

Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation

P.O. Box 1464 • Dillingham, Alaska 99578 • (907) 842-4370 • Fax (907) 842-4336 • 1-800-476-4370



January 5, 2017

Re: Tanner crab Board of Fisheries Proposal 278

Board of Fisheries members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on Board of Fisheries Proposal 278.

Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC) is a Community Development Quota (CDQ) entity that represents 17 communities in the Bristol Bay region. Through investments in Bering Sea fisheries like Bairdi, BBEDC is able to provide a number of meaningful benefits to the roughly 6,000 year-round residents of the region, including scholarships and professional development, assistance to local small-boat fishermen, and community development projects.

We pride ourselves on promoting responsible stewardship, and supporting conservation efforts that ensure the long-term sustainability of Bering Sea fisheries. We believe that fisheries management should consider a wide range of biological, environmental, and socio-economic factors, and reflect what is in the best interest of the resource and stakeholders. This can only be achieved through active dialogue between industry, stakeholder groups, and ADF&G.

BBEDC supports the ongoing efforts of the Bairdi Ad Hoc Committee, Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, and Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation to work with Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff to provide the Board of Fisheries with the necessary information to make responsible management decisions. We also appreciate Westward staff's willingness to engage with stakeholders throughout the process. We are confident that the continued relationship between stakeholders and ADF&G staff will engender management strategies that reflect the diversity of stakeholders, and embody our shared goal of long-term resource sustainability and opportunity.

We are confident the Board of Fisheries will base its decision regarding Proposal 278 on careful consideration of the scientific information provided by both NMFS and BSFRF, recommendations from staff, and input from stakeholders. As such, BBEDC respects the Board's decision on this issue; we would support Proposal 278 if the Board determines that the information provided warrants opening the fishery, but would respect the Board's decision in the interest of the long-term resource sustainability should it determine that the proposal would result in a demonstrable conservation concern.

We are excited to continue participating in the Board of Fisheries process to ensure that the harvest strategy reflects the best available information, is consistent with other comparable crab harvest strategies, and provides opportunity for fishermen and rural communities alike to benefit from a healthy tanner crab fishery.

Sincerely,


Norman Van Vactor
CEO/President