

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, AP and SSC Members
FROM: Jim H. Branson
Executive Director
DATE: January 15, 1988
SUBJECT: Halibut Management

ACTION REQUIRED

Give the Halibut Commission your opinion of the trip limits proposed by the Halibut Commission staff. Are they allocative or non-allocative.

BACKGROUND

The staff of the International Pacific Halibut Commission is proposing several options for management of the fishery in 1988. Among them are trip limits by vessel size on all boats fishing Areas 2C, 3A and 3B (Gulf of Alaska). These proposals are outlined in item C-8(a). Four fishermen's associations have written to the Halibut Commission (item C-8(b)) saying that they view such proposals as clear economic allocations within the U.S. commercial user group and that they believe IPHC cannot legally do so, that instead they should be done by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

NMFS and NOAA in Washington, DC are concerned enough about the issue that they asked the Regional Director to ask the Council to agenda the subject and give NMFS an opinion on the IPHC staff proposals.

The question is are the IPHC staff proposals for trip limits sufficiently allocative to individuals, areas or groups to fall under the recently developed procedure for halibut regulations that gives the Council the power to make allocative regulations and the IPHC the power to make all allocations having to do with conservation and management of the resource and fishery per se.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE ALASKAN HALIBUT FISHERY IN 1988

by

IPHC Staff

Introduction

In recent years, the halibut fishery in the Gulf of Alaska (Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B) has taken the allowable catch limit in a few days even though recent annual catches are near historical highs, and are probably near Maximum Sustained Yield. For comparison, the 1987 catch limit of about 50 million pounds was taken in less than 3 fishing days whereas over 40 days were required to take annual catch limits of less than 20 million pounds in the late 1970's. A similar situation is also occurring in the Bering Sea (Area 4) where larger catch limits are being taken in fewer fishing days.

The short seasons are a result of increased fishing effort and higher catch rates. Catch rates have increased due to higher abundance and improved fishing techniques. New vessels have entered the halibut fishery because of the high catch rates and relatively high prices in recent years. The short intense fishery has created the following management problems:

- (1) It is no longer possible to closely attain the catch limit with current management practices because of the high daily catch rates. For example, 27 millions pounds were landed in Area 3A in two 24-hour fishing periods during 1987, 4 million pounds below the 31 million pound catch limit. The risk of greatly over or under fishing is high unless other restrictions are implemented.
- (2) Several million pounds of halibut are wasted annually as a result of lost or abandoned gear, poor handling of juvenile halibut below the size limit, and prospecting prior to each fishing period. Although some wastage is inevitable in any fishery, the short intense fishing periods have increased the problem in the present halibut fishery. The short fishing periods along with high catch rates create an incentive to set more gear than can be hauled and haul gear as fast as possible without regard to careful handling of juvenile halibut. Multiple short seasons present more opportunity for wastage than do fewer seasons.
- (3) There are an increasing number of reports of fishing before and after an opening, suggesting that the one or two day seasons create greater enforcement problems. The Staff is concerned that violations will become increasingly wide-spread unless enforcement effort is increased or alternative restrictions are implemented.
- (4) Improper handling occurring during very intense fishing periods reduces the quality of halibut landed.
- (5) The short fishing periods create potential safety problems because of economic pressure to fish during poor weather conditions and haul as much gear as possible.

OPTIONS-1988

The staff developed three options for the 1988 fishery in Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B. These options, however, could also be applied to other areas. The primary objective of each option is to attain the catch limit in each area with a minimum risk of exceeding it. However, other objectives including reduced wastage and enforcement problems, improving quality and safety were considered. The staff also examined the advantages and disadvantages of hold-inspections in a fourth option. Hold-inspections, however, are only intended to reduce the problem of early or late fishing, and do not address the management problems discussed above. Therefore, the staff does not consider hold-inspections to be a comprehensive option. A brief description of the options follows:

OPTION I. Status quo management with a trip limit and pre-registration on the last fishing period to assure reaching the catch limit. The trip limit would be determined based on the amount of catch limit remaining and could vary with vessel size. The catch limit in areas 2C and 3A may be attained in less than 3 fishing days in 1988. An additional fishing day may be required to take the catch limit in Area 3B, but a trip limit may be needed to avoid exceeding the catch limit. The season could be scheduled as follows:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>FIRST PERIOD</u>	<u>SECOND PERIOD*</u>
2C, 3A, 3B	1 DAY IN MAY	2 DAYS OR LESS IN SEPTEMBER

*A trip limit would be required on the last opening in order to reach the catch limit. A third period should be scheduled to allow for the possibility of not taking the catch limit in the first two periods.

