

Alaska Trollers Association

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Alaska Board of Fisheries
c/o ADFG Board Support
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: **Proposal 92**

Dear Board of Fisheries Members:

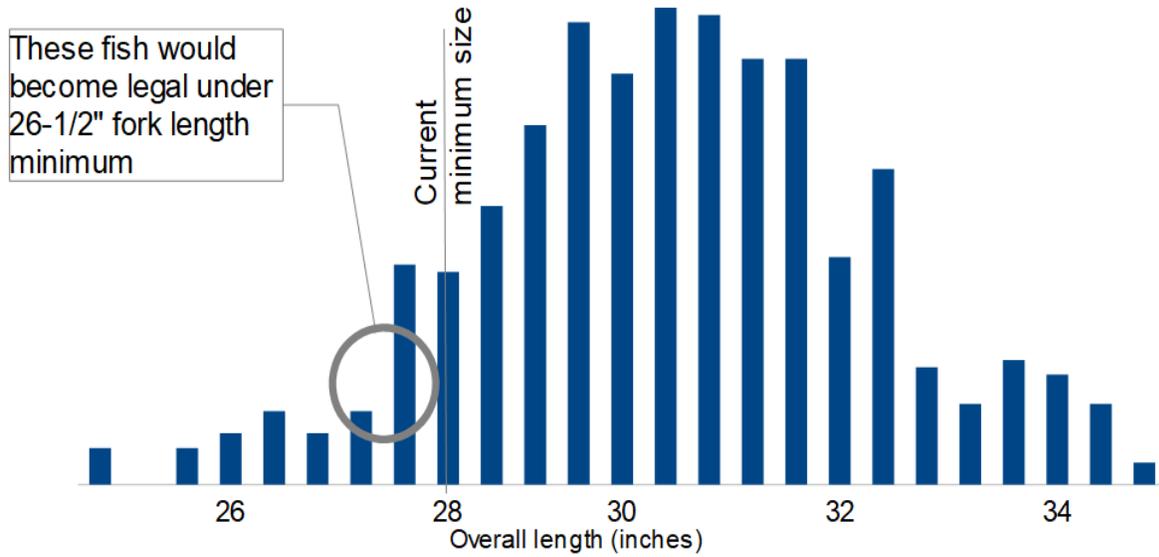
Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) represents the power trollers and hand trollers who fish throughout the waters of Southeast Alaska up to and including Yakutat. Since we have a very high percentage of Alaska resident fishermen, we are a significant proportion of the SE Alaska community economies. Our fishery has been in operation for well over a century, although we harvest about a third of our historical Chinook catch mostly due to three brutal Treaty reductions. We write in support of Proposal 92, which seeks to allow trollers to keep king salmon greater than 26 inches in THAs but offer the following comment for modification.

The Alaska troll fishery has enforced a 28 inch minimum overall length on Chinook for many decades, but since 2006 ADF&G port samplers have measure our coded wire tagged salmon from the fork of the tail rather than the tail tips. This is a more accurate measurement since it is much less sensitive to how the tail happens to be positioned. The fork of the tail stays the same distance from the snout regardless of whether the tail is flared or squeezed. If we were to use this standard it would reduce the number of times that honest trollers are cited by enforcement for short fish, i.e., a fish that was 28" when measured alive, but went into rigor mortis with the tail flared out, and thus short when delivered.

Adopting a fork-length minimum would be particularly beneficial during the spring fisheries due to physical changes in maturing Chinook. As kings near maturity their tails get squarer, making the fork length almost as long as the overall length. An immature king that measures 28" overall will be about 26-1/2" from the snout to the fork of the tail. But a mature king that is 26-1/2" to the fork will only be about 27" overall. Thus, if our minimum size limit in the spring fisheries was 26-1/2" from snout to fork, the protections for immature fish (mostly Treaty fish) would remain unchanged, but we would be able to keep some additional mature fish. These keepers would mostly be 2-ocean hatchery jacks; fish that our 3% enhancement taxes have paid for. As the proposer points out, it is "ridiculous" that trollers are required to release these fish that are likely to then get caught in a gillnet or purse seine. As 2 year old jacks tend to be heavy for their length, they would still be heavier than the 28" immature feeders and thus of significant value to the industry and many Chinook runs are seeing an increasing proportion of 2-

oceans in their returns. Changing our minimum size to 26-1/2" fork length will allow trollers to retain a few more of these hatchery fish.

Length Distribution of 2-ocean Chinook 2015-2020 SE Purse Seine THA fisheries only



Your positive consideration of the above proposal as conceptually amended is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Amy Daugherty
Executive Director

