

Boar of Fish Oral Testimony – Jan 2018

Chairman Jensen and members of the Alaska State Board of Fisheries:

My name is Carter Hughes and I am a Sitka based troller. I have been in the Alaska commercial fishing industry since 1984 and I have owned my own troller since 1994. I submitted PC64 and I am going to focus my comments primarily on the second part, the comments that pertain to the ADF&Gs recovery Action Plans for the 3 listed stocks of concern RC4 and 5.

First, I'd like to say that I support the revised position submitted by the Alaska Trollers Association and the comments submitted by the Sitka Advisory Committee (AC5) that pertain to the 2 Action Plan papers.

In PC64, on the last page, I listed 3 important points that I will speak to now:

1. ADFG should be able to continue to manage all the effected fisheries by Emergency Order (EO). This allows for flexibility. I would like to add that when the stocks of concern meet the criteria for recovered status, that the Board be able to take up delisting discussions at a statewide meeting so that the fisheries effected can return to their normal management format without having to wait for a designated SE AK Board meeting.
2. I do not want to see non ~~directed~~ chinook fisheries unnecessarily curtailed for any user group, sport or commercial. In particular, for trolling, I want to see the coho season open on July 1. The APs mention opening the troll season on July 8 and 15 in Options B and C but fail to clarify if this applies to cohos. I sit on the SPC Board of Directors and Option B would cost SPC about 10% of its summer coho production if applied to cohos. I think the summer king season should open July 1 too. I want to see the Icey Straits – North Chatham chum fisheries open on or before June 15. Thus I oppose Proposals 133 and 134.
3. Where possible, I would like to see chinook opportunities that have minimal impact on the stocks of concern made available. These opportunities would occur in places with very low encounter rates with stocks of concern. This is the scalpol and not the machete concept that is discussed in detail in PC 159 as well as the previously referenced comments by the Sitka AC and ATA.

I would like to fish the quota that is allotted by the Pacific Salmon Treaty without a last minute closure like last summer. The loss of the second opener last year cost SPC not only the fish in the second opener, but the opportunity to sell the kings caught in the first opener at a higher price had we known of the closure ahead of time. This is mentioned in PC 28, by the Chairman of my Board.

I think it is important for the Board to understand that the stocks of concern cannot be recovered without better data collection in the sport sector. In particular, lodges should report their harvest data weekly and ADF&G fish samplers should be allowed open access to their docks to collect tag and genetic data. PC 28 also discusses this.

And now, a note on hatchery king programs and their vulnerability during the rebuild process. Everyone should know, especially the guided and unguided sport businesses, that it will be very difficult to maintain the expensive king salmon programs at NSRAA and SSRAA if the commercial fleets, that are the primary funders, cannot access them. This is particularly true in the Ketchikan area. PC 28 discusses this in detail.

This brings me to my final point, Mark Select Fisheries. This is a bad idea and I am not sure why ADF&G has not vetted this through the Board with a proposal. MSF is discussed in depth in PC 45. MSF will add significant cost to hatchery king programs if hatcheries are required to do this. Any intentional hook and release fishery encourages high grading and wanton waste.

That's all. Thank you all for your dedication and this opportunity to express my thoughts.