

Craig AC Fish & Game Advisory Testimony-Salmon- 3.18.22**Thank you for your service!**

My name is Kurt Whitehead. My wife and I own and operate a small hunting and charter fishing lodge on Prince of Wales Island near Klawock, AK. We offer fully guided saltwater fishing trips and fully guided Coastal Black bear hunts in GMU 2. I have been guiding saltwater fishing anglers in Southeast AK every year since 2000 from the ports of Sitka, Port Alexander, Craig and Klawock. My wife and I are both, year round, full time, snow shoveling, REAL Alaskan residents. I am the Secretary for the Craig AC and I am here today to comment on their behalf.

We took no action on proposal 80 and noted that the state doesn't have to payback unless the entire state goes over their allocation.

We unanimously support Proposal 81 with the amendment of adding the sport fishery and removing the start date of Sept. 1. We can't leave any fish on the table in negotiations in the future treaty with Canada or we won't get them. This proposal allows the trollers to have a season after Sept. 1.

We unanimously support Proposal 82 with added language that a non resident bag limit of 1 per day and 3 annual is needed for the stability of the charter fleet.

SEAGO wrote proposal 83 for the main reason of providing stability in the charter regs. The AC wants to keep the limits at 1 per day and 3 annual so the charter fleet would have the stability we need. ADFG stated that in season management is better due to the new electronic logbooks and they do not see the charter fleet growing much due to the Charter Halibut Permits. Electronic logbooks will hopefully allow us to manage better/sooner.

It was also noted that the troll fleet will lose fish to the sport fishery during the low abundance year if Prop 83 is approved. One member noted that the charter fleet growth is only possible if they buy a CHP. Another member noted that it is very difficult for the charter fleet to sell trips if we don't know what the bag limits will be from one week to the next. This yo-yo management of guided non-res is very restrictive and bad for all of our businesses.

We took no action on Proposal 83 because we support 82 with the amendment that all non res charter anglers will be 1 per day and 3 annual in all management tiers and we also wanted full resident protections in all tiers.

We unanimously supported Proposal 85 and agree on full resident protections.

We unanimously supported Proposal 86 and all agree that residents should have the priority.

We unanimously supported Proposal 91 and agreed to add in our notes that the troll opener should start on Aug. 5

We took no action on Proposal 105 but discussed the following: Allowing all the gear groups to fish in Port St. Nicholas Bay would be a major conflict with all the locals that live there and all their docks. ADFG noted that SSRAA has proposed to move the fishery over to Trocadero Bay in the future so there wouldn't be conflict with locals. There should be hours set, for example, 9am-5pm, so the fishing effort doesn't conflict with locals. SSRAA wants the fish to go to the trollers. If there is no THA, SSRAA will have to contract with seiners to clean them up. The whole idea of this proposal is to get these fish to trollers. ADFG doesn't think the hatchery fish will mix with wild fish. Pt. St. Nick hatchery fish usually show up the first week of June. One member stated that trollers should fish very close to the terminal area so we don't catch wild fish. ADFG stated they doubt that area will ever be open prior to June 1 moving forward to keep from harvesting wild fish.

We took no action on Proposal 106 but our concern is to have rotational hours to keep peace in the community with all the docks, boaters & people. This proposal would expand the cost recovery area. Regulating the hours, such as business hours, needs to happen in the cost recovery in order to keep the peace amongst the locals. Cost recovery this past year was excellent.

We took no action on Proposal 107. This Chum release site is for cost recovery due to its remote location.

RC136

We unanimously support Proposal 110 which will require reporting and recovery of lost gill net gear. A lost gill net is a navigation hazard, kills animals and pollutes the water.

We unanimously oppose Proposal 113 regarding mesh size on gill nets. If the proposal is approved then the mesh size will be restrictive.

We took no action on Proposal 114 and noted that Hand trollers can use down riggers during the winter season but currently can not use them in the summer. This proposal wants to use a down rigger year round. Enforcement will be an issue.

We unanimously opposed 115 which seeks to change the start date of winter troll to Oct. 1. We are not in favor of changing the dates.

We unanimously support Proposal 119 which deals with boundary lines. This was passed at the BOF six years ago but was later sunsetted. This proposal clearly denotes a boundary line that is currently confusing.

We unanimously support Proposal 120: This proposal is the sister proposal to 119.

We unanimously support Proposal 125 which clarifies subsistence language for the taking of coho and king.

We unanimously oppose Proposal 129 which would allow a C&T finding on the Klawock River. We do not support changing the dates. The sockeye are showing up later so there's a potential to catch sockeye while fishing for coho. The potential of harvesting sockeye is possible which would be a negative impact since there is a conservation concern for them. We support more fishing for coho and a higher annual limit for coho but the issue is harvesting sockeye if allowed to fish earlier. **We are in support if there is an amendment.** We support a higher annual coho limit but there is no need to fish above the bridge where the sockeye mainly congregate and risk catching sockeye. There are plenty of coho below the bridge to catch.

We took no action on Proposal 130 because Klawock River and Klawock Lake are federal waters. We are in support of the proposal but without seeing the lat/longs and not knowing if it goes into federal waters this prompted us to take no motion.

We unanimously support Proposal 143 with the wording change: "Require in season reporting of **unguided** nonresident sport fish harvest....."
ADFG gets good info from surveys but ADFG is content with the overall response with current regs. ADFG would have a big job getting this proposal in the works. The RAC has looked at limiting the unguided non-resident anglers. We are all in favor of making unguided non-res anglers being regulated. Guided non-res anglers are already very regulated.

We unanimously support Proposal 144 which would establish a logbook program for rented vessels in SE AK.

We took no action on Proposal 145 which would reduce the bag limits for coho and sockeye because the way its written now, it would also affect the guided non-residents who are already very regulated.

We oppose Proposal 152 which would close a portions 108 creek but we would support it if the closure was confined to 300' above and 300' below the lower falls.
ADG noted that this coming summer is the last return of fish for the hatchery so many are worried that overfishing of 108 creek will later happen unless this proposal is approved. The way this prop is currently written, it would close most of the creek but the **intent** of the prop at the East POW meeting was to close 300' above and 300' below the LOWER falls because the fishing pressure is intense in low water years since the fish are trapped in the pool and/or cannot get about the falls. Released fish also suffer a high mortality due to the low water and the closure of the Whale Pass fish hatchery/poor run returns has and will continue to shift fishing pressure to 108 creek.

We oppose Proposal 153 which would close a portion of Log Jam creek as written but would support the closure with the change to 300' above and 300' below the falls during the months of July, August & September. We support it to protect coho but wanted the closure confined to the summer because its a good spot to fish cutthroat during other times of the year. The way the proposal is currently written will effectively close the whole stream but we have noted that the proposals intent was not supposed to close it year round but rather to

protect the returning salmon since there is more fishing pressure from the Whale Pass hatchery closing/having poor fish runs.

**Thank you,
Kurt Whitehead
Craig AC Secretary**