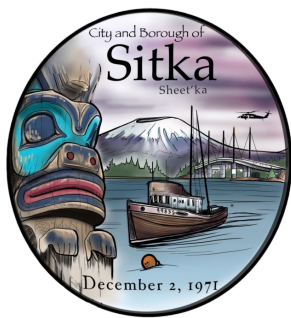


Sponsors: Mosher / Christianson

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

**I MOVE TO** approve Resolution 2024-17 on first and final reading opposing Proposal 156 to be considered at the January 28 - February 9, 2025, Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting.



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

**From:** Assembly Members Mosher and Christianson

**Date:** November 27, 2024

**Subject:** Resolution opposing Proposal 156

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### **Background**

The Alaska Board of Fisheries will meet in Ketchikan from January 28 to February 9, 2025, to consider several proposals, including Proposal 156, which seeks a significant reduction in pink and chum salmon production. This reduction would severely impact the Southeast Alaska Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA), Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC), and Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (NSRAA). Many Southeast Alaska communities, including Sitka, rely on these salmon stocks for subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial fishing.

Proposal 156, submitted by a Fairbanks resident, proposes a 25% reduction in chum and pink salmon production in Southeast Alaska. These hatchery-produced salmon are vital economic drivers and support a larger ecosystem of fisheries in the region.

Sitka/Angoon - Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (NSRAA) raises chum, coho & Chinook salmon in the Sitka area to enhance the fisheries of the Northern Inside waters of Southeast Alaska. NSRAA was incorporated in 1979 with a mission "to assist in the restoration and rehabilitation of Alaska's salmon stocks, and to supplement the fisheries of Alaska by utilizing artificial propagation to enhance the availability of salmon to all common property users, without adversely affecting wild salmon stocks. NSRAA is committed to promoting the wise use of Alaska's salmon resources through education, sustainable harvest management, the maintenance, protection and promotion of high-quality fish habitat, and the utilization of the highest scientific standards, in carrying out its mission."

### **Analysis**

Hatcheries produce chum salmon to supplement wild stocks and sustain commercial fisheries. In 2024, SE hatcheries contributed approximately \$34 million of the estimated \$75 million commercial harvest value to Southeast Alaska's economy (46%); 86% of

that value was from chum salmon. In 2021, the City and Borough of Sitka received \$1.2 Million in fisheries business and landing taxes with an estimated \$53.5 million in ex-vessel income by Sitka-based fishermen. If Proposal 156 is adopted, the resulting reduction in hatchery production will have far-reaching economic consequences for Sitka, beginning with a decrease in the fisheries landing tax revenue. This reduction will affect all local entities that rely on this revenue, from public services to community programs that benefit Sitka residents.

Reduced salmon production would also impact employment and businesses reliant on a strong fishing sector. Sport and charter businesses, essential to our tourism industry, would face reduced opportunities, as salmon availability declines.

Beyond economics, this proposal threatens subsistence, personal use, and sport fisheries supported by hatchery funding. Revenue from chum and pink salmon cost recovery funds production of sockeye, coho, and Chinook salmon.

In the Sitka area NSRAA releases support sport and charter fishing opportunity for coho at Medvejie and Deep Inlet, and releases Chinook at Medvejie, Crawfish Inlet and at the Sitka Sound Science Center which is an in town accessible Chinook fishery. While outside of the immediate vicinity of the City of Sitka, NSRAA releases coho and Chinook on Baranof Island from Hidden Falls and Little Port Walter, and coho from Hidden Falls and Mist Cove. NSRAA additionally releases Chinook salmon from its facility in the community in Kake supporting roadside fishery access. If Proposal 156 passes, access to these fisheries may be lost.

### **Fiscal Note**

This resolution, if passed, will have no effect on the municipal finances, other than the staff time to submit to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

### **Recommendation**

We respectfully request the Sitka Assembly adopt this resolution to demonstrate support for hatchery programs vital to Southeast Alaska's economic and cultural fabric. By opposing Proposal 156, the City & Borough of Sitka can advocate for sustainable hatchery practices, supporting Sitka's economy and maintaining residents' access to essential fishery resources. This resolution reinforces Sitka's commitment to preserving Alaska's salmon heritage, a legacy providing both ecological and economic value.

If this resolution passes, we request that the municipal administration submit this resolution to the Alaska Board of Fisheries public comment portal by January 14, 2025.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-17

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA OPPOSING PROPOSAL 156 TO  
BE CONSIDERED AT THE JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 9, 2025,  
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES MEETING**

**WHEREAS**, Southeast Alaska's salmon hatchery programs have successfully operated for almost 50 years, supplementing wild salmon harvests and supporting commercial, sport, subsistence, and personal use fisheries across the state, which are vital to communities such as Sitka; and

**WHEREAS**, Proposal 156 seeks to reduce hatchery production of pink and chum salmon by 25%, posing a significant risk to the hatchery-supported ecosystem in Southeast Alaska and threatening the stability of salmon resources on which coastal communities like Sitka depend; and

**WHEREAS**, a reduction in hatchery production would not only diminish the availability of salmon for commercial but would also limit access to salmon for subsistence, personal use and sport fishers, thereby directly impacting food security, cultural practices, and recreational opportunities in communities like Sitka; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is responsible for supporting approximately 4,200 jobs, \$219 million in labor income, and \$576 million in economic output annually, benefiting over 14,000 Alaskans who earn part of their livelihood from hatchery salmon; and

**WHEREAS**, the Southern Southeast Alaska Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA), Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC), and Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (NSRAA) play critical roles in generating economic stability, providing jobs, and supporting local communities through hatchery operations; and

**WHEREAS**, Proposal 156 would create uncertainty for hatchery production, complicating long-term planning and financial commitments for these organizations, potentially jeopardizing the sustainability of Alaska's hatchery program, which has historically been a successful partnership between private nonprofits and the state; and

**WHEREAS**, the current data on hatchery impact on wild salmon populations remains inconclusive and does not substantiate the drastic cuts proposed by Proposal 156; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's hatchery system operates as a nonprofit model funded through cost recovery and enhancement taxes, following stringent public permitting and scientific standards to ensure that wild salmon populations are protected while benefiting all user groups; and

**WHEREAS**, Proposal 156 introduces an additional oversight mechanism that would conflict with the established regulatory framework, risking the proven balance between hatchery and wild stocks that has been achieved under existing management.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA, ALASKA:**

**Section 1.** The City and Borough of Sitka strongly opposes Proposal 156, scheduled for consideration at the January 28 - February 9, 2025, Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting, and urges the Board to reject this proposal to prevent detrimental economic and social impacts on Alaska's hatchery programs and the communities they support.

**Section 2.** The City and Borough of Sitka reaffirms its support for SSRAA, DIPAC, and NSRAA, acknowledging their essential contributions to Sitka's economy, community well-being, and sustainable fishery practices.

**Section 3.** The City and Borough of Sitka calls upon the Alaska Board of Fisheries to commit to science-based, objective assessments for hatchery management, working in collaboration with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, industry leaders, and the hatchery community to ensure that management decisions reflect the value and benefits Alaska's hatchery programs bring to all residents.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2024.

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Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Sara Peterson, MMC  
Municipal Clerk

1<sup>st</sup> and final reading: 12/17/2024

Sponsors: Mosher/Christianson