THE STATE of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Fish and Game

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July 17, 2026

Initial DRAFT Spend Plan for funds appropriated to address the 2023 Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) East Side Set Gillnet (ESSN) salmon fishery disaster determination. NOAA Fisheries has allocated $5,750,019 for this fishery disaster. The spend plan informs the federal grant application submitted by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to NOAA Fisheries and is subject to change based on approval of the final grant.

Written comments are requested on all elements of the proposed spend plan and should be as specific as possible. Comments will be posted as received online and therefore, ADF&G requests that no business proprietary information, copyrighted information, or personally identifiable information be included in written comments. Comments can be submitted by email to:
dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov or by mail to: ADF&G, Attn: Darion Jones
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Comments must be sent by August 14, 2026, for consideration in the next iteration of the spend plan. A second draft of the spend plan will be available for public comment before the spend plan is finalized.

Guiding principles for disaster fund distribution: Disbursement of funds is intended to 1) assist fishery participants harmed by the 2023 ESSN salmon fishery disaster and 2) improve fishery information used to assess fishery performance and to develop management approaches that avoid and/or mitigate the impacts of future fishery disasters that cannot be prevented.

The proposed categories and allocations were informed by previous ESSN fishery disaster spend plans and initial public comments. Allocation percentages and amounts are estimated and subject to change up to 2% based on administration fees, rounding, and/or recalculations.

Category	Allocation	Estimated funds [a]
Research	10%	$569,000
Communities	3%	$172,000
Harvesters	62%	$3,565,000
Processors	25%	$1,437,500
Program support	0.11%	$6,519
Total		$5,750,019

[a] Additional funds will be allocated to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to administer the federal grant

The impact of the fishery disaster created significant loss of income to those involved in the harvesting and processing sectors and to the communities in which the cultural and basic economic structure is the marine economy. A portion of these funds will be allocated to research activities that promote restoration of the fishery or prevent a similar failure in the future, but they will also be used to help assist the fishing communities that were affected by this fishery resource disaster by recognizing the loss of incomes. These direct payments will compensate participants consistent with fishery investments and/or historical fishery performance. Historically one of the purposes of disaster funding was to get funds to communities and fishermen as fast as possible. Direct payments provide that method.

<u>Research – 10% (~$569,000):</u> Research funds are intended to support projects that improve available fishery information and help prevent and/or mitigate future fishery disasters. ADF&G is requesting input on suggested research themes. In addition, recent Alaska disaster spend plans have used competitive and non-competitive bid processes to award research funds. If a competitive process is used, research funds will be distributed through an open competitive bid process administered by PSMFC. If a non-competitive process is used, research projects that are responsive to the research themes would be described directly in the spend plan. ADF&G is requesting input on the appropriate award process for research funds in this fishery disaster spend plan.

ADF&G is requesting comments on whether alternative gear reimbursement should be included in the spend plan to assist permit holders with the purchase or modification of approved alternative gear intended to improve conservation of Chinook salmon.

<u>Communities – 3% (~$172,000):</u> ADF&G is proposing direct payments to municipalities and boroughs that rely on revenue generated from ESSN salmon landings and other economic activities related to the salmon fisheries. These local government entities were negatively impacted by the fishery disaster because fishery revenues comprise a significant portion of local operating budgets and are used to support education, public works, ports and harbors, and other services. The state's Fishery Business tax rate is 3% for shore-based landings and is shared 50/50 with the state and municipalities/ boroughs where the landings occur. If landings occur in the bounds of a municipality and borough, landing tax revenues are shared 50/50 between each entity.

ADF&G proposes using the same eligibility criteria that was used for the 2021/2022 ESSN fishery disaster due to the complete closure of the 2023 ESSN fishery.

