

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Council, SSC, and AP members
FROM: Jim H. Branson *JHB*
Executive Director
DATE: September 20, 1984
SUBJECT: Review of foreign fishing vessel applications.

ACTION REQUIRED

- (a) *Review vessel applications for Portugal for directed fishing and joint ventures.*
- (b) *Review West German directed fishing allocation.*

BACKGROUND

Portugese Directed Fishing Permit Applications

We received eight permit applications for directed fishing of Pacific cod. I routinely approved four of them which were for trawl operations. My approval was based on the Council's deliberations last September [see C-9(a)] and because it's apparent that these ships are applying as a result of the lengthy negotiations NMFS has held with the Portugese government and industry over the past 12 months.

The Portugese have been given a direct allocation of 5,000 tons of codfish and 1,805 tons of other species in the Bering Sea as the first part of the expected 8,000 tons Pacific cod they will be given for a directed fishery. Apparently they have also purchased 2,400 mt of salt cod from U.S., i.e. Alaskan processors, and are currently negotiating for an additional 700 mt. They also have applied for internal waters permits for joint ventures to the State of Alaska as will be described below. Therefore, I approved the four trawl permits.

However, the remaining four vessels, the SAN RAFAEL, VIMIERO, SAN GABRIEL and MARIA DE RAMOS PASCOAL, want to use sunken gillnets for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea in 1984. This gear is not prohibited in the groundfish FMP for the Bering Sea but it has never been used there. I consider it an unusual fishery under my guidelines for reviewing permits. Therefore I've held them for Council review [see item C-9(b)]. The use of bottom gillnets was discussed by a Council Interim Action Committee for groundfish on September 17, 1984. A summary of the teleconference is under item C-9(c).

Portugese Joint Venture in FCZ

Portugal has applied for the FERNANDES LAVRADOR and ESTEVAO GOMES to participate in joint ventures and receive 1,762 mt of Pacific cod from about six U.S. trawlers arranged by Trident Seafoods. Operations will be in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea/Aleutians during October, November and December. See C-9(d). The vessels will also fish for 3,000 mt cod and purchase an additional complementary cargo of 2,466 mt wet salted cod from Trident.

Portugese Internal Waters Joint Ventures

Portugal has applied to the State of Alaska for the following internal waters joint ventures:

1. Trident Seafoods - Solseca: FERNANDES LAVRADOR and ESTEVAO GOMES will purchase 4,500 mt each of round cod from 15 U.S. trawlers in the Bering Sea near Akutan and Port Moller, September 15, 1984 through April 15, 1985. Solseca will purchase approximately 1,300 mt of wet-salted cod from Trident and from U.S. catcher/processors. See C-9(e).

2. Alaska Salt Fish - Pascoal and Filhos: SAN GABRIEL and MARIA DE RAMOS PASCOAL will purchase up to 2,500 mt cod from trawlers from Alaska Dragger's Association and another fishermen's group. Operations are planned for the GOA and BSA, October 15, 1984 through April 15, 1985. Pascoal and Filhos will purchase at least 1,000 mt of wet-salted cod from domestic Alaska processors during 1984. See C-9(f).

West German Allocations

When reviewing permit applications last December, the Council recommended that each West German vessel be permitted a 14,000 mt direct allocation with 50% withheld until after June 30. The second allocation was to be granted to a vessel only if it purchased at least 3,000 mt in joint ventures by June 30 and committed to 3,000 mt more in joint ventures after June 30.

In February the Council heard testimony from John Schmiedtke of Nordstern that 14,000 mt was insufficient to keep the FRIEDRICH BUSSE operating and thus participating in joint ventures later in the spring and fall. The Council voted to extend West Germany's joint venture permit to the Gulf of Alaska and to increase their direct allocation to 25,000 mt, provided West Germany increased its joint venture purchase to 8,000 mt. In addition, the first joint venture was to start by March 1 and no more direct allocation was to be made until at least 3,000 of the 8,000 mt joint venture had been purchased.

