

Sherman McNeley's testimony

Good afternoon madam chair and board. I'm Sherman Mcneley, I'm here to speak on behalf of nelson lagoon and to support proposals 120 and 128. I'm 22 y/o and I've been on the boat with my father since I was around 5 years old and have gone fishing every year since, and am now our family's permit holder. The impact of the Nelson River system failing on the fellow residents of nelson lagoon have been severe to say the least. Due to the poor harvest year after year, those who rely on fishing in nelson lagoon are struggling to keep up on pre-season, in season and post season expenses to keep their boats running and ready for the water the next season, keep the lights on and food on the table during the winter months. Many who travel to nelson lagoon to fish don't even bother because the fishing has gotten so bad in the river and their boats are only equipped to fish within the river. The majority don't have readily available nets nor trustworthy equipment that's capable of handling the outside weather, such as old engines that have been around since the 70s, navigational equipment from around the same time and poorly operating pumps and electrical systems as well as communication equipment. Meeting law and regulations by the bare minimum to make sure the vessel they're fishing on is legal. Fishing has been a staple of our community and the sole reason why nelson lagoon is here today and if things keep going in the direction they have been I can see that my home village Nelson Lagoon will lose its identity as a fishing village.

Im in support of proposal 120 because in 2013 rolling closures were put in place, and all local fisherman in nelson lagoon would tell you that it helped but wasn't enough to sustain, since 2018 when they were removed, nelson river has been going downhill ever since. Having basic knowledge of the ecosystem, when human intervention is absent, nature tends to flourish. Which tells me that if proposal 120 passes it will give salmon a chance to travel unhindered on their way to spawn. Ensuring a healthy future salmon harvest and escapement as well as a chance for the salmon to make it to the streams that many people rely on for subsistence to feed their families.

As of proposal 128, some outer Area M fisherman previously have stated that 70 mesh nets act as a "Sea anchor" for the larger vessels, keeping them fishing in bad weather not sailing in the high winds having net in the water longer. in which to my understanding is that a drifter is supposed to drift and not be anchored. I can understand what they're getting at with that but 70md is a lot of net, and 45s seem to work perfectly fine. ^{for me} Another note is that a 70md net can be cut down to 45 meshes deep and the lead line can be hung back on providing a 45 mesh net for fishing outside and a 25 mesh deep piece of web that could be used for a set net on the beach.

If those of us in Nelson Lagoon primarily being the youth, that are capable of fishing outside the river, are very few in terms of equipment that can make the trip. Those of us who are the youth are heavily depended on by the elders for help with their daily needs that they are physically incapable of doing themselves. If all of us youth have to go away to fish, it will leave our elders without help and their needs unattended to.

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