



## Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

### Communications Committee Meeting

Friday, May 2, 2025

9:30 AM – 12:00 PM Alaska Time

Virtual

**APPROVED MINUTES** (on 9/11/25)

#### **SUMMARY:**

##### **ASMI Team Achievements and Content Creation**

Greg Smith introduced the new team member, Khrystl Brouillette, and highlighted the team's recent achievements. He emphasized the importance of communicating the value of ASMI to key audiences, including government leadership and stakeholders and mentioned the team's focus on improving social media features and increasing synergy across programs.

##### **Outreach Programs Launch**

The team discussed the launch of a new Alaska restaurant outreach program, an extension of the seafood sustains Alaska campaign. The program aims to make Alaska seafood more visible to consumers and visitors within Alaska restaurants and promote the tools and resources developed by ASMI. The team is in the process of compiling a comprehensive contact list.

The team also discussed the success of their Town Hall during Comfish in Kodiak, which improved their perception amongst the fleet. They plan to host more Town Halls in the future, *seeking recommendations on good times and locations to connect with the fleet.*

The team is also working on a pre-season processor send-out project, aiming to build a relationship with fleet managers to deliver ASMI resources to the fleet.

The Pink salmon media package is in the planning phase and expected to be ready with assets in the middle of next fiscal year. This four-phase project is aimed at promoting pink salmon in the domestic market, increasing alignment across programs, and building the general consumer value proposition of affordability and accessibility.

##### **Website Updates**

Upcoming updates to the industry section of the website include a streamlined interface, improved navigation, and a new species hub.

## Edelman's Success With "Always in Season" Campaign

*Greg Smith* introduced *Laura Hoover* and *Elizabeth Mulligan* from Edelman, who joined the team at the beginning of the year. They have been working on the "Always in Season" campaign, which has seen significant results, including 4.2 billion impressions across 34 media placements and 5.2 million impressions across influencer-owned and paid social media. The campaign has been successful in amplifying Alaska seafood's relevance across multiple touchpoints, including earned media, trade media, and social media.

## FY26 Communications Program Budget Recommendation

*Greg Smith* presented the FY26 Communications Program and Consumer PR budgets to the committee. The proposed budget reduces the Communications Program by \$31,500, with a \$40,000 increase in personal services and a \$13,650 increase in contract labor support. The budget also includes a \$10,000 reduction in conference and event sponsorships, a \$40,000 reduction in advertising promotions, and a \$7,000 reduction in printing materials. The Consumer PR budget remains the same as FY25. The budget was approved.

## Plan and Need for Subcommittees

The committee discussed the role and effectiveness of subcommittees. They considered whether to keep them as they are, adjust, or remove them altogether. After discussion, the committee ultimately decided to restructure the subcommittees based on *Greg Smith's* recommendation. There are now 3 subcommittees with 3 members each focused on crisis communications, industry and fleet communications, and sustainability storytelling.

## Strategic Updates and Emerging Challenges Post-AHOD

Since the AHOD meeting, several developments emerged that could impact strategic objectives. *Shannon Ford Ward* observed a rise in negative marketing on social media from lab-grown and farmed fish companies targeting wild-caught fish, often using deceptive imagery. *Nicole Kimball* noted that recent executive orders on seafood competitiveness, along with critical NGO narratives about fisheries management, have created uncertainty, prompting more conservative fishing behavior. The communications team continued supporting the RFM to CSI transition across platforms. McKinley's trade report on tariffs was considered useful but not widely distributed, with discussions ongoing about secure dissemination during a 90-day pause on outputs. ESA scenario planning and messaging were underway, with coordination between ASMI, Edelman, and ADF&G; however, uncertainty remained. *Cassandra Squibb* highlighted a gap between the state department's intent to locally source Alaska seafood and the logistical know-how to implement it, suggesting chef or technical support could help. *Jessie Keplinger* emphasized the strength of the domestic market amid the tariff situation and stressed the importance of reinforcing core Alaska Seafood messaging around health, sustainability, and American identity.

## FULL DETAIL:

- I. Call to Order – 9:30 AM  
Acting Chair *Shannon Ford Ward* called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM.
  
- II. Roll Call
  - a. Committee members present: *Cassandra Squibb, Jessie Keplinger, Julianne Curry, Nicole Kimball, Rachel Kallander, Shannon Ford Ward, Tracy Welch*
    - i. Committee members absent: *Everette Anderson, Hannah Heimbuch*
  - b. Also Present: ASMI Board (*Allan Kimball, Tomi Marsh*), ASMI Staff (*Greg Smith, Tanna Peters, Khrystl Brouillette*) and ASMI Contractors (*Christine Fanning, Kate Constentein, Laura Hoover, Elizabeth Mulligan*).

