

Testimony of Peter Andrew Jr.
Bristol Bay Native Corporation Board Member

Statement for the Record

Before the U.S. Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science and Transportation
Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard
Hearing on “Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
Conservation and Management Act: Oversight of Fisheries
Management Successes and Challenges”

September 12, 2017

Dear Members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for inviting me to testify today. My name is Pete Andrew Jr. and I live in Dillingham, Alaska. I am on the Bristol Bay Native Corporation's (BBNC) Board of Directors, a commercial fisherman, and a life-long subsistence user from Bristol Bay in southwest Alaska. I have served as a BBNC Director since 2006, as chair of the Finance Committee and I am a member of the Legal & Policy, Government Services Operations, Executive, and Nominating Committees. I am president of the Nushagak Cooperative (electric utility) board of directors and serve on the American Seafood Community Advisory Board and have served on the Board of Directors of the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association.

I am a life-long commercial and subsistence fisherman in Bristol Bay. I first commercial fished in 1971 when I was ten years old, working with my older brother on his 32' Bristol Bay gillnetter named the *Cuddy Shark*. In 1977 my father gave me my own permit, nets and a 22' skiff to start my own operations. Since then I have owned several boats, and currently captain the *Lucky Bear*, with crew from Togiak and New Stuyahok..

I have experienced first-hand the immense economic and cultural value of the Bristol Bay fishery. As you can see in the pictures attached to my testimony, fishing is essential to our lives in Bristol Bay. It is something I am passing to my children and want to pass to my grandchildren (*see attch. A*). Just as I did, my children's livelihoods are based on commercial fishing in Bristol Bay.

My family is similar to many families in Bristol Bay. We have kept our strong ties to the Bay and its incredible wild salmon. We take increasing advantage of educational and other opportunities, available to us because of the strong foundation provided to Bristol Bay by its incredible 130 year old sustainable commercial salmon fishery. This fishery will produce jobs and sustain our communities for generations so long as it is properly managed and, when necessary, protected.

This week, we are celebrating this invaluable resource here in DC, with an Alaska Wild Salmon Day featuring the bounty of our region. Chairman Sullivan, we know you appreciate the uniqueness of Bristol Bay and we're pleased to give you BBNC's "Fish First" award this year for your work on salmon issues. BBNC and the people of Bristol Bay put fish first, and we are proud to have a delegation that knows and understands that philosophy too.

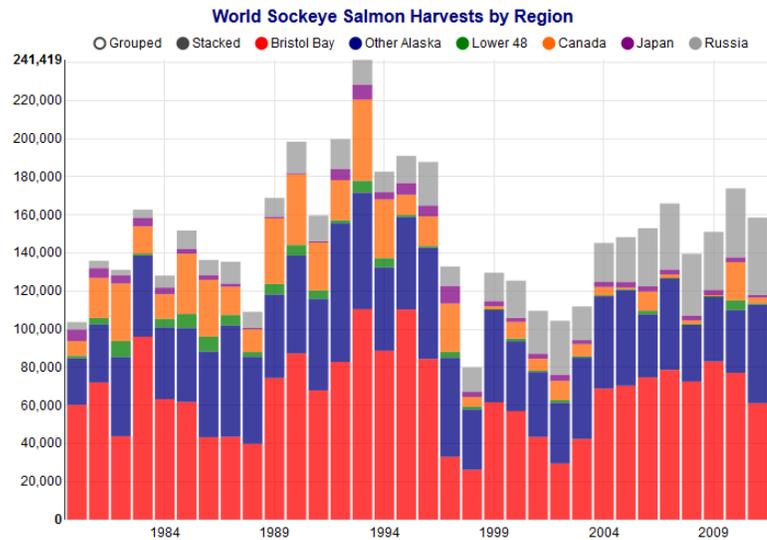
I'm here to talk about the direct effects of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) management approach on salmon fishing. Pursuant to the MSA, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council developed a fishery management plan for salmon. With respect to Bristol Bay and many of Alaska's other salmon fisheries, the Council defers to the State of Alaska for direct management of the fishery, thus supporting Alaska's escapement-based management approach. This is a good example of federal-state cooperation in the management of a critical ocean resource. And the example has extraordinary results as seen in the strength of Bristol Bay's salmon run and ability to meet management goals year after year.

My testimony focuses on the importance of the Bristol Bay economic engine – the pristine salmon fishery – and the need to protect this immensely important economic and cultural resource. First, I describe the world-class Bristol Bay fishery; second, I speak to the strong economy that relies on the fishery; and third, I conclude with the importance of protecting, preserving, and properly managing this world-class fishery.

Bristol Bay Fishery – A Historic Run for the World's Largest Salmon Fishery

Bristol Bay provides about 50% of the world's sockeye salmon production. This year saw one of our strongest salmon runs in history, with more than 56 million salmon *returning to our waters (see attch. B). Our salmon runs were so strong this year that, remarkably, on seventeen days this season, our commercial fishermen caught and processed more than one million fish per day.*

No wild salmon fishery in the world matches the productivity of Bristol Bay. Overall, this year our commercial fishermen caught, processed, and shipped more than 39 million salmon around the world. What’s more, despite a significant increase in supply, prices paid to fishermen actually increased. While we can always improve, 2017 was a true bumper year for us.