The longer but reduced number of fishing periods will reduce the opportunity for violations and wastage. The lack of any restrictions on landings during the first fishing period provides maximum opportunity for fisherman to make large catches. However, landings would be concentrated over very short time periods, reducing the amount of fresh fish available to the market. Freezing capacity could also be a problem.

The trip limit on the last opening addresses the problem of attaining the catch limit, but does not solve the other problems.

OPTION II. Exclusive registration for Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B combined with a trip limit during the final opening. Areas 2A and some or all of the subareas in Area 4 could also be included. With exclusive registration, fishermen would select from available areas, and be ineligible to fish other areas. An example of this option is as follows:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>FIRST PERIOD</u>	<u>SECOND PERIOD</u>	<u>THIRD PERIOD*</u>
2C	1 DAY IN EARLY MAY	1 DAY IN EARLY JUNE	1 DAY IN EARLY SEPT.
3A	1 DAY IN MID-MAY	1 DAY IN MID-JUNE	1 DAY IN MID-SEPT.
3B	1 DAY IN LATE MAY	1 DAY IN LATE JUNE	1 DAY IN LATE AUG.

*A trip limit and pre-registration might be required on the last opening to reach the catch limit in each area.

The chief advantage of this option is that each area could be opened at a different time without the entire fleet moving from area to area. Thus, landings could be spread over a longer period allowing for more fresh fish to reach the market. Another advantage is that the catch limit can be more precisely attained, particularly in Areas 3A and 3B, because of less effort in each area. There is also no restriction on trip size except during the final fishing period. The actual number of time periods and days per period could be adjusted when fleet size is known for the various areas. The number of vessels that would register for Area 3B may be small relative to the catch limit and this could result in a long season in Area 3B. The one-day fishing periods and the lack of any control on catch rates are the chief disadvantages of this option; wastage, quality, enforcement and safety problems would probably not be significantly improved under this option.

OPTION III. Trip limits for all fishing periods in Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B.

The following example provides for trip limits by vessel tonnage class and allows three 2-day fishing periods in Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B.

<u>AREA</u>	<u>VESSEL CLASS</u>	<u>FIRST PERIOD</u> 2-DAYS MAY	<u>SECOND PERIOD</u> 2-DAYS JUNE	<u>THIRD PERIOD</u> 2-DAYS SEPT.
2C	0- 9	5,000 LBS	5,000 LBS	TO BE DETERMINED
	10-19	10,000 LBS	10,000 LBS	TO BE DETERMINED
	20+	20,000 LBS	20,000 LBS	TO BE DETERMINED
3A/ 3B*	0- 9	10,000 LBS	10,000 LBS	TO BE DETERMINED
	10-19	20,000 LBS	20,000 LBS	TO BE DETERMINED
	20+	40,000 LBS	40,000 LBS	TO BE DETERMINED

*A fourth period for Area 3B may be needed if most of the effort is concentrated in Area 3A

The primary advantage of this option is that it will spread landings over at least three fishing periods. Additional fishing periods could be provided by reducing the trip limit. Other advantages include reduced wastage, improved quality because of the lower catch rate, and increased safety. There is also a greater opportunity to bring in other species during the openings. The chief disadvantage and major complaint from fishermen is that it penalizes the most productive fisherman. Substantial enforcement effort would be required on-shore to prevent abuse of the trip limits. However, less enforcement would be required at sea.

OPTION IV. Hold inspections with check-in and check-out before and after each opening.

