

Chairman

Alaska Board of Fish

Southeast and Yakutat Finfish

Feb. 23rd, 2015

Dennis Thacker

Box 149

Willow, Alaska 99688

Ref: proposal 204 and 205. Ban the use of aircraft and drones. Proposal 126 open pounding

I oppose proposal 204 and 205. I support Proposal 126

My name is Dennis Thacker and I am a fish spotter for salmon and herring in Southeast. I started spotting fish in 1983 for PWS herring. Since then I've spotted herring in SE, PWS, CI, Kodiak, Chignik, Togiak, and Norton Sound. I've spotted salmon in PWS and SE. Started flying for Sitka herring in 1988 and SE salmon in 1992. In 2005 I became a partner with a group of fishermen in the purchase and operation of a salmon processor, the Ocean Fresh. I am a co-manager and the ship is currently on contract with Trident in Chignik.

I have owned a hangar in Petersburg, done my maintenance in southeast, stayed in hotels, rented cars and generally helped support jobs and economy in SE.

This proposal's justification for banning the use of spotter planes because the planes fly over and look in his net and bring their boats to him. In looking at the regulation for the other areas where spotting is prohibited I don't see where this would be illegal as the pilot would not be directing his boats and they're not taking the fish as they have already been taken.

I'm not saying this doesn't happen but I will say when pilots do that they don't last long in the fishery as the fishermen are paying them to find fish and get away from the fleet. If the fisherman wants to get in line with other boats he doesn't need a plane to help him.

Some good things that spotter planes do:

- 1-----Spread the boats out. I have fishermen that will catch less fish to be alone
- 2-----Help department evaluate what is happening with the fishery.
I fly every day, but the department schedule may prevent them from surveying daily and the info I have can be of help.
- 3-----Help NSRAA/Dipac with volume of fish traveling into districts or building

In the terminal harvest area.

4-----I have helped get word to fishermen who were confused and fishing in closed Areas.

5-----By having planes flying, if a fisherman is inclined to fudge the line, they may Think twice. I have a video camera ready to run and I know some of The other pilots do as well.

6-----There is always a safety issue. If someone get hurt on a boat, we are already There to help. Sometimes it is possible to get a crewman to town before the Coast Guard even launches.

Proposal 126:

I support the idea of open pounding and that the fishermen can make a business decision whether to do Sac Roe or ROK. I worked with pounders in PWS and didn't care for the way the fish were handled.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dennis Thacker

