

**CITY OF CRAIG
MEMORANDUM**

To: Craig City Council
From: Brian Templin, City Administrator
Date: February 13, 2023
RE: Wild Fish Conservancy Lawsuit – Resolution 23-03

Attached is Resolution 23-03.

The Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) has filed suit in Washington State regarding resident Puget Sound killer whales. If this lawsuit is successful it will have major impact to King Salmon harvest in all sectors. The suit is primarily targeted at troll fish, but if successful, it is highly likely that restrictions will spread to other gear groups, sport, charter, and subsistence take of King Salmon.

Recommendation: Approve resolution 23-03.

**CITY OF CRAIG
RESOLUTION 23-03**

A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING ON THE WILD FISH CONSERVANCY LAWSUIT

WHEREAS, commercial fishing is a mainstay of Alaska’s economy and the largest private sector employer in the state; and,

WHEREAS, commercial fishing has significant historical and economic significance in Craig; and,

WHEREAS, the troll fleet is the second largest commercial fleet in Alaska; and,

WHEREAS, between 2000 – 2018, the troll fleet land on average 3.02 million pounds of Chinook salmon each year at an average value of \$11.7 million; and,

WHEREAS, approximately 1,450 fishermen earn income from the troll fishery, including skippers, (permit holders) and crew with a total direct, indirect, and labor income estimated at \$28.5 million; and,

WHEREAS, in 2018, the residents of the Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area (Craig, Klawock, Thorne Bay, Coffman Cove, Hydaburg, Metlakatla, Kake, and other communities) landed 17% of the Alaska resident troll Chinook harvest and 15% of the total troll Chinook harvest value; and,

WHEREAS, in 2021 Craig ranked 30th in the nation for commercial seafood landings (21 million pounds) and 52nd in value (\$22.7 million), out of 137 of the nation’s top fishing ports; and,

WHEREAS, commercial salmon trolling is a year-round contributor to Southeast Alaska and Craig’s economy and sustains year-round employment in the fishing, processing, and support sector industries; and,

WHEREAS, including fishing, processing, and all related multiplier effects, the troll fleet has a total economic impact of approximately \$85 million for the whole of Southeast annually, as measured in terms of total output; and,

WHEREAS, the lawsuit filed by the Wild Fish Conservancy against the National Marine Fisheries Service threatens to close Alaska’s winter and summer troll fisheries despite those closure providing no meaningful benefits to Southern Resident Killer Whales; and,

WHEREAS, the Wild Fish Conservancy has pledged to eliminate mixed stock fisheries and eliminate hatcheries; and,

WHEREAS, the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit has the potential to impact other Southeast Fisheries; and,

WHEREAS, the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit has the potential to have catastrophic impacts to the economy and quality of life in Craig; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Craig, Alaska urges in the strongest possible terms that:

1. NMFS prioritize preparation of the necessary documents and processes to support Alaska's troll fisheries.
2. NMFS and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game commit the necessary resources to effectively defend Alaska's fisheries and the troll fishery in particular.
3. All necessary available state, federal and private resources be made available to support lawsuit defendants and intervenors through all possible appeals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the City of Craig, Alaska encourages the State of Alaska to work with Alaska's Department of Law and Congressional delegation to protect Alaska's fisheries from present and future misdirected or malicious lawsuits

This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the city council this 15th day of February 2023.

MAYOR TIM O'CONNOR

KECIA WEATHERWAX, CITY CLERK

