

CITY OF UNALASKA
43 Raven Way - P.O. Box 610
Unalaska, Alaska 99685
Tel (907) 581-1251 FAX (907) 581-4469



January 19, 2026

Angel Drobnic, Chair
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: C-2 Chum Salmon Bycatch

Dear Ms. Drobnic:

The City of Unalaska is located on Unalaska Island in the Aleutian Chain, eight hundred miles west of Anchorage, in the heart of the Bering Sea fisheries. Unalaska Island has been inhabited by the Unangan people for more than 10,000 years. Unalaska's International Port of Dutch Harbor has been known as the nation's #1 Commercial Fishing Port based on the volume of the catch for 28 years and in the top three ports during same time-period for dollar value.

The Pollock fishery is the economic engine of Unalaska and the other fishery-dependent communities of the Bering Sea region. A closed or reduced Pollock B season will have a dramatic negative impact on all our harvesters, seafood processors, fishery support sector businesses, and our community members. A closed or reduced Pollock B season will have a dramatic negative impact on Unalaska and the seafood industry and support sector business in many millions of dollars in lost revenues, impacting the economic wellbeing of the harvesters, seafood processors, fishery support sector businesses, and our community residents.

The Pollock B season fishery has a 20% larger allocation than the Pollock A season and a much longer harvest season, from June 15th until late October. The Pollock fishery of the Bering Sea is the nation's largest and most valuable fishery and a major food source for the nation.

The Pollock fishery has been more important recently due to the recent collapse of most of the Bering Sea Crab Fisheries over the last few years, and the reduced harvest allocations on Pacific Cod. The Pollock fishery is also of critical importance to the harvesters and processors of Unalaska and other communities in the region, including the six CDQ groups and the support sector businesses of Unalaska that support the seafood industry and the community.

When you review Economic and Social Assessment section in EIS, you will see the large dependance Unalaska has on revenues from the Pollock B season. Looking at 2025 the local 2% raw fish landing taxes for Pollock in \$2.4 million, and the state shared taxes, Alaska Fisheries Business and Resource landing taxes came in at \$5.5 million. The \$7.9 million in Pollock fish tax revenues for FY 2026 is almost 22% of the City of Unalaska's General Fund budget. Additionally, the local 3% sales taxes are driven by the sale of marine fuel to the seafood industry harvesters

and processing plants and the other revenues coming from the business that support the seafood industry and the community. This revenue stream is almost 25% of the general fund revenues.

The analysis explains the high degree of vulnerability for Unalaska and the Seafood industry under Alternatives 2 and 3 if restrictive Chum caps were adopted. In one section of the analysis on Alternative 2-3 the analysis points out that a hard cap of 100,000 Chum salmon that the Pollock B season could be shut down in 11 of 12 years without the Pollock B season allocation being harvested that type of risk is unacceptable to Unalaska. The analysis also points out the high degree of dependency on the Pollock B fishery season that has a 20% larger allocation and a much longer season.

The support sector businesses of Unalaska are particularly important part of our community as an example I will discuss the transportation sector and the Port of Dutch Harbor. Port is the major shipping port for domestic and export shipping of hundreds of millions of pounds of seafood for the region. Matson, CMA, Lyden Transport, Samson Tug and Barge, and Coastal Transportational all have operations in Unalaska supporting both the shore-based and at-sea processors, both of which utilize the port as their shipping and resupply base. The Port of Dutch Harbor would be heavily impacted by a B season reduction or closure. This would have a huge negative impact on the transportation sector businesses, including the families of 350 plus long-shore workers who live and work in Unalaska all depend on a sustainable seafood industry.

Alternative 4 Incentive Plan Agreements (IPAs) would work well for Unalaska. The latest Incentive Plan Agreement has added six additional provisions that are on Page 98 of the analysis. It is also important to see the significant reduction of Chum Bycatch during the Pollock B season harvesters have had on Chum Bycatch in the past three years. The 2022 Chum Bycatch was 242,000 fish, which was reduced in 2023 by 46% to 112,000 fish. In 2024 there was another 34% reduction to 39,000 fish. In 2025 the amount of Chum bycatch increased to 156,000 Chum salmon, which is still well below the bycatch amounts of five to ten years ago in the Pollock B season.

Unalaska does not object to the development of new measures to reduce Chum PSC bycatch, such as the development of the six new provisions for IPAs in Alternative 4. We also realize that some parts of Alternative 5 Chum salmon corridor caps. Unalaska will keep an open mind and weigh the potential impacts of a hybrid alternative if it moves forward.

The Chum bycatch analysis from 2011-2024 by area shows the Asian/Russian Hatchery Chum bycatch at 53% and Coastal Western Alaska, and Upper Yukon Combined Chum PSC for the same number of years is at about 19%. The total for the Gulf of Alaska, Southwest Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest was at 28%. The NPFMC please, during your deliberations, remember that 81% of the Chum Bycatch has nothing to do with the Western Alaska Chum salmon river system returns. It would be devastating to Unalaska and the seafood industry we depend on, to face Pollock closures based on hatchery Chum salmon from Asia and Russia.

We believe that there is a need for assistance from the State and Federal agencies to assist with funding for bycatch reduction measures that are based on the best available science, technology innovation, and stakeholder collaboration to ensure the sustainability of the Pollock fishery that is of critical importance to the seafood industry and to Unalaska. We understand that there is pending federal legislation that may assist with funding bycatch research and technology. We have a new salmon scale lab in Unalaska that that started operation in 2025 which will help get real time information on the origin of Chum salmon bycatch so that

information can be reported to the shore side catcher vessels to avoid areas of Western Alaska Chum salmon.

