

January 31, 2025
Angel Drobnica, Chair
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: C-2 Chum Salmon Bycatch

Dear Ms. Drobnica:

OptimERA was founded in 2005 to initially provide Local Internet services and has evolved into engineering, technology and communications solutions in remote and challenging environments in Alaska. Headquartered in Unalaska in the Aleutian Islands, our company provides critical infrastructure and services necessary to provide voice, data telecommunication and electrical contracting as well as Utility Line support in Unalaska and services in additional remote fishing dependent communities in the Aleutians. We employ over 20 individuals with strong wages, benefits and skilled positions in the remote community of Dutch Harbor and take pride in bringing quickly evolving technological solutions to these remote communities.

It has been brought to our attention the Council is currently considering options to minimize catch of Western Alaska chum salmon in pollock fishery. With declining returns of Chum salmon to Western Alaska, we fully understand that there are real pains and severe challenges in the communities that depend on chum for their subsistence, commercial fishing and cultural needs. At the same time we understand how Alaska's fishery dependent communities and service industries are intertwined with the pollock fishery. The pollock fishery is the economic engine of Unalaska and other fishery-dependent communities of the Bering Sea region. Any change to the pollock fishery potentially creates a significant ripple effect throughout the pollock reliant region and companies like ours. Not only are support services and critical infrastructure like ours directly impacted, but also our employees, other fishing industry customers and support sector businesses, and ultimately the community itself is affected.



OptimERA Holdings, Inc.

Optimizing technology for a new era

Our community is dependent on the economic activity, landing taxes and sales taxes generated here with Alaska pollock as the very foundation for these revenue streams. Without pollock the community itself would be jeopardized and certainly would not be able to support all of the other smaller fisheries and the families that depend on them that are landed, processed and shipped to markets.

The analysis that you are reviewing at this meeting includes important information about the chum salmon encountered in the pollock fishery in particular where and when Russian and Asian hatchery fish are likely to be encountered and most importantly where and when Western Alaska chum salmon are present on the fishing grounds. We would ask as you move to support a policy and solution to address low returns of Western Alaska Chum that you focus on scientific solutions that match the purpose and need of reducing Western Alaska chum bycatch and at the same time not inadvertently causing damage to the pollock fishery, service providers, City of Unalaska and the thousands of residents that rely on this resource while possibly protecting Hatchery fish at the cost of a Alaskan economy.

As a Unalaska Resident and Business Owner we thank you for your consideration of our comments on this issue, it is critical to our future as a significant employer and service provider to remote communities in Alaska and to our employees, seafood industry partners, and the community of Unalaska that our family calls home.

Sincerely,

Matt Scott
Chief Operating Officer
OptimERA, Unalaska, AK