



Testimony of Dale Kelley on Behalf of
Alaska Trollers Association
Before the Alaska Board of Fisheries
January 16, 2018

Good day! My name is Dale Kelley. I am Executive Director of the Alaska Trollers Association. Our office is in Juneau. I serve on other boards and commissions, including the Transboundary Rivers Panel of the Pacific Salmon Commission; I also chair the US Advisors Panel of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. **ATA's comments can be found at PC 008, and RC 111, which amends ATA's original position on the Stocks of Concern Action Plans.**

You have a tough job. The information presented by ADFG is compelling and troubling to all of us who rely on king salmon - or are charged with ensuring their sustainability. The fact that trollers rely on these fish means we are also responsible for their care. ATA has largely supported the state's conservation strategy - we only **ask that actions include meaningful attempts to distribute the conservation burden and put the fish we save on the spawning grounds.**

The draft action plans are too broad and should be specific to stocks of concern; ADFG has EO authority to manage other stocks.

ATA supports closing the winter fishery April 15th for the Unuk, but opposes an early winter closure for the Chilkat, because our harvest of this stock is de minimis. Trolling is closed in Lynn Canal through July 14 (5 AAC 33.384) – when nearly 100% of the Chilkat run is in the river. As ADFG stated, two of the years this stock came in under goal it missed by just 27 fish one year and 31 the next. It's hard for terminal fisheries to add so few fish to escapement without major disruption, much less trollers that fish a hundred miles away, or more.

We know spring fisheries will be curtailed for stocks of concern and others, but ask that ADFG provide as much opportunity as possible. Spring troll management is unique and designed around hatchery Chinook, many which are intended to mitigate losses under the Pacific Salmon Treaty (treaty).

ATA opposes changes to the summer fishery. Conservation actions in winter and spring will move many Unuk and Chilkat spawners to the rivers and there is little added value to delaying summer trolling, which occurs largely in outside waters, not near the rivers. It is also important that Alaska catch its treaty quota. Loss of the August opening last year meant passing up thousands of healthy fish that Alaska is allocated under the treaty, with little gain for Alaska stocks. This unprecedented decision was costly, disruptive and made on moment's notice without consultation with industry; a re-peat would be devastating. Plus, loss of Chinook fisheries data has long-term ramifications for stock assessments and Alaska's treaty harvest share.

The measures under consideration have significant implications for this large fleet and the region. **Chinook salmon make up 44% or more of trollers annual earnings** and each fish is worth nearly twice

the price of a barrel of oil. Recent year restrictions have taken a toll on family and industry budgets; the action plans will result in further economic slowdowns in our communities.

The Board should take a minimalist approach when designing the action plans and give ADFG managers broad authority and flexibility. ADFG's highly precautionary management in 2017 proves the department will make tough choices to protect the stocks in question; they have the expertise and tools necessary to balance conservation with fishing opportunity, which will help fishermen weather the storm until the stocks rebound. ADFG said that can happen quick with king salmon, so flexibility is key.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment and am grateful for your service and the exceptional job that ADFG does every day.

Thank you.

