

PROPOSAL 28 - 5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for the Cook Inlet – Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area. Reduce Lower Cook Inlet marine fishery bag limit to one king salmon, as follows:

January 1 - December 31, one king salmon per day, 5 king salmon per year.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? While there have been restrictions and closures of Upper Cook Inlet sport, guided sport, personal use, and commercial fisheries over the past 5 years caused by king salmon shortages, in salt water South of the Anchor Point Light from October 1 - March 31 the sport limits are 2 king salmon per day with no annual limit. There are currently 7 king salmon stocks of concern in Northern District drainages with the possibility that more could be added at the 2017 Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries meeting. Kenai River king salmon shortages have created hardships for thousands of users. I do not know how many October - March king salmon caught South of the Anchor Point line are destined to Upper Cook Inlet drainages, however, in light of the hardships to Upper Cook Inlet user groups caused by king salmon shortages I believe it may be time to adjust daily and annual king salmon bag limits South of the Anchor Point line. Such a change should be considered, because of uncertainty, and for precautionary reasons, in light of well-documented Upper Cook Inlet king salmon shortages.

This proposal is also a call to hear and consider the most recent and best available science on the harvest numbers and origin of king salmon stocks caught in this fishery. With public involvement perhaps better solution(s) may be reached. Another solution could be to somehow adjust the October - March bag limit in response to emergency orders issued for stocks North of the Anchor Point Light. If solid and recent science shows hardly any harvest of Upper Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, it could be best to leave this fishery unchanged.

PROPOSED BY: Andy Couch

(EF-F16-095)
