

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SIGN-UP SHEET

Agenda Item: C-4 Scallop ACLs

	NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF:
1	<i>Ally Thomson</i>	<i>Tim Stone</i>
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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.



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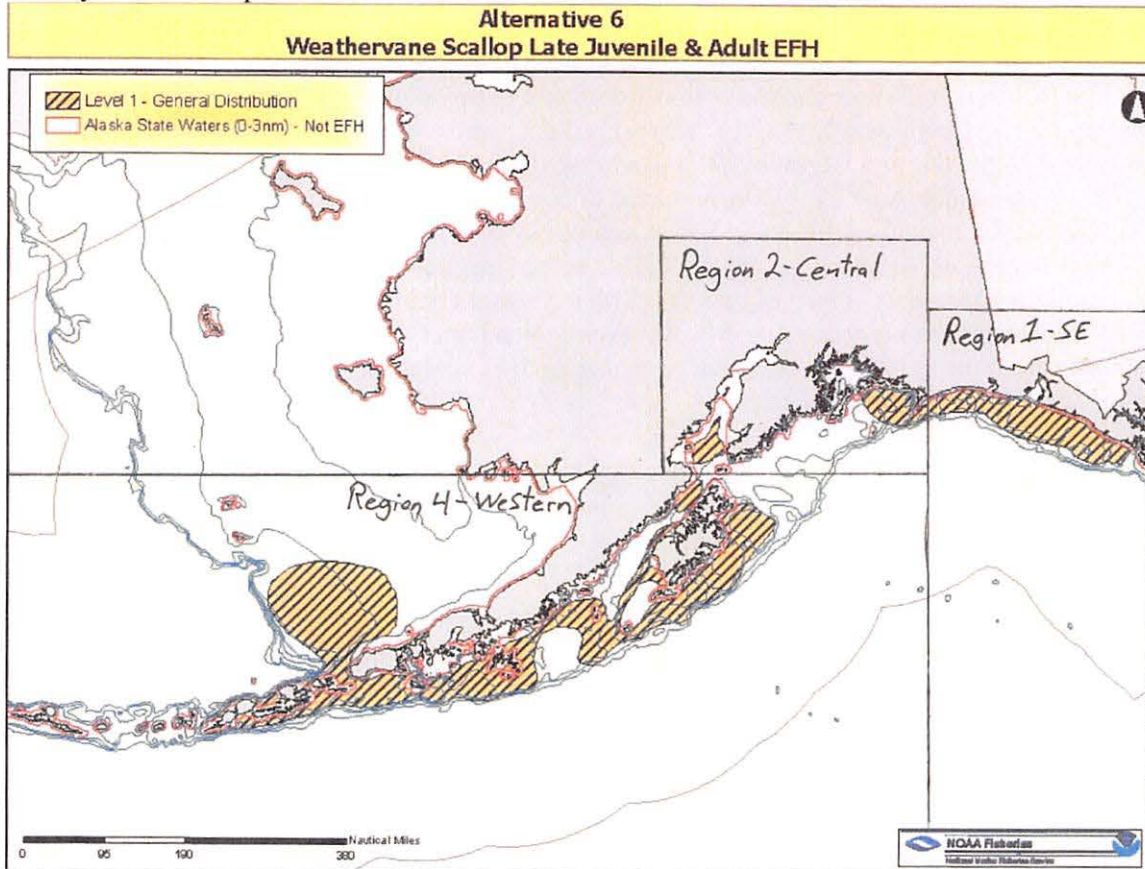
RE: Agenda item C-4, Scallop ACL

Dear Mr. Chairman

I apologize for not being able to stay for final action on Scallop ACL's in the council. I have attended, participated and testified at SPT, SCC and the AP. One of the problems of being in one of the smallest Federal fisheries in Alaska is that I must wear many hats. We are concluding a marketing campaign, convincing high end seafood consumers that Alaska Weathervane Scallops are the best scallops in the world, I must attend our final marketing event for the year this weekend. I appreciate and understand that you could not let me testify so early before the scheduled time for Scallop ACL's on the agenda.

Statewide vs Regional

No matter which alternative is chosen ASA membership believes that **option "A Statewide" is appropriate** and not regional. As the below EFH chart clearly illustrates these are bureaucratic boundaries and not scallop biological boundaries. Two of the borders of region 2 actually bifurcate important commercial Weathervane beds.





Alternatives;

We agree with the State of Alaska and ADFG in that **alternative 2a is the appropriate choice.**

One huge buffer not quantified in analysis is created from the hundreds of scallop beds around the state closed to fisheries out of habitat concerns. These beds continue to contribute to the productivity of all the State's scallop beds, closed or open to fishing. Every Spring literally billions of larvae are sent off travelling for 4 to 8 weeks with the prevailing currents from the closed beds reseeding and settling on both opened and closed beds around the state.

The Weathervane MSY is based on the average landings from 1990 to 1997 on only the opened beds and includes no productivity from these many closed beds.

Using this MSY calculated without full consideration to the whole statewide weathervane population makes us believe that the buffer is considerably less than Council staffs assignment of P*.50 to Alternative 2a, a calculation derived from only the open beds.

Non-Target scallop species;

While none of the options are very satisfactory to ASA members. Currently we do not fish these species, but we recognize that scallop populations shift, market perceptions and economic values of different species change. (Example; in the late 70's and early 80's we used to joke in the Bering Sea about "Who would ever want to catch these tiny worthless *Opilio* crab?" Now the most valuable crab species in Alaska.) Our members have been looking for the best method that would allow them access should this non-target scallop fishery develop. **We have settled on Option 2, Ecosystem Component (EC).**

An Ecosystem component option appears that it might allow for some small incidental landing to current LLP holders. We recognize that should a fishery in these non target scallops begin to look plausible, that we would need to return to the NPFMC to create an FMP and ACL's.

We originally thought that option 1 dropping these non-targets from the FMP would be appropriate. After further discussions we realized that were a non-target scallop fishery to begin that the number one and largest bycatch would most likely be Weathervane scallops. With ACL's, this weathervane bycatch would need to be accounted for and deducted from the OFL. This deduction from the OFL could have a potentially devastating impact on the Scallop LLP holders in reduced weathervane scallop GHl's by persons not currently in any scallop fisheries.

An additional concern of option 1, is that a vessel could conceivably fish non-targets in Federal waters with no permit (i.e. Mr. Big event). Non target scallop could be fished without the same restrictions as weathervane scallopers have such as vessel size limits, no mechanical shuckers and maximum crew sizes.

Sincerely, Jim Stone, President
Alaska Scallop Association