

March 10, 2025

To: Chair Stutes and Members of the House Fisheries Committee
From: Sue Jeffrey and Dan Ogg
Re: HB 117

Dear Chair Stutes and Members,

About us:

1. Both full-time Alaska residents
2. Kodiak residents for more than half a century
3. Fished salmon at our setnet site in Uganik Bay since 1987; 38 salmon seasons in all so far
4. Each holds a Limited Entry Kodiak salmon setnet permit
5. Run a family-friendly fishing operation. First season, siblings were crew. Then our children and their friends; our nephews and their friends; our family friends' children; and now grandchildren along with able-bodied adventure-seekers from around the country and the world

We support HB 117 for the following reasons:

-- HB 117 enshrines the status quo since there is no need to fix what is not broken. Alaska's salmon setnet fishery is operating the same way it has since statehood and long before: permit holders and crew in small skiffs working together pulling salmon one by one from nets and then transferring them into chilled water in one large holding skiff anchored offshore on the fishing grounds until the fish processing tender arrives to off-load the catches.

-- Comingling fish caught with two permits fishing does not skew the information vital to managing Alaska's salmon runs in the midst of the season. The information about each setnet site's fish catch that is vital to the State of Alaska Department of Fish & Game -- total weight of the salmon harvested and date, time, and location where the fish were caught -- is accounted for and recorded on one permit, depending on which permit holder makes the delivery.

-- Requiring Alaska's setnet operations with more than one permit to separate fish caught by each net would dramatically increase setnet

operation costs. It would require the purchase of more equipment to operate a separate holding system – another holding skiff with insulated holds, anchors, ice-making machine, etc. Moreover, requiring each permit holder and crew to make each delivery would increase safety risks because it would put more crew on the fishing grounds to deliver regardless of challenging weather conditions.

-- Regulations governing Alaska's setnet fishery are easily monitored and enforced regarding time, area and gear fished. That is, the setnet fishery is a stationery fishery; its operations are easily visible from air or water for State of Alaska salmon fishery managers and State Wildlife Troopers. Indeed, regulations require each Limited Entry setnet permit net location to be clearly identified with a permanent sign staked onshore with the permit holder's name and Salmon Limited Entry Permit and number visible.

-- In conclusion, HB 117 clarifies in statute a traditional salmon fishery that has existed long before statehood. Passing HB 117 will enshrine Alaska's set gillnet fishery, which will strengthen the State's fishing industry for all Alaskans.

Respectfully,

Sue Jeffrey and Dan Ogg