



# Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Science, Technology, and Innovation Committee July 28, 2022, 8:00 AM (AST) Meeting Minutes

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**Committee members:** Ragnar Alstrom, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, Peter Micciche, Tommy Sheridan

1. **Call to order:** Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Science, Technology, and Innovation Committee meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM by Chair Tommy **Sheridan**.
2. **Roll call of committee and ABRT members:**  
  
Committee members present: Ragnar Alstrom, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, Tommy Sheridan (Chair).  
  
ABRT members present: Chair John Jensen.
3. **Approve agenda:** July 28, 2022, approved.
4. **Approve minutes:** May 27 approved and July 7, 2022, awaiting further review due early next week.
5. **Old business:**
  - a) Update from ADF&G's **Karla Bush**: provided a brief update on what the department is doing to prepare for the final ABRT report to the Governor.
6. **New business:**
  - a) [Alaska Blue Economy Center](#) presentation from Director **Justin Sternberg** of the Alaska Blue Economy Center (ABEC).

ABEC was founded in 2019 at the Direction of Chancellor White at UAF and was established by four founding units of the University, including the UAF College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS) and Alaska Center for Energy and Power (ACEP). The mission of ABEC is to be a resource to the State for training and funding in marine and coastal industries. ABEC works with internal and external partners to further engage researchers and students with industry and innovative technology, and to support experiential learning for students to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. ABEC is proposing an innovation fund established by the SOA with a starting fund of two million dollars. This fund would work with stakeholders and industry to identify priorities in the research and development of bycatch reduction implementation. The fund would create and promote challenges to put out to bid for individuals or groups to work on these issues and attempt to solve or reduce the issues surrounding each challenge. Applicants would work with researchers and provide match funding to whatever the bycatch fund would put forth. Some broad stroke ideas of what challenges regarding bycatch might look like if this fund was implemented were provided. Sternberg discussed the successful model provided by UAF partnership with US DOI BOEM through the Coastal Marine Institute. Noted that ACEP and CFOS both increased their funding during recent budgetary cuts given the increased desire for further research into fisheries.

- i. Chair **Sheridan** learned of ABEC through his role with ACEP where he is working on development of a community innovation hub in Cordova. Sheridan noted ACEP's success during a challenging time for SOA budgets and its ability to connect with unique funding sources to develop a world-renowned program. Discussed the merits of this proposed fund and how ACEP could be a model for ABEC going forward. Wants to discuss the possibility of conservation hatcheries with the committee/task force in the future.
  - ii. Member **Kozak** requested that the presentation be posted to the ABRT web site. Wants to know what ABEC means by Industry and if Communities would be included in this proposed group. Director **Sternberg** responded that industry in this context means commercial entities that are in the business of making a profit and operating in a capital system. Also noted that communities and governmental entities would be included in the work along with Industry. Member **Kozak** also asked about research coordination and working towards research—would this include being a liaison between disparate organizations to ensure that work is not being duplicated and that information is being shared between these entities. Director **Sternberg** confirmed that would be one of the goals.
  - iii. Member **Madsen** noted that the pollock industry has been donating to the University for years and no one has been interested in furthering development of technology, so the industry has developed technologies and other innovations on their own due to this lack of interest. Commented that the State needs to further develop priorities and make it a statewide issue that encompasses all fisheries. Director Sternberg did note the work that the pollock industry is doing with the University in the way of bycatch innovation. Member Madsen requested a presentation by Keith Criddle to note the funding and research already done. Suggested an expansion of the tax credit program for when bycatch reduction is the focus.
- b) Review of draft committee report template and updated work plan/timeline:
- i. Timeline: Member **Kozak** requested discussion of committee recommendations to ABRT, recommends that the committees send forward research recommendations no later than August 31, 2022, as a due date for Committee recommendations to the STI Committee. To not only allow STI to go over them but to provide some review for the ABRT at large.

Also, for final reports of Committees to be turned on by September 23. Member **Madsen** requests clarification on how the approval process of recommendations might occur with the ABRT and suggested instead a September 23 due date for Committee recommendations given that some Committees have not been able to fully meet as often due to fishing season priorities. Member **Kozak** noted that the STI Committee will only be organizing the research recommendations to present to the ABRT, requested a deadline be provided to better guide committee responses. Chair **Jensen** likes the suggestion of having a turn in period between August 31 and September 23 for research and final committee reports.

- ii. Outline: Member **Kozak** wants to get a draft committee report template out sooner rather than later hopefully by the end of next week. Suggested to have a meeting of ABRT and/or STI Committee next week to discuss draft template of Committee reports.

c) Committee recommendations received to date:

- i. **Madsen** provided three recommendations: (1) encouraging the State of Alaska to develop a way to track research projects across groups; (2) coordination to make sure disparate groups are not duplicating work and sharing research/innovations; and (3) a tax credit program developed with industry involvement to further incentivize bycatch reduction. Otherwise, **Madsen** recommended that outreach to communities is necessary so that an understanding of what is being done about bycatch can be disseminated further to the public at large.
- ii. Member **Kozak** noted that agency/industry cooperative research is beneficial and wants SOA to be a catalyst for more cooperation.
- iii. ABRT Chair **Jensen** agrees with both Member Kozak and Madsen on coordination to discourage duplication of work.

7. **Public comment: three-minute (3) limit to individual comments:**

a) **Brent Paine**, Executive Director of United Catcher Boats:

Appreciated the discussion by committee members and Director Sternberg's presentation. Wants to know what coordination means here given how much collaboration is already taking place. Member **Kozak** noted this public comment is reflected in several comments made to the Crab Committee. Also asked if Commenter has noticed any duplication for work. Commenter suggested that a steering committee to help drive research in a collaborative and nonduplicative manner. Member **Madsen** just wants to make sure that duplication is reduced to a minimum to protect funding sources for different ideas versus funding the same research multiple times over. Suggested the State take this on and develop a reporting catalog so that these research projects can be tracked.

b) **Chris Barrows**, President of Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA):

Would support offer of North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation to provide a more comprehensive summary of what is being done in this space. Noted North Pacific Fisheries Research Board could provide some insight to this committee as well. Could not detect what gap ABEC could be filling if they initiated a bycatch research fund. Mr. Barrows feels that there is a need to focus more on what is already existing and the research already being done both academically and by Industry. Hopeful that ABEC could fill in the coordination spot that seems to

be missing in this space. Feels that ADF&G and NOAA could work better to coordinate this and move research forward and fill gaps instead of there being duplicative work. Member **Kozak** noted that it was a huge issue that we already looked at lighting and that it was important to know that it had already been investigated; also requested that PSPA provide a list of recommendations to the committee.

**8. Committee comments:**

- a) Member **Kozak** supports a recommendation to look into a presentation by Keith Criddle at a future meeting.
- b) Chair **Sheridan** noted that time conflicts are often an issue and floated the idea of Garrett Evridge with Alaska Ocean Cluster presenting something next Thursday or Friday. Hoping to have a meeting next Friday morning at 9 AM.

9. **Next Meeting Date:** August 5, 2022, at 9 AM.

10. **Adjournment** at 9:50 AM.