Assembly to Refine Cod LLP Letter

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Once again, the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly took up the issue of the Cod LLP recency letter at its work session last night. And once again, concerned fishermen and members of the community turned out to voice their opinions on what has become a contentious and divisive matter. The assembly ultimately decided to refine the latest version of a proposed letter to the Secretary of Commerce, requesting that he reject a North Pacific Fishery Management Council plan that significantly reduces the number of participants in the Gulf of Alaska limited entry cod fishery, until a study of its affects has been done.

Under the council's guidelines, roughly 70 percent of LLP holders would be removed from the fishery, because they did not fish cod during the qualifying years. On one side of the issue are those who have fished their licenses and would likely benefit by the reduction. Jerry Bongen spoke against the idea of sending the letter to Secretary Gary Locke. He said the letter as drafted did not take a neutral enough stance.

-- (Letter 1 28 sec. "A lot of the people that ... tanners, salmon or herring.")

On the other side, are people who believe taking away so many licenses bars many who wish to participate in the fishery from the opportunity to do so. Shawn Dochterman spoke in support of the letter.

-- (Letter 2 32 sec. "There's still a lot to be done ... representative in the future.")

Assemblywoman Sue Jeffrey, who originally proposed the letter and presented a draft at the meeting, said a thorough socio-economic analysis of the possible effects of removing so many LLP holders from the fishery is needed.

-- (Letter 3 55 sec. "That's what analysis is all about ... doesn't lose by this.")

Assemblywoman Pat Branson said she supported sending the letter, but only if it clearly requests the socio-economic study, remains neutral and serves the best interests of Kodiak.

-- (Letter 4 38 sec. "If the intent of this letter is ... economy of this community.")

In the end, the assembly decided that Branson and Jeffrey would work together to refine the language of the two-page letter and edit it down to one page, making it more concise. The next opportunity for the assembly to discuss the issue will be at its next work session on June 25th. Next week's regular meeting was cancelled, because the planned agenda was so light.

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