

House Fisheries: April 29, 2021

# Update on Commercial Fishing Industry in Alaska & Impacts of COVID-19 to the Industry

Frances Leach, Executive Director  
United Fishermen of Alaska

# Who is UFA?



United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) was started in 1974 by a group of commercial fishermen who wanted to have a unified voice on commercial fishing issues in the State of Alaska.

- Our primary objectives are:
  - Promote positive relations between industry sectors.
  - Support all commercial gear types and remain neutral on allocative issues between commercial gear groups.
  - Protect industry from attacks through initiatives, legislation, etc.
  - Promote industry safety.
  - Promote healthy fishery resources by supporting research and habitat protection.
  - Support adequate funding for fishery research, management and enforcement.
  - Oppose fish farming.
  - Support development of new fisheries.
  - Educate industry, government and the public.
  - Support efforts to increase consumption of Alaska seafood.
  - Promote quality standards — harvester to consumer.
  - Protect consumer access to seafood by maintaining a stable supply of product to processors.

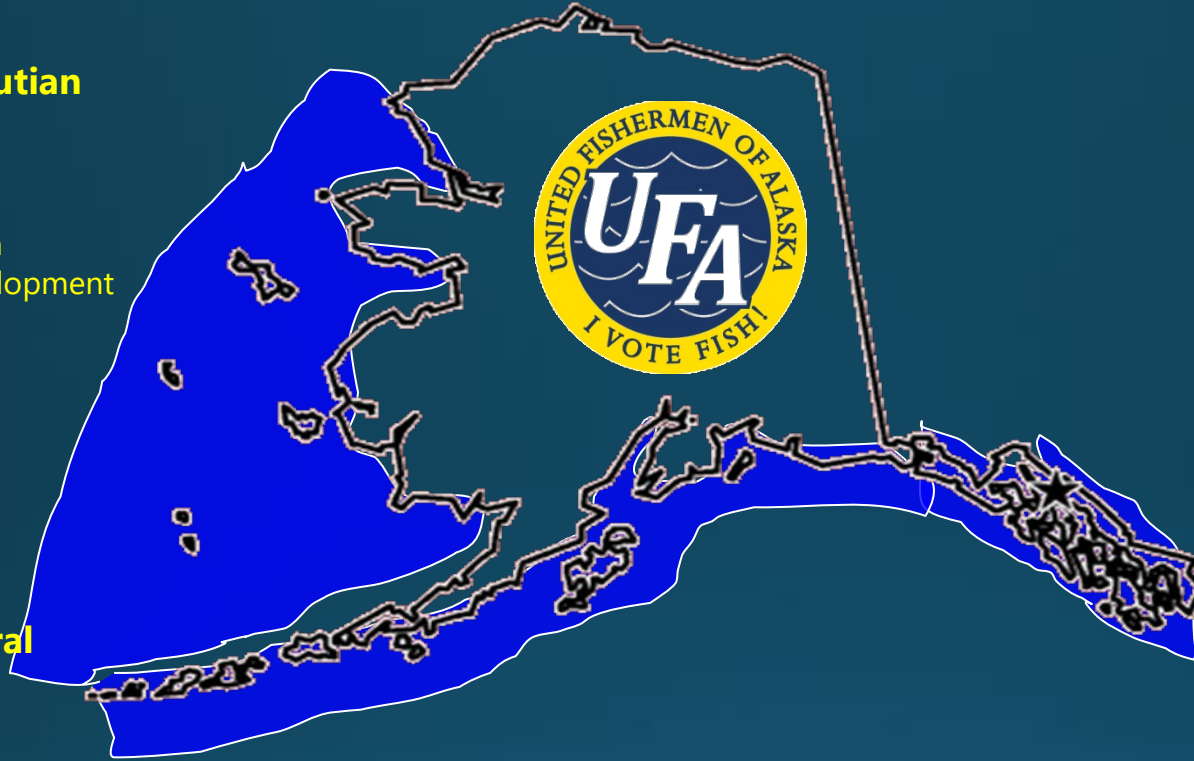
# UFA Member Associations & Areas of Operations

## Bering Sea/ Bristol Bay/Aleutian Islands

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers  
At-Sea Processors Association  
Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association  
Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association  
Bristol Bay Reserve  
Freezer Longline Coalition  
Groundfish Forum  
United Catcher Boats

## Gulf of Alaska & Southcentral

Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Assn.  
Area M Seiners Association  
Cape Barnabas, Inc.  
Concerned Area "M" Fishermen  
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association  
Cordova District Fishermen United  
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen Assn.  
Kodiak Crab Alliance Cooperative  
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Assn.  
Kodiak Seiners Assn.  
Northwest Setnetters Association  
North Pacific Fisheries Association  
Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corp  
Valdez Fisheries Development Association



## Statewide

Alaska Scallop Association  
Fishing Vessel Owners Assn.

## Southeast

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn.  
Alaska Trollers Association  
Armstrong Keta, Inc.  
Douglas Island Pink and Chum  
Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Assn.  
Petersburg Vessel Owners Assn.  
Purse Seine Vessel Owners Assn  
Seafood Producers Cooperative  
Southeast Herring Conservation Alliance  
Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance  
Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Assn.  
Southeast Alaska Seiners Association  
Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Assn.  
United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters



# UFA Policy Work

- 
- Administration
  - AK Legislature
  - ADFG
  - CFEC
  - ASMI
  - Board of Fish
  - DEC

- Congress
- NMFS/NOAA
- USCG
- North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
- International Pacific Halibut Commission
- USDA
- DEC



# Sustainability & Management

Alaska wrote a sustainability mandate into its constitution in 1959. Alaska arguably has the best managed fisheries in the world through State, Federal and international agencies working with input through a science-based public process.

Alaska's fisheries are seasonal and dynamic, and effective management as well as funding for that management is critical. The seafood industry is one of the most heavily regulated industries in Alaska.

The science-based and cautious approach includes shutdowns when the returns are low – and if the research and stock surveys are not able to be funded. Closures caused by a lack of field data unnecessarily cost reductions in income for fishery participants – and for the state's general fund.

- Major fishery management bodies and organizations:
  - Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
  - Alaska Board of Fisheries
  - Commercial Fishery Entry Commission (CFEC)
  - National Marine Fisheries Service
  - North Pacific Fishery Management Council
  - International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC–treaty)
  - Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC–treaty)





# Value of Alaska's Seafood

- Seafood is a diverse industry. Both fishing businesses and processors range from large corporations to family businesses and sole proprietors.
- Over 80 different commercial seafood species are fished in Alaska, caught by over 6,500 boats and processed at 120 shoreside plants.
- Seafood directly employs more workers than any other private sector industry in Alaska and is the foundation of many rural communities providing 60,000 direct jobs in Alaska
- Seafood is Alaska's top export. Approximately 5.7 billion pounds of seafood worth \$2.0 billion was harvested annually in 2017/2018. Processors turned this harvest into 2.8 billion pounds of product worth \$4.7 billion.





# ALASKA COMMERCIAL FISHERIES PAYS ITS WAY



Seafood pays approximately **\$172 million** in taxes, fees, and self-assessments to fund fisheries management each year (FY18).

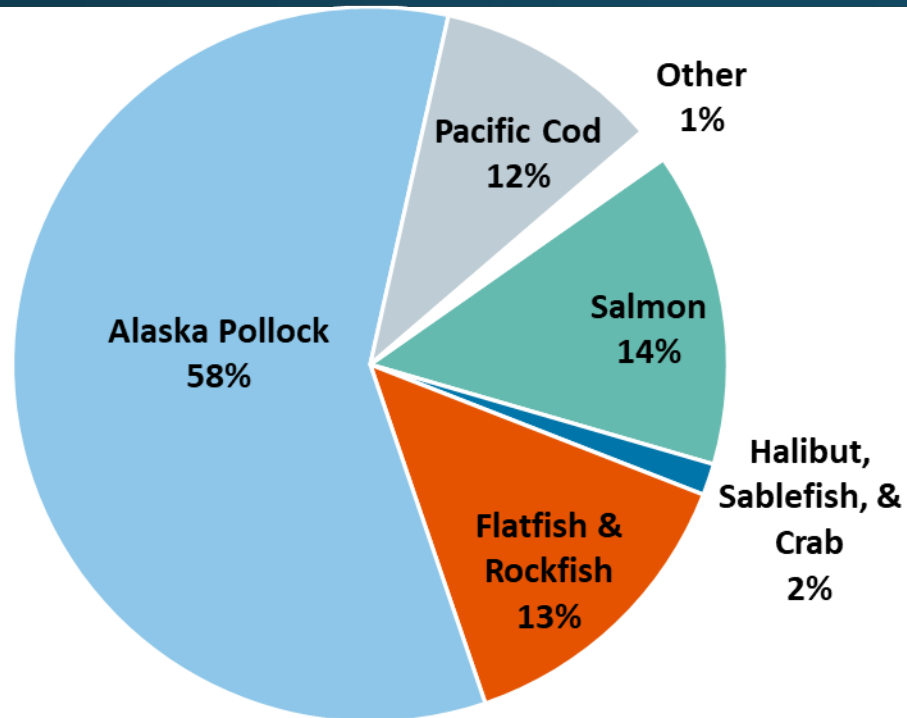
Seafood pays directly into the General Fund and **supports both state and local governments.**



