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Board of Fish Testimony

Steve Reifenstuhl, NSRAA General Manager

My testimony will refer to proposal 277. Please refer to PC 27 and it may help to look at the map on the second and third page.

This is a fairly simple proposal. It seeks to allow a troll fishery that targets hatchery chum during the ADFGF August coho closure, which can be zero days up to 10 days. In 2019, it was 8 days. There has been an analogous regulation 30 miles to the north in Sitka Sound for 25 years – trollers target hatchery chum during the closure in a defined area within Sitka Sound.

The department has reviewed the proposed area in PC 27 and have no conservation concerns.

There was a question yesterday that may not have been answered fully – how do you tell how many wild fish are caught in a terminal fishery? All NSRAA fish are otolith marked, so in 2019 for example 2,027,000 chum were harvested at Crawfish Inlets – of those 0.01% were unmarked chum or 2,027 fish.

In 2019, of that 2 million fish harvest, 176,000 chum were harvested by trollers in this area. So the trollers may have harvested approximately 176 unmarked chum during their 6 weeks of trolling (Aug 7 – September 15). Therefore, the troll fishery may harvest 35 unmarked or wild chum in an 8 day period.

It is important to note the area you are considering is managed as a pink salmon directed seine fishery during the same time period. Harvest records show 626,000 in 2004 to harvests of 100,000's in 2007, 2013 and 2014, and other years with harvests in the low thousands. Some years like 2019 there were no pink salmon directed fisheries in West Crawfish. The point here is that a normally conducted seine fishery will catch far more wild fish than an 8 day troll fishery targeting chum. The pink salmon fishery is typically prosecuted from late July through mid August.

One final point regarding PC 27 is that the requested area for the coho closure period is slightly larger than the original ACR. This is simply to provide an area for trollers to turn around 180 degrees in order to stay on the troll drag. The area that the trollers use the day before a closure and the day after a closure encompasses a much larger area.

Thank you

### Crawfish Area Detail:

Chum caught in Crawfish, West Crawfish, and Whale Bay were included in this analysis. The 4 year old fish are typically the strongest returning age class, which was true in Crawfish fisheries, but there was also a strong return of 3 year old fish in this area. Chum caught in these areas were predominantly of NSRAA origin, and the majority were released to this area as fry.

