

RC for Proposal 56, by Matt Marinkovich, proposal author.
December 1, 2022

“Test-your-boat” becomes **“Transfer to Neutral” up until Emergency Order** proposal.

This amendment will solve every aspect of the “safety first” intentions of Proposal 56, and will create a much safer fleet in Bristol Bay.

While the intent of proposal 56 remains unchanged, I realize my approach to this problem was all wrong. After conversations with BOF members, Enforcement, and ADF&G biologists, I hereby amend my proposal to the following:

Layman-term regulation language: When a fisherman files their intent to transfer with ADF&G, so long as the transfer was initiated prior to the beginning of the Emergency Order period of the district from where the transfer was initiated, it shall be illegal for them to fish in any district for 48-hours, but at the time of transfer they do not have to state to which district they are transferring. The transfer effectively de-registers them from any district, effective after the 48-hour waiting period.

Author’s Commentary:

This proposal will allow (as always) fishermen to drop their card in any district and go fishing for as long as they wish. If they choose to transfer out of said district before the Emergency Order begins in that district, they do not have to declare to which district they are transferring, but they do have to wait 48-hours before they can fish again. After this 48-hour waiting period they can hold their registration card “in their hand” just as if they had never “dropped their card” in the first place.

The difference is that the fisherman now has real-time fishing experience for them and their crew, and have field-tested their vessel. Now captain, vessel, and crew are one-thousand times better off than from where they would have been if they had not engaged in this early-season “shakedown” fishing. Since there is a mandatory 48-hour waiting period after this early-season fishing, there is plenty of time to address the “punch list” of deficiencies found while fishing.

The deadline for the “Transfer to Neutral” option is tied to the Emergency Order start date for each district because it is by those dates the area run managers are concerned with how many boats are registered in the district and how that may affect the length of the Emergency Order opening being considered in that district.

Around 10 years ago, during the three-year trial of “open registration through June 25,” fishermen could fish in, and freely transfer between, any district they wished until 9:00 a.m. June 25, at which time the Emergency Order period began for all districts. That proved to be chaotic for run managers, but was very much appreciated by fishermen because they could “shakedown” their boats, “season” their crews, all while still “holding their blue card” until June 25.

This amendment to Proposal 56 eliminates that early-season chaos, yet still allows fishermen to “hold their blue card” by “decision time” as to where they may want to fish. This is very significant; I’ve seen fishermen driving around during rather good fishing, hesitant to drop their card, because they think there might be more fish in another district. It is for this same reason

that many fishermen choose to forgo an early-season “shakedown” trip in order to hold their card up until this decision time, which is usually decided around June 25 (It could be earlier or later—just when the fisherman makes up their mind).

It would be a very solid estimate that most fishermen (who are “on the fence” about where they’ll start fishing) will wait until June 25 or later to drop their card. The expiration of the “Transfer to Neutral” option coinciding with the beginning of the Emergency Order fits perfectly with the needs of the fleet who prioritize having their blue card “in their hand” on June 25.