



Alaska Trollers Association
130 Seward #205
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-9400
alaskatrollers@gmail.com

June 1, 2020

Dear Mayor Jensen and the Petersburg Borough Assembly,

On behalf of the Alaska Trollers Association, I am asking the Borough to contribute \$2500 to help us defeat a lawsuit that threatens to shut down our commercial chinook fishery and impact other fishing interests.

The Washington State-based Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) is suing NOAA Fisheries, claiming the agency is allowing Southeast Alaska to harvest too many chinook that could, instead, be feeding an endangered group of orcas in Puget Sound, the Southern Resident Killer Whales distinct population unit (SRKW). The lawsuit downplays more significant threats to SRKW and their prey including pollution, dams, and other habitat degradation in their home range. The lawsuit glosses-over the extensive scientific and stakeholder input that went into the Pacific Salmon Treaty process which determines Southeast Alaska's share of chinook.

As part of its suit, the WFC is seeking an injunction to close the summer troll fishery in federal waters three miles off the coast. NOAA Fisheries says such a closure would contribute little or no benefit toward helping this distinct orca population recover. According to harvest data, trollers catch a very small number of fish from chinook runs originating in Puget Sound. In fact, NMFS in its brief in opposition to the injunction, estimates that closing the summer fishery is expected to reduce prey along the coast by only 0.6% and in the Salish Sea by only 0.2%.

This injunction would have far-reaching and immediate economic impacts on commercial trolling for chinook salmon and beyond. If the closure went on for the summer, it would also dramatically impact coho fishing as well. It would force the outside waters fleet to the inside, creating more competition with other commercial and sport fishermen. In the long term, the lawsuit could have broader economic and fishery management implications.

I know that this is a bad time to ask for money, but a judge is considering the injunction right now. Individual trollers and others have made over \$10,000 dollars in donations to our legal fund. The town of Craig has given us \$2,500 and we are in the process of asking Sitka. Please consider joining them with a contribution of \$2,500.

Thank you for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Mark Roberts F/V Cape Cross
ATA Board member