- III. ASMI Antitrust Statement  
a. *Shannon Ford Ward* read the short ASMI Antitrust statement.
- IV. Approval of Agenda  
a. *Julianne Curry* moved to approve agenda; *Cassandra Squib* seconded. Motion passed – **agenda approved.**
- V. Public Comment  
*Shannon Ford Ward* asked for public comment, no public attendance, no comment received.
- VI. Approval of Previous Minutes  
a. December 4, 2024, All Hands draft minutes  
i. *Tracy Welch* moved to approve December 4, 2024 minutes from All Hands on Deck; *Jessie Keplinger* seconded. Motion passed – **minutes approved.**
- VII. Comms Program Updates – 9:35 AM  
ASMI team provided a presentation highlighting program activities and consumer activities as prioritized by AHOD discussions. Members of ASMI team presented slides in their area of expertise and answered questions after each slide.

***Greg Smith updated on the Communications Program broadly and on efforts to share the value of ASMI:***

- New Communications and Marketing Coordinator Khrystl Brouillette joined ASMI team February 2025. Comes to ASMI with 5+ years of communications industry experience, most recently as Communications Coordinator for a Southeast Alaska nonprofit. Part of her role will be focused on fleet and harvester communications.
- Continue to tell leadership, fleet, and industry the value that ASMI provides via value of ASMI one-pager, industry website update, and ROI analysis of ASMI activities.
- Last 5 years: ASMI has received almost the same amount of funding from Federal grants as received from industry assessments

*Nicole Kimball* – Question: Has ASMI been asked to present to any committees at the legislature this session; is this info going to the governor’s office?

*Greg Smith*- Jeremy has presented to the Senate Finance Subcommittee in the Department of Commerce, House Finance Subcommittee on the Department of Commerce and highlighted recent ROI information and success stories, and have shared value of ASMI report with governor’s office.

*Nicole Kimball* suggests getting ROI info in front of the legislature/governor before this session is over.

***Tanna Peters updated on content creation and collaboration:***

- Fisherman voice series: Social media feature that highlights fisherman as the voices of the ocean with a sustainability story arc with assets collected with versatility in mind. Vertical version performed well on social media; horizontal version was picked up by the domestic team for advertising; b-roll/content collected available to industry.
  - Great success on building upon one shoot’s assets to be used by multiple programs and audiences.

- Culinary/Always in Season collaboration with Edleman and RTC: Experimental ASMI owned content outperformed influencer content (pollock winter bowls; deckhand pie paid spend had very high 15.91% engagement rate).
  - Shoots also build and leverage partnerships – Barnacle Foods engaged for winter shoot, RTC provides additional content like herring, surimi, etc. to make assets more robust.
  - Summer/Fall 2025 – recipes to feature pink salmon, sablefish, surimi, and herring; assets determined via team collaboration.

*Shannon Ford Ward* noted she has seen content go up on social.

*Cassandra Squibb* suggests showing recipes with flexible product forms to make it consumer accessible (i.e. used canned or filet)

*Kate Consenstein* **updated on sustainability storytelling and restaurant outreach:**

- Slinky Pot Adaptability Storytelling: combine sustainability/adaptability story with fisherman’s voices to showcase fishery adaptation and position priority species as abundant and sustainability. Creating a few different slinky pot deliverables – multigenerational fishing family, sablefish culinary, sablefish domestic abundance.
  - Suggestions from committee about similar stories that we can tell to drive home sustainability to the consumer – what sustainability means, and how our fleet and industry collaborates to promote it.
- Restaurant Outreach: piloting program to make Alaska seafood more visible to consumers in Alaska restaurants by promoting tools to Alaska restaurants and chefs.
  - Will send out new window cling, revised anniversary cookbook oriented for food service, and one-pager highlighting existing resources and explaining campaign to recipients.
  - Currently putting together comprehensive contact list – committee members, please reach out to Khrystl or Kate if you have good restaurant contacts that would benefit from this program.
    - Have tapped ATIA, CHARR, Seafood Distributors. Thanks to Cassandra and Jesse for helping us connect with their companies, and FAVCO is also excited to help us partner with Cisco.

