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February 11, 2009

Cook Inlet Salmon Task Force
 Chair Representative Craig Johnson
 State Capitol Building, Rm. 126
 Juneau, AK 99811

Chairman Johnson:

The Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA) members have been a voice in the Cook Inlet Community for over fifty years. Primarily a representation group for setnet fishing families, we give a voice to members from the southern reach of Kachemak Bay to the northern realm of the Susitna Flats, Fire Island, Kalgin Island, the Central District west side and the eastern shores of Ninilchik, Coho, Kasilof, Kalifornsky, Salamantof, East Forelands and others.

Of the approximately seven hundred twenty-five Cook Inlet Limited Entry permit holders, KPFA members represent the majority, eighty-six percent who are Alaskan residents.

We want to applaud the Committee on undertaking such a voluminous undertaking. Many of us in the fisheries business have taken years of participation to understand the concepts of complex biological terms. It is our desire to see that every Committee Member fully comprehend the difficult job that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) addresses in taking on the biological management and allowing opportunity for all south-central resource utilization.

Our organizations goal: "*Ensuring the Sustainability of Our Fishery Resources*"

What this means is that we subscribe to the principles of *Maximum Sustained Yield* and to the slight variation, *Optimum Sustained Yield*. We do not agree with management that is determined by politics or social pressures. We believe that a healthy resource that returns *High Sustained Yields* is the only positive way to manage surplus resources to achieve the most equitable distribution. Unhealthy production caused by man made or natural

interventions must be identified and rectified, mitigated to bring balance and substantial returns for a given salmon species.

The Legislature and the Administration should make the commitment to fund resource protection and development. Management can only fulfill expectations of the users if it has healthy and predictable returns.

Cook Inlet setnetters have harvested in her waters for over one hundred years. Competition with traps and other efficient users, over the years, is nothing new for our setnet fishery. We consider these to be just new and expanding fisheries. Our fishermen have had to reduce their opportunity to harvest by time, area and gear in order to accommodate these new fisheries. We understand the need to share the resource, however we do not agree with being excluded from the harvest opportunities: we believe that resource users need to work within reasonable expectations, predictable fisheries based on sound science.

The ADF&G is inadequately funded, it is impossible in the present situation to give the public maximum utilization of her resources because we have limited knowledge and do not have the proper management plans in place to increase production. Intensive use by a growing population requires an equally intensive long range plan that all users can expect will give them access to their chosen resource.

The Department has chosen its management of our entire State on the principles of *Sustained Escapement Goals*. This is a far departure from establishing *Biological or Maximum Sustained Yields*. This is a cost saving measure by the Department and does nothing to accomplish *High Sustained Yields*. There is no incentive within the Sports Division and very little in the Commercial Division to improve on the numbers of returning fish stocks. This is the new definition of *Sustained Yield* within our State Fish and Game Managers, simply it is apathy, a lack of incentive and direction to accomplish the best that can be.

KPFA is looking towards the future. We see the need to expand our knowledge base. We also see the need to increase production to better serve the needs of our residents. Picking the bones from what is left of our resource pleases no one.

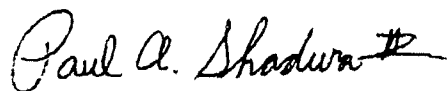
If it is necessary for commercial fishermen to manage themselves, they are aware, they have the tools to accomplish this. We believe in real not perceived conservation concerns. State law gives the fishermen the guidance to protect their interests as a separate and significant user group. It is not by any means appropriate to attempt a force out. The result will not change the production problems that currently are the result of inadequate evaluation and protection of the resource.

Forcing commercial fishermen to fish in terminal areas does not improve the success in harvesting, catching or increase production. In-river users will compete with a higher concentration of in-river users. Expectations will be high, actual harvest and catches will be low. We believe that there should be a balance.

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In the end, the Task Force should consider that commercial fishermen want not to just catch a fish today; we want to harvest it tomorrow and next year, and the next decade. We have a strong interest in perpetuating strong healthy runs for our families and for your families. We are for the most part all Alaskans, and we all strive for what is best for the future of our State!

With all respects,



Paul A. Shadura II
Executive Director

cc Representative Johansen, Representative Neuman, Representative Stoltze, Representative Doogan, Senator Wagoner, Senator Huggins, Senator McGuire, Senator Wielechowski, Fishery Advisor Cora Crome, Representative Chenault, Representative Seaton, Senator Stevens, Representative Austerman, Representative Olson