Fishermen Plan Walmart Protest

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

On the day before Walmart executives are expected to meet with Alaska seafood officials, some fishermen are planning a protest in front of the company’s biggest store in Anchorage to urge the mega corporation to reverse its rejection of Alaska wild-caught salmon. The company announced earlier this year that it would not source seafood unless it had the Marine Stewardship Council, or MSC, stamp of approval. Alaska salmon does not carry that endorsement.

Members of Prince William Sound Fishermen, the Northwest Alaska Seiners Association and Cordova District Fishermen United plan to march on the Walmart behind the Dimond Mall at 10 Wednesday morning.

John Renner is the vice president of Cordova District Fishermen United, one of the organizers of the protest.

“We’d just like to see Walmart go back to carrying Alaska salmon like they have in the past," he said. "This is about a certification agency from Europe that is in a dispute with the processors. And there’s no reason for it. We’re the gold quality in sustainable salmon.”

Renner said if Walmart isn’t interested in carrying Alaska salmon, there are plenty of other retailers that do.

“We’re just hard-working Alaskan fishing families that want our product to be sold as it gas before in Walmart. And we would like people, if they want to buy Alaska salmon, there’s a lot of alternatives out there. New Sagaya, Fred Meyers, Carrs, Target, QFC, Costco, Safeway, to name a few stores that carry Alaska salmon.”

.When KMXT reached Renner on his boat, he was hauling in some of the very fish that Walmart is snubbing.

“And that’s the situation, they have another accredidation agency, I believe it’s called ‘Global.’” “(inaudible.)” “Gotcha, gotcha, thank you! I got fish on the bite here, Jay. I’m fishing currently in Valdez for silvers. Anyway, we have sustainable policies written into our state constitution, we also have a sustainable fisheries policy in front of the Board of Fish. There’s just no reason for this to impact our markets on a year like this, when we need sales of Alaska salmon.”

Whether the fishermen’s protest holds any sway with Walmart or not, when Alaska seafood officials meet with the company’s executives Thursday, they will likely point to the all-time record salmon harvest Alaskan fishermen hauled in this summer. Nearly 300-million salmon of all species have been caught, easily surpassing the previous record of 221-million set in 2005.