The City of Unalaska strongly supports the continued operation of the Alaska pollock fishery as a vital economic engine in the Southwest Alaska region and sustainable food source for the nation; and that the City of Unalaska urges the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to prioritize bycatch reduction strategies for Western Alaska chum that are informed by the best available science, technology, innovation, and stakeholder collaboration to ensure the sustainable operation of the pollock fishery and the protection of marine ecosystems, and diminished economic activity across the region.

In closing, we hope that the Council keeps in mind that overly restrictive alternatives could shut down or restrict the Pollock B season which would harm the City of Unalaska, as well as our seafood industry partners, and the support sector businesses that we depend on for Unalaska economic wellbeing.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on this issue, which is of the utmost importance to the City of Unalaska, the seafood industry, support sector businesses, and residents of the community.

Sincerely,

CITY OF UNALASKA


Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.
Mayor

Attachment: City of Unalaska Resolution 2026-06

CC: Abner Hoage, Unalaska City Manager
Marjorie Veeder, Unalaska Deputy City Manager
Unalaska City Council Members

CITY OF UNALASKA
UNALASKA, ALASKA

RESOLUTION 2026-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE UNALASKA CITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF ALTERNATIVE 4 OR SOME COMBINATION WITH ALTERNATIVE 5, FOR C-2 BERING SEA CHUM SALMON BYCATCH MANAGEMENT, FINAL DECISION BY THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL AT THEIR FEBRUARY 2026 MEETING

WHEREAS, the Alaska Pollock Fishery is the economic engine of Unalaska and for other fishery dependent communities of the Bering Sea region. A closed or reduced Pollock B season will have a dramatic negative impact on Unalaska revenues, the economic wellbeing of the harvesters, seafood processors, fishery support sector businesses, and Unalaska residents; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Pollock Fishery is recognized as one of the most sustainable and well-managed fisheries in the world, operating under strict guidelines established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and overseen by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC); and

WHEREAS, the Pollock B season fishery has a 20% larger allocation than the Pollock A season and a much longer harvest season, from June 15th until late October. The Pollock fishery of the Bering Sea is the nation's largest and most valuable fishery with an ex-vessels value of \$123 million and first wholesale value of \$1.5 billion; and

WHEREAS, disruption to the Alaska Pollock Fishery would have widespread and detrimental impacts on Unalaska and other Southwest Alaska Communities including the six Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups, including the loss of jobs, reduced municipal revenues and the loss of economic activity in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Economic and Social Assessment section shows the large dependence Unalaska has on revenues from the Pollock B season. Pollock fish tax revenues for FY 2026 are almost 21% of the City of Unalaska's General Fund budget \$36 million. Unalaska's 3% sales tax, which is driven by fuel sales to the harvesters and processors, along with other goods and services, is almost 24% of the General Fund revenues; and

WHEREAS, the analysis also points out the high degree of dependency on the Pollock B season fishery for Unalaska and the seafood industry that supports our community, including other fishery dependent communities in the region, including the six CDQ groups and their communities that depend on the Pollock Fishery; and

WHEREAS, the analysis describes the high degree of vulnerability for the community of Unalaska and the Seafood industry under Alternatives 2 and 3 which have the most restrictive Chum Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) caps. In one section of the analysis on Alternative 2-3 the analysis points out that a PSC hard cap of 100,000 Chum salmon means the Pollock B season would potentially be shut down in 11 of 12 years, without the Pollock B season harvest being completed. That type of risk is unacceptable to Unalaska and the seafood industry; and

WHEREAS, many industry support businesses would be negatively impacted by a Pollock B season closure, notably the Port of Dutch Harbor which is the major shipping port for domestic and export, shipping of hundreds of millions of pounds of seafood for this region, as well as

Matson, CMA, Lyden Transport, and Coastal Transportation all have operations in Unalaska supporting both the shore-based and at-sea processors, which utilize the port as their shipping and resupply base. This would in turn have a huge negative impact on the transportation sector businesses, including the families of 350 plus long-shore workers who live and work in Unalaska; and

WHEREAS, the 2011-2024 Chum Salmon bycatch analysis shows the Asian/Russian Hatchery Chum bycatch at 53% for Coastal Western Alaska, and Upper Yukon Combined Chum PSC for the same number of years is at about 19%. The total for the Gulf of Alaska, Southwest Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest was at 28%. Eighty-one (81%) of the Chum Bycatch has nothing to do with the Western Alaska Chum salmon river system returns. It would be devastating to Unalaska and the seafood industry we depend on, to face Pollock closures based on hatchery Chum salmon from Asia and Russia; and

WHEREAS, Alternative 4 Incentive Plan Agreements (IPAs) would work well for Unalaska. We understand and do not object to provision of Alternative 5 corridor proposals that could be included with Alternative 4 provision. The latest Incentive Plan Agreement has added six additional provisions that are on Page 98 of the analysis. It is also important to see the significant reduction in the Pollock B season Chum Bycatch that the current industry provisions have reduced Chum Salmon Bycatch during the past three years; and

WHEREAS, we believe that there is a need for assistance from the State and Federal agencies to assist with funding for bycatch reduction measures that are based on the best available science, technology, innovation, and stakeholder collaboration to ensure the sustainability of the Pollock fishery that is of critical importance to the seafood industry and the community of Unalaska.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED that the City of Unalaska strongly supports the continued operation of the Alaska Pollock fishery as a vital economic engine in the Southwest Alaska region and a sustainable food source for the nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Unalaska urges the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to prioritize bycatch reduction strategies for Western Alaska Chum that are informed by the best available science, technology, innovation, and stakeholder collaboration. This will ensure the sustainable operation of the Pollock fishery and the protection of marine ecosystems and economic activity across the region.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the Unalaska City Council on January 27, 2026.


Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.
Mayor

ATTEST:


Estkarlen P. Magdaong, CMC
City Clerk