*Khrystl Brouillette* **updated on fleet communication tactics:**

- ComFish Town Hall: Great way to connect with fisherman on the ground and give fisherman the chance to connect with each other. 30+ attendees, great participation and generated positive buzz around ASMI. Also collected fisherman emails to add to our monthly marketing email list.
  - Custom fisherman hats were created as a gift for fisherman. Khrystl will mail hats to Shannon and Tracy. Noted that Tracy recommends pink for next year.
  - Plan to do more townhalls in the future – Committee please reach out with recommendations on when/where to host a townhall to engage fisherman.

*Jessie Keplinger* – Question: Has ASMI ever done a town hall during Pacific Marine Expo?

*Greg Smith* – No, we have discussed trying to do one during a less busy time, like lunch or happy hour.

- Pre-Season Processor send out: Identified and prioritized processors to send ASMI resources to. This will help get ASMI resources into the hands of the fleet by building a relationship with fleet/office managers at the plants: resources coming from fleet managers will be received as coming from a trusted messenger and will support the perception of ASMI among fishermen.

**Tanna Peters demoed the Industry and Fleet Hub website update:**

- Streamlined for ease of use (left hand nav, easy newsletter signup, clearer naming conventions).
- Going live in the next few weeks; will be included in Wheel Watch.

*Greg Smith* noted that it takes a lot of time to roll out a website and Tanna is providing excellent management.

**Christine Fanning updated on Pink Salmon Media Package:**

- Key priority to focus on pink salmon with alignment across programs, social synergy, value/affordability and accessibility. Create a product that can be used long term. 4-phases:
  - 1.) Planning – inform the long-term creative position and key messages that can be used beyond consumers and leveraged across other programs.
  - 2.) Assets – Culinary, Harvest, photo/video. Create outputs useful for social media but also for partners. Identify feature harvesters for photo/video assets but also for in-depth PR angles. Work the sustainability angle.
  - 3.) Content creation – making social videos, harvesting, cooking, pr launching and pitching with Edelman.
  - 4.) Leverage – in app adds for connected commerce, creative inform new POS at retail, omnichannel – when people see/hear about pink salmon on insta or on tv, they see the very similar look and feel in the grocery store.
- Hoping to be ready by middle of next fiscal year.

*Cassandra Squibb* – Question: Are we using existing content or can it be deployed in the fall of 2025?

*Greg Smith* – aiming for/planning on fall 2025 release. Working with domestic/retail to look at budget and opportunities, talk with Edelman to work it in, influencer swag, hammering out plan and working on budget. Developing now could be used again in 2027 for another pink harvest year.

*Greg Smith* introduces Edelman team – *Laura Hoover* and *Elizabeth Mulligan*. Noted that even with transition they have not missed a beat, and new perspectives and ideas are giving fresh perspective and energy.

**Laura Hoover and Elizabeth Mulligan shared their credentials and gave update on Always in Season campaign:**

- *Laura Hoover* has 20+ years in comms and public relations with a food and commodity industry focus; understands how to promote without showing bias towards particular brands. Registered dietician. Noted that Greg and team have been very welcoming and an excellent asset in catching Edelman team up to speed with industry, and ASMI campaigns show great success across the board.
- *Elizabeth Mulligan* has 10+ years in PR and comms, lots of work in commodity and food/beverage. Has been asking to be on Alaska Seafood account for a while at Edelman because of the fun, compelling, and exciting nutrition story.

**Highlight of Always in Season successes:**

- Winter PR effort emphasized Alaska seafood as nutrient rich, premium choice to resonate with health conscious audience – 4.2 B+ impressions, 34 placements.
- Lent focused media coverage used same health message during key consumption time – picked up mass market audience and trade audiences.
- Activated owned social and with influencer to inspire everyday home cooking, 5.25M impressions, 51,000 engagements.

This campaign is amplifying AK seafood over multiple touch points, and reinvigorating AK seafood as a trusted premium protein for consumers.

*Greg Smith* gives kudos to Edelman team for being responsive in requests and diligently working with influencers to manage messaging.

VIII. FY26 Budget Discussion – 10:00 AM

a. FY26 Communications Budget

*Greg Smith* presents recommended budget.

**FY 26 Communications Program total budget reduction 2.5% (\$31,500) decrease from FY25.**

**Program operations:** 8% (\$40,500) increase from FY25. Includes staff salaries, benefits, and travel; determined by ASMI Fiscal team. Increase due to legislative adjustments to exempt employee salary schedules and annual merit increases.

