SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

Resolution 19-02

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ALASKA SALMON HATCHERY PROGRAM UTILIZING UNBIASED AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS TO ASSESS THE INTERACTION OF ALASKA'S SALMON HATCHERY PROGRAM WITH NATURAL SALMON STOCKS

WHEREAS, the communities and businesses of Southeast Alaska benefit greatly from the State of Alaska Salmon Hatchery Program; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has operated for 45 years and supplements wild salmon harvests throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is an example of sustainable economic development that directly benefits subsistence fishermen, personal use fishermen, sport fishermen, charter fishermen, commercial fishermen, seafood processors, as well as state and local governments, which receive raw fish tax dollars; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program employs strong scientific methodology and is built upon precautionary principles and sustainable fisheries policies to protect wild salmon populations; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulates hatchery operations, production, and permitting through a transparent public process and multi-stakeholder development of annual management plans; and

WHEREAS, returns of hatchery and wild salmon stocks follow similar survival trends over time and the largest returns of both hatchery and wild salmon stocks have largely occurred since hatchery returns began in about 1980; and

WHEREAS, there are no stocks of concern where most hatchery production occurs, indicating that adequate escapements to wild stock systems are being met in these areas over time; and

WHEREAS, Alaska hatcheries contributed an annual average of nearly 67 million fish to Alaska's commercial fisheries in the past decade; and

WHEREAS, Alaska hatcheries accounted for 22% of the total common property commercial catch and 43% of the total ex-vessel value in the Southeast region in 2016; and

WHEREAS, a McDowell Group report identifies the economic contribution in 2017 of the Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA) to be 680 jobs, $32 million in labor income, and $70 million in total economic output; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has proven to be significant and vital to Alaska's seafood and sportfish industries and the state of Alaska by creating employment and economic opportunities throughout the state and in particular in rural coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is non-profit and self-funded through cost recovery and enhancement taxes on the resource and is a model partnership between private and public entities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has significantly invested in Alaska's salmon hatchery program and associated research to provide for stable salmon harvests and to bolster the economies of coastal communities while maintaining a wild stock escapement priority; and

WHEREAS, Alaska salmon fisheries, including the hatchery program, continue to be certified as sustainable by two separate programs, Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC);

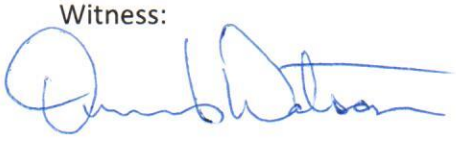
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeast Conference affirms its support for Alaska's salmon hatchery programs; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeast Conference supports unbiased and scientific methods to assess the interaction of Alaska's salmon hatchery programs with natural salmon stocks, such as the Alaska Hatchery-Wild Salmon Interaction Study which began in 2011 and is scheduled to conclude in 2023; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeast Conference calls on the Alaska Board of Fisheries to work with the hatchery community, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and industry leaders to further its understanding of the importance of the Alaska salmon hatchery program to all Alaskans.

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON September 14th, 2018 AND WILL SUNSET ON September 14, 2019.

Witness:



Dennis Watson – President

Attest:

Robert Venables – Executive Director