



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the HOUSE RESOURCES
committee name

committee on HJR 21, dated WEDNESDAY, MAR. 18, 2009
bill/subject

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Signed:

SHAWN DOCHTERMANN

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State of Alaska - Legislature
House Resources Committee

Public Comment of Shawn Dochtermann on HJR 21 re P.Cod Endorsements

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Chairmen Johnson & Neuman and House Resource Members,

I'm Shawn Dochtermann, a second-generation commercial fisherman from Kodiak with over 30 years of fishing experience under my knife belt. I'm here representing my interests in Gulf of Alaska fisheries, today — even though I'm frequently a public advocate for many Alaskan fishermen, their families and coastal communities.

I'm here in support of HJR 21, for many reasons.

First I'd like to review a brief history of fisheries rationalization regimes:

- Fifty years ago, we became a state, and forced fisheries processors to start sharing profits of the resources that were being extracted from our state.
- Fast forward to the early seventies, Limited Entry was introduced as state fishery law. **There was only one catch: in order to harvest the fish, the permit holder had to actually put his boots on and go down and work on the boat, go fishing, catch the fish and then deliver them for processing. It was an owner-on-board fishery, and the crews got paid well.**
- In 1995 the halibut and sablefish federal fisheries management program (FMP) was changed from open access to Individual Fish Quotas, a.k.a. IFQs, DAPs, LAPs, or 'Catch Shares'. The NPFMC gave quotas to vessel owners and the program created a superior right so they would never have to step foot on boat again if they so chose. **This is what you would call an absentee owner model.**

For the record, approximately 15,000 halibut crewmen and skippers lost their jobs in one day. But at least when quotas are sold or the initial recipient expires from the fishery (my father will be 100 years old, I'll bet!) the IFQ has to be fished by the quota holder. That's what one would call fair — as compared to the newer privatization schemes. And the quotas were awarded only to fishermen as suppliers, not given to processors as buyers: who might dominate price setting.

- Next (BS) pollock was privatized in 1998 with the direct help of Ted Stevens and Trevor McCabe. **Now foreign owned companies that own processors and vessels are granted exclusive rights to catch and process pollock in the BS.** This greatly degraded Alaska's sovereign abilities to control its own resources.
- Lastly, in 2005 came Bering Sea Aleutian Island Crab Rationalization (CR) or CRAB RAT7. With a name like that one would know there's real "devils in the details", as over 1,000 crab crewmen were disenfranchised by Ted Stevens' Rider on a must-pass federal appropriations bill. **This gifted over 1 Billion Dollars in**

IFQ rights to about 100 individuals and corporations.

The processing rights were given to 7 major processing companies. Japanese trading companies own 40-50% of the processing rights, while Trident Seafoods has over 25% of processing and a large amount of IFQs. All of the IFQs were given to the quota holders forever; consequently there is no program to get fishing privileges back into the hands of active fishermen.

Crewmen in the Bering Sea are now getting paid at unfair and inequitable compensation rates due to high rent seekers taking exorbitant lease fees off the top. The average Bering Sea crabber now makes from 50-70% less than he did pre-rationalization. Now BS crab IFQ holders (who by majority live out of state) can play golf in Hawaii during the crab season — and collect a paycheck from Alaskan crab that was harvested without having to even own a boat or gear — by skimming 70% of the gross proceeds right off the top, before the boat it is fished on leaves the dock.

The next generation (myself included) is now sitting at this table and we've had enough of fishery access removal by the factions of fisheries lobbyists you will hear from today. If you're not born into a fishing family, it will take millions of dollars invested just to go catch some fish.

We fought Ben Stevens and his thuggery and stopped SB113 in this same building in 2005/6, and we won. Governor Palin was elected and she put the kibosh on the rush into GOA groundfish rationalization. **But now the NPFMC is trying to get GOA groundfish rationalization through by other means to suit the trawlers' need of getting quota ownership and securing the high value bycatch — incidental species now targeted that should by the standards of the Magnuson Stevens Act and related fisheries laws be brought to a halt.** The gear groups that fish the dirtiest should be penalized for excessive bycatch, not awarded allocations as a prize for lobbying efforts and campaign financing.

In summary, removing the latent LLPs from the GOA groundfish permit holders will leave state waters as the dumping ground for new entrants. Why shouldn't federal waters have a place for active fishermen as new entrants to transition into, for all of its fisheries? Where is the problem of too many fishing vessels? There is no great influx of vessels coming into the GOA Pacific cod fishery in the last 5-10 years. It's not financially viable for that many vessels to stay in the fishery, in any case — especially with the huge recent drop in ex-vessel cod prices. So, many vessels are now fishing only to secure rights to a catch history in case a rationalization management or privatization scheme gets imposed.

I'll be headed out jigging in state waters this week. But with these low prices, it looks like I'll be fishing first for my sanity and second to try to make an income. But there are no guarantees, it's fishing. I should be able to have access to the fisheries that are right outside of my doorstep, and the next generation should have that opportunity as well. **Fishing rights need to remain with those who go out on the boats.**

Removing these LLPs from the fixed-gear fishermen will simply **take rights from active and future fishermen and give exclusive rights to a investor-only faction who do not fish.**

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council presides over the federal waters off of one state only: Alaska. And the Council and State conduct joint Board of Fish and other coordinated efforts. Yet some have argued that you should not concern yourself with advising the Council on behalf of the People of Alaska whom you represent. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is both the right and duty of this Legislature to keep watch over these economic and social issues. In fact, it is inherent in our State's birthright and Constitution.

I urge the House Resources Committee to move HJR21a to the floor and ask all of the members here today to speak with the state senator representing their district to move this Resolution forward to the NPFMC.

As always, I appreciate the time you've taken to listen to my comments.

Respectfully,

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Add'l. Bio: I've fished in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), Bering Sea (BS), Aleutians, up to St. Matthew Island, and in the rivers of Bristol Bay. I'm a state salmon driftnet permit holder, and own a Bristol Bay vessel, and also fish halibut, cod, king crab and tanner crab.

3-18-09

Thank you chairman members of the Committee.
My name is Ilia Kuzmin I represent K-Bay Fisheries Association.

Long time cool participant in the Gulf of Alaska
Specifically in Central Gulf but, based out of Homer
We have to end this race for fish due to Safety as
number-1 priority.

We oppose House Joint Resolution # 21 as it is not
productive for the legislature to insert themselves into
complex fishery management issues.

In HJR 21 there are misrepresentations and incorrect
assertions, such as consolidation of vessels, reduction of
participants elimination of crew jobs.

So, we ask the Committee to let the Council do it's job
to complete this process of LLP Recency.

With the current final action that the Council is considering
there will still be anywhere from 110 to 306 permits that will qualify

It is totally false because with the LLP recency Action that the
Council will take will actually save crew jobs, protect long time local
Alaska fisherman that have been dependent on P-cod fishery, protect
small boat owner/operators from being pushed out of the fishery by
bigger 58 Footers, that have just recently started fishing and are
taking a bigger chunk of the TAC.

We do not support HJR 21 and urge you to let the Council process work as it is intended to do.

Sincerely,
Ilia Kuzmin

Ilia Kuzmin
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