

RC 062

Members of the Board,

This letter is regarding #369, the proposed 80 foot limits on the Scallop Fishery. My name is Rick Corazza and I am a life-long Alaskan and commercial fisherman. I am 30 years old and have been commercial fishing my entire life. I started as a skiffman on my father's salmon seining boat when I was 12 years old in Prince William Sound. As soon as I graduated High school I immediately went to the Bering Sea to be a crabber. I enjoyed being a deckhand but I knew I had to own and run my own operation to be a success. I was born too late for the Bering Sea. All the profitable fisheries such as crab, halibut, and sablefish had been turned into IFQ fisheries and had effectively cut me out with their massive barrier to entry costs. I tried hard to buy a cod boat but the cod prices were so up and down and the low profit margins on cod pot boats prevented me from getting a loan for a reliable, sufficient vessel.

In 2010 I was able to buy a small Prince William Sound seiner because of Prince William Sound's limited entry permit program and 58 foot limit. I was only able to afford a 42 foot boat. It is still a starter vessel and a long way from my dream of owning a successful year round business. Relying on only one fishery is a very hard thing to do. I cannot keep my deckhands employed all year so there is inherent turnover resulting in having to train new guys from all over instead of keeping Alaskans solidly employed all year. I feel like I was born too late to really be a success in Alaska's fisheries. The pie was all cut up before I got to the table, even the table was cut up. I think it's time to give a little back to the next generation of fisherman who want to make fishing their life and livelihood in Alaska. A 80 foot limit on scallop boats would give some of us smaller operations a chance to survive in this overbearing Alaska fishing climate of massive corporations and massive boats that none of us younger guys can compete with no matter how hard we work. I am trying to get a new 50 foot boat built and it will require another fishery to keep it profitable. At this point some of the only available winter fisheries are to go to Washington or Oregon to crab for Dungeness. I really ask that we try to make Alaska a good place for hard-working Alaskans to be able to start small and come up, like the last generation was allowed to do.

Sincerely, Rick Corazza

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