

RC092

1-13-18

Dear Chairman Jensen and Alaska Board of Fisheries members,

My name is Chelsea Berg. I am a 4th generation commercial fisherman, 3rd generation female commercial fisherman. I was born in Wrangell, Alaska and have been raised in Petersburg, Alaska where I grew up commercial fishing. I grew up doing multiple fisheries with my family but the one I took a special interest in was SE gillnetting. I started working with my mom full time as her deckhand early middle school. I then leased my first gillnet permit at 18 and bought a permit at 19. I leased and ran the F/V Ginny Sue gillnetting from 2007-2014. In 2014 my now husband and I purchased the F/V Eric where we converted an older troller to a nice 38' gillnet boat. Every year, since being 18, I have started my gillnet season before many other boats by going into Anita Bay and searching for the bay's king salmon. Being young and buying into the fishing industry is much more expensive and challenging now days then it was for our parents or grandparents. The cost of boats and permits have been exponentially increasing, so having the option to be able to start the season early, and fish the season later, has been extremely valuable for me in regards to helping bring in more income to help offset my outstanding bills. The Anita Bay king salmon run has become an essential asset to our direct marketing business as there is a high demand for wild caught Alaskan king salmon. With the decline in the natural king salmon runs, Anita Bay is really the last spot we have to target and supply our business with king salmon. This year, the wild coho run was also very poor for us. We offset the lack of coho in district 6 & 8 by going into Anita Bay once the regular opener closed. The loss of Anita Bay would be detrimental to our direct marketing business, which we need, to be successful in our fishing career.

Not only does Anita Bay provide us with a necessary financial boost, it has many personal attributes for me. It is my favorite place to fish. I love the bay. The scenery, the calmness, fishing around the same group of boats that I have started with 11 years ago, or even tying up to the docks to take walks or have a fire on the beach if you want. Not only is the bay beautiful, but for the last 11 years, between the 24 hour gillnet openings, I take the time to go into Wrangell to visit my grandpa and take him out to lunch, coffee and cruises. It would truly break my heart to lose this beautiful place to fish and explore.

I am a member of USAG and support the proposals they submitted (141, 154, 156, 157, 160, 169 and 170). I also support the on-comments USAG submitted about other proposals.

Thank you for your time and please consider the adverse effects these propositions could have on fisherman like myself,

Chelsea Berg

F/V Eric