

PROPOSAL 161

5 AAC 28.XXX. New section.

Create and establish Alaska Board of Fisheries policy regarding the management of groundfish fishery resources in waters of Alaska, as follows (*To be heard at the Pacific cod meeting and deliberated during the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting*):

GOAL AND BENEFITS

It is the goal of the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage groundfish stocks in a manner that will protect, maintain, improve, and extend these resources for the greatest overall benefit.

Management of these fisheries for the purpose of achieving this goal will result in a variety of benefits which include but are not limited to:

Maintaining healthy stocks of groundfish to ensure their continued reproductive viability and the maintenance of their role in the ecosystem;

Providing a sustained and reliable supply of high-quality product to consumers and substantial and stable employment in all sectors of the economy relating to these fisheries; and

Providing opportunities for sport, subsistence, and personal use fisheries.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries also recognizes the benefits of managing for the highest socio-economic benefit consistent with the below objectives.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve the management goal and provide the benefits available from these resources, it is necessary to set objectives which will protect stocks and provide for optimum utilization of these resources. With regards to the management of groundfish fishery resources in State of Alaska waters, the Alaska Board of Fisheries has the following objectives:

Minimize adverse interactions with other stocks and fisheries.

Protect habitat from unsustainable fishing practices.

Utilize management measures that ensure adherence to annual and seasonal catch limits.

Harvest the resource to optimize quality and value of product.

Harvest the resource with consideration of ecosystem interactions.

Coordinate with federal management agencies responsible for groundfish fishery management.

Manage fisheries based upon the best available information.

Manage fisheries consistent with conservation and sustained yield of healthy groundfish resources.

Avoid sport, subsistence, and personal use conflicts.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At its March 23, 2013 meeting, the board repealed 5 AAC 28.089. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR GROUNDFISH FISHERY REGULATIONS, citing an interest in removing duplicative and unnecessary regulatory wording pertaining to the State's management of its groundfish fisheries. However, we believe that the board did not fully recognize the value that this regulation had in documenting sound and precautionary conservation management practices for the public's consideration.

The Board has a history of adopting policies in other fisheries which are intended to give guidance to future Boards, department staff, and the public (i.e., policies for the management of sustainable salmon stocks, King and Tanner crab, mixed stock fisheries, and statewide escapement goals). The Board and public will benefit from an overall groundfish policy that provides guidance in decision-making during consideration of future proposals. Formalizing this policy for groundfish is consistent with the State's approach in managing the health and sustainability of other Alaska's fisheries and will help document Alaska's record as a leader of fisheries conservation and responsible management.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation

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