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To: Erin Reinders, JR Pearson, Michelle Price, Mayor Tutikoff and City Council

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: Fishery Activities for the week ending 3-3-2022.

Last week I attended two days of the United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) annual meeting via zoom online. I also attended the monthly Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) meeting on Thursday morning.

On Wednesday UFA started at 800AM after the welcoming address by the President of UFA Matt Alward. The first speaker of the morning was Rep Vance of Homer she discussed the fisheries various bills that the House is are considering. She took questions on hatchery bills and ADFG budget as well as other bills the House is considering. Up next was a presentation Hannah Lindoff/Ashley Heimbiger of Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) they gave a great presentation on the various seafood they are promoting. They discussed the basic product promotions they have been running, and they talked about the various markets such as salmon, especially Sockeye, with another huge harvest projected in Bristol Bay, Halibut, Whitefish (Cod and Pollock) and the poor crab situation on declining allocations. They talked about some of the new products they are promoting on such as Sablefish which is a very excellent product to promote.

They moved into a report from Bruce Schactler who is the marketing committee Chairmen, he gave a run down on the various marketing activities his committee has been working on with the ASMI staff. Of interest was work they have been doing with flatfish Rock Sole and Yellowfin Sole and Rockfish Species which is species that have not much time and effort on in the past. He also reported on the work he has doing

with the federal government for purchases of Alaska Seafood especially salmon and Pollock.

The next speaker was Director Randy Bates of ADEC he spoke on the Ocean Ranger program for water quality improvement that requires a certified CG approved marine engineer on all cruise ships acting as observers traveling in Alaska it is funded by a \$4.00 per head tax on all cruise ship passengers. The program is working well, and the department is seeing and improvement in water quality by this program.

After lunch UFA had a visit by Senator Lisa Murkowski, she gave a report on issues she is working on, top of the list she concerns on Ukraine situation and is incredibly supportive of the US providing as much aid as possible to Ukraine and supports strong sanctions against Russian. She updates us on her and Senator Sullivan's bill to stop Russian exports of seafood into the United States which should be no brainer since seafood from USA cannot be exported into the Russian market. She is also genuinely concerned on the United States purchasing fuel from Russian that should not be happening we should be using our own petroleum reserves and increase oil production in Alaska and other areas in the country immediately. She also states her continued support for NOAA budget and how important to the Alaska Seafood industry. Congressman Young called in on the phone and spoke for just a few minutes mostly he gave an update on MSA reauthorization that is not going the way he would like but he continues to collaborate with Chairman Huffman of California to get the reauthorization bill that will work the best for Alaska. We then had another committee report from the Statewide committee Chair Megan O'Neil, gave an update on statewide issues such as the Board of Fisheries and the Alaska Legislature.

We finished up the first day of the conference with a report from the Director of Commercial Fisheries Sam Rabung, who discussed ADFG budget which seems to be in decent shape since the State budget has a budget surplus for the first time in years because of the increase in price of Oil to over a hundred dollars a barrel. He also discussed the crab situation and that they have a opt survey starting soon to recover over 1,000 tags that have been deployed a few months ago. He urged all the UFA organizations to lobby NOAA to continue to provide staffing and vessels to continue their survey work which is incredibly important for crab and all the Alaska Fisheries. Sam discussed the huge upcoming Bristol Bay Red

salmon fishery that may come in at sixty million fish (three hundred million pounds) he stated industry has committed to purchase at least fifty million fish. He also touched on other areas of the state and especially the tension in the Cook Inlet salmon usage between commercial and sportfish users.

On Thursday UFA President Matt Alward, he touched on items he was monitoring. UFA had more committee reports Stephanie Madsen Chair of the National Committee touched on they are monitoring such as the Russian Export bill, MSA reauthorization, federal Alaska Seafoods purchases, Regional Council Chairmen meetings on what issues they are working. Jami Goen, Sue Doherty, gave a report on PR and Membership Committee Jami mention the work that the Crabbers have been doing on crab bycatch issues.

Alaska State Senate President, Pete Micciche he gave a short presentation on fishery bills mostly legislative proposed in the House. He stated that he did not think that HB393 the additional \$0.06 tax on all seafood products processed by out of State Seafoods Company's which is a retaliation bill on a Washington Fuel surtax increase on Alaska, Oregon, and Idaho on fuel they purchase in Washington. He also discussed continuing buy back legislation for Cook Inlet salmon commercial fishers, and some hatchery legislation. Up next was presentation by a representative of US Tires on the improvements on tires manufacturing to reduce pollution from tires into salmon habitat streams and rivers.

Just before lunch we received an update from Speaker of House of Rep Stutes, from Kodiak, she went over fisheries legislation from the House two high profile Hatchery Bill HB 52 Tulta Bay and HB80 Alaska Board of Fisheries Bill on Conflict-of-Interest issues would have a chance to pass. She commented on HB393 she stated that she will be speaking with the Speaker of the House in Washington State to see if a compromise position could work out that to take Alaska out of the fuel surtax increase, so Alaska would not move forward with an additional tax on Washington State processors that are critical to Alaska Seafood industry. The afternoon session was mostly committee reports, UFA Board elections, and one presentation on Alaska salmon in a changing climate by Peter Westley.

On Thursday morning for two hours, I attended the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation monthly board of directors meeting. We approved the last meeting minutes and moved on to the financials the board reviewed the current financials which at this time look strong but that will change soon with the lack of the Red King Crab fishery and only 5.5-million-pound Snow Crab allocation. The BSFRF is \$250K under budget for FY 22 with reserves of \$1.6 million on hand, \$300,000 less than a year ago. Due to no revenue from Red King Crab with revenues projected to drop from \$800,000 to \$150,000 per year will we be drawing down the reserves probably at least \$350,000 per year with reduced budgets. The board has approved a bare bones budget of \$450,000 for FY 23 we have reduces most capital projects.

We then moved on to project planning we discussed are efforts to work with the North Pacific Research Board with jointly funded projects, the projects they have so have a have little value for our reduced funding level. We will need letters from the crab industry on projects they would like to see worked on. The board approved funding for the REM certification of all Bering Sea Crab Fisheries. Executive Director Goodman update the board on the ADFG /NOAA tagging updates on Red King Crab and Snow Crab we should start getting more data soon from the 1,000 the sonar and popup tags soon.

We had a short update on bycatch work with Amendment 80 sector, ADFG and NOAA on fishing gear modifications and time and area changes to fishing activities that may help reduce bycatch. Moving on to Tanner Crab research on lower size changes it was discussed that some processors were buying under 5” inch Tanner they passed season. The BSFRF needs more information on stock dynamics an information on when the Board of Fisheries could accept action on changing the preferred size of 5” inches to a lower size. We had and overview on the Snow Crab rebuilding plan that will be finalized in October at this time the time- frame looks to be 10 years and the total biomass may have to be a huge amount that is not finalized as of yet but I’m sure it will be many hundred million pounds of crab. Lastly the board received a short update of EFH and Climate work that is being done by NOAA committees.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. Fishery Articles