**Conference and event sponsorships:** 11.8% (\$10,000) decrease from FY25. Includes trade shows, conferences, providing seafood for events, organizational membership. Reduction achieved by reducing sponsorship levels and/or eliminating non-strategic partnerships.

**Advertising and promo:** 22.2% (\$40,000) decrease from FY 25. Includes airport/other in-state advertising, industry publications, and digital/social ads. Reduction achieved by eliminating non-strategic advertising placements and right-sizing ads for National Fisherman and other commercial fishing publication that have moved online; further alignment of campaigns with Domestic to target key areas of overlap, like pink salmon.

**Stock Photo and Video:** no change recommended (\$70,000). Includes photo and video asset capture.

**Printing and materials:** 10% (7,000) decrease from FY 25. Includes design, printing, and freight for printed materials (including print run costs) a collateral clearinghouse KP, as well as branded swag items. Reduction achieved by slightly reduced printing at KP and small pare back of swag; will synergize with other programs to ensure everyone as what they need to meet their objectives.

**Contract labor support:** 5% (\$13,650) increase from FY25. Includes RTC and Christine Fanning communications. Core contractors to ASMI. No increase since FY23 during a time of increased costs – modest contract increases for both contractors.

**Media Experience Expenses:** 55.6% (\$28,650) decrease from FY26. Includes funds available for media tours, FAM trips, events to generate media and social coverage. Increased significantly in FY25 to offset reduction to consumer PR that year. Consumer PR has media experiences expenses line for \$20,000 – a total of \$48,650 is available for these opportunities. Overall reduction of \$18,650 will require scaled back/reduced media or FAM activities.

**FY26 Consumer PR Budget: Flat budget, no recommended change.**

Line item changes:

\$4,000 moved from domestic event sponsorship to Domestic PR.

\$3,000 increase for Sample Product to ensure capacity for earned coverage.

Media Experiences Expenses increased to \$20,000 by reducing: Social Media Amplification (\$2,000), Paid Influencer (\$5,000), and Paid RD (\$6,000). Paid RD reduced to align with recent trends and increased expertise of Edelman account leads who are both RDs.

Open for Questions/discussion

*Cassandra Squibb* – generally sounds like a solid plan. Happy to see increase in samples, best way to make an impact.

*Shannon Ford Ward* – huge benefit to have two RDs representing us. Marketplace and consumers love credibility, great impact and love that it saves on our budget and improves effectiveness.

*Nicole Kimball* – Question: Will this be same budget if we do get funding from legislature?

*Greg Smith* – Yes, this budget is assuming if we receive money from leg. House has passed ASMI funding in supplemental budget and hearing good signs from senate. Jeremy met with Governor at SENA, which provided great view of industry and improved perspective on ASMI.

*Nicole Kimball* – agrees signs are really good.

*Allen Kimball* – The board will remain flexible under the constraints that they have – will support the effort and energy that is needed to move forward from a communication standpoint.

*Tracy Welch* – Question: What are we missing anything by not attending the NY media event? Did we pick more momentum elsewhere?

*Greg Smith* – NY media event gives the chance for us to meet big names on their turf – like Martha Stewart and Saveur. Potential to add something back at a smaller scale or consider alternating FAM trips and media events. Both types of media experiences are a chance to build relationships, and lead to additional media and social coverage.

*Tracy Welch* motioned to accept the FY26 budget as presented, *Julianne Curry* seconded. Motion *passed*; **Budget is approved.**

IX. Break – 10:50 AM

Reconvene at 11 AM

X. Subcommittees – structure and membership

Discussion of role and effectiveness of subcommittees and how to use them going forward – Should the committee structure be kept and formalized or transition to as-needed/fluid basis. If the committee structure is kept, which ones are needed and who are their members.

Background:

Current subcommittees are crisis communications, in-state campaigns, consumer PR, and fleet and industry engagement. Open Meetings Act requires a committee with more than 3 members to be a public meeting with notification and minutes taken. Communications subcommittees should be 3 or less members to maintain nimbleness in decision making.

*Greg Smith* and team have been reaching out to specific committee members as needed without needing a formal meeting.

**Discussion:**

*Shannon Ford Ward* – likes having preplanned teams to discuss but sometimes can be unwieldy to have a formal meeting. Great to have an opportunity to bounce ideas off of each other, in whatever mechanism that needs to happen.

