



April 2, 2021

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Council Item D5 - Salmon Bycatch

Dear Chairman Kinneen,

Sitka Salmon Shares provides premier wild Alaska seafood to thousands of home cooks across the country while supporting our collective of small-boat Alaska fishermen and coastal fishing communities via a community supported fishery model. We operate a seafood processing plant in Sitka, Alaska and partner with fishermen and seafood processors in other parts of the state including Kodiak and Bristol Bay. As a values-driven company, we support the interconnections between the health of the fishing communities where our fishermen fish and the ongoing health of the resource.

In recent years, declines of Chinook salmon across the state have resulted in management actions that have impacted businesses and communities who rely on the Chinook salmon resource. For our fishermen, including the Southeast Alaska troll and gillnet fleets, treaty allocation changes, harvest season and area closures, and other actions have challenged the resiliency of these small-boat, directed fisheries and the well-being of Southeast Alaska's fishing communities.

To sustain the well-being of our own business and that of hundreds of independent, small scale fishing businesses that have had to adapt to promote the long term health of the resource, we urge you to take action to reduce the bycatch of Chinook and other salmon species in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries. It is unacceptable that the volume of Chinook caught as bycatch in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska Trawl fishery is approximately 25% of the entire commercial Chinook harvest in Southeast Alaska.

In a time where Alaska's small-boat fishermen and fishing communities are working together to support conservation and management of these critical salmon stocks, we ask that you hold other fishing sectors to the same standards and acknowledge the need to take additional measures to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch in Alaska's trawl fisheries.

Sincerely,

Kelly Harrell
Chief Fisheries Officer
Sitka Salmon Shares

Michael Kohan
Science and Policy Director
Sitka Salmon Shares