

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board Support Section
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

March 13, 2015

Mr. Chairman:

The Chignik Advisory Committee supports the institution of a State water seine and jig Pollock fisheries in the Chignik Area (L) but is opposed to a state water trawl fishery for our area.

It is our recommendation that if approved the Chignik Pollock seine fishery should be super-exclusive, and a 58 foot vessel limit imposed. Further, we suggest that observer requirements be limited to the extent necessary to develop a fishery management plan that has virtually no bycatch concerns. This in effect would render an observer program unnecessary.

In January of 2014 the Board encouraged interested fishermen to apply for commissioner's permits to conduct experimental Pollock seine fisheries in their areas but no one in Chignik or Kodiak or the South Peninsula of Area M did so. Please do not mistake a lack of participation during this experimental period as indicating a lack of interest. The risk versus reward was not favorable enough given the uncertainty about whether there was going to be an actual fishery. Added to this was that everyone was hoping that someone else would take the risk and get us through the uncertainty period. What we are hopeful for is a full fishing opportunity which will spur creativity within our ranks to find a way to make the fishery work.

We support the guideline harvest level based on 25% of the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) areas 620 and 630 walleye Pollock acceptable biological catch (ABC) as contained in the original proposal #44.

When the State waters pot cod fishery was instituted it took a few years for fishermen to be able to take full advantage of the opportunity – we had to figure out how to do it most efficiently and effectively. A Pollock fishery will be no different. It will be important that Chignik fishermen have access to a meaningful but relatively small amount of Pollock at first and an opportunity to increase that amount over a period of years. Perhaps a million pounds might be enough for an initial start and when we are able to demonstrate that we can fully utilize it, the amount should be raised. Perhaps the relative amounts between area cod allocations can be the guide for where the caps should be.

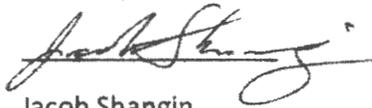
The fishing communities of the Chignik area are 100% dependent on commercial fishing – primarily salmon and cod. It is most important that the Pollock state waters program be designed to encourage and support local fishing dependent communities as a first priority.

We oppose a Chignik State water pelagic trawl fishery because no one living in the Chignik communities uses trawl gear and there is, despite the hope that a 100% observer program might address it, a major concern over bycatch impacts most particularly on Tanner crab but also for halibut and Chinook salmon.

Most importantly, Chignik fishermen want to be part of this package as it moves ahead. Should the Board delay this process as some have suggested that is acceptable provided Chignik stays on the same timeline as the other areas being considered. If the Board should take action at this meeting then follow through and implement a Chignik seine Pollock fishery.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob Shangin", written over a horizontal line.

Jacob Shangin