

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1989

Source

Legislative
Resolve No.

CSSJR 13(Res)

1



Requesting the Pacific Salmon Commission to increase Alaska's chinook salmon quota.

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

WHEREAS chinook salmon fisheries were placed under a quota in 1985 by the Pacific Salmon Commission to rebuild depressed chinook salmon stocks coastwide by 1998; and

WHEREAS chinook salmon stocks subject to the quota in Southeast Alaska, for which Alaska shares management responsibility, are responding far better than anticipated at this early date; in 1982, eight percent of the indicator chinook salmon stocks met the established escapement goals, while in 1987 that number increased to 42 percent, and from 1982 to 1987 79 percent of all indicator chinook salmon stocks have shown increases in escapement; and

WHEREAS the abundance of chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska waters has significantly exceeded the population-rebuilding projections of the United States-Canada Salmon Treaty, as evidenced by the increase in the daily catch rate during the 1988 season to 108 percent above the daily catch rate during the 1986 season; and

WHEREAS many economic sectors in Southeast Alaska have suffered substantial economic declines under chinook salmon harvest quotas; and

WHEREAS the Southeast Alaska summer chinook salmon troll season has been reduced from 169 days in 1979 to only 12 in 1988; and

WHEREAS longer seasons benefit the Southeast Alaska fishing industry by ensuring higher quality fish products and greater market availability; and

WHEREAS processors are losing markets for chinook salmon and are unable to fill orders due to such short fishing seasons; and

WHEREAS the shortened season results in area closures for chinook salmon fisheries and in disastrous economic effects on specific Southeast Alaska communities; and

WHEREAS treaty agreements have shortened the Southeast Alaska troll season so much that Alaskan hatchery fish cannot be harvested at the rate anticipated; and

WHEREAS due to increased chinook salmon harvests in fisheries not subject to a harvest quota and increased federal hatchery production of chinook salmon the fishermen of Canada, Washington, and Oregon have enjoyed increased harvests above treaty expectations in some of the fisheries harvesting the same chinook salmon stocks taken in Alaska; however, there has not been any increase in the chinook salmon quota in Alaska; and

WHEREAS the Southeast Alaska summer chinook salmon troll season was initially reduced by the state in 1980 prior to treaty implementation so that Alaska has contributed disproportionately more to the coastwide rebuilding program; and

WHEREAS a fair increase in the Southeast Alaska chinook salmon harvest quota can be allowed in order to lengthen the chinook salmon fishing season and soften the adverse socio-economic effects without jeopardizing the 1998 goal for the natural stock rebuilding program by focusing on stocks that are rebuilding faster than anticipated, including hatchery stocks, thus allowing benefits of the rebuilding program to be taken now;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United States section of the Northern Panel of the Pacific Salmon Commission to work, at its February 1989 meeting, to substantially increase the chinook salmon quota for Alaska in order to allow Alaska to share in the increased abundance and harvest of chinook salmon.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to Don W. Collinsworth, David A. Colson, John R. Donaldson, and S. Timothy Wapato, Commissioners, Pacific Salmon Commission.