


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke
Executive Director 

DATE: February 4, 2000

SUBJECT: Council/Board of Fisheries Issues

ESTIMATED TIME
2 HOURS

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Summary of joint meeting.
- (b) Comment on BOF proposals (including State waters P. cod closure).
- (c) Further direction on stand-down measures and crab FMP revisions.

BACKGROUND

By the time we get to this agenda item, we will have met with the Board and discussed the following topics:

1. Groundfish gear usage restrictions preceding the crab season; crab FMP revisions
2. Crab management (C-3 for crab sideboard issues and crab co-op development)
3. Proposals of mutual concern
4. Habitat areas of particular concern (D-1)
5. Halibut management issues (C-1)
6. Steller sea lions (C-2)
7. Application of the groundfish/crab LLP to State waters fisheries (C-4)

I will have a summary of our joint meeting discussions available and then the Council may consider further action/direction on any of the above topics, either under this broader agenda item, or under the specific Council agenda items cross-referenced above. Two specific issues for which there are no separate agenda items in the Council notebooks include #1 and 3 above.

Board Proposals

Proposals that will be considered by the Board in March were made available in your joint meeting notebooks for February 8th, and are not repeated here. One that stands out, however, is proposal #418, which in its latest revision by the Aleut Corporation, would restrict State waters cod and rockfish fisheries between 173 and 178 W to jig or fixed gear vessels equal to or less than 60 ft. Two other proposals, #417 and 420, would

establish inshore State waters pollock fisheries. As you will recall, the Council members on the joint committee voted to recommend the Board drop #417 and 420 from further consideration because of concerns over Steller sea lions. The Council may want to comment on other proposals as well. Also please recall that the Board has sent to the Council, Resolution #2000-198-FB which requests revisions to observer protocols on trawl vessels in the Gulf of Alaska.

Preseason Gear Restrictions and Crab FMP Revisions

The staff will need further direction as appropriate on these two topics, particularly if the Council wants to initiate changes to our groundfish regulation or crab plan. All available information related to these topics was provided in your special joint meeting notebooks.

Mezich Allegiance, Inc.
E/V Fierce Allegiance

February 1, 2000

Mr. Rick Lauber, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Ave., Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

RECEIVED

FEB - 1 2000

N.P.F.M.C

RE: Comment on Agenda Item C-6
American Fisheries Act BBRKC Sideboards

Dear Mr. Lauber:

I am writing to express my concern over the American Fisheries Act Management Plan for Bristol Bay Red King Crab (5 AAC39.XXX). As owner of the AFA qualified vessel the Fierce Allegiance (ADF&G #55111 and MVP #7304B), I am against the ADF&G plan to *equally* apportion among the AFA crab vessels the BBRKC aggregate cap. The AFA and it's sideboards restrict all qualified vessels to their historical catch records for nearly every groundfish species available to fish, but on the contrary, propose to equally divide among the boats the BBRKC harvest without the slightest consideration to past catch history and effort expended by these vessels.

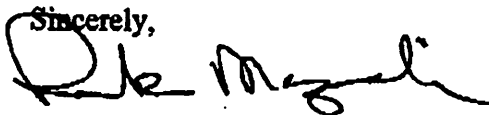
The Fierce Allegiance, owned by Mezich Allegiance, Inc. (a family owned business), has historically been far more economically dependent on the crab fisheries than on pollock. The vessel is now limited to a small allocation of pollock and other groundfish due to the AFA sideboards and it's limited catch history. The Fierce Allegiance, on the otherhand, has continually produced far better than average in the crab fisheries. As skipper of the vessel with 21 years experience as a captain in Bering Sea crab fisheries, I have worked hard to make the Fierce Allegiance a highly competitive crab boat. The boat is equipped with top-notch crab gear and a dedicated, experienced crew which have helped make it a high producer in the crab fisheries. An *equal* distribution of the BBRKC aggregate cap among the AFA catcher vessels would eliminate everything I've worked for as a fisherman these past 32 years in the Alaska. It is unfair and unethical to limit AFA vessels to their historical catch in certain fisheries such as pollock and Pcod and take that same right away in other traditional fisheries such as Bristol Bay red king crab.

It is my understanding there are legal issues involved that limit the Alaska Board of Fisheries in it's authority to divide the sideboard cap into anymore than equal trip limits for all qualified vessels. I urge the council to take action on this issue and adopt a new ruling that will allow for allocation the BBRKC aggregate cap on a *differential* basis using each vessel's historical catch history.

In addition, I would like to comment on my disagreement to item (6) on the draft proposal (12/27/99) for the AFA management plan for Bering Sea and Bristol Bay king crab fisheries. Once again AFA sideboard restrictions are affecting the ability of the AFA crossover boats to fish their historical catch on which they economically rely. Why should the AFA boats be penalized if they do not catch their allocated harvest within the same time limit as the non-AFA crab fleet? The AFA crab vessels should be allowed to harvest their aggregate cap regardless.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rick Mezich
Mezich Allegiance, Inc.- President
7215 156th St. SW
Edmonds, WA 98026
(425)742-7456
(425)742-7712 FAX