

Submitted by Board Member Ruffner
Regarding Kapp Request for Board of Fisheries support

RC66

The Board of Fisheries is again requesting that CFEC consider whether to adjust the existing Northern Southeast limited entry spawn on kelp (SOK) herring pound fishery so that herring seine permit holders can have the option to utilize open pounds to harvest SOK in Sitka Sound. It is our understanding that this would require CFEC to remove Sitka Sound from the Northern Southeast administrative area, which is an area where there is currently no participation. CFEC could then consider whether to allow seine permit holders to utilize open pounds to harvest SOK as an alternative gear. The Board of Fisheries regulations allow the use of pounds in Sitka Sound even though there is no fishery authorized there at present.

If these actions were taken by CFEC, it is very likely this board or a future board would approve some form of an open-pound SOK fishery in Sitka Sound. This request has been previously made and the overlapping jurisdictions and inaction on the part of CFEC is hindering the ability for the board to meet its statutory mandate to develop fisheries. There are a number of reasons the board would favorably consider this concept. Market conditions, both the demand and price for sac-roe herring has dramatically dropped in the past decade and there are no indications that this trend is going to reverse in the foreseeable future. Open pound fisheries do not kill fish in the process of gathering the spawn, there was a strong desire on the part of the Sitka Tribe to reduce harvest of herring for a number of ecological reasons.

Finally we are confident that we can work through the specific details that would ultimately result a new option for harvesting herring eggs in an ever-changing market. Please consider this request as the historical back and forth delays are not serving the public process.