

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

January 28, 2016

10:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair  
Representative Neal Foster  
Representative Bob Herron  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
Representative Dan Ortiz

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Charisse Millett

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION: YOUNG FISHERMEN'S SUMMIT

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL GUIDES ORGANIZATION ON  
REGIONAL QUOTA ENTITIES/CATCH PROPOSAL

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

PAULA CULLENBERG, Director  
Alaska Sea Grant Program  
School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences  
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the  
Young Fishermen's Summit.

TORI CONNOR, Fisherman  
Petersburg, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the  
Young Fishermen's Summit.

AMANDA JOHNSTON, Fisherman  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

GREGG MARXMILLER, Fisherman  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

HANNAH HEIMBUCH, Fisherman  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

ELSA SEBASTIAN, Fisherman  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

ZACHARY HILL, Seiner  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

GARY CLINE, Regional Fisheries Director  
Bristol Bay Economic Corporation  
Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

STEVE JOHNSON, Fisherman  
Wrangell, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

ALEXANDER SMITH, Fisherman  
Aleknagik, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

SUNNY RICE  
(No address provided)

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

BILL THOMAS, Fisherman  
Haines, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

TOM OHAUS, Lodge Owner  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Southeast Alaska Regional Guides Organization on Regional Quota Entities/Catch Proposal.

RICHARD YAMADA, President  
Alaska Charter Association (ACA)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Southeast Alaska Regional Guides Organization on Regional Quota Entities/Catch Proposal.

ANDY MEZIRROW, Member  
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC)  
Seward, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Southeast Alaska Regional Guides Organization on Regional Quota Entities/Catch Proposal.

RYAN MAKINSTER, Executive Director  
Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the presentation of the Southeast Alaska Regional Guides Organization on Regional Quota Entities/Catch Proposal.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:00:25 AM](#)

**CHAIR LOUISE STUTES** called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Representatives Stutes, Ortiz, Kreiss-Tomkins, Foster, and Herron, were present at the call to order.

#### **PRESENTATION: YOUNG FISHERMEN'S SUMMIT**

[10:00:55 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the first order of business would be a presentation of the Young Fishermen's Summit.

10:01:38 AM

PAULA CULLENBERG, Director, Alaska Sea Grant Program, School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), said there are 33 sea grant programs throughout the United States, each representing a partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the universities. The mission is to strengthen coastal communities and marine resources throughout the state. Fifteen marine advisory agents are positioned in eight coastal communities to assist in the effort. Ms. Cullenberg said she co-chairs the UA Fisheries, Seafood & Maritime Initiative (FSMI), which developed a plan to support the fishing industry workforce. The Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD) has adopted the plan, along with the UA Board of Regents, and a number of municipal groups around the state. It has become a guiding document for supporting Alaska's huge maritime workforce representing approximately 70,000 related jobs, which include: fisherman, processors, the ferry system, freight forwarders, fisheries biologists, researchers, shellfish farmers, and other positions penetrating urban and rural locales. The workforce plan has led to the formation of a new group, Maritime Works, which is an industry group focused on workforce development. She reported that the number of programs relating to the marine economy have been increased on all three major campuses. The expansions include: the Kodiak Marine Seafood Science Center, development of a commercial fishing training program at the Bristol Bay campus, maritime training for the ferry system in Ketchikan, and Sitka now has one and two year programs to train hatchery workers. She said the Young Fisherman's Summit has convened for six consecutive years, with an aggregate participation of approximately 300. The summit provides a three day forum to develop professional leadership skills, and was begun in response to the graying of the fleet. The average age of an Alaskan fisherman is estimated to be 49 years old.

10:06:17 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked for clarity regarding the average age trend and over what period.

MS. CULLENBERG responded that ten years ago, the average age might have been 40, and the rate of increase is considered significant when combined with the decline of permit holders who are under 40. The indications are that the ability for young people to enter the industry is a concern. Many barriers exist

for young fisherman who must purchase permits and quota shares to gain access to the profession. Ms. Cullenberg said summit participants will provide testimony to that end. The summit is hosting statewide participants with backgrounds that represent a diversity of fishing methods.

[10:11:07 AM](#)

TORI CONNOR, Fisherman, outlined the permits and quotas she holds, which include: a Prince William Sound (PWS) permit, Southeast hand-troll, and 500 pounds of declassified individual fishing quota (IFQ). She expressed concern regarding a one percent landing tax proposed for the commercial fleet and opined that it should also include the charter fleet. In response to a member's question, she suggested taxing the sport fisherman as well.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS confirmed that an equitability argument may exist: commercial fisheries pay for enhancement/hatcheries without similar contributions from the charter catch.

