



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
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CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TLINGIT & HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA
Eighty-Seventh Annual Tribal Assembly
April 20-22, 2022
Juneau, Alaska

Resolution TA 22-14

Title: Bycatch Reduction

By: Ketchikan Tlingit & Haida Community Council

WHEREAS, the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribe with more than 34,000 citizens; and

WHEREAS, the *chaatl* (Tlingit) or *xagw* (Haida) (Pacific halibut, *Hippoglossus stenolepis*), *t'a* (Tlingit) or *taa'an* (Haida) (king salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), and *ishkeen* (Tlingit) or *skil* (Haida) (black cod, *Anoplopoma fimbria*) fisheries are of critical importance to the Indigenous people throughout all of coastal Alaska, which is shown through the diet, artwork, dances, and other expressions of culture throughout coastal tribes in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the tribal citizens of Tlingit & Haida hold these finfish in high regard as traditional foods to sustain themselves, their families, and those around them, and this is shown by the high rate of subsistence and personal use permits that are issued to our tribal citizens on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, according to data collected by state and federal agencies as well as universities for decades, the abundance of these finfish has been declining, resulting in localized fisheries closures, which has particularly affected king salmon fisheries in subsistence areas throughout Alaska including the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Unuk, Stikine, and Taku Rivers; and

WHEREAS, the walleye pollock mid-water trawl fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea has been well documented to be majorly contributing to the population declines of many finfish species in Alaskan waters through the discard of what is known as bycatch; and

WHEREAS, the Tlingit & Haida recognizes that, as required by North Pacific Fisheries Management Council regulation, bycatch of non-targeted finfish species is tossed over the side of factory trawlers dead or dying, completely wasting these critical, traditional foods, which is blatant disrespect to the fish and the values that the Indigenous people of this land have held for as long as we have existed; and

WHEREAS, on account of the walleye pollock fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea having such high rates of bycatch, coupled with the observed impacts of climate change, pollution, habitat degradation, and changes to predator-prey dynamics, many finfish populations are likely to continue to decline until we see a total collapse of large scale fisheries in Alaska;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eighty-Seventh Tribal Assembly of the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska delegation convened April 20-22, 2022, hereby demands immediate action by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) to significantly reduce halibut, king salmon, and black cod bycatch in the walleye pollock fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, including the implementation of lower quotas, enhanced exclusion devices, and area closures to ensure that all other finfish fisheries can be sustainable for generations to come; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tlingit & Haida demands immediate action by the NPFMC 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% to ensure that accurate data of bycatch is obtained to make better management decisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tlingit & Haida demands that protections be put in place for these observers, as in the past many individuals have come forward with stories of threatening and harassment of these observers by those intending to manipulate bycatch data such that they could continue fishing even when bycatch limits were exceeded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tlingit & Haida will work with other tribal entities to ensure that the walleye pollock fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea and the discard of bycatch resulting from operations therein does not impact access to traditional foods for its tribal citizens; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Tlingit & Haida shall encourage all other entities to work towards reducing the amount of bycatch that comes from the walleye pollock fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea.


ADOPTED this 20th day of April, 2022, by the Eighty-Seventh Tribal Assembly of the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

CERTIFY



President Richard J. Peterson

ATTEST



Tribal Secretary Jacqueline L. Pata