

From James Moore

The page or two following are excerpts from my briefing to Chum Trollers Association after they refused to sign on to the negotiated allocation agreement last spring.

I am providing this to you in hope that it will help you gain insight into the curious relationship between 175 and 176. As you know most of our industry opposes both.

I was reluctant to say which boards I was working on during my testimony but I can disclose them to you now. I was asked to be a founding board member of Chum Trollers Association on which I served until this fall. I was elected to Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association and to Alaska Trollers Association and appointed to JRPT. I gave the RPT position to George Eliason and resigned from CTA. I was just reelected to NSRAA.

I offer a few words of reflection on the issues. What are the issues? Because of the change in relative price differences of salmon species it is sometimes more difficult for trollers to come into their range. Chums were worth nearly the same as coho a couple years back. Seine gear is designed to harvest chums effectively. Gillnet gear is also very effective. Trollers have learned to catch chums and are sometimes fairly effective too in the right conditions. But trollers catch them one at a time while seiners catch them by the ton. Realistically the only way trollers can move into their allocation range at times when the chum price is high is to displace the net fisheries, to tie them up. The threat posed to the net fleet by 176 is that it looks like it would demand that.

Though a growing percentage of the troll fleet will sometimes target chums most of the fleet prefers to harvest the traditional troll fish, coho and king salmon. Keep in mind that a troller has an option while other gear groups may not.

Seiner's nightmare: Chum Trollers win exclusive access to Deep Inlet for two weeks during the peak of the season. There is extreme abundance of king salmon, some boats are catching big august Cohos- 200 per day at Cape Edgcumbe, or maybe the price of Chum Salmon continues to fall and the stage is set.....Imagine: 15 trollers show up in Deep Inlet THA the first day, only 6 the second day but the Chinook/Coho fishing is too good at the Cape, two hours away. The weather is perfect! Day three finds only one troller fishing the THA the remainder of the two weeks because his boat is unseaworthy and his engine is about to fail, but the net fleets are still tied up in town. *The fact is the trollers are still coming closer to their targeted allocated numbers! Is this economic justice???*

Please do not allow a small sliver of the troll fleet to upset the apple cart. The industry groups agree we are making progress and will continue to make progress.

I hope this and what follows helps you. Sincerely, James Moore

“What are the different perspectives? Obviously the activity of CTA is considered threatening. Why?”

First, a common troller point of view on allocation: We are entitled to a certain percentage of the value of the enhanced salmon production. That is the law. There is an agreement. Tools to make it happen include THA management. It's only fair to share. Whatever we are down on our allocation each year is money out of our pocket. Somebody else has caught our fish and has our money.

Gillnetter point of view: I have a very limited number of places and times to fish- openings. The fish are bound for the terminal areas I make my living in. Anyone catching those fish on their way to me is “corking” me. I have to guard my sets, my area, my time and fight for position among my own fleet. Got to be aggressive here. The allocation plan threatens my position- something has to be done about it.

Seiner's viewpoint? We are the real fisher aristocracy. St. Peter was a seiner. The only truly efficient way to harvest salmon is the fish trap and we are the next best thing! Everybody knows the allocation numbers are an artificial construct (bullshit). Things get messed up when they are taken too seriously. Relative values of fish change. Allocation is a guideline, at times not practical that it be too strictly enforced. We measure our catch in tons, not numbers of fish.

Of course this is an oversimplified characterization. Lots of trollers tend to view allocation as a guideline too and some consider it practically unattainable especially since the relative value of chums to Coho has changed (looks like it might be changing again). Others of us have proven that trollers, given the right conditions, the right *opportunity* can effectively harvest chums. Given the economic dominance of chums right now trollers would be much farther below their allocation range without the current significant increase in troll chum production. The economics may be changing again and significant *opportunity* to catch king salmon this year will reduce the chum production significantly thus reducing the enhanced salmon

percentages. This is a major concern among the net groups: that blocks of time be cut out of traditional net rotation and set aside for trollers to improve their numbers, and that trollers, finding a more productive *opportunity* catching Kings or Cohos, won't show up. This kind of approach toward shifting allocation percentages would work mostly by depriving the other groups of an *opportunity* to fish. This is a valid concern.

We also need to bear in mind that if we are taking a turn in a THA, Deep Inlet for example (assuming we are not shifting our effort from wild stocks such as coho or king) then we are only improving our production of chum by the difference between what we are catching inside the THA and what we would have caught outside, say in Eastern Channel. And that is assuming we catch more inside.

The point is that we have numerous *opportunities* and choices about where to fish and what to fish for and the choice to take a turn in an established net rotation takes away another fisherman's only *opportunity* to produce that day. This is why the net groups want us to stay out of Deep Inlet and Hidden Falls and support us in just about anything short of that. The benefit to our group is small compared to the cost to the other groups."