

MEMORANDUM**NOV. 12, 2024****To:** Petersburg Borough Assembly**From:** DIPAC/SSRAA/NSRAA/Capitol Compass**Subject:** Request for Adoption of a Resolution Supporting Southeast Hatcheries and Opposing Proposal 156

INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Board of Fisheries will meet in Ketchikan from January 28 to February 9, 2025, to consider several proposals, including Proposal 156, which seeks a significant reduction in pink and chum salmon production. This reduction would severely impact the Southeast Alaska Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA), Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC), and Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (NSRAA). Many Southeast Alaska communities, including Petersburg, rely on these salmon stocks for subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial fishing.

We urge Petersburg to submit a resolution opposing Proposal 156 to protect local hatchery programs and ensure economic stability, food security, and cultural preservation for our communities.

BACKGROUND

Proposal 156, submitted by a Fairbanks resident, proposes a 25% reduction in chum and pink salmon production in Southeast Alaska. These hatchery-produced salmon are vital economic drivers and support a larger ecosystem of fisheries in the region.

SSRAA and NSRAA were both incorporated in 1976 and have been providing salmon for subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial fishing in the Petersburg area since their inception. Specifically, SSRAA releases of chum, coho, and chinook at Anita Bay; coho and chinook at Crystal Lake; and chum at Burnett Inlet Hatchery. NSRAA releases chum at Thomas Bay, chum at SE Cove, chinook and chum at Gunnuk Creek (Kake), chum, chinook and coho at Hidden Falls, chinook from Little Port Walter and coho at Deer Lake, all of which contribute salmon to the local Petersburg area.

IMPACTS OF PROPOSAL 156

Hatcheries produce chum salmon to supplement wild stocks and sustain commercial fisheries. In 2024, SE hatcheries contributed approximately \$34 million of the estimated \$75 million commercial harvest value to Southeast Alaska's economy (46%); 86% of that value was from chum salmon. If Proposal 156 is adopted, the resulting reduction in hatchery production will have far-reaching economic consequences for Petersburg, beginning with a decrease in the fisheries landing tax revenue. This reduction will affect all local entities that rely on this revenue, from public services to community programs that benefit Petersburg residents.

Reduced salmon production would also impact employment and businesses reliant on a strong fishing sector. Sport and charter businesses, essential to our tourism industry, would face reduced opportunities, as salmon availability declines.

Beyond economics, this proposal threatens subsistence, personal use, and sport fisheries supported by hatchery funding. Revenue from chum and pink salmon cost recovery funds production of sockeye, coho, and Chinook salmon. If Proposal 156 passes, personal use, subsistence, and sport fisheries that rely on these releases could be lost, undermining local cultural practices and food security.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

We respectfully request Petersburg Borough Assembly's adoption of a resolution to demonstrate support for hatchery programs vital to Southeast Alaska's economic and cultural fabric. By opposing Proposal 156, the City Council can advocate for sustainable hatchery practices, supporting Petersburg economy and maintaining residents' access to essential fishery resources.

This resolution reinforces Petersburg's commitment to preserving Alaska's salmon heritage, a legacy providing both ecological and economic value.

SUBSEQUENT ACTION

If this resolution is adopted, we request Petersburg submit it to the Alaska Board of Fisheries public comment portal by January 14, 2025. For assistance or questions, contact Frances Leach at Capitol Compass (frances@capitolcompass.com).

Attachments

- Draft of the proposed resolution.
- Proposal 156