

MEMORANDUM

TO: SSC, AP and Council Members
FROM: Chris Oliver ^{DO}
Executive Director _{for}
DATE: January 25, 2011
SUBJECT: BSAI Chum salmon bycatch

ESTIMATED TIME 8 HOURS (All C-3 items)
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ACTION REQUIRED

Preliminary review on BSAI Chum Salmon Bycatch EA/RIR

BACKGROUND

At this meeting the Council will take preliminary review of the draft EA/RIR for the BSAI non-Chinook (chum) Salmon Bycatch Management analysis. The draft analysis was mailed to you on January 19th, and provides a progress report on analysis undertaken to date. The draft analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the alternatives under consideration by the Council which were last modified in June 2010 as well as preliminary environmental impact analyses of these alternatives and additional background information on chum stock status and commercial and subsistence harvest information. The draft background information is provided at this time for consideration of the availability of information as well as to provide context on the issue and provide for comments and input on these sections during the outreach efforts over the next several months. The draft RIR is primarily comprised of background information on chum salmon subsistence and commercial fishery status and will be modified to include a formal socio-economic impact analysis once methodologies used in the Environmental Assessment impact analysis are finalized (contained in draft form in the EA at this time). The June Council motion is attached as Item C-3(a)(1).

A draft analysis of status quo with particular emphasis on the voluntary rolling hotspot (VRHS) system presently in place is attached as Item C-3(a)(2). This analysis was not available for inclusion in the preliminary draft. Additional information on draft impact analyses of the triggered closure options will be presented as available at the Council meeting.

At this meeting, the Council may wish to draft a problem statement specific to this analysis, to review the draft analyses presented, and to modify the suite of alternatives as needed to meet the purpose and need of the analysis. Initial review of the EA/RIR/IRFA is scheduled for June 2011 in Nome, Alaska. The Council will be provided an initial review analysis at that time including any revisions to and impacts of alternatives modified at this meeting. Additionally the Council will receive an update on the outreach effort that will occur between February 2011 - April 2011. Further information specific to the outreach plan is provided below.

The outreach plan for the Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch action has been revised slightly over time as outreach meetings are confirmed and new efforts arise. The most recent version is available at:

http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/bycatch/ChumOutreach1210.pdf. The plan has always incorporated a number of outreach meetings in rural communities in western Alaska, subsequent to the release of the preliminary impact analysis scheduled for Council review at this meeting.

Council staff has consulted with the coordinators of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA), Kawerak, Inc., and the Yukon River Panel, in order to evaluate the potential for time on the agendas of their annual regional meetings. There was a recognized conflict between the AVCP annual meeting October 5 – 7, 2010, in Bethel, and the Council meeting October 4 – 12, in Anchorage, so staff and Council members were unable to attend the October AVCP meeting.¹ There is also a schedule conflict that will prevent staff from attending the Seward Peninsula RAC meeting in Nome (February 15 – 16). However, the June 2011 Council meeting is scheduled in Nome, which will provide ample agenda time for this issue and public comment. In addition, staff plans to attend the Bering Straits regional conference in Nome in February. In sum, this schedule includes seven outreach meetings in the different regions, if scheduling is amenable, and two meetings with the Yukon River Panel in Anchorage. All of these meetings are open to the public.

Yukon River Panel*	(Dec 5 – 11, 2010; Anchorage)
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn annual meeting	(Feb 14 – 17, 2011; Mountain Village)
Bering Strait Regional Conference	(Feb 22 – 24; Nome)
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council	(Feb 23 – 24, 2011; Mountain Village)
Western Interior Regional Advisory Council	(March 1 – 2, 2011; Galena)
Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council	(March 3 – 4, 2011; Fairbanks)
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council	(March 9 – 10, 2011; Naknek)
Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting	(Mar 15 – 19, 2011; Fairbanks)

*Staff also presented to the Yukon River Panel in April 2010 in Anchorage.

Each of these entities represents an area that encompasses several member villages and/or tribes, and it is recognized that there is some overlap between the various entities, although the participants that attend the meetings may be very different. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC represents 42 villages in its management area. The Eastern Interior RAC represents 13 villages along the Yukon or Tanana Rivers and an additional 17 villages within the region. The Western Interior RAC represents 27 villages along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. The Bristol Bay RAC represents 31 Bristol Bay subsistence communities. The Tanana Chiefs Conference is a tribal consortium of 42 villages in interior Alaska, along the Yukon, Tanana, and Kuskokwim Rivers. The Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association has members along the entire Yukon River drainage. Kawerak, Inc. is a regional consortium of tribal governments organized as a nonprofit corporation with headquarters in Nome, Alaska. Kawerak provides services to 20 Native villages located on or near the Bering Straits.

Consistent with the outreach plan, one to two Council members are scheduled to attend each regional meeting, with one to two Council staff analysts, including the lead analyst on the project. Primary NMFS staff analysts were also invited and will attend several of these regional meetings. Council staff plans to provide presentations on the Council process, outreach efforts, and the proposed action on chum salmon bycatch reduction measures. Council staff and members will be available to answer questions, and staff will document the results of each meeting. In addition to input that can be incorporated into the impact analysis, the results of the outreach meetings will be provided to the Council prior to final action in the form of an outreach report.

¹The AVCP represents 56 tribes in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.