

Public Testimony

Agenda C-1 Inshore/Offshore

Andy Cristaldi, Chelsea Realty & Dev., Kodiak. Real estate is used as a benchmark of economy. The decline of the crab fishery, softening of salmon seasons, and other fishery events cause high degree of residential fluctuation, softening of construction, and other economic changes. With the onset of inshore delivery there has been an increase in their economy.

Janet Wendte, Northern Exposure Gallery, Kodiak. Supports inshore allocation. Even though she is not involved in the fisheries, they have an impact on her business.

Barry Fisher/Fred Yeck, Midwater Trawlers Co-op. Support allocation; but suggest an amendment which would shift a pure harvesting vessel out of the offshore category and into the inshore category for the purpose of allocation, and shift an appropriate portion of the resource from offshore to inshore category. Mr. Fisher expressed concern that the moratorium seems to have been separated from the inshore/offshore issue.

Stan Daily, Aleutian Dragon Fisheries. Feels coastal towns have been "shorted." They are pretty much shut down. He feels they would have had a better chance if there had been more allocation to inshore operations.

Linda Freed, Acting Mayor, Kodiak Island Borough. Urged the Council send the analysis out for public review so they can comment more substantially at the June Council meeting.

Tom Sweeney, Sweeney Insurance. In favor of sending the analysis out for public review. Onshore processing is very important to their business and the community. Processors need to operate year-round.

Gary Ekvin, McDonald's/Kiwanis Club. Send analysis out for public review. Fisheries are important for Kodiak economy.

Wayne Stevens, Local Color. Supports specific allocation for onshore industry. Loss of processing jobs has a direct impact on his business.

Mike Sweeney, Sweeney Motor Co. Supports inshore allocation.

JoAnn Demke, Kodiak Chamber of Commerce. Supports shorebased allocation as soon as possible for stability of coastal communities.

Sandy Cavanagh, Sandy's Flower's. Not involved in fishing but it affects her business. Send analysis out for public review.

Debbie Refiore, Kodiak Motors. Likewise, their business depends on local processors being in business all year round.

Mick Stevens, ProFish Int'l. He doesn't think Council can allocate except at the harvesting level. Proposed updating Option 4 with regard to vessel size, or an additional option addressing newer information. Referred to Pacific Council's method of categorizing trawlers, ie., whether they catch

and sell only or whether they catch and process. Also believes options analyzed do not address the problem at hand.

Marina Villanova, Alaska Fresh Seafoods. He is impacted by inshore/offshore allocation; the outcome will affect his family. Cannery workers suffer because of the factory trawlers grabbing the Alaska resource.

Paul MacGregor/Garry Brown, AFTA. Commended staff on the analysis but don't think it's adequate to be released for public review. The options do not solve the problem identified. Unless access is limited and the resource apportioned among users, preemption will continue to occur. Several options need to be added: a moratorium option, an ITQ system or some other effort limitation, and an apportionment option based on actual DAP harvests in 1988-89. Mr. Brown mentioned additional information they provided which was not used. Also, concerned that the model is not accessible to the public thus making comment difficult because they can't access the assumptions, etc., in model.

Dan Clark/Randy Ackerman F/V Columbia/FV Viking Explorer. Support inshore/offshore allocation. They feel inshore interests are entitled to at least 50% of the quota. Catching and processing facilities are available to handle 50%.

Chris Riley, Trident Seafoods. Asked that his document, "Economic Review of the Proposed Inshore/Off-Shore Pollock Allocation in the North Pacific," be entered into record. Send analysis out for public review without delay. Expressed hope that the Midwater Trawl Co-op proposal could be included.

Laurel Sison, Cannery worker. Time for cannery workers to be given some consideration; they are low-paid workers and need year-round employment.

Wally Johnson, Kodiak Motors. Fisheries have a great effect on all business in Kodiak. Favor an inshore allocation.

Agenda C-2 User-Fee System

Larry Tideman, Pacific Observers. Objects to the references to conflict of interest in the document; he sees that as a disservice to observer contractors. Decertify violators if there is confirmed conflict. Submitted written comments on the analysis.

Dem Cowles, Steve Hughes, Vince Curry, Arni Thomson, Linda Kozak, Chris Blackburn. Submitted eight points which they support for a user-fee program. Also favor an oversight committee. Crab catcher-processor vessels should be assessed and funded as others, not exempted.

Roger Woods, Data Contractors, Inc. Submitted written comments on analysis. Supports an oversight committee.

Doug Gordon, AHSFA. Submitted written comments on analysis. User-fee system is only half the plan; they need more detail on what the fees will be paying for. Oversight Committee is desirable.

John Dolese, Emerald Resource Mgmt. Prefer the status quo with NMFS assigning observers at random.

Agenda C-4 Halibut Management

Daniel Miller, Kodiak. Has fished halibut as crew member and owner; just bought a boat and is not sure he will get anything; against whole system of limiting access. Been in fisheries since early 1970s.

Shari Gross, HANA. Encouraged Council to include in the analysis a realistic picture of how a program will be implemented, exactly how it will all work. Supports AP recommendation for a SIA in the halibut analysis.

Agenda C-5 Future Management Planning

Steve Hughes, MTC. Support AP recommendations with no change in dates. A moratorium needs to be put in place and kept there until an ITQ system is implemented. Regarding the AP recommendation on vessel size replacement, vessels may need to increase over 20% to comply with Coast Guard rules.

Doug Dixon, MARCO. Doesn't particularly support a moratorium. But, regarding the increase in vessel size, JV vessels that don't have tanks to deliver to shore may have to install fish holds, thus the 20% would restrict them. Another problem is the cost/benefit in increasing size to comply with Coast Guard rules. Asked Council to consider something in excess of the 20% with regard to lengthening.

Doug Gordon, AHSFA. Urged Council not to create any more "windows".

George Anderson, Fishing Co. of Alaska. He testified last year about the problems they were encountering--overcapitalization, bycatch, loss of markets, etc., all of which have occurred. Council is micromanaging them out of existence.

Bert Larkin, AFTA. Supportive of a moratorium, but it must be done now; no more loopholes. Any ITQ program for sablefish and halibut should be compatible with a similar program for groundfish and crab.

Agenda C-6 International Fisheries

Feeney Matthews, Aquatic Resources. Submitted written comments regarding concern for pollock stocks and the relationship of fishing in the donut to declining stocks.

Paul MacGregor, AFTA. Called for an immediate moratorium on fishing in the donut. Scientists have indicated a link between donut stocks and US stocks. Without a moratorium on all fishing in the area, their competitors in the world market are continuing to fish there and they must to compete.

Agenda D-1 Groundfish

Thomas Elias, Alaska Sportfishing Assn. They have been concerned for eight years about salmon bycatch by trawl fleet. It should be addressed very strongly by the Council now. There should be caps on salmon bycatch or restrictions to alleviate the problem. King salmon returning to

Southcentral are declining rapidly each year. There are several areas to be addressed, but trawl is a major one. They understand a major source of the problem is in the rockfish fishery.

Bruce Cotton, Long John Silver. Inconsistent opening and closing of seasons, and the resulting unreliable supply, does not allow them to purchase as much Alaska product as they would like. Quality of catch and consistent supply are most important. They would prefer to plan purchases over a 10-12 month period rather than all in the first quarter. The cod they buy from Alaska is more expensive than that bought from foreign countries even after processing.

Gary Cadd, Kenai Peninsula Sportsfishing Assn. Submitted written testimony. Supports AP recommendations for salmon bycatch and the proposal to prohibit trawling. Asked for closure of the rockfish fishery in the Gulf because of salmon bycatch.

Daniel Miller, Kodiak. Regarding bycatch. Worked as an observer in for the State in 1977-78; in favor of time/area closures; incentive programs only work with full-time observers.

Loren Flagg, Cook Inlet Coalition. Represents seven major sport and commercial user groups in Cook Inlet who are concerned about salmon bycatch. Requested action over six months ago. Support AP recommendations regarding salmon bycatch, including an out-of-cycle amendment to close trawl fishery.

Steve Pint, Kodiak. Currently fishes in the Bering Sea and delivers to a shorebased plant. Definition of pelagic cod trawls is not working. Asked that the Council look very closely at either a penalty box system or vessel initiative pool to address the incidental catch problem. Suggested prohibiting night trawling. Shouldn't waste incidental catch; should be some way to sell it.

Linda Behnken/Dan Falvey, ALFA. Testified in favor of their request for an emergency closure of trawling in the eastern Gulf.

Kris Norosz, PVOA. Support ALFA's request and requested action to reduce bycatch before it shuts down their longline fisheries. Asked Council to deny a request to transfer halibut PSC from 4th quarter to 2nd quarter.

John Henderschedt, Golden Age Fisheries. Their vessels have participated in bycatch incentive programs and attempted to reduce bycatch by various means. Displacement of boats from BSAI to GOA has resulted in some surprises. Boats new to the rockfish fishery, and with no incentive program, have had an extremely high bycatch of salmon. Thinks an opening of June 1 for the rockfish fishery would result in lower bycatch rates. They have experienced lowest bycatch rates in the eastern Gulf.

Greg Seider/Arni Thomson, UFA. They have 22 member groups, including crab, longline, salmon, and draggers. They submitted four resolutions relating to the control of bycatch in trawl fisheries.

Feeney Matthews, Aquatic Resources Conservation. Supports the ALFA request to prohibit trawling in the eastern Gulf for rockfish conservation.

Dem Cowles, Fisheries Conservation Action Group. Linda Kozak, Chris Blackburn, Linda Behnken, Arni Thomson, Greg Seider, Gary Cadd, Loren Flagg. Submitted written testimony consisting of suggestions for bycatch issues before the Council.

Doug Gordon, AHSFA. Don't use closed areas without trying out other bycatch regimes suggested over the years: floating caps, hot spot authority, dividing bycatch among companies, etc. Depoliticize the system.

Linda Kozak/Thorn Smith, North Pacific Longline Coalition. Submitted written testimony supporting seasonal apportionment of BSAI Pacific cod.

Thor Olson/Steve Hughes, Midwater Trawlers. Present bycatch management is a disaster. Have worked with the Council on a number of measures. Asked Council to immediately request, in strongest terms, a Secretarial amendment. Need to continue the process started on bycatch. Also recommended rockfish fishery begin in June or July and that no fishery in Alaska begin until the end of the second or third week of January to alleviate high chinook and halibut bycatches. Need to keep GOA and BSAI seasons in sync. No more pelagic trawl definitions--require use of roller gear.

Lori Hamilton, Net Systems, Inc. Have worked over the years to develop gear which will help reduce bycatch; this will, however, also reduce CPUE to some degree. Need a method of individual accountability. Don't regulate by gear.

Kent Hueser, Cook Inlet Professional Sportsfishing Assn. Asked the Council to address bycatch of king salmon with emergency priority.

Dave Fraser, Cape Flattery Fisheries. There is no "magic" way to reduce bycatch. Thinks individual accountability is one way of encouraging reduction.

Jeff Stephan/Jay Stinson, UFMA. Regarding the pot definition amendment--supported the halibut excluder and biodegradable panels and asked for some coordination between State and federal definitions for groundfish pots. Concerned over current definition of pelagic trawl. Thinks it's discriminatory against smaller vessels; can't build one to spec that will be effective in catching the fish they're after. Recommends that Council contact AFDF regarding the status of their proposed study on reduction of bycatch through gear design changes.

David Harville, Kodiak & Western Trawl. To reduce bycatch, restrict midwater trawlers to lesser horsepower, and implement gear size restrictions.

George Anderson, Fishing Company of Alaska. One of their vessels in the rockfish fishery was part of the problem with high bycatch recently. But their company also wishes to be part of the solution. Want to help provide insight not only to solving bycatch, etc., but other management issues. Would like an ad hoc committee of Council, NMFS, and rockfish participants to work on the problems. Suggested a cap on salmon bycatch with penalties, followed by a real incentive program. Wants Council to support 100% industry participation in the rockfish stock assessment proposal.

Chris Blackburn/Mark Chandler, Kodiak. Requesting 100 mt trawl halibut bycatch in GOA be moved from 3rd and/or 4th quarter to 2nd quarter to minimize disruption in developing flatfish and arrowtooth flounder fisheries. Opening and closing the processing operation because of fishery closures just won't allow them to get the operation going. Currently harvesting primarily dover sole where halibut and salmon bycatch is practically non-existent. In favor of a true bycatch incentive program.

Bert Larkin/Vince Curry, AFTA. Give fishermen incentives and let them learn to comply; not gear restrictions, etc. NOAA has to be advised that we need cooperation - millions of pounds of fish are not being unharvested because of bycatch. Industry needs a mechanism to stop the few abusers in any gear group before they shut everyone down.

Sinclair Wilt/Dave Stanchfield, Alyeska Seafoods. Regarding NMFS' suggestion to reduce the reduction of the allowable bycatch of cod in the pelagic pollock fishery from 20% to 2%. Although cod bycatch is normally below 2%, they have experienced brief periods of higher bycatch rates. A reduction to 2% would result in waste of cod. Not opposed to a reduction in the rate, but this proposal is too severe; suggest 5% to 10%.