



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number: Crab 13-006

Agenda Date 12/9/2013

Agenda Number: C-9

Eric Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

BSAI Crab Cooperative Reports; Crew Provisions, etc.

ESTIMATED TIME:

6 hours (all Fishing Cooperative Issues)

ACTION REQUIRED:

Receive cooperative reports.

BACKGROUND:

The Congressional-lead rationalization of the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands (BSAI) crab fishery in 2005 was a response to significant issues in crew safety, resource conservation, bycatch management and economic instability for competing parties of the previous derby-style fishery. Despite the improvements in most of these areas, criticisms have been raised by some stakeholders as a result of rationalization. The program's 5-year review highlighted these issues, which included the social and economic concerns of:

- (1) the transfer of quota share (QS) among non-active participants;
- (2) the high lease rates for individual fishing quota (IFQ);
- (3) the amount of the lease rate that is charged against crew compensation;
- (4) and a decline in the percent of gross vessel revenue attributed to crew compensation.

These concerns prompted the Council to request the presentation of two analyses at the February 2013 meeting. The first analysis was an initial review of a Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibly Act analysis (RIR/IRFA) evaluating the Council's management options for promoting transfers of QS to those who have maintained active participation in that fishery. The second was a discussion paper that considered addressing lease rates, crew compensation, and active participation through flexible cooperative management. The discussion paper suggested the utility of an annual cooperative report in understanding cooperatives' self-management of these issues.

After hearing these presentations from Council staff and testimony from stakeholders, the Council chose no immediate regulatory action. Instead the Council chose to send a letter to each of the crab cooperatives requesting that they voluntarily describe measures the cooperative is taking to address these issues. The letter called for any relevant information or data to support their members' efforts and a description of the level of participation in these efforts. It informed the BSAI crab cooperatives that these reports would determine if the Council would attempt to take regulatory action in the future. These voluntary reports were intended to be a reoccurring submission in October of each year.

This is the first round of reports from the crab cooperatives. As a reference to the Council, cooperatives and the public, tables of Economic Data Reporting (EDR) information have been updated from the previous discussion paper (**Item C9a**). Additionally, the Alaska Fisheries Science Center has provided a snapshot of preliminary EDR information on the newly redefined lease rate variable (**Item C9b**).