



Alaska Field Office
715 L Street, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501

Tel (907) 276-3133
Fax (907) 276-2584

nature.org/alaska

March 21, 2011

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Mr. Eric Olson, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Re: Request for a new exempted fishing permit to continue research on salmon bycatch reduction devices

Dear Chairman Olson,

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy's Alaska chapter, I am writing to encourage the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to approve the request of Principle Investigator, John R. Gauvin, for an Exempted Fishing Permit to continue research on salmon bycatch reduction devices for the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

The Nature Conservancy is a science-based organization committed to developing partnerships that find cooperative, collaborative solutions to conservation issues throughout the world. For the last year, the Conservancy has been working directly with Mr. Gauvin and representatives of the Bering Sea pollock fleet to evaluate the data collected during EFP 08-02 to assess the efficacy of the flapper-style salmon escapement device to allow escapement of Chinook salmon from pollock trawl nets. Based on our evaluation of those data, the Conservancy concludes that the flapper-style device is effective in allowing Chinook salmon escapement, and can contribute to the Council's objective for Amendment 91 to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Groundfish Fishery Management Plan to maintain Chinook bycatch below 47,591 annually. The development of this device could not have occurred without the EFPs approved by the Council in 2003, 2005, and 2008.

While the flapper-style device has been effective in allowing Chinook salmon escapement, it has not had satisfactory results for chum salmon escapement. Differences in the behavior of chum and Chinook salmon in the net are likely contributing to the disparate results. We believe the additional studies proposed in this EFP request will be useful in determining ways to reduce chum salmon bycatch, and may improve the performance of the flapper-style device for Chinook escapement. In addition, this research may be useful to other fisheries in Alaska and other regions addressing salmon bycatch.

We, therefore, encourage the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to approve this request for an EFP. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 907-276-3133 x101.

Sincerely,

Steve A. Maclean
Fisheries Program Director

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP SHEET

Agenda Item: D-2(c) Salmon Excluder EFP

	NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF:
1	GLENN REED	PSPA
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NOTE to persons providing oral or written testimony to the Council: Section 307(1)(I) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act prohibits any person "to knowingly and willfully submit to a Council, the Secretary, or the Governor of a State false information (including, but not limited to, false information regarding the capacity and extent to which a United State fish processor, on an annual basis, will process a portion of the optimum yield of a fishery that will be harvested by fishing vessels of the United States) regarding any matter that the Council, Secretary, or Governor is considering in the course of carrying out this Act.