

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
Teleconference
Use of 200 fathom nets in Upper Cook Inlet
June 26, 2008

Summary of Actions

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) met by teleconference on June 26, 2008 to consider a petition submitted by United Cook Inlet Drift Association (UCIDA) requesting that the board adopt an emergency regulation to modify the regulatory provisions of 5 AAC 21.333 regarding the use of 200 fathom nets when two permit holders are on board a vessel. Six of seven board members were in attendance (Campbell absent). Public listen-only sites were available in Palmer, Soldotna, Anchorage, and Juneau.

Questions had come up in-season about the intent of the board when it developed requirements and specifications for the use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnets in the Cook Inlet area. The petition sought clarification on the board's intent.

During the teleconference, the board adopted a finding of emergency based on the Joint Board Petition Policy and general welfare as provided for in Alaska Statute 44.62.250. The board noted that there were unforeseen effects of the 200 fathom net regulation that were not fully anticipated when first approved.

The board adopted a motion to delegate authority to the Commissioner of Fish and Game to establish an emergency regulation to apply in the 2008 season and to make permanent. The emergency regulation clarifies that transport through any area where the legal compliment of gear is less than 200 fathoms of gillnet would be allowed as long as the gear is not deployed into the water.

By amendment the board also specified that when fishing in any area where gear is restricted to less than 200 fathoms of gillnet, the extra length of gear must be sacked or bagged. The board noted that a similar gear stowage requirement is applied in Southeast Alaska. It recognized that this requirement may be more cumbersome for the fishermen but that it is also more enforceable.

The board concluded that the action fulfills its earlier intent to provide the opportunity to fish two permits from one vessel thereby allowing participants to benefit from the potential efficiency measure and allowing an overall reduction in the total amount of gear and vessels in the fishery. The board clarified its intent to make the regulation permanent.

Appreciation was expressed to Larry Edfelt for his service on the board.