

PROPOSAL 125 – 5 AAC 21.354. Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan. Remove mesh size restrictions on set and drift gillnet gear in the commercial pink salmon fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 21.354

(c) During a pink salmon commercial fishing period opened under this section, [A (1) SET GILLNET MAY NOT HAVE A MESH SIZE GREATER THAN FOUR AND THREE-QUARTERS INCHES; AND]

(2) [DRIFT GILLNET GEAR MAY NOT HAVE A MESH SIZE GREATER THAN FOUR AND THREE-QUARTERS INCHES, AND] Fishing with drift gillnet gear will only be opened in the areas defined in 5 AAC 21.200(b)(2)(B)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Pink Salmon Management Plan currently in place allows for a maximum potential of two extra days of fishing time, late in August, every other year. This plan was implemented to attempt to address underutilized surpluses of pink salmon that sometimes occur. In reality this is relatively rare. Since it was implemented the pink salmon plan has been used on only two occasions. Participation was very low. A large contributing factor to this is the current requirement on mesh size that prohibits people from fishing their normal gear. Due to the rare occurrences and relatively low value of the potential opening, most fishermen are unable to justify building special gear. We would like to see this mesh size requirement removed in order that the fishery may be better utilized when the opportunity occurs.

This proposal seeks to remove the language requiring smaller gear be used for pink salmon openers, allowing gillnetters to use their standard gear which is limited to 6” or less by regulation.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association (HQ-F16-078)
