

12/10/24

My name is Danny Carpenter. I have drift gillnet fished Area E for 39 seasons and been a year round resident of Cordova for that period of time.

I marked the proposals I supported and did not support and most of them I'm not going to comment on, but there are a few I feel strongly about. I did try to attach these comments to the ones I marked and sent in but I've been told the attachment didn't go thru.

Proposals 14-17 I strongly support. My understanding is that currently there is little or no observation of bycatch in this trawl fishery. Knowing the pollack fishery nearshore to Kodiak was shut down this Fall when 2 boats caught 2000 King salmon early in the fishery makes me wonder why all trawl fisheries are not closely observed. How can Fish and Game manage a fishery that is supposed to be mid water, but spends most of the time on the bottom and has no active observation? Anything that could stiffen observation and keeping the nets off of the bottom makes sense.

Proposals 46 and 47 I strongly support. Harvest reporting on all salmon catch should be reported in a timely manner. If I'm not mistaken with the subsistence reports not due until the end of October the BOF doesn't have accurate information in time for the meetings in the same year that they are hearing these proposals. With all the devices available these days there is no excuse for not reporting in a timely manner.

Proposal 48 I strongly oppose. There are already too many boats on the Copper River basically commercial fishing by charging folks to catch subsistence and personal use fish. The boat operators are asking for more area because of the excessive pressure. I don't support even more pressure from this user group that is currently unlimited.

Proposal 52 and 53 I strongly oppose. Fish and Game already has the ability to reduce fishing time and area if the run timing is off. May 18-25th used to be the peak of the run on the Copper River Flats. The timing has been a week to 10 days later in recent years. Either way having a mandatory calendar date closure would tie the hands of the commercial managers and could cause an over escapement of early run fish. We have only been getting a 12 hour or two opener early in the season leaving a lot of escapement window for fish in May and early June. There is a significant lag in when fish are counted at the sonar and when they actually enter the fishery. I understand the early fish upriver are arriving late...they have been arriving late in the commercial fishery as well. These proposals would tied the hands of Fish and Game managers.

Proposals 56 and 57 I strongly oppose. I feel that these proposals will increase the income gap between the smaller boats and larger boats in Area E and increase the overcapitalization we already have going on. I don't agree with giving fishermen based on their finances an increased amount of gear providing them an unfair advantage. Most of the fishermen I've talked to about Proposal 56 had no idea a single Area E fisherman could even own more than one drift permit. I'm still not sure just how many Area E drift permits one fisherman can own. We have 50 to 100 permits that have not fished in the last 5 or 7 years according to Fish and Game numbers. Neither of these proposals would reduce gear if these latent permits are purchased as stacked permits. It would actually increase the amount of gear in the water. I also think that the extra gear will concentrate in areas that are already crowded making it harder to compete for the boats without stacked permits. I do think that the price on permits would go up if either of these 2 Proposals pass. I don't think that inflating the price of permits is a good reason to go this direction. In the past permit prices were driven by fish prices and run success. I worry that the ripple effect of these 2 proposals is hard to predict. It could make it harder for younger fishermen to ever get established into the fishery and it could make permits more of an investment tool than a way for people to start a business. If we had half as many fishermen due to stacking how would that affect local economies for parts, repairs, groceries and services? This could drastically affect the number of limited entry permits especially allowing one person to fish more than one and it will set a precedent for every area in the state. I don't see these 2 proposals fixing anything in our fishery and can see many ways it could cause unforeseen problems.

I support either Proposal 75, 76 or Proposal 77. The allocation plan is completely out of whack as illustrated by the \$68,000,000 difference in parity illustrated in proposal 76. VFDA often produces 50% or more of the seine income which is currently not included in the allocation. Disaster relief money is also excluded from the 5 year Coar average so that low income years that are compensated by the Federal government thru disaster relief is not reflected in the actual income for the allocation groups. The seine fleet got a large relief payout in 2016, but the 5 year average was based on fish harvested not money. Fish and Game has claimed it's too complicated to back these figures out due to VFDA fish. This ended up giving Chalmers to the seine fleet on one of the biggest Chalmers Chum harvests ever. They harvested 810,000 while the gillnet fleet harvested 234,700 with 1.1 million for cost recovery. They also intercepted a large percentage of Wally Norenberg bound Chum transiting the area which affected the gillnet cost recovery reducing time and area for the gillnet fleet and required more cost recovery from Main Bay which also reduced time and area. The current allocation plan is continuing to skew the share of fish to the seine fleet and this will happen again when the terrible Pink year from 2024 gets thrown in the 5 year average for the 2026 season. Likely there will be another round of disaster relief for that run. In fairness any money the gillnet fleet receives should also be thrown into the average.