

Introduced by: Mayor, Johnson
Date: 01/19/21
Action: Amended by Substitute
Vote: 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2021-008**

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE TO
DECLARE A COMMERCIAL FISHERY RESOURCE DISASTER DUE TO THE 2020
FAILURE OF THE UPPER COOK INLET COMMERCIAL SOCKEYE SALMON
FISHERY**

- WHEREAS**, in the 2020 commercial salmon fishery for the Upper Subdivision of the Central District of Cook Inlet, Alaska, (“UCI”) approximately 959,802 fish were commercially harvested, which is the lowest harvest of commercial salmon for that region since 1971 and approximately 59.6 percent less than the recent 10-year average of 2,814,926 fish; and
- WHEREAS**, the total gross revenue for these fisheries in 2020 was 83 percent less than the most recent 10-year annual average; and
- WHEREAS**, sockeye salmon are the most valuable of the five species of Pacific salmon present in UCI and in 2020 the combined drift and set net commercial sockeye harvest of 579,068 fish was approximately 77 percent less than the average annual harvest of 2,525,662 fish for the years 2010 to 2019 and the lowest UCI sockeye harvest since 1975; and
- WHEREAS**, in 2020, the commercial drift gill net sockeye harvest in UCI was 283,727 individual fish; these numbers are 81 percent less than the previous 10-year annual average harvest of 1,518,6154, excluding the 2018 harvest as it was also a disaster; and
- WHEREAS**, the 2020 commercial set net sockeye harvest in the UCI was 295,341 individual fish which is 67.5 percent less than the previous 10-year annual average harvest of 909,213, excluding 2018 as it was also a disaster; and
- WHEREAS**, the UCI commercial salmon fishing industry includes harvesting salmon, the wholesale or retail marketing, sale, delivery, distribution, and processing of gill netted salmon, including the negotiation of wholesale and/or retail prices, contracts, custom processing, agency, brokerage, and shipping agreements; and
- WHEREAS**, the 2020 individual sockeye salmon weight at age was, on average, one pound less than 10 years ago, and the 579,068 harvested in UCI were worth approximately 86 percent less than the previous 10-year average ex-vessel value; and

WHEREAS, during 2020, the majority of the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon returned during the month of August which is weeks later than normal returns; and

WHEREAS, state regulators have abandoned abundance-based management practices in favor of highly prescriptive-based management practices causing insufficient fishing opportunity and resulting in economic disasters, reduced food supply and economies; and

WHEREAS, the commercial sockeye salmon fishing industry has long been an important component of the Kenai Peninsula Borough economy

WHEREAS, this extremely low harvest was below the level necessary to cover the cost of operating and maintaining the commercial drift and set net gillnet fisheries, including the harvesting, processing and marketing businesses in the Kenai Peninsula Borough; and

WHEREAS, the United Cook Inlet Drift Association and the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association have urged the Kenai Peninsula Borough and others to request the Secretary of Commerce to declare an economic disaster for the Upper Cook Inlet sockeye salmon commercial fisheries due to the failure of the 2020 season;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly respectfully requests the United States Secretary of Commerce declare a Sockeye salmon fisheries failure due to a fishery resource disaster due to undetermined causes, in the Upper Subdivision of the Central District of Cook Inlet, Alaska, based on the considerably low returns, harvests, and reduced size of Sockeye salmon, in the commercial drift and set net gillnet commercial salmon fishing industry as a result of the devastating 2020 UCI sockeye salmon fishery.

SECTION 2. The assembly further respectfully requests the Secretary of Commerce to declare an economic disaster, as provided for in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, and implement a recovery plan that provides private and public assistance and takes other actions to benefit the commercial drift and set net gillnet fishery participants and others that rely on this important fishery resource.

SECTION 3. That copies of this resolution be provided to the United States Secretary of Commerce, US Senator Lisa Murkowski, US Senator Dan Sullivan, and US Representative Don Young and Governor Michael Dunleavy

SECTION 4. That this resolution becomes effective immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 19TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2021.

Brent Hibbert, Assembly President

ATTEST:

Johni Blankenship, MMC, Borough Clerk

Yes:

No:

Absent: