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Alaska Board of Fisheries  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK. 99811-5526

Dear Members:

I am writing in support of Proposal 27 to change regulations to allow one Eastside Bristol Bay setnet permitholder to own and operate two setnet permits. I am a setnetter in the Naknek Section of the Naknek-Kvichak District in Bristol Bay. I grew up in Naknek and have been fishing for 23 year, initially with my mom on our setnet sites, and then as a crew on a drift gillnetter for a nine years. When I began setnetting again in 2010, the only reason I was able to start my family operation back up was because of the permit-stacking regulation that was in effect. Since the regulation was repealed for the 2013 season, I have faced many challenges with keeping my operation running. It is not economically feasible for a setnetter to run an operation and be profitable with just one permit.

Due to the regulation changes in 2013, I had to transfer my permit to a fishing partner, who has since quit fishing due to family obligations. Subsequently, I was faced with the challenging decision to either forego fishing or transfer what used to be my second permit into someone else's name. I found a deckhand who could hold the permit for one season but, having a second permit in someone else's name is not only logistically complicated, it is incredibly unnerving because the second permit holder could choose to sell the permit at any time. There is no way to guarantee that a permit that has always been in my family will actually STAY in my family.

My setnet permit used to belong to my great grandmother, and the second permit initially belonged to my father. It's very important to me to continue this way of life and to be able to share it with my family. These two setnet permits are meant to stay in my family forever; the plan for the second permit was for my nephew to take over once he was ready. He recently joined the Navy and we have no timeframe for when he'll be able to return to the fishery. The second permit is now in my mother's name, but as she ages, it's hard to tell how long she will be able to fish the permit and if we will be able to keep it until my nephew's return from military service. It's hard to invest more money in an operation that could lose its profitability or even its ability to break even. I've finally got my skiff paid off but hesitate to purchase another or expand my operation any more with the uncertainty of who my second permit holder would be if something happened to my mother's ability to continue fishing.

As far as logistics go, permit stacking will allow simplicity and increased profitability for setnet operations. Timing is the biggest logistical hurdle since my crew have either primary employment or school controlling when they can arrive to the Bay for fishing in June and when they have to leave in July. The potential to miss out on profitable fishing time due to being restricted to running on site with one permit instead of running two sites is high, and unfortunately, has been frequent. In seasons where the salmon run late, like in 2015, having the second permit holder leave to return to their primary employment can be financially devastating for an operation. Permit stacking will allow setnetters to have more control over fishing their sites according to their timeline and their crew's availability, contributing to profitability and operational longevity.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I hope to continue to fish in Bristol Bay another 30 years alongside my family and permit stacking would make that a feasible reality.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Aspelund