

Comments on Proposal 179**Aleutian Islands Golden King Crab Harvest Strategy****By****John Hilsinger, representing the owners of the fishing vessel Alaska Trojan**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Board:

My name is John Hilsinger. I live in Anchorage Alaska. I am presenting comments on proposal 179 on behalf of the owners of the Alaska Trojan, which fishes for golden king crab in the western Aleutians (known as the WAG). The owners have participated in this fishery since the 1980s when it began.

Proposal 179 requests the Board to adopt a harvest strategy for this fishery which will be based on the results of the recently approved golden king crab stock assessment model. This process has demanded an incredible amount of work by both staff and industry. The model was in development by ADF&G for over 10 years. The crab industry retained the services of modeling experts to work with ADF&G in developing it. Most recently, industry hired Steve Martell to work closely with ADF&G on the model and subsequent harvest strategy development. This is a great example of cooperation between the industry and department that went in to these harvest strategies. I wish to thank the Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff for their excellent work with industry to develop the harvest strategy options. I particularly wish to acknowledge Ben Daly and Mark Stichert in Kodiak and Shareef Siddeek and Jie Zheng from Juneau. They all worked very hard on this, they welcomed industry participation, and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

The golden king crab fishery in the WAG is both healthy and stable. Staff have presented you with a range of options that meet both conservation and industry needs. As the staff note in their comments, "in the WAG, policies 3, 4, and 11 (15%, 20%, and 17.5% ramps with a 25% legal cap) provide the best trade-off between conservation objectives, catch, and catch stability." Of these three options, Alaska Trojan supports policy 11, the 17.5% ramp with 25% legal cap. We note that under this policy, harvest rates will be well below those that have existed since the fishery began; the 17.5% harvest rate would be the maximum under this policy and is below even the lowest harvest rates experienced during the nearly 40 year history of the fishery (Staff report, Figure 2, page 27). Therefore, we believe policy 11 provides well for conservation and also provides for a healthy and stable harvest.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have.