

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 24. Representatives on hand included:

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council):	Mr. Kyle Adicks (WDFW) Mr. Butch Smith (WA Obligatory Appointment)
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):	<i>Not in attendance</i>
United States Coast Guard (USCG):	Mr. Chris German
Council Staff:	Ms. Angela Forristall
Salmon Technical Team (STT):	Dr. Alexandra Safiq (WDFW)

Participants

An estimated 32 participants attended the hearing, including those listed above. NMFS representatives were not able to attend due to travel restrictions and the hearing occurring outside of normal business hours.

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 11 participants provided public comment, including 7 commercial and 4 sport interests. The overlying theme of public testimony was a preference for Alternative I for the commercial fishery and support for the most liberal and consistent season possible for the recreational fishery. Appreciation was expressed for the hearing location and format.

Commercial Testimony

The president of the Washington Trollers Association (WTA) commented on the commercial troll fishery, expressing support for the non-treaty quotas and season structure proposed in Alternative I, as well as the measures for incidental Pacific halibut catch outlined in Alternative II. The WTA is optimistic about Chinook abundance and, if necessary, prefers time/area adjustments over quota reductions to meet conservation objectives. They also support the use of inseason tools to provide flexibility in achieving the full quota. Additionally, the WTA expressed concern about the negative economic impact in recent years due to past quota reductions but remains hopeful about this year's projections, highlighting that the fleet has been waiting for a significant quota increase for 10 years. They advocated for balancing opportunities to benefit families, fleets, and communities. Six other individuals testifying on commercial fisheries supported the WTA president's testimony and added that increased opportunities in the coming year could help engage the younger generation and promote commercial fishing as a viable livelihood.

Recreational Testimony

Four people provided comments on the recreational fishery, including representatives and members of the Westport Charter Boat Association (WCBA), Puget Sound Anglers (PSA), and Ilwaco Charter Association. Similar to the commercial testimony, Alternative 1 was favored.

The president of the WCBA highlighted that the economic health of Westport and the surrounding area depends on fishing families and businesses, noting that it is home to the largest west coast seafood processor. They expressed encouragement regarding the Columbia River Chinook forecasts. They stressed the need to maintain a strong summer coho fishery. They stated the season should start out cautiously and be liberalized as the season progresses and emphasized the importance of a salmon season that runs from mid-June through mid-September without interruptions. While not yet ready to endorse a specific alternative, the WCBA supports higher quotas and, similar to the commercial testimony, prefers time/area management adjustments over quota reductions to meet conservation goals. They also stated fish from North of Cape Falcon, OR (NOF) that are harvested South of Cape Falcon, OR (SOF) should be looked at to ensure that there is equity between NOF and SOF fisheries when meeting allocation and conservation requirements. One other individual spoke for WCBA and supported the WCBA president's testimony.

The president of PSA expressed support for the largest quotas and guidelines available and a season that is open 7 days per week in all four management areas to help ensure the Chinook quota for every area is met.

The Ilwaco Charter Association expressed support for Alternative I in the Columbia River subarea and the ability to trade Chinook for coho with the commercial fishery as the season progresses. This would help ensure the recreational season remains open and consistent.

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 and the upcoming Council meeting in San Jose, California from April 11-15.

PFMC
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