



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:Catch 14-017

Agenda Date12/8/2014

Agenda Number:C7

Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:
Vessel IFQ Cap Discussion Paper

ESTIMATED TIME:
2 hours

ACTION REQUIRED:
Review discussion paper and take action as necessary.

BACKGROUND:
Beginning with a sablefish IFQ proposal in 2009, the Council has heard from some stakeholders that the caps on the amount of IFQ species one vessel can harvest in a season, vessel IFQ caps, are a constraining factor in successfully harvesting a QS holder's IFQ. The original proposal, (which was modified from focusing on "QS use caps" to "vessel IFQ caps") requested the Council raise the vessel IFQ cap specifically for sablefish A shares. This proposal was later joined by a request that the Council consider creating a vessel IFQ cap floor for halibut IFQ; a threshold which the vessel IFQ cap would not fall below in the event of a very low halibut catch limit.

In February 2014, the Council requested a "spreadsheet" summary of issues raised by these two proposals as well some specific background information to assist in scoping the nature and extent if the issues. Based on the type of qualitative and quantitative information requested, Council staff determined that a discussion paper would provide a more comprehensive overview of the issues.

The discussion paper describes the potential issues around vessel IFQ caps for the sablefish IFQ fishery as well as the halibut IFQ. Concerned stakeholders in the sablefish IFQ fishery have primarily pointed to a historical trend of sablefish IFQ in the BS and AI left unharvested, stating that the vessel IFQ cap is one responsible factor. While halibut IFQ is often harvested to its full potential in most areas, stakeholders concern in this fishery has propagated because of the rapidly declining vessel IFQ cap, as a result of the declining halibut IFQ. Some stakeholders in this fishery are reacting to impacts they have felt in the last one or two years, while other halibut IFQ stakeholders may be expressing concern for vessel IFQ cap they anticipate becoming a burden in the future.

This discussion paper examines several Council decision points around scope of action if the Council determines any action is warranted. Based on these two proposals, information provided in the discussion paper, and other public testimony, the Council may consider focusing action to certain areas or quota share categories.