



August 27, 2020

To: Mayor and Assembly

Re: 2020 Southeast Salmon Fisheries

Dear Mayor Jensen and Members of the Assembly,

As many of you are aware, the 2020 Southeast Alaska Salmon season has seen some of the lowest harvest numbers since statehood. While the pre-season forecasts indicated a “weak” 2020 season, no one could have anticipated these abysmal harvest numbers and ex-vessel prices.

PURSE SEINE FISHERY

According to the ADF&G Salmon Fishery report: “Hatchery produced chum salmon throughout Southeast returned in numbers much lower than forecasted and hatchery operators had to cease or limit common property and/or cost recovery harvests to obtain broodstock. The region's common property chum salmon harvest was poor with less than 800,000 chum salmon harvested to date. This harvest level is the poorest since 1983.”

The 2020 pink salmon harvest forecast was for a ‘weak’ harvest of 12 million fish. The actual 2020 pink salmon harvest was very poor with less than 5 million fish harvested or 58% less than the pre-season forecast. According to the ADF&G Salmon Fishery report, “This harvest level is the lowest since 1976 and the 5th lowest since statehood.”

Preliminary estimates of the ex-vessel value of the SE Seine Fishery for 2020 is \$8,00,000. This is 90% lower than the 10-year average value for this fishery (\$73 million) and 83% lower than the ex-vessel value of the fishery from just last year (\$47 million).

DRIFT GILLNET FISHERY

Although gillnet fisheries are ongoing, the preliminary harvest information estimates are 70-80% below the 10-year average and 60-80% below last season. The ex-vessel value preliminary estimate is \$7,000,000, which is significantly below the 10-year average of \$27 million and last season’s \$18 million value.

While these are preliminary estimates and do not include other fisheries such as the SE Troll Fishery, the overall trend is clear that the region and our local commercial harvesters are suffering a fisheries failure. As you know, the impacts are being felt by commercial fishermen, fish processors, and those who sell fuel, supplies and services such as cold storages. In Petersburg, the entire community including the municipality will be affected. We believe these impacts are severe enough to warrant raising the issue of a federal fishery disaster declaration to the Governor of Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

PEDC Board of Directors

cc: PVOA
USAG