



## **Alaska Trollers Association**

130 Seward #205

Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 586-9400

alaskatrollers@gmail.com

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Honorable Senator Lisa Murkowski,

As you know, Alaska Trollers Association represents the Southeast commercial troll fleet. Our members are professional hook and line salmon fishermen. The troll fleet is one of the largest salmon fleets in the state and is 85% resident. A large number of our 1600 troll permit holders live in rural communities in Southeast Alaska.

In response to Deputy Commissioner Swanton's October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 letter addressed to the three Southeast Aquaculture Associations referring to Treaty mitigation, ATA would like to point out that his mitigation funding requests will do little in assisting our fleet or our supporting businesses, especially in the short term. While ATA understands that the PST negotiations may have referenced these funds for increasing future Alaska Chinook stocks in several years, we see a more dire need for short term measures to mitigate the allocation trends of our fleet and the subsequent effects on processors, our infrastructure.

ATA requests mitigation funds of direct compensation to qualifying active troll permit holders as historically designed when our quota was cut 10 years ago in PST negotiations. At that time our fishery was reeling from a 15% reduction and the State requested and received \$15 million to mitigate that loss. We are again reeling. The economics we now face are yet more dire due to a further sizeable reduction added to the consistent reductions in our allocations since statehood. In 2019 and thereafter until 2028, we face Chinook negotiate cuts of 7.5% in Alaska's Chinook harvest in most abundance scenarios.

Accordingly, we request \$6 million for a direct pay purpose to our fleet as this will help them make payments for the next few years and remain economically viable in our communities. This number represents the value of the Chinook salmon that the fleet will lose due to this recent round of Pacific Salmon Treaty negotiations for the next few years, although the low treaty numbers will remain in effect for ten years' time. Our hope is that this will be sufficient time to rebuild more of our challenged stocks. Please keep in mind our fishermen would much prefer to catch and sell fish.

Additionally, we are requesting \$1.5 million for "quality enhancement" projects for fish processors. This is facilitated by way of a grant program, also as it was delivered historically. The reduction our Chinook catches has an obvious impact on our local processors. They too would prefer to have the historical numbers of troll-caught Chinook to sell.

We believe that we are at the low point of the Chinook cycles and that our stocks will resurge since we have seen some rebounding escapement numbers in some Southeast rivers. This \$7.5 million request will help cover some the economic gap we face in the short term and ease the impact on our many rural Southeast communities for a few years. This request should in no way be viewed as a counter-claim to the State's mitigation request for marking and tagging as stipulated in Commissioner Swanton's referenced letter to the aquaculture associations.

At ATA we appreciate all you do for the State and our state's fisheries. Our hope is that we can once again rely on your expertise and assistance for this critical request. Please contact me if I can provide any explanation or help.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Amy Daugherty  
Executive Director  
Alaska Trollers Association

Cc: Erik Elam, US Senator Dan Sullivan's Office  
Ephram Froehlich, Special Assistant to Governor Walker  
Charles Swanton, Deputy Commissioner, ADFG  
Steve Merritt, President, Alaska Trollers Association