

Fishery questions to be posed to gubernatorial candidates Mark Begich and Mike Dunleavy:

1. What is your long-term vision for Alaska's seafood industry and what will you look for during the transition? Are there any fishery issues you will be particularly interested in?

Alaska's fishing industry is a critical part of our state's economy, supporting tens of thousands of jobs – our state's fisheries are the greatest in the world, and it's our duty to protect and manage them. Responsible management of our fisheries is critical if we want to make sure our fish stocks are healthy and available for decades to come. To protect Alaska fisheries, we need to invest in world-class research so we have a clear view of current and long-term needs, including the threat posed by climate change and effective mitigation steps. We must think long-term about every aspect of the industry and the resource, understanding and protecting the needs of commercial fishing, sport fishing, and subsistence users. Long-term sustainability of our fisheries is achievable with strong management based on sound science and accurate data. Additionally, we need to protect our coastal fishing communities and the waters that sustain both people and fish.

During the transition, I will continue to solicit new ideas from Alaskans on strengthening our fisheries. As governor, I will reclaim our state's coastal zone management ability, which the Parnell administration inexplicably surrendered to the federal government – not only will this give us more control over the protection of our fisheries and coast, it will also channel additional federal funding for our state's use in those efforts.

2. What qualifications would you look for in a Commissioner of Fish and Game?

If I'm fortunate enough to be elected, there are several traits and qualifications I will highly value in considering individuals for Commissioner positions – at the top of the list is a commitment to transparency and problem-solving. My approach to governing is action-oriented and responsive to Alaskans' needs, with a focus on bringing all Alaskans to the table to build consensus and get the job done. Anyone I would consider for a commissioner position must share those values. I'll listen closely to subsistence users, fishermen, processors, personal use harvesters, and others across the state to find an individual with the knowledge, skills, and temperament to be a successful Commissioner of Fish and Game.

Commercial fishing for salmon, halibut, groundfish, crab, and more is a major part of Alaska's economy. Subsistence, sport, and personal use fisheries are central to our Alaska lifestyle, tourism, and Alaska Native culture. Alaska must have a Commissioner of Fish and Game dedicated to addressing the tough questions, using data and sound policy, without regard to politics. With that comes the need for strong management skills, particularly with respect to the budget, staff, and deliverables. We must recruit and retain highly talented scientists, analysts, and other public servants to our state government, and commissioners play a vital role in achieving those goals.

3. Ecosystem changes are affecting the ocean's food web. A variety of fish stocks such as cod and pink salmon are significantly reduced and surveys show Bering Sea fish/crab stocks are moving northward. Ocean acidification and water warming threats are

looming. Does the state have a role in protecting and sustaining our fisheries from impacts of these ecosystem changes? If so, what would it be?

Yes. In Alaska, we are experiencing the impacts of climate change more intensely than almost anywhere else. Alaskans know climate change is real, and we see it around us every day – warming waters, ocean acidification, changing fish patterns, and impacts on our coastal communities. The state has an important role to play in protecting and sustaining our fisheries and assisting impacted communities. We must be serious about addressing the risks associated with climate change, and central to that is acquiring comprehensive and accurate scientific data. In consultation with fisheries and climate change experts at the University, the state must combine sound data with an effective action plan.

4. The migration of permits out of rural communities has been continuing for years now. How do you propose to ensure rural access to commercial fishing?

For years, I have heard about and witnessed the underrepresentation of rural areas of Alaska, at many levels. Rural participation in fisheries management at every level is key, and I believe in leading by example – I am committed to bringing more equity to fisheries management. I also see the need to help young Alaskans succeed in Alaska's fishing industry. This means stronger programs in fisheries education and financial support to enter and stay in the business. New and increased opportunity is a key component to long-term success for beginning and legacy fishermen as they struggle with rapid changes in the market, the environment, and our culture.

As Governor, I will bring together unique partners such as fishers and tech companies to create greater value for the industry, potentially also increasing safety and efficiency. We will work with the Division of Economic Development to enhance and strengthen the self-sustaining commercial fishing revolving loan program. My administration will work to find ways to reduce Alaska transportation costs, one of the main cost drivers impacting processors and ex-vessel price. Commercial fisheries need to be represented on the University of Alaska Board of Regents, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, and other educational and business entities. Alaska also needs access to critical support services such as machinists, welders, electricians, and refrigeration techs. And we need to utilize our public education institutions to help grow the next generation of the fishing industry in Alaska.

5. How would you address funding challenges for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, fishery research, stock assessment surveys and fishery management?

Good fisheries management decisions require using the best science available. I support research, management oversight, and data collection. With changes in climate, we have seen drastic shifts in fish returns that raise questions that need to be answered. We must deal with this reality and designate needed state resources to agencies on which we rely.

The agency needs resources to manage appropriately. With fish playing such an important role in Alaska, the agency with management responsibility must be able to do the job expected of them. It's an overall budget question I am eager to tackle as part of my broader fiscal plan. We cannot

cut our way out of the budget situation we are in and cannot expect one of the biggest industries in Alaska to thrive without proper resources.

6. Many coastal communities rely on fisheries for their local economies. Alaska's hatchery program enhances fisheries for all user groups. What is your vision for the future of Alaska's hatchery program?

Alaska is well-suited to continue developing a viable and sustainable hatchery program, as well as a mariculture industry, where we can enhance fish stocks and produce shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities.

I oppose farmed fish and realize we must continue to educate folks about the real difference between hatcheries and fish farming. We can see the progress that has been made with some of the hatcheries as new, state of the art facilities come online. Hatcheries are an important of fisheries in Alaska and can be very successful when coupled with good management and stable funding.

7. Seafood is Alaska's #1 export. What role would you take as Governor to minimize the impacts from the new tariffs that have been imposed?

Alaska fish is traded on a global market and must be handled with the same attention as other Alaska natural resources. Tariffs on our fish and fish products have enormous negative economic impact – not only do they reduce our exports to our trading partners, but Alaska consumers pay more out of pocket for imported products. We must work for exemptions for Alaska seafood and products, diversify our trading partners, and strongly fund our seafood marketing program so our trade relationships are durable.

As Governor, I won't sit on the sidelines when national policies hurts Alaska – like Trump's trade war with China. I'll bring together a bipartisan group of governors from states like Alaska with strong exports to Asia to pressure the federal government to change course. It's important the governor fights for our state, no matter the partisan politics.