

REB65

March 20, 2013

Chair Johnstone, Board of Fish Members,

My name is Christine Brandt and I am here before you today representing myself and my 4 children and our livelihood. I commercial set net in Cook Inlet on the East side. I am actively involved in the public process.

My CFEC permit states that it is for harvesting salmon; it does not specify one stock over another. As a resident of Alaska I believe I should have the same opportunity to harvest the resource as another resident. The method I choose to harvest salmon is a limited entry permit, again it does not distinguish a specific stock and like my fellow East Side Set Net harvesters, my sites target sockeye.

2012 brought many uncertainties to all users in the Kasilof and Kenai River areas, but the ESSN families were impacted the heaviest by closure of their fisheries, we shouldered the burden of conservation for king salmon and were unable like many other users to harvest sockeye.

During discussions by the Upper Cook Inlet Task Force, ADF&G has stated that the escapement into the Kenai River was well over 28,000 Chinook salmon. Do I believe that the Task Force was a waste of time? Absolutely not, it has brought much needed information on genetics along with new data on the DIDSON sonar and escapement goals.

The following information has become known or available:

King salmon entering the Kenai River were late and there was no conservation concern.

Over 400 CFEC S04H families were impacted financially in a season that would have harvested a substantial surplus of sockeye salmon.

13% is the total exploitation by the ESSN of Kenai River late-run king salmon and of that 13%, 43% are salmon measuring less than 29 ½ inches.

ESSN permit holders catch less than .01% of king salmon in the total harvest of all stocks of salmon.

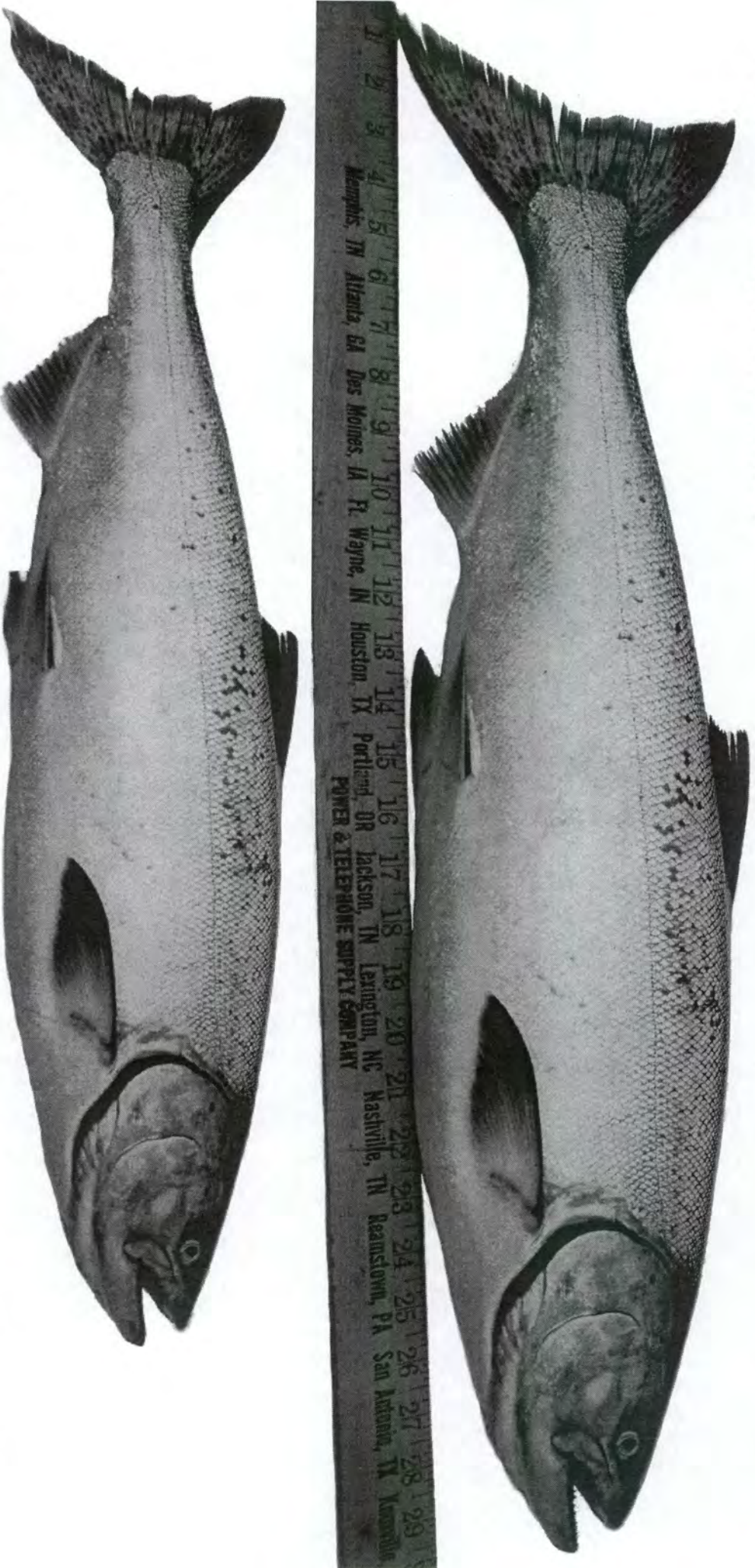
There is no reason to further restrict ESSN fishermen unless there is a true conservation concern with runs expected to fall well below 13,000. I support the escapement goal of 13,000 to 28,000 as outlined on page 18 in RC 3, 13-02.

The Board has asked for new information or solutions, I would like to present a guideline that I believe to benefit all users and keep everyone fishing to the extent practicable: no retention of female king salmon over 30 inches as a step down for the inriver fishery to be used before catch and release, this would also place females on the spawning beds.

If a closure occurs, sportfishing guides will be closed at the same time as ESSN fishermen, with new technology there is absolutely no reason for this not to take place.

Hindsight is 20/20, and uncertainties are an occurrence in everyday life, let us not be so quick to destroy the fabric in which this State was made. Commercial fishermen have existed for over a 100 years in the waters of Cook Inlet and it is a healthy viable way of life.

A Kenai River Chinook which is 75 cm (29.53) inches in length or longer is what the DIDSON sonar counts as a King at river mile 8.5



A 3-year old male Chinook has normally spent one winter in the ocean and is referred to as a “Jack”. The average length for this size King is 16.9 inches. A 4-year old Chinook has an average length of 25.6 inches.