If hold-inspections were required within 48 hours of a fishing period, flagrant early fishing could be greatly reduced. However, even with a check-out procedure, it would be very difficult to eliminate fishing after a fishing period unless a vessel was required to unload or seal the fish hold. The major disadvantage of hold-inspections is the cost, both to enforcement agencies and to the fleet. There were over 6000 halibut licenses issued in 1987. To conduct a hold-inspection on this number of vessels within a 48-hour period spread over at least 10 ports would not be practical. Further, requiring a check-in within 48 hours would be a burden on the fleet, particularly for vessels that planned on fishing a long distance from port. Delays in obtaining an inspection could cause problems even for vessels fishing near port.

Even if logistical problems associated with hold-inspections could be overcome, this option, by itself, does nothing to reduce the problems of wastage, quality, safety and attaining the catch limit.

CONCLUSION

The first three options involve a trade-off between allowing maximum freedom for individual vessels to land as much fish as possible in any area during a fishing period against mitigating the management problems of wastage, enforcement, quality, safety, and attaining the catch limit. Option I provides the maximum freedom to the fleet, but only minimum improvements in the management problems. Options II and III are more restrictive to the fleet but go further in reducing the management problems. Option IV only addresses the enforcement problem, and is probably not feasible from a logistic standpoint.

These options are not mutually exclusive and could be combined to obtain different results. For example, area registration could be combined with trip limits to spread landings over a longer period or to allow for larger trip limits.

KODIAK LONGLINE VESSEL OWNERS ASSOCIATION
KODIAK LONGLINERS ASSOCIATION
UNITED FISHERMAN'S MARKETING ASSOCIATION
ALASKA DRAGGERS ASSOCIATION
KODIAK, ALASKA 99615

December 17, 1987

Donald A. McCaughran
Executive Director
INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION
P. O. Box 95009
Seattle, Washington 98145-2009

RE: Vessel Trip Limits

Dear Mr. McCaughran,

We wish to take this opportunity to address a matter of great concern for our organizations and many others involved in the Alaskan halibut fishery. This is the issue of the IPHC implementing vessel trip limits as a method of regulating the overall harvest of the 1988 halibut quota in Alaska.

We view such proposals as clear economic allocations of a fisheries resource within the U.S. commercial user group. We believe that the IPHC has no legal or historical mandate by which to proceed in such issues. We are certain you are well aware that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, a U.S. governmental entity, has complete jurisdiction over any socio-economic and allocative decisions affecting the halibut fishery in Alaska. The use of trip limits as a management tool, to obtain additional fishing time at the end of the season without overages in regards to quotas, is within the traditional biological and regulatory responsibility of the IPHC. However, the practice of an international agency establishing continuous economic limits among participants within a U.S. industry is certainly not within the IPHC's legal charge.

For the IPHC to promote the concept of trip limits as an allocation based upon the principal of conservation is an interesting theory, but is greatly dwarfed by the obvious socio-economic consequences of such a plan upon the U.S. fleet. We suggest that the IPHC follow the established procedures that we ourselves are bound by and go through the North Pacific Fishery Management Council process in seeking any major changes of an allocative nature in the Alaska halibut fishery. Surely to change overnight 90 years of open and competitive fishing within the commercial sector of the industry to a system where catch rates and vessel trip limits are decided by a non-U.S. governmental entity constitutes a very significant change that needs to be properly and legally explored by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

As Executive Director of the IPHC, we hope that you fully consider the aforementioned points in the next month before the annual meeting of January 25-27 in Sitka. We suggest the IPHC, its staff, commissioners, and conference board take extreme caution in proceeding in a direction that could cause legal

December 16, 1987

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problems in the improper setting of regulations for the 1988 Alaska halibut season. If legal actions become necessary to insure our rights, we are confident that other fishermen and fishing organizations would lend support to the 100 plus vessels throughout the State of Alaska and Pacific Northwest whose support we presently have concerning this matter.

We would like to thank you for your attention to our concerns. We will continue to do everything possible in the future to help the IPHC improve its role as the scientific and biological trustee of the halibut resource in the North Pacific. We look forward to seeing you at the Sitka meeting in January.

