

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 seafood industry is an economic driver for our state. In the long-term, I'd like to see a seafood industry where:*

- *Our coastal communities have a source of jobs and economic activity and are thriving places with working waterfronts*
- *Our natural resources are turned into value-added products here in the state for maximum value to fishermen and Alaskan jobs*
- *Alaska seafood is sold throughout the world, broadening our market base, reducing reliance on certain markets and our exposure to exchange rates and trade wars.*
- *More of our fisheries are conducted by Alaskans who will spend their earnings in the state*
- *We've developed product forms and markets for underutilized species and have full utilization of the harvest, broadening our economic base*
- *We have a stable regulatory environment that allows fishermen and processors to invest in Alaska with comfort*
- *Our Department of Fish and Game is on the cutting edge of research and management*

*I'm particularly interested in fisheries issues where we can find creative solutions instead of just fighting the same old fights. As Governor, I would represent all Alaskans. Not just one region or one gear type. I'm going to be interested in hearing from all stakeholders.*

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

*Given the employee and budget responsibilities, the Commissioner must first and foremost be a strong administrator with proven leadership experience. In addition, demonstration of the following attributes and experience:*

- *Team player in both the cabinet and the department; capable of working collaboratively with other resource commissioners and building a team of competent professionals from which they will take advice.*
- *Broad fisheries background and expertise.*
- *Experience in international, national, and state fisheries management forums.*
- *Recognition of the importance of game in the ADFG portfolio.*
- *Capable of working closely with the legislature on budget and other issues.*

*I've been talking to fishermen and processors all over the state and have asked for characteristics of the qualities they want to see in a Fish and Game commissioner, in a fisheries advisor, and in a Board of Fish or North Pacific Council appointment. I've gotten a lot of great feedback and in the transition; I'm going to be looking for new leadership to help set policy for the fishing industry. I'll be looking for opportunities to appoint those who share my vision for a robust seafood industry and want to secure Alaska's economic future.*

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?

*The State has a role in addressing environmental conditions that might affect our fisheries. Although documenting oceanographic changes in the North Pacific basin may be beyond our scope and jurisdiction, our scientists can collaborate with those doing the work and learn from their results. We also have the opportunity through several different forums to influence federal and international prioritization of research and funding.*

*We have scientists on staff that can focus on drawing the correlations between environment and fish stock health. Even if we can't control the environment, understanding what to expect and how stocks and fishermen will be affected will allow us to make more informed decisions and better adapt to changing conditions.*

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?

*Our rural communities have relied on commercial and subsistence fishing for generations. State loans and grants and infrastructure, are examples of ensuring rural residents have continued access to fishing. Part of it starts with state policy but we should also be using our seats on the North Pacific Council effectively to ensure our residents have access to a variety of species, not just salmon.*

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

*We need to manage our fisheries based on sound science, and I am committed to providing the resources necessary to support excellent management. Natural resource management is clearly an essential and indispensable function of state government. The funding challenge is obviously tied into the larger imperative of balancing the state's budget. My approach is to reduce overall state spending to a sustainable level. I want to focus on the basic priorities of state government, including public safety, schools, roads, and natural resource management. Government spending on programs that are not constitutionally mandated should be scrutinized very carefully to identify savings. We need to eliminate waste and fraud, identify areas where we have duplication of services, privatize certain functions when it's practical, and implement methods for providing essential government services with greater efficiency.*

*On the revenue side, we need to focus on the development of our vast lands and natural resources. This holds the key not only for attaining state revenue goals, but also for providing a healthy tax base for local governments. There is no way to escape the reality that we must generate new wealth in Alaska.*

*Otherwise, some of the taxation proposals amount to nothing more than competing schemes for slicing up an ever-smaller pie. We take money from one group of Alaskans and give it to another group and label it a "fiscal plan." Growing the size of the pie is crucial to avoid this stalemate.*

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's hatchery program has been a mainstay of our coastal economy since it was established in the 1970s. Our program was carefully designed to always put wild stocks first. I think it's fair to acknowledge that there are things we don't know about the ecosystem and environment, and that's why I*

*support the research work that's on-going to learn more about hatchery fish interacting with wild stocks. I see our hatchery program continuing, with ever evolving research so as the state of knowledge changes we stay at the forefront of responsible management.*

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?

*A Governor of one state clearly doesn't set trade policy for the nation, as Governor, I would work with this administration and our congressional delegation on the tariff issue. Although some seafood is subject to new tariffs, other species and product forms have been exempted. We will continue to work with our seafood companies to identify candidates for exemptions. We will work together with our friends in other food production industries to call for sensible trade policy. As Governor, I will use the Office of International Trade and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute to increase our presence in alternate markets.*