Compiled by Gunnar Knapp, UAA/ISER, 6/26/13
Units: metric tons

What we experienced this year is not a product of chance, but rather of our careful management and stewardship of this sustainable resource. Our fishery is robust and healthy because of a strict compliance with the proven escapement-based management model and protection of the pristine watershed conditions.

The people of Bristol Bay take great pride in the region’s fisheries. In February of 2011, after two years of engaging community members in 27 communities, the people of Bristol Bay drafted the “Bristol Bay Vision Statement” (excerpt below). This collective vision exemplifies the central importance of salmon to all aspects

of our lives – cultural, economic, recreational and more.

The success of the commercial fishery is due in no small part to the fishermen who sustainably managed the salmon fishery for millennia. The current generation is committed to preserving and managing our salmon fishery for generations to come.

Bristol Bay Vision Statement February 2011

The foundation of the Bristol Bay Region is committed families, connected to our land and waters.

We believe future generations can live healthy and productive lives here. Across our region, we share common values of community, culture, and subsistence.

We see a future of educated, creative people who are well prepared for life. This requires:

- Excellent schools
- Safe and healthy families
- Local jobs
- Understanding our cultural values and traditions

We assert the importance of local voices in managing our natural resources to continue our way of life.

We welcome sustainable economic development that advances the values of Bristol Bay people. Our future includes diverse economic opportunities in businesses and industries based largely on renewable resources. Large development based on renewable and nonrenewable resources must not threaten our land, our waters, or our way of life.

We foster cooperation among local and regional entities to coordinate infrastructure planning for stronger, more affordable communities. Investments in energy, housing and transportation promote sustainable communities and spur economic development.

We recognize the need to locate new sources of capital to implement this vision with a goal of generating self-sustaining regional economies.

We are unified to secure a prosperous future.

The people of Bristol Bay have a clear vision for the future. That vision is based on the fact that we are a salmon-based community and economy, and the vision is founded on a fish-first policy.

Bristol Bay Economics – Commercial Fishing, Sportfishing, and Tourism

Bristol Bay brings in billions of dollars annually to our local, state and national economies, and supports over 20,000 jobs catching, processing, and delivering our salmon to market (*see attach. C*). The economic importance of the fishery extends well beyond Bristol Bay and Alaska, and is particularly significant to the West Coast States of Washington, Oregon, and California. Every summer over 7,000 commercial fishermen fish in Bristol Bay and this provides essential income and additional jobs to watershed residents. The University of Alaska Institute of Social and Economic Research found the Bristol Bay salmon fishery has a total economic output, or sales value, of \$1.5 billion across the United States (*see attach. C*).

Consumers, increasingly aware of the healthy attributes of wild salmon versus farmed salmon, are seeking our wild salmon products. Bristol Bay and its fishermen benefit from the reputation that precedes them.

Commercial and subsistence fishing are two pillars of the fishing-based economy of Bristol Bay. Sportfishing is the third, and the quantity and quality of our amazing fish attract thousands of visitors to our region each year, where they stay in lodges, hire guides, and buy supplies while they participate in bucket list trips. By one estimate, sportfishing in the Bristol Bay watershed accounts for approximately \$60.5 million in annual spending. Roughly 37,000 sport-fishing trips were taken to the Bristol Bay region. These sport-fishing activities directly employ over 850 full- and part-time workers. Each year, these fishermen come to Bristol Bay to catch trophy rainbow trout, all five species of Pacific salmon, Arctic grayling, and many other species of fish found in our waters. It is a true mecca for sportfishing men and women.

The tourism generated by the sportfishery in Bristol Bay benefits many who live in the region, including BBNC and its over 10,000 shareholders. Recognizing the importance of tourism to the region's sustainable economy and ability to provide economic stability in the region, BBNC has made substantial investments in tourism. BBNC's investment in Mission Lodge several years ago opened the doors for a thriving tourism sector at BBNC. And the recent purchase of Katmailand, Inc., which includes the Brooks Lodge and Grosvenor Lodge concessions in Katmai National Park, and Kulik Lodge on Nonvianuk Lake, will provide opportunities for employment for the people in our region as well as opportunities to share our culture and incredible environment with people around the world.

Conclusion – Protecting, Preserving, and Managing Bristol Bay’s World-Class Fishery

Bristol Bay supports a salmon fishery that is the economic and cultural foundation of Bristol Bay. The Magnuson Stevens Act, by allowing cooperative management between the federal and state governments, has played a prominent role in the successful management of that resource. As a result, this year, like many years in the past, tens of millions of fish returned to the Bay and were available for harvesting by the region’s fishermen.

The people of Bristol Bay know we live in one of the most incredible places on earth that, if well-managed, can sustain us for thousands more years into the future. Ted Stevens knew this, as did Warren Magnuson. I am glad that four decades later, we still have an Alaska senator and a Washington senator on this committee championing the values inherent in the Magnuson Stevens Act that allows our Bristol Bay salmon fishery to be so successful. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.