

If this item is pulled from the consent agenda the following motion would be in order:

POSSIBLE MOTION

I MOVE TO approve Resolution 2015-09
on first and final reading.

Hi Tristan and Mim,

Attached is a draft halibut bycatch resolution that we hope the City Assembly will consider.

As you may have heard on the news, this year the trawl fleet in the Bering Sea threatened to take 93% of the available halibut resource as bycatch, leaving only 7% to the residents of Bering Sea communities and other quota share holders. The deplorable waste of this valuable resource finally galvanized the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to consider significant reductions in the Bering Sea halibut bycatch caps, called Prohibited Species Catch caps. These reductions, which range from 10% to 50%, will be before the Council for final action at their June meeting in SITKA. Since the Bering Sea is a nursery ground for halibut, bycatch in the Bering Sea hurts fishermen and coastal communities all the way down the coast to Sitka and beyond. We hope to bring sufficient public pressure on the Council that they are empowered to reduce bycatch caps by 50% during their June meeting, and then follow up with more significant long-term bycatch reductions for the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

Please let me know if you have questions on the resolution and how I can assist with moving this forward. I will be in DC next week but will be back in Sitka for the remainder of the month and most of March.

I expect this resolution to be unanimously supported in Sitka. Halibut bycatch effects subsistence, sport, charter and commercial fishermen.

Thank you!

Linda Behnken

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
834 Lincoln Street
Sitka, AK 99835
www.alfastaff.org
www.alfafish.acsalaska.net

907 747 3400 (office)
907 738 3615 (cell)

Small boats. Big ideas.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

RESOLUTION 2015-09

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA REQUESTING THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL 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. AND FURTHER REQUESTING THAT GOVERNOR WALKER MAKE HIS NOMINATIONS OF ALASKANS TO SERVE ON THE NORTH PACIFIC COUNCIL CONTINGENT ON A MANDATE TO REDUCE THE QUANTITY OF HALIBUT BY-CATCH IN THE GULF OF ALASKA AND BERING SEA TRAWL FISHERIES BY NOT LESS THAN 50% OF THE CURRENT LIMITS.

WHEREAS, the abundance of North Pacific halibut has declined significantly over the past two decades; and

WHEREAS, the commercial catch limits for halibut in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea have been reduced by 70% over the past decade in order to conserve halibut stocks; and

WHEREAS, the halibut fishery is of critical importance to Alaska's subsistence, sport, and commercial fishermen; and

WHEREAS, coastal communities in Alaska depend on Alaska's halibut resource for subsistence, recreation, and livelihood, and

WHEREAS, the daily halibut catch available to charter clients in the Gulf of Alaska has been reduced by 50% in some areas; and

WHEREAS, halibut bycatch limits for trawl fisheries operating in the Gulf of Alaska have been reduced by only 15% over the same time period; and

WHEREAS, observer coverage of Gulf of Alaska trawl catch fell 50% between 2013 and 2014; and

WHEREAS, halibut by-catch limits for trawl fisheries operating In the Bering Sea have not been significantly reduced for 30 years; and

WHEREAS, trawl by-catch of halibut in the Central Bering Sea is now more than 10 times the catch allocated to historic halibut harvesters in the area.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City and Borough of Sitka requests immediate action by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to reduce halibut bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea trawl fisheries by not less than 50%; and, to increase observer coverage on Gulf of Alaska trawlers to 100% and to maintain observer coverage on Bering Sea trawlers at not less than 100%; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City and Borough of Sitka requests Governor Walker make his nominations of Alaskans to serve on the North Pacific Council in March in keeping with the "Alaska first" principles of fisheries management that protects our fishery resources and the fishermen and fishing communities dependent on those resource. Additionally, the CBS respectfully request copies of this resolution be sent to all members of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Honorable Bill Walker, Governor of Alaska, members of the Alaska State Senate and House, the Alaska Congressional Delegation, and regional Tribal entities within the State of Alaska.

48 **PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka,
49 Alaska on this 24th day of February 2015.

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Mim McConnell, Mayor

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55 ATTEST:

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58 Colleen Ingman, MMC
59 Municipal Clerk