

Slate Of Local Issues On NPFMC Agenda

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council is meeting in Kodiak this week. The council's Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee started meeting Monday, while the council itself will get together for the first time Wednesday. KMXT's Casey Kelly has more.

The council has a full agenda, including many issues that will directly affect local fishermen. This community took a major economic blow with the implementation of the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization program. So one of the most anticipated items will be a report from the council's Crab Committee, which is currently looking at making changes to the program. Council Executive Director Chris Oliver says while the report will just be part of the committee's ongoing work--expected to be complete later this year--it should be of great interest to people in Kodiak, especially the issue of crewmember participation.

1 (Oliver :25s "air time there in Kodiak.")

Kodiak fisherman Shawn Dochtermann has fought against Crab Rationalization since before the program went into effect. He plans to bring a proposal that would reallocate a portion of the total allowable catch every year to working crab crewmembers.

1 (Dochtermann :23s "what we're looking for.")

Dochtermann says he's crunched the numbers and it's not just crab fishermen who were negatively affected by the program.

2 (Dochtermann :17s "missing in this community.")

The crab

committee's report is scheduled to be taken up by the council on Thursday. Before that another Bering Sea issue will dominate the discussion. On Wednesday, the council is scheduled to receive an Environmental Impact Statement report on ways to reduce the amount of Chinook salmon being caught as bycatch by the Bering Sea pollock fleet. Oliver says the council will consider the three alternatives presented in the report: maintaining the status quo; a hard cap that would shut down the pollock fishery when bycatch numbers reach a certain level; or triggered closures in certain areas when the pollock fleet exceeds a certain number of king salmon caught.

(Oliver
2 :06s "until
later this year.")

Closer to

home, two items dealing with Gulf of Alaska groundfish will be taken up by the council. One is a look at a sector split between the different gear types fishing for cod in the gulf. It would split up the total allowable catch between the gear types based on catch history or other criteria. The other issue is a proposed action to remove some of the 800 or so fixed gear licenses that don't have any recent catch history from the western and central gulf groundfish fisheries. Dochtermann says he hopes the council takes a cautious approach to both issues.

(Dochtermann
3 :29s "this is going to go here.")

Kodiak

fisherman Duncan Fields sits on the North Pacific council, and says he hasn't really made up his mind on any of the issues. But he encourages everyone with a stake in the fisheries to come to the council meetings and let their voice be heard.

(Fields
1 :29s "change
through this process.")

The council

meets first thing Wednesday morning at 8:00. It's scheduled to wrap up next Tuesday. A full meeting agenda and background materials for each of the agenda items can be found at the council's website.

’m Casey
Kelly.

LINK: [North Pacific Fishery Management Council website](#)

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