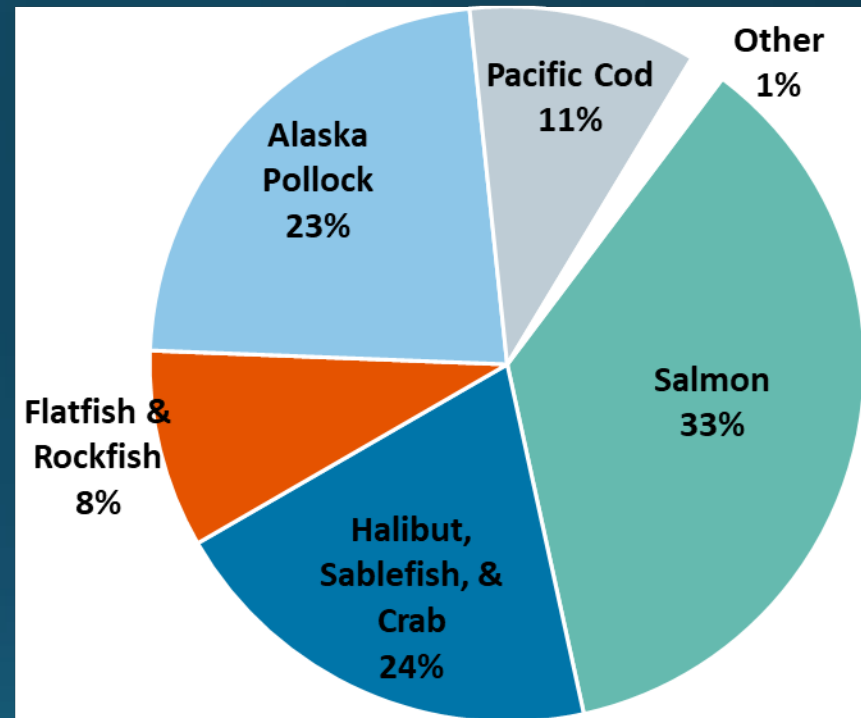
This revenue is **more than four times** the state general fund revenue used by the Commercial Fisheries Division (approximately \$38 million, FY20 final enacted).

Seafood contributes **\$5 to \$6 billion** in economic activity in Alaska each year and supports nearly **60,000 direct jobs** and an additional 11,000 indirect jobs in Alaska.

# Ex-Vessel Volume & Value



Ex-vessel Volume  
5.8 Billion Pounds



Ex-vessel Value  
\$2.0 Billion

Source: NMFS and ADF&G; compiled by McDowell Group.  
Some 2018 figures are preliminary.





