

Please See RC

Hello Chairman Jensen and Members of the Board of Fisheries,

My Mike Hudson, I am the owner of 3 Rivers Fly and Tackle in Wasilla. I been in business for 23 years, and have lived in the Mat-Su Valley for over 30 years. As a long time resident and member of the business community I have had my thumb firmly on the pulse of what Mat-Su salmon fisheries have been doing for over 2 decades.

I'm here to ask the board for help. Help in sharing the responsibility of managing a dwindling salmon fishery. We've had more restrictions on the Mat-Su salmon fisheries in the past 5 years than in the previous decade. With low king and silver salmon returns to our rivers, sport anglers have virtually LOST the opportunity to harvest salmon in the Valley.

Owning and operating a fishing retail store, the lack of sport fish harvest opportunity has come at a great cost. For years my business operated out of two locations with 12 employees, 7 days a week, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the summer salmon season. Our annual gross revenue was in the neighborhood of 1 million dollars. That picture is much different today. I am currently down to 2 part-time employees, reduced hours, and closed one day of the week. The annual business revenue has dropped 75% from what it once was. This is a very clear picture of Economic Reality in the Mat-Su Valley when king and silver salmon returns go away, and emergency restrictions and closures eliminate sport fishing opportunity. Many other small Mat-Su Valley business even outside the fishery have been impacted, because of lack of tourism — including overnight stays in the valley, lower restaurant sales, rental vehicle sales, boat launch and campsite uses, etc. From my own thinking I figure 1 king salmon is worth about \$2500 to the Mat-Su Valley sport fishery. This takes may take in account airfare to alaska, nonresident license and king salmon stamp fees, lodging, rental vehicle use, tackle or charter services used, fish processing, meals and meals. Most successful nonresident anglers now have to hire a guide or charter service because of the extreme lack of opportunity to harvest king salmon fishing off the bank near the road system. Even with a guide many anglers fail to harvest a single king salmon during a whole season or trip to Alaska. After such an experience Many Nonresident do not return or go somewhere else in Alaska where sport fishing opportunities are better.

I am asking you to carefully consider the importance of sharing the conservation burden of Mat-Su king salmon and coho salmon resource on a more reasonable basis. Conservation of stocks the Board has designated primarily for sport and guide sport uses so in times of shortage restrictions should not START or be primarily limited to only the sport and guided sport uses.

It is my understanding that the Board has designated Northern king salmon and coho salmon stocks to be managed primarily for sport uses. Please do everything you can to see that occurs. Please allow reasonable king salmon and coho salmon harvest opportunities in the Mat-Su Valley for a maximum number of Alaskans and visitors.

Mike Hudson

