

Josh Wisniewski Comments on utilization of slinky pots in State managed Pacific Cod fishery in Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet Areas ACR08

Chairwoman Marit Carlson Van Dort, Alaska Board of Fisheries
Alaska Board of Fisheries
P.O. BOX 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526

October 25, 2022

My name is Josh Wisniewski, I live in Seldovia I am a "small" small boat community based fisherman and a subsistence fisherman. I set net where I live at Barabara Point, and I also long line halibut and jig out of a 22ft boat that I built to fish my home waters in Kachemak Bay and Lower Cook Inlet.

I'm requesting the Board take action on ACR_08 at the earliest available opportunity in order to allow the proposed action to allow for long lining slinky pots in the Prince William Sound Pacific cod fishery, *within the existing pot limits and to amend ACR_08 to include the Cook Inlet area.* This ACR meets ACR criterion C addressing unforeseen gear type issues. Slinky pots had not been developed when regulations regarding pot fishing for Pacific cod were developed. Currently there use is allowed in other state managed groundfish fisheries.

The gear types allowed in the Cook Inlet area Pacific Cod fishery currently are limited to single pot and jig/hand troll gear. Under the current pot gear restrictions, a small boat fisherman such as myself cannot whose vessel is not large enough to fish single pots cannot currently participate in the pot fishery. Yet a larger boat can fish in these same waters I would fish were I to have the opportunity to do so. Slinky pots were specifically developed by fishermen for small boats like mine to be able to fish using pots for groundfish, and they have a proven success rate in the sablefish fishery. There use is already allowed in other state groundfish fisheries.

If I were allowed to long line slinky pots in the state Pacific cod fishing in the Cook Inlet area I would immediately be able to participate in this fishery, I am otherwise excluded from simply based on the size of my vessel and gear type limitations developed prior to the advent of slinky pots. It would allow me to supplement my salmon and halibut fisheries and would expand my fishing season.

Being able to long line slinky pots would open up a winter fishing opportunity for me and other small scale fishermen. For a small boat fisherman like myself this is not about pursuing a high volume fishery. It is about creating an opportunity for diversification for small boat operators.

For someone like myself who can fish with low overhead in waters adjacent to their community the opportunity to longline slinky pots for Pacific cod offers and important opportunity for winter income that is largely absent in rural coastal communities like Seldovia where I live. Therefore, for someone like myself allowing for the use of slinky pots in the open access Pacific cod fishery would be a huge opportunity and poses no conservation issue.

The Gulf of Alaska is undergoing significant and rapid ecological change resulting in changes in species distribution and abundance. Creating access opportunities for small scale fishermen to be able to adapt to these fluctuations is critical for our small boat community based fisheries to remain viable.

Taking up ACR_08 out of cycle would be a worthwhile undertaking for the Board given that it simply a previously unforeseen gear type issue, based on the advent of slinky pots in period after Pacific cod gear restrictions were developed. It promotes a clean way of fishing and is an important opportunity for small boat fisherman based in rural coastal communities.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request and for your service to Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Josh Wisniewski
PO Box 20, Seldovia, Alaska 99663