# Fishing in Alaska- A way of life for Generations

Independent Fishermen =  
Small business =  
Investment

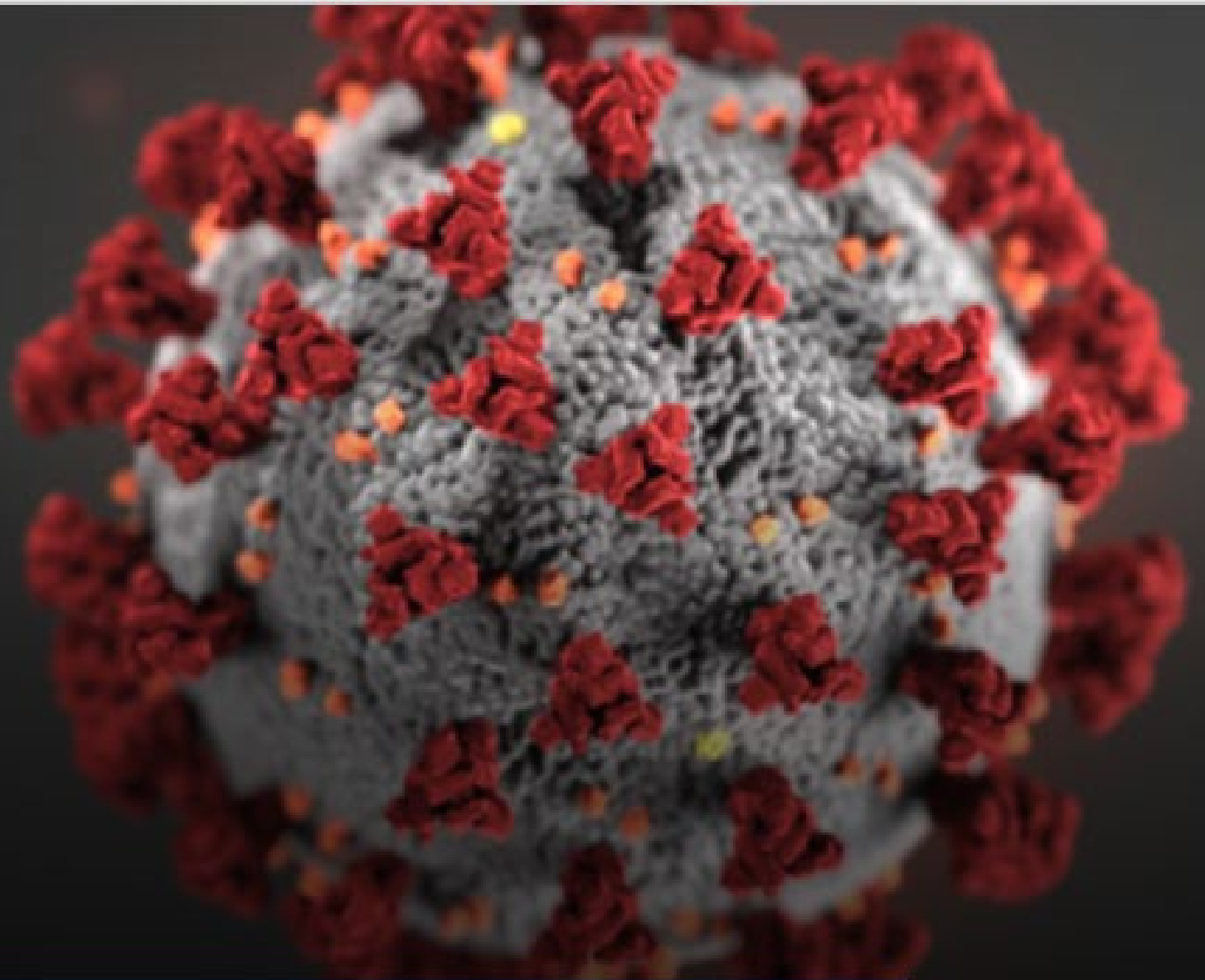


# Lowers the Cost of Living in Alaska

- Shipping seafood on southbound routes provides “backhaul” revenue for shippers, allowing for more competitive rates on northbound freight
- Alaska’s seafood industry ships approximately 1 billion lbs. of finished product south each year, or the equivalent of 23,000 containers



