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## RE: Committee recommendations at the Feb 25-26 meeting

1 message

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Jeff Berger <jeffb@eefoods.com>

Wed, Feb 19, 2020 at 1:39 PM

To: James Armstrong - NOAA Affiliate <james.armstrong@noaa.gov>, and others

James,

I too have been pretty busy and hoping for some progress at the BOF meeting that would indicate that we were going back to a more sound management of our resources here in Cook Inlet. Clearly that did not happen, which makes our work all that much more important.

At this point I do not have specific proposals regarding the FMP other than to reference the fact that we have an FMP that was drafted in 1979, that, if followed, would produce much better results than we are currently accomplishing and is much closer to being in compliance with MSA. None of the alternatives that we have before us solve our problem of the fact that we are not managing for MSY. If I cannot make recommendations that manage the resource throughout its entire range then I cannot make any proposals at all, because they do not solve anything.

What we need is for the NPFMC to direct the State of Alaska and the Board of Fish to manage our fisheries in Cook Inlet for Maximum Sustained Yield for the benefit of all users and then fairly allocate the resources between the user groups in a fair and equitable manner. The agenda at this point is to eliminate commercial fishing in Cook Inlet and put the maximum amount of fish into the river systems without regard to biology, MSY or what the economic consequences are to anyone. This board is politically driven and is not giving the protection to customary and traditional users that Magnuson and the Alaska Constitution are supposed to provide.

We cannot allow prevailing politics to destroy one industry in favor of another for political reasons, especially when if managed properly, there would be plentiful resource for all user groups to thrive. We as stewards of this public resource are mandated to manage for the benefit of all users and the general highest and best use for EVERYONE. It is inconceivable that we continue to manage this resource in a manner that diminishes the benefit to the public in favor of no one and waste a harvestable surplus that has tremendous economic value to the State of Alaska and the entire country.

When evaluated fairly and equitably and compared equally without bias, the value of this resource is equal when all economic spin-off benefits are accounted for, whether it is harvested commercially, or by private individuals. It makes no sense, therefore, to choose to manage for diminished returns overall and waste our most precious renewable resource.

The current strategy that we are operating under this year will put excessive escapements into the river systems without doing anything to solve the problems of killing the spawning biomass on the spawning grounds under the guise of coho fishing and catch and release of king salmon on light coho tackle. These fish are caught and released but the mortality studies are wrong. These fish, played out, often times, multiple times, on the spawning beds, cannot recover no matter how many are put into the river for escapement. They have not "escaped" they have only made it to a place where they can be harassed until they are killed. In any case they will never spawn effectively after this treatment.

The NPFMC is our last chance to correct this atrocious wrongdoing that has been systematically occurring over these past 25 years or more.

I hope we can get to drafting an FMP that will lead to the recovery of our salmon returns to the Kenai River and Upper Cook Inlet. When this happens we have an FMP that just needs to be modernized.

Jeff

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*Jeff F. Berger*

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