Proposed eligibility criteria for communities:

1. Fish ticket port of landing data must show that salmon from the 2021 or 2022 ESSN salmon fishery were landed in the community.
2. Estimated loss in gross revenue value for salmon landed in the community from 2021 and 2022 ESSN fisheries combined must be at least $10,000. The estimated loss in gross revenue is calculated by subtracting the value of the fishery in the disaster year from the previous five-year average, excluding the disaster years of 2018 and 2020.

Disaster funds for communities are proposed to be distributed **pro rata** to each community's demonstrated loss relative to the total loss of all eligible communities. Based on the criteria, three municipalities and one borough may be eligible for community-designated funds: City of Homer, City of Kenai, City of Soldotna, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough based on landings in Kasilof and Ninilchik.

<u>Harvesters – 62% (~$3,565,000):</u> This category includes permit holders and crew. The total estimated loss in gross revenue for the 2023 ESSN fishery disasters is ~$7.23 million dollars. Funds allocated to the harvesting sector are intended to mitigate this loss by providing funds to bring the harvesting sector up to 50% of the sector's recent historical value.

ADF&G proposes direct payments to commercial fishery permit holders and crew who meet all eligibility criteria. Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit information, fish ticket data from commercial salmon landings and CFEC gross earnings data are proposed to be used to determine eligibility for permit holders. Eligibility for crew will be verified using ADF&G commercial crew license or CFEC permit data and an affidavit from the permit holder or vessel owner. An affidavit form will be provided by PSMFC in the application materials.

ADF&G proposes to divide the harvester allocation into two pools, one for S04H permit holders (90%) and one for crew members (10%). Direct payments to minors are not authorized by the terms of the Federal grant but may be authorized to guardians in the same household on behalf of an eligible minor.

<u>ESSN Permit Holders – 90%</u>

Based on initial public comments, ADF&G does not recommend including purchase of a 2023 buoy sticker as an eligibility criteria due to the preseason closure that was announced on March 9, 2023.

Proposed eligibility criterion for permit holders:

- Individual must have registered a valid S04H CFEC permit. A permit is considered valid if fees were paid to renew the permit, regardless of the post-season fee waiver issued by CFEC due to the season closure.

Funds are proposed to be paid to the person listed as the 2023 'Permit holder' and temporary emergency transfer permit holders (transferees) in the CFEC database. Permit holders who certified they were unable to participate to qualify for an emergency transfer and permit holders who permanently transferred a permit away will not receive payment.

Each permit holder who meets the eligibility criterion is proposed to receive an equal payment for each eligible permit. ADF&G estimates a total of 656 permits were renewed by 384 permit holders.

<u>ESSN crew – 10%:</u> ADF&G proposes **equal payments** to ESSN gillnet crew meeting all criteria, not to exceed $1,500. Unused crew funds should be redistributed to permit holders.

Proposed ESSN crew eligibility criteria:

1. Crew member must have held a 2021, 2022, or 2023 commercial crew license <u>or</u> a 2021, 2022, or 2023 CFEC permit for any fishery. This information will be verified using the ADF&G Licensing database and the CFEC permit database.
2. Crew member must provide information to show they were fishing crew for a <u>qualified 2023 S04H permit holder</u>, based on an affidavit signed by the permit holder.
3. Anyone qualified for disaster funds as a 2023 ESSN permit holder or transferee cannot qualify as crew.

<u>Processors – 25% (~$1,437,500)</u>: ADF&G proposes direct payments to processing companies. Processing permit holders that are required by 5 AAC 39.30 and 50 CFR 679 to complete and submit the COAR and who meet the eligibility criterion are eligible for direct payment. COAR buying data are used to determine eligibility and payment for processors because those data are linked to the location of salmon harvest, and the scope of this fishery disaster includes the ESSN salmon fisheries. Final exvessel price from the COAR buying data are used to determine processor losses.

Processing companies are identified based on the nine-digit federal tax identification number. A processing company may hold more than one processing permit and companies with more than one identification number will be consolidated based on company name and address. Disaster payments to processing companies are proportional to each company's demonstrated loss relative to the total loss of all eligible processing companies.

