

PROPOSAL 23

5 AAC 06.333. Requirements and specifications for use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay.

Clarify that the holder of two drift gillnet limited entry permits may operate up to 150 fathoms of drift gillnet gear, as follows:

New language:

(h) A person who holds two Bristol Bay drift gillnet CFEC permits may not operate both permits concurrently, on the same vessel, in a “D” configuration. A permit holder may only operate up to 150 fathoms of drift gillnet gear using a single CFEC permit and may not employ a second CFEC permit held by the same individual to operate additional drift gillnet gear.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Additional clarity to existing regulation is requested for the circumstances in which one vessel utilizing a “D” configuration is able to operate 200 fathoms of drift gillnet gear under section 5 AAC 06.333. By adding to existing regulations as proposed, the role of single and ownership of two Bristol Bay drift gillnet permits will be clarified and fully outlined for the fleet.

The Bristol Bay Drift Fleet has taken measures through the Board of Fisheries to create a “D” permit configuration which has achieved lasting benefits to both captains and permit holders, and added a measure of gear reduction. Allowing single owner permit stacking would erode the benefits of the “D” configuration, especially to existing crew, “D” permit holders, and new entrants into the fishery.

An SO3T permit has a value which goes up and down directly in line with the economic health of the fishery. Allowing single owner permit stacking would change this relationship, raise permit values, create barriers to entry, and eventually result in an undue consolidation of the fleet.

The Board of Fisheries has taken up the issue of permit stacking for a decade’s worth of meetings, expending several days of discussion each meeting, while consistently arriving at the same decision. Regardless, every cycle new proposals are put in and the Board is required to consider them. An addition to the existing regulation which allowed for 200 fathoms of gear allocated to a vessel is needed to clarify that this benefit cannot be achieved by a single permit holder.

When the Alaska Legislature created the allowance for an individual to own two permits in 2006 they explicitly included language disallowing extra gear. It was made clear this was done as a gear reduction effort. The move to allow an individual to own two permits was done in conjunction with a Southeast buyback program and was not intended to allow an individual to fish more gear.

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