

August 29, 2020

Petersburg Borough Assembly
PO Box 329
Petersburg, AK 99833

Dear Mayor Jensen and Borough Assembly Members,

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association (PVOA) is a local non-profit organization representing commercial fishermen. Members participate in state and federally managed fisheries for a wide variety of species and gear types. Targeted species include salmon, herring, halibut, sablefish, cod, crab, shrimp, pollock, tuna, geoduck, and sea cucumber.

As you are aware, salmon returns to Southeast this season for sockeye, chum, and pink salmon were well below forecasts. Pre-season, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game projected a harvest of 1 million sockeye, 9.17 million chum, and 12.38 million pink salmon for 2020¹. This includes wild and enhanced fish.

Final harvest data for the purse seine and gillnet fisheries in Southeast won't be available for several weeks, however, ADF&G publishes and updates the Preliminary Alaska Commercial Salmon Harvest report weekly. This data shows total landings of 327,000 sockeye, 1.97 million chum, and 6.18 million pink salmon to date for the 2020 Southeast season². This results in harvests ranging from 21%-50% of the pre-season forecast for chum and pink salmon respectively.

The standard used by the Secretary of Commerce to grant a disaster request, is whether or not a large decrease in fish stocks occurred, and if the decrease resulted in significant loss of access and revenue from the fishery resource.

Harvest data cited above shows a distinct decline in stocks. There were also minimal days open to salmon fishing this season, for example, from August 8th-13th there was a five-day closure of all but one area for the purse seine fishery. Decreased stocks and access to salmon were compounded by suppressed prices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, estimated ex-vessel value of the purse seine and drift gillnet fisheries appear to be the lowest on record since 1976, at \$8 and \$7 million respectively. These ex-vessel values are considerably lower than the 10-year average from 2010-2019

¹ Brenner, R. E., S. J. Larsen, A. R. Munro, and A. M. Carroll, editors. 2020. Run forecasts and harvest projections for 2020 Alaska salmon fisheries and review of the 2019 season. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Special Publication No. 20-06, Anchorage

² 2020 Preliminary Alaska Commercial Salmon Harvest - Blue Sheet (Rep.). (n.d.). Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
doi:<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyfisherysalmon.bluesheet>

at 11% and 26% of \$73,520,208 for the seine fishery and \$27,395,806 for the gillnet fishery³.

Governor Dunleavy's administration has indicated to PVOA they would prefer cities and boroughs make requests for regional fishery disaster declarations. We ask the Petersburg Assembly contact the Governor, on behalf of salmon net fishermen, to request the Secretary of Commerce declare a commercial fishery resource disaster for the 2020 sockeye, chum, and pink salmon fisheries.

Thank you in advance for contacting the Governor's office, and please contact us if we can be of assistance in the process.

Respectfully,



Megan O'Neil
Executive Director

CC: Governor Dunleavy
Policy Advisor John Moller
Senator Stedman

³ Conrad, S., and T. Thynes. 2020. Overview of the 2019 Southeast Alaska and Yakutat commercial, personal use, and subsistence salmon fisheries. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fishery Management Report No. 20-18, Anchorage.