PROPOSAL 46
5 AAC 24.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.
Repeal limitations on use of deep gillnet gear, as follows:

5 AAC 24.331. Gillnet specifications and operations

(b) Eshamy, Coghill, and Unakwik Districts:

(6) **Repealed** [before the first Monday in July, unless modified by emergency order, in the Coghill, Unakwik, and Eshamy Districts and the Port Chalmers Subdistrict, gillnets with a mesh size of less than eight inches may not be more than 60 meshes in depth and gillnets with a mesh size of eight inches or greater may not be more than 40 meshes in depth;]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Remove the regulation limiting the use of gillnets deeper the 60 meshes before the first Monday of July.

This regulation has been in part to blame for millions of lbs of chum salmon going dark and degrading in quality and value before harvest. In trying to manage both the wild Coghill sockeye run and the Esther chum hatchery return run overlap the department often is unable to give long enough duration openers to harvest excess chum salmon without impacting wild sockeye escapement. 60 mesh gillnets are much less efficient at harvesting chums as chum salmon tend to dive deeper than sockeye. Allowing the use of deep nets earlier in the season would increase the number of chums caught per hour of fishing time relative to sockeye.

PROPOSED BY: Ezekiel Brown   (EF-F20-135)
****