

**SALMON MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES HEARING SUMMARY
CALIFORNIA REPORT**

The public hearing focused on California state salmon management alternatives was held in Santa Rosa, CA on the evening of Monday, March 23. Representatives in attendance included:

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council)	Ms. Corey Ridings
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):	Ms. Shannon Penna
United States Coast Guard (USCG):	<i>Not in attendance</i>
Council Staff:	Ms. Robin Ehlke
Salmon Technical Team (STT)	Ms. Kandice Morgenstern

Participants

An estimated 70 participants attended the hearing, including those listed above, Council representative Ms. Marci Yaremko, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) agency staff. The USCG was not able to attend the hearing due to the ongoing partial government shutdown.

Opening Remarks

Ms. Corey Ridings provided opening remarks for the hearing as the Council representative for CDFW. Ms. Kandice Morgenstern provided the forecasts and conservation objectives for key California salmon stocks, alternatives for the commercial and recreational salmon seasons, and for incidental halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery.

Summary of Testimony

A total of 18 participants provided testimony, including 5 commenting primarily on the commercial troll fishery and 11 commenting primarily on the sport/charter fishery. Many participants voiced concern over salmon stock abundances, new inseason management measures and caps on harvest, viability of the conservation objective for CA Coastal Chinook, uncertainty in measuring effects of the Klamath River dam removals, and the economic devastation of California ocean salmon fisheries in recent years.

The ocean salmon trollers voiced deep frustration with the reduced fishing days, harvest limits, and low weekly landing limits in the range of alternatives for the 2026 troll fishery, stating that it does not provide enough opportunity to be profitable. The trollers spoke to the high price of fuel, crew wages, and other operating costs it takes to participate in the troll fishery. It was also noted that landing limits affect boat operators differently based on the size of the vessel; larger boats have higher operating costs and more deck hands than smaller vessels, so profitability is not the same across the fleet. The economic impact from the troll fishery closures for the past three years has devastated family businesses and the harbors that support salmon fishery operations. The trollers strongly urged the Council to take action that would help the industry survive. A few of the trollers said that Alternative II was preferable over Alternatives I and III, but no Alternatives provided a season that was economically viable.

There was a strong showing from charter boat operators mainly from the San Francisco and Monterey management areas. Testimony was unified and supported a hybrid of Alternatives III and I by adding the fall fishery in Alternative I to Alternative III. The range of Alternatives are very limited again in 2026, especially compared to past years. Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity provided in 2025 season, and even though it was limited, the economic boost to the local ports and small businesses benefited the coastal communities. Many of the participants supporting the sportfishing community also voiced support for the troll fishers, stating that the troll fleet needs a viable salmon season in order to survive.

Testimony also included comments on the accuracy of salmon abundance forecasts and harvest models, the need for improved river habitat, and adequate data collection in the Klamath River since dam removal. Several questions were raised about the viability of the age-4 Klamath River fall Chinook surrogate used in the conservation objective for California Coastal Chinook, noting significant changes in hatchery practices for Klamath River fall Chinook, as well as significant changes in habitat in the Klamath and Eel River basins.

Organizations in attendance included, but were not limited to, the Golden Gate Fishermen's Association, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association, Clipper Yacht Harbor, and North Coast Rivers Alliance.

PFMC
03/26/26