

Mr.Chairman, Board of Directors, Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am Jeff Berger and I have lived in Ninilchik for over 30 years. I am an avid sport fisherman and make my living in the fishing industry.

I have been testifying at these proceedings for a long time and have always come up here and say the same thing....this year is no different except I hope the Board takes some action to rectify the problems.

Regarding King Salmon in the Kenai River, as long as you allow catch and release King Salmon fishing on the spawning grounds under the guise of Coho fishing there is no way the Kenai Kings will ever recover. Its catch and kill.....they are so stressed they definitely do not spawn effectively.

The fishing Industry is the back bone of our economy and has been for over 138 years, probably longer. We have a long history of fishing families on the Kenai peninsula and we would all like to continue to make our living in our traditional way. There is no reason why we should not be able to. We have a management plan that works and we just need to follow it. Let the fleet and the beach fish their two days per week inlet wide openers and set our escapement goals where they return Maximum Sustained Yield for the benefit of Everyone. The escapement goals we have now are to high.

Under the current management we have had low returns and forgone harvest opportunity while we have allowed the re allocation of our resource to go to a new user group that is growing un checked and putting our business's in jeopardy. This cannot go on forever, it is just not sustainable.

In any case fish that are not harvested above the escapement goal benefit no one, they are wasted and this should not be allowed to happen.

Please allow our biologists to manage for MSY for the benefit of everyone as is mandated in Magnuson Stevens Act and our State Constitution and do not allow one industry to continue to be forsaken for another for no reason. It is just not right.

Thank you for listening and I hope we can return our resource to its former success