

Public Testimony

Agenda D-2/3, Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea Groundfish

Dave Woodruff, Alaska Fresh Seafoods. Prefers a later season opening date, in the spring. He also feels that 170° isn't far enough out for pot boats.

Randal Henderson, speaking for Charles Christensen, F/V Leward. Mr. Henderson read a letter from Mr. Christensen who was concerned about a later season opening date because of market situations in Japan. Also, to shorten the season two or three months would put the fishery into a derby-like situation. On his own behalf, Mr. Henderson told the Council that last year 50% of his income came from sablefish fishing, much of it off of Southeast Alaska, and that this year, with a shorter season, he estimates that less than 40% of his total income will be from sablefish and much of that in the Central/West Yakutat areas which means more time away from home and a decrease in total income. As pot boats increase in numbers he sees the problem escalating.

Bob Alverson, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn. Mr. Alverson referred to written comments submitted during the public comment period. He stressed that it is important not to allow trawlers to target on black cod.

Dave Wallen, G & W Fish Co., Port Alexander. Mr. Wallen supported a longline-only fishery for sablefish in the Central Gulf. His experiences with pot boats has been negative; there is a definite lack of communication. He prefers the status quo on sablefish seasons.

Kevin O'Leary, Alaska Coastal Community Alliance. The Alliance supports a longline-only fishery east of 159°. The Alliance is composed of trawlers, pot fishermen and longliners and the vote was a close one. In his own opinion, he feels that the gears are incompatible and that perhaps the area should be split into separate areas for each. He feels that pot fishermen have the right to earn a living, too, and would like to see a compromise, if possible.

Tim Longrich, F/V Kodiak. Mr. Longrich, a pot fisherman, still feels that pot gear is the best way to harvest the resource. He feels that better communication between pot and longline fishermen would solve the problems.

Ted West, Alaskan Fisheries. Gear restrictions in the Western and Central Gulf and Western Aleutians would be detrimental to the boats working in his joint ventures; they need the capability to move between fisheries to make their operations economical.

Oliver Holm, Kodiak Longline Association. Gear conflict is a very serious problem. He is not happy with the economic analysis the staff did on this issue. Communication between pot and longline vessels is difficult because pot vessels do not have to stay with their gear. He feels the trawl fishery

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Agenda Item 2-10, and of Alaska and Herding as Groundfish.

Don Wainwright, Alaska Herd, Inc. states a later season opening date in the spring. He also feels that 170% limit is wrong out for herders.

Paul Henderson, speaking for Charles Christensen, RV Island, Mr. Henderson read a letter from Mr. Christensen who was concerned about a later season opening date because of market situation in Japan. Also, to shorten the season two or three months would not be likely to help the situation. On his own behalf, Mr. Henderson told the Council that last year 90% of his income came from salmon fishing, much of it off of Westport Alaska, and that this year, with a shorter season, he estimates that less than 40% of his total income will be from salmon and much of that in the Central Area. He stated that he means more time away from home and a decrease in total income. As for boat license numbers he sees the problem escalating.

Bob Alexander, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn., Mr. Alexander referred to written comments submitted during the public comment period. He stated that it is important not to allow numbers to target on black cod.

Paul Mallon, E & W Fish Co., Fort Alexander, Mr. Mallon suggested a longline-only fishery for salmon in the Central Gulf. He expressed concern with pot hours has been negative; there is a definite lack of communication. He refers the status on or salmon seasons.

Kevin O'Leary, Alaska Coastal Community Alliance, The Alliance supports a longline-only fishery east of 150°. The Alliance is composed of herders, not fishermen and longliners and the vote was a close one. In his own opinion, he feels that the years are incompatible and that perhaps the area should be split into separate areas for each. He feels that pot fishermen have the right to earn a living, too, and would like to see a compromise. He suggests.

The Longline, TV Herder, Mr. Longline, a pot fisherman still feels that pot fishery is the best way to harvest the resource. He feels that better communication between pot and longline fishermen would solve the problem.

Ed West, Alaskan Fishery's, Gear contributions in the Eastern and Central Gulf and Western Alutians would be detrimental to the herders and to his joint venture; they need the capability to move between fisheries to make their operation economical.

Ulfar Holm, Kodiak Longline Association, Gear conflict is a very serious problem. He is not happy with the economic situation that exists on this island. Communication between pot and longline remains the difficult issue. He would like to see a compromise. He feels that the pot fishery

should have 5-7% bycatch of sablefish, but should not be allowed to target on it. He also feels the pollock OY should be kept to the low end; allowing a high OY to the foreign fishery doesn't help our domestic surimi production. He would also like a 670 mt ton limit on halibut bycatch for the entire year.

