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**Date:** September 2,2020

**To:** Erin Reinders, City Manager, JR Pierson, Asst. Manager, Mayor Tutikoff, & Unalaska City Council Members

**Subject:** August Fishery Activities

On Friday August 28th, I attended a daylong North Pacific Council Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) Sub-Committee meeting for planning purposes the presentation came from Alaska Fisheries Science Center staff for the 2021 Alaska surveys. The sub-committee recommendation will move to full SSC committee. I assume that this topic will be discussed at the Groundfish Plan team meeting in September, and at the SSC meeting at the October North Pacific Council Zoom meeting. My takeaway from this meeting was that the Eastern Bering Sea Groundfish Trawl surveys would continue to be a top priority for survey work, followed by the Aleutians Islands and Gulf of Alaska. The committee had long discussions on how to fund expansion of survey work; as an example the increasing importance of getting data from Northern Bering Sea region, which at this time is surveyed semiannually but many committee members would like to see this area move into a standard survey category which means surveyed annually.

The Committee had a long discussion on the importance of getting more data from that area especially with the movement being seen of various species moving into that area such as Pacific Cod, Pollock, Sole, and Snow Crab. They also discussed the need to start getting some data on the Arctic Region which is totally closed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and will remain closed, until survey work and stock assessments are done especially in the Chukchi Sea area. The committee had a hard time coming up with good recommendations for 2021. The major issues they face include the Pandemic status, funding levels for NMFS, staffing availability, and vessel availability. They also discussed the options of doing more semiannual surveys in some areas, or reduced amount stations trawled in areas to allow assets to work in other areas. That really did not come up with a solid at this meeting. The crab survey work was hardly mentioned this was surprising since we have so many crab stocks in poor conditions the reason may have been that Crab surveys are done by chartered commercial trawlers not by NOAA vessels, like the groundfish surveys are done. It is critical, I believe to get survey work accomplished in 2021 especially since we did not have surveys this year, and the poor performance of

the Pollock fishery this B season. I have attached the SSC PowerPoint document of this meeting for your review with this memo.

On Tuesday afternoon the Alaska Fisheries Communities Bycatch Sub-Committee met via teleconference and zoom. The meeting on Tuesday focused on the bycatch of Halibut Abundance Based Management (ABM) which has to do with a reduction of the Prohibited Species Catch by the Amendment 80 sector, at the October North Pacific Council Zoom meeting. It was discussed what groups are considering testifying or write letters on this Halibut ABM issue. Halibut sector members will continue to reach out to the State of Alaska, Governor's office, ADFG and the North Pacific Council members to share their concerns. We also discussed the possibility in the future of having community members from various fishing communities to reach out to the Governor's office, and federal officials to voice concerns on various bycatch issues, Halibut, Sablefish Salmon, Herring and Crab later in the fall. We had some comments on the Sablefish bycatch of small fish by the Bering Sea by the trawlers which is at 180% almost double the amount allowed. It appeared that harvesters in that sector want to discuss this with their members before moving forward with comments. We also touch on the Herring bycatch issues no one at this meeting knew if the At Sea Processors request for allowing them to remain in the Northern Herring saving area to fish Pollock had been granted; this area was to close on September 1st of 2020. The full Alaska Fisheries Committee will meet on Friday.

Regards

Frank Kelty