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RC 090

Alaska Board of Fisheries  
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Dear Members:

I am writing in support of Proposals #45, 46, 48, and 50, to change regulations to allow one Bristol Bay setnet permit holder to own and operate two setnet permits. I am a setnetter in the Naknek district of Bristol Bay. I grew up in Naknek and have been fishing for 20 years; initially with my mom on our setnet sites, and then as crew on a drift gillnetter for a few years. When I began setnetting again in 2010, the only reason I was able to start up my family operation back up was because of the permit-stacking regulation that was in effect. Since the regulation went away for the 2013 season, I have faced many challenges with keeping my operation running. It is not economically feasible for a setnetter to run an operation and be profitable with just one permit.

Due to the regulation changes, in 2013 I had to transfer my permit to a fishing partner, who since has had to quit fishing due to family obligations. I once again am faced with the decision to either forego fishing this upcoming season, or transfer what used to be my second permit into someone else's name. These two permits are meant to stay in my family forever, and the second one will be taken over by my nephew once he's ready. Having a second permit in someone else's name is not only logistically complicated, but is incredibly unnerving because the second permit holder could choose to sell the permit at any time. There is no way to guarantee that a permit that has always been in my family will actually STAY in my family. My permit used to belong to my great grandmother and my second permit belonged to my father. It's very important to me to continue this way of life and to be able to share it with my future family.

As far as logistics go, permit-stacking will allow simplicity and increased profitability for setnet operations. Timing is the biggest logistical hurdle since my crew have either primary employment or school controlling when they can arrive to the Bay for fishing in June and when they have to leave in July. The potential to miss out on profitable fishing time due to being restricted to running one site with one permit instead of running two sites is high, and unfortunately has been frequent. In seasons where the salmon run late, like in 2015, having the second permit holder leave to return to their primary employment can be financially devastating for an operation. Permit stacking will allow setnetters to have more control over fishing their sites according to their timeline and their crew's availability, contributing to profitability and operation longevity.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals. I hope to continue to fish in Bristol Bay for another 30 years alongside my family, and permit stacking would make that a feasible reality.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Aspelund