

Proposal 6 is an attempt to address a problem caused by the exclusive nature of Chignik regulations, but it is only one small part of a larger problem of stranded quotas.

Many stranded quota problems arise with jig quota. One problem is caused when an area with exclusive state registration fails to close. Most jig effort occurs immediately before salmon season and the overwhelming majority of jig boats will switch to salmon. This leaves only a tiny number of boats harvesting the remaining state jig quota. While this sounds ideal for those remaining boats, the Federal harvest is suspended within three miles until the state season closes. A jig boat that expects to move to a different area (e.g. a boat that fishes Kodiak state water in spring then moves to Sand Point in the summer) will be blocked from entering that new area because state season remains open.

How could abundant quota for a few boats be a bad thing? It is important to understand that favorable conditions for jigging occur in different locations each year. In some years jig boats simply cannot catch cod in some areas even while other gear types are successful. Since a decision to register in some exclusive area must be made before a jig boat begins its season there is no way to know beforehand if cod will cooperate. You roll the dice. There is only the hope that a bad decision can be mitigated by moving to another area after the state season closes.

In this scenario, one area now has a few boats and abundant quota while other boats look on jealously and wait. All those other boats who wanted the protection of an exclusive area—nearly all of them salmon boats—have left the jig fishery and are not going to return to it. The pattern of participation is identical in every area with exclusive registration. There is no protection needed against outside entrants because there are virtually no other boats left to enter a new area except for the few full time jig boats that move around the state... BUT... if those few boats can congregate on an area, mopping up state quota, then jig boats in that area can begin harvesting the Federal jig sector quota! This is a key goal for several reasons. First, of course by working where there are fish the state jig quota is finally harvested, but Federal quota works on a step-up system where more jig harvest equals more jig quota. By maintaining exclusivity, the state of Alaska is actually reducing the total amount of fish that can be landed by blocking Federal quota from being landed!

While a few boats and abundant quota are great for the lucky few, that apparent luck can also run out. Another problem has arisen when local markets disappear. This problem has occurred in Chignik and South Peninsula jig fisheries, and also in the Chignik pot fishery. There is no market for cod located in the Chignik area, so all fish must be tendered out or delivered at a huge cost in time and fuel by participants. The Trident plant in Sand Point simply quit buying cod in July of 2015, making it impossible to fish cod in either Chignik or the South Peninsula, but due to exclusivity it was also impossible to move to other areas (e.g. Kodiak) where the fishing may have been poor but at least there was a market for the fish. Thus millions of pounds of state and Federal jig quota went untouched while a group of dedicated jig boats was prevented from working.

The above scenarios are not the only ways that quota can be stranded, but at the heart of all stranding problems is the issue of exclusivity. Chignik is the most extreme problem with the double issue of super exclusivity and remoteness from markets. Some stranding problem occurs every year though. Many times the full extent of the problem is masked by the fact that unharvested jig quota is rolled over to other sectors. As Chignik illustrates, and Proposal 6

addresses, there are times when even the rollover provisions cannot result in an effective harvest. The only people willing to harvest the quota are still blocked from pursuing it.

There is a simple and elegant solution, not only to Chignik's stranding problem, but for a variety of others. Federal jig quota is allocated in A and B seasons, with B season opening on June 10 each year. That date was chosen to allow jig quota to be caught when the fish are most cooperative. If exclusivity is maintained in all areas in the spring, then dropped statewide on June 10, jig boats will be able to reposition and resume fishing as they see fit. This is especially important for the Chignik area since dozens of small boats jig around Kodiak in the spring, then transit Chignik on their way to Bristol Bay etc. Those boats can carry loads to distant markets, easing the tendering problem. If a Chignik based boat feels that its jig quota is being unfairly removed, it is important to remember that more Federal quota becomes available as soon as state fisheries close. Anyone who wants to jig in the Chignik area has far more quota available than the state allocation. It is only a matter of unlocking the potential.

Now, to return to Proposal 6, Chignik pot boats could conceivably be hurt by removing jig quota that might roll over to them, but under current regulations they are severely hindered from pursuing it in the first place. It is not expected that the full Chignik jig quota will suddenly be fully harvested. Given the historical variation in jig catches, it should be expected that Chignik will also have years in which jiggers simply cannot catch codfish. The stranding problem remains in place for Chignik unless a provision is made to allow mop up fishing to be conducted by those willing to fish there, *in a timely fashion*. Proposal 6 seeks to drop exclusivity at the end of October, but the harsh reality of cod fishing in the Chignik area suggests that an earlier date may be necessary.

The goal in dropping exclusive registration is not to harm any coastal community. There are valid concerns when a sudden influx of boats enters an area. Exclusivity can be an effective tool to manage and moderate the surge of cod fishing activity in the spring. Nonetheless, there is a lengthy history of state and Federal quota becoming stranded while willing boats are prevented from harvesting it. Nobody is helped by leaving fish in the water.