West Germany currently has a directed allocation of 27,995 mt in the Bering Sea and Aleutians and by September 1 had harvested 15,243 mt, or 54%. More allocations are about to be released even though West Germany has purchased only 4,000 mt in joint ventures and has not indicated any plans for additional joint ventures this fall.

The Council should make a formal recommendation to the State Department not to release any more directed allocation until more joint ventures are arranged.

Permit Review Committee
Meeting Summary
September 26-27, 1984

The Council's Permit Review Committee met in Anchorage on September 26-27, 1984. Attending were RADM Lucas (chairman), Rudy Petersen, John Peterson, Bob Mace, Henry Mitchell, John Winther, Joe Kurtz, Craig Hammond, Choate Budd, Jim Branson, and Clarence Pautzke. The Committee heard public testimony from various individuals and took the following actions.

Portuguese Directed Fishing Permit Applications

The Committee reviewed the four applications to use sunken gillnets for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea and is very concerned with the gillnets being lost but continuing to ghost fish and with potential gear conflicts between sunken gillnets and trawl and longline gear. The Committee recommends against approving the use of sunken gillnets by these four Portuguese vessels in the Bering Sea.

There apparently are problems with Portugal meeting its commitments in return for a directed allocation. Therefore, the Committee recommends against issuance of the eight directed fishing permits until such time as NMFS is satisfied and has written evidence of Portugal meeting the terms negotiated in its fish n' chips agreement. The Committee also wants Portugal to be aware that there may be no cod available for TALFF in 1985.

Portuguese Joint Venture in FCZ

The Committee recommends approval of the FCZ joint venture permits between Alaska Contact and Portugal provided that (1) an import license is granted by the Portuguese government to bring fish into Portugal, and (2) there is written evidence provided to NMFS of a firm contract to purchase product from U.S. processors.

Portuguese Internal Waters Joint Ventures

1. Trident Seafoods - Solseca: Chuck Bundrant of Trident Seafoods testified that this application had been withdrawn. The Committee did not further consider the application.
2. Alaska Salt Fish - Pascoal and Filhos:

The Committee reviewed the internal waters joint venture proposal and was given evidence that no firm commitment had been made for the purchase of product from U.S. processors. The Committee recommends approval of this joint venture provided Portugal approves an import license for U.S. product and there is written evidence provided of a firm contract to purchase product from U.S. processors.

West German Allocations

The Committee heard from John Schmeidtke of Nordstern that the EEC GIFA, though apparently finalized and signed, ^{was} has run into problems with France and probably would lapse soon. He also testified that because of heavy financial losses (\$500,000) incurred in West Germany's joint venture last spring, that no further joint ventures were being considered. It is their intention to pull the FRIEDRICH BUSSE home from the FCZ once their allocation is reached. FRG has requested about 5,000 mt in direct allocation for the remainder of 1984.

The Committee recommended that no further direct allocations be made to West Germany until an additional 4,000 mt joint venture is completed.

Augmentation of Polish Joint Venture

The Committee reviewed the requested 5,000 mt pollock joint venture between Quest Export Trading Company and Poland for the rest of 1984. Poland has also requested 5,000 mt more in a direct allocation of pollock in the Gulf of Alaska. The Committee heard testimony from Nancy Eickoff of Quest concerning her company's role in arranging for U.S. trawler participation and for observers on the Polish processing vessels.

The Committee approved the 5,000 mt joint venture and the additional 5,000 mt directed allocation, but stated they were very concerned with part of the product coming back into U.S. markets.

Soviet Vessel Permit Applications

The Committee approved the requested directed fishing permits now that the USSR has a directed allocation. They also recommend approval of the new joint venture vessel ZELENOGRAD to work with MRC pending publication of the permit in the Federal Register next week.

Jim B. [unclear] is published.

The Committee recommends inviting the Soviet attache, G. Chursin, to attend the December Council meeting.

