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Alaska Board of Fisheries

Subject: ACR 5 Dolgoi Area

Mr. Chairman and Board Members:

What can I say except, Here we go again! Where's our normal meeting cycle and how does a merit change come into play for an agenda change request for ACR 5 submitted by the Chignik Inter Tribal Council when it doesn't meet the criteria set out by the Board of Fisheries for consideration of fishery issues onto an agenda for consideration out of a normal regulatory board cycle?

My husband and I are both Area M Set Net permit holders, who have been forced out of a local fishing area, the SEDM (South East District Mainland), due to regulations set forth upon our fishery from another area, Area L. February 2019 we were in our normal meeting cycle in Anchorage, Alaska contenting with these same issues adjudicated by this same board. Two big regulatory changes came about at this meeting and took place this past summer: one being the June fishery schedule realigned yielding in more closures with basically no salmon gear in the waters during the month of June. Another major change was closing Dolgoi Island to purse seine fishing gear. Now more wants to be taken from our fishery for the Chignik Area fishermen.

In 2019 escapement reached 87% of a prior 10 year average and with the 2019 commercial fishery, Chignik Management Area L fishermen harvested over 3.4 million pounds of sockeye, over 1.4 million pounds of Coho and over 6.9 million pounds of pink salmon. Please note that my husband, myself and several fishermen have not fished in SEDM during the entire 2018 salmon season due to the SEDM being closed and on August 15th 2019 we experienced our first opener on the SEDM which lasted only a few short weeks with regular closures and openers within that period.

Is there a conservation issue regarding the early Chignik sockeye return, NO! How can it be when the 2019 escapement was 345,918 sockeye, which is basically about 4000 sockeye below the BEG range of 350,000 to 450,000. These are not sustainability issues.

Another factor we have to content with is misleading and inaccurate statements about our fishery.

We do ask the board at this time to throw out ACR 5 and to consider any such proposals for consideration to come to the board during its normal meeting cycle.

Best Regards,

Jack R. Foster / Amy M Foster
Jack Foster Jr. / Amy M Foster