



MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION FY18-02

A RESOLUTION BY THE SOUTHWEST ALASKA MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP URGING GOVERNOR WALKER TO DECLARE A FEDERAL FISHERIES DISASTER FOR THE 2018 COMMERCIAL PACIFIC COD FISHERY IN THE GULF OF ALASKA

WHEREAS, in December 2017, using its biennial bottom trawl survey showing a 71% decline in Gulf cod abundance since 2015 and an 83% decline since 2013, the National Marine Fisheries Service reduced the 2018 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Pacific cod catch limits by 80 percent compared to 2017; and

WHEREAS, Pacific cod fishery is a critical species in the GOA that is harvested by all gear types in both State and Federal waters across all seasons; and

WHEREAS, many Gulf of Alaska coastal communities, fishermen, and processors, are highly dependent upon GOA Pacific cod including, but not limited to, Kodiak, Sand Point, King Cove, and False Pass; and

WHEREAS, using the most recent year's prices, an 80% reduction suggests a 2018 ex-vessel value of \$9.6 million; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2017 GOA Pacific Cod Stock Assessment and Fisheries Evaluation (SAFE), the most recent average 5-year GOA Pacific cod first-wholesale value is \$103.8 million and an 80% reduction equates to only \$20.8 million in first wholesale value in 2018; and

WHEREAS, scientists link the high natural mortality of Pacific cod with record warm Gulf of Alaska temperatures in 2014-2016 ("the blob") and warm water effects on forage fish and cod bioenergetics which led to higher natural mortality and low recruitment in recent years – in effect, warmer water means higher metabolism for Pacific cod, which means they need more food than normal to survive at a time when the same warm water severely reduced their food source; and

WHEREAS, with the Pacific cod biomass not projected to bottom out until 2020, this dramatic fishery decline will persist for several years, at the very minimum until 2021; and

WHEREAS, the causes for the collapse of the Pacific cod fishery is beyond the control of fishery managers and regulators must respond by setting 80% lower catch limits to stay within sustainable levels; and

WHEREAS, the diminished Pacific cod fisheries will severely affect fishermen, fish processors, vendors, and local governments and create significant hardship on both the private and public-sector economies of coastal communities involved in this important fishery; and

WHEREAS, under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) a fishery resource disaster is a sudden, unexpected, large decrease in fish stock biomass or other change that results in significant loss of access to the fishery resource, for a substantial period of time. The Act specifies that allowable causes are natural

causes, undetermined causes, or man-made causes beyond the control of fishery managers to mitigate through conservation and management measures; and

WHEREAS, the Pacific cod biomass decline meets the definition of a fishery resource disaster; and

WHEREAS, the MSA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to determine if a commercial fishery failure has occurred and warrants federal disaster relief; and

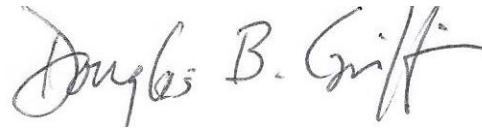
WHEREAS, a commercial fishery failure declaration from the Governor's office will begin the long process of requesting federal aid to assist our fishermen, processors and fishery-dependent communities during this difficult time.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference Membership respectfully urges Governor Bill Walker to review the Pacific cod resource disaster in the Gulf of Alaska and declare a federal fishery failure in accordance with Section 312(a) of the MSA. This action will initiate the process of review by the Secretary of Commerce for a federal disaster and relief declaration.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference Membership this 2nd day of March 2018.

IN WITNESS THERETO:

ATTEST:



Rebecca Skinner, SWAMC President

Doug Griffin, SWAMC Executive Director