

C-3(a) BSAI Chum salmon bycatch

February 4, 2011

The Council adopts the following problem statement and moves the analysis for initial review.

Problem statement:

Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards direct management Councils to balance achieving optimum yield with bycatch reduction as well as to minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. Non-Chinook salmon (primarily made up of chum salmon) prohibited species bycatch (PSC) in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery is of concern because chum salmon are an important stock for subsistence and commercial fisheries in Alaska. There is currently no limitation on the amount of non-Chinook PSC that can be taken in directed pollock trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea. The potential for high levels of chum salmon bycatch as well as long-term impacts of more moderate bycatch levels on conservation and abundance, may have adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities.

Non-Chinook salmon PSC is managed under chum salmon savings areas and the voluntary Rolling Hotspot System (RHS). Hard caps, area closures, and possibly an enhanced RHS may be needed to ensure that non-Chinook PSC is limited and remains at a level that will minimize adverse impacts on fishery dependent communities. The Council should structure non-Chinook PSC management measures to provide incentive for the pollock trawl fleet to improve performance in avoiding chum salmon while achieving optimum yield from the directed fishery and objectives of the Amendment 91 Chinook salmon PSC management program. Non-Chinook salmon PSC reduction measures should focus, to the extent possible, on reducing impacts to Alaska chum salmon as a top priority.

The Council forwards the AP motion and asks staff to incorporate the SSC and AP comments to the extent practicable.