

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke
Executive Director

DATE: September 18, 1997

SUBJECT: Russian Report



ESTIMATED TIME
1 HOUR

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Review draft report on Russian fisheries management and enforcement in the Far Eastern Region.
- (b) Status report on other international issues.

BACKGROUND

(a) Russia Fishery Management Report

The Magnuson-Stevens Act tasked the Council with reporting on the institutional structures in Russia pertaining to stock assessment, management, and enforcement for fishery harvests in the Bering Sea. The Council needs to develop recommendations for improving coordination between the United States and Russia for managing and conserving Bering Sea fishery resources of mutual concern. A draft report will be available at this meeting for your review. The Council's committee and the Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body will have reviewed the document earlier this week and may have recommendations. The report needs to be submitted to Congress by September 30, 1997.

(b) Other International Issues

The Bering Sea Fisheries Advisory Body met Tuesday evening with State Department representatives to review the status of negotiations with Russia on the maritime boundary and conservation of Bering Sea pollock stocks. The negotiating session in Washington, D.C. in mid August did not produce much. The Russian delegation would not move off their original demand for access to 150,000 metric tons of fish in the U.S. EEZ in return for finalizing the maritime boundary. It is unclear whether the next planned negotiating session in October in Vladivostok will take place. Perhaps we will know more after Tuesday night's session.

Another issue is possible interception of U.S. origin salmon in the Russian EEZ. A letter has been sent from the Senate to the Department of State on this issue and NMFS has requested information on the salmon caught in the driftnet fisheries. Both letters are under item C-8(a).

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 31, 1997

The Honorable Madeleine Albright
Secretary of State
U.S. State Department
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

#4

Dear Madam Secretary:

As you may know, there has been a fisheries disaster in the 1997 sockeye salmon return to Bristol Bay, Alaska. The forecast return of approximately 34 million fish has failed to materialize, leaving a harvest of less than 17 million fish, rather than the anticipated 25 million. Low market prices for these fish have aggravated the impact of the failure on fishermen.

This is the largest single salmon fishery in North America. A large number of fishermen from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest depend on it for their livelihoods, and the failure will have serious economic repercussions in a number of States. The Governor of Alaska has already declared an economic disaster, and Federal agencies are reviewing their ability to provide assistance as well.

While unusual environmental conditions may have played a major role in the disappearance of these fish, there is reason to believe these salmon have been vulnerable to ocean fishing while migrating through Russia's exclusive economic zone. It is our understanding that many Japanese salmon fishing vessels have reflagged to Russia. Reports that we have received suggest that the fishing area for these vessels has been enlarged, the fishing season adjusted, and the allowable salmon harvest increased, perhaps in the effort to increase the harvest of sockeye salmon. We understand that a considerable percentage of this catch may be salmon originating from Bristol Bay and other North American sources. We have been told that Japan and Russia have not been responsive to North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission requests for information on the extent of these fisheries.

This is a very serious matter. The need for accurate and reliable data on these fisheries is urgent, as is the need to communicate our deep concern to both Russia and Japan. In that regard, Madam Secretary, we request that you seek the assistance of U.S. agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard or others that may be able to provide information on the level of effort in these fisheries. We additionally ask that you work with the Department of Commerce to obtain data about levels of salmon available on the international market which could help determine the reliability of report harvests in the Russian exclusive economic zone.

4/1

The Honorable Madeleine Albright
July 31, 1997
Page Two

Finally, we strongly urge that this issue be placed on the agenda for Ambassador Pickering's upcoming meetings with First Deputy Foreign Minister Ivanov of Russia in August. It is important that the Russian government recognize that scientific and management cooperation in all shared fisheries resources is a top priority for the United States and essential to the success of other matters discussed at that meeting.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


FRANK MURKOWSKI


TED STEVENS


PATTY MURRAY


SLADE GORTON



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

July 31, 1997

Dr. Irina Shestakova
Executive Director
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
6640 Northwest Marine Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1X2
Canada

#5

Dear Dr. Shestakova:

On behalf of the United States delegation, I wish to submit the U.S. request for information regarding catch information, enhancement information, materials such as biological samples and other technical data related to anadromous stocks. Specifically, the U.S. requests the following:

1. The 1995-1997 Japanese and Russian Bering Sea and Commander Islands sockeye salmon fishery scale samples (acetate impressions) and associated catch (date, latitude, longitude) and biological data (length, weight, sex, gonad weight, and Russian age and maturity determinations). They should provide the 1995-1997 samples as soon as possible.
2. The 1997 Russian baseline sockeye salmon scale samples (acetate impressions) and associated biological data (length, weight, sex gonad weight, and Russian age determinations) from: Lake Kuril (Ozernaya R.), Kamchatka R., Bolshaya R., Avacha R., Vorovskaia R., Khikchik R., Chailula R., Icha R., and Krutogorova R.
3. The 1995-1997 Russian and Japanese sockeye salmon catch data in numbers of fish for the Bering Sea and Commander Island fisheries by species in each time/area stratum).
4. The data for the Atmospheric Circulation Index (so-called Vangengeim-Girs Index) for 1891 to present published by Dr. Leonid Klyashtorin of the Russian Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (VNIRO, Moscow) who cited as a source of data the Federal Arctic and Antarctic Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia.



5/1

In accordance with the Article V11.3 of the Convention, the U.S. asks the Commission to support its request and greatly appreciates efforts to be made by the Japanese and Russian Parties for providing the above information.

Sincerely,



Steven Pennoyer
U.S. Commissioner &
Point of Contact

cc: Mary Beth West, DOS
Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer
Mr. Guy McMinds