Sincerely,

Nicholson Delaney

Nicholson Delaney

KODIAK LONGLINE VESSEL OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Oliver Holm

Oliver N. Holm

KODIAK LONGLINERS ASSOCIATION

Jeff Stephens

Jeff R. Stephens

UNITED FISHERMAN'S MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Al Burch

Alvin Burch

ALASKA DRAGGERS ASSOCIATION

cc: Richard Eliason
Garnet E. Jones
Donald McLeod
Robert McVey
George Wade
Gary T. Williamson
Petersburg Vessel Owners
Kake Vessel Owners
Alaska Trollers Association
ALFA
Association of Alaska Halibut Fishermen
North Pacific Vessel Owners
Peninsula Marketing Association
Russian American Fishermen
Atka Fishermen's Association
Toksook Bay Fishermen's Association
Central Bering Sea
St. George Tanaq Corporation
Bristol Bay Halibut Coop.
Newport Oregon Longliners
Seattle Vessel Owners Association
Seattle D.S.F.U.

Jay Cherry

**HALIBUT ASSOCIATION****OF NORTH AMERICA**

2208 N.W. MARKET STREET, #311
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98107
PHONE 206-784-8317

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
WILLIAM S. GILBERT

VICE PRESIDENT
BARRY J. McMILLAN
J.S. McMillan Fisheries Limited

TREASURER
RICHARD C. KELLY
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.

SECRETARY Dr. Donald McCaughran

GEORGE A. DODMAN, Director
British Columbia Packers Limited
International Pacific Halibut Commission

TRUSTEES P.O. Box 95009
Seattle, Washington 98145-2009

ALASKA
CLIFFORD R. PHILLIPS
C.C. Phillips & Son, Inc.
MARK S. SANDVIK, Dear Don:
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.

THOMAS E. THOMPSON
Sitka Sound Seafoods, Inc. As a result of our HANA meeting today we have the following recommendations for the Commission's upcoming meeting in Sitka, Alaska.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
GEORGE A. DODMAN
British Columbia Packers Limited
JIM KLOSCHINSKY
Lions Gate Fisheries Limited
DONALD McLEOD
The Canadian Fishing Company Ltd.

TOTAL QUOTA

Should be set based upon current biological data supporting long term health of the resource.

WASHINGTON
CARL D.F. JENSEN, JR.
Pacific Alaska Seafoods, Inc.
WILLIAM J. KELLIHER
Kelliher Fish Company
MARK BRASHEM
Booth Fisheries Corporation

OPENING DATES

Being sensitive to availability of freezing capacity we recommend following the staffs dates with the exception of that 2C should have a June opening coinciding with other Alaska areas.

MEMBERS
ALASKA
Drapnet Fisheries Co. Inc.
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.
Pollan Cold Storage Company
Peterburg Fisheries
E.C. Phillips & Son, Inc.
Steward Fisheries
Sitka Sound Seafoods, Inc.
Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.
Wrangell Fisheries, Inc.

QUALITY

We agree with the Commission's concerns about quality and strongly recommend that fish:

- BRITISH COLUMBIA**
Billingsgate Fish Limited
British Columbia Packers Limited
The Canadian Fishing Company Limited
Fishermen's Federation, Inc.
Lions Gate Fisheries Limited
J.S. McMillan Fisheries Limited
Ocean Fisheries Limited
Seafood Products Company
Seaport Crown Fish Co. Ltd.
Vancouver Shell Fish and Fish Co. Ltd.
- OREGON**
Astoria Seafood Company
- WASHINGTON**
Alaska Pacific Seafoods
Booth Fisheries Corporation
Bornstein Seafoods, Inc.
Dory Seafoods, Inc.
Kelliher Fish Company
Northern Products Corporation
Pacific Alaska Seafoods, Inc.
Seafood Producers Cooperative
Seattle Seafoods, Inc.
Trident Seafoods Corporation
Washington Fish and Seafood Company
Windjammer Seafoods, Inc.
- (a) Must be dressed upon catching.
 - (b) Properly iced/chilled to 35° - 36° F in temperature and not be delivered in the round.
 - (c) Receiving a fishing license should be made contingent upon following the above.

