

Support for Proposal 43

Hello members of the board, I would like to start by thanking you for your time and effort. I am writing this letter to show my support for Proposal 43, the reduction of closed area within Kachemak Bay / Cook Inlet managed ground fish fishery.

I am a lifelong commercial fisherman and have participated in the Cod fishery for over 15 years. I would like to speak to the safety concerns for our fleet. I know that I have found myself on the fishing grounds more than once in weather that is too rough for my boat. I, like the rest of the fleet have a small boat and a winter fishery with the prevailing Northerly winds that can come up quickly and leave us little time to react. The further to the West you go, the worse it becomes. With the number of small boats that now take part in this fishery we are being pushed into the worst weather conditions.

This reduction in closed water area would give the small boat fleet an opportunity to fish inside of Kachemak Bay without being forced out into Cook Inlet where the weather conditions come much more into play. This would also reduce the number of non-fishing weather days.

This area was established as a crab sanctuary. There is absolutely no evidence that this is working or that our fishery is the cause of low crab stocks. There has not been a commercial crab fishery since 1994 nor a subsistence fishery since 2011, and the crab stocks are still low. I would argue that stocks are low due to predation.

Please consider what ADF&G is to gain with this closed area. Not much if history has anything to contribute. The safety of our fleet should take precedence over a failing attempt to increase crab stocks.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,
Charlie Black
F/V Lady Grace