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Nov 20, 2010

Respectively Council Members,

I have been a fisherman in the Bering Sea for 36 years, and a Captain nearly 25 years. Crab, Cod, Salmon, Yellowfin Sole and Pollock have been my targeted species over these years. There have been many ups and downs in each of these fisheries over this period and nervous times that lost many "career" fishermen to jobs at home because of the uncertainty of their future.

It's not that we all don't want to believe in the science behind the establishment of our quotas, the science is very impressive. But, something has changed and until I for one see the return of vast schools of fish all across the Bering Sea and not just in one area, I believe caution should be used. For many years as we ended a Pollock season the "dock talk" was how healthy the fishery and ocean looked. That hasn't been the talk for awhile now, as the here we go again feeling creeps in. Miles of ocean get traveled by the Pollock fleet each year, a kind of ongoing survey if you will. What used to be a short run to find another school of fish was 20 miles, you could almost pick any direction. These past 5 or so years have tested one's nerves. Northeast or Northwest from Dutch to look for fish? To go Northeast, which was always home to vast amounts of Pollock now has become high risk. If you stay and try to make a trip there is no guarantee you can. Once you turn west to look for fish, the likely next stop is some 300 plus miles away.

We came down from large quotas fairly fast, and possibly a little late. The cold winters, survival rates of 0-1yr old fish over the winter, missing year classes that may or may not return in the future, the non-mixing of cold and warmer waters and the missing large bio-mass east of the Pribilof Ids. All of these are reasons we should be concerned about increasing our quotas too fast.

If we follow the science and start by increases on a smaller scale, we can do what's right for the future and return to the days of knowing we left behind a healthy ocean at the end of each season.

For these and other reasons I believe 900,000 mt should be the upper limit to our 2011 Bering Sea Pollock fishery. I know I am only one voice with one opinion, but we have to be right. To be anything else is not an option to be considered.

Sincerely,

Floyd Smith

Captain F/V Starlite

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Thursday, November 04, 2010

Dear Council Members,

My name is Brent Paylor and I am a commercial fisherman. I started fishing at the age of 17 onboard the Arctic Trawler in 1983. I worked very hard and by 1991 was operating the Seattle Enterprise a 270 foot Pollock Factory Trawler. I have since operated three Factory Trawlers and today am the Captain of the Island Enterprise, a 304 foot vessel, which also targets Pollock.

I am not as salty as some of the old guard, but 20 yrs of chasing Pollock on Factory Trawlers certainly warrants a voice in this process and I thank all of you for taking the time to listen to what I have to say.

THE POLLOCK FISHERY IS ON ITS KNEES.

I have listened to Dr. Ianelli on numerous occasions as well as his predecessors. I do not have a Phd but I do understand the majority of the science that goes into the model. I find it extremely complicated, but trust that our science community at NMFS has learned from the failures in other fisheries around the world.

The model that is being used to calculate the Pollock biomass is an amazing mathematical feat; taking in to count many factors such as backscatter, spawning biomass and other variables, however, it does not factor in common sense nor does it have the ability to listen to the fisherman, the people who spend half of their lives trying to locate schools of Pollock.

I find it extremely risky and dangerous for the council to authorize a dramatic increase in the quota based on the 2006 yr class. I would hope that your common sense would prevail. Lets wait for some more data to come back before we jump the gun, the stakes are too high. Let's see if the 2008 yr class materializes. What is the hurry?

Some of my colleagues that work for other companies will tell you that the fish are plentiful, that the stocks are improving. That the council should ratchet up the quota, this is not their sentiment on the fishing grounds. They are being short sighted and driven by their balance sheets and debt.

In closing I would ask that you factor in common sense to the matrix and that you really take a long hard look at what is at stake here. If the science is inaccurate and the stocks are still declining, the next few years could be the final dagger. If the science is accurate then we will be able to capitalize on your good judgment for yrs to come.

Thank You

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP SHEET CATTONS

Agenda Item:

	NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF:
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NOTE to persons providing oral or written testimony to the Council: Section 307(1)(I) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act prohibits any person "to knowingly and willfully submit to a Council, the Secretary, or the Governor of a State false information (including, but not limited to, false information regarding the capacity and extent to which a United State fish processor, on an annual basis, will process a portion of the optimum yield of a fishery that will be harvested by fishing vessels of the United States) regarding any matter that the Council, Secretary, or Governor is considering in the course of carrying out this Act.