

Madame Chair and members of the Board of Fisheries, I am Chuck McCallum. I am the Fishery Advisor for the Lake and Peninsula Borough. I am also a retired Chignik fisherman and fished Chignik for over thirty years. I am speaking today on my personal behalf.

I am deeply concerned about proposal 105, initiated by The Department to fundamentally change the management of Chignik by combining the two distinct escapement goals that have been in place for over ½ a century into a single BEG. The department first announced their intention to combine escapement goals in April of 2022, less than a month after the board of fisheries identified the early run as a stock of management concern in response to the fisheries failures in four of the last 5 years. In my frequent conversations I have yet to encounter another Chignik stakeholder that doesn't share my deep concerns about proposal 105

105 rests on the scientifically faulty assumption that changes in freshwater habitat has made Chignik Lake a new bottleneck that justifies a single watershed-wide escapement goal. Simply put, you cannot attribute recently observed declines in sockeye productivity to freshwater changes alone, when we know that ocean conditions have an overriding influence on salmon survival. Despite the changes that occurred in the freshwater habitat, the Early and Late Chignik sockeye runs are still genetically distinct; they return to spawn at different times, spawn in different places, and still largely rear as juveniles in the two distinct lakes of the system. And the two runs are NOT synchronized: in most years if one run is doing poorly the other run tends to do well, which provides a buffer against nature's ups and downs. Talking as if the two runs are now one and the same is simply not supported by the science.

Chignik remains one of the few places where we have the tools, knowledge, and ability to manage the fishery in a way that genuinely reflects the true diversity of the system. Proposal 105 risks the erosion of that diversity, which underpins the sustainability of the Chignik sockeye salmon fishery and is counter to the intention of the sustainable salmon policy.

I ask you to defer action on 105 to allow time for additional scientific research, including studies recently funded as a result of the 2018 disaster funding and to allow time for an independent outside peer review of the Department's proposed combining of early and late run escapement goals. Given the dire straights of the first run, now is the time to be ramping up monitoring efforts, working to initiate collaborative research that reflects the best available science, and taking precautionary approaches to protect weak stocks. There couldn't be a worse time for 105 to be proposed.