

**Testimony of Glen Gardner Jr.**  
Sand Point, Alaska

My name is Glen Gardner Jr. I am a lifelong resident and fisherman of Sand Point, Alaska, and a proud member of the Qagan Tayagungin Tribe. Our people have lived with and depended on these salmon runs for more than ten thousand years. Salmon are not just a resource to us — they are our history, our culture, and the lifeblood of our community.

The Area M salmon fishery is a fundamental component of our economy. It provides significant employment, generates ex-vessel and first wholesale revenue, and forms an essential tax base for communities within the Aleutians East Borough. When Area M is strong, our communities are strong. When it is disrupted, the impacts are immediate and severe.

Salmon fisheries across Alaska hold enormous economic, social, and cultural importance. They require balanced management practices that uphold the sustained yield principle established in the Alaska Constitution — ensuring long-term viability of the resource for common use. That principle is not optional. It is a constitutional mandate.

At the same time, the Alaska seafood industry is facing significant disruption. Global market pressures, declining value, and consolidation in the shoreside processing sector are harming harvesters and fishing-dependent communities throughout our region. We are seeing outmigration of limited entry permits and disproportionate impacts to our domestic small-boat fleet. Further restrictions on Area M would compound this hardship.

We recognize that incidental bycatch and mixed-stock harvest challenges occur across multiple fisheries statewide. That reality underscores the need for innovative, adaptive, and science-based management — not exclusionary actions that single out one region. Assessments of the mixed-stock Area M fishery indicate that the harvest rate on AYK stocks is 5.5%. That data reinforces the importance of continued mitigation, monitoring, and adaptive management — not elimination.

Rapidly changing environmental, oceanic, freshwater, and climatic conditions are affecting salmon production across the Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, and the North Pacific. These broader forces increase uncertainty and complicate real-time management decisions. It is critical that we acknowledge the full ecosystem picture.

Disruptions to the Area M salmon fishery would result in substantial and immediate economic harm — job losses, reduced municipal revenues, and diminished economic activity that cannot simply be replaced. Our region has experienced past management decisions that were not sufficiently grounded in comprehensive scientific analysis and that caused lasting economic harm without measurable conservation benefit. We cannot afford to repeat that history.

Area M fishermen, including the Area M Seiners Association, continue to work collaboratively with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and other stakeholders to implement worldly management measures that reduce interception risk when AYK-origin salmon are present. We

support continued investment in research, monitoring, and improved in-season assessment to better manage Alaska's interconnected fisheries.

This Board of Fisheries is appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Legislature, and supported by the scientific expertise of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. With access to the best available biological and economic science, technological innovation, and public input, you are positioned to make sound decisions.

I stand with fishing-dependent communities across Alaska in support of solutions that balance ecological sustainability with economic stability, food security, and the long-term social well-being of our people.

Area M is not just a fishery. It is our home. It is our heritage. And it deserves balanced, science-based management — not actions that would devastate the communities who have stewarded these resources for generations.

Thank you.