

**FINAL RESOLUTION**  
**Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee**  
**A Resolution in Support of the Alaska Salmon Hatchery Program**

**WHEREAS**, the Copper River watershed and Prince William Sound communities benefit greatly from the State of Alaska Salmon Hatchery Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee is charged with promoting and protecting the common interest of Alaska's fishery resource, as a vital component of Alaska's social and economic well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee has long been an advocate for the sustainability of Alaska's wild fishery resources, including both freshwater and marine species and their habitats; and

**WHEREAS**, the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee represents the voice of over 2,000 coastal residents in Cordova and beyond; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has operated for over 40 years in Prince William Sound, and supplements wild salmon harvests for all user groups throughout the region; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is an example of sustainable economic development that directly benefits subsistence fishermen, personal use fishermen, sport fishermen, charter fishermen, commercial fishermen, seafood processors, as well as state and local governments, which receive raw fish tax dollars; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's salmon hatchery program employs strong scientific methodology and is built upon precautionary principles and sustainable fisheries policies to protect wild salmon populations; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulates hatchery operations, production, and permitting through a transparent public process and multi-stakeholder development of annual management plans; and

**WHEREAS**, returns of hatchery and wild salmon stocks follow similar survival trends over time and the largest returns of both hatchery and wild salmon stocks have largely occurred since hatchery returns began in about 1980; and

**WHEREAS**, there are no stocks of concern where Prince William Sound hatchery production occurs, indicating that adequate escapements to wild stock systems are being met in these areas over time; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska hatcheries contributed an annual average of nearly 67 million fish to Alaska's commercial fisheries in the past decade; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017 Alaska hatcheries accounted for 21% of the total common property commercial salmon catch in Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's salmon hatchery program has proven to be significant and vital to Alaska's seafood and sportfish industries and the state of Alaska by creating employment, recreation, and economic opportunities throughout the state and in particular in rural coastal communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska's salmon hatchery program is non-profit and self-funded through cost recovery and enhancement taxes on the resource and is a model partnership between private and public entities; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Alaska has significantly invested in Alaska's salmon hatchery program and associated research to provide for stable salmon harvests and to bolster the economies of coastal communities while maintaining a wild stock escapement priority; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska salmon fisheries, including the hatchery program, continue to be certified as sustainable by two separate programs, Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC);

**WHEREAS**, the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee supports unbiased and scientific methods to assess the interaction of Alaska's salmon hatchery programs with natural salmon stocks, such as the Alaska Hatchery-Wild Salmon Interaction Study which began in 2011 and is scheduled to conclude in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee recommends that policy makers reserve judgement and action on these matters until after the Alaska Hatchery-Wild Salmon Interaction Study concludes in 2023; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee affirms its support for Alaska's salmon hatchery programs; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED** that the Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee calls on the Alaska Board of Fisheries to work with the hatchery community, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, industry leaders, and the general public to further an understanding of the importance of the Alaska salmon hatchery program to all Alaskans.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY 2019.**

  
John Renner, CR/PWS AC Fisheries Chair

ATTESTED BY:

  
Tommy Sheridan, CR/PWS AC