



Fish News

March 16, 2010

Alaska Board of Fisheries Takes up Statewide Finfish Proposals March 16 - 21, 2010 in Anchorage

Starting today (March 16, 2010), the Alaska Board of Fisheries will focus on 32 statewide finfish proposals, supplemental issues, subsistence finding standards and the Chitina dipnet fishery. Two of the proposals may be of interest to fishermen in Area M:

- 168: Repeal length limit on salmon seine vessels in Alaska
- 174: Amend lawful gear for groundfish

Proposal #168 would repeal the 58-foot limit on the length of vessels in the salmon purse seine fishery. Proposal sponsor Darrell Kapp said because the current law doesn't limit capacity increases, some fishermen add width and depth as a way to increase vessel capacity for the fishery. Kapp added that even with a bulbous bow, fishermen consumer more fuel than necessary, and the current length restriction produces inefficient vessels.



Proposal #174, sponsored by AEB Mayor Stanley Mack, would expand the state waters P. cod fishery to include gillnet fishing for small boat fishing.

Proposal #174, sponsored by Aleutians East Borough Mayor and fisherman Stanley Mack, would expand the state waters Pacific cod fishery to include gillnet fishing for small boat fishing. This fishery would be modeled after the Norwegian fishery. Each vessel would be restricted to a total of 200 fathoms of gear.

For more information on the proposals, visit the links below:

[BOF Tentative Committee Roadmap March 16 - 21, 2010](#)

[BOF Statewide Finfish Proposals](#)

NPFMC Meets April 8 - 14, 2010

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) plans to meet April 8 - 14, 2010 at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel. Major issues include:

- Final action on groundfish annual catch limit requirements
- Bering Sea Crab Rationalization Program:
 1. emergency exemptions from regionalization - stakeholder proposals
 2. Final action on western Aleutian Islands golden king crab regional delivery
- Crab management:
 1. Preliminary review of Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Crab Annual Catch Limit Analysis and BSAI Snow/Tanner crab rebuilding plans
 2. Preliminary Review of Pribilof blue king crab rebuilding plan
- Groundfish issues:
 1. Initial review: analysis for controlling Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Tanner crab bycatch
 2. Review discussion paper on GOA Chinook Salmon Bycatch
 3. Receive Amendment 80 Coop. report - Action as necessary



- GOA Rockfish Program: Initial review of analysis for Central GOA limited access rockfish program.

For more information, visit the link below:

[NPFMC Draft Agenda: April 8 - 14, 2010](#)



Last month, Aleutia Marketing Consultant Karen Montoya made a presentation to the Council during the Feb. 10 - 16, 2010 meeting. The presentation focused on the current situation Aleutia is facing as a result of purchasing the crab processing quota that Peter Pan Seafoods was required to divest. The contract was signed in 2008. However, the purchase

has not worked out well for Aleutia. The following is Karen's testimony:

My name is Karen Montoya. I am here on behalf of Aleutia to talk about rights of first refusal and community protections associated with crab rationalization.

Aleutia was designated as the ECCO for the Aleutians East Borough and City of King Cove. Aleutia purchased red king crab quota from Peter Pan Seafoods when Peter Pan was forced to divest itself following the merger of Nichiro and Maruha. Although I wasn't with Aleutia at the time, I am told that because the Aleutia Board of Directors believed that Peter Pan Seafoods was a partner working together to protect the community, it agreed to purchase the crab without triggering the right of first refusal. Aleutia is a non-profit organization. Its sole purpose in purchasing the quota was to insure that it remain in King Cove and the Aleutians East Borough. Remote King Cove and the Borough are completely dependent on commercial fishing. The economic hit from losing a large percentage of the crab quota would be devastating.

The story of Aleutia's purchase of PQS is often used as a success story in the world of crab rationalization. However, the reality of our situation is very different. In fact, it quickly became apparent that the deal that was struck was not in the community's best interest — or what the Board was led to believe would happen. We are working very, very hard to renegotiate this deal. Our aim is to hold on to the quota,

create jobs and make sure local communities are part owners in this important resource. Because we are hoping to work on a solution, I cannot give you specific details of the current contract. But I can tell you that under the current terms, Aleutia will lose a significant amount of money. The situation is so dire that Aleutia's salmon marketing program – the first year we've broken even - is now in jeopardy because of the resources it has had to expend.

Because of our experience, we support the strongest community protections outlined in the draft right-of-first-refusal modifications.

It does not appear that communities and community organizations are being well-served under the current rules. Any efforts to further strengthen protections are imperative. In fact, from what I've seen, it seems like ROFRs don't help small communities at all. Because of that, I request that for the protection of communities, you add another set of options for analysis.

They include:

- Require appraisals of all PQS sales to community ECCOs whether or not ROFR is triggered.
- Allow or require review of all contractual details of sales to community entities by a neutral third party.
- Review current contracts between processors and communities with an emphasis on identifying potential control issues and mechanisms to address these concerns.

I realize that some of these points may seem elementary. But if they were in place when Aleutia purchased its PQS, it would have dramatically changed our situation. Congress, in its most recent amendment to the Magnuson Stevens Act, REQUIRED communities be protected. It is up to you to make sure that our Alaskan communities stay whole.

Shockingly, when I outlined our concerns at the AP earlier this week, I overheard a processor representative laugh about our situation and suggest that it was Aleutia's fault that it entered into a contract that may not be in its best interests. I'm a lifelong Alaskan who was born not far from the fishing grounds in Dillingham. I have to say that I am offended by the callousness of this comment. This isn't the Alaskan way. This isn't the fisherman's way. To expect fishermen and members of the community from a remote Alaska region — people who do business with their word, a shake of the hand and a square look in the eye - to have the same expertise, the same knowledge base or even the same way of looking at the world as a multi-national corporation with unlimited resources is absolutely outrageous. In fact, that is exactly why community protections are supposedly in place.

The Council created the crab rationalization system. I hope you will see from our experience that it desperately needs repairs to protect vulnerable communities and vulnerable community entities. I ask that you take steps to do this today by supporting the strongest community protections available.

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