South Korean Joint Venture Augmentations

The Committee reviewed the requested augmentations and has no objections. They are concerned, though, with payment problems associated with the FPA/Korea Wong Yang Fisheries joint venture.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Clement V. Tillion, Chairman
Jim H. Branson, Executive Director



Mailing Address: P.O. Box 103136
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

605 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Telephone: (907) 274-4563
FTS 271-4064

October 5, 1983


William G. Gordon
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
3300 Whitehaven, Page 2
Washington, DC 20235

Dear Bill:

At their meeting last week, the Council discussed at length the recent negotiations between your staff and elements of the Portugese government and industry that resulted in the Portugese offer to purchase 10,000 metric tons of salt cod and 12,000 tons of Pacific cod over the side in joint ventures in return for a direct allocation of 8,000 metric tons of codfish and 20,000 tons of pollock. The members approved the proposal in concept by unanimous vote and look forward to seeing industry-to-industry negotiations on this framework in the near future.

The Council will look favorably on permit applications from Portugul based on this proposal and want to commend your staff for their enterprise in putting this together. It should be a boon to the U.S. groundfish industry in Alaska.

Sincerely,


Jim H. Branson
Executive Director

cc Robert McVey
James Storer
Robert Hayes

NO: PO-84-0002

OFFICIAL FORM

- (1) VESSEL NAME: "S Ã O R A F A E L" (2) CALL SIGN: C U E F
- (3) CALL NUMBER: LX-66-N
- (4) VESSEL TYPE: GILLNETTER (5) LENGTH: 79;05 m.
- (6) GROSS TONS: 1.488,46 (7) NET TONS: 688,73 (8) MAX SPEED: 13 knots
- (9) OWNERS NAME: Armazéns José Luis da Costa & C^a., Lda.
- ADDRESS: Rua de S. Julião, 68-70 - 1100 LISBOA
- (10) PROCESSING EQUIPMENT: Heading, Washing machine
- (11) HOLD CAPACITY (IN CUBIC METERS):

HOLD #1: 350 HOLD #2: 1.050 HOLD #3: 1.050 HOLD #4: _____

(12) FISHERIES FOR WHICH PERMIT IS REQUESTED:

FISHERY	TARGET SPECIES	GEAR	ACTIVITY		
			CATCH	PROCESS	OTHER
BSA GOA	PACIFIC COD	Bottom-gill net	X	X	

(13) HAS THIS VESSEL EVER FISHED WITHIN THE U.S. WEE?
 YES _____ NO X (IF YES, LIST PERMIT NUMBER(s) _____)

(14) ARE FISHING ACTIVITIES REQUESTED IN SUPPORT OF VESSELS OF THE U.S.?
 (If yes, attach supplemental sheet showing fishery, species quantities, dates, locations and specific activities requested.)
 YES _____ NO X

NO: PO-84-0013

(1) VESSEL NAME: "VIMIEIRO" (2) CALL SIGN: CUED
 (3) VESSEL NO.: LX-52-N
 (4) VESSEL TYPE: GILLNETTER (5) LENGTH: 79,37 m.
 (6) GROSS TONS: 1.338,91 (7) NET TONS: 923,63 (8) MAX SPEED: 13 knots
 (9) OWNERS NAME: Armazéns José Luis da Costa & C^a, Lda.
 ADDRESS: Rua de S. Julião, 68-70 - 1100 LISBOA
 (10) PROCESSING EQUIPMENT: Heading, Washing machine

(11) HOLD CAPACITY (IN CUBIC METERS):
 HOLD #1: 350 HOLD #2: 1.085 HOLD #3: 1.085 HOLD #4: _____

(12) FISHERIES FOR WHICH PERMIT IS REQUESTED:

FISHERY	TARGET SPECIES	GEAR	ACTIVITY		
			CATCH	PROCESS	OWNER
BSA GOA	PACIFIC COD	Bottom-gill net	X	X	

(13) WAS THIS VESSEL EVER FISHED WITHIN THE U.S. FCZ?
 YES _____ NO X (IF YES, LIST PERMIT NUMBER(S) _____)

(14) ARE FISHING ACTIVITIES REQUESTED IN SUPPORT OF VESSELS OF THE U.S.?
 (If yes, attach supplemental sheet showing fishery, species quantities, dates, locations and specific activities requested.)
 YES _____ NO X

