

Kenny Jones Testimony

Prop 28, 29, 30

Mr Chairman, esteemed members of the board,

My name is Kenneth Jones, and I am a third generation commercial fishermen, lifelong Cordova resident and a new father. I support my wife and child through the several commercial fisheries I am involved in. I also feed my family through subsistence hunting and fishing.

I have been gillnetting and seining for over 15 years, and 10 as an owner of my own fishing operations. I am here to discuss the proposals in front of you now.

With mandatory inside closures in place and pushing the fishery offshore, it has increased the danger of fishing in the Copper River District.

Unfortunately I know of this danger first hand. Two years ago during a mandatory inside closure I had an experience I was lucky to survive. A large wave washed me overboard while I was picking my set. I was fortunate to have a deckhand fishing with me, who acted quickly in getting me back on the boat. A week later, the same thing happened to my father, who thankfully survived. This past season, during unprecedented time and area restrictions, a similar incident took place and a gentleman who was fishing alone did not survive.

By pushing the fishery offshore and outside the Barrier Islands you will continue to endanger the lives of the over 500 commercial permit holders plus their deckhands who are fishing to provide for their families, and contribute to their communities, and the state, through fish taxes. I urge you to support proposal 28 and 30, restoring access to the safe fishing areas, and oppose proposal 29, which would push us further offshore into more danger.

In Addition, I would urge you to keep the allocation plan unchanged and oppose proposal 47. The plan has been working since last amended and adopted in 2005. Currently

gear groups are within their trigger points and the "piggy bank" system has been working well to correct the 5 year average percentages.

Proposal 4 would establish a directed pelagic rockfish jig fishery. As one of the few jig fishermen in PWS, I support this wholeheartedly. Jigging is an entry level fishery for people who are trying to break into vessel ownership. In 2014 the Board established a Pcod allocation for a directed jig fishery and the board has adopted a directed rockfish fishery in Kodiak. This fishery would allow for economic growth in Cordova, and put more fish dollars into the State budget as well.

Regarding proposals 38 and 39, I support elimination of the minimum leed web size requirement and I believe permit stacking will be a great way to shrink the seine fleet to a more sustainable size. When limited entry was implemented vessels were smaller and less efficient, if the permits become fully utilized, with current vessel capabilities, managing for sustainable fisheries will become more difficult and the economics of owning a vessel will diminish.

Thank you for your time today, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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