

Public Testimony

Agenda C-4 - Int'l Fisheries

Bob Morgan, American Factory Trawlers. AFTA vessels were fishing in donut. There were fourteen American vessels out of 114 in the area. One million tons of fish are caught in the Donut, 862 tons were caught by American Factory Trawlers, and they were the only ones who have provided catch data. Pointed out that Nippon Suisan and Taiyo have vessels fishing in the donut and since they own a majority of the processing plants in Dutch Harbor and other nearby areas, they will be proponents of inshore/offshore allocation.

Harold Sparck, Yukon-Kuskokwim Fisheries. Provided a written proposal, "Alternate Program to Remove U.S. and Foreign Fishing Effort in the Doughnut".

Agenda C-5 - Inshore/offshore

Bert Larkins, American Factory Trawlers Assn. Reiterated from Fishery Planning Committee report about AFTA providing consultant for inshore-offshore community profiles. They feel the portion of the SIA dealing with Ballard is inadequate.

Doug Gordon, American High Seas Fisheries Assn. Spoke in favor of a proposal submitted by Midwater Trawlers Co-op which suggests the pollock TAC in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska be split using vessel sizes, and that allocation be based on some recognition of the level of catch history in a DAH mode. Allocation of pollock in the Bering Sea is absolutely necessary now and catch histories should be recognized.

Jim Wexler. Regarding enforcement of load line regulations. Right now there are 236 vessels operating without certificates. Perhaps the Council could use that as a possible way to reduce the number of vessels in the fisheries and address safety. Before any allocation the Council should have a firm handle on the size of fleet.

John Dolese, Emerald Seafoods. They oppose inshore/offshore allocation; they do not believe that such an action comports with National Standards 4 or 5. They believe the proposal will give a significant portion of control to onshore interests. They also believe that the Council is ill advised to delay the moratorium issue; it is needed to get a handle on the fisheries.

C-8 Research Priorities

Paul MacGregor, AFTA. Urged Council to get serious about placing mortality of bycatch species in trawl fisheries as a high research priority. Assumptions of 100% mortality of halibut and crab and are very restrictive to the trawl fisheries. Information from vessels indicates that mortality is actually much lower.

to watch over how the money is used. They have concerns with product recovery rates and how fees will be assessed.

#### D-1 General Groundfish

Jack Crowley, FVOA. Interested in being involved in the Pacific cod fishery, but the amount taken in the first quarter is not sufficient and their boats can't fish in the Bering Sea during January-March because of the safety factor. Would like to see an allocation so that they could fish the Gulf in the first quarter.

Thorn Smith, Freezer Longliner Group. Their primary fishery is codfish in the Bering Sea. Anticipate there will be a number of traditional shoreside delivery longliners participating in the Pacific cod fishery in the Bering Sea this year and there will also be pot fishermen participating in the latter part of the year if TAC available, plus shoreside and head and gut operations wanting the fishery spread throughout the year. Their concern is that for the first time the Council has curtailed the pollock roe fishery and postponed the flatfish fishery; they believe that as a result there will be increased trawl effort on Pacific cod during the first half of the year for the first time, thus the possibility of depleting the TAC during the first half of the year.

Steve Hughes, Midwater Trawlers. Disappointed that an incentive program is not yet in place. Suggested the Council send a letter to DC pointing out the urgency of getting regulations through on this program. Also pointed out that according to a recent assessment halibut biomass is increasing and if the bycatch caps are not connected to fluctuations in the stock it could create a serious bycatch problem for trawl fisheries. Regarding the emergency action to allocate Bering Sea/Aleutians cod TAC, Midwater Trawlers urged reconsideration of the action taken because they feel that it makes sense to harvest this resource during the first half of the year.

John Crowley. In favor of allocation of cod. It's an important fishery to them later in the year. Concerned about taking excessive fish during spawning season.

Vince Curry, AFTA. Oppose use of emergency rule authority for purposes of manipulating the cod fishery; there is no resource emergency.

Linda Kozak, Kodiak Longliner Vessel Owners Assn. Support emergency action taken in December on cod. Believes there is significant biological concern. In 1989, percentages throughout the year were reflective of a year-round, spread-out fishery -- approximately 25% each quarter.

Perfenia Pletnikoff, Central Bering Seas Fishermen's Assn. Supports extended season for all fisheries, especially cod. They need year-round fishery for their residents to be successful.

Fred Yeck, Oregon. Urged Council to reverse previous decision to allocate cod. He thinks it's to allocate from trawl to longline. Thinks the allocation will close the fishery earlier in the season which is when trawlers can best harvest; this will force trawlers into other areas and fisheries, causing disruption in those fisheries. An action that can have these kinds of impacts should be dealt with by regular amendment process.

Mel Morris, All Alaska Seafoods. Testified in September about impending problem with Gulf of Alaska pollock stocks. With the way the Central Gulf is managed now under one quota, in October when the Bering Sea closed for pollock those boats came over and essentially closed the Gulf in 10 days. Suggested that the Davidson Bank area is actually Bering Sea stock, or a mix. The Council needs to identify where those stocks come from, and allow for protection of those stocks when boats come over from Bering Sea.

Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Databank. If Davidson Bank stocks are actually Bering Sea fish, then the Council should consider changing the management area designation. Also agrees with Paul MacGregor that halibut mortality research should be a high priority.

#### C-9 - Foreign Ownership

Paul MacGregor, Mundt, MacGregor, et al. Concerned when the Council gets involved in technical law issues, particularly maritime law. Criticized the article on foreign ownership in Marine Digest as not being objective. Regarding the issue of a foreign bank taking possession of a vessel under bankruptcy, laws do not enable sale to foreign interests unless grandfathered in under the Anti-Reflagging Act.

Doug Gordon, AHSFA. All they are concerned about is foreign entities having access to a U.S. common stock.

Jim Wexler. Has the same concerns as Paul MacGregor.

#### C-7 - Future Mgmt Planning

Jan Standaert. Supports Lundsten's proposal with some reservations.

Jack Crowley, Fishing Vessel Owners Assn. Would like to see the Council take some real action this year.

John Crowley, FVOA. Vitally interested in an IFQ program. The Council has heard the story many times over -- they need IFQs. Endorses Lundsten plan.

Linda Behnken, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn. Restated ALFA's support of IFQ program for sablefish; supports Lundsten's proposal. The person holding the IFQ should be required to be on the vessel at the time of operation. There should be a cap on ownership broken down by area basis, i.e., not more than 3% of TAC for any particular area.

John Dolese, Emerald Seafoods. Asked Council to move ahead with development of a moratorium. It would allow the Council to make decisions based on a better understanding of the fisheries.

#### C-10 North Pacific Fisheries Research Plan

Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Databank. Supports getting a plan underway as soon as possible. Asked that NMFS come up with an estimate of what they need for start-up funding so industry can lobby for seed money. If NMFS continues to use contractors for observers, they would like to see a number of contractors to continue to be involved; prices are starting to go down with multiple contractors. Also would like the Council to consider whether there should be an independent board