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Alaska Board of Fisheries

Dear Chairman Jensen and Board of Fish Members:

I have been involved in the Sitka herring fishery for almost all of my adult life both as a fisherman and as a buyer/processor.

Under the sound management of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game I have witnessed the Sitka herring fishery quota rise in years of increased biomass and reduced in years that have had less linear miles of spawn and a lower biomass. The fishery is managed using sound science. The fishery has a biomass threshold of 25,000 tons. If the biomass is less than 25,000 tons the fishery does not open. As the biomass rises above 25,000 tons the conservation based model used by ADF&G provides for a harvest rate that begins at 12% and rises to a maximum harvest rate of 20%.

The success of ADF&G's science based management is proven in the data. In 1980 there were 63 nautical miles of spawn. In 2017 there were 62 nautical miles of spawn. And the average nautical miles of spawn over 38 years? 60, that's right 60 nautical miles! I don't know how anyone could do a better job of sustainably managing a fishery over 38 years than the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has done.

I therefore oppose Proposals #98, 99, 105 and 106. I think we embark on a slippery slope when we start ignoring science to manage our fisheries. Where does it end and ultimately what happens to our renewable resources when science is thrown out the window?

I urge you to vote no on proposals #98, 99, 105 and 106.

Regards,

Hank Baumgart