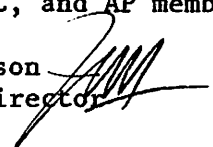


M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, SSC, and AP members

FROM: Jim H. Branson   
Executive Director

DATE: September 18, 1981

SUBJECT: Halibut Limited Entry, report on Seattle meeting.

*ACTION REQUIRED*

*Discussion by the Council of the proposed halibut/longline fishery objectives identified by the workgroup.*

BACKGROUND

On August 27 and 28, Council members Bevan, Collinsworth, Lokken and Tillion met with SSC members Marasco, Langdon and Council staff member Richardson to identify and discuss objectives for the halibut/longline fishery as directed at the July meeting.

A summary of this meeting will be presented. The objectives should be discussed by Council members. If some agreement is reached, the Council may wish to instigate a detailed investigation of the long-term costs and benefits of several alternative programs to help attain the objectives.

### Halibut/Hook and Line Limited Entry

The Council received a report at the July meeting in Homer summarizing the recommendations made by a group of fishery scientists which met in May to determine the desirability and feasibility of some sort of limited entry scheme for the halibut fishery off Alaska. The report recommended that some type of properly designed and implemented limited entry program was desirable. The present level of fishing effort in the halibut fishery has led to both biological and economic problems. It was stressed by the group that there was no easy or obvious solution to the problems of the halibut fishery, but they felt the approach which would provide the greatest overall benefits would be the establishment of individual fishermen's quotas. The concept was discussed in the paper they presented to the Council.

In July, the Council agreed that limited entry for the halibut fishery was desirable and should be further investigated. As an initial step, the Council chairman appointed a workgroup to meet to discuss and identify objectives for the halibut fishery. The group appointed was: Council members - Bevan, Collinsworth, Demmert, Lokken and Tillion; SSC members - Langdon and Marasco; and Council staff member - Richardson. The appointed workgroup met in Seattle at the end of August.

The workgroup discussed the following choices for limited entry in preparation for the identification of objectives. The choices were:

- (1) the status quo--do nothing which would probably ultimately result in reduction of the halibut fishery to an incidental catch in other fisheries;
- (2) a limited entry program for the halibut fishery; or
- (3) a limited entry program for a hook and line fleet fishing for halibut and other species.

The consensus of the Council workgroup was that the status quo of the halibut fishery was unacceptable. They also felt that due to the present level of effort in the fishery, and the fact that many of the possible target species of the longline fleet are to some extent biologically interrelated, it is more appropriate for the Council to consider a limited hook and line fleet rather than concentrate only on the halibut fishery.

The composition of the fleet in a limited hook and line fishery depends on the management objectives. Those identified by the Council workshop are as follows:

#### Objectives

- (1) Distribute the hook and line fishery, both in time and space to ensure conservation of the resource.
- (2) Avoid further overcapitalization, thus encouraging development of an economically viable and efficient year-round multispecies domestic

hook and line fishery that:

- (a) is made up of owner/operator rights holders; and
  - (b) makes it possible for fishermen to earn a major share of their income from hook and line fishing.
- (3) Make certain cost of administration and enforcement while effective are not excessive relative to the benefits of the program.
  - (4) The program would not preclude the extraction of rents or royalties from the fishery at some point in the future.
  - (5) Minimize adverse biological impacts of the program on related fisheries.
  - (6) Insures that no particular entity acquires excessive control of rights to participate in a fishery.
  - (7) Attempt to be compatible with IPHC objectives.
  - (8) Minimize disruption of the present fleet by using past performance to distribute initial rights.
  - (9) Use the market to transfer fishing rights after initial distribution.

If the Council agrees and adopts a set of objectives for the hook and line fishery, the next step will be to evaluate and analyze the long term benefits and costs of specific alternatives for a limited entry program.

The workgroup felt that the individual fishermen's quota system recommended at the May workshop be one of the alternatives for further evaluation. Others may be added according to the wishes of the Council members. The SSC subgroup for halibut and the Council staff are prepared to develop a specific RFP upon a request by the Council members.