

Madam Chair, Commissioners, Good morning, my name is Lyle Cabe and I am here speaking on behalf of CCA Washington.

I would like to make two primary points: First, that SAFE area production has grown to where it can supply the public's need for Spring Chinook, and secondly, main-stem non-selective netting eats into the non-Tribal E S A allocation quickly, which greatly constrains what could be a world class fishery with great economic benefit to the State of Washington.

There are simply not enough Spring Chinook to support both a robust recreational and a non-selective commercial fishery in the main-stem Columbia. SAFE areas were developed where hatchery produced salmon are raised in upriver hatcheries then transferred to SAFE areas in the lower river. While this reduces the number of fish available to the recreational sector it allows for a selective net fishery off the main-stem with **minimal impacts** to naturally produced listed fish.

The majority of lower Columbia recreational angling now occurs in March where, for the first 3 weeks, recreational anglers fish an average of 37 days for each fish caught. If the sport fleet were able to fish during the peak of the Spring run, the economic benefit would greatly increase.

The off-channel SAFE areas are fished from February through June and produces roughly 70% of the entire gillnet harvest of Spring Chinook. There is no reason to continue gillnetting on the main-stem during the Spring season, where

the very minor additional catch of hatchery fish can seriously damage wild fish and greatly constrain recreational opportunities.

Harvest opportunities are based on run size predictions. With a smaller run size, the recreational fishery share is higher because of its ability to selectively harvest a high number of hatchery fish for each wild fish killed. A catch-balancing agreement is in effect with treaty tribes and it reduces fish available to recreational fisheries. This year, a run size of over 300,000 was forecast; the non-tribal ESA limit was 22,000 fish. Due to the commercial allocation and catch-balancing the recreational catch was capped at 6,000 fish under the ESA limit. This equates to many lost fishing days and a huge missed economic opportunity.

The solution to these concerns is straightforward: Establish a recreational priority for Spring and Summer Chinook. Removing gillnets from the main-stem from January to July would reduce the total main-stem commercial salmon landings by only **eight percent!**

The conservation benefits of a recreational priority are clear: minimal ESA impacts. And, the economic benefit of more than 200,000 Washingtonians fishing the Columbia while fewer than 180 gill-netters fish in the main-stem spring season is also clear. The sport fisheries take is less than one third of the harvest of commercial fisheries, while they provide **17 times more economic benefit!**

This isn't about an allocation battle, it's about stewardship of fragile ESA

listed fish and greatly increasing the economic benefit to the State of Washington.

Thank you for your attention now may we take any questions you may have?