[10:13:50 AM](#)

AMANDA JOHNSTON, Fisherman, provided a brief background of her experiences, including overseas travels, and said Alaska's commercial fleet is extremely unique and worth preserving. Accessibility by rural communities and the younger generation to the fisheries is a concern. As the next generation attempts to take over the fishing culture, there is a fear that it is being lost and may die off. She urged committee members to become familiar firsthand with the issues by visiting boats and fishing camps.

[10:15:33 AM](#)

GREGG MARXMILLER, Fisherman, said he is a fisherman of 25 years and expressed concerns for helping young people enter the profession and the difficulties associated with the fluctuation in fish prices. Not only do prices vary dramatically, but limitations are imposed regarding the volume that may be sold, which restricts a fisherman's ability to make up for low costs by selling more fish. The fishing industry is wrought with instability and limitations, which are a deterrent for anyone considering entering the business. He pointed out that options need to be considered for making fishing a more attractive career choice. Also, scenarios, such as the foreign ownership

of the primary Bristol Bay processors could be an area for scrutiny and change.

[10:18:04 AM](#)

HANNAH HEIMBUCH, Fisherman, stated that she is a third generation, commercial salmon and halibut fisherman. She paraphrased from a prepared statement, which read:

I wanted to talk to you today about options for improving community access to local fisheries, and what the outmigration of permits and quota really means to coastal Alaska; because, when we talk about fish and the fishing livelihood we're never really just talking about fish. We're talking about the wellbeing of our coastal communities, our ability to be self-sustaining, [enjoy] food security both locally and across the state, economic stability, and work skills. We're also talking about cultural heritage and family traditions. These are essential components of community and state health and stability that strong local fisheries can support. They are also incredibly difficult to rebuild once they are lost.

As you look at options to sustain and improve community access to fisheries, I would urge you to consider it in light of how essential these fisheries are to a community's well-being.

I believe you will have the opportunity to consider very meaningful options for improving community access to fisheries, including permit banks.

While this move may be complex and challenging, we cannot wait another generation to change the status quo. We have to prioritize the health and stability of Alaska's coastal communities by protecting access to fisheries.

More than ever, Alaska needs the stability of these small businesses to sustain our state.

[10:19:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON asked about shareable insights/highlights from the summit regarding solutions to the out-migration of permits.

MS. HEIMBUCH answered that several options are being discussed, including permit banks and educational permits.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON noted that the out-migration of permits is can be a question of economics. He said there may be a conundrum that exists in holding a permit locally, and still being able to optimize economic gains.

MS. HEIMBUCH agreed. She said it's due to this conundrum that entering the fishing industry represents such a high cost to the new generation of fishermen. It's not an impossible situation to overcome; however, a structural change in the transfer of permit ownership may need to be made.

[10:21:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS pointed out that the legislature created an investment program [Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Division of Economic Development, Financing Section] as an alternate lending resource for fishermen, particularly those entering the field. He asked whether Ms. Heimbuch had found the [Financial Section] loans personally helpful.

MS. HEIMBUCH answered yes. She said it is the only reason she holds a permit. Still, she stressed, not everyone has the opportunity to access the loans; especially rural Alaskans who may not have the financial skills, or credit history, to take advantage of the state program.

[10:22:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked whether state loan reforms, or qualification adjustments, are being discussed at the summit; is there a need to consider how the program operates.

MS. HEIMBUCH responded that she is not aware of any such discussion. It shouldn't necessarily be easy to receive a loan, she said, but ways and means for educating the audience regarding the process would be helpful.

[10:23:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS offered that the loan program has been very successful since its inception, and suggested that additional options could provide helpful augmentation.

10:24:00 AM

ELSA SEBASTIAN, Fisherman, reported that, as a former resident from the historical fishing village of Point Baker, Prince of Wales Island, she has witnessed many potential young, generational fishermen turn away from the industry citing the lack of economic opportunity, financial burdens, and the inherent risks involved. She opined that when fishing permits are gone from a local area, it not only effects the economy, but entire families and an important way of life are lost as well. "I would like to encourage the committee to improve access and opportunities for Alaskan's to Alaskan fisheries," she said.

10:25:53 AM

ZACHARY HILL, Seiner, recounted his decision to buy into the Kodiak region fishery and the issues he encountered receiving a loan. He was eventually able to outfit himself via a loan through the Alaska Commercial Fishing and Agriculture Bank (CFAB). He expressed gratitude to the committee for its timely action of increasing lending limit allowances, effectively expanding the opportunities for permit purchases through CFAB.

