

3/12/2023,

Madame Chair and Members of the Alaska Board of Fish,

My name is Gary Hollier. I am a lifelong resident of Kenai, Ak. I am an Eastside Set netter (ESSN) in Cook Inlet. I have set net fished over 50 years on North Kalifonsky Beach, just south of the Kenai River.

I authored RC 4, so would like to make some additional comments, which are not in the Emergency Petition. The ESSN fishery for years has been involved with King Salmon issues.

The ESSN fishery in 1986 helped with the "Bethe" study. This study, ran by ADF&G, put observers in set net skiffs, to see where King Salmon were captured in set gill nets.

ESSN fishermen, in 2012, were mainstays in the BOF Taskforce, which dealt with ideas trying to help reduce King Salmon harvest.

ESSN fishermen collaborated, in 2014, with the Kintama study, dealing with King and Sockeye salmon being captured and fitted with devices that showed at what depth they swam heading up Cook Inlet to the Kenai River.

Since the 2012 Upper Cook Inlet set net disaster, some ESSN fishermen have voluntarily reduced the depth of their nets from 45 meshes to 29 meshes. Along with fishing smaller mesh gear 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, down from the larger mesh sizes, up to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Some ESSN fishermen were instrumental in getting these gear restrictions up in regulatory language.

In those years from 2012 to present, Late Run King Salmon goals for the Kenai River have gone from an all King Salmon goal of 13,500-27,000, to a Large King Salmon goal of 15,000-30,000. The current Large KING goal is unattainable and has never been met since put in regulation in 2020.

This issue would certainly been addressed at the regular scheduled BOF meeting for Upper Cook Inlet. That meeting was canceled till 2024, due to COVID. This cancellation was certainly an unforeseen circumstance. Therefore meets the criteria for an Emergency Petition.

ADF&G will most certainly argue that RC 4 does not meet the criteria of an Emergency Petition. Now with a pre-season Department projection of 13,624 large king salmon returning to the Kenai River, the ESSN fishery is closed pre-season. ADF&G has always used in-season projections to manage Upper Cook Inlet fisheries. In 5 AAC 21.360 Kenai River Late Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan, a determination on run strength in made July 20, at that time the fishery if the minimum in-river goal will not be met, the fishery shall be closed or restricted as necessary.....

In 2022 the ESSN fishery fished five days (5) days in the Kasilof Section and the entire Upper Sub District fished two (2) days. For those seven (7) days tota, 32 Large King Salmon were harvested. The total Large King Salmon run to the Kenai River was 13,952. The harvest of Large King Salmon in the ESSN fishery was less than .25 of 1% of the total run.

RC 4 asked for a total of four fishing days for the ESSN fishery. Two days in each section, fishing will be based on abundance. Total Large King Salmon harvest should be less that the 32, caught in 2022 as the

time in 2023 will be 43% less fishing time than 2022. If on July 20, the OEG can't be projected, the ESSN is closed.

If the OEG is met, then the ESSN fishery can reopen.

Pre-season closure is an emergency to the ESSN fishery, the processors, and the multitude of businesses that earn income from the set-net fleet.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gary Hollier