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RC 24

Alaska Board of Fisheries
Alaska Department of Fish & Game

RE: Proposal 18

Welcome to Dillingham. As a lifelong resident of Bristol Bay my family fish in Nushagak, Naknek/Kvichak and Egegik Districts and on behalf of my family from the Bristol Bay region. I am here to support Proposal 18 Repeal limits to Subsistence Fishing period in the Nushagak District.

The Bristol Bay economy depends on the fisheries and decisions that affect the economy should provide for the greatest amount of local participation. This will be my 3rd time having the opportunity to participate in the process, the other two times while the meetings were held in Dillingham.

Being able to testify on the impacts, the proposals and decisions made during this process and express first hand the affects this has on our livelihoods is detrimental in being able to continue to live in our region and the survival of our fisheries as we know it.

When you look at AS 16.05.258 (b) this is often referred to as the Subsistence preference or sometimes the subsistence priority. I support proposal 18 to give **equal access as a subsistence user**. This summer there were 800+boats in the water (on average there are 300-500 boats fishing) in Nushagak and sports fishing in full swing, here I was on the beach not able to subsistence fish because of the time line to only 3 days a week. (Read the Alaska state law) This restriction was implemented in the 70's - 40 years ago. In this day and age, we have the ability to monitor and manage what we catch. We don't take more than we need and if we are lucky to get what we need than we share with our families and friends. My subsistence catch is shared with three other families. Plus we share with our local elders. This is one of our cultural values.

I can understand the reason for wanton waste that can even happen while we fish and process and continues to happen within our commercial fishing (dropouts) we manage and we are not wasteful people and we fully support conservation after all subsistence sustains us not just today but into the future. We just ask for fairness and equal access as subsistence users. The current restriction does not allows this to happen. We are faced with tides, weather, safety (nighttime) and sometimes limited to catches over the years. We get 10 fathoms per site on the beach vs the commercial boats getting 150 fathoms and set netters who get 50 fathoms our nets in the water if we are all fishing equal 3-4 boats nets in the water.

I just do not think us having the opportunity to fish based on need, as a subsistence user is equal or fair from the other users in the bay. Please support proposal 18 as submitted by the Nushagak Advisory Committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Wassiliisia (DeeDee) Bennis

Subsistence User - Co-Owner /operator/participant in the Fisheries