10:27:26 AM

GARY CLINE, Regional Fisheries Director, Bristol Bay Economic Corporation, said many of the Bristol Bay area villages have economies that rely entirely on the fishing industry and access to fishing permits is essential. A permit grant program has been implemented to assist the residents, but it is a slow process. The village of Togiak united with Copper River Seafoods [Inc.], and created a small processor, and participants receive premium prices for the products with good success. He reported monitoring the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) meetings to gain an understanding of the fisheries management practices in the area. Due to the state budget situation, care for optimization of sustainable harvest will be more important, he stressed.

10:32:12 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON asked about the loss of permits in the region and the residual resentment that exists.

MR. CLINE said many family members will not broach the topic. He recently learned that his mother sold her permit when he was

an infant, which would be a benefit for him now. As a young adult, he was urged to go to college and not become a fisherman; it was a time when drift permits were being sold for \$15,000. Today the same permit may cost \$180,000, as the fishery has once again become a lucrative venture.

[10:34:41 AM](#)

STEVE JOHNSON, Fisherman, said that as a 15 year fisherman he would like to offer solutions to a couple of problems. Being a tender operator, he related that he would like to receive financing through the state to expand his operation, but lending options are not available to him. He suggested expanding the state program to allow owners to use equity from a vessel as collateral for expansion/improvement loans. Additionally, young fishermen continually report an inability to afford permit costs. Interim use permits were once issued to new fishermen who could not purchase a full permit and he suggested revisiting that practice. The opportunity would be valuable for a young fisherman if it could serve as experience equity towards a full permit loan.

[10:36:54 AM](#)

ALEXANDER SMITH, Fisherman, said the [Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Division of Economic Development, Financing Section] has been helpful to him as a Bristol Bay fisherman; however, the loan limitations of the program are a concern.

[10:37:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS noted that 21 limited permits are owned by residents of the Aleknagik community, down from a historic high of 72, and the Point Baker permits, mentioned by a previous testifier, have declined from 89 to 18. He asked about the socio-economic impacts on Aleknagik or other changes observed since the permit declines.

MR. SMITH answered that tourism provides a seasonal economic boost to the area due to the proximity of Aleknagik to [Wood-Tikchik State Park], but fishing is the lifeblood. The lack of permits cause only negative impacts and keeps the village economically suppressed. It's a big, difficult step to acquire a permit and a boat, he stressed.

[10:39:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON said a member of his family, Raymond Conquest, resides in Aleknagik, and asked Mr. Smith to draw a comparison of the importance of commercial fishing between the two families.

MR. SMITH admitted to feeling lucky to be involved in the fishing industry that sustains his family today as it did his ancestors. The village environment is closed and requires cooperation around the shared fishing interest, he offered.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON inquired whether the community has been impacted by the [Wood River Bridge, completed in 2015].

MR. SMITH responded that there is excitement, even among those who were not initially supportive of the project. Having ambulance service has been a lifesaver, and the access it provides to the park, despite environmental concerns, provides a possibility for economic growth.

[10:42:09 AM](#)

SUNNY RICE expressed appreciation for the committee's interest in hearing from the summit attendees.

[10:42:35 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES expressed gratitude and personal delight at the level of participation being generated through the summit. After forty years, her husband has recently retired from the industry and, she said, it is heartwarming to see the response from the young fishermen bringing enthusiasm and new life to the fleet.

[10:43:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ noted the seriousness of the decline in resident owned permits. He said in the district he represents, Hydaburg, the 62 permits owned in 1980 have dwindled to 38, with only one active seine permit being fished. It is incumbent upon the legislature to be active in seeking ways and means to reverse this trend.

[10:44:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON requested comments from a former legislative member in the gallery, Representative Bill Thomas.

[10:45:15 AM](#)

BILL THOMAS, Fisherman, said he has fished continuously since 1969. Two permits were originally in Haines, and one has been sold, making him the last permit holder in the area; it was gifted to him from the state. He has endeavored to have the regional corporations, village corporations, tribal governments, and Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs) be the permit owners. Thus, fishermen could lease the permits and have easier accessibility to the industry. The Alaskan definition of a successful fisherman is one who lives in Seattle or Bellingham, Washington, he joked. The exodus of permits has been ongoing, and today perhaps 70 percent of the Southeast seine permits belong to non-residents, as well as 75-80 percent from Bristol Bay. Many fishermen end up in trouble due to the inherent fluctuating nature of dependable income, or tax issues. The reason he still fishes at the age of 69, is due to improved fishing methods that allow him to continue to successfully participate, including: radar, hydraulic lift systems, auto pilots, and higher speed boats. The permits have left the state, and the individual fish quotas will follow, he predicted, as they are currently priced at \$53.00 per pound. He said taxing the sport harvest would be helpful, as previously mentioned. The caveat should be that, if you own a permit, you need to reside in Alaska, he opined.