FISHING VESSEL IDENTIFICATION FORM

NO: PO-84-0024

- (1) VESSEL NAME: "S. GABRIEL" (2) CALL SIGN: C U D R
 (3) HULL NO: LX-46-N
 (4) VESSEL TYPE: GILLNETTER (5) LENGTH : 66,99 m.
 (6) GROSS TONS: 1.164,98 (7) NET TONS: 534,76 (8) MAX SPEED: _____
 (9) OWNERS NAME: PASCOAL & FILHOS, LDA.
 ADDRESS: Apartado 308 - 3806 AVEIRO CODEX
 (10) PROCESSING EQUIPMENT: Gutting machine
 (11) HOLD CAPACITY (IN CUBIC METERS):
 HOLD #1: 370 HOLD #2: 560 HOLD #3: 192 HOLD #4: _____

(12) FISHERIES FOR WHICH PERMIT IS REQUESTED:

FISHERY	TARGET SPECIES	GEAR	ACTIVITY		
			CATCH	PROCESS	OTHER
BSA GOA	PACIFIC COD	Bottom-gill net	X	X	

(13) HAS THIS VESSEL EVER FISHED WITHIN THE U.S. FCZ?
 YES _____ NO X (IF YES, LIST PERMIT NUMBER(s) _____)

(14) ARE FISHING ACTIVITIES REQUESTED IN SUPPORT OF VESSELS OF THE U.S.?
 (If yes, attach supplemental sheet showing fishery, species quantities, dates, locations and specific activities requested.)
 YES _____ NO X

FISHING VESSEL IDENTIFICATION FORM

NO: PO-84-0025

- (1) VESSEL NAME: "MARIA DE RAMOS PASCOAL"
- (2) CALL SIGN: C S G C
- (3) HULL NUMBER: A-2613-N
- (4) VESSEL TYPE: GILNETTER
- (5) LENGTH : 71,13 m.
- (6) GROSS TONS: 1,224,88 (7) NET TONS: 581,90 (8) MAX. SPEED: _____
- (9) OWNERS NAME: PASCOAL & FILHOS, LDA.
- ADDRESS: Apartado 308 - 3806 AVEIRO CODEX
- (10) PROCESSING EQUIPMENT: Gutting, heading machine

(11) HOLD CAPACITY (IN CUBIC METERS):
 HOLD #1: 495 HOLD #2: 400 HOLD #3: 400 HOLD #4: _____

(12) FISHERIES FOR WHICH PERMIT IS REQUESTED:

FISHERY	TARGET SPECIES	GEAR	ACTIVITY		
			CATCH	PROCESS	OTHER
BSA GOA	PACIFIC COD	Bottom gill net trawler	X	X	

(13) HAS THIS VESSEL EVER FISHED WITHIN THE U.S. FCZ?
 YES _____ NO X (IF YES, LIST PERMIT NUMBER(s) _____)

(14) ARE FISHING ACTIVITIES REQUESTED IN SUPPORT OF VESSELS OF THE U.S.?
 (If yes, attach supplemental sheet showing fishery, species quantities, dates, locations and specific activities requested.)
 YES _____ NO X

AGENDA C-9(d)
SEPTEMBER 1984

EMBAIXADA DE PORTUGAL
WASHINGTON

August 16, 1984

17 AUG REC'D

RW

Mr. Larry Snead
Acting Director
Office of Fisheries Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. Snead,

Further to my letter of July 24, I am enclosing an application for permit for joint ventures in the Pacific Waters for two fishing vessels "Fernandes Lavrador" and "Estevão Gomes".

The two vessels belong to "SOLSECA-Pesca e Secagem de Bacalhau, Lda." and will be engaged in joint ventures with Trident Seafood Corporation of 653 N.W. 41st Street, Seattle, Washington 98107.

