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To salmonbycatcheis@noaa.gov

Subject Salmon Bycatch EIS

Robert D. Mecum,

Bycatch in the Trawl fishery off Alaska's coast are despicable. There are billions of dollars of economic waste occurring annually that must be stopped, for example Halibut and Salmon, these two economically important specie bring in millions of dollars to many communities and to the state of Alaska itself and yet the Trawl fleet is allowed enormous amounts of by-catch negatively affecting other fisheries.

These rates of Trawl by-catch are without doubt affecting commercial quotas of these and other fisheries such as hook and line and sport, both economically important, take for example the IPHC cuts across the board for 2009.

These enormous by-catch rates are also affecting the very ecosystem on which all species depend upon, marine birds, mammals, crab, squid and all fish. Even your agency reports continuing declines of Northern Fur Seal and Steller Sea Lions in the Bering Sea strangely with no no known cause.

Many communities are also being economically impacted by this huge removal and waste of species not only coastal communities but also communities further inland where many Salmon migrate to spawn, these communities are also seeing a major declines in Salmon. I'm certain that removal of Salmon from these inland communities will also have a hugely negative effect on those ecosystems as many mammals such as bear, wolves and bald eagles depend upon returning Salmon for survival. The lowering of the Pollock quota to 815,000 tons will without doubt help to alleviate by-catch but it is certainly not enough. Scientific evidence was there at the December 2009 NPFMC meetings that should have enacted a much lower Pollock quota to 400,000 and maybe even less but sadly this strong evidence was ignored.

Your agency is there to protect our fisheries, the only way to reduce by-catch is to eliminate the problem in the first place and in this particular case, a fishery that is having enormous implications on our entire ecosystem and economy, the Trawl fishery.

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