

April 4, 2024

Angel Drobnica, Chair  
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
L29 Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Annual report – Prohibited Species Donation Program

Chairwoman Drobnica,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this update to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. The Prohibited Species Donation Program (PSDP) has now generated over 26 million servings of high protein seafood for Americans struggling with hunger.

No one asks for bycatch, but everyone who participates in this program appreciates the value that these fish can have for hungry families. Food bank clients in Alaska and the lower 48, where seafood is in scarce supply, benefit greatly from this program. Those struggling to feed their families face the burden of not only getting enough to eat, but also accessing nutrient-rich foods that promote good health and help reduce the risk of chronic disease. Seafood, particularly Alaska salmon and halibut, are high-quality proteins that contain essential vitamins and minerals. In addition, hunger-relief efforts are increasingly focused on waste reduction across the food chain. The Prohibited Species Donation Program exemplifies that effort and offers a positive example of industry and regulators coming together to do the right thing.

### **Our role**

SeaShare has worked with fishermen, processors, and other stakeholders for 30 years to retain and donate valuable protein that would otherwise be discarded, and remains the only organization authorized to retain Prohibited Species Catch from the BSAI and GOA and use those fish exclusively for hunger-relief.

To summarize our efforts, SeaShare:

1. Works closely with NMFS to manage the permits for both salmon and halibut, and maintains the relevant records. The permits were most-recently renewed in June 2023.
2. Enlists boats and processors who are willing to retain, clean, and donate the fish. The list of vessels and plants changes slightly every year, but the overall participation remains consistent.
3. Coordinates the downstream services needed to turn those fish into packaged servings and distribute them to food banks and feeding centers.  
Secures funding to support the costs that are not fully donated.

## Retention and Quality Standards

The program is voluntary, allowing the processors to retain fish only if they are wholesome and usable, and when they have staff and line time to clean, freeze and pack the fish for donation. Shore plants can retain both salmon and halibut. At-sea processors can only retain salmon, as per IPHC recommendations. Salmon donations include both chum and king salmon. The boats and processors follow strict guidelines for quality, packing, and storage. At a minimum they agree to H&G, freeze, pack and record all fish for donation.

## Current Participants

- 132 Catcher Boats
- 12 Shoreside processors
- 35 At-Sea Processors
- 2 re-processors in Puget Sound (to inspect, trim, steak and re-pack)
- Multiple cold storage, freight, and logistics companies in AK and WA

## PSC Donation Volumes from the BSAI and GOA

	<u>2023</u>	<u>since 1994</u>
Pounds of PSC salmon	158,921	5,969,909
Pounds of PSC halibut	8,556	678,243
Total pounds =	164,477	6,648,152

## 2023 Distribution of PSC Donations

13,026 pounds were distributed in AK

151,451 pounds were distributed in WA and CA

## Other Donations in Alaska

SeaShare works to distribute donations as locally as possible. However, Intrastate freight options for PSC fish from Kodiak and Dutch Harbor remain limited. In order to reach more communities across the state, we access other non-PSC fish, then we recruit freight partners to send those donations to coastal communities and population centers. Some of our recent efforts include:

- Canned Salmon sent to the Food Bank of Alaska and the Fairbanks Food Bank via AML and Tote.
- Non PSC salmon sent to our freezer in Dillingham.
- Breaded Alaska pollock portions sent to our freezer in Bethel via Lynden Air Freight.
- Frozen portions sent to our freezer in Juneau.
- Non-PSC salmon sent to villages in the Y-K region, via USCG, Grant, Lynden.
- Non-PSC salmon sent to villages in Western Alaska, via Coastal Villages.
- PSC Salmon and halibut donated in Kodiak.
- PSC Salmon and halibut, plus ling cod, sent to the Kenai Food Bank via Carlile.

SeaShare has developed partnerships with seafood companies, tribal entities, and freight carriers to create distribution networks in Nome, Kotzebue, Bristol Bay, Kenai, and the Y-K Region.

All seafood donated in Alaska is at 0 cost to the receiving agencies.

Food banks in the lower 48 are able to support our seafood donations with funding.

### **Current Financial partners for Alaska**

SeaShare receives no funding from government agencies. We rely on a small base of financial donors to support all of our programs. Results from the Prohibited Species Donation Program would not be possible without the fundraisers, gifts, and grants from these partners who help support it:

- Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA)
- At-Sea Processors Association (APA)
- Conoco Phillips
- Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC)
- Norton Sound Economic Development Association (NSEDCA)
- Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA)
- Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (YDFDA)
- Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)
- Wells Fargo Alaska
- Bethel Community Services Foundation
- Fishing boats and fleets
- Industry leaders



Donated freezer and donated fish at the Southeast Alaska Food Bank in Juneau

### **Summary**

The Prohibited Species Donation Program has worked for 30 years; reducing waste while providing nutritious seafood to families served by food banks. It has also been a catalyst for other valuable donations in Alaska and the lower 48. SeaShare exists to provide food banks and feeding centers access to nutritious seafood.

**Fish from the Prohibited Species Donation Program make up 10% of the 270 million seafood servings that SeaShare and its partners have distributed since 1994.**

SeaShare is grateful to NMFS and all of the individuals, companies, and organizations who support the Prohibited Species Donation Program. We will continue to combine their generosity to achieve maximum benefit for everyone. Please let us know if you have recommendations to improve the program, or if you have ideas for additional collaboration.

Sincerely,



Jim Harmon  
Executive Director

cc: SeaShare board of directors  
CDQ partners  
Conoco Phillips  
Wells Fargo