



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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UFA Resolution 2018 – 02

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ALASKA SALMON HATCHERY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast, with the mission "*To promote and protect the common interest of Alaska's commercial fishing industry, as a vital component of Alaska's social and economic well-being; and*

WHEREAS, the United Fishermen of Alaska benefits greatly from the State of Alaska Salmon Hatchery Program; and

WHEREAS, there has been a recent decline in some southeast Southeast Alaska Chinook stocks, there is no scientific literature suggesting the decline is due to hatchery chum or pink salmon production, and there have been many high Chinook abundance years in the past two decades with simultaneous record wild and enhanced pink salmon returns; and

WHEREAS, Pacific Rim hatchery programs from Japan, U.S., Russia, Korea, and Canada release approximately 5 billion fry annually, there is an estimated additional 20 billion wild salmon fry; of which the combined biomass represent only 3% of all nektonic feeders in the North Pacific Ocean. Squid alone represent another 4%; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has operated for 45 years and supplements wild salmon harvests throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is an example of sustainable economic development that directly benefits subsistence fishermen, personal use fishermen, sport fishermen, charter fishermen, commercial fishermen, seafood processors, as well as state and local governments, which receive raw fish tax dollars; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program employs strong scientific methodology with rigorous critical review of hatchery-proposed operations including the genetics policy, origin of broodstock, scrutiny of rearing and release locations, and interactions with naturally occurring stocks with a priority on those natural stocks through the Regional Planning Team process; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is built upon precautionary principles and sustainable fisheries policies to protect wild salmon populations; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulates hatchery operations, production, and permitting through a transparent public process and multi-stakeholder development of annual management plans; and

WHEREAS, returns of hatchery and wild salmon stocks follow similar survival trends over time and the largest returns of both hatchery and wild salmon stocks have largely occurred since hatchery returns began in about 1980; and

WHEREAS, there are no Stocks of Concern where most hatchery production occurs, indicating that adequate escapements to wild stock systems are being met in these areas over time; and

WHEREAS, Alaska hatcheries contributed an annual average of nearly 67 million fish to Alaska's commercial fisheries in the past decade; and

WHEREAS, Alaska hatcheries accounted for 22% of the total common property commercial catch and 43% of the total ex-vessel value in the Southeast region in 2016; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has proven to be significant and vital to Alaska's seafood and sportfish industries and the State of Alaska by creating employment and economic opportunities throughout the state and in particular, in rural coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is non-profit and self-funded through cost recovery and enhancement taxes on the resource and is a model partnership between private and public entities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has significantly invested in Alaska's salmon hatchery program and associated research to provide for stable salmon harvests and to bolster the economies of coastal communities while maintaining a wild stock escapement priority; and

WHEREAS, Alaska salmon fisheries, including the hatchery program, continue to be certified as sustainable by two separate programs, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the United Fishermen of Alaska affirms its support for Alaska's salmon hatchery programs; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the United Fishermen of Alaska supports unbiased and scientific methods to assess the interaction of Alaska's salmon hatchery programs with natural salmon stocks, such as the Alaska Hatchery-Wild Salmon Interaction Study which began in 2011 and is scheduled to conclude in 2023; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the United Fishermen of Alaska calls on the Alaska Board of Fisheries to work with the hatchery community, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and industry leaders to further its understanding of the importance of the Alaska salmon hatchery program to all Alaskans.

Approved and signed this the ____ day of _____ 2018

By the UFA Board of Directors, September 27, 2018.



Matt Alward, President



Attest: Frances Leach
Executive Director