

**PROPOSAL 121**

**5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.**

Modify intent language within the Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan, as follows:

**5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.** (a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure adequate escapement of salmon into the Northern District drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. [THE DEPARTMENT SHALL MANAGE THE COMMERCIAL DRIFT GILLNET FISHERY TO MINIMIZE THE HARVEST OF NORTHERN DISTRICT AND KENAI RIVER COHO SALMON IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SPORT AND GUIDED SPORT FISHERMEN A REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO HARVEST THESE SALMON STOCKS OVER THE ENTIRE RUN, AS MEASURED BY THE FREQUENCY OF IN RIVER RESTRICTIONS.] **The department shall also manage the common property fisheries with a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources.** The department shall manage the Central District commercial drift gillnet fishery as described in this section.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Delete unnecessary language in the Cook Inlet salmon management plans to direct the department to minimize the commercial harvest of coho. That language restricts the flexibility for the managers to manage on a real time basis, based on in season abundance, to harvest the surplus of all salmon species and results in gross over-escapements and the waste of valuable harvestable salmon surpluses. This language has resulted in tens of millions of harvestable salmon going un-harvested and negatively affects the commercial fishing industry, communities, National food source, interstate commerce, economies and also decreases future salmon production resulting from the effects of over escapement. It also violates the Magnuson Stevens Act. The sports fishery has a reasonable opportunity to fish because of the fact that salmon run into thousands of streams in the Cook Inlet drainage from May to October and most all are open to sports fishing. If one system is not open, for escapement reasons, a sports fisherman has many other system they can fish. In comparison the commercial fisherman, when restricted or closed down, has no other area to fish because they are restricted to the areas and their gear type by their limited entry permit they own. There is unfair and has no parity in reasonable opportunity between commercial and recreational fisheries under the current management plans. There are no conservation concerns on coho and most coho runs are harvested well below acceptable 60% to 70% exploitation rates, with many exploitation rates being less than 5% and most less than 2%. Because of overly restricted commercial fishing management plans only around half of the CFEC permit holders are currently participating in the Cook Inlet fishery, thereby reducing their harvest potential by half.

**PROPOSED BY:** Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F23-025)

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