Strengthening the working waterfront

Linda Behnken, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
The working waterfront is fishermen and fishing communities
Why is a working waterfront important?

- Important economic driver for the Nation, especially in coastal states.
- Vital voice for conservation and sustainable fisheries.
- Harvesting fish from the sea is integral to the identity of coastal people.
If you aren’t fishing, there isn’t much of a need to own a boat. And as village life ceases to revolve around these vigorous outdoor activities, it will more and more settle on the four prongs of a cultural pitchfork: welfare, TV, junk food, and alcohol.

- Dan O’Neill, A Land Gone Lonesome
Thriving Waterfronts

- A productive resource that supports an economically viable fishing industry and a healthy workforce.

- A regulatory structure that encourages stewardship, diversification, and participation in fisheries by local residents.
Threats to the working waterfront

- Fleet consolidation
- Limiting options and rising access costs
- Inadequate socioeconomic analysis
Fleet Consolidation
Limiting Options: Rising Access Costs

- Diversification can substantially reduce the variability of income and therefore risk from commercial fishing.
- The current fleet of vessels on the US West Coast and in Alaska is less diverse than at any point in the past 30 years.

From: Kasperki and Holland, PNAS 2012
Socioeconomics of Scale

At-sea monitoring: human observers VS. electronic monitoring
Socioeconomic of sectors
Capturing contributions and impacts

Commercial

Charter/for hire
Changing Course
Limit Consolidation

- Rethink “economic efficiency”

- Monitor fleet/community health over time and adjust regulations to meet working waterfront objectives
Promote Diversification and Affordable Access

- Provide management alternatives scaled to meet the needs of community-based fishermen.

- Build fleet and community resilience by promoting diversification.

- Support programs that anchor fishery access in communities.
Strengthen Effect Analysis

- Consider social as well as economic effects.
- Recognize effects differ between large and small fishing operations.
- Develop baseline data and standardized metric to evaluate waterfront industries.
- Assess cumulative impacts to fleet and waterfront.
Conclusion

- Adhere to science-based management
- Rethink economic efficiency and fleet consolidation
- Promote diversification and affordable access
- Strengthen socioeconomic analysis