CATCH MANAGEMENT

Recognizing current management problems we suggest that if trip limits are to be established that they should somehow contain historic divisions of catch between various vessel classes.



HALIBUT ASSOCIATION

OF NORTH AMERICA

7208 N.W. MARKET STREET, #311
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98107
PHONE 206-784-8317

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PRESIDENT
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VICE PRESIDENT
BARRY J. McMILLAN

J.S. McMillan Fisheries Ltd. in Donald McCaughran: 1/20/88

TREASURER
RICHARD O. KELLY
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.

SECRETARY
GEORGE A. DODMAN
British Columbia Packers Limited

(Page 2)

FRESH MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

TRUSTEES

ALASKA

CLIFFORD R. PHILLIPS should not be around major Holidays, USA and Canadian openings should not be concurrent and when possible fishing should start on Mondays.

E.C. Phillips & Son, Inc.
MARK S. SANDVIK
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.

THOMAS E. THOMPSON
Sitka Sound Seafoods, Inc.

ENFORCEMENT

BRITISH COLUMBIA

GEORGE A. DODMAN We recommend improved surveillance to maintain strict adherence to fishing seasons, areas, quotas and other Commission regulations.
British Columbia Packers Limited
JIM KLOSCHINSKY
Lions Gate Fisheries Commission
DONALD McLEOD
The Canadian Fishing Company Ltd.

WASHINGTON

CARL D. J. NICHOLS copy of this as well as appropriate staff, conference board readers and any other interested parties. Thank you for your help in this regard.
Pacific Alaska Seafoods
WILLIAM J. KEILHART
Kullihar Fish Company

MAHK BRASHEM
North Fisheries Corporation

Mr. Jay Cherrier of Dragnet Fisheries will be our Association's official representative in Sitka, Alaska assisted by other member companies whom might be in attendance.

MEMBERS

ALASKA

Dragnet Fisheries Co. Inc.
Icicle Seafoods, Inc.
Pelican Cold Storage Company
Petersburg Fisheries
E.C. Phillips & Son, Inc.
Seward Fisheries
Sitka Sound Seafoods, Inc.
Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.
Wrangell Fisheries, Inc.

We appreciate the chance to give our recommendations.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Billingstain Fish Limited
British Columbia Packers Limited
The Canadian Fishing Company Limited
Fishermen's Federation, Inc.
Lions Gate Fisheries Limited
J.S. McMillan Fisheries Limited
Ocean Fisheries Limited
Seafood Products Company
Seward Crown Fish Co. Ltd.
Vancouver Shell Fish and Fish Co. Ltd.

OREGON

Asinia Seafood Company

WASHINGTON

Alaska Pacific Seafoods
Douth Fisheries Corporation
Hornstein Seafoods, Inc.
Dory Seafoods, Inc.
Kullihar Fish Company
Northern Products Corporation
Pacific Alaska Seafoods, Inc.
Seafood Producers Cooperative
Seattle Seafoods, Inc.
Trident Seafoods Corporation
Westinghouse Fish and Oyster Company
Windjammer Seafoods, Inc.

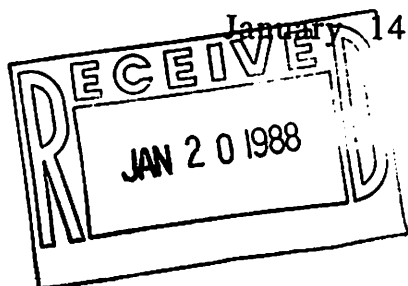
Sincerely,

Ralph G. Hoard
Secretary



MARINE RESOURCES COMPANY INTERNATIONAL
A Washington Partnership

January 14, 1988



Dr. William E. Evans
Assistant Administration for Fisheries - F
NOAA/NMFS
Room 1011 Universal South Bldg.
1825 Connecticut Ave N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20235

Dear Bill:

I am writing to express my company's complete support of the views expressed in the Fishing Vessel Owner's Association's letter to you of December 18 regarding halibut allocation in the Bering Sea.

