



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:Catch 14-009

Agenda Date10/6/2014

Agenda Number:C8

John Henderschedt, Acting Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:
CDQ Pacific Cod Fishery Development - Final Action

ESTIMATED TIME:
2 hours

ACTION REQUIRED:
Final Action on an Environmental Assessment/ Regulatory Impact Review to expand opportunity for small hook-and-line CDQ vessels to fish Pacific cod CDQ

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this action is to create a regulatory structure for the harvest of Pacific cod Community Development Quota (CDQ) that promotes harvest opportunities for small hook-and-line vessels, and effectively allows CDQ and IFQ halibut harvesters, operating vessels less than or equal to 46 ft. LOA, the ability to retain Pacific cod CDQ in excess of the 20 percent maximum retainable amount (MRA) provided for in the halibut fishery. The difference between the vessel requirements for halibut CDQ fishing and directed Pacific cod CDQ fishing means that Pacific cod caught in the halibut fishery is generally not able to be retained by small vessels for commercial use. Adjusting the regulations for these fisheries could reduce Pacific cod discards and increase small vessel economic opportunities in the halibut CDQ fishery.

In June 2014, the Council identified Alternative 4, along with National Marine Fisheries Services' (NMFS) expanded recommendations, as a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA). This alternative would provide for an exemption to the License Limitation Program (LLP) for hook-and-line vessels less than or equal to 46 ft. LOA that are fishing Pacific cod CDQ. This alternative would still require specific documentation for fishery participants to demonstrate eligibility while on the water. However, unlike an LLP license this documentation would be issued without charge and unlimited in supply. Additionally, the PPA outlines the retention and catch accounting process that would take effect in a directed Pacific cod CDQ fishery under this alternative. This alternative would constrain the directed Pacific cod CDQ fishery to operate during the halibut CDQ season in order to provide a straight-forward accounting process for halibut caught while the vessel was targeting Pacific cod CDQ.

The Public Review Draft of the analysis also considers three options for the PPA. The first would apply the provision of the PPA that have been considered for the Pacific cod CDQ fishery to all of the groundfish CDQ fisheries (with the exception of sablefish). Option 2 considers extending a prohibition against discarding legal sized halibut while IFQ fishing to participates of the CDQ halibut fishery. The third option of the PPA would allow a Pacific cod CDQ directed fishery to occur before, during, and after the halibut CDQ season by using a combination of halibut CDQ and a CDQ group's Prohibited Species quota to account for halibut caught while Pacific cod CDQ fishing.

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In addition to consideration of the three options, the Public Review Draft also includes an expanded description of the practical elements of the PPA, including documentation of eligibility.