

City  
of  
Pelican

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February 19, 2015

The Honorable Governor Bill Walker  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

RECEIVED  
FEB 19 2015

Dear Governor Walker,

I am writing to seek your support urging the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to reduce halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea trawl fisheries by lowering halibut "Prohibited Species Catch" caps by not less than 50% of the current limits. You can support this request by nominating Alaskans to serve on the NPFMC in keeping with the "Alaska first" principles of fisheries management that protects fishery resources, fishermen and communities vitally dependent on the resource. Council member terms are set to expire soon; these members are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce upon the recommendation of the governors of Alaska and Washington. As governor, you will submit three names for each vacancy occurring on the Council and may indicate a preferred choice.

The nominations of Alaskans to serve on the NPFMC could be contingent on a mandate to reduce halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea trawl fisheries by not less than 50% of current limits. The halibut resource is essential to the subsistence, sport, and commercial fishing residents of Pelican. We are part of wide network of communities dependent on the Pacific halibut resource for sustenance, recreation, and livelihood.

The Pacific halibut resource has steadily declined over the past two decades despite a 70% reduction to the directed fishery for halibut in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea. Furthermore, the daily halibut catch available to charter clients in the Gulf of Alaska has been reduced by 50% in some areas.

By contrast, halibut bycatch limits for trawl fisheries operating in the Gulf of Alaska were reduced by only 15% over the same time period; and observer coverage of Gulf of Alaska trawl catch fell 50% between 2013 and 2014. And halibut bycatch limits for trawl fisheries operating in the Bering Sea have minimally deviated over the past thirty years. So much so, the stark inequity of trawl bycatch of halibut in the Central Bering Sea is now more than 10 times the catch allocated to the long-established customary harvest of halibut fishermen in the Bering Sea region.

Please encourage the NPFMC to reduce halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea trawl fisheries by not less than 50%. As an added measure of resource management encourage action by the NPFMC to increase observer coverage on Gulf of Alaska trawl fleet to 100% coverage and 100% observer coverage on Bering Sea trawl fishery as well. Thank you for your valuable time.

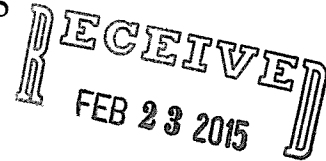
Sincerely, *Patricia Phillips*  
Patricia Phillips, Mayor – City of Pelican



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service*  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 23, 2015



Dan Hull, Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
605 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 306  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

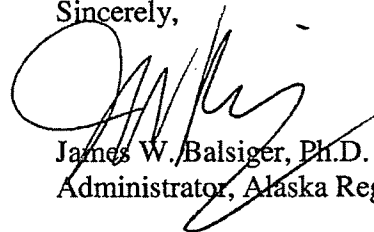
Dear Mr. Hull:

During the February Council meeting, we discussed plans for peer review of the technical reports that will inform the proposed rule the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is developing for changes to the critical habitat designation for Steller sea lions under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). With this letter NMFS seeks to clarify our plans so the Council and stakeholders know what to expect in the months ahead.

In our letter to you dated February 3, 2015, we indicated that independent peer review of the biological report from the Critical Habitat Review Team and the report from our economics contractor to support our analysis under section 4(b)(2) of the ESA will occur concurrently with the public comment period on the proposed rule. Based on further guidance from our headquarters office on the use of peer review in critical habitat designations, we will instead have those peer reviews completed before we issue the proposed rule. Conducting the peer reviews earlier will allow the public to consider (during the comment period on the proposed rule) what the peer reviewers had to say and how NMFS responded.

NMFS appreciates the Council's continued interest in this issue.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.  
Administrator, Alaska Region



Issue: Re-appointment Dan Hull

2/18/2015

RECEIVED  
FEB 23 2015

Dear Council Members and Concerned,

My name is Jody Cook. I am owner/operator of a 58' combination longline/salmon purse seine/cod trawl and pot vessel, Cape Reliant, out of Petersburg. I want to give my support for re-appointment of Dan Hull for another term on the council. I have been involved in the council process for some years now, writing letters and testifying, and getting to know more about the process. I appreciate the effort and time that you all give for this. I feel that Dan Hull is very conscientious and fair in his evaluation of the issues. I believe that Dan weighs all sides fair and even, as possible. I believe that Dan Hull comes to the post as unbiased as I have seen anyone. This is not always in my favor, but I respect and appreciate his objective and fair approach. I feel that a vote from Dan is a vote based upon research, testimony, and moral commitment to fairness.

I would hope that the council and all who are involved in the process will weigh the value of the experience that Dan has acquired and these qualities that I have mentioned. I hope that you all can agree that Dan has the kind of qualities that are ideal for this position.

Thanks,

Sincerely,



Jody R Cook