*Cassandra Squibb* – indifferent to keep/remove committees as long as Greg/team have identified resident experts that they can reach out to. Haven't used the formal committee structure and doesn't see a need for it to move forward.

*Julianne Curry* – need to revitalize the subcommittee structure or just get rid of it as they are not being utilized.

*Shannon Ford Ward* asked for a motion to keep the subcommittee structure and then move to clarify what it would look like and membership. Heard none – asked for a motion to dissolve the subcommittee structure. *Tracy Welch* moved. *Cassandra Squibb* Seconded. Motion passed – continued discussion.

*Tracy Welch* – Greg has really good communication with folks on the committee, and we haven't utilized committee structure – would vote to dissolve.

*Cassandra Squibb* – Structures exist from subcommittees can be deployed for larger issues in brand/other areas: elimination of crisis communication subcommittee would not leave us without a structure to deal with it.

*Greg Smith* shares **recommendations for committees and memberships:**

Keep:

- 1.) Crisis Communication – Nicole Kimball, Cassandra Squibb, Julianne Curry
- 2.) Fisherman and Fleet Communications – Tracy Welch, Hannah Heimbuch, Shannon Ford Ward

New:

- 3.) Sustainability storytelling – Rachel Kallander, Jessie Keplinger, Everette Anderson

Dissolve: In-State Campaign and Consumer PR

#### **Discussion:**

Committee agreed that this is a good approach.

*Greg Smith*- Question: Would It make sense to identify a chair/lead to take charge of committee meeting schedule/usage?

Committee discussed the purpose of the lead and ultimately determined that this is not needed at this time. Keep the structure simple and Greg Smith or ASMI team is expected to convene the committee as needed.

*Nicole Kimball* substitute motion to revise the current committee structure to include three committees (crisis comms, fisherman/fleet industry comms, and sustainability storytelling) with membership as proposed above. *Jessie Keplinger* seconded. Motion passed. All voted in favor.

**Subcommittee structure approved.**

Discussion Question: **Has anything happened since All Hands on Deck that we need to be aware of to better achieve our strategic objectives?**

*Shannon Ford Ward* – Has seen on social media huge amount of content from companies that are farming fish, using negative marketing against wild fish, and deceptively making lab fish look like wild and clean (but they're not!). Good for ASMI staff to be aware of as a trend.

*Nicole Kimball*– EO on seafood competitiveness. Seen articles on negative impacts of fishery structure and regulations. Negative spin from NGOs say that we will overfish and not be sustainable. These eliminations increase uncertainty – means fisherman are MORE conservative with their catch. If scientists have less info to set limits, they may also be more conservative. Doesn't mean more fishing in Alaska, actually means less. Keep this in mind with sustainability message.

*Greg Smith* notes that EO info is not currently folded into our in-state messaging but could be useful to see where/when we could incorporate some of that messaging.

Communications program is helping to amplify transition from RFM to CSI via website, industry FB, and in weekly/monthly updates.

Information on Tariffs - McKinley developed a trade situation report, it's useful but maybe not shared as widely as it should be, need to figure out how to distribute in a secure broad way. With current state, no feasible way to make daily changes and have it still be accessible - Need to ask Jeremy what the plan is now that there's a 90-day broad pause on outputs. Need to figure out desired product. *Greg Smith* to provide future updates.

ESA Update – Four plans for different scenarios – no listing, 1 stock, more than 1 stock, all stocks. Edleman worked up messaging around key statement, and ASMI in touch with ADF&G. Spoke with commissioner in Kodiak and they said they just don't know what will happen yet. *Greg Smith* to engage crisis comms committee to look at plans and provide feedback.

*Cassandra Squibb* – More attention on local sourcing of Alaska products at the state department, but a disconnect between wanting to do it, putting out a bit, and actually doing it. Larger entities haven't cooked fish in a long time and may need technical assistance to figure out how to cook fish well. Perhaps via chef council or tap into ASMI technical? Sales are being made but more support needed for execution.

*Jessie Keplinger* – Domestic market is great for us right now in tariff landscape. Should focus on capitalizing in this market and home in on trends. Important to emphasize AK Seafood as healthy source of protein, sustainable, traceable, American, regional – all of our standard messaging is really useful right now and subtly play up our American connection/pride.

XII. Old Business and Good of the Order

*Shannon Ford Ward* – thanked everyone for attending.

XIII. Adjourn

*Tracy Welch* motion to adjourn, *Cassandra Squibb* seconded. Motion Passes. **Meeting Adjourned at 12:01 p.m.**