ADF&G proposes using the same eligibility criteria that was used for the 2021/2022 ESSN fishery disaster due to the complete closure of the 2023 ESSN fishery.

Proposed eligibility for processors:

1. Processing company must have purchased ESSN sockeye salmon in 2021 and/or 2022.
2. Processing company must have a demonstrated loss in final exvessel value for sockeye salmon purchased by the company from the 2021 and 2022 ESSN fisheries. The estimated loss in value is calculated by subtracting the final exvessel value of sockeye salmon in 2021 and 2022 from the average in 2014 through 2017 and 2019 excluding years with no value.

Disaster payments are proposed to be **pro rata** to each company's demonstrated loss relative to the total loss of all eligible processing companies. Based on the criteria, a total of seven processing companies may be eligible for processor funds.

Program Support – 0.1% ($6,519): ADF&G proposes allocating funds for staff working on fishery disaster plan development and implementation in coordination with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

From: [redacted]
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Subject: 2023 CI Setnet spend plan comment
Date: Monday, July 13, 2026 9:54:12 PM

-Our family doesn't support a crew share allocation for 2023 Disaster Relief as the season was closed for the year prior to the season The vast majority of crew members that would have returned for 2023 season and didn't , didn't buy a Crewmember License .
-We would also support a Association allocation for KPFA of 3 percent
-We would also support a 50 percent Reduction in the processor allocation from the 2018/20 disaster relief.
Thanks Greg Johnson and family
Sent from my iPad

From: [redacted]
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Subject: 2023 ESSN Cook Inlet Disaster Spend Plan Comments
Date: Monday, July 13, 2026 6:37:26 PM

It has come to my attention that the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association has submitted comments and recommendations concerning the 2023 disaster spend plan for the ESSN fishery.

1). The KPFA board members did not contact their membership at large for input on their recommendations. They did not announce that the KPFA board would hold a closed meeting to develop recommendations from only the input of 5 or 6 board members that fish in the Kenai area.

2). KPFA did not send out any emails, Facebook posts on their FB page, or any news announcements asking for input from their membership.

3). I just learned that some board members promoted recommendations that would screw the disaster funds in many of the board members favor by promoting unequal division of relief funds.

4). I just learned that some KPFA board members promoted recommendations to not give disaster relief to crew members so they could receive a greater share of disaster relief funds. My crew in 2023 had crew licenses and did not get to fish the ESSN fishery and did not have income opportunity from the ESSN fishery in 2023 as they have in years past.

5). Just because there was an announcement in March of 2023 that the season would be closed for the ESSN fishery, it could have been opened if the minimum escapement goal had been achieved as it had in 2025.

6). The 2023 disaster spend plan should be divided equally as was the 2018-2020 plan and crew should be included.

Respectfully,
Russell Clark

From:	~~Gary Hollier~~
To:	DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Subject:	2023 ESSN disaster spend plan.
Date:	Saturday, July 4, 2026 8:31:13 AM

To whom it may concern:

My name is Gary L. Hollier. I am a 72 year old life long resident of Kenai Ak. For the past 55 years I have participated in the Eastside Set Net Fishery (ESSN) in the Upper Subdistrict of Cook Inlet.

I would like to put in comments for the 2023 FederaL Disaster spend plan for the ESSN fishery.

!. I think the 2021 & 2022 spend plan should be the "blue print" for the 2023 spend plan, with a few changes.

2. It is my understanding that there will be no Research Monies (10%) allocated for actively promoting fishery restoration. I would recommend that this 10% be allocated to the Kenai Peninsula Fisherman's Association (KPFA). KPFA is the trade organization that has been representing the ESSN fishery for over 60 years. It is KPFA thru its Board of Director's that have done ALL the work in preparing and advocating for ESSN disasters since 2018, 7 in all. Without KPFA there would be NO disaster applications past, present, or in the future.