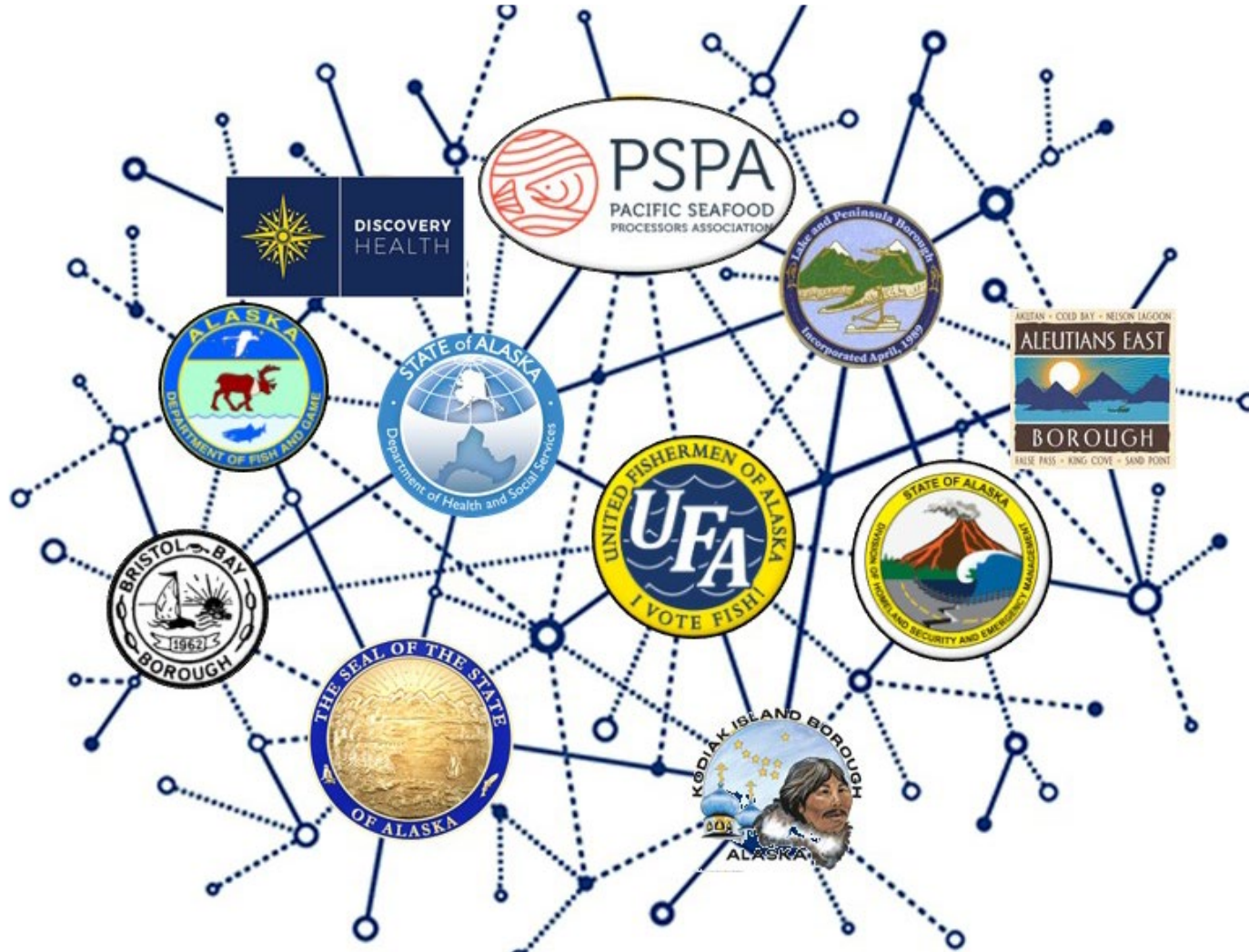




# Covid-19

Commercial Fishery Industry Response & Outreach

# Coming Together





# We are Critical Infrastructure



STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001  
907-465-3500

550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1700  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-269-7450

Governor Michael J. Dunleavy  
STATE OF ALASKA

## **\*\* COVID-19 HEALTH MANDATE \*\***

Issued: March 23, 2020

By: Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Commissioner Adam Crum, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services  
Dr. Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer, State of Alaska

To prevent the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the State of Alaska is issuing its tenth health mandate based on its authority under the Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration signed by Governor Mike Dunleavy on March 11, 2020.

Given the increasing concern for new cases of COVID-19 around Alaska, Governor Dunleavy and the State of Alaska are issuing the following mandate to go into effect March 25, 2020 at 12:01AM., and will be reevaluated by April 21, 2020.

This mandate is issued to protect the public health of Alaskans. The Governor looks to establish consistent mandates across the State in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The goal is to flatten the curve and prevent the spread of the virus.

The purpose of this mandate to control the ingress to Alaska from outside localities in order to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

operation of residences;

g. Food and agriculture, company cafeterias, cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing;

March 23, 2020

Health Mandate 010 Attachment A

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# Health Mandate 17

## — Health Mandate 017: Protective Measures for Independent Commercial Fishing Vessels

Issued: April 23, 2020

Updated: 5/27/2020

By: Governor Mike Dunleavy

Commissioner Adam Crum, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

Dr. Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer, State of Alaska

To slow the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the State of Alaska is issuing its seventeenth health n based on its authority under the Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration signed by Governor Mike Dunleavy c 2020.

Given the ongoing concern for new cases of COVID-19 being transmitted via community spread within the state, Gc Dunleavy and the State of Alaska issued Mandate 017 to **become effective April 24, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. This Manda reviewed, and will remain in effect until rescinded or superceded.**

This Mandate is issued to protect the public health of Alaskans. By issuing this Mandate, the Governor is establishi mandates across the State in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The goal is to flatten the curve and disrupt the virus.

