

PROPOSAL 203 – 5 AAC 75.003. Emergency order authority. Expand emergency authority to close sport fishing in special harvest areas if hatchery cost recovery goals may not be met, as follows:

5 AAC 75.003 is amended to read:

(5) The commissioner or an authorized designee may close a hatchery special harvest area, or a portion of a hatchery special harvest area, to sport fishing for hatchery produced fish by emergency order when

(A) the special harvest area is closed to commercial common property fishery harvest of hatchery-produced fish; and

(B) the total escapement of hatchery-produced fish through existing fisheries into the special harvest area is projected to be less than the hatchery escapement goal for that species, which includes broodstock, cost recovery, and any natural spawning requirements as listed in hatchery annual management plans that have been approved by the department; the intent of this subparagraph is to assure hatchery broodstock, cost-recovery, and natural spawning requirements are met.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are nonprofit hatchery programs throughout Alaska providing harvest opportunities for sport and commercial fisheries. To support these programs, hatcheries must have access to: 1) broodstock to supply gametes (eggs and sperm) to perpetuate hatchery releases; and 2) the financial resources generated from cost recovery harvests to operate the hatchery facilities and associated programs. On occasion, a hatchery return after passing through common property fisheries into a hatchery special harvest area is insufficient to meet hatchery escapement goals (broodstock and cost recovery harvest) and also support sport and commercial harvests within the hatchery special harvest area. This proposal provides authority for Alaska Department of Fish and Game to close by emergency order a special harvest area or a portion of a special harvest area to sport fishing when commercial harvest within that special harvest area has been closed to achieve hatchery escapement goals. The proposal also recognizes natural spawning requirements. By ensuring natural spawning, hatchery broodstock, and cost recovery requirements are met, future harvest opportunities are maintained for all users.

PROPOSED BY: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association, Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc., Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association, Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation, Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, and Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (EF-C15-067)