3. I believe that the Processors share (25%) should be cut to 15%. I am advocating for this change is due to the fact that the ESSN fishery was closed entirely in 2023, the Drift Fleet fished in excess of 35 days I believe. Processors lost harvest share the the ESSN closure, but made up with volume to their plants, with the tremendous amount of Drift Fleet time.

4. Harvestors, ESSN permit holders should get an equal share of whatever monies is allocated to them, regardless where they fish on the ESSN fishery, as long as they meet the criteria set up in the 2021 & 2022 spend plan.

6. Qualified Crew members, should split 10% equally what is allocated to the Harvestors, as long as they meet the 2021 % 2022 criteria.

7. Communities should get 3%, as in the 2021 & 2022 spend plan.

So the spend plan that I would recommend would look like this:

Harvestors-72% Permit holders & Crew

Processors- 15%

KPFA- 10%

Communities- 3%

Research- 0%

Thank you,

Gary L. Hollier

Kenai, Ak.

From: [redacted]
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Cc: markdoner ak
Subject: Fwd: 2023 UCI ESSN Fishery disaster relief
Date: Wednesday, June 24, 2026 3:10:52 PM

Please add my new email address to the Cook Inlet Fishery disaster distribution list. I look forward to viewing the draft spend plan as I have concerns that I expressed in my previous email attached below.

Thank you,

Mark Doner

From: "dfg com fisheriesdisasters" <dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov>
To: "Mark Doner"
Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 12:05:59 PM
Subject: RE: 2023 UCI ESSN Fishery disaster relief

Good afternoon,

Congressional funds have not been appropriated and the spend plan has not been drafted or finalized for the 2023 UCI salmon fishery disaster. We have not posted a draft spend plan or collected buoy registration information yet for the 2023 UCI fishery disaster as funding has not been appropriated.

I would recommend making public comments on that spend plan once it is ready. Your email is on our Cook Inlet distribution list so you will be notified once that initial spend plan is drafted and open for public comment. There are two rounds of public comment and editing before the spend plan is finalized and you may suggest other eligibility criteria or edits to any section of the spend plan.

As for the upcoming 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022 years you do have buoy registrations so you should receive applications and relief for those funded disasters.

Thank you,

ADF&G Federal Fishery Disasters Team

From: MARK DONER
Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 11:40 AM
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored) <dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov>
Subject: 2023 UCI ESSN Fishery disaster relief

Greetings,

While filling out UCI ESSN fishery disaster relief applications this year I have realized that one of the key components of the spend plans is having registered to fish by purchasing buoy stickers for the ESSN fishery. In the years leading up to the complete closure of the fishery in March of 2023 I had registered to fish each season in the Soldotna ADFG office. (I had tried a number of years in a row to purchase my stickers online before I left my home in Palmer to drive to Clam Gulch and set up for the season, but the online system was not operational.) Since I could not register/purchase buoy stickers at any other ADFG office, each season I would register my permit and purchase my buoy stickers at the K-Beach Rd office of ADFG on my way to Clam Gulch. When the 2023 season closed "until further notice" in March of 2023, I decided to wait until we had an opening before I drove to the peninsula. We never opened in 2023. I never drove to the peninsula that year. I didn't register my permit for the ESSN area and I never fished the permit. Disaster relief applications were new to me at that time I did not realize that registering my permit would be a requirement for inclusion in future disaster disbursements.

I have been an ESSN fisherman since 1969. I was an original limited entry permit holder in Cook Inlet. I have never fished my permit anywhere in Cook Inlet besides my site at Clam Gulch and the Kasilof Special Harvest Area.

What will I need to do in order to apply for the 2023 disaster relief for the ESSN fishery when the applications come out?

