



C4 BSAI Crab Partial Offload

June 2019

Action Memo

Staff: Sarah Marrinan

Action Required:

1. Initial Review Draft – review
2. Review Crab Plan Team report on this issue, Enforcement Committee minutes, SSC and AP comments, as well as public testimony
3. Potentially identify a preliminary preferred alternative

BACKGROUND

Through this analytical package the Council is considering removing a regulatory prohibition that bans vessels fishing for Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Crab Rationalization (CR) Program crab from conducting a partial offload of crab and then continuing to fish, prior to the offload of any remaining crab. Under current regulations, a catcher vessel may offload a portion of CR crab on the vessel at multiple processors, but the vessel is prohibited from fishing for CR crab between these offloads. Crab harvesters (through the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee) expressed interest in increased harvesting flexibility that may be created by removing this prohibition. These crab harvesters expect this flexibility would only be used in emergency situations or special circumstances related to the safety or economics of the operations, as increased time before offload may decrease efficiency and increase crab deadloss overall, both of which could create personal financial costs to the harvesters. The analysis describes the expected benefits the harvesters, potential impacts on processors and communities, and expected implications for management, enforcement, and accounting.

The proposal for this action was made in April 2018. The Council received a discussion paper in February 2019, at which time the Council developed a purpose and need statement, action alternative, and chose to move the action forward for Initial Review.

In addition to any public testimony at this meeting, the Council has/ will receive feedback on this issue from a number of advisory bodies. This action was presented to the Crab Plan Team in May 2019. The Crab Plan Team report posted on this June 2019 Council agenda provides feedback on this item.¹ Additionally, at this June 2019 Council meeting, this action is intended to be presented to and discussed by the Enforcement Committee, the SSC, the AP and the Council.

Note that an additional proposal was submitted by the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee to consider developing electronic logbooks (elogbooks). The Council also discussed this issue in February 2019 and requested NMFS and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission work together to develop a cost analysis for creating an electronic system for crab logbooks. If the crab partial offload action moves forward, there has been interest expressed in moving it forward on a same timeline as crab elogbooks.

¹ <https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=dfe0a4b7-ae7e-4e3b-a23f-a62cff329a1.pdf&fileName=C1%20Crab%20Plan%20Team%20Report%20May%202019.pdf>