

Good afternoon Chair Morisky and Board of Fish Members. I am Paul Ostrander, Kenai City Manager. I would like to speak to two proposals of specific interest to the City of Kenai, proposal 85 and 145 and also bring to the attention of the Board a resolution that the Council of the City of Kenai passed at their meeting of February 5, 2020 that has been submitted to the Board as an R.C.

First, proposal 85 which proposes to restrict fishing derbies. This proposal would directly impact the City of Kenai because we are preparing for the 3rd annual Kenai Silver Salmon Derby. As I understand it, it is unlikely that this Board has the authority to restrict fishing derbies beyond time, area, methods and means, and bag and possession limits, however I wanted to state clearly that the City of Kenai is opposed to this proposal.

The second proposal I would like to comment on is proposal number 145. This proposal would extend the personal use fishery on the Kenai River until August 15th. The City of Kenai strongly opposes extending the fishery from its current length of 21 days to 36 days. The City of Kenai currently spends approximately \$400,000 a year to support the fishery. Due to lower participation over the last several years, the fees the City charges have not been enough to offset expenses - the City lost almost \$70,000 in 2018 alone. Participation numbers would likely trend downwards throughout the extended season while the expenses to the City would increase proportionally to the number of days of the extension - with slight variation, every day that the fishery is open costs the City the same amount. Extending the season as this proposal suggests would likely guarantee that the City would lose money supporting the fishery. This is a fishery that the City is already concerned cannot be sustainably supported under the current fee structure.

Lastly, I would like to speak to City of Kenai Resolution 2020-07, submitted to the Board as an R.C., titled, Supporting Sound Fisheries Management Practices and Diversified Harvest Opportunities in the Cook Inlet. It is critical to all user groups that our fisheries, and for the City of Kenai, particularly the Kenai River be managed using sound, research based science. Pursuing the maximum sustained yield for salmon stocks in the Kenai River is our only chance to meet the increasing demand for these fish. Any management or allocative decisions that potentially jeopardize our ability to achieve maximum sustained yield should be avoided. I would encourage this Board to lean heavily on the experts within the department. They have the experience and knowledge we should rely on. Particularly, allocative decisions that put us at a higher risk of missing sustainable escapement goals, either with under or over escapement should be avoided. One example of a proposal that could result in the over escapement of sockeye into the Kenai River is proposal 88 which proposes to adjust the inriver goal significantly upwards. The Department is neutral on the allocative nature of the proposal, however, when salmon runs are large - 4.6 million to 5 million fish - these proposed inriver goals would require a sportfish harvest of 500,000-700,000 fish, a level that is almost certainly unachievable, meaning in those years, the Kenai River sockeye escapement would exceed the upper end of the sustainable escapement goal, jeopardizing future returns.