

Dear Representative Stutes and members of the House Fisheries Committee,

My name is Tom Rollman and I am writing on behalf of myself and my family to voice our support for HB 117. Our family has been setnetting in Alaska since 1970, starting in the Northern District of Cook Inlet, and then also fishing the Nushagak District of Bristol Bay starting in 1984. My wife and I bought our own operation in 1992 and have since expanded by purchasing additional permits and sites as our family has grown. Setnetting has always been about family for the Rollmans. Kids in our family (have had permits in their names as early as age 10 and started helping and contributing earlier. This recent interpretation of how salmon are to be sorted and delivered would and will make it impossible for us to operate our operations legally. Young kids, expecting Moms, and aging parents can't be expected to make deliveries at the tender in the middle of the night or put in crazy hours like we do in the Bay, it's not realistic or safe. My brother Trevor and his family now run our Cook Inlet operation, where he also direct markets some of his catch. It is common practice there to use several open skiffs, pick multiple nets with each, then bring them to the beach where fish are sorted, iced and loaded onto a truck for delivery. One person typically makes the 1-2 hour drive off the beach (tide dependent) to the processor and delivers all the fish on one permit. Under this new interpretation, all the fish would have to be separated according to which nets they were caught out of, and all four permit holders would have to travel to Kenai for every delivery. Both totally unrealistic and unnecessary. Due to strong runs and excellent management, our Nushagak setnet fishery in Bristol Bay has turned into a 24 hour a day affair, much different from when we started 40 years ago. In order to keep all our nets in the water around the clock and to be able to take good care of them, we need the ability to pick nets and deliver fish from each other's nets within our family co-op. HB 117 allows for up to 10 permits within a co-op. While I have seen testimony saying this is too many, I disagree. This allows flexibility for families to grow if needed and does not infringe on smaller operations.

Like many have already testified, this family setnetting model has worked for generations in Alaska. We aren't asking for anything new, just to operate the way we always have, and HB117 makes this happen. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom Rollman
Eagle River, AK