



## NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA

February 25, 2017

Fish & Game Board  
State of Alaska  
C street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Re: Native Village of Eklutna's comments concerning fishing proposals in our tribal jurisdiction.

Board members:

First thank you for allowing us to speak to provide guidance and input. Too, accept our sincerest admiration for we do not envy your position and responsibility. Thank you for your leadership.

Allow me to introduce myself: My name is Lee Stephan; 1st Chief & President of Eklutna, Native Village. I represent a membership of approximately 380 people. I also serve our village corporation as Vice-president, as board secretary and board member. For both these organizations I've been in a leadership roll since the early 1980s.

Dena traditional homelands exist well over 250 million acres, a good portion includes Cook Inlet areas and all rivers, one of the last continuing occupied villages "Eklutna," where we live is located at mile 26.5 of the Glenn Highway towards Palmer, Alaska, just 35 minutes from downtown Anchorage. Our village has been a Dena settlement over 800 years, we have a story about how the village got its name, that would place its existence when the dinosaurs were here. I'm son of Leo & Alberta Stephan, member of the Chysi Clan, of the Dena-Ina Athabaskan Nation.

It is my understanding traditional way to live is you never take more than you need, you never damage the environment leaving a mess so others can find you and you never disrespect nature for Mother Earth is watching. I say these things to bring a few traditional teachings to your deliberations cause their intents are still relevant today.

In Indian living lifestyle all had their place all had their job to do, all contributed so the village and/or Clan could prosper and continue. There was a common purpose a unified mission. This too is very relevant today.

Let me tell you a true story of how history has played out, that I have seen:

Im told in 1915 or thereabouts Dena had fish camps at Ship Creek, ( Dena called it Needle fish river), the owners of them camps came home to their spring dwellings one day and invaders to their land had made a tent city on their lands and burned their campsites down and said: "No one was living there." Being outnumbered the people moved their camps, some to Point Warnsoff and others onto Fire Island.

Time past and sometime after 1941 commercial set net as it began to be called was closed to Point Warnsoff fisherman, therefore the Clan had to again move and they relocated at Point Possession. In the early 1960s commercial set net was open seven days a week, if I remember right, there were 300,000 or less people in Alaska. In mid 1960s during the time I was a boy I remember filling our 24 foot open face dory 4 foot deep sides from bow to stern knee deep with salmon, barely floating to make it out to the canary scow to pitch the fish on and go back to the nets to do it again. During them years we never in our foggiest mind ever thought there might be an end to Salmon.

As time went on I believe in the late 1970s along came a thing called limited entry permits and all the stupid sold them to the highest bidder loosing their fish camps, sites and locations. Too, the number of days you could fish begin to be limited, to where it is now. I'm a northern district fisherman, or used to be, now there is no money in it.

Today, I subsistence using any means necessary subsisting is not reserved to one form, that's a fallacy. We can hook and line, we can set net, we could drift net, we can dip net, there is not one of you we are not. Any form we use to catch fish to eat, has one very significant and common truth, which is "If you do not catch only what you need, you will catch them all and there will be no more for anyone."

The highest priority for any fisher group, industry what have you should be to ensure the escapement is priority one. It's hard but places, groups, fishing types will have to close, take a hit, bend, sit out some seasons what have you to ensure the populations reboot so opportunity can come back.

We know fish and game now has the history, science and modern technology to know which fish is returning when to where. With that knowledge you will know when to close lower inlet commercial fishing when northern inlet fish are trying to make it to their rivers and so on.

Finally, today there are around 700,000 people in Alaska many of which are either personnel use or sports fisherman, because of limited entry, therefore it maybe time to begin taking a long hard look at resource allocation.

Again please error in favor of preservation, habitat protection and increasing the numbers of fish allowed to spawn and make more fish for all Thanks for listening and hearing me.

Lee Stephan  
President & 1st Chief.

by: 