



# BRISTOL BAY

Regional Seafood Development Association

## **\*\* COVID-19 FLEET ADVISORY #02: Planning Progress & Fleet Responsibility \*\***

April 1, 2020

The Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association (BBRSDA) has assembled a COVID-19 Fleet Team to develop a plan and set of safety protocols for the fleet, in collaboration with processors, local government, tribal organizations, and State government. We have set up a [COVID-19 website](#) where the fleet and residents can find updates and resources about how the COVID-19 crisis, as well as information about response planning as it becomes available. The goals, roles, and roster of our COVID-19 Fleet Team can also be found [here](#). We welcome input on specific concerns and our team can be reached at [covid19team@bbrsda.com](mailto:covid19team@bbrsda.com).

We fully expect to execute a summer salmon season without risking public health, but we recognize that strict safety requirements must be established and enforced. Our primary objective right now is to protect public health, while also recognizing that this fishery economically supports thousands of people and is an important food source for the entire nation. The challenge is to avoid not only a public health crisis, but an economic crisis as well.

### Planning Progress

Our planning efforts are proceeding rapidly with excellent support from virtually everyone we call on. In general, the recommended protocols will be aimed at 1) preventing virus transmission by separating industry from the community and 2) avoiding strain on local medical resources. The expectation is that these recommendations will be translated into requirements by the State of Alaska, assuming the COVID-19 virus still presents a public health threat as we approach the season. For now, the best thing fishermen and residents can do is be vigilant about social distancing and practice careful hygiene to avoid becoming infected. It's likely that those who are sick or those who have contracted the virus will not be able to participate in commercial fishing activities this season.

BBRSDA's COVID-19 Fleet Team is broken out into sub-groups that are developing protocols and identifying funding needs for the following components of the overall plan:

- Fisherman Travel
- Industry Separation & Self-Quarantine
- Tender-Fishermen Interactions
- Fishing Operations & Medical Response
- Economic Relief

While we cannot commit to any specific safety protocols just yet, we are examining the possibility of arranging chartered flights (to keep industry/community separate), pre-flight health screening, keeping nonresident fishermen out of local stores by having provisions delivered, medevac coverage, staying out of local airports, and confining nonresident crews to boatyard areas prior to the season.

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We expect to have a preliminary set of protocols ready by April 10 and appreciate the support and patience from so many fishermen and local residents. Again, these protocols will be designed to protect public health and minimize strain on local medical resources, while providing clear and workable operating procedures. Everyone on our team is taking substantial time away from their families and other commitments to create a benefit for all stakeholders.

### Fleet Responsibility

We advise all fishermen to strictly follow State of Alaska [Health Mandates](#) and respect the wishes of local government and tribal organizations. Fishermen should postpone travel to Bristol Bay until May 1, or later; and should monitor our [COVID-19 website](#) for any updates about new travel restrictions or requirements that may be imposed prior to their departure.

Any nonresident fishermen who are already in Bristol Bay should strictly adhere to [Health Mandate 011: Social Distancing](#), including submitting to a 14 day self-quarantine if you've recently traveled into the Bay (outside of completing essential work). Be aware, that violating Health Mandates carry stiff penalties and could jeopardize your ability to participate in the fishery at all, perhaps even beyond this season. Our communications with government agencies and industry indicate that any fishermen who jeopardize public health or the 2020 season may be subjected to extremely costly consequences.

Any nonresident fishermen thinking about traveling to Bristol Bay prior to May 1 should reconsider, and at a minimum would need to submit a Travel Action Plan and [Travel Declaration Form](#) to the State of Alaska (via email to [alaskadevelopment@alaska.gov](mailto:alaskadevelopment@alaska.gov)). While commercial fishermen are able to travel for essential purposes, nonresident fishermen must still abide by the 14-day self-quarantine requirement. See DCCED's [COVID-19 page](#) for more information. The most prudent course of action for nonresident fishermen is to stay healthy, stay put until at least May 1, prepare your crew for possibly self-quarantining before departure, and begin thinking about what steps you'll take to keep your crew legal and safe during the upcoming season.

This is an unfortunate situation. We are all being called upon to make hard decisions under short timelines and remain calm in the face of great uncertainty. However, Bristol Bay and its commercial seafood industry is filled with remarkable people, the kind of people who know how to solve tough problems and work together. The level of collaboration by leadership from all Bristol Bay stakeholders has been incredible, and we hope residents and fishermen can treat each other with dignity and respect in this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Andy Wink  
BBRSDA Executive Director

Attached: *COVID-19 Fleet Team: Objective & Team Roles*