

Warren Wilson

Fish board Testimony 2026

Madam Chair members of the board. For the record My name is Warren Wilson I am from King Cove Alaska born and raised lived there all my life. Been fishing out of my home town for 40 years as a seiner, drift gillnetter and set netter. my son and daughter spent their summers fishing on our 40 ft. Drift gillnetter.

Currently I am the Mayor of King Cove. As you may have heard that our processor Peter Pan Seafoods closed their doors in 2023. We are now in our third year without the city's main source of income, which is a 2% raw fish tax that on average brought \$1.0 million in revenue and the state raw fish tax, average of \$ 400,000 per year. Salmon provided about 25% of those totals.

Due to time and area restrictions in the last 2 decades on area M salmon June fishery and further restrictions in July had a detrimental effect on the local fishermen and our processor Peter Pan Seafoods. Peter Pan Seafoods started the cannery in 1911, a long history of canning salmon up until 2023. The reason for the processors closing their doors I'm sure had many factors. I know for a fact that one of the main reasons was the restrictions placed on the June and July fisheries back in the late 80s and 90s. June and July were always the make it or break it for all our fishers, drift, seine and set netters. Targeting sockeye salmon. That was when PPSF diversified and started doing white fish during the Pollak A and B season. That gave them the ability to process year around with canned salmon, frozen salmon. cod, Pollak, sable fish, halibut, king crab, tanner crab, opilio crab, Dungeness crab now that's one heck of a buffet. But now it's gone.

With our main source of revenue source gone the services we provide for our community which is our public safety police and fire depts, electrical utility, we are blessed with 2 hydro units which provide 95% of electricity to our community and water, sewer, solid waste and city of King Coves #2 diesel, and gasoline distribution facility, and our boat harbor dept. with 2 boat harbors that we are having a hard time filling with vessels because of processor being shuttered. We have cut personnel and implemented a wage freeze and have about 2 more years of reserve cash to sustain our current level of services for our community.

We are also seeing a decrease in population after the PPSF plant shuttered. King Cove's population in 2026 DCEED count is 383. In 2023 our population was 886. This is a decrease of 480 people approximately 400 people from the PPSF plant and 60 to 80 residents moving out from the community. It's sad to see our community losing its residents do the fact that our fish plant is shuttered with all our fisheries struggling to survive with all the restrictions

put in place by this board in place. the proposals to further restrict our June, July and august fisheries. We have seen in the past the same proposals repeatedly presented to this board. Have to remember our state has the best wild fish on the world stage. Highly sought after. It's getting harder to make it salmon fishing out of my hometown. I also own a welding service in King Cove which is hit with a 85% decrease in business since the plant shuttered.

King Cove is now faced with our only freight line out of Seattle Wa. Stopping into our port once a month. That really hurts with no dry goods, fresh produce and other freight. The airport doesn't have the length and is not paved so the freight carrier out of anchorage will not land their planes on King Cove Airport.

I the mayor and my city administrators are working on finding a potential seafood processor to buy the fish processing facility from the current owner. We are also working on the one lane road to the cold bay 10,000 ft. runway which will maybe help in getting a potential seafood processor buy our shuttered fish plant.

State Resources are the backbone of our great State. Sound Salmon management by adf&g and help from the our Area M fishermen to reduce chum harvest is a proven tool to curb the harvest of chum salmon. Area M also has a lot of chum salmon streams all the way from Kupreanoff pt. to Port Heiden.

King Cove, Sand Point, and False Pass Have shared the burden four times over to help with the AYK chum Decline. Not to mention the Massive Asian and Russian trawl fleet next to the boarder outside of the Norton sound AYK areas those migrating chum are also passing through those water ways.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify on behalf of my community and participate in the board process.