

2018 Board of Fisheries Meeting, Dillingham, Alaska 30 NOV

Record Comment _____

By Mark Smith in regards to PROPOSAL # 30

Respectfully to Board Members:

Please amend my proposal to reflect a requested change for vessel length from 32' to 36'.

From listening to concerns in testimony there is a fear that substantial vessel length change will cause a rapid change in fleet dynamics. A 36' limit will allow incremental improvement that will allow vessels to accommodate needed additional space without violating basic shipbuilding norms of length vs width.

As the owner of commercial vessels since 1980, the evolution of safety and compliance has come to the point where US Coast Guard is focusing on smaller and smaller vessels. This last July, every commercial tug over 26' in length is required to have Certificate of Inspection and qualifying quality management system. This program has been transformational and many legacy tugs are being retired from service.

The fishing industry is certainly the next fleet that will see increasing regulation – beyond what is currently the “norm”. Stability, basic USCG qualified systems, marine sanitation devices, fire alarms and control system, and manning requirements are on the immediate horizon. With a vessel life in this industry approaching 40 years, the ability to reasonably respond to quality and compliance issues is very important. Accommodating this with standard dimensions is a gift to all future fisherpersons.

One of the basic safety items is 110/208v power. Addition of AC power will increase safety, comfort and fuel efficiency. It also allows for a much wider variety of appliances and equipment to enhance on-board quality enhancements.

Our current restricted length makes every vessel a compromise where safety, working efficiency, hold capacity, and crew comfort are juggled and none are fully satisfied.

Although 32' boats have been able to harvest a quality product, it has been done so with a less than ideal platform. As vessel owners like myself seek to invest in the long term, please consider that the future fleet needs to evolve in a rational way instead of slowly approaching the vessel dimensions of 32'X32'.