The question of allocation among U.S. fishermen of fishery resources from the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone is both complex and contentious. To its credit, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has begun a study of the broader but encompassing problem of overcapitalization in an industry that is currently based on a common property resource. However, the council's recent decision to allocate a portion of that resource to "local fishermen" (i.e., residents of Nelson Island) seems both premature and, because of the lack of any documented justification, contrary to at least one of the MFCMA's National Standards.

The precedent this council action establishes is most troubling -- once started, where does the partitioning of the U.S. E.E.Z. into special interest enclaves end?

U.S.A.
192 Nickerson
Suite 307
Seattle, WA 98109
Tel: (206) 285-6424
Telex: 277115 MRC UR
FAX: (206) 282-9414

Mail Pouch 704
Dutch Harbor, AK 99692
Tel: (907) 581-1886

U.S.S.R.
National Hotel
Suite 450
Moscow
Tel: 2203-5466
Telex: 413 052 SOVAM

Verkhne Morskaya
dom 134
Nakhodka 17
Primorski Krai
Tel: 25-290
Telex: 213818 MIRK SU

We urge you to reject that action and, if a specific stop-gap measure for Area 4E Halibut is necessary prior to completion of the council's broader study, that the NPFMC Advisory Panel's alternative be relied upon.

Sincerely yours,

Bert Larkings

H. A. Larkings
Vice President and
General Manager

HAL/bk

INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

Halibut Bycatch in the DAP Sablefish fishery

November 5, 1987

Alverson

I. Bycatch Rates

Rates of halibut incidence in the foreign longline fishery in the Gulf of Alaska have been collected by the NMFS Observer Program and by ADF&G for the DAP longline fishery in the Kodiak region. The average halibut incidence (no. per mt) from the 1977-1984 foreign longline fishery operating at depths greater than 500 m (about 275 fathoms) is shown below by month and region:

Region	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Shumagin	1.609	-	3.269	0.186	4.480	0.657
Chirikof	0.000	-	1.269	0.446	0.117	0.000
Kodiak	0.000	17.910	4.980	0.176	0.105	0.000
Yakutat	0.000	-	0.536	0.880	3.038	0.068
Southeast	-	-	-	-	-	-

Region	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Shumagin	0.000	0.000	0.037	0.350	0.531	11.614
Chirikof	0.315	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.752	6.073
Kodiak	0.000	0.022	0.000	1.401	1.064	8.273
Yakutat	0.235	0.000	0.055	2.351	1.393	2.815
Southeast	-	-	0.000	0.000	-	-

Incidence rates are generally highest from October through May and lowest from June through September. This is consistent with known migration patterns of halibut: to deep water (greater than 150 fathoms) in November-March for spawning and up into shallow water (less than 125 fathoms) for feeding during May-September. The foreign fishery data shown above indicate an average incidence over all regions and months of 1.7 halibut per mt of sablefish.

Collection of bycatch data from the DAP longline fishery has only recently been initiated. Observations from the sablefish fishery are limited to those taken in the Kodiak region from ② vessels during June-August, 1984 and ③ vessels during September, 1986-March, 1987. These data are as follows:

Month/Year	Halibut Incidence (no. per mt)
6-8/84	0.400
9/86-3/87	20.600

Source

ADF&G Informational Leaflet #257
ADF&G News Release - May 27, 1987

Dr. William E. Evans
January 13, 1988
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We strongly urge you to send this action back to the Council and seek an alternate solution to the problem.

Sincerely yours,

MIDWATER TRAWLERS COOPERATIVE



Steven E. Hughes
Technical Advisor

Copies: Senator Daniel Evans
Senator Bob Packwood
Senator Brock Adams
Senator Mark Hatfield
Congressman Mike Lowry
Congressman John Miller
Congressman Les AuCoin
MTC President Barry Fisher
MTC Vice President Fred Yeck
James Campbell, NPFMC Chairman