

2020 Legislative Priorities for Local Fisheries

Alaska Wildlife Trooper

Maintaining the Valdez post for an Alaska Wildlife Trooper (AWT) is important to the fishing community of Valdez and Prince William Sound (PWS). Valdez is home to 41 permit holders and homeport to 91 vessels participating in various commercial fisheries. A local AWT provides;

1. Regulation enforcement and protection of wild and hatchery fishery resources in Valdez and PWS. Port Valdez and Valdez Arm are home to one of the largest purse seine salmon fisheries in Alaska. Up to 200 commercial vessels fish each summer in close proximity to the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, the Alyeska Marine Terminal and regulatory closed waters. The on water presence of the Valdez AWT helps to ensure an orderly fishery and maintain established boundaries for resource protection and marine traffic.
2. Enforcement of hunting regulations in Prince William Sound and the Copper River Basin.
3. Local Valdez office for fishery registration, administrative and education needs.
4. Support for Valdez Police Department.

Alaska Department of Fish & Game Budget

The legislature must recognize the need for a balanced approach to budget reductions that create minimal impacts on the core functions of fisheries resource management. Valdez and PWS fishermen rely on these functions to provide for maximum fishing opportunity and sustainable resource management. Key elements include;

1. Maintaining adequate staffing levels in PWS to provide for effective and dedicated fisheries management.
2. Full funding for in season data collection through aerial surveys, stream assessments and other methods. This establishes accurate in season reporting to provide the tools necessary to maximize fishing time and area for Valdez and PWS fishermen.
3. Ensure budget reductions do not reduce or eliminate economic opportunity for industry and resource users.
4. Continued support for ongoing research projects.

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

The functions and programs of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute are vital to the promotion of Alaska's seafood resources and the development of new markets for Valdez seafood producers. Any future budget reductions must fully consider the impacts to AMSI's ability to effectively promote the benefits and sustainability of Alaska's seafood products.