

Fish Commish calls for end to foreign take

Juneau—Commissioner of Fish and Game, Don W. Collinsworth, called for a scheduled phase-out of foreign fishing in the developing offshore groundfish in testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on the Outer Continental Shelf hearing in Kodiak on August 7.

"The state's policy regarding the developing groundfish fisheries is to create an atmosphere where as much economic activity as possible occurs in Alaska, with maximum benefit to local communities," Collinsworth told the committee. "The state believes that a swift phase-out of both foreign fishing and joint ventures will be most beneficial to the development of a shore-based groundfish harvesting and processing industry.

Collinsworth also said that the phase-out should take place as quickly as possible and under a

time-certain schedule in order to reduce the risk in investing in the industry. He also tied allocations to foreign fisheries and joint ventures, during the phase-out, to cooperation in enforcement, catch reporting and elimination of high seas intercept fisheries.

"As more research is conducted," Collinsworth said, "the problems caused by the high sea fisheries beyond the 22-mile fishery conservation zone become more evident. It is now estimated that an annual average of at least 100,000 chinook salmon of Western Alaska origin and another 100,000 chinook of central Alaska origin are harvested in the Japanese high seas fisheries. In addition, the catch of coho salmon of Western Alaska origin is believed to be as high as the inshore Western Alaska catch...total interceptions of all salmon and steelhead of North American origin are estimated to

be over 1,000,000 fish per year." Collinsworth also said, "the economic loss to Alaska fishermen is approximately \$20,000,000 annually."

The commissioner also reiterated the state's opposition to federal oil and gas leasing in the North Aleutian Basin, emphasizing the extremely high marine productivity of the area and the economic and social value of the resources.