

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

C-1 Halibut Fishery Management

Oliver Holm, Kodiak Halibut Fishermen's Assn., Member of Halibut Workgroup. Kodiak is united against any form of moratorium or limited entry. He feels the make-up of the Halibut Workgroup was not equitable. Large boat representatives had three votes representing the same fleets; Petersburg with two permits had one vote and Kodiak with 700 permits had one vote. He does not feel the circle hooks had the effect of doubling the size of the fleet; they just reduced the number of days to catch the same amount of fish and cut expenses for fishermen. He feels the Council should work through IPHC's Conference Board to develop management measures.

Mark Lundsten, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union. They have supported a moratorium in the past, but not sure it is still a good idea since OMB did not approve it. The halibut fishery is now absorbing effort from other fisheries which are in bad shape. Not enough is know about where the halibut come from and they may decrease in the future. He feels the objectives for halibut management that the workgroup developed are a good start, but doesn't know just what the Council's course of action should be.

Arne Lee, Bob Alverson, Jack Knutsen, Fishing Vessel Owners' Assn. Mr. Lee pointed out that there seems to be a large discrepancy in the number of permits issued and the number of boats actually fishing. The number of boats will not decline if the Council abandons the moratorium or limited entry. More boats may come into the fishery because of the circle hooks. He feels the Council should set up a time plan to study any limited entry proposals and send them out for public comment. He is sympathetic to the proposal by the fishermen in the Pribilofs, but feels everyone should be treated equally. Bob Alverson said Association members endorse the moratorium as amended by the Workgroup and recommend that it be sent to the Secretary, regardless of OMB's previous comments. The Conference Board is probably the best way to address management alternatives for the 1984 season. Mr. Knutsen said he doesn't feel that the halibut fishery can support the size of the fleet; the management regime now seems to be to fish until the stocks are gone and then go into another fishery.

Barry Collier, North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners' Assn. The fishery should be managed for the benefit of the resource; then there would be no problems in the fishery.

Henry Mitchell, Bering Sea Fishermen's Assn. The IPHC will not deal with the concept of the developmental fishery for the Pribilofs. The only way to deal with the situation is for the Council to approve the proposal before them.

Flore Lekanof, Anthony Murculief, St. George Tanaq Corp., John Hooper, Nelson Island Fishermen's Assn. Mr. Lekanof said he is encouraged by the support they have received for their proposal for a developmental fishery. Area 4C should be established as an exclusive registration area open to small boat fishermen. Mr. Murculief said that halibut fishing is important to their

economy and the fact that they took 94,000 pounds last year by hand-jigging demonstrates that they could take a larger quota if the area were restricted to small-boat fishermen. Mr. Hooper also said that an exclusive registration area is the only way they will be able to develop their fishery in Area 4C.

Sig Mathisen, Petersburg Vessel Owners' Assn. He feels a moratorium is the first step in going into a limited entry system, but feels the Council should get involved in the IPHC's Conference Board for management of the fishery. He feels the Council should approve the moratorium and make it clear to NOAA and OMB that it is the first step toward a permanent management system for the fishery. If the moratorium is not going to be implemented, then something should be done in Area 2C which, he feels, is in worse shape than other areas.

Peter Allan, Kodiak. The moratorium is actually a limited entry scheme because of its restrictions. He asked that if the Council approves a moratorium, it not include vessel restrictions and the transfer of rights clause. An overall plan is needed for halibut management, not the piece-meal approach now being used. Mr. Holm said he felt Harold Lokken's proposal was well thought out, but he feels the Council should give the management authority to the IPHC Conference Board. Mr. Allan agrees with the objectives developed by the Workgroup and urged the Council to approve them.

Mike Haggren, Kodiak. Against the moratorium because it is not for biological reasons. He feels the fleet will equalize sooner or later; the strong will survive and the weak will drop out. He is against a exclusive registration area for Area 4C. Feels IPHC management has been good and sees no reason for the Council to get involved.

Barbara Monkiewicz, M/V KIKITUK, Kodiak. If the moratorium is approved, she is concerned about the vessel size limit. They have been very careful not to overcapitalize over the years and are now ready for a larger boat. Council should not pursue limited entry concepts because public hearings have not been held. Ms. Monkiewicz commended Harold Lokken on his work toward trying to solve the halibut problem, but is against his proposal; two-day-a-month openings may be good for some, but not for all.

Paul Folley, North Pacific Fishermen's Assn., Homer. A meeting of fishermen in the Homer area was held to discuss the moratorium; all of the members present were in favor of the moratorium. Mr. Folley suggested pre-registration for the halibut fishery, possible exclusive registration areas so IPHC would have an idea of what the effort is going to be by area, and staggered openings as possible management methods. If other areas in the state are against a statewide limited entry system, he asked the Council to consider one for the Southeast only.

Chuck Kekoni, Assn. of Alaska Halibut Fishermen. At this time, limited entry could not work because of the large number of people already in the fishery. He asked the Council to continue to explore halibut management methods and work with the IPHC Conference Board.

D-3A Gulf of Alaska Sablefish

Bill Gilbert, Ocean Beauty Seafoods. Ocean Beauty Seafoods is committed to the complete utilization of aquatic resources within the FCZ as soon as possible and utilization of existing shoreside facilities. There is a market for sablefish and he would like to develop a program to bring sablefish to Alaska processors for initial processing before shipping to the Lower 48. He urged the Council to provide increased allocations for domestic groundfish harvests.

Robert Brophy, Icicle Seafoods. Mr. Brophy told Council members that Icicle Seafoods has fulfilled their commitment to process 400 tons of sablefish and feels that in 1984 the entire sablefish OY in the Gulf can be utilized by the domestic fishing and processing industry.

Dave Woodruff, Alaska Fresh Seafoods. He believes the domestic industry can take the entire TALFF in 1984. His plant would like to process one to two million pounds of sablefish in 1984.

Peter Zachara, Independent Fishermen of Alaska. There are 20 fishing vessels out of the Sitka area and there is simply not enough fish to go around. The domestic industry cannot continue to expand until the foreign fishing industry is asked to leave. He would like to see the DAH raised to the OY level in the entire Gulf.

Joe McGill, Alaska Herring Co-op; Val Angason and Wm. Nicholson, Bristol Bay Herring Marketing Co-op. If the sablefish TALFF is eliminated, their herring operation with the foreign longliners would be jeopardized. They have tried to develop domestic markets but have had no luck. Loss of their agreement with the Japanese would have a detrimental effect on their local economy. They are working on the problem but need more time, at least 3 years, before the TALFF is eliminated.

Paul MacGregor, Japanese Longline Assn. Mr. MacGregor feels that there was not enough advance notice of the possibility of eliminating the sablefish TALFF in the Gulf. The longliners have been successful at arrangements to avoid gear conflicts and establish ground preemption. They are always willing to work with the domestic industry to solve conflicts. There is no real proof that the domestic industry is capable of harvesting the entire OY in the Gulf in 1984. Mr. MacGregor also told the Council that he felt there was not a thorough analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of eliminating the TALFF.

Jack Knutsen, Fishing Vessel Owners' Assn. Mr. Knutsen said the real issue is how many years the Japanese will be fishing sablefish in Alaska. The domestic industry will be making a large transition because of what is happening in the halibut fishery and he believes they can take the entire harvest in 1984.

Mark Lundsten, Deep Sea Fishermen's Union. They need the opportunity to fish more westward for sablefish. Their main concern is that there will be shorter and shorter halibut openings and they need something to fish in between these openings. Sablefish is their first choice.

Rod Armstrong, Agent for Korean fishing fleet. They have a very small directed blackcod fishery and last year had only one vessel on the grounds. They participate in the gear conflict prevention measures along with the Japanese and observe the time-area restrictions in the West and have never had any complaints. They would like to participate in any discussions that might be held to preserve any kind of access for them to this fishery and are willing to respect any restrictions in order to continue participation. The Council has never taken such a precipitous action before as cutting TALFF two weeks before the fishery begins and he requested that they act in a fair manner and with goodwill. There should be a full opportunity for all involved to submit data and proposals and participate in discussions before any such action is taken.

Oliver Holm, Kodiak Halibut Fishermen's Assn. They have a real problem with lost gear around Kodiak on the ledge. The foreign vessels lose the gear and then Kodiak fishermen get tangled in it. If the Council doesn't want to take the foreign fleets out of the entire area, he would like to suggest giving domestic fisherman the chance to fish first and allowing the foreign fleets to fish later in the fall.

Steve Johnson, Japan Deep Sea Trawlers Assn. The resources should be utilized per the FCMA. He feels the DAH estimates based on the NMFS survey are probably too high. Although the sablefish fishery in Southeast is fairly well developed, development in the western part of the Gulf is slower than predicted by NMFS and he believes that NMFS figures will prove to be over-estimations. He feels that DAH estimates should be revised downward. The Japanese trawl industry does not have a directed sablefish fishery and he would like to see an adequate amount of TALFF provided for incidental catch. A mechanism outside the OY is needed to permit the trawl fisheries to go forward. Mr. Johnson said he did not think the issue of the sablefish OY has been in the Federal Register or supporting documents prepared and doesn't think the Council should make a hasty decision on this issue.

Lonnie Chesnut, Alaska Longline Fishing Assn. Last year domestic fishermen fished in the area of the Portlock Banks and decided that they would increase effort further westward, but they need relief from the Japanese longline pressure. There is so much Japanese gear on the grounds that it is one to two years before domestic fishermen can fish without getting entangled in lost gear.

David Harville, Alaska Draggers Assn. Groundfish allocations are being requested for a species (sablefish) which American fishermen are denied an opportunity to sell. Alaska Draggers is currently engaged in three joint fishing ventures with different nations and have at least 20 American trawlers involved. This is the first opportunity for the American segment to provide a strong data base on which to base future American groundfish operations in the Gulf of Alaska. Presently, there is an arbitrary regulation limiting the landing of sablefish in a joint venture arrangement to less than 1.