[10:49:51 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 10:50 a.m. to 10:57 a.m.

**PRESENTATION: SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL GUIDES ORGANIZATION ON REGIONAL QUOTA ENTITIES/CATCH PROPOSAL**

[10:57:10 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the final order of business would be a presentation by the Southeast Alaska Regional Guides Organization on Regional Quota Entities/Catch proposal.

[10:59:06 AM](#)

TOM OHAUS, Lodge Owner, said the halibut harvest is overseen by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) as a federally managed fish; discrimination for state residency is not a regulatory factor. The topic for consideration, he pointed out, is the guided, sport, charter harvest, not the

commercial catch nor the non-guided sport catch. He then provided a brief history of the last 20 years of the harvest. The highlights included: 1996/97 the Southeast and Southcentral catch became a concern; 2008 NPFMC passed the catch sharing plan allowing a percentage of the exploitable yield to be taken by guided charter anglers and grouping them with the individual fishing quota (IFQ) [commercial] harvesters; 2008 halibut stocks were identified to be on a downward trend, and charter guides self-determined their share to be under allocated; 2008-2010 guided catch limits underwent a series of adjustments and Southeast limits changed from the previous two halibut of any size to only one less than 37 inches long; Southeast guides join together to formulate a workable plan and propose a joint owned IFQ.

[11:03:22 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES surmised that IFQs would be included in a pool versus an individual's name, and asked about the mechanics of the plan.

MR. OHAUS responded that the IFQ represents the pounds of fish allocated for harvest. The IFQ would be in the name of the recreational quota entity (RQE).

CHAIR STUTES questioned the ability to roll individual quotas into a pool.

MR. OHAUS stated that the mechanism already exists in other programs, and the proposal represents an expansion.

[11:05:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ queried whether the pool would be managed statewide.

MR. OHAUS responded that every IFQ relates to a specific fishing region. The intention is to create one board that would govern two halibut quota pools; one for Southcentral and one for Southeast.

[11:06:30 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES questioned whether the plan establishes a cap for the number of pounds that could be purchased by the proposed entity.

MR. OHAUS answered yes, and deferred for further details.

[11:07:42 AM](#)

RICHARD YAMADA, President, Alaska Charter Association (ACA), underscored that fish allocation conflicts exist between the commercial and charter fleet sectors. The statewide Alaska Charter Association and Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO) united efforts to write a joint grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to create a mechanism that allows inter-sector transfer on a market based approach. He directed attention to the committee packet and the 15 page Executive Summary reprint of the 132 page whitepaper, titled, "Integrating a recreational fishery into a catch share program: Case study of Alaska's guided halibut sport fishery, CATCH, Catch Accountability Through Compensated Halibut," dated January 2014, with author credits to Richard Yamada and Sherry Flumerfelt. The paper provides the results from two years of research, he said, which he personally conducted. The mechanism proposed, a Recreational Quota Entity (RQE), would be developed as a state owned, non-profit organization, composed of a board, boat charter operators and other seats to be designated. The RQE would purchase IFQ's from any willing sellers, at market prices, and hold the quota for the good of all guided recreational anglers. The expectation is that the RQE would receive an annual allocation by which the NPFMC would set bag limits, in addition to the regulatory allocation. Based on these combined allocations, he said, the charter fishermen will be relieved of the severe restrictions currently in place.

[11:10:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked how new participants would be able to benefit from the pool once it's ongoing.

MR. YAMADA pointed out that the pool would be restricted to guided charter anglers, and said the IFQ is based on abundance of stock, which will be distributed among the active guides as they access the quota held in trust without individual ownership.

[11:12:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS clarified that charter guides currently operate under a limited entry permit, and through acquisition of a permit a new guide would gain access to the pool.

MR. YAMADA concurred.

[11:12:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked what would be the origin of the resources to purchase the IFQs for establishing the RQE.

MR. YAMADA responded that a \$10.00 halibut stamp is being proposed, which over time would provide the funds to purchase the quotas.

[11:13:44 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES asked whether parameters and quota management guidelines exist to ensure that anglers aren't exceeding limits in-season.

