

Selby Sheds Light on NPFMC's Chinook Cap

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Earlier this month the North Pacific Fishery Management Council met in Juneau and set a cap on chinook salmon bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska trawl fishery. The council was looking a variety of cap amounts, ranging from 3,000 to 10,000, but in the end set it at 7,500.

A number of Kodiak representatives attended the meetings in Juneau, including Borough Mayor Jerome Selby. During Thursday's borough assembly meeting, Selby took the opportunity to share how the cap might affect Kodiak.

"I thought for a while they would go to the 10,000 level, which would take a lot of pressure off the fishing fleet for Kodiak, because we've never gone over 10,000 a couple of times, historically. But they went with the 7,500, which puts us a little bit at risk as a community, of shutting down our bottom fish fishery prematurely before the quota is caught."

He said it will still probably be another year before the cap goes into effect, and won't impact this year's fishery. However, once it does go through, Selby said he hopes Kodiak's fishermen can adapt.

"They're probably going to need to make some gear modifications and try to figure out how to stay away from juvenile king salmon, obviously, in order to stay below 7,500. So hopefully they can do that and we won't be that significantly impacted economically, for the community. Particularly the fishermen and the process workers, in the future."

Assemblywoman Louise Stutes also attended the meeting and said Kodiak's presence in Juneau was very well received.

"Having our mayor there, and I testified before the AP. And I had at least, I think there's like 17 people on the AP, and I had at least six of them come up and say how impressed they were that Kodiak was there. That we were there from the start of the Chinook issue and our mayor was there until the conclusion of it."

During Thursday's meeting Stutes also had a report from the Southwest Alaska Municipal Council regarding the Tustumena. She said the word from the Seward dry dock is that if no further significant rusting is detected the ferry could be back in action by the end of July.