

Stakeholders of the Salmon Resource in the Gulf of Alaska

March, 2011

Mr. Eric Olson, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, AK 99510

Governor Sean Parnell
P.O. Box 11001
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: Agenda Item C-3(b) Gulf of Alaska Chinook Salmon Bycatch

Dear Chairman Olson and Governor Parnell,

We, the undersigned, urge the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to continue to expedite measures to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch in Gulf of Alaska pollock trawl fisheries.

In 2010, the incidence of observed Chinook bycatch in the directed fishery reached unprecedented levels which were unacceptably high. To date there are no control measures to reduce Chinook bycatch. This results in a lack of incentive for the trawl fleet to alter their behavior to reduce this waste.

We favor a Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) limit of 15,000 Chinook salmon for the Gulf of Alaska. This amount represents a reasonable cap which will provide immediate incentive to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch. We also recommend a mandatory cooperative, which will provide the responsible fleet mechanisms to achieve the goal. We support expanded observer coverage for trawl vessels which currently carry no observers to provide additional data necessary to base sound management decisions.

The salmon resource in the Gulf of Alaska is an important part of what defines our community and economy. This level of bycatch is unacceptable and puts undue hardship on Alaska commercial, sport, recreational, personal use, and subsistence harvesters.

Thank you,