MR. YAMADA answered that in-season management programs are not part of the proposal. Currently, regulators use estimates based on angler numbers and season effort, along with the size of fish landed, to project guidelines for the following season. The confidence level is plus or minus 10 percent, and significant overages, as have occurred in the past, are not anticipated.

CHAIR STUTES queried what would happen if a serious overage did occur; would it be taken off the next years allocation.

MR. YAMADA said a subsequent year reduction has been proposed, as well as a rollover, but the council will make the policy decision.

[11:16:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON asked about the health of the halibut resource in Southeast regardless of the impact of the quotas.

MR. YAMADA said the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) has reported it to be stabilized from the decline of the last few years; perhaps on an uptick.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON pointed out that the smaller size catch is better for eating; however, there continues to be interest in pursuing the largest halibut possible. He asked whether anglers understand that taking the monster fish could be harmful to the resource.

MR. YAMADA explained that there is a term, fisheries induced evolution, which is based on the assumption that the largest fish are fertile females and that there is an effect on the population if they are fished out. However, it's not necessarily correct, he opined, nor are large females as fertile as the younger, smaller ones, measuring 30-32 inches. The larger fish will have contributed to the gene pool and be on the short end of its life span when taken.

[11:21:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ added that it's important to consider the significant, halibut by-catch issue, which is a major contributing factor to the health of the fishery.

[11:22:39 AM](#)

ANDY MEZIROV, Member, North Pacific Management Council, referred to the previously cited white paper to explain how the council works with these type of community generated reports. The council generated document is being analyzed and will be reviewed prior to submission to the committee. Addressing the purpose of need, he paraphrased from a written statement, which read [original punctuation provided]:

Alaska's guided halibut anglers have seen recent increases in regulatory restrictions due to declining halibut stocks and guided recreational allocations. A market-based mechanism for the guided halibut recreational sector may be an effective means to supplement their annual allocations. Allowing an RQE (Recreational Quota Entity) to hold a limited amount of commercial halibut [quotas] on behalf of guided recreational halibut anglers under a "willing seller and willing buyer" approach may result in less restrictive annual harvest measures for guided recreational anglers in times of low halibut abundance, while complying with total halibut removals under the guided halibut catch limits determined by the International Pacific Halibut Commission. The guided recreational halibut allocation under the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan would be combined with the halibut quota share held by the RQE to determine the annually adjusted total guided halibut allocation. The total allocation would be the basis for the determination of appropriate management measures for the guided halibut sector each year. The intent is to

consider such a mechanism without undermining the goals of the halibut IFQ Program or significant adverse impacts to other halibut sectors.

[11:30:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON asked about the internal vetting and peer review process to which the document was subjected.

MR. MEZIROW explained:

There is one agency analyst that is assigned to this project. The agency analyst builds the document, and then it's reviewed by the person that's responsible for all of the halibut issues that come before the council, ... then once again reviewed after that by his supervisor, which is the chairman of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC).

[11:31:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS confirmed that the white paper, being proposed is contingent on council action/deliberation over the next year.

[11:32:14 AM](#)

MR. MEZIROW described the reporting process that is proposed and conjectured on how the council might intervene depending on market prices. He presented a number of scenarios to provide an illustration for fluctuating prices and council control options.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked whether the council has reviewed the community generated document CATCH.

MR. MEZIROW answered yes, and said it is informative, however dated to 2014. The council is taking the core ideals of the document to incorporate into its own report.

[11:35:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked to hear further about the health of the resource.

MR. MEZIROW described the steady recovery of the stocks in Southeast, and said the Western stocks are more tenuous.

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked what is attributed to the population declines in the halibut fishery.

MR. MEZIROW offered that there have been a variety of circumstances. The harvest rates were set artificially high, through the directed fishery, for a period of time ten years ago. The calculations for the model in use, at the time, resulted in generous catch privileges being given to the private sector. A major area of concern has been the Gulf of Alaska trawl fleet by-catch, where observer coverage is important. Observers are currently aboard 25 percent of the fleet, up from 13 percent, and the goal is to have 100 percent coverage with the expectation to see a significant lowering of by-catch levels.

[11:38:35 AM](#)

RYAN MAKINSTER, Executive Director, Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO), said that the whitepaper will be reviewed, and sideboards imposed by the council, and then it can come back to the legislature for action. He predicted a need for statutory review and fiscal scrutiny. As previously mentioned, a halibut stamp could be implemented for purchasing IFQs, and management costs to ADF&G would need to be considered.

[11:40:46 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES thanked the participants and announced the committee's next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.