

**2018 SESSION OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSAL**

**OFFERED IN:** House Finance Department of Fish and Game Budget Subcommittee

**TO:** HB 285 / HB 286

**OFFERED BY:** Representative Dan Ortiz

**DEPARTMENT:** Department of Fish and Game

**APPROPRIATION:** Commercial Fisheries

**ADD:** \$432.0 of UGF (1004) to the following allocations for the projects specified in the below tables. All funding items are in the personal services line.

**ALLOCATION:** Southeast Region Fisheries Management

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Project</b>                 | <b>UGF (1004)</b> | <b>Inc Type</b> |
|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| SEAK          | Herring assessment/ management | \$ 81.0           | IncOTI          |
|               | <b>Region Total</b>            | <b>\$ 81.0</b>    |                 |

**ALLOCATION:** Central Region Fisheries Management

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Project</b>            | <b>UGF (1004)</b> | <b>Inc Type</b> |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| CEN           | Togiak herring assessment | \$ 61.0           | IncOTI          |
| CEN           | Alagnak Tower             | \$ 50.0           | IncOTI          |
|               | <b>Region Total</b>       | <b>\$ 111.0</b>   |                 |

**ALLOCATION:** Westward Region Fisheries Management

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Project</b>               | <b>UGF (1004)</b> | <b>Inc Type</b> |
|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| WW            | Kodiak weirs                 | \$ 100.0          | IncOTI          |
| WW            | Chignik weir                 | \$ 100.0          | IncOTI          |
| WW            | Kodiak aerial salmon surveys | \$ 40.0           | IncOTI          |
|               | <b>Region Total</b>          | <b>\$ 240.0</b>   |                 |

**EXPLANATION:**

**SEAK - Southeast Alaska Herring Assessment/Management (\$81.0)**

The department has historically conducted full assessment on nine herring spawning aggregates in Southeast Alaska. In recent years due to budget cuts the number of areas that have been assessed has been reduced to two areas (Sitka Sound and Craig-Klawock). There are three basic

requirements for full assessment for a given herring spawning aggregate. They are aerial surveys to map spawn, biological sampling, and dive surveys that collect egg density information. This increment would reinstate aerial surveys for seven areas (West Behm, Kah Shakes Cat-Island, Ernest Sound, Seymour Canal, Tenakee Inlet, and Hoonah Sound), reinstate dive spawn deposition surveys for two areas that were deemed to be most likely to be above the minimum threshold required to provide for fisheries, and reinstate biological sampling (age-weight-length) data for two areas. Herring fisheries cannot be opened in Southeast Alaska unless the spawning aggregates are assessed.

### **CEN - Togiak Herring Assessment (\$61.0)**

The Togiak herring fishery is the largest herring fishery in Alaska. There is currently no dedicated funding for the Togiak herring assessment. This increment would provide funds for complete aerial surveys used to document spawning biomass and full biological assessment which provides for the most accurate estimates of abundance.

### **CEN - Alagnak River Tower (\$50.0)**

The Alagnak River is a major tributary of the Kvichak River. It produces significant numbers of sockeye salmon (2018 forecast is for return of 4.4 million fish) and is a very important part of the overall salmon production in Bristol Bay. There is currently no dedicated funding to operate the counting tower in the drainage. The Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a special harvest area (SHA) management for the Alagnak that requires tower counts as a trigger for potential fishery in the SHA in years when salmon abundance in the river is above the escapement objectives.

### **WW - Kodiak Weirs (\$100.0)**

Karluk: Currently fish tight ~ May 23 and pulled ~9/14. Right now there is a crew of 2 with a part time FB-I. With increment weir would be fish tight May 23 but pulled **9/24** and back to a crew of 3 technicians. This would the FB-I to move around between weirs and ensure consistent field camp operations. This could provide more late-run sockeye and coho opportunity.

Dog Salmon: Currently fish tight ~ May 25 and pulled ~8/7. Right now there is a crew of 2. With increment weir would be fish tight May 23 but pulled **8/20**. This could provide more sockeye, pink, and coho salmon opportunity.

Ayakulik: Currently fish tight ~ May 24 and pulled ~8/24. Right now there is a crew of 2. With increment weir would be fish tight May 23 but pulled **9/15** and back to a crew of 3 technicians. This could provide more late-run sockeye and coho opportunity.

Upper Station currently fish tight ~ May 24 and pulled ~9/11. Right now there is a crew of 2. With increment weir would be fish tight May 23 but pulled **9/20**. This could provide more late-run sockeye and coho opportunity.

### **WW - Chignik Weir (\$100.0)**

The Chignik River weir is the most important salmon stock assessment project in the Chignik Management Area. Daily weir counts are monitored inseason and used directly to determine commercial fishing opportunity. There is currently no dedicated funding for late season operation of the weir. The department does have soft-funding (AKSSF) to cover late season operations for the 2018 field season. Future funding options beyond 2018 are uncertain at this time and as of right now in 2019 weir operations would cease August 1<sup>st</sup>. With the increment, the weir would remain in operation an additional month. The month of August can be a productive part of the run (an average of approximately 1.0 million pounds of sockeye salmon harvested).

### **WW - Kodiak Aerial Salmon Surveys (\$40.0)**

The current aerial survey budget for the Kodiak Management Area (KMA) is \$20.0. It takes 20 hours to fly the entire KMA or \$11.0 (\$550/hr). With additional \$40K in aerial survey budget the department would be able to fly more early sockeye salmon buildup surveys. This will allow more opportunity on local sockeye systems in June. The department would also be able to fly the KMA more frequently. Specifically, there could be more surveys flown on the Alaska Peninsula mainland streams later in season. This could provide additional fishing opportunity on chum and coho salmon later in the season.