

# NPFMC Looks To Provide Emergency Relief From Crab Ratz

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

Bering

Sea crab fishermen are looking for emergency relief from the Crab Rationalization program, but it's not what you might think. KMXT's Casey Kelly has more.

Although issues of displaced crew and fair compensation still exist and are still on the table, those were not the most pressing concern identified by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, meeting in Kodiak over the weekend. That distinction belongs to "emergency relief," which refers to giving crab skippers the ability to break from the program's regionalism requirements under certain emergency situations.

Council member Sam

Cotten is chairman of the council's crab committee. He says certain protections, such as processor quota shares, built into the program to protect communities like St. Paul in the Pribilof Islands, are having unforeseen consequences.

(Crab Relief 1 :36s "in case of an emergency.")

One idea that's been proposed is to give skippers enough leeway to make the call whether or not the conditions are safe enough to make a delivery. If the skippers feel it's unsafe they could take their load to another processor in another port, then file an affidavit swearing that the conditions prevented them from making it in.

(Crab Relief 2 :20s "problem might be solved.")

St. Paul Mayor

Simeon Swetozof says he has no problem with giving skippers the ability to go to another port when ice conditions prevent them from offloading in his community. But he wants to make sure St. Paul's financial interests are protected.

(Crab Relief 3 :14s "to the community of St. Paul.")

Attorney Mateo

Paz-Soldan advises the city of St. Paul on fisheries issues. He hopes the final emergency relief measures adopted by the council will take into account other types of emergencies that might affect other communities that are stakeholders in the Bering Sea crab fisheries.

(Crab Relief 4 :24s "a lot at stake here.")

But even Cotten admits that it would be a lot easier if processor quotas and other regionalism measures weren't such a major part of the crab program.

(Crab Relief 5 :15s &ldquo;&hellip;now there is.&rdquo;)

The council's crab committee meets in September and is expected to review a discussion paper on various options for providing emergency relief from regionalism under Crab Rationalization. That will hopefully lead to the council developing a solution by the end of this year.

I'm Casey Kelly.

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