Terry Baker, Arctic Alaska Seafoods. ADF&G had an observer on one of their factory trawlers last year; they probably had the lowest mortality rate because of the speed with which they returned the fish to the sea. They have a three-year history in the Bering Sea and Gulf and voluntarily stayed out of the Central Gulf last year. He hopes that this will not cost them because they have not established a 'history' in the fishery.

Richard Thummel, read a letter from Chuck Thompson citing gear conflicts with the SALTY III. He supports a longline only fishery east of 159°.

Harold Thompson, Sitka Sound Seafoods. He feels that a later opening for sablefish would be better. They have encountered a larger amount of softer fish in the earlier months of the year. He asked the Council to consider impacts on crew jobs and processing when making any decision on the longline only issue.

Ray Weaver, Vice President, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union. He concurred with most of the longline-only testimony, but the larger concern is that the large pot boats carry so many pots and take up a lot of area thus displacing the smaller longline vessels. He also

supports a later opening date, late March or early April. He agreed with the 5-7% bycatch amount of trawlers.

Jay Hastings, Japan Fisheries Assn., spoke in favor of the proposed Bering Sea amendment which would increase the upper end of the OY. The proposal would not increase TAC or TALFF, but would give the Council maximum flexibility in managing the fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutians.

John Woodruff, Icicle Seafoods. Icicle prefers a longline only fishery for sablefish in the entire Gulf of Alaska, to 170°W longitude. They feel the Council can establish areas for all existing sablefish fishermen for all gear types. They prefer concurrent openings and asked that the Council consider the safety of small vessels when making their decision.

Al Burch, Bernie Burkholder, Kent Hilligso, Alaska Driggers Assn. Mr. Burch reviewed his written comments on Amendment 14. With regard to observers, he said that they are willing to take them aboard, but the insurance is too high; costs should be borne by management agencies. Mr. Burkholder said that trawlers do contribute to the local economies when possible; however in some cases it is not possible to deliver shoreside. He feels it would be a mistake to make the sablefish fishery longline only; it is an important fishery to domestic fishermen. Mr. Hilligso's testimony concurred with Mr. Burch and Mr. Burkholder.

Barry Fisher, Highliners Assn., spoke on methods of reducing salmon interception in the Bering Sea. He suggested the Council give industry a chance to solve the problem before they consider regulations.

about five 2-77 pounds of subfish, but should not be allowed to exceed 100. It also feels the bottom OY should be kept to the low end; allowing a high OY to the foreign fishery doesn't help our domestic subfish production. He would like a 670 mt limit on halibut harvest for the entire year.

John Johnson, Alaska Seafoods, AFSA, had an observer on one of their factory trawlers last year; they probably had the lowest mortality rate because of the gear with which they were fishing. They have a three-year history in the fishing for red GULF and voluntarily stayed out of the Central Gulf last year. He hopes that this will not cost them because they have not established a history in the fishery.

Richard Thummal, was a former and since then an observer on a fishing vessel with the SAIF. He supports a longline gear fishery west of 150°.

Richard Thompson, Alaska Seafoods, he feels that a later opening for subfish would be better. They have encountered a larger amount of winter fish in the earlier months of the year. He asked the Council to consider a change in crew jobs and procedures when making a decision on the longline gear fishery.

Ray Weaver, Vice President, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union, he concurred with most of the longline-only testimony, but the former concern is that the larger boats carry too many gear and take up a lot of area thus displacing the smaller longline vessels. He also

supports a later opening date, later March or early April. He concurs with the 2-77 harvest amount of 670 mt.

Jay Hamilton, Japan Fisheries Assoc., spoke in favor of the proposed being for subfish which would increase the upper end of the OY. The proposal would not increase the SAIF, but would give the Council maximum flexibility in managing the fishery in the longline fishery.

John Johnson, Alaska Seafoods, John prefers a longline gear fishery for subfish in the Central Gulf of Alaska, to 170°W longitude. They feel the Council has established a gear for all existing subfish fisherman for all gear types. They prefer a longline gear and asked that the Council consider the status of gear vessels when making their decision.

Al Barth, Barrow Fishermen's Assoc., Alaska Progress Assoc., in Barrow, Alaska, had written comments on Amendment 1A. With regard to observers, he said that they are willing to take them aboard, but the insurance is too high. Costs should be borne by management agencies. Mr. Barth said that he would like to contribute to the local economy when possible; however, in some cases it is not possible to deliver subfish. He feels it would be a mistake to make the subfish fishery longline only; it is an important fishery in Barrow. Mr. Barth's testimony concurred with Mr. Barth and Mr. Barth.

Jerry Fisher, Hillier Assoc., spoke on methods of reducing subfish harvest in the fishing gear. He suggested the Council give industry a chance to solve the problem before they consider regulations.

Dennis Petersen, North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners' Assn., recapped the Association's comments on Amendment 14 submitted during the public comment period. In reference to the status report on trawl closures to protect king crab aggregations, Mr. Petersen said his organization has data they plan team can use in their analysis of this problem

Mark Lundsten, Seattle, said the Council must make a decision on the sablefish fishery in Southeast; pot and longline gear are incompatible and if pots are allowed to continue in the fishery the longliners will be pushed out.

Andrew Moritz, Jr., Sand Point, said the sablefish fishery is going the way of the crab fishery. Pots are not suitable based on past history.

Ed Philemenof, St. George Tanaq, said that their associations with foreign joint ventures has been very important to their economy and although they agree with the Americanization of the fisheries, foreign nations should be allowed to harvest species underutilized by domestic fishermen.

Steve Johnson, Japan Deep Sea Trawlers/Hokuten Trawlers. Mr. Johnson recapped written comments submitted on Amendments 9 and 14 during the public comment period.

Phil Werdal, Jubilee Fisheries, asked the Council to eliminate pot gear from the sablefish fishery in Southeast Alaska.

Vern Hall, Kodiak, feels pots are the most efficient method of harvesting sablefish. He does not think sablefish should be harvested by trawl, but supports a 5-7% bycatch. Under catcher/processor reporting, Mr. Hall favored the alternative which would require a FCZ permit, weekly reports, but without a check-in/check-out requirement.

Jim Phillips, F/V NANCY K, prefers Gulfwide longline only for sablefish and an April 1 season opening.

Danny Graham, Eldan Alaska, Ltd., Kodiak, agreed with Mr. Phillips' testimony.

Jack Knutsen, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn., feels limited entry in the sablefish fishery is the only option, but favors "grandfathering in" pot boats that have fished the area before 12/31/84 until 1986; then they would be issued a longline license. He favored a January or February season opening.

Ron Hegge, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn., recapped their written comments submitted during the public comment period. They favor a longline-only fishery Gulfwide and a small incidental catch for trawlers.

Rich White, Baranof Fisheries, criticized the RIR and EA prepared for Amendment 14, saying that he felt they were biased toward a longline only fishery.

Alvin Osterback, Sand Point. Sand Point supports longline only for sablefish east of 170°.

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Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers Assn. The factory trawlers have been instrumental in Americanizing the fisheries and employ over 800 Americans; it is unfortunate now that they have to squabble with longliners. It is important for the Council to analyze the impact of regulations on the fleet. He suggested an industry working group could be established to study a mutually compatible solution to the problems in the sablefish fishery.

Sam Hjelle, Glacier Fish Co., feels that no one gear group should be singled out for special privileges. Industry should come to grips with the problems and come up with their own solutions to benefit all.

Gordon Jensen, thinks the most practical solution would be to separate the gear types in the sablefish fishery. The longline fishermen will lose out if they are forced to compete with pot fishermen. He feels that it might be worthwhile to start the season a little earlier, but not much because the fishermen will run out of time.

Larry Cotter, Int'l Longshoremen & Warehousemen's Union. Mr. Cotter feels that a longline only sablefish fishery east of 170° would be satisfactory; the longline fishermen have a history of vested interest in the fishery and deserve the opportunity to continue. He supports a 5-7% bycatch for trawlers.

Paul MacGregor, North Pacific Longline Association, spoke on the proposed closure within 20 miles of the Aleutians. There is very little domestic activity in the area described and this proposal really wouldn't reduce bycatch of fully-utilized species. The Japanese who fish the area already have an extremely low bycatch and the costs associated with this action would outweigh the benefits. The Japanese would not be able to make up their catch in other areas, thus affecting joint ventures.

Jon Adams, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union, favored an earlier season opening date for sablefish. He was in favor of a longline only fishery east of 170°.

Don Johnson, F/V MARGARET LYNN, disagreed with the proposed area closure to reduce salmon bycatch. They are very careful to avoid bycatch of chum salmon and feel an area closure is not required.

Richard Desantel, spoke on the request by Factory Trawlers to reduce the Pacific cod TAC in the Bering Sea. He feels that foreign fishermen have better CPUEs because they have better equipment and doesn't feel that reducing the TAC will help domestic fishermen's CPUE.

Ted Evans, Factory Trawlers Assn, spoke in favor of their request to reduce the Pacific cod TAC in the Bering sea. They feel that reserves for Pacific cod for the remainder of the year should be withheld and that managers should do anything they can to help trawlers get established in this fishery.

Paul MacGregor, North Pacific Longline Assn., said the decrease in the cod stocks is exactly as predicted by Northwest & Alaska Fishery Center scientists last year and that reducing the TAC would not aid domestic fishermen.

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