The purpose of this Mandate is to enact protective measures for independent commercial fishing vessels operating Alaskan waters and ports in order to prevent, slow, and otherwise disrupt the spread of the virus that causes COVID

- We were the only industry with our own mandate



# Governor Applauds Commercial Fishing Industry

"We commend Alaska's seafood industry for successfully navigating the most difficult season Alaska has ever experienced. Captains, deckhands, processors and hatcheries worked tirelessly to protect coastal communities, jobs and the health of Alaska's people and economy. Local leaders, health care workers, and state officials devoted countless hours to developing policies and reviewing community protection plans."

## Protecting Alaska's fisheries in a turbulent season

✍ Author: [Mike Dunleavy](#) | [Opinion, Clay Koplin](#) | [Opinion, Dan O'Hara](#) | [Opinion, Rodney Dial](#) | [Opinion](#)

🕒 Updated: September 16, 2020 📅 Published September 16, 2020



*Commercial fishing boat moored in Dillingham on Monday, August 26, 2013, after the sockeye salmon fishing season. (Bill Roth / ADN)*

COVID  
Disruptions to  
Alaska Seafood  
Harvesters,  
Processors, and  
Coastal  
Communities

Widespread closures of  
food service sector

Shipping Disruptions

Added costs for harvesters  
and processors

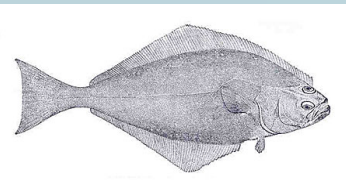




# Fishery Specifics

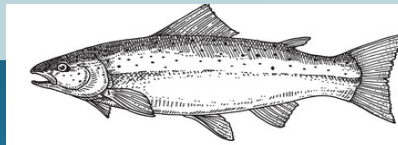
## Halibut and Sablefish

- Most affected fisheries because they rely on foodservice market and seasons opened at beginning of the pandemic



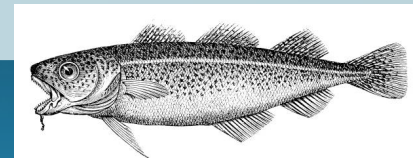
## Salmon

- Shipping disruptions made it difficult and more expensive to get seafood to market



## Alaska Pollock

- Added costs for harvesters and processors working to ensure safety



# The Cost to Harvesters



- COVID-19 contributed to widespread harvest value declines in 2020, with a preliminary estimated drop in ex-vessel value of 20-25%
- The Alaska Department of Revenue forecast estimates that fisheries business and resource landing tax revenue for FY2021 will total \$47.8 million- a 19% decrease from \$58.8 million collected in FY2020.
- Costs to put in safety measures
- Commercial Fishing Crew Numbers Down



# COVID-19 costs totaled more than \$50 million for Alaska's seafood processors



OBI Seafoods Wood  
River Plant-  
Dillingham



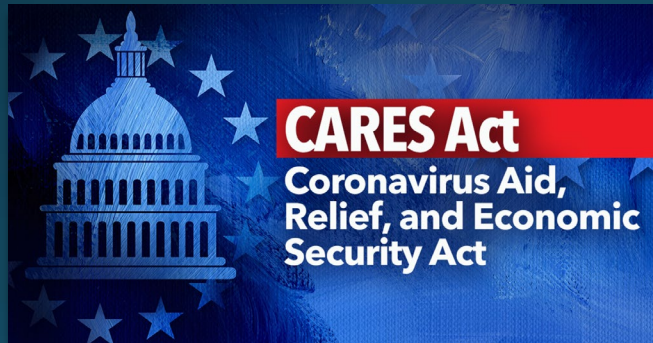
# Impacts to Coastal Communities will continue to be seen into 2021

- Shared fisheries taxes are based on ex-vessel value of previous year's landings





# Financial Assistance



# Moving Forward

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Without any COVID-19 emergency orders in place in the State of Alaska, commercial fishermen are no longer required to comply with Mandate 17, but that does not mean everything is back to normal

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We are still advocating for safe COVID-19 practices including vaccination, quarantining, safe practices, and common sense

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Keeping communities and our crews safe and healthy is of upmost importance to us and will continue to be to a high priority



# Thank you



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