

Submitted by:

Stuart Deal

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Mr Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Stuart Deal. I am a commercial fisherman in Prince William Sound, operating a seine boat. Much of the financial stability that I have is attributable to the hatcheries there. Sometimes I'm asked why I am not fishing for more notable fish that I used to catch, the Copper River Salmon. I point out that what I catch now feeds many more people, and at a price that is more widely affordable. The fish that I catch has a very low carbon footprint.

This meeting is becoming a review of how hatcheries are regulated. More than 50 years ago it was agreed and written into law that Alaska's fisheries would be managed for sustainability and according to science. This was clearly a wise and timely step. Along with many healthy rivers, it contributed significantly to healthy salmon stocks. Not long after Limited Entry was enacted legislation was written to enable hatcheries. In keeping with the standard of sustainability for wild stocks, guidelines were put in place for the hatchery programs to answer to good science, and to be subject to public review. This is how the hatchery programs in Prince William Sound were formed. They have not been formed in closed meetings. The consensus of science is not seeing a smoking gun pointing in the general direction wild stocks or the ecosystem at large.

My sons also would like to be operators in the seine fishery in PWS one day. I hope the board will see fit to stand with managing according to good science and not take the process away from a reliable path.