

What we don't understand is the company you keep!

Last week Tom Fink held a press conference in Anchorage in which he said his opposition to the state subsistence law is misunderstood and, under his administration anyone who needed fish and game would get it.

While Tom Fink may be an honest and sincere man who strongly believes and voices his opinions, we must find fault with this stance in this regard.

If Mr. Fink truly believes that anyone who needs fish and game would get it, how can he support repeal of a law that, if repealed, would do nothing more than assure that in a fairly short time there would be little fish and game for anyone, much less those who truly need it.

Mr. Fink says that prior to the passage of the 1978 subsistence law there was no problem with the people who needed game in getting it.

We think he should check the history of the Tanana Valley Sportsmen's Association in Fairbanks.

That group espouses the need requirement of subsistence game take now but when the Western Arctic Caribou take was limited by the Fish and Game Department to only Western Arctic residents, the TVSA sued to open the hunt to non-locals.

Even though the people of the Arctic were limited in their take to the very few who truly needed the food, the TVSA callously disregarded that need and tied the allocation up in court.

We think he should look to the history of Tyonek where Sam McDowell fought to keep the entire Cook Inlet king salmon fishery for sport fishing, even when they took nowhere near the allowable catch. Simply, the sportsmen did not want subsistence users in Tyonek to have any.

Perhaps Mr. Fink is misunderstood in other areas. Our feeling, however, is that he is very much understood in his stand on subsistence.

Mr. Fink may be a man who has strong principles, and he may truly believe that subsistence could work without the law but we likewise believe we fully understand his position and strongly disagree with it.

Further, we just don't trust the company he keeps in this stand and recent history gives us no reason to think otherwise.