


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members
FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director
DATE: January 25, 2013
SUBJECT: GOA Trawl Issues

ESTIMATED TIME 8 HOURS (All C-3 items)
--

ACTION REQUIRED

- (b) Discussion paper on CGOA Trawl Catch Shares
- (c) Receive testimony on WGOA issues and discuss next steps

BACKGROUND

- (b) Discussion paper on CGOA Trawl Catch Shares

Recently, the Council has advanced a number of actions to reduce the use of prohibited species catch (PSC) in Gulf of Alaska fisheries. At its June 2011 meeting, the Council introduced Chinook PSC limits in the Gulf pollock fisheries. In addition, the Council took action at its June 2012 meeting to reduce halibut PSC available to trawl and longline fisheries in the Central and Western Gulf. The Council is also considering an action to extend similar Chinook PSC limits to non-pollock groundfish fisheries in the Gulf. While this series of actions reflects the Council's commitment to reduce prohibited species catch in the Gulf fisheries, participants in these fisheries are concerned that the current management structure limits their ability to collectively reduce PSC usage.

At its June 2012 meeting, the Council received a paper to help focus its development of a management program. The Council received an additional discussion paper at their October 2012 meeting. In response to the papers and public testimony, the Council developed a purpose and need statement and also identified goals and objectives for this action at their October 2012 meeting. The Council then requested that its staff develop a discussion paper (attached as Item C-3(b)(1)) outlining MSA requirements and limitations regarding the development of a catch share plan, and describe various catch share options used in other fisheries that might meet the Council's goals and objectives for this program.

Further, the Council asked interested members of industry and the public to be prepared to provide input on the scope and structure of a Central gulf trawl catch share program at this meeting. Public and industry input is expected to provide focus for the program's development, so that effective management tools can be implemented that also meet the Council's goals and objectives.

Elements and options for the proposed program that are developed as a result of public input and the discussion paper are expected to define the management tools that allow industry to more effectively utilize available PSC, create incentives for the minimization of bycatch, and create vessel level

accountability for the Central Gulf of Alaska trawl groundfish fishery. If the Council is provided sufficient information to develop potential elements and options at this meeting, it may wish to develop a timeline for reviewing the analytical development of those components.

(c) Review WGOA issues and discuss next steps

At the December meeting, the Council received testimony from participants in the Western Gulf trawl fishery requesting that the trawl fishery in that management area be included in any catch share program considered for the Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries. In response, the Council requested that participants in the Western Gulf trawl fisheries present their positions concerning possible inclusion of the Western Gulf trawl fisheries in such a program at this meeting. Those who support inclusion of those fisheries in the catch share program are asked to present the Council with elements and options appropriate for the Western Gulf fisheries. Specific elements should be developed for the Western Gulf to recognize the different fishery, regional, and community interests.