

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON PROPOSED 1982 AMENDMENTS
TO THE TROLL SALMON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Anchorage, Alaska
March 23, 1982

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries conducted a public hearing on proposed 1982 amendments to the Troll Salmon Fishery Management Plan as part of the March 23-26, 1982 Council/Board meeting held in Anchorage. Synopses of testimony received are given below.

Ed Wojeck, Executive Director of the Alaska Trollers Association, testified that neither the Canadians nor the Washington and Oregon trollers have taken meaningful action to reduce pressure on Columbia River bright stocks and, therefore, Alaska should not be expected to make further harvest reductions until Canada, Washington, and Oregon make significant sacrifices as well. He suggested that NMFS seriously investigate the possibility that foreign fishing vessels may be the cause of net-marked salmon in Southeast Alaska. Mr. Wojeck introduced Earl Krygier, fishery biologist for the Alaska Trollers Association, who further elaborated on the need for determining the origin of net-marks on chinook and coho salmon caught in the Southeast Alaska troll fishery.

Eric McDowell of Homan-McDowell Economic and Management Consultants, Juneau, spoke on behalf of the Alaska Trollers Association on a study his firm conducted to determine the relationship of market demands for Alaskan fishery products to the proposed reduction in harvest. Mr. McDowell felt that the NMFS position on the effects of the harvest reduction had overstated the price expected for troll caught salmon in 1982 and that comparisons between actual 1981 catch and targeted 1982 catch levels were improper. Mr. McDowell suggested that it will be the Southeast Alaska fisherman who bears the entire brunt of economic losses resulting from the proposed reduction in chinook harvest levels, and disagreed with NMFS that a significant portion of the economic losses would be displaced by a banner year coho harvest.

Scott Stafne, Jim Ferguson, and Bob Dignon said they were concerned that transfers among existing domestic fisheries may result from management actions in the troll fishery. They opposed troll closures on Fridays and holidays because processing plant workers must later work overtime to catch up after the closure, thus increasing processing costs. They favored the status quo for optimum yield.

Mr. Ferguson spoke on the problem of competition between Alaskan salmon and Norwegian farm salmon. He said the Norwegian product appears to be making strides to become a substitute on the market for troll-caught king and coho salmon.

Mr. Dignon said that the trollers in Hoonah will be severely impacted by the proposed six- and eight-day closures and urged the Board to exempt Hoonah from them. He suggested that the State attempt to develop a fresh and frozen market for troll-caught pink salmon to offset losses taken in the king and coho troll fisheries.

Pete Esquiro, Jr., 20-year hand troller from Sitka, said that until last September he had made his living totally from hand trolling; however, the reductions in optimum yield over the past two years have made it impossible for him to continue to support his family by hand trolling and he has since gone to work for the Northern Southeast Aquaculture Association. He felt it was asking too much of Alaskan fishermen to bear the total brunt of the Columbia River stock problems and urged the Council and Board to maintain the status quo for optimum yield.

Richard Luhndahl, speaking on behalf of the Southeast Regional Council and the Pelican Fish and Game Advisory Committee, said that the only solution to the problems of the troll fishery is to re-open the waters west of Cape Suckling to trolling. He said this would ensure the conservation of depressed Columbia River salmon stocks, satisfy the subsistence priority, and maximize benefits to the public.

Maurice Ingman testified against any further OY reductions and suggested that either the NPFMC be disbanded or its jurisdiction over salmon management be removed.

Eric Jordan, Sitka hand troller and member of the Council's Advisory Panel, said that Sitka fishermen oppose any further reductions in the troll fishery. They feel that the small savings in Columbia River stocks is does not substantiate further Alaskan economic losses of the magnitude being considered. He said that the time has come for Canada and the Columbia River Indians to do their fair share to conserve southern stocks and suggested that the Council ask for a voting seat on the Columbia River Power Commission.

Clark Eaton, power troller from Gig Harbor, Washington and board member of Halibut Producers Cooperative, said that the Columbia River dams have caused much of the habitat degradation which has contributed to the declining southern chinook stock populations. He said the fishermen of the Coop ask the Council to remember that the resource has come to its current condition over a number of years and that domestic fishermen are not the only cause -- salmon interceptions by foreign trawlers have also contributed to stock degradation.

Jerry Museth, speaking for the Elfin Cove Fish and Game Advisory Committee, supported the status quo for OY, managing toward the upper end of the range. She asked the Council and Board to take the social and economic problems of villages such as Elfin Cove into consideration when setting OY. She favored the species directed closure in the FCZ and said that 100% observer coverage is essential on foreign vessels.

Diana Runde of Sitka Troll Pac favored the status quo for optimum yield.

Tarleton F. Smith, speaking on behalf of the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee, favored an OY at the upper end of the 1981 range and increased pressure on the Canadian government to restrict its British Columbia troll fishery.