



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Fish and Game

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

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October 25, 2016

Bruce Twomley, Commissioner
Ben Brown, Commissioner
Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
P.O. Box 110302
Juneau, AK 99811

Subject: Southeast Sablefish Longline Fishery Gear Conversion

Dear Commissioners:

During the 2016 Board of Fisheries Work Session, the board did not accept Agenda Change Request (ACR) #10 to allow Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish limited entry permits to use pot gear and reopen the season for longline gear after September. This was essentially the same request the board heard as an emergency petition on August 30.

The ACR was not accepted given it did not appear to meet the criteria provided in 5 AAC 39.999. This is not to say the Board is not concerned with the issue. There is no question longline fishermen in Southern Southeast are experiencing killer whale predation, just as longline fisheries across Alaska have faced. While the board could not clearly determine the predation is a conservation concern, there is enough uncertainty that action is potentially warranted.

The Board recognizes it has the authority to extend the season date, but CFEC is authorized to allow pot gear to be used under limited entry longline permits. The Board is encouraged by CFEC's interest in this matter to date and requests it consider conducting a regulatory review of allowing pots as an acceptable gear type under limited entry longline permits for the Southern Southeast sablefish fishery (C61C).

Should CFEC change its regulations the Board may need to consider any follow up regulatory action under its authority. The best time for the Board to act would be the 2018 Southeast Finfish regulatory meeting. For the Board to generate a proposal that could be acted on at that 2018 meeting, CFEC would need to have its regulation change accomplished by March 2017 or at the latest, before the Board's October 2017 Work Session.

For more information on the Board's most recent action on this issue please contact Glenn Haight, Executive Director, 907-465-6095.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John Jensen in black ink.

John Jensen
Chair
Alaska Board of Fisheries