

Tenacious Charters

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CAPTAIN MICHAEL T. LOCKABEY • U.S. COAST GUARD LICENSE # 278053

1/12/18

TO: B.O.F. AT 2018 SITKA MEETING.

RE: POSITION ON SEA OTTER PREDATION.

FROM: MIKE LOCKABEY.

A COPY OF A LETTER TO SEC. OF INTERIOR
ZINKE FOLLOWS THIS COVER

IF YOU CONSIDER A RESOLUTION TO TAKE A
POSITION ON THIS ISSUE. PERHAPS MY LETTER
WOULD HELP CREATE YOURS

THANK YOU ALL AGAIN

Mike Lockbey

I HAVE DELETED PERSONAL COMMENTS TO THE SECRETARY

Michael T. Lockabey, Karen J. Lockabey

F/V Chelsea 'L' & F/V Michael 'J'

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May 20, 2017

To: Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior

Re: SE Alaska Dungeness Crab & Shellfish fisheries

Cc: President Donald Trump

Greetings Secretary Zinke,

[REDACTED] in
[REDACTED] and
[REDACTED] do.

My name is Michael Lockabey, I am a fishermen here in Alaska. I have spent the last 43 years of my life as a logger and then fisherman. I have made my living from natural resources for my entire adult life. Myself and my wife have raised our family and resided here for 43 years. My son has followed us as a fisherman and along with my daughter and grand children are life long residents.

I am writing to you to try to get relief from a regulatory issue that threatens our livelihood and our resources here in S E Alaska. This problem has to do with the reintroduced Sea Otter population and its exponential growth and subsequent decimation of our Crab, Clams, Sea urchin, abalone and other shellfish stocks. There is an accompanying research report from the North Pacific Research Council that clearly shows the problem. What's in the way of resolving the problem is the regulations that don't allow for the state to manage a population that has rebounded to and beyond levels that existed before the Russians came here to exploit the fur trade. Believe me, the otters are back, they have been expanding at a rate that now threatens at least five of our fisheries. The otter population has forced fisherman into an ever decreasing area and now we are all competing for what's left, this has caused a dramatic decline in our individual harvest and subsequent incomes. I.E. The pie is being cut into smaller and smaller pieces.

We (fisherman) have presented this to our State Board of Fisheries, we have asked them to write to you at 2 statewide meetings and make you aware of this problem. They assured us they would and never did. The state board has thrown its hands up when dealing with the federal regulations concerning these animals. At the board meetings (all public) they have agreed that the problem is real and threatening all of us harvesters, yet, they have been hesitant to take ANY action, they in fact have told us in public they have no hand in the management of these animals.

I intend to propose to you a plan to resolve our current dilemma I'll start with an executive summary (pg. 2) of the problem and potential resolutions. This issue is most pressing because the board of fish is currently considering changes to our fishery that would further reduce our efficiency. This is being done in reaction to the declining catch

per boat that is a direct result of displaced vessels due to predation. Population of the otters has never been higher in recent history and possibly in the history of the resource. The expansion of their range is a direct result of the otters exhausting their food supply area by area. That very food supply resource is what our livelihoods are dependant upon. Please, ENOUGH OTTERS !!! It's time to manage the Otters as a harvestable resource that interacts with all of our other resources. In short I am asking you remove the Otters from their extremely protected status and allow us all to survive. Harvesting otters and allowing their export as a fur resource would be the beginning of a solid balance in resource management. I am not a crack pot asking to eradicate the otters but rather a professional fisherman who is quite willing to live in a balanced eco-system. The otters are one of the finest furs in the world and are extremely valuable. An additional advantage to allowing harvest and export would be to create a new industry that many here in SE Alaska would partake in. Think of a short business plan that would allow a 10% harvest rate. At current population levels a 10% harvest would barely reduce the expansion but that would be a huge help. At \$500 per hide (a trapper I feel that would be a minimum on today's fur market) 2000 hides would result in quite a few local jobs and produce approx. \$1,000,000.00 in revenue to local trapper/hunters. A 10% harvest rate would fall well within normal biomass harvest levels of other species. Just think, a new resource harvest coupled with the preservation of other existing resources. Who would lose? This would be a **win win situation** as opposed to the Otter win everyone else loses situation we have NOW.

The 2012 State of Alaska report to our State Board of Fish on the status of shellfish including Dungeness crab mention the otter predation problem. Now, (2017) the biological staff is so reluctant to even mention this problem that some in the biologist ranks now refer to the Otter predation problem as 'Other Entities'. The Otters are not 'Other Entities', they are now over populated and are **THE** problem to a normal balance in our eco systems. In and around Cordova and Craig Alaska many residents can only attribute the loss of their crab and abalone stocks to their most efficient predator - sea otters. These areas are already 'Dead Zones'

Thank you for your time in reviewing this. I can and am willing to meet face to face with you at anytime you would like, even 10 or 15 minutes. I will travel at my own expense. I can also provide names of other fisherman and if you would like could easily raise a delegation to meet with you, if even for only a brief meeting.

I ask myself if it was really worth the time to contact you and President Trump on this Issue. Can a small group, one person speaking up, really effect resolution to a problem? After seeing you and the President reopen marine reserves to use and with your recent reopening of monuments and other areas in Utah I am encouraged to send this along to you.

Thank You,

Michael T. Lockabey
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