This situation applies to all three of my immediate family's permits:
Mark Doner
Merry Doner
Johanna Doner

Sincerely,
Mark Doner

From: [redacted]
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Subject: Disaster Funds Qualifications
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2026 5:09:55 PM

As you engage in writing the initial draft of the Spend Plan for the 2023 Upper Cook Inlet East Side set gillnet salmon fishery, I would like to address one portion of the eligibility criterion for Harvester applicants. Below I quote from the current Final DRAFT Spend Plan for funds appropriated to address the 2021 and 2022 Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) East Side Set Gillnet (ESSN) salmon fishery disaster determination:

Harvesters
"• ADF&G maintained buoy sticker purchase as the eligibility criterion..."

I would like to request that you consider removing this requirement from the 2023 Spend Plan for the following reason;
We were notified by ADF&G Advisory Announcement: UPPER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL FISHING ANNOUNCEMENT No. 1 on March 9, 2023, that *"Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Fishing Announcement No. 1 closes set gillnet fishing for salmon in the Kenai, Kasilof, and East Forelands Sections of the Upper Subdistrict until further notice, effective immediately."*

There was never any opportunity, suggested or actual, to put nets in the water at any time subsequent to this announcement. As a result, there was no need to purchase buoy stickers for the 2023 season. It is unreasonable to require buoy stickers as an eligibility criterion for 2023 disaster fund applicants. I suggest that CFEC Permit renewal for 2023 could be considered as sufficient.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jan Kornstad

From: [redacted]
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Subject: 2023 Upper Cook Inlet Spend Plan
Date: Friday, June 26, 2026 3:37:18 PM

The 2023 Upper Cook Inlet spend plan should focus on the ESSN permit holders on an equal basis per permit. The disaster allocation was based upon the ESSN holder lack of being able to participate in the fishery while ALL OTHER user groups were still able to harvest sockeye and did not have a disastrous season.

Each permit should be allocated an equal share on an equal basis. There should not be any permit holder receiving a less allocation than any other permit holder.. Crew members should receive all equal allocations also.

Russell Clark
ESSN Permit Holder

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: [redacted]
To: DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored)
Subject: 2023 Upper Cook Inlet East Side Set Net Salmon Fishery Disaster Relief Funds
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2026 7:53:22 PM

[redacted]

I'm writing on behalf of my family, longtime participants in the Cook Inlet Commercial Set Net Fishery at Humpy Point, Cohoe, Alaska. As I compose comments about the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G) spend plans for federally funded fishery disasters for the 2023 Upper Cook Inlet East Side set gillnet salmon fishery, I wonder who I'm competing with for these funds. I assume it's other ESSN harvesters and the processors, as they're the only entities economically impacted by the disaster.

In allocating and prioritizing those who were economically impacted by the disaster, the ESSN should be allocated the majority of the spending fund. We were 100% economically affected ……we only have a "Plan A " … no fishing no income! The Processors, with a backup income from the Drift fleet , should be considered secondly.

PERSONALLY , for us, the 2023 commercial set season started with the renewal of permits, vessels, shore leases, and buoy stickers. In late May and June, we incur startup expenses from fuel, utilities, gear repairs, food, vehicle maintenance, and crew licensing. These expenses can add up to a significant debt before we even fish.

We put in our running lines for beach shore fishing, checked our outside cork cluster, and listened daily for an opening or the word "closed for the season." Along with checking the recoded escapement numbers and the "large" Chinook count. Mid- August we closed up camp with a record season of high and dry.

Besides the loss of income from harvesting salmon we also lost income from our buying station that purchases fish from 21 permits. And lastly my family love salmon… not only in our nets but also on our dinner table in which we take from our nets as "personal use" … not so this year… we had to find an alternative option.

IN SUMMARY:

70% Disaster funds should be allocated equally to ESSN permit holders with the required " intent to fish" documentation: 2023 permit, buoy sticker and/or renewed vessel and lease if registered.

30% Fish Processors , considered secondary, with the understanding of their income from the profitable drift fleet.

Regards,

Susan HJ

From:	Kenai Peninsula Fishermen"s Association
To:	DFG, ComFisheriesDisasters (DFG sponsored); Bush, Karla L (DFG); Jones, Darion B (DFG)
Cc:	[redacted]
Subject:	Kenai Peninsula Fishermen"s Association Comments on 2023 NOAA Fisheries Disaster Relief Funds Distribution Plan
Date:	Monday, July 13, 2026 10:12:49 PM

Dear Karla Bush and Darion Jones,

On behalf of the Executive Board of the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the distribution of the 2023 NOAA Fisheries Disaster Relief Funds allocated to the Upper Cook Inlet Setnet fishery.

The Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) commercial fisheries trade association that has represented Cook Inlet fishing families since 1954. Our mission is *"Ensuring the Sustainability of Our Fishery Resources."* We are committed to strengthening our fishing community while promoting the long-term economic stability of the Cook Inlet East Side Setnet (ESSN) fishery.

KPFA primarily represents salmon setnet permit holders fishing along the east side of Cook Inlet, from Ninilchik to Boulder Point—a coastline spanning more than 60 miles. Salmon harvested in this fishery originate primarily from the Kenai and Kasilof River systems. Approximately 440 limited-entry permit holders participate in this fishery. These permit holders are small business owners; approximately 86% are Alaska residents, and about 80% reside on the Central Kenai Peninsula.

The KPFA Executive Board has reached the following consensus recommendations regarding the distribution of the $5.8 million in 2023 NOAA Fisheries Disaster Relief funding.

Distribution Between Permit Holders and Crew (Harvester Share)

KPFA recommends that disaster funds designated for harvesters be distributed as follows:

- 95% to qualified permit holders
- 5% to qualified crew members with a flat payment of $1,500 per qualified crew member
- Crewmember funds not disbursed will be paid evenly to each qualified permit holder as a final payment

This distribution recognizes both the capital investment and financial risk assumed by permit holders while acknowledging the economic hardship experienced by crew members who depend on the fishery for seasonal employment.

Permit Holder Eligibility

The 2023 season was unprecedented. For the first time during the recent series of fishery disasters, the ESSN fishery began the season closed because the preseason forecast for large Kenai River king salmon was below the lower bound of the escapement goal. In March 2023, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced that the fishery would remain closed until projections indicated escapement goals could be achieved.

As a result, many permit holders reasonably chose not to purchase buoy stickers because there was little expectation that fishing opportunities would occur. Ultimately, the fishery remained closed for the season.

Because buoy sticker purchases have historically been used to demonstrate intent to fish, applying that requirement to 2023 would unfairly exclude many active participants who fully intended to fish but were prevented from doing so by the preseason closure.

Accordingly, KPFA recommends that eligibility for permit holders be based upon:

- Holding a valid East Side Setnet limited entry permit in 2023;

  Renewing the permit for the 2023 season; and

- Demonstrating intent to fish through the purchase of 2022 buoy stickers for statistical areas 244-21, 244-22, 244-31, 244-32, 244-41, or 244-42.

Using the 2022 season as the qualifier more accurately reflects active participation in the fishery and avoids penalizing fishermen for management actions entirely outside their control. Payments will be split evenly between permit holders.

Crew Member Eligibility

Many crew members also suffered substantial economic losses during the 2023 disaster.

Some crew members purchased commercial fishing licenses despite the uncertainty surrounding the season. In contrast, others delayed purchasing licenses because resident licenses ($60) and nonresident licenses ($220) represented a significant expense without any assurance of being able to fish.

KPFA recommends that crew members qualify by:

- Purchasing a 2023 commercial fishing crew license; or
- Qualified for 2021 or 2022 disaster; and
- Provide an affidavit from the permit holder confirming that they were the intended crew for the 2023 season.

KPFA further recommends a flat payment of $1,500 for each qualified crew member.

Support for Industry Organizations

KPFA respectfully requests that a modest administrative allocation of 5 percent of $5.8 million, resulting in $290,000, be applied to the overall 2023 NOAA Fisheries Disaster Relief determination.

For more than sixty years, KPFA has represented the interests of East Side Setnet fishermen and has been at the forefront of disaster relief efforts on behalf of fishermen, processors, fishing communities, and fisheries research. Since 2018, KPFA has been the primary organization requesting and supporting federal fisheries disaster declarations for the East Side Setnet fishery, including disasters for 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025. Throughout this period, KPFA's Board of Directors has served entirely on a 100% volunteer basis, contributing thousands of hours advocating for fishermen, coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies, traveling to participate in regulatory and public processes, and developing recommendations for disaster relief distributions.

Like the fishermen it represents, KPFA has also suffered financial losses resulting from repeated fishery disasters. Membership dues and voluntary contributions from fishermen are the Association's primary source of operating revenue. They are used to pay essential organizational expenses, including insurance, communications, rent, meeting expenses, legal and administrative costs, and other necessary business obligations. As fishing opportunities and fishermen's incomes have declined, so too has the Association's ability to generate the revenue necessary to meet these obligations while continuing to represent the fleet.

Because KPFA has served as the principal industry representative requesting disaster declarations and coordinating disaster response on behalf of the East Side Setnet fishery, the Association believes it is appropriate that a modest administrative allocation be included as part of the overall disaster determination. An allocation of 5 percent of the entire grant would recognize the documented financial losses incurred by KPFA, offset a portion of the costs associated with disaster-related advocacy and coordination, and help ensure the Association can continue serving as the recognized voice of the fleet during future disaster declarations, recovery efforts, and fisheries management processes.

Research Funding

If a portion of the disaster funds is allocated to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for research, KPFA requests that:

- Reduce Research funding allocation by 5% to cover the new Association share.

- Research funding be directed toward projects that directly benefit the fisheries affected by the disaster;

- KPFA be provided meaningful stakeholder input regarding the selection and implementation of research projects funded through the 2023 disaster allocation; and

> Research expenditures remain focused on restoring fishing opportunities and preventing similar fishery disasters in the future.

KPFA further requests that any research funding expended by the Department from the 2023 disaster allocation be transparent and directly tied to projects that provide measurable benefits to the affected fisheries and fishing communities.

Alternative Gear Reimbursement

KPFA further recommends that research funding include reimbursement opportunities for fishermen who invest in conservation-oriented alternative gear.

ESSN fishermen have repeatedly been required to modify gear for conservation purposes, including reducing net depth from 45 meshes to 29 meshes, without compensation. As new alternative gear types become available and are authorized for use, fishermen should not bear the entire financial burden of conservation-related innovation.

As previous disaster spending plans have recognized:

> "A portion of these funds will be allocated to research activities that promote restoration of the fishery or prevent a similar failure in the future, while also assisting the fishing communities affected by the disaster by recognizing the loss of income."

Consistent with that purpose, KPFA recommends establishing a non-competitive gear reimbursement program to assist fishermen with the purchase or modification of approved alternative gear intended to improve conservation while maintaining fishing opportunity.

Thank you for considering the recommendations of the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association. We appreciate the Department's work in administering these disaster relief funds and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively toward the recovery and long-term sustainability of the Upper Cook Inlet fishery.

Sincerely,

Andy Hall
President
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association

Lisa Gabriel
Secretary & Project Lead
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association

Lance
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 3:49 PM
To: AK FishDisaster <AKFishDisaster@psmfc.org>
Subject: Cook Inlet 2023

I'm writing with comments/suggestions regarding the disaster payment breakdown for 2023.

We, the permit holders knew in the spring of 2023 that our season was closed. Therefore the majority of us did not make crew hiring commitments for a non existent season.

If we offer crew disaster money for the very, very few who for some reason actually bought crew licenses, then if we used the somewhat normal ratio of 90/10%, then those crew members would receive more money than the individual permit holders that they work for.

I would suggest a ratio near 97/3%. This puts more money in the pockets of the actual permit holders. If the permit then wants to pay a crew person "disaster " money, they can do so out of their own pocket.

I'd like to see the remaining 3% go to an ESSN set net legal fund (yet to be established) to allow for legal representation in stock management concerns.

Sincerely
Lance Alldrin
ESSN permit holder

To: ADF&G Federal Fisheries Disaster Team
Re: 2023 UCI ESSN salmon grant award / Comments on
Spend plan (first round)
Attn: Karla Bush, extended jurisdiction program manager
Attn: Darion Jones ADF&G disaster relief coordinator

Date: July 12,2026

To whom it may concern:

I provided comment on 7/10/2026 during the public noticed listening session and this letter extends those comments on the 2023 UCI ESSN salmon spend plan, etc.

1/ Fishermen/owner operators/permit holders and crew are still awaiting for distribution of the 2021/2022 ESSN salmon fishery Disaster relief funds to be distributed. It's been 2 years since that spend plan was completed and approved. A recent email exchange on this was updated by the Federal Fisheries Disaster Team (see emails). Of note: "0n June 21,2024 NOAA allocated $11,496,171 to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game."

Also note in the response email (6/29/2026) from the Department of Fish and Game federal disaster team."PSMFC and ADF&G were recently updated on the approval of the 2021/2022 UCI grant award with an anticipated start date of Oct. 1,2026."

Karla Bush responded on July 10, 2026 that the "anticipated start date would be on October 1,2026" over the 2021/2022 disaster distribution of funds. And stated ADF&G federal fisheries disaster team would be contacting GAO on those funds.

Congress approved these funds (Congressional record) and was announced by NOAA Fisheries On April 21,2024. NOAA, PSMFC, and ADF&G are charged to provide an open and transparent process on these disaster funds. It is incumbent that PSMFC and ADF&G update its records and be responsible for the distribution of these fore mentioned funds ASAP to the stakeholders harmed.

2/ in the listening session I also brought out that permit holders should not be required to purchase "buoy stickers" in 2023 to qualify. Unlike in 2018, 2020, 2021, or 2022 disaster years where we were severely restricted during the season - in 2023 we were completely closed by ADF&G. Landing records would show no landings for the ESSN fishery permit holders.

3/ Crew members should receive 10-15% of the allocated amount for 2023 disaster years. They just came off the 2021/2022 disaster years and were severely impacted. If they qualify for 2021/2022 disaster years they should automatically qualify as it is totally unreasonable to expect anyone to purchase a crew members license when A total closure occurred. In my case the cost for crew licenses, out of state airline fares would have been over $6,000 - one doesn't require a crew if your fishery was closed.

4/ The processors should get 5% along with fish and game (5%). Their impact was minimal compared to the ESSN fishery stakeholders. Owner/operators will be lucky to recover 12% on the lost fishery revenue -lost benefit during 2023.

Sincerely,
Jeff Beaudoin
ESSN stakeholder/owner/operator
SO4H permit holder
Kasilof, Alaska

Comments from public listening session 7.10.26

Jeff Beaudoin

- Crew members must have held a crew license in past spend plans and permit holders must have purchased buoy licenses, but it was impossible for 2023 when the season was closed so early.
- Suggests using the same eligibility criteria from 2021/22 for crew and not requiring a buoy registration for 2023 permit holders.

Mark Doner

- Echoing Jeff's comments that the season was closed so early that people did not purchase buoy stickers. Suggests participation in previous seasons.

Gary Hollier

- Processors should be cut back to 15% because they've likely been made up from other sectors and suggest moving that 10% back to the harvesters' allocations.
- Allocate the research funds to KPFA instead.
- Remove the buoy sticker requirement but keep the permit registration criteria.