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Public Testimony
Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues Board of Fisheries Meeting, 2026

I. History and Efficacy of the Conservation Corridor – Pete Probasco

For decades, commercial fisheries management of Kenai River sockeye has impacted Upper Cook Inlet with little regard for appropriate harvest levels of Northern District fish stocks and degraded them to alarming levels resulting in poor escapements and local fishing opportunities being been restricted or eliminated.

1) Conservation Corridor was established in 2011, Northern District salmon were almost universally in decline and the benefits were realized immediately.

- Limits on drift gillnet fishing in the central inlet (Area 2) by restricting commercial fishing to the Expanded Harvest Corridor provides a conservation corridor (the remainder of Drift Are a 2) for north-bound salmon stocks.
- The corridor has proven particularly effective in passing Susitna sockeye which now consistently meet escapement goals.
- Fishing in the Expanded corridor and maintaining the Conservation Corridor in the remainder of Drift Are 2 significantly reduced the catch contribution of northern inlet sockeye relative to non-corridor openers in 2025 based on Genetic Stock Identification (GSI).
- Expanded Kenai and Kasilof sections effectively harvest large numbers of sockeye contrary to objections when first adopted.
- Expanded sections accounted for almost 60% of the 3.5 million sockeyes harvested by the drift fishery in 2025 from the largest UCI sockeye run on record.
- The greatest success in conserving Northern bound salmon stocks has been establishing and maintaining the Conservation Corridor. The Corridor has successfully pulsed more fish through the commercial drift fleet and into northern waters, allowing Northern salmon to return to their natal streams to spawn.

1. From 2014-2019, drifters harvested an average delivery of 53 coho per delivery in the Conservation Corridor, versus 10 coho per delivery in the Harvest Zone, during the critical period from July 16-31.
2. Restricting the drift gillnet fishery to terminal harvest zones will reduce Northern District coho bycatch **fivefold** on average.
3. Susitna sockeye was designated a stock of concern in 2008; 12 years later, in 2020, as a result of regulatory changes enforcing the Conservation Corridor, they were delisted.
4. Coho returns in Northern Cook Inlet streams reached record lows in 2011- 2012. Regulations supporting the Conservation Corridor showed immediate improvements. Commercial Drift gillnet catch data demonstrates the impacts commercial fishing locations can have on northern-bound coho.
5. Expanded Kenai and Kasilof sections focus harvest in more terminal areas where Kenai and Kasilof sockeye are abundant. These sections significantly reduced the catch contribution of northern inlet sockeye relative to non-corridor openers in 2025 based on Genetic Stock Identification (GSI).

6. The Drift Gillnet fleet can be effective in the terminal harvest areas
7. Expanded Kenai and Kasilof sections effectively harvest large numbers of sockeye contrary to objections when first adopted. Expanded sections accounted for almost 60% of the 3.5 million sockeye salmon harvested by the drift fishery in 2025 from the largest UCI sockeye run on record.
8. Expanded terminal harvest areas was first utilized in 2011, and in the recent 5 years has averaged 1.7 million sockeyes harvested by the drift gillnet fishery harvest in the terminal areas has averaged 391,062 sockeye per year which is 33% of the drift total.

- Terminal area harvest of sockeye was a record ex-vessel value in 2025 exceeded $30 million