

**SALMON HEARING SUMMARY ON MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES
WASHINGTON REPORT**

The public hearing focused on Washington state salmon management alternatives was held in Westport, WA on the evening of Monday, March 25. Representatives on hand included:

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council)	Mr. Kyle Adicks (Washington) Mr. Phil Anderson
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):	Mr. Tony Siniscal
United States Coast Guard (USCG):	LTJG Connor Sutton
Council Staff:	Mr. Merrick Burden
Salmon Technical Team (STT)	Dr. Alexandra Safiq (Washington)

Participants

An estimated 30 participants attended the hearing, including those listed above, Council representative Mr. Butch Smith, and other agency staff.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Adicks provided opening remarks for the hearing as the Council representative for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Dr. Alexandra Safiq (WDFW) reviewed alternatives for commercial and recreational salmon seasons.

Summary of Testimony

A total of 22 participants provided public comment, including 10 commercial and 12 sport interests. The overlying theme of public testimony was a preference for Alternative I for both commercial and recreational fisheries. Appreciation was expressed for the hearing location and format.

Commercial Testimony

The president of the Washington Trollers Association (WTA) provided comment on the commercial troll fishery. They supported the non-treaty quotas and season structure from Alternative I, including measures for incidental Pacific halibut catch represented by Alternative I. They noted the relatively large Lower Columbia Tule forecast for 2024, as well as run sizes and conservation objectives that are being met for Columbia River and Puget Sound chinook stocks. They referenced the projected increase in exvessel revenue of Alternative I compared to the 2018-2022 average, and cited the benefit this would have to coastal communities and businesses. They contrasted this year's projections with the constraints that had been placed on North of Falcon ocean fisheries in recent years and the impact this has had to the fleet and local businesses. They support a Chinook quota of 85,000, a coho total allowable catch of 105,000 and support the utilization of inseason tools to provide flexibility to attain the full quota. They expressed concern about the negative economic impact of recent decreases in quota but are encouraged by this year's forecasts. The other nine individual testifying on commercial fisheries supported testimony provided by the WTA president.

Recreational Testimony

Twelve people provided comment on the recreational fishery, including representatives and members of the Westport Charter Boat Association (WCBA) and Puget Sound Anglers (PSA). Similar to the commercial testimony, Alternative 1 was favored. The representative of PSA supported Alternative I

and a season structure that will provide maximum opportunity. The president of the WCBA supported Alternative I but with a season structure for the Westport subarea that includes five-day-per week openings on Sundays through Thursdays for the first three weeks of the season, switching to seven days per week beginning July 21. There was widespread support for a season structure that would avoid an early closure, and several individuals noted the negative economic implications of closing the season before September. Several individuals supported the WCBA testimony and regulations that would begin the season with five-day-per week openings before moving to seven days per week, in order to provide for a season that stretches into September. Testimony also included a preference for avoiding restrictive in-season adjustments if possible, preference for a two-fish bag limit (with one chinook), and for providing as much advance notice as possible for all in-season adjustments due to effects on customers.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Kyle Adicks thanked the participants for attending the hearing and for providing information for use in the Pacific Fishery Management Council process. He also reminded the audience of other upcoming fishery planning meetings in the North of Falcon forum.

PFMC
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