

RC 5

**Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association**

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Date: March 7, 2020

To: Alaska Board of Fisheries

From: David Harsila, President

**Re: Support for Proposal 279**

The Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association (BBFA) supports Proposal 279. However, we have some questions. Proposal 279 would allow two Bristol Bay drift gillnet permit holders to fish concurrently from the same vessel and jointly operate up to 200 fathoms of drift gillnet gear in Bristol Bay when the Naknek River Special Harvest Area (NRSHA) is in effect.

Currently, the use of the dual permit regulation that allows two hundred fathoms of gear has become commonly used and is integral to the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. The regulation has caused about a 40% overall reduction of gear in the waters of Bristol Bay since the peak use of permits with 150 fathoms of gear in the past.

One question we have about proposal 279 is about when the NRSHA is in effect to conserve Kvichak River sockeye salmon. Dual permit vessels using two hundred fathoms of gear could potentially transfer to the Ugashik District where known interceptions of Kvichak sockeye occur. Could the use of two hundred fathoms of gear by that fleet be counterproductive to the conservation of Kvichak sockeye salmon, which is the primary reason for using the NRSHA? If using two hundred fathoms of gear in the Ugashik district is determined to increase those interceptions of Kvichak sockeye salmon, Proposal 279 might be limited to the Nushagak fishing district only.

Considering increased run sizes, over escapements and the fact that many local Nushagak fishermen are disallowed from using their dual permit operations when the NRSHA is used, BBFA supports proposal 279 for the Nushagak fishing district only.