

Dear Members of the Board of Fish,

I am a commercial fisherman who has owned and operated my own seine vessel in Kodiak waters for over a decade. I mainly fish the west side of Kodiak, so several of the current proposals are of concern to me.

To be specific, I am OPPOSED to proposals 62, 69, and 70. These proposals seek to allocate specific fishing time or harvest to setnetters at the direct expense of seiners. I am neutral on proposals 63 and 64, which would improve the setnet fleet harvest through improvements in efficiency, but are less of a direct allocative grab from the seine fleet.

Loss of fishing hours and days is every bit as important to Kodiak seiners as it is to setnetters. Shifts in run timing (weaker early-run Karluk sockeye, and stronger late-run Karluk sockeye), along with loss of June fishing opportunities in Cape Igvak for Chignik-bound sockeye, have made June and early July less profitable for seiners and setnetters alike. Early seasons in recent years have been consistently tough for all Kodiak fishermen, not just for setnetters.

Rather than scapegoating seiners, I respectfully suggest that setnetters focus on improving the efficiency and duration of their own fishing operation. This may include shifting the weeks of operation to cover late August and September in order to target robust late-run sockeye runs, and it may also include help from proposals 63 and 64. In times of low fish prices, it seems important that both gear types continue to work together in order to keep markets open for everyone.

It should be noted that a 'modern' seine operation is not inherently a more efficient way of harvesting salmon than it was in the past. Improvements to hydraulics, nets, skiffs, and boats come at a high cost, and are certainly not uniform across the Kodiak seine fleet. This seems true of setnet operations also- there are some very basic operations, and there are also some very 'modern', scaled-up, and efficient setnet operations. I can attest that all seiners face a huge fuel bill, high insurance costs, high maintenance costs, and historically low fish prices. Setnetters also face similar financial challenges. My point is that becoming a more efficient fishing business comes at significant cost. Rather than blaming seiners, the setnet fleet might focus on investing in their own operations and targeting changing fish patterns. Hardworking Kodiak fishermen, regardless of gear type, willing to invest in their operations, should be given the opportunity to succeed. This should be an opportunity, not an allocation.

Sincerely,

Brad Marden

FV Renaissance