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Stebbins IRA

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January 30, 2009

Mr. Eric Olson, Chair
 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC)
 605 W. 4th Ave. Suite 306
 Anchorage, Ak. 99501-2252

Mr. Doug Mecum, Regional Administrator
 NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Region
 P.O. Box 21668
 Juneau, Ak. 99802-1668

Re: Chinook By-Catch

Dear Mr. Olson and Mr. Mecum,

I was not able to come in person and I hope that you will excuse me and accept this testimony.

It is good to know that you both have Alaska Addressess. First, I am going to provide some information of Stebbins Community. We have a State incorporated "City of Stebbins" 1968 and Stebbins IRA (Indian Reorganization Act of 1934) Stebbins IRA established with this Act in 1939 and have served Stebbins since then. Stebbins IRA is a political, social and economic entity to serve it's 814 members. Stebbins is cash poor and a natural resource rich area. Stebbins membership (related to Stebbins IRA) and Residents, same people, are related to City of Stebbins, natives and non-natives. Prior to the passage of the IRA Constitution and bylaws and long before the inception of the City, the village was governed by an active Traditional Tribal Council.

Stebbins is a Yupik Eskimo village located northwest coast of St. Michael Island (notable due to Nome Gold Rush and the U.S. Army Post which were put there to enforce law @ Nome. The isolated community is 120 miles southeast of Nome, nearest regional hub and 870 miles northwest of Anchorage (the largest commercial center for goods and services). Stebbins is accessible and serviced by Air Transportation year round.

Stebbins is derived from Stevens. Elders could not sound out the "V" and pronounced Stebbins. Stebbins was first recorded in 1898 by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic survey.

In 1950, Stebbins was described as a village of Yupik Eskimos who make their livelihood by hunting, fishing, and herding reindeer. The economy of Stebbins remains primarily herring fishing (now inactive, due to market conditions. Food fish of the Chinook and other salmon species

All cash positions are in local government (IRA and City, village corporation established by Alaska Native claims Settlement Act of 1971. School, and two local grocery stores. Seasonal jobs are firefighting, local projects, if any.

Stebbins receives State Services of Food Stamps, 64 or 13% get food stamps and USDA Food Bank Service, administered by Stebbins IRA. 34 with State and 20 with USDA Program, in 2008.

83 or 10% also received hearing assistance in 2008. Data is derived from the 2 fee agents, IRA Tribal Coordinator and the local fuel company.

Since inception of commercial salmon in the Norton Sound district, Stebbins is excluded from commercial fishing of salmon, the justification is that we intercept would intercept salmon.

The by catch of Chinook salmon has a negative impact to the coastal areas of Bristol Bay, Yukon - Kuskokwim coastal and rivers, Norton Sound and the Country of Canada, that depend on the resource for subsistence and commercial. I am a commercial salmon permit holder, issued by the State and voluntarily and due to cost prohibitiveness, late openings, shorter fishing time have not fished in 2007 and 2008 and will not participate in 2009 in the pursuit of Chinook salmon fishing, but will concentrate on subsistence fishing. The 130 to 150,000 (my understanding) by catch of Chinook Salmon in 2007 is very alarming and the by catch of Chinook and chum are documented from 2003 to 2007, 2008, its no wonder that Chinook salmon numbers are coming down, to those coastal areas.

Consistent with Association of village Council Presidents, that encompasses the 56 Yukon / Kuskowim Delta, villages. Native Village of Stebbins (Stebbins and St. Michael are within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS) favors a 30,000 cap of Chinook by catch. Although the Pollock fishery is justified in commercially feeding the masses, the harvesters in the Bering Sea have and are contributing drastically to the decline of the Chinook and chum salmon. Chinook / King Salmon feed on the Pollock and the by catch cannot be avoided and will continue, despite efforts to lower the by catch. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.

Fred
Fred Pete, Sr.
President