Salmon Management Option Hearing Summary

Date: March 31, 2008
Location: Chateau Westport
Westport, WA
Attendance: 20
Testifying: 9
Hearing Officer: Mr. Mark Cedergreen
Other Council Members: Mr. Phil Anderson
NMFS: Dr. Peter Dygert
Coast Guard: Matt Walker
Salmon Team Member: Mr. Doug Milward
Council Staff: Dr. Kit Dahl

Organizations Represented:
Washington Trollers Association,
Ilwaco Charterboat Association,
Westport Charterboat Association

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the 10 people testifying:

- 5 commented primarily on the commercial troll fishery.
- 4 commented primarily on the recreational (charterboat) fishery.

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Doug Milward reviewed options for the commercial and sport salmon seasons.

Commercial Troll Comments

- Recommend 60 fish per day landing limit per opening.
- Supports quota south of Leadbetter Point.
- Support for a 2 Chinook to 1 halibut catch ratio with a 30 fish cap.
- Recommendation for Option 1 with a 15 percent guideline assigned to Area 1, 50 fish landing limit, July 1 opener with 40 coho and a 2:1 halibut ratio (report of preliminary meetings of the Washington Trollers Association).
- Concern about boats from south of Cape Falcon moving north and competing for available quota. Possible restrictions include landing requirements, lower quota to make it less
attractive, requirement to use 6-inch plugs.

- Stock enhancement programs should be increased to more rivers and get schools involved.
- Concern about take of salmon in Pacific whiting fishery.
- Concern about consumption of salmon by marine mammals.
- Appreciation for NMFS getting the Guidance Letter out well before the March Council meeting.
- Work with the governors to secure disaster relief and make sure it is available early since the situation is anticipated.

Recreational Comments

- 8 percent exploitation rate for ESA-listed LCR coho unreasonable considering these are descended from hatchery strays
- Council should convey to the Secretary of Commerce the fishery disaster situation on the west coast and secure economic aid.
- Concern about boats from south of Cape Falcon moving north and competing for quota.
- Include charterboat industry in disaster relief programs.
- Support for 2 fish bag limit over 1 fish, even if a Chinook only fishery.
- Some support for an earlier opening than June 8.

Written Statements (Attached)

- Westport Charterboat Association
- Ilwaco Charter Association

PFMC
04/01/08
The Ilwaco Charter Association is not here to testify tonight on the options we would like to have. Whether we have Option 1 or Option 3, this year will be a disaster. The 2008 salmon options are extremely draconian and we will have a very hard time lasting 15 days for our summer fishing season. Other Ports on the Washington Coast aren’t any better off. I’m here tonight to ask you to do what you can to convey to the Secretary of Commerce the reality of the disaster we face on the Washington Coast. It is not only the charter fishing industry, but also the Washington troll fishery and all our support businesses as well. We are not used to asking for help, but this year will hopefully be one of the few times that we must ask for help. We need direct aid to the fishermen and salmon related businesses. We ask that you, the Pacific Fishery Management Council, please do what you can as soon as possible.

Thank you

Butch Smith
President Ilwaco Charter Assoc.
March 30, 2008

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place
Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-1384
Attn: Donald Hansen, Chairman

Dear Chairman Hansen,

My name is Steve Westrick. I’m the president of the Westport Charterboat Association. Our Association is comprised of 33 charter fishing vessels and 10 booking services all operating here in Westport.

First, I’d like to thank the Council for having public hearings in Westport each year.

It’s obvious that 2008 will be a tough season. We have been following the development of the salmon stock predictions since December and are well aware of the constraints that will determine this year’s fishing levels.

We have two major concerns aside from the economic ramifications of a general lack of opportunity this year.

FIRST We believe that an 8% Exploitation Rate on ESA listed lower Columbia naturally spawning Coho creates a social and economic disaster that SOME flexibility could lessen. NOAA Fisheries TWICE rejected the listing of this stock, declaring them EXTIRPATED (I believe that means EXTINCT – Webster’s dictionary defines it as “REMOVED – DESTROYED TOTALLY”). Basically, the Coho stocks spawning in the wild below Bonneville Dam are HATCHERY STRAYS. If Hatchery salmon are so detrimental to the health of wild stocks WHY are they listed?

If there are no TRULY PURE ORIGINAL Coho in these Rivers, WHY are they listed?

We believe this was solely a POLITICAL decision with the intent of placating influential groups bent on destroying the fishing industry.
SECOND       With regard to the management of the seasons North of Cape Falcon:

We are concerned that commercial fishing vessels from Oregon, with little or no opportunity South of Cape Falcon, WILL have the opportunity to come North of Falcon and take not only a substantial share of the commercial catch but also impact the recreational quota.

We have been constrained for many years while the fisheries south of us have been managed much more liberally. We sympathize with the situation they find themselves in this year but we believe we have a right to our quota, however small.

We ask that you choose regulations that maximize the manageability of the fisheries North of Falcon so as to protect our Washington fisheries.

FINALLY       The timing of our public hearing occurred before the SECOND North of Falcon meeting here in the state. We haven’t had our General Membership meeting yet to look at our final recommendations. As we have in the past we will ultimately be supporting a season structure that maximizes opportunity and potential angler success rate given the quotas ultimately agreed upon by the Council.

Respectfully Yours,

Steve Westrick, President