

**EIGHT ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF POLLOCK RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL BERING SEA**

OPENING STATEMENT

UNITED STATES DELEGATION

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen the United States delegation is honored to host this the Central Bering Sea Convention Eight Annual Meeting. In additions, it is a pleasure to welcome all of you to the beautiful city of Portland.

The focus of our discussion over the next several days will be on the status of the pollock resource in central Bering Sea. Despite ten years of no fishing in the central Bering Sea, pollock are in low abundance. The lack of pollock affects all parties to this Convention economically and socially. The importance of this resource underscores the necessity for continuing collaborative efforts directed at understanding the status of this resource, as well as, factors that effect its abundance.

This past spring all Contracting Parties participated in a workshop held in Busan, South Korea to better understand Aleutian Basin pollock abundance. We belief that the workshop was very successful in promoting the exchange of information and perspectives about this resource. It is vital that these discussions be continued as a means of improving our understanding of pollock dynamics and ecology. Despite current events, the United States remains optimistic that a fishery will once again occur in the central Bering Sea. We must remain patient, resolute and optimistic.

Mr. Chairman, the United States delegation is here to continue our important work to further the objectives of the Convention. I would like to introduce our delegation.

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CLOSING STATEMENT

UNITED STATES DELEGATION

On behalf of the United States Delegation, I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Jim Balsiger for serving as chairperson of the annual conference. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the Rapporteurs and of all parties to the Convention.

The conservation and management of pollock in the Central Bering Sea are of great importance to citizens of all the contracting parties. Wise management is necessary if participating nations are to benefit from this resource. Proper management in turn requires good science. We believe that actions taken in the past and those taken at the current Conference demonstrate the commitment of all parties to the conservation of the Central Bering Sea Pollock resource.

The United States delegation is very encouraged by the continuing dialogue made possible by the Convention. Cooperation on the part of all contracting parties in the conduct of research and management is critical to the conservation of the Central Bering Sea pollock resource.

We would like to express our disappointment that the delegations from China and Poland were not present.

The U.S. delegation thanks the Pacific Marine Fishery Commission staff and in particular Ms. Sharon Perkins for organizing and facilitating this meeting.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone a safe journey home. We look forward to seeing you in Tokyo, Japan.