



C6 BSAI Halibut Abundance-based Management (ABM) PSC Limits

October 2020 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Dr. Diana Stram, Sam Cunningham, Anna Henry

Other Presenters: Dr. Carey McGilliard, Dr. Jim Ianelli (AFSC)
Dr. Mike Downs (Wislow Research Associates)
Dr. Joe Krieger (NMFS AKRO SF)

Action Required: 1. Initial Review Draft EIS – review; action as necessary;
2. Discussion paper – review; action as necessary

BACKGROUND

The Council will review the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the BSAI Halibut ABM PSC limit management action. This document analyzes alternatives that would index Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits for the Amendment 80 sector in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) groundfish fishery to halibut abundance. The objective of indexing PSC limits to halibut abundance is to provide flexibility to the groundfish fisheries in times of high halibut abundance while protecting halibut spawning biomass at low levels of abundance and stabilizing inter-annual PSC limit variability. An abundance-based PSC limit approach could indirectly provide additional harvest opportunities for the commercial halibut fishery.

The DEIS assesses the environmental impacts of the action and quantitatively estimates or qualitatively describes the revenue impacts for the directly and indirectly affected sectors. This DEIS addresses the statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Presidential Executive Order 12866. A DEIS is a document produced by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Region to provide the analytical background for decision-making.

Information posted to the Council's agenda includes the DEIS, the executive summary, a stand-alone description of alternatives, the motion from February 2020 to modify the action to apply only to the Amendment 80 sector ([Council February 2020 ABM Motion – AM80](#)) and the Draft EIS' Appendix 1: the Social Impact Assessment (SIA).

Staff have also produced a discussion paper on different approaches to be considered for Amendment 80 bycatch reduction. Those measures are outside of what was analyzed in the DEIS but may be considered in tandem moving forward if the Council chooses to include some or all of the concepts described in the paper. Both the discussion paper and the motion initiating it are posted to the Council agenda ([Council February 2020 ABM Motion - PSC](#)).