

**PROPOSAL 221**

**5 AAC 41.285 Aquatic stock acquisition on an aquatic farm site and 5 AAC 41.235 Determination of insignificant population.**

Prohibit harvest of naturally occurring sea cucumbers on aquatic farm sites by farm operator in areas where there are commercial sea cucumber fisheries.

**In areas where there are limited entry CFEC Q11A fisheries that are subject to fisheries management plan, sea cucumbers cannot be added as a species of culture and must be allowed to escape into benthos.**

[5AAC 41.285. AQUATIC STOCK AQUISITION ON AN AQUATIC FARM SITE. WILD STOCK OF THE SPECIES IDENTIFIED FOR CULTURE IN THE OPERATION PERMIT THAT SETTLE ON AN AQUATIC FARM, HATCHERY SITE OR CULTURE GEAR BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE AQUATIC FARM OR HATCHERY OPERATION PERMIT HOLDER AS A CONDITION OF THE OPERATION PERMIT.]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Aquatic farms that are permitted to operate in areas where the limited entry CFEC commercial sea cucumber fishery (Q11A) occurs have added sea cucumber to their permitted species culture using 5AAC 41.285. A very specific instance occurred with a farm permitted in a commercial sea cucumber fishing area that began as an oyster farm and then added sea cucumbers to its cultered species list. This farm is only using naturally settling sea cucumbers directly removing those sea cucumbers from settling to the bottom and becoming part of the common property resource.

Very little is known about sea cucumber settlement patterns in SE Alaska so it is unclear how this practice could affect the commercial fishery over time. We believe allowing a farm to add sea cucumbers as a cultivation species in an area known to already support a commercial fishery is allocating sea cucumbers to a private farm and away from a CFEC limited entry fishery.

Furthe under 5AAC 41.235 the commissioner must determine that the wild stock is not of a nature signifigant enough to attract or support a commercial fishery. In this case the wild stock is already supporting a commercial fishery. Further the sale of the shellfish will not result in the alteration in traditional fisheries or other uses of fish and wildlife resources if the population is included within the aquatic farm. How can privatizing sea cucumbers out of the common property not alter the commercial fishery in that area.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. SARDFa has geoduck, sea cucumber and sea urchin committees. This idea was discussed with ADFG Ketchikan biologists.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Dale Stanley

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