17 AUG 1984

Sincerely yours,



Roque Félix Dias
Commercial Counselor

FISHING VESSEL IDENTIFICATION FORM

PO-84-0026
NO:

- (1) VESSEL NAME: "ESTEVÃO GOMES" (2) CALL SIGN: CSPB
 (4) VESSEL TYPE: SIDE TRAWLER (3) HULL NUMBER: LX-34-N
 (6) GROSS TONS: 1,441,56 (7) NET TONS: 859,97 (8) MAX SPEED: 13 knc
 (9) OWNERS NAME: SOLSECA - Pesca e Secagem de Bacalhau, Lda.
 ADDRESS: Rua Marquês de Fronteira, 117-1º., Esq. - 1000 LISBOA
 (10) PROCESSING EQUIPMENT: 2 Gutting machine
 (11) HOLD CAPACITY (IN CUBIC METERS):

HOLD #1: 702 HOLD #2: 758 HOLD #3: _____ HOLD #4: _____

(12) FISHERIES FOR WHICH PERMIT IS REQUESTED:

FISHERY	TARGET SPECIES	GEAR	ACTIVITY		
			CATCH	PROCESS	CLASS
BSA	PACIFIC COD	Bottom trawl	X	X	
GOA	POLLOCK		X	X	

(13) HAS THIS VESSEL EVER FISHED WITHIN THE U.S. FCI?
 YES _____ NO X (IF YES, LIST PERMIT NUMBER(S) _____)

(14) ARE FISHING ACTIVITIES REQUESTED IN SUPPORT OF VESSELS OF THE U.S.?
 YES X NO _____ (If yes, attach supplemental sheet showing fishery, species quantities, dates, locations and specific activities requested.)

RECEIVED AUG 24 1984

FISHING VESSEL IDENTIFICATION FORM:

FO-84-0025
NO: _____

(1) VESSEL NAME: "FERNANDES LAVRADOR" (2) CALL SIGN: C 5 0 N
 (4) VESSEL TYPE: SIDE TRAWLER (3) HULL NO: LX-26-N
 (6) GROSS TONS: 1.386,05 (7) NET TONS: 795,09 (8) LENGTH: 71,42 m
 (9) OWNERS NAME: SOLSECA - Pesca e Secagem de Bacalhau, Lda.
 ADDRESS: Rua Marquês de Fronteira, 117-1^o, Esq. - 1000 LISBOA

(10) PROCESSING EQUIPMENT: Heading, Gutting, Washing machine
 (11) HOLD CAPACITY (IN CUBIC METERS):
 HOLD #1: 702 HOLD #2: 758 HOLD #3: _____ HOLD #4: _____

(12) FISHERIES FOR WHICH PERMIT IS REQUESTED:

FISHERY	TARGET SPECIES	GEAR	ACTIVITY		
			CATCH	PROCESS	OTHER
BSA	PACIFIC COD POLLOCK	Bottom trawl	X	X	
GOA			X	X	

(13) HAS THIS VESSEL EVER FISHED WITHIN THE U.S. FCI?
 YES _____ NO X (IF YES, LIST PERMIT NUMBER(S) _____)
 (14) ARE FISHING ACTIVITIES REQUESTED IN SUPPORT OF VESSELS OF THE U.S.:
 YES X NO _____ (If yes, attach supplemental sheet showing fishery, species quantities, dates, locations and specific activities requested.)

RECEIVED AUG 2 4 1984

METHOD OF OPERATION

1. Deep side Trawlers, "Estevão Gomes" and "Fernandes Lavrador".
2. The U.S. fishing vessels who shall deliver U.S. harvested fish will be contracted by Trident Seafoods Corporation, Akutan, Alaska. The vessels shall be delivering their catches to both Solseca's vessels as well as to Trident. It is not yet decided which vessels will be contracted but the following stern trawlers shall probably be involved:
"Western Dawn", "Ocean Leader", "Pacific Viking", "Viking Explorer", "Royal Atlantic" and "Royal American".
3. The official agent of Portugal; International Trading and Shipping Agency President Mrs. Carmen Aza de Martinez, telex nº 640287 - INAGENA NYK
4. Contact for all the above Portuguese vessels' operations in Alaska:
Trident Seafoods Corporation
653 N.W. 41st street
Seattle, Washington 98107
Telephone nº (206) 783 3818
Telex no 321266 TRIDENT SEA
5. Bearing Sea, Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska, not classified.
6. September, October, November and December 1984. The two above mentioned vessels shall be employed in the operation all time.
7. The main species shall be the pacific cod (*Gadus Macrocephalus*). The two vessels have the following total combined quota:
Fishing : 3,000 tons round fish
Overside sales : 1,762 metric tons round fish
Purchasing complementary cargo : 2,466 metric tons wet salted fish.
Smaller quantities of other underutilized species may also be of interest.
The market for all species and quantities shall be Portugal. No quantities

will re-enter the U.S.A..

8. The vessels will follow all U.S. fishing regulations and disgorge any incidental catch of prohibited species immediately.

9. Transfer of fish from U.S. fishing vessel to the portuguese vessels may be done in different ways dependent on size of catch and weather conditions, zippered cod ends, by brailer from deck to deck, via transport vessel or via Trident's dock in Akutan.

10. Both vessels will catch fish themselves and also receive U. S. harvested fish.

11. The price for any one of species has not yet been settled. Prices are under negotiations and shall be finally agreed late August or early Sptember.

RECEIVED SEP - 4 1984

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON APPLICATION TO CONDUCT	INITIAL
FOREIGN SEAFOOD PROCESSING OPERATIONS IN	
THE INTERNAL WATERS OF ALASKA	
Admin. Off.	

Trident Seafoods Corporation, acting as a local agent for the Portuguese firm of Solseca, Pesca E. Secagem de Bacalhan, Lda., has applied to the Governor of Alaska for permission to process Pacific cod in the internal waters of Alaska. The proposed venture has the following features:

Fishing: To be conducted by about 15 U.S. fishing vessels operating in the Bering Sea area near Akutan and Port Moller.

Processing: Cod will be delivered by U.S. fishing vessels to the side trawlers FERNANDES LAVRADOR and ESTEVAO GOMES where they will be processed and salted. The applicant has indicated that each vessel can handle about 75-80 metric tons of round cod per day. The total volume of production specified for each vessel is 4,500 metric tons.

Market: Salt cod products produced as a result of this venture will be sold in the Portuguese market.

Period of Operation: September 15, 1984 through April 15, 1985.

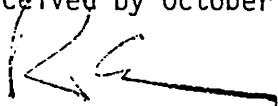
The Governor may not grant permission for a foreign fishing vessel to engage in fish processing if he determines that fish processors within the State have adequate capacity and will use that capacity to process all of the domestically harvested fish that are landed.

It is State policy that all foreign processing operations in internal waters must actively promote the development of Alaska shore-based processing of seafood products and the specific activities intended to promote Alaska's seafood industries will be negotiated and agreed on prior to the issuance of any permit to operate.

The applicant has indicated that Salseca, Pesca E. Secagem de Bacalhan, Lda. will purchase approximately 1,300 metric tons of finished wet-salted cod from Trident Seafoods and from domestic U.S. catcher/processors.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Development is compiling a record of public comments on this application to assist the Governor in his determination.

Please address written comments to Greg Baker, Director, Alaska Office of Commercial Fisheries Development, Pouch D, Juneau, Alaska 99811. To be considered, comments should be received by October 1, 1984.


Richard A. Lyon, Commissioner

Date: August 29, 1984

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON APPLICATION TO CONDUCT
FOREIGN SEAFOOD PROCESSING OPERATIONS IN
THE INTERNAL WATERS OF ALASKA

The Alaska Salt Fish Corporation, acting as a local agent for the Portuguese firm of Pascoal and Filhos, Ltd., has applied to the Governor of Alaska for permission to process cod in the internal waters of Alaska (Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea). The proposed venture has the following features:

LOCATION	ROUTE TO	INITIAL
Exec. Sec.		
Adm. Sec.		

Fishing: Expected to be conducted by members of the Alaska Druggers Association (Kodiak) and independent vessels in a fishermen's group formed to fish for the venture. Specific vessels have not yet been identified.

Processing: Cod will be delivered by U.S. fishing vessels to the Portuguese stern trawlers SAN GABRIEL and MARIA RAMOS PASCOAL where they will be processed and salted. The applicant has asked for permission to process up to 2,500 metric tons.

Market: Salt cod products produced as a result of this venture will be sold in Portugal on each vessel.

Period of Operation: October 15 through April 15, 1985.

The Governor may not grant permission for a foreign fishing vessel to engage in fish processing if he determines that fish processors within the State have adequate capacity and will use that capacity to process all of the domestically harvested fish that are landed.

The applicant has indicated that domestic production of cod products is far less than the volume of fish available for harvest.

It is State policy that all foreign processing operations in internal waters must actively promote the development of Alaska shore-based processing of seafood products and the specific activities intended to promote Alaska's seafood industries will be negotiated and agreed on prior to issuance of any permit to operate. The applicant has indicated that Pascoal and Filhos will purchase at least 1,000 tons of finished wet salted cod from domestic Alaska processors during 1984.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Development is compiling a record of public comments on this application to assist the Governor in his determination.

Please address written comments to Greg Baker, Director, Alaska Office of Commercial Fisheries Development, Pouch D, Juneau, Alaska 99811. To be considered, comments should be received by October 5, 1984.

Richard A. Lyon, Commissioner

Date: September 7, 1984

MINUTES
Groundfish Interim Action Committees Conference Call
September 17, 1984

Participants included:

Drs. Loh Lee Loh and Gary Stauffer and Russ Nelson and the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center; Don Rosenberg at the University of Alaska; Jim Brooks, Thorn Smith, Pat Travers and Bob McVey at the NMFS Regional Office; Don Collinsworth and Fred Gaffney for the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game; and Jim Branson, Jeff Povolny, Clarence Pautzke and Steve Davis for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Two subjects were discussed by the Interim Action Committee, the upcoming Council decision on the Portugese request to use bottom gillnets for directed codfish fishing in the Bering Sea and the sablefish situation in the Central Gulf of Alaska.

Jim Branson presented technical information on the Portugese bottom gillnet fishing techniques which he received from a Portugese delegation who visited him on September 14. Mr. Branson explained that he had already approved permits for four Portugese groundfish trawlers and had held up applications for four gillnet vessels because the gillnet was a new gear in the foreign groundfish fishery off Alaska. According to information Branson received, the Portugese fishing will be a mothership-type operation using four aluminum gillnet boats. Each of these boats are 8 meters long. They normally carry a four-man crew but have been designed to carry up to seven men. They fish a gillnet which is put together in 100-meter shackles; they will fish 5 to 25 shackles in a line. The nets are 25 meshes deep, they are between 3 and 3½ meters deep and they use mesh sizes between 6 and 7 inches depending on the size of fish they are catching. Normal soak time, according to the Portugese, is about 12 hours but could be as short as 6 hours if fishing is very good as it was reported to be off of Canada earlier this year. The leadline of the net is a lead core line; the net is actually hung 30 to 40 centimeters off of the bottom. The net is hung fairly loose, there are about 6 meshes slack in the hanging lines. In response to a question from Gary Stauffer, Branson said that we have received no information from the Canadians on the operation of the Portugese gear in their waters and that we are not aware of any information on the use of this gear type in the Bering Sea. However, the Portugese have said that in their Spring of 1982 internal water joint venture off Kodiak Island one U.S. vessel did use bottom gillnets for a short period of time. The Council staff is trying to obtain information on that vessel and its use of the bottom gillnet gear.

Russ Nelson of the NWAFC raised the question of safety of U.S. observers should the Council request that U.S. observers be placed on all of the catcher vessels using the gillnet gear. Nelson stated that he has no information at this time on the way these vessels will operate, whether or not they make daily personnel transfers from the catcher vessels to the mothership, whether the boats remain at sea with personnel aboard while the nets have been set and are soaking, and what potential hazards may exist on these catcher vessels. In summary, he does not have information concerning their operations to feel comfortable about putting observers on board the catcher vessels. A related

question on observer coverage was raised on what constitutes adequate observer coverage necessary to obtain a representative sample of the catches. Dr. Low of the Northwest Center stated that it probably is not necessary to have observers on all of the catcher vessels. He stated that, given his understanding of the way they would operate, having observers on two boats would be adequate if all of the vessels involved are fishing the same general areas and they are all targeting on codfish.

Jim Branson asked whether or not more than one observer could be assigned to the operation and a Chief of Party be named who would have responsibility for making decisions at the scene of the operation concerning the safety of the observers going aboard at any particular time. Russ Nelson responded that although he may have three people available to act as observers, he thought that naming a Chief of Party who would have the responsibility for the decision would be a good idea. He would still have to study the personnel he has available and that he would want to retain the flexibility to terminate the observer operation in the middle of fishing operations.

Don Rosenberg, University of Alaska, asked what procedure would be followed if the observers reported a high bycatch of prohibited species with gillnets. He questioned what was the relationship of a bycatch by this gear to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands prohibited species amendment which is designed to reduce the bycatch of prohibited species in foreign fisheries in the Bering Sea. Pat Travers, sitting in with Robert McVey, pointed out that the regulations to control the bycatch of prohibited species in the Bering Sea apply only to foreign trawl gear at this time. Foreign longline gear is specifically exempted and foreign gillnet gear is not mentioned at all, so it would appear that the bycatch regulation does not specifically apply to gillnet gear. Thorn Smith, sitting in with Robert McVey, reported that the General Counsel for fisheries in Washington, DC, has said that there is no problem with putting permit restrictions on the Portugese permits for conservation reasons. Protection of prohibited species would be a valid conservation reason.

Don Collinsworth, ADF&G, said that it would be extremely useful to get good observer information on the use of bottom gillnets in the Bering Sea, primarily because we have no good information on the use of this gear and we can expect that domestic fishermen in the future will want to use bottom gillnets for groundfish fishing. Bottom gillnets have been a successful gear type in other bottomfish fisheries, primarily in the Atlantic, and it can only be expected that if this gear is more efficient U.S. fishermen will try to use it. Having the information will be very valuable to the Council in evaluating future requests to use this type of gear.

The general concensus expressed by the Interim Action Committee was that the Council's Permit Review Committee should approve these permits with the proviso that the National Marine Fisheries Service is able to provide adequate observer coverage for these fishing operations. Russ Nelson of the National Marine Fisheries Service will try to provide the Council Permit Review Committee with his evaluation of the safety of the observers on board the vessels prior to the permit review committee meeting. Jim Branson informed the Interim Action Committee that the Portugese will be at the Council meeting and will be prepared to answer any questions the Council members might have concerning their operations.

The second item discussed was the catch of sablefish in the Central Gulf of Alaska. National Marine Fisheries Service reported that the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game has determined that 2,700 tons of sablefish have been caught by domestic longliners which is approximately 90 mt over the target harvest of 2,610 tons. Therefore, it appears that there are approximately 90 mt left for joint ventures as a bycatch, 29 tons for foreign longliners as a bycatch in their directed Pacific cod fishery, and 85 tons for foreign trawlers in their remaining fisheries. Gary Stauffer of the Northwest & Alaska Fisheries Center reported that, as of September 1, joint ventures had caught 126 tons of sablefish and foreign fisheries had caught 55 tons of sablefish in the Central Gulf of Alaska. Dr. Stauffer also reported that in the Chirikof area the sablefish bycatch in the foreign Pacific cod fisheries has been approximately 0.005%. It was the concensus of the Interim Action Committees that there is no reason at this time to consider raising the optimum yield in order to provide for bycatch in the remaining groundfish fisheries in the Central Gulf of Alaska. Don Collinsworth, ADF&G, stated that he wanted to examine the current optimum yield level. He noted that optimum yields are currently set at 75% of the equilibrium yield and he was interested in finding out if this is still an appropriate level for the optimum yield given that the sablefish resource appears to be rebuilding and has been stronger in recent years than when the MFCMA was first implemented.