



Alaska Marine Policy Forum

Summary from Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Host: Paula Cullenberg

Notes by Holly Kent

The Alaska Marine Policy Forum is a bimonthly teleconference for Alaskans to network and share information about marine policy, budgets, and legislation at state, national, and international levels, sponsored by Alaska Sea Grant and the Alaska Ocean Observing System. Contact Sue.Keller@alaska.edu to be added to the list to receive a reminder and agenda for the next call, and summary notes following each call.

Alex Schenck, Sen. Dan Sullivan's office

Alex is leaving Senator Sullivan's office for a new job so Tom Mansour (USCG Fellow) and Erik Elam will be participating in these calls in the future. The Senator's office is supporting Barry Myers, nominee for NOAA Administrator. The Save Our Seas Bill is currently held up in the House. The Senator has been looking closely at the National Ocean Policy and is concerned about the several layers of federal bureaucracy but overall the policy has a lot of positives. Work on the US Coast Guard (USCG) Bill continues.

Ephraim Froehlich, Sen. Lisa Murkowski's office

The USCG Bill has been a big focus for Senator Murkowski as well. The Senator's office has been working hard towards legislation regarding the December 18 deadline for expiration of the EPA exemption to the Vessel Discharge Act. Senator Murkowski has been able to hold the line against potential funding cuts on programs important to Alaska called for in the President's budget. They are still working on getting funding for the 2016 pink salmon crisis, increasing the capacity for fish processing on the lower Yukon River, and the Integrated Coastal Ocean Observing System (ICOOS) Act reauthorization. The Alaska congressional delegation sent a letter to Sec. Rex Tillerson at the State Department, Sec. Ryan Zinke at the Department of Interior, Governor Bill Walker, and Lt. Governor Byron Mallot asking to elevate the transboundary mining/water quality issue and to bring the issue up at upcoming bilateral talks with Canada.

Nikoosh Carlo, Senior Advisor for Climate Policy

On October 31 the Governor signed Administrative Order 289 creating the Alaska Climate Change Strategy and forming a Climate Action for Alaska Leadership Team. The strategy focuses on four action areas including mitigation, adaptation, research, and response. and establishes a process to seek solutions. The first team meeting will be on December 18 in Anchorage. Nikoosh can be reached at nikoosh.carlo@alaska.gov.

Barbara Blake, Lt Governor Byron Mallott's office

There are new positions open at the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission and new seats becoming available at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the Alaska Board of Fisheries. If anyone has suggestions for these positions, please forward them to Barbara at barbara.blake@alaska.gov.

Caroline Hamp, Representative Ortiz' office

Rep. Ortiz is the chair of the House Fish & Game's Finance subcommittee and Caroline is the new staff member in charge of that area. Feel free to contact her if you have any questions or concerns at caroline.hamp@akleg.gov. Rep. Ortiz is fully behind bilateral work on transboundary issues and will have a resolution on the House agenda soon. The following marine-related legislation: HB 56 "Commercial Fishing Loans," HB76 "Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund," and HB 128 "Shellfish Enhancement are now on the Senate side and ready to move forward; if anyone has questions on those feel free to contact her.

David Witherell, Executive Director of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC)

The Council's meeting ended December 11, 2017; they set catch limits for the next year with the big news being an 80% decrease in the catch limits for Pacific cod in the Gulf of Alaska and a 15% decrease in catch limits for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea. Additionally, an apparent drop of 10-15% in halibut stocks has prompted more controls on charter operators. There is currently a large increase in sablefish close to the Gulf of Alaska. Dave can be reached at david.witherell@noaa.gov.

Darcy Dugan, Alaska Ocean Acidification (OA) Network Director

There is a stakeholder survey circulating now to find out what Alaskans consider to be the most pressing concerns regarding OA; please complete the survey at www.aoot.org/alaska-ocean-acidification-network/. Darcy represented the network at Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle which draws thousands of fishermen and lots of Alaska fishing groups; so many that they are all represented in the "Alaska" wing. From the huge draw to the network's booth, it is clear that Alaska and Pacific Northwest fishermen are interested and concerned over OA. New research was presented to suggest that OA impacts the sense of smell in pink salmon.

Sunny Rice, Alaska Sea Grant (ASG) Marine Advisory Agent in Petersburg

ASG held their seventh Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit in ten years at the beginning of December in Anchorage. This year the 85 attendees included young fishermen from 26 Alaska communities. Fritz Johnson from Bristol Bay was the keynote speaker with an appearance by Governor Walker and Lt. Governor Mallott and videos from Senators Murkowski and Sullivan. The participants were impressed with the level of interest showed by the state and congressional delegations. Four topics were covered: Alaska's role in the global seafood marketplace, the business of fishing, the fishing regulatory process, and the science and management of Alaska fisheries. Other activities included shadowing a member of the NPFMC during their meeting and selection of fishing's top issues. Over 450 commercial fishermen in Alaska have attended AYFS.

Roundtable

Paula announced that Alaska Sea Grant and partners released the report *Turning the Tide*, an overview of possible policy options that the state might consider to address the graying of the fishing fleet and decline in fishing business ownership by people that live in rural coastal communities. Also, Alaska Sea Grant is offering [several fellowships](#), including the Knauss Fellowship in Washington D.C., Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowships, and NOAA Fisheries fellowships including a coastal development/digital coastal fellowship. They are great opportunities for graduate students or those just finishing their graduate studies. The deadlines are in January and February.

Ephraim announced that Senator Murkowski will be introducing the bipartisan Coastal Communities Ocean Acidification Act in December with co-sponsors Collins, Peters, and Whitehouse. Senator Murkowski will be hosting Sea Grant Knauss Fellow Anne Robertson for 2018.

Darcy mentioned that the Alaska Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) network has created a real-time data portal with data on Southeast and Lower Cook Inlet with the official roll-out slated for January.

Diana Rhoades wanted to tell folks that she is the new staffer in Representative Geran Tarr's office and will be joining these calls from now on.

Next Alaska Marine Policy call: February 21, 2018, 1 pm Alaska time

Upcoming Events

January 22-26, 2018: Alaska Marine Science Symposium, Anchorage