

PROPOSAL 269 – 5 AAC 35.310. Fishing seasons for Registration Area E. Allow a commercial Tanner crab fishery in the Western District of Prince William Sound, as follows:

On January 1st crab fishing will commence in the Western District of PWS and continue until March 15th, or until 500,000 lbs. of Tanner Crab are caught; whichever comes first. Vessels will be limited to 25 pots.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has apparently eliminated in perpetuity commercial crab fisheries in Prince William Sound (PWS) –

The Department has since 1991 relied solely on its trawl survey for its data regarding tanner crab stocks in PWS Area E. Trawl surveys take place in a very limited area of PWS and their effectiveness in these areas is widely questioned. Area E encompasses approximately 13,000 square nautical miles. Vast swaths of Area E have neither been fished nor surveyed nor managed in any manner for three decades. The Department appears to be acting in contradiction to the Tanner and King crab policy established by the Board of Fisheries which states as one of its goals; *“providing a sustained and reliable supply of high quality product to the industry and customers which will provide substantial and stable employment in all sectors of the economy relating to these fisheries.”*

The Western District of PWS which comprises roughly 4500 square nautical miles of the total PWS area has not had a pot survey, a trawl survey or a fishery since 1998.

PROPOSED BY: Robert A. Smith (HQ-F16-035)
