

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Chris Oliver *DO for*
Executive Director

DATE: March 26, 2013

SUBJECT: Groundfish issues – BSAI flatfish specifications flexibility

ESTIMATED TIME 6 HOURS (All C-2 a, b items)

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) Final action on BSAI flatfish specifications flexibility

BACKGROUND

For Council review is an analysis for a proposed action that would allocate the ABC surplus (i.e., the difference between acceptable biological catch (ABC) and total allowable catch (TAC)) for flathead sole, rock sole, and/or yellowfin sole, among the Amendment 80 cooperatives and CDQ groups, using the same formulas that are used in the annual harvest specifications process. These entities would be able to exchange their quota share of one of the three species (flathead sole, rock sole, and/or yellowfin sole) for an equivalent amount of their allocation of the ABC surplus for another (flathead sole, rock sole, and/or yellowfin sole). The approach is intended to increase the opportunity for maximizing the harvest of these species, while ensuring that the overall 2 million mt optimum yield, and ABCs for each individual species, are not exceeded. The analysis also includes options to restrict flexibility in the exchange of yellowfin sole, if the analysis shows that there is a potential negative impact of the approach on users of yellowfin sole in the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands trawl limited access sector.

The analysis was distributed to the Council in early March. At initial review in February 2013, the Council added an additional alternative (Alternative 3), which is evaluated in the March draft of the analysis. Staff also noted, at initial review, that the implementation of Alternatives 2 and 3 for CDQ groups needed to be further articulated, which is also addressed. These are the primary substantive changes that are included in the March draft, which also includes other clarifications and additional discussion of prohibited species catch usage, as requested at initial review. The executive summary is attached as Item C-2(a)(1). At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to take final action on this issue.