

Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association
Dustan Dickerson
October 17, 2018

UNFA BOF PROPOSAL

The case for a new sector

UNFA is a community based advocacy group that promotes small boat fishermen of the Eastern Aleutians. Along with the fishermen of Akutan, we are responsible for the Jig fishery and the Under 60 Federal fixed gear cod fishery in the Bering Sea, that so many boats now participate in. I would suggest that the Super 8's that enjoy this fishery, owe a debt of gratitude to the smaller vessels of that sector, for opening the door for them. It is our hope that in return, they would recognize the need for another sector based on gross tons, by which to accommodate those of us that are clearly of another class, in both the State Water and the Federal cod fishery. And we hope, that the Board of Fish and the NPFMC, will recognize the value that small boats have to the communities of Unalaska and Akutan. And give us cover in the Super 8's drive to overcapitalize the State Water fishery as they have the Federal fishery and push us into bankruptcy. This is a call for help. This is a bad marriage. And though the larger vessels of this sector, may have respect for the small boat lifestyle and an appreciation for the simple zen of fishing, and we in turn applaud their ambition, there is no mechanism by which to separate ourselves. This is the divorce court. Maybe i'm just getting old or maybe I choose to preserve the legacy of the Bobby Storr's, the Bob Nehus's, Emil Berikoff's and others from our town who lived the small boat lifestyle, and who's impact improved the fabric of our community, and inspired me as a young man to go jigging and get involved in fish politics. So, the value of the creation of a new sector is two fold. To preserve the small boats of our Alaskan communities, and to give opportunities to the young that are inspired by this lifestyle. The same words we used in 1999 when we separated ourselves from the larger vessels of our sector, during the creation of Amendment 64 at the NPFMC and the birth of the Under 60. We do not wish to take fish from anyone, only to have ours returned.



To the Chairman of the Board of Fish,

The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska supports the Unalaska Native Fishermen's Association's efforts to create another sector for smaller vessels of our community fish to catch even after the 58's and Super 8's have caught their allocation. This is because our local fleet is being left behind in the current way the State chooses to allocate resources.

It is important to recognize the broad discrepancies between the sizes of boats that participate in the State Water cod fishery. The majority of boats in the fishery are 58's and Super 8's. This fact puts the smaller boats that wish to participate at a severe disadvantage.

If the State would like all of her citizens to prosper equally, there should be a mechanism by which they can do so. We believe that creating another sector is the only way to ensure our local small boats and other small boats from communities around the state, which are sure to come, an equal opportunity to the fish that belong to all of us.

The request to create a new fishery is supported by historical precedent. A fishery in State Water for boats 58 and under was created because it benefited the people of the State. We can do the same thing, by creating a category for smaller vessels, to benefit the people of a community.

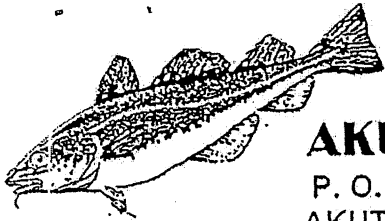
It is our hope the State begins to take a "community needs" approach above all other considerations when it comes to the allocation of fish. The vibrancy and the vitality of our small boat fishermen depend on it. Of the many reasons that "community needs approach" is a sound philosophy, perhaps the fact we live here in the Aleutians, is the most important one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas Robinson
President





AKUTAN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

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Hello BOF, Stakeholders and fellow fisherman:

The Akutan Fisheries Association's membership (AFA) supports the idea of using a vessels gross displacement instead of overall length to help establish a new vessel category, this new fishing sector in the AI/BS State water p-cod fishery would not be in conflict with the new class 58 footers that are being built today.

Rational for AFA's support: with the reduced P-cod quota in the GOA, there's less p-cod to pay for operational expenses or fixed and uncontrolled expenditures, this forces vessel owners to pursue the State water allocation, it's almost impossible for new entrants to be able to get a foothold in an already crowded cod fishery, it also hurts the vessels that perhaps don't own IFQs to help diversify their fishing activities AFA supports the idea of using gross tonnage displacement to be used to help establish a new fishing sector or vessel category using the State water fisheries.

Today's new 58-foot combination vessels aren't what the BOF envisioned or expected back when the 60 foot and under class was implemented, the displacement on these new class 58 foot vessels are in the 100 ton range, they are very efficient, they pack more gear and pack a quarter of a million pounds and not much weather keeps them off the grounds.

I don't have anything against this new class of super 58s, I like everything about them, but with more efficiency comes shorter seasons, vessels like the described can and do clean up the quota fast, which doesn't give my members who own smaller vessels under 55 tons a chance to compete, a chance to catch what's needed to make ends meet, in the last 6 years its been a struggle for the small boat fisherman in the State-water sector to scratch out a living.

Back in 1994 a similar request was made to the NPFMC where a separate cod jig quota was established to help protect the small boat fisherman around the AK Penn / AI districts, what was done for the P-cod jig fishery back in 94 could be used by the BOF as a model to formulate a separate vessel category by using 55 gross tons as the breaking point in order to be able to enter this new vessel category, this would help the BOF maintain its philosophy of leaving the State-water P-cod fishery an open access fishery to help new recruits break into the Alaska fishing industry.

If implemented properly, it shouldn't cause any conflicts, we believe this is a friendly request, which honors the set quota free enterprise system, that allows anyone to harvest as much as possible until the quota is met; this proposal is not trying to rationalize the fishery, limit anyone's catch or establish trip limits, the other question is; how come state residency is not a requirement in a State run fisheries?

We don't have the all the answers, but I'd hope the Board can come up with an amicable compromise to help Alaskan registered small vessels, harvesting with all gear types in the State water p-cod fisheries, while still satisfying all stakeholders involved.

We thank the BOF for their consideration.

Regards, J. Hugh Pelkey
Akutan Fisheries Association President