

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1982

Source

HCS CSSJR 70(Res)

Legislative
Resolve No.

11



Relating to commercial fishing of North Pacific chinook salmon.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the Alaska commercial fishing industry provides the highest employment of any industry in the state; and

WHEREAS Alaska commercial fishermen, especially trollers, depend for their livelihood on the North Pacific chinook (king) salmon; and

WHEREAS, since 1977, the fishery management plan and amendments implemented by the Secretary of Commerce under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 have resulted in substantial reductions in the harvest of chinook salmon in the fishery conservation zone off the coast of Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, Alaska commercial fishermen suffered more than a 15 percent reduction from the 1980 allowable harvest of chinook salmon; and

WHEREAS the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries, in joint session, voted to direct the National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage the Yakutat-Southeast Alaska chinook salmon fishery toward the lower end of the 1981 optimum yield range with a target of 255,500 chinook salmon, which would be a 20 percent reduction in yield since 1980; and

WHEREAS Alaska has established a plan for the rebuilding of depressed Canadian and Southeastern Alaska natural chinook stocks and has managed its fishery in accordance with this plan; and

WHEREAS chinook escapements in British Columbia are only one-third of the optimum, due primarily to chronic overharvest by Canadian fisheries; and

WHEREAS Canada has not established a plan for the rebuilding of its severely depressed chinook salmon stocks; and

WHEREAS Canadian troll, net, recreational and Indian fisheries are the major North Pacific coast harvesters of chinook salmon, averaging some 1.8 million fish per year; and

WHEREAS Canadian commercial and recreational fishermen throughout British Columbia have not experienced a regulatory reduction comparable to that experienced by Alaskan fishermen; and

WHEREAS Canadian commercial fishermen continue to harvest chinook salmon in great quantities, despite reductions imposed on Alaskan and other American commercial fishermen for the benefit of all who participate in the fishery; and

WHEREAS the less stringently regulated Canadian harvest and interception of chinook salmon poses a severe economic threat to commercial fishermen in Alaska and other Pacific coast states; and

WHEREAS salmon interception treaty negotiations between the United States and Canada have continued for several years without resolving the international dispute over the harvest of chinook salmon; and

WHEREAS the Columbia River chinook salmon stocks have been seriously depleted by habitat degradation caused by hydroelectric development on the Columbia River; and

WHEREAS the management authorities on the Columbia River have not been successful in explaining or rectifying adult and juvenile salmon losses in the river due to habitat degradation and illegal fishing problems; and

WHEREAS a major barrier to achieving a United States-Canada salmon agreement which would address North Pacific coast conservation problems is the allowable level of United States interception of Fraser River salmon in Puget Sound;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries to direct the National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage the Yakutat-Southeast Alaska chinook salmon fishery at the 1980 optimum yield range; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the United States is respectfully requested to direct the Secretary of Commerce to disapprove any amendments or modifications to the fishery management plan submitted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council if the amendments would reduce the harvest of chinook salmon in the Yakutat-Southeast Alaska region below the 1981 level; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the chairman of the Alaska Board of

Fisheries is respectfully requested to reconvene the Alaska Board of Fisheries to reinstitute the optimum yield of chinook salmon in the Yakutat-Southeast Alaska region at the 1980 level; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the Department of State to move toward a speedy resolution of the United States-Canada salmon interception issues; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Congressional delegation work with the Congressional delegations of the State of Washington and the State of Oregon to ensure that a successful plan is implemented to reverse the unexplained mortalities of adult chinook salmon in the Columbia River.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ronald Reagan, President of the United States; to the Honorable Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary of Commerce; to Mr. Clem Tillion, Chairman, North Pacific Fishery Management Council; to Mr. James Beaton, Chairman of the Alaska Board of Fisheries; to Mr. Ronald Skoog, Commissioner of Fish and Game; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.