

Council Motion
Agenda Item D-4
April 14, 2021

The council adopts the following purpose and need statement and initiates analysis of a suite of IFQ actions with the following alternatives and elements.

Purpose and Need:

IFQ stakeholders, the IFQ Committee, and NMFS have identified regulatory revisions that could increase operational efficiency, reduce administrative burden, and clarify how harvesters can meet existing regulatory requirements. In addition, the Council is considering revisions to pot limits and gear tending restrictions also identified through the recent 3-year GOA sablefish pot review to determine whether they are serving their intended purpose.

The Community Quota Entity (CQE) program was modified in 2014 to include the Aleutian Islands. This allowed the community of Adak to form a CQE and purchase halibut and sablefish quota. Since the implementation of the Aleutian Islands CQE in 2014, Adak has faced challenges being able to harvest its IFQ. The Council is considering temporarily broadening who is eligible to harvest IFQ held by the Adak CQE to provide more opportunities for more fully harvesting its allocation.

Alternative 1: No action

Alternative 2: Revise IFQ program regulations to the address the following regulatory clarifications

Element 1: Clarify that “slinky pots” are a legal gear for the IFQ fishery, and revise regulations to allow the use of biodegradable twine in the door latch or pot tunnel.

Element 2: Remove buoy configuration and flagpole requirements in regulation but retain “LP” marking requirement.

Element 3: Authorize jig gear as a legal gear type for the harvest of sablefish IFQ.

Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the 9-inch maximum width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when vessel has unfisher halibut IFQ onboard.

Element 5: Pot Limits

Option 1: Change the Pot Limit for WY and/or SEO to

Suboption a) 180 pots per vessel

Suboption b) 300 pots per vessel

Element 6: Gear Retrieval requirements

Option 1: Remove the gear retrieval requirement

Option 2: Modify the gear retrieval requirement to 7 days for all GOA areas

Suboption: 3 days in SEO

Alternative 3: Remove Adak CQE residency requirement for a period of five years.

Note: Alternatives 2 and 3 are not mutually exclusive.

The Council supports NMFS initiating rule making under its authority to remove notary requirements for IFQ participants, and the requirement for sablefish pot fishermen to use pot tags. In addition, the Council requests NMFS OLE clarify that they have the discretion to waive gear tending requirements (i.e., documented mechanical breakdown or a severe weather event). The Council requests that NMFS update the Council on these issues under the NMFS management report at a future meeting.