

CITY OF  
**Saint Paul**  
ALASKA



December 11, 2023

Doug Vincent Lang  
Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Attn: Darion Jones, [dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.com.fisheriesdisasters@alaska.gov)  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

*Re: Comments on Second Draft Spend Plan for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Bering Sea Snow Crab and Bristol Bay Red King Crab Fisheries Disasters*

Dear Commissioner,

We wanted to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Second Draft Plan issued by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G or the State) on November 28, 2023.

We also appreciate ADF&G's responsiveness to comments concerning the Initial Draft Spend Plan, and more specifically to the recommendations made by Alaskan crab-dependent communities. The State's proposal to reduce the research allocation from 18% to 12%, allocate 5% to communities "off the top", and set aside 1% for Saint Paul community entities, improves the ability of our Alaskan communities to weather the impacts of the 2021, 2022, and now 2023 crab fishery closures.

We commend the State for considering Saint Paul Island's unique dependence on the BSS fishery and financial situation, and support ADF&G's recommendation to set aside 1% of the disaster funds for this community. As remote, western Alaskan communities and boroughs, with large Alaska Native and minority populations, we all share similar challenges and have a shared sense of solidarity with the troubles affecting our sister communities. In addition, the State's guidance on how disaster funds are to be distributed, both from the 1% Saint Paul set aside and the proposed community allocation, will facilitate and expedite disbursement of these funds among the various beneficiaries.

However, we continue to support an allocation to communities that is higher than the 5% proposed by the State and request that it consider a community allocation of 6%. To achieve a higher community allocation, we propose that the research allocation be reduced to 10% as proposed by the overwhelming majority of industry -- and all of the community -- stakeholders.

As you are aware, the businesses that our communities depend on are facing a series of recent challenges resulting not only from the crab fishery closures, but also from poor market conditions that are affecting a number of other fisheries. This has led major operations based in our communities to defer or cancel important infrastructure

investments that would have otherwise spurred economic growth and opportunities. These developments have had cascading impacts on our communities which include the loss of associated fisheries service activities, infrastructure development, and loss of population. Unfortunately, this situation is likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

Given these realities, and the difficulties that we are likely to face in getting future disaster determinations funded by Congress, we believe it is vital for us and for the State of Alaska that sufficient levels of support be extended to our communities from the disaster funds appropriated last December for the 2021 and 2022 BBR and BSS seasons.

As we have stated before, disaster funds that are disbursed to assist affected Alaskan communities are funds that are invested in our State and more likely to remain in Alaska, benefitting our residents. A prolonged economic crisis and even a failure by some communities to recover from the crab collapse, would likely result in additional economic burdens to our State.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the State towards successful implementation of the BSS and BBR Spend Plan.

Sincerely,



Alvin Osterback, Mayor  
Aleutians East Borough



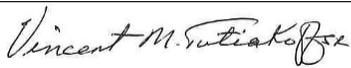
Joe Bereskin, Mayor  
City of Akutan



Warren Wilson, Mayor  
City of King Cove



Jacob Mercurief, Mayor  
City of Saint Paul



Vince Tutiakoff, Mayor  
City of Unalaska