

Eva Dawn Burk - Committee of the Whole Testimony
February 2023

The Aleutian Islands is a cash economy whereas the AYK region is a mixed cash-subsistence economy. There are over 250 permits for non-salmon species. They have alternatives, they are not starving. Salmon makes up about 71, 62 and 89 percent of the diets of Tanana, Fort Yukon and Eagle, respectively (2017). Without salmon, we cannot barter and trade. Salmon, moose, and caribou are the backbone of our food systems. All species are in decline and subsistence resources are less reliable and affordable. We have to travel farther and farther to hunt, costing precious gas resources we do not have.

Our economy is depressed. Our fisheries are depressed. Our people are depressed.

Proposal 140 ensures time/area closures, ensuring there are sufficient time windows for chum passage. The heat stress that we saw in 2019 could not be planned for. CWAK is 20 percent of all chum in Area M June fishery but 40 percent of Alaskan chum are of CWAK origin. We need every single salmon to spawn. Summer chum counts on the Yukon River become significant historically around June 28 - July 3. The Area M June fishery would essentially be over at this point.

This year 2023 will be rough. That year's (2019) fish will be coming back this year. By June 21, 2022, only 834 chum passed the Pilot Point sonar station, the lowest count on record. If we set a cap, that could be all our fish. The Area M June fishery will be over by the time we see chum. If we had a repeat of 2019 and a low run, we will be on our way to extinction.

We need 72-hour closures to allow passage. The 2001-2003 Area M June Management Plan resulted in better summer chum runs on the Yukon River. Proposal 140 is not new, this was already in regulation. We went from under 500,000 summer chum in both 2000 and 2001 to over 2.5M and 3.7M in 2005 and 2006, respectively. This shows that allowing chum to pass through Area M resulted in successful spawning and a rebound in population.

This is a food security crisis for about 16 percent of Alaska's population. The Governor has a Food Security Taskforce. Over 95 percent of food is flown into urban areas of Alaska. In rural Alaska, our diet is about 50-60 percent wild foods, mostly salmon, from the lands and waters. Lack of salmon in the AYK region is a major food security issue. Our bodies are adapted to eat

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mostly wild foods. We're experiencing serious health disparities trying to adjust to store-bought foods. Our foods are not replaceable. Our bodies need them for optimum health and wellness.

I have 6 people in my household. I received \$1,100 for disaster relief for the fisheries crisis. This is not enough to feed my family. The salmon I'm not currently able to fish are of way more value than that. This disaster relief needs to be looked at equitably. This is not a solution for poor fisheries management.