



C2 BSAI Pacific Cod Small Vessel Access

June 2022 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Kate Haapala (NPFMC)
Other Presenters: Abby Jahn (NMFS)
Action Required:

1. Review the Initial Review draft RIR and determine whether to release for final action
2. Consider whether to select a preliminary preferred alternative

BACKGROUND

Under this agenda item, the Council will review a draft Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) that analyzes a proposed amendment to allow smaller vessels operating in the Bering Sea Aleutian Island (BSAI) less than 60' hook-and-line (H&L) or pot catcher vessel (CV) sector to harvest Pacific cod from the BSAI Pacific cod jig sector's allocation. The analysis highlights the potential social and economic impacts as well as the management and enforcement considerations of this action.

In recent years, the BSAI Pacific cod less than 60' H&L or pot CV sector has seen an increase in participation, and the Council has received public comment from some stakeholders that smaller vessels in the sector without additional capacity and efficiencies are being constrained in their harvest of Pacific cod. During the June 2021 Council meeting, the Council reviewed a discussion paper evaluating the potential impact of expanding the allowable participants to fish off the BSAI Pacific cod jig sector's allocation to smaller H&L or pot CVs. That discussion paper evaluated different options for defining a smaller H&L or pot CV (e.g., less than 57' LOA, trip limits, and pot limits) and provided the Council an opportunity to discuss and give direction on its preference for potential future work on access opportunities for smaller H&L or pot vessels currently operating in the less than 60' H&L or pot CV sector.

After review of the June 2021 discussion paper, the Council initiated an analysis of alternatives to allow H&L or pot CVs operating in the BSAI Pacific cod less than 60' H&L or pot CV sector that are less than or equal to either 55' or 56' length overall to harvest Pacific cod from the jig sector's allocation. The proposed amendment could provide additional opportunities for current fishery participants and potential new entrants with smaller H&L or pot CVs without negatively impacting vessels currently operating in the Federal BSAI Pacific cod jig sector. The scope of this action is limited to the BSAI Pacific cod less than 60' H&L or pot CV and jig sectors, and it would not redefine any other BSAI Pacific cod sector or their allocation.