

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
December 6-9, 2022 - Anchorage, AK

C2 Snow Crab Rebuilding

The Advisory Panel (AP) recommends that the Council select Alternative 2 Option 2 from the initial review as the preliminary preferred alternative for rebuilding Bering Sea snow crab.

In addition, the AP supports the SSC's recommendation on suggested additions to be analyzed in the final review, including adding projected directed fishery harvest levels in the short-term along with economic benefits.

Motion passed 16-0

Rationale:

- *The recommendation to move the analysis forward is in line with the SSC's determination that the rebuilding plan analysis is adequate to proceed to final review. This motion also supports the SSC recommendations regarding the need for more information on the potential economic impacts to the directed fishery with projected harvest levels. Given that the action alternative and options in the rebuilding plan will have severe social and economic impacts on the crab industry and the associated fishing communities, it is important to understand those estimated impacts as much as possible.*
- *The analysis shows that the maximum time to rebuild the snow crab stock is 10 years and that fishing impacts from both directed and bycatch fisheries do not significantly change the timeline to rebuild between the options. As such, in order to provide the opportunity for a direct fishery, which supports harvesters, processors, and communities, Alternative 2 Option 2 is identified as the preliminary preferred alternative. The opportunity for a small directed snow crab fishery is especially important for a community like St. Paul where the continuation of subsistence opportunities is tied to the commercial fishery.*
- *The preliminary preferred alternative retains existing conservation measures within the ADF&G harvest strategy that closes the directed fishery at low levels of abundance. The preliminary preferred alternative best complies with the Magnuson-Stevens Act to rebuild the stock as quickly as possible taking into account the needs of fishing communities.*
- *The rebuilding plan is primarily focused on timeline requirements to comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Act as a result of the overfished determination. However, there may be more that can be done, through the analysis and adoption of additional comprehensive management measures, to help snow crab rebuild. While the current suite of rebuilding alternatives and options do not include other potential management measures, these may be needed to err on the side of conservation and give snow crab a better chance at recovery and it will be important for all sectors discuss such potential measures in order to best work together for the recovery of snow crab stock while also keeping all sectors fishing.*