CITY OF HOMER
HOMER, ALASKA

RESOLUTION 20-127

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA,
STRONGLY OPPOSING ALTERNATIVE 4 IN THE PUBLIC REVIEW
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/REGULATORY IMPACT
REVIEW FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENT XX TO THE FISHERY
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SALMON FISHERIES IN THE EEZ OFF
ALASKA THAT WOULD CLOSE ALL FEDERAL WATERS IN COOK
INLET TO COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING AND FINDING THAT
IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE 4 WOULD HAVE A
SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY OF HOMER

WHEREAS, The North Pacific Fishery Management Council developed the Fishery
Management Plan for Salmon Fisheries in the EEZ off Alaska, (FMP) that manages salmon
fisheries in the United State Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ; 3 nautical miles to 200 nautical
miles off shore of Alaska); and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to a United States Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit ruling, after
successful litigation brought by Cook Inlet commercial fishermen and seafood processors, the
North Pacific Fishery Management Council must amend the FMP to bring it in line with the Ninth
Circuit Court’s decision; and

WHEREAS, Through its Public Review Draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory
Impact Review for Proposed Amendment XX to the Fishery Management Plan for the Salmon
Fisheries in the EEZ off Alaska the North Pacific Fishery Management Council is considering
four alternative amendments to the FMP:

Alternative 1 is status quo or no action, deferring management to the State of Alaska by
excluding the traditional net fishing area in the Cook Inlet EEZ from the FMP (the Ninth
Circuit Court ruling makes this alternative “ untenable” according to the authors’ of the
Public Review Draft EA/RIR for Proposed Alternative XX to the Fishery Management Plan
for the Salmon Fisheries in the EEZ Off Alaska);

Alternative 2 would establish federal management of the commercial salmon fishery in
Cook Inlet with management of the commercial fishery delegated to the State of Alaska
in accordance with the Magnuson Stevens Act and other applicable federal law;
Alternative 3 would establish Federal management of the commercial salmon fishery in Cook Inlet with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and national Marine Fisheries Service without delegation of management to the State of Alaska; and

Alternative 4 would establish Federal management of the commercial salmon fishery in the Cook Inlet EEZ with the EEZ closed to commercial fishing; and

WHEREAS, The waters of the Cook Inlet commercial salmon drift gillnet fishery included by the EEZ are the closest fishing grounds to Homer and have been part of traditional fishing grounds since statehood; and

WHEREAS, In 2014 the Homer City Council voiced opposition to restrictions on the Cook Inlet Fishing District 1 (Resolution 14-019(A)), which is roughly equivalent to the area of the EEZ, citing widespread and deleterious effects to local and regional economies; and

WHEREAS, The Homer City Council has consistently advocated for science-based fisheries management decisions that are equitable across fishery users and sustainable for continued human benefit into the future; and

WHEREAS, Alternative 4 was proposed by the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council’s October 12, 2020 meeting after closure of public comment; and

WHEREAS, Alternative 4 is not a science-based alternative to fishery management, does not result in equitable or sustainable distribution of the salmon harvest resource, was introduced after public comment which is counter to the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act, and does not adequately address the Ninth Circuit court ruling; and

WHEREAS, If Alternative 4 were adopted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, it would close the area of fishing where most of the Cook Inlet salmon drift gillnet fishery harvest occurs, effectively eliminating the economic viability of the fishery and viability of local seafood processors; and

WHEREAS, The loss of the salmon drift gillnet fishery in Cook Inlet would cause severe job loss, loss of capital investment in the fishery and support businesses, and could impact other fisheries if local processing capacity is lost or reduced; and

WHEREAS, A 2015 report published by the McDowell group titled “The Economic Impact of the Seafood Industry in Southcentral Alaska” reported that the seafood industry in the reporting region directly employs over 10,000 people seasonally and had an economic output of $1.2 billion; and
WHEREAS, The Homer City Council recognizes that the salmon drift gillnet fleet, like other fisheries users, is a critical component of Homer, positively contributing to the City’s local history, culture, and economy; and

WHEREAS, Section 4.55 of the EA/RIR presents information about fishing communities associated with the Upper Cook Inlet salmon drift gillnet fishery and includes some of the following information regarding the City of Homer:

Homer has the highest vessel participation of any community with participants in the fishery with an annual average number 2009-2018 of 104.9, average percent of 24.38 of total participants, and 197 unique vessels (Table 4-13);

Homer-based vessels receive the highest gross revenue from the fishery of communities with participants in the fishery with an annual average revenue 2009-2018 of $5,505,099 and 28.6 percent of total revenue (Table 4-14);

Homer has the highest permit participation in the fishery of communities participating in the fishery with an annual average number 2009-2018 of 107.1, average percent of 23.55 of total permit holders, and 216 unique permits; and

WHEREAS, The closure of the fishery as proposed under Alternative 4 would have a significant adverse impact on the economy of Homer through the loss of the livelihoods of Homer based fishermen who participate in the Cook Inlet salmon drift gillnet fishery, marine trades and other businesses based in Homer, and the City of Homer primarily through the loss of harbor fees, ice and crane sales, fish landing tax revenues, and sales tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, The timeline allowing for public comment on Alternative 4 has been inadequate generally, but particularly because the proposed closure of the fishery under Alternative 4 would disproportionally affect the economic health of the Homer community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Homer, Alaska, hereby opposes the North Pacific Fishery Management Council adopting Alternative 4, proposed to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council that would close all federal waters in Cook Inlet to commercial salmon fishing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of Homer, Alaska, has determined that implementation of Alternative 4 would have a significant adverse impact on the economy of Homer.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Homer City Council on this 25th day of November, 2020.
ATTEST:  
MELISSA JACOBSEN, MMC, CITY CLERK

Fiscal Note: N/A