



City of Adak

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BOARDS

EMERGENCY PETITION FROM THE CITY OF ADAK TO THE ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Dear Chairman Webster and Board members,

At the December North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) meeting the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced its intention to impose new Steller Sea Lion (SSL) Reasonable Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) restrictions in the Aleutian Islands Pacific cod and Atka mackerel fisheries beginning January 1, 2011 which will have devastating social and economic impacts on the community of Adak and would leave a biologically allowable resource to go unharvested based on flawed science. We request emergency action as there is no time to go through the normal proposal process in time for a state waters fishery.

We request emergency action to be taken by the Board to amend the Aleutian Islands District Pacific cod Management Plan, 5 AAC 28.647 to allow vessels under 60 feet to fish Pacific cod in state waters in the vicinity of Adak during the federal season based on SSL protection measures that have been in place as currently specified in 5 AAC 28.647(g). The Board has the authority to take action, consistent with its policy in 5 AAC 96.625, given the unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action. A delay would be significantly burdensome to the City of Adak because the resource would not be available in the future.

NMFS has admitted that there is no decline in the Aleutian area east of 178°, yet the RPAs would reduce the available fishing area by 50%, concentrating and intensifying effort in the remaining open area. NMFS PRAs also creates a safety concern for the smaller vessels by pushing the boats 10 miles offshore.

NMFS has had a total closure of SSL Critical Habitat in place in this area for Pollock and Atka mackerel for the last decade or more. As the current population growth of SSL demonstrates, allowing some opportunity for small vessels to operate in state waters during anytime during which the federal fishery is open would not harm SSL.

This emergency petition requests the Board to amend the current regulation to maintain the existing state waters open and closed area for vessels less than 60 feet at those times during which there is a parallel fishery between 175° and 178° longitude in state waters from zero to three miles. The gear used in the Parallel fishery would remain the same in the state waters fishery by season.

Thank you for your consideration to this emergency petition. We feel that this action is critical to maintaining the viability of the community of Adak.

Respectively Submitted:

Michael E. Swetozof 12-23-10
City of Adak,

Michael E. Swetozof, Mayor of Adak