



Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
Alaska Board of Fisheries
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
dfg.bof.comments@alaska.gov

October 28, 2021

RE: PWS/UCSR Proposals 49-55

Dear members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am writing you today in support of Alaska's salmon hatcheries and in opposition of enhancement proposals submitted for the PWS/Upper Copper and Susitna Rivers Board of Fisheries meeting that seek to limit or reduce hatchery production in Prince William Sound.

The City of Valdez benefits greatly from our regional fisheries enhancement programs. Efforts by all Prince William Sound hatcheries greatly increases sport, commercial, and subsistence harvest opportunities in times of low abundance and provides for direct economic and social benefit to the community of Valdez.

This substantial economic benefit is realized through the creation of local seafood processing jobs and recreational tourism jobs, fisheries business tax, increased commerce through the Port of Valdez, and seafood industry investment in our community.

Economic impact studies by the McDowell Group revealed that in 2017 the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC), headquartered in Cordova, contributed significantly to the regional economy by providing 1,405 jobs, \$68 million in labor income, and \$192 million in total economic output. Similarly between the years of 2012 and 2017 Valdez Fisheries Development Association, Inc. (VFDA), headquartered in Valdez, contributed significantly to the economy of Prince William Sound by providing 760 jobs, \$33.9 million in labor income, and \$112 million in total economic output.

VFDA hatchery production has created the largest Pink salmon sport fishery in Alaska. The VFDA Coho salmon sport fish program, which the City of Valdez sponsors each year to promote our summer economy, provides for an abundance of salmon to support the annual Valdez Silver Salmon Derby, the Valdez Women's Silver Salmon Derby, and the Kids Pink Salmon Derby.

This world-class sport fishery greatly increases summer tourism, and was credited in 2016 for bringing an estimated 28,000 anglers to fish Valdez. These salmon further benefit local commerce through the sale of sporting goods, boat rentals, custom processing, lodging and RV camping, fuel, harbor moorage, fishing charters, and other purchases estimated to be \$9 million annually.

Alaska's salmon hatchery programs are permitted using strong scientific methodology, and are built upon sound and sustainable fisheries policies intended to protect wild salmon populations. Our hatchery programs have a long history of sustainable and responsible fisheries enhancement.

The City of Valdez strongly supports both VFDA and PWSAC and submitted Resolution 18-33 to previously affirm that support. We strongly encourage the Alaska Board of Fisheries to reject all proposals that seek to diminish these great public private partnerships by reducing hatchery production. Such actions will no doubt hinder our coastal economies and reduced opportunities for Alaskans to harvest these renewable salmon resources.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments and look forward to your continued support of Alaska's Salmon Hatchery Programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Scheidt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sharon" and last name "Scheidt" clearly distinguishable.

Sharon Scheidt
Mayor-City of Valdez

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA

RESOLUTION NO. 18-33

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ,
ALASKA, SUPPORTING THE ALASKA SALMON HATCHERY PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the City of Valdez benefits greatly from the State of Alaska Hatchery Program; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has operated for 45 years and supplements wild salmon harvests throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is an example of sustainable economic development that directly benefits subsistence fishermen, personal use fishermen, sport fishermen, charter fishermen, commercial fishermen, seafood processors, as well as state and local governments such as Valdez, which receive raw fish tax dollars; and

WHEREAS, Alaska hatcheries accounted for 57% of the total common property commercial catch and 60% of the total ex-vessel value in the Prince William Sound region in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (PWSAC) headquartered in Cordova contributes significantly to the economy of Prince William Sound by providing 1,405 jobs, \$68 million in labor income, and \$192 million in total economic output in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Valdez Fisheries Development Association, Inc. (VFDA) headquartered in Valdez contributes significantly to the economy of Prince William Sound by providing 824 jobs, \$21.5 million in labor income, and \$80.1 million in total economic output between 2008 to 2012; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has proven to be significant and vital to Alaska's seafood and sportfish industries and the state of Alaska by creating employment and economic opportunities throughout the state and in particular in coastal communities such as Valdez ; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is non-profit and self-funded through cost recovery and enhancement taxes on the resource and is a model partnership between private and public entities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has significantly invested in Alaska's salmon hatchery programs and associated research to provide for stable salmon harvests and to bolster the economies of coastal communities like Valdez, while maintaining a wild stock escapement priority; and

WHEREAS, Alaska salmon fisheries, including those of hatchery origin, continue to be certified as sustainable by two separate programs, Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC);

WHEREAS, salmon hatchery programs are permitted using a public process, employ strong scientific methodology and are built upon sound and sustainable fisheries policies intended to protect wild salmon populations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, that

- Section 1. The City of Valdez affirms its support for Alaska's Salmon Hatchery Programs including PWSAC and VFDA.
- Section 2. The City of Valdez supports unbiased and scientific methods to assess the interaction of Alaska's salmon hatchery programs with natural stocks, such as the Alaska Hatchery/Wild Salmon Interaction Study which began in 2011 and is scheduled to conclude in 2023.
- Section 3 The City of Valdez calls on the Alaska Board of Fisheries to work with the hatchery community, the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game and industry leaders to further its understanding of the importance of the Alaska salmon hatchery program to all Alaskans.
- Section 4 The City of Valdez supports the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game's approval of VFDA's permitted increase of 20 million pink salmon eggs taken in 2018 at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA, this 2nd day of October, 2018.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA



Jeremy O'Neil, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sheri L. Pierce, MMC, City Clerk

