

Good morning, I am Ed Wickersham a volunteer advocate speaking on behalf of CCAWA. I would like you to know that my goal is to do what I can to help restore our fisheries resources for the good of us all. I gain no financial benefits for my efforts.

As you know CCA has been very concerned with the continuation of gill netting on the LCR. We are encouraged with the Departments testing of selective commercial gear and view it as a positive move, **BUT** only if it does not further hamper recreational fisheries. And I would remind you it is only being tested for fall Chinook and coho so it does nothing for 10 of the 13 stocks of ESA listed fish that pass through the LCR in the spring and summer.

Furthermore those spring and summer commercial fisheries are essentially unselective and contribute only 5% of total CR commercial landings. Conversely the CR provides 37% of all recreationally caught salmon in WA.

We would suggest that setting a recreational priority for LCR non-tribal fisheries is needed and is supported by any perspective from which you want to assess that action.

Conservation: Recreational gear poses far less risk to wild fish and by-catch than gillnets We now fish spring and summer Chinook, coho and steelhead selectively. The only nominally selective fishery with gillnets is in the spring and those tanglenets still have at the least 50% higher mortality rate than recreational gear. Regardless those tanglenets are only able to be used in the spring therefore about 95% of mainstem gillnetting is non-selective.

Social Equity Standpoint: Presently the Department receives about 66% of it's budget from sportsman. Less than 14% comes from the general fund. There is little likelihood that general fund revenues are going to increase. So the health of the Department rests with the recreational public and one way to ensure increased revenue for the agency is to increase real recreational fishing opportunities. Consider this. I am a member of the CR endorsement board. Endorsement sales have been consistently at or above 220 thousand. Compare that to 255 gillnet licenses of which about half are active. CR endorsements alone actually provide more revenue than the entire value of the LCR commercial fishery.

Importance of Statewide Fisheries: Another major consideration is enhancing eastside fisheries. I will tell you the endorsement board is authorizing large expenditures to maintain and increase eastside fisheries where there is significant potential. Unfortunately because of the meager recreational allocation for spring Chinook the eastside got about three days of decent fishing on the mainstem this spring. That is unacceptable!!!!

One of the statements you hear from the gillnet crowd is that the WA food fish

policy is a mandate to continue their fishery. The policy states the Department “Must maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state.” We agree with that policy. and would respectfully point out that on the CR there is a very robust tribal commercial fishery. And recently the Department argued in court that the recreational sector is an industry in defending the move to place a priority for recreational crabbing in PS. The court agreed and upheld the Departments position and the new policy that places a recreational priority on PS crab harvest. We would suggest that is an excellent example for the CR.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions.