

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Boards Support Section

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My name is Kayla Miller. I am a 15 year old permit holder of a set net operation; located in Ekuk, Alaska. I have been fishing as a permit holder for five seasons. However my experience as a set netter has been life long. I am a fifth generation, commercial fisherman of our region.

My permit was gifted to me when I was eleven; in honor of the years I spent fishing with my late aunt. I am invested into this industry and its wellbeing. I am also invested in protecting my operation and ensuring that I have a competitive edge in the market. While I am young, I feel that it is necessary for me to become involved and learn the processes of our Board of Fish Meetings. Without this process, I would have no voice; or ability to prevent an inequality in representation or ensure the livelihood of our fisheries.

Because I am new to the Board of Fish process, I would like comment on one proposal in particular and share why it is important to me.

PROPOSAL 61 – 5 AAC 06.335

Set-gillnet operators would benefit from either version of this proposition being implemented. The proposal would not only allow a safer fisheries for set net operations, it would allow for the drift-gillnetters to be held

accountable; providing troopers/ Fish and Game the ability to enforce such a regulation. As you know, many set-gillnetters have a more limited amount of beach, water, i.e. fishing time, and length of gear to work with. Drifters have the whole bay to move around to be where they need/want to be. It's a whole other story for set-gillnetters, when we get hit, we get hit, when we miss, we miss... and that's that.

I have two high water sets a day, my gear goes dry in between and I am unable to fish the entire opening. I personally find it unfair and offensive, that the drift-gillnetters can (during my limited fishing time) fish in-between our gear and right off our buoys. Every year reports are made to law enforcement because drift boat operators are running over and tearing up our gear; sometimes purposely targeting specific set-gillnet operators. These incidents create hardship in the equipment that we have to replace, which can potentially end our season. Regardless of if our gear is damaged, the bottom line is that we lose out on pounds because they are being scooped out from right in front of our gear.

I thank you for your time and the opportunity for me to make recommendations on how our fishery is regulated.

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