

To: North Pacific Fishery Management Council
From: Don Ashley, F/V Gold Rush
Date: April 6, 2018
RE: Agenda Item C6 GOA Non-Pollock Chinook PSC Limits

Mr. Chairman & members of the council, I am Don Ashley. I partner with my brother in the F/V Gold Rush, a Kodiak based AFA trawler.

I am asking the Council to continue to move the C6 Non-Pollock Chinook PSC limit adjustments through the process for Public Review.

Chinook PSC caps were reduced in anticipation of a GOA Bycatch Management program. Without that program, the trawl fleet has been left without the benefit of the tools necessary to effectively respond to reduced caps. The fleet subsequently experienced a shutdown of non-pollock trawl fisheries which negatively impacted the trawl fleet as well as its processing partners and the community of Kodiak, and is likely to recur.

The trawl fleet is also vulnerable to shutdowns as a result of observed trip basket sampling.

As an AFA Exempt CV, we are particularly sensitive to the Chinook bycatch issue and have worked diligently and successfully to minimize all bycatch.

Please take this opportunity to provide continued review and better understanding of this groundfish issue.

Respectfully,
Don Ashley, F/V Gold Rush



SEAFOOD PRODUCERS COOPERATIVE

PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS & MARKETERS OF PREMIUM QUALITY SEAFOODS

March 30, 2018

Chairman Hull and members of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC):

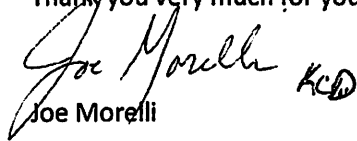
My name is Joe Morelli and I am the CEO and President of Seafood Producers Cooperative (SPC). SPC is a 74-year-old organization with a plant that is located in Sitka AK. We employ approximately 90 people and specialize in hook and line caught seafood. Our core products are salmon, halibut and sablefish. Troll caught king, coho and chum salmon are our core salmon species. Troll caught king salmon is the product that has the highest average value per pound of our product line. Troll caught king salmon is one of SPC's signature premium products. I am writing to the NPFMC to support no action on Agenda Item C-6, Gulf of Alaska (GOA) CV Chinook PSC limit adjustments.

As you all know, the harvest of king salmon in Southeast Alaska (SEAK) was put under serious restrictions last year by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) to reduce the impact on king salmon runs that return to river systems in the SEAK region. The restrictions were particularly austere for the troll fishery. In particular, 30,000 kings were removed from the troll fishery last summer when the August opener was cancelled on short notice. This disruption has caused SPC considerable difficulties. Further, last October, the Alaska State Board of Fish (BOF) listed three SEAK river systems as king salmon Stocks of Concern (SOC). One of the results of the SOC listing is the loss of the last 6 weeks of the winter king salmon troll fishery (March 15 – April 30, 2018) and further restrictions on the spring component of the troll king salmon fishery (May 1 – June 30). That said, SPC realizes that the conservation issue is real and understands that our continued access to king salmon is dependent on the recovery of the SEAK river systems' king salmon runs. While SPC is willing to endure restrictions on the troll fishery so that future recovery of the regional king salmon stocks can recover, SPC does not want to see the recovery hindered by increasing pressure on the said king salmon stocks because the catch level of another fishery(s) is increased.

Currently before the NPFMC in agenda item C – 6 are options for increasing the bycatch of king salmon in the GOA non pollock, non rockfish trawl fisheries. Analysis of the bycatch of king salmon in these fisheries indicates that approximately 14% of the kings caught are from SEAK river systems. Considering the austerity of the cuts that are being implemented in SEAK to protect the king salmon runs in this region, SPC does not feel an increase in the bycatch of king salmon is appropriate.

SPC respectfully requests that the NPFMC hold the status quo on king salmon bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska non pollock , non rockfish trawl fisheries. SPC urges the NPFMC to support the no action option on Agenda Item C – 6.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

 KCD
Joe Morelli

Southeast King Salmon Escapements

Stock	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Escapement goal	
						Lower	Upper
Situk	912	475	174	329	1,187	450	1,050
Alsek	4,992	3,357	5,697	2,504	1,740	3,500	5,300
Chilkat	1,719	1,529	2,456	1,386	1,231	1,750	3,500
Taku	18,002	23,532	28,850	12,000	7,000	19,000	36,000
King Salmon	94	68	50	149	85	120	240
Andrew	920	1,261	796	402	349	650	1,500
Stikine	16,735	24,360	21,343	12,000	10,000	14,000	28,000
Unuk	1,135	1,691	2,623	1,502	1,203	1,800	3,800
Chickamin	2,223	2,499	2,693	964	722	2,150	4,275
Blossom	987	662	642	522	240	500	1,400
Keta	1,484	1,321	915	1,342	668	550	1,300
Number missed	4	4	2	9	9		
Percent missed	36%	36%	18%	82%	82%		

Escapements in 2016 and 2017 were the worst on record; dark cells indicate the escapement goal was not achieved

Oral Report RC-3, Tab 20