

SSEI Emergency Petition, August 30, 2016
PO Box 232 Petersburg, AK 99833

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association
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August 7, 2016
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board of Fisheries
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811
Email: dfg.bof.comments@alaska.gov

RE: Comments on August 30 Meeting for the Southern Southeast Sablefish Longline Emergency Petition

Dear Board of Fisheries Members,

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association (PVOA) is composed of over 100 members participating in a wide variety of species and gear type fisheries. An additional 35 businesses supportive to our industry are members. Targeted species include salmon, herring, halibut, sablefish, cod, crab, shrimp, pollock, tuna, geoduck, and sea cucumber.

PVOA's mission statement is to:

"Promote the economic viability of the commercial fishing fleet in Petersburg, promote the conservation and rational management of North Pacific resources, and advocate the need for protection of fisheries habitat."

At the 2015 Southeast Finfish meeting, our membership supported similar proposals 134 and 135 that would allow hook and line longline fishermen to convert to pot gear. **PVOA continues to support legalizing pot gear for the C61C Southern Southeast Sablefish fishery as outlined in the emergency petition from Bill Connors.** We ask that the regulation be developed to allow fishermen to choose between hook and line and pot gear in order to use the gear type that is best for an individual's operation.

PVOA members believe converting to pot gear is a conservative solution to mitigate the killer whale predation in Clarence Straits. The amount of fish lost to these whales is not measurable for management purposes and harms all user groups in the area.

The Southern Southeast Sablefish fishery is currently broken into two seasons. The hook and line gear get the first 75 days from June 1 to August 15 and pot gear gets the second 75 days from September 1 to November 15. At the 2015 Southeast Finfish meeting, our members noted the conflict of the hook and line season overlapping with the southeast salmon fisheries' seasons. **PVOA still asks for one season for both gear types to prevent potential economic impacts of having to choose between targeting salmon and sablefish from June-August.** Alternatively, our members would support extending the hook and line season into the pot season to prevent this timing conflict and enable the fishery to occur when less whales are in Clarence Straits, as described in the emergency petition.

Thank you for your service and considering our comments. Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association represents six of the 20 active permanent and interim C61C permits. As always, we are happy to answer any questions. Since it is salmon season and our membership is on the water, email is currently the best way to contact us: pvoa@gci.net.

Respectfully,



Megan O'Neil
Executive Director