Some said the delay showed that the process is broken. It’s not. The fact that we reached an agreement is proof of that. What is true is that salmon management is becoming more difficult every year as the resource continues to disappear.

This reality demands increasing caution by the salmon co-managers as we work to share and rebuild a steadily shrinking resource.

Poor ocean food supplies, climate change, and the ongoing loss and damage of salmon habitat have led to record low returns of chinook and coho for the past few years.

2016 WAS THE FIRST TIME in more than 30 years that the co-managers were unable to complete the North of Falcon process in the usual time frame of February through April process.

I am optimistic that we will finish on time and agree on a package of fisheries that balances the needs of all fishermen and the sustainability of the salmon resource.

We all want more fish, but there just aren’t enough. So, let’s look at what we can do together.

This year the same is expected so preliminary meetings in January so that tough issues can be addressed more quickly.

For example, we are addressing species like pink and coho salmon earlier in the process. That gives us extra time to deal with more at-risk species such as Puget Sound chinook, which have continued to decline since being listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1999.

One thing that’s certain is that fisheries management is better when we work together!