

STATE OF ALASKA

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ENTRY COMMISSION

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COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ENTRY COMMISSION

SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSED OPTIMUM NUMBER OF PERMITS FOR THE BRISTOL BAY SALMON DRIFT GILLNET FISHERY

October 22, 2004

The Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission is proposing a regulation to establish an optimum number of limited entry permits for the Bristol Bay salmon drift gillnet fishery. The proposed regulation calls for an optimum number range from 800 to 1,200 permits for the fishery. There are currently 1,857 entry permits in the fishery.

The proposed regulation is based upon recommendations from a recently completed study of the fishery by the commission's research staff. The study is titled, "*Bristol Bay Salmon Drift Gillnet Fishery Optimum Number Report.*"

Determination of an optimum number for a fishery is a "second- stage" of limited entry. The law (AS 16.43.290) requires an optimum number to represent a reasonable balance of three general standards. The standards include economic, resource conservation, and management concerns. Under the law, the optimum number may be a range of permits.

The commission invites public comments on the proposed regulation. The comment period will remain open until February 15, 2005, to give the public time to read and consider the report and provide comments and recommendations to the commission with regard to the proposed regulation.

If the commission adopts an optimum number that is less than the existing number of permits in the fishery, the commission and participants in the fishery will then have a number of options to explore for consolidating the fleet to bring it within the

optimum number determination. The report includes a description of some of those options.

Copies of the proposed optimum number regulation, a public notice regarding the comment period with instructions for submitting comments, the complete optimum number report, and the executive summary of the report, are available on the commission's website at www.cfec.state.ak.us. Copies may also be obtained by contacting CFEC Law Specialist Susan Haymes at Susan_Haymes@cfec.state.ak.us or 907- 790- 6963.