

PROPOSAL 30

5 AAC 06.341. Vessel specifications and operations.

Increase the maximum length for drift gillnet vessels from 32 feet in overall length to 42 feet in overall length, as follows:

This proposal is to strike the number 32 and replace it with **42** in the first paragraph of the referenced code section.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The 32 foot vessel length restriction must be changed. This issue addresses the issue of quality output, safety, and financial viability of Bristol Bay gillnet vessel owners. 32 feet of vessel length is not enough to meet modern standards required by the seafood industry. **PRODUCT QUALITY** requires robust refrigeration equipment for any cooling system used on a vessel. To achieve this larger chillers are need, and the power to run them efficiently is a generator. **SAFETY** at sea is a prime consideration for the maritime community. A larger, more stable work platform will keep fishers more efficient workers and lessen injuries related to slips, trips, and falls. A larger vessel can also accommodate bulwarks and hand rails to ensure a physical barrier to falling overboard. **FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY** is needed to afford maximum profitability - especially to watershed residents - who can use a larger vessel to more safely fish the other bounty of other species in Bristol Bay. As it is financially ridiculous to double down on old, legacy 32 foot gillnetters, the Bristol Bay fleets must recapitalize on a platform that has durable value, is safer for the crew, and has value beyond the salmon season. With the evolution of 'stacked' permits, the limit makes even less sense. Stacked boats have more gear and handle more fish, and effectively every argument presented is 33% stronger. If this regulation **is not** changed, fishermen will be forced to cram more and more required equipment into the already cramped 32 foot platform. It is a fact that the fleet is become increasingly "square" with each new generation of vessels. This investment can now easily cost more than \$500,000 and other than meeting the Bristol Bay length requirement, the vessel is comparatively worthless in any other fishery. That is an egregious waste of money.

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