Assembly to Consider Appeal to Commerce Secretary

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Erik Wander/KMXT

One Kodiak Island Borough Assembly member plans to introduce an agenda item proposing a letter to the Secretary of Commerce urging him not to endorse the North Pacific Management Council's recent decision to reduce the number of limited license permit holders for cod in the Gulf of Alaska. KMXT's Erik Wander has more.

The North Pacific Management Council's April decision reduces the total number of longline and pot cod LLP holders by 70-percent. Under the new guidelines, roughly 790 LLP holders will be removed from the cod fishery because they did not fish cod during the qualifying years established by the council. Assemblywoman Sue Jeffrey, who plans to introduce the letter as an agenda item, said the assembly should request that the Secretary of Commerce require the council to conduct a thorough socio-economic impact study before establishing such a management program.

Local fisherman David Kubiak, among many who spoke at Thursday's regular assembly meeting in support of the letter, said the issue is a complex one.

-- (Kubiak 1 23 sec. "They were addressing LLP ... serious fishing intention.")

Kodiak's State House Representative Alan Austerman, who also spoke at the meeting, said he opposed the recency issue, noting that the House passed a resolution opposing it as well. He said recency prevents the younger generation of fishermen from gaining a fair stake in the fishery.

-- (Austerman

1 43 sec. "We're more concerned with ... allow people to buy into it.")

Austerman said there is a need to carefully analyze the council's original problem statement in order to gain a better understanding of the it's position on the issue. He said the problem statement went through a number of revisions to the point where it no longer reflected the essence of the original.

-- (Austerman
2 30 sec. "In the original and through ... buy permits and get into it.")

City councilman Terry Haines said that while he was glad to see the assembly taking an active interest in fisheries issues, the community as a whole needs a better-defined fisheries policy and better representation on the council in order to address such issues before, not after, the council decides on them.

-- (Haines
1 25 sec. "I think this speaks to ... recency issue right now.")

Assemblywoman Pat Branson tied the issue to bringing a University of Alaska Fairbanks research vessel to Kodiak, an issue discussed by the Kodiak City Council and the assembly in an April joint work session. Branson emphasized the vital economic importance of fishing to the community.

-- (Branson
1 29 sec. "Our economic base is ... to enhance our economic base.")

The agenda item proposing the letter to the Secretary of Commerce will be introduced at the assembly's work session on Thursday. Jeffrey encouraged concerned members of the public to attend.

I'm Erik Wander.

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