

To the Members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

My name is Alvin Pedersen. I am an elder who has lived my entire life in the Chignik Lagoon watershed, directly on the beach. I submit this letter for the public record regarding the continued decline of Chinook (King) salmon returns to the Chignik system.

I have observed these runs for decades. I have fished them for subsistence, fed my family from them, and watched the cycles of abundance and scarcity. What we are experiencing now is not a normal cycle. It is a long-term decline.

Last summer, for the first time in my life, subsistence users in Chignik Lagoon were not allowed to harvest King salmon throughout the entire season. I never imagined I would see that day. The inability to harvest even a single King for subsistence represents more than a regulatory restriction. It represents the loss of food security, cultural continuity, and generational teaching.

I also want to address the role of interception fisheries in Area M. These are mixed-stock fisheries that harvest salmon bound for multiple river systems, including the Chignik watershed. While sockeye escapement improved last season under restricted openings and fishing windows, King salmon escapement remained weak. That contrast is important.

It shows that:

- When sockeye are given adequate protection, they respond.
- When King salmon are given similar measures, the outcome has not been sufficient.

This suggests that Chinook require stronger, earlier, and more targeted protection, particularly in mixed-stock intercept areas.

I respectfully urge the Board to consider:

1. Increased and better-timed fishing windows in Area M to allow passage of Chinook stocks.
2. Stronger conservation measures specifically designed for King salmon, not just sockeye management.
3. Prioritization of subsistence needs when stocks are weak.
4. Evaluation of cumulative impacts from ocean conditions, bycatch, and intercept harvest.

From the perspective of someone who has watched these fish return to this

watershed for a lifetime, I can say clearly that the runs today are not what they once were. Without decisive action, future generations may only know King salmon in Chignik as a memory.

I ask the Board to take meaningful steps to ensure that Chinook salmon continue to return to the Chignik system in harvestable numbers for subsistence users.

Thank you for your consideration and for placing this testimony into the official record.

Respectfully,

Alvin Pedersen
Chignik Lagoon, Alaska