



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:BYC 17-019

Agenda Date12/4/2017

Agenda Number:D6

Dan Hull, Chairman
David Witherell, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Chinook Salmon Excluder EFP - Consultation

STAFF CONTACT: Sara Cleaver (NPFMC) and Brandee Gerke (NMFS)

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review 2018 EFP application
- Provide feedback to NMFS if necessary

BACKGROUND:

NMFS has received an exempted fishing permit (EFP) application from Mr. John Gauvin on behalf of Gauvin and Associates, LLC, to continue the development and testing of salmon excluder devices for the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery. The specific objective of the EFP application is to identify upgraded excluder design(s) and specific rigging configurations most likely to produce the greatest relative reduction in Chinook salmon bycatch rates on vessels from different horsepower and size classes of the fishery. Testing would be conducted in the 2018, 2019, and 2020 Bering Sea pollock fishery A seasons (January 20 through June 10). Results from each year would guide the device design to be tested the subsequent year during the period of this EFP. Tests would be performed on each of the following three classes of vessel authorized to fish in the Bering Sea pollock fishery: (1) catcher vessels equal to or less than 1,800 horsepower, (2) catcher vessels greater than 1,800 horsepower, and (3) catcher processors. The effectiveness of the excluder devices will be monitored under a set of systematic vessel operation types for each vessel class.

If granted, the EFP would exempt participating vessels from selected observer requirements and allow an exemption to fish in areas otherwise closed to fishing with trawl gear and the Steller Sea Lion Conservation Area. Additionally, following the practice that the Council and NMFS have approved for past EFP experiments dedicated to salmon bycatch reduction, groundfish and prohibited species taken during the experiment would not be counted against the annual TAC and PSC limits.

By regulation, NMFS is required to consult with the Council before issuing an EFP. Mr. John Gauvin will be available to present a description of the experiment. Posted as a single attachment under this agenda item is:

1. Letter to Council chairman from Dr. Jim Balsiger (NMFS AKR) regarding receipt of the application
2. AFSC's approval of the experimental design
3. NMFS' draft determination for categorical exclusion under NEPA

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4. The EFP application
5. Bering Sea Salmon Excluder EFP 15-01 Final Report
6. Summary of May 2017 Salmon Excluder Workshop