

Darren Johnson Personal Testimony

RC096

Afternoon madam chair and the board. My name is Darren Johnson, I am from The Native Village of Nelson Lagoon. I am speaking today on behalf of our poor commercial fish catch and subsistence catch. Growing up fishing I watched our fishery get worse and worse with more and more fishing on the north line in the last 20 years. I believe the north peninsula fishery at Port Heiden to Ilnik is intercepting Nelson Lagoon's sockeye run and continues to be a problem for all of us. I know of north line fisherman in 2022 season having 30,000 pound days. Nelson Lagoon fishermen can't even make that in one season and yet the north line fishermen don't believe they are intercepting us. We don't need science to tell us that, if you fish in Nelson Lagoon, its obvious. Growing up fishing, once Bristol bay got their run, Nelson lagoon would get our run a few days later. I should not have to run 100 miles from town to catch the portion that belongs to the Nelson River. Nelson Lagoon is a community that is there because of commercial salmon fishing. This is where we live year around. With that, I think the management needs to be adjusted. Nelson River lately just barely gets the bottom end of escapement. We are not asking for all of it, we just want our portion. I am hoping the board can make a decision that will benefit all of us. I believe proposal 128 would help us as long as the fish and game manages and enforces this proposal. I believe another option is proposal 120. We are willing to negotiate how those windows could work. Anything that would help let our portion of sockeye get to the Nelson River. We've heard throughout this week that these proposals could hurt the north area m fishermen because they'd have to buy new gear ~~that they would have to buy~~ J

and would have a hard time affording stuff like that

~~in tip top shape~~, well I am here to say that the Nelson Lagoon fishermen are already in that position because our fishery is so depleted. My boat has needed a new engine and my skiff has needed a new motor for over 15 years but we can't afford it. So I am asking that the board take a fine look at our situation and make a decision that will help conserve our fisheries that are struggling. Thanks.