

## Board of Fish Testimony,

Norman Van Vactor

Mr. Chairman, Board Members. Greetings and Good \_\_\_\_\_. My name is Norman Van Vactor and I'm here today speaking in behalf of Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation where I am the Chief Executive Officer. Dillingham Alaska is my home.

I'd like to start by expressing my gratitude to all of you that take on this significant and invaluable role as public servants by your service to this Board and to all our Statewide Fisheries

I'd like to speak specifically to proposals 45 thru 53 referred to as the Permit Stacking Proposals. BBEDC and our 17 Member coastal communities are unequivocally and unanimously opposed to any form of Permit Stacking. Yes we have residents that feel strongly to the contrary but we have a commitment to represent the majority and act in a way that we feel is not only in the region's best interests today and into the future.

One of the single largest issues we have in our region is the continued loss of ownership of permits by watershed residents. It is an issue that BBEDC puts at one its highest levels of priority and one into which BBEDC is investing millions. That said while we are winning a few skirmishes we are losing the war. We estimate that on average even with our programs we are still averaging a net loss of 7 to 8 permits a year from the region.

Permit stacking is an experiment with disastrous implications that only exacerbates this problem. Past failed experiments were fortunately allowed to sunset in 2012 speak for themselves. I would implore you to read the CFEC Report 12-02-N. The report quantitatively details the real effects of permit stacking as implemented during the years of 2010, 2011, and 2012. While this report specifically speaks to setnet permit stacking the parallels the drift fleet. This report gets into all the specifics of permit distribution, changes in permit price, and fishery landings broken out by locals, non-locals, and Non Residents. A major argument in 2009 by those in favor of permit stacking was that it would in fact favor watershed residents that could take advantage of it. The reality was that over the next 3 years just the opposite happened. The conclusion of CFEC's own substantive report is that Permit Stacking reallocated harvests amongst residency classes in Bristol Bay and significantly diminished the entry of new participants into the fishery.

I served as the Chairperson of the Governor's Fisheries transition team. Facilitating for 25 wonderful folks from across the state with varied backgrounds but a common passion, Fish was a real pleasure. Let me focus on the top two priorities that were developed. #1 was simple, Put FISH FIRST in any conversation. #2. Prioritize and Improve Fishery Access for Alaskans. Develop policies, strategies, and management to return fishery access opportunities to residents of Alaska Fishing Communities. These permit stacking proposal will do the opposite.

Quoting from an article by Tim Troll "It would be a sad comment on our as failure as Alaskans if 50 years from now historians look back on the Bristol Bay Commercial Fishery and conclude that the decisions made during statehood brought the fishery full circle. - Bristol Bay residents once again sitting on the shore while non-residents did all the fishing."

BBEDC and our partners are not in the business of saying No but when it comes to these permit stacking proposals before you it is a resounding NO.

Folks from across the state who are passionate about turning the tide on resource ownership by Alaskans have been quietly working on possible legislation that while not a magic arrow could help turn the tide. I would invite you the Board members to join us in a Fisheries Access Workshop to be held here in Anchorage on January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. I am hopeful that post this event the Legislative sponsors will make their determination when to move forward with possible legislation. None of these events happen on a timeline that thrills any of us but wait we must. When it comes to the Permit Loss Conversation it's the brightest bulb of hope I've seen in my 40 years of participating in the Fishery and a pursuit that gives me hope. Here's to hope and our doing the right thing. Thank you.

Draft as of 11AM