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## Fish News

March 9, 2011

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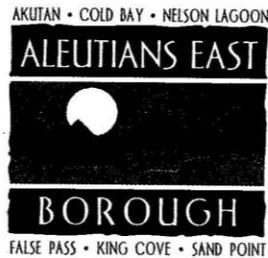
### **Reminder: Council Plans to Adopt Preliminary Preferred Alternative on Chinook Salmon Bycatch Restrictions at the Next Meeting**

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled to adopt a preliminary preferred alternative on Chinook salmon bycatch restrictions governing the Gulf pollock trawl fleet at its next meeting (March 30 - April 5, 2011) in Anchorage. **This may be the last opportunity local fishermen will have to work on the chinook bycatch measures for the Western Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery.**



**The Council plans to adopt a preliminary preferred alternative at its next meeting (March 30 - April 5, 2011) at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage. This meeting may be the last opportunity for local fishermen to provide input on WGOA Chinook bycatch restrictions before final action is taken.**

Last week, Aleutians East Borough Mayor Stanley Mack sent a letter to the Council, requesting that the Council take more time to develop regulations addressing Chinook bycatch in the GOA pollock fishery so local fishermen, who will be most affected, can participate in the process. (See letter below).



March 2, 2011

Eric A. Olson, Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch Schedule

Dear Chairman Olson,

The Aleutians East Borough supports local pollock fishermen's request that the Council take more time to develop regulations that will address Chinook salmon bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska pollock fishery.

These regulations will impact fishermen in King Cove and Sand Point who operate small pollock trawlers and provide winter employment and revenue to their communities and the Aleutians East Borough.

These fishermen and the Aleutians East Borough understand the need to set up a program that effectively monitors and curbs Chinook salmon bycatch. However, we support the fishermen's desire to see these regulations proceed with adequate involvement of those who will be most affected.

Last year's bycatch caught everyone by surprise. It was extremely unusual, and something we all hope will never happen again. Local fishermen were aware that they had gained an unwanted spot light and began talking about how to address this problem. They asked the Council to require retention of all salmon in the pollock fishery to insure that every salmon is counted.

After the Council's December meeting, the fishermen discussed putting together a pilot program to carry observers. Our fishermen remain convinced that the current method of extrapolating bycatch numbers from a few larger vessels with observer significantly over estimates the numbers, and they believe that the more NMFS understands their fishery the more NMFS will be comfortable relying on the numbers recorded on fish tickets. However, given the shortened time frame for Council action they gave up this idea since the data and information gained from such a program would not be available before the Council took final action.

Our pollock fleet consists of limit seiners which have been modified to allow trawling. They have no experience with carrying observers or employing electronic monitoring. Information gained from a pilot program would have provided valuable information that would have helped the fleet and NMFS decide what kind of regulations would provide the best protection for salmon while insuring that the pollock fishery continues.

Local fishermen believe that they deserve the same opportunity that the BSAI pollock fleet had to craft a program that will be appropriate for their fishery, and the Aleutians East Borough supports them in this request.

Thank you for considering our comments,



Stanley Mack, Mayor

Click on the links below for the Council agenda and the GOA Chinook salmon bycatch motion.

**[Council meeting agenda - March 30 - April 5, 2011 - Anchorage](#)**

**[GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch Motion](#)**

Fishermen interested in traveling to Anchorage for the Council meeting should contact AEB Mayor Stanley Mack or Borough Clerk Tina Anderson at the Sand Point office at (907) 383-2699.

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