

United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
PO Box 21668
Juneau, AK. 99802-1668

Robert D. Mecum,

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Toghoththele Corporation which represents the Native people of the Nenana, Alaska area. Nenana is located on the Tanana River which connects to the Yukon and subsequently to the Bering Sea. In many ways the Tanana River represents the very lifeline of the people of Nenana. It is a natural transportation corridor for us; it is a source of sustenance, and an integral part of our lifestyle here in the Nenana region. We have serious concerns about the non-Chinook by catch in the Bering Sea. We have noticed a steep decline in the number of salmon returning to our area. As you know Chum salmon make up the majority of the non-Chinook by catch and we are very dependent on Chum salmon as a food source for ourselves and our dog teams. So in many ways our lifestyle is dependent upon the return of the salmon. It is the request of the Toghoththele Corporation that you put measures in place to eliminate or at least minimize the non-Chinook by catch in the Bering Sea. It is our suggestion that you put limits on commercial fisherman in the form of total poundage caught, including by-catch. Then they have to quit fishing when they reach the total, whether they caught the kind of fish they were targeting or by-catch fish, when they reach a certain predetermined poundage quota, they are done fishing. This is a much better option than having them throw the Chum Salmon back into the sea, dead. They bring whatever they caught to shore and sell it and whatever escapes will return to their spawning grounds, regardless of species. We support closure of the fishery after a cap has been reached.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Jim Sackett, CEO
Toghoththele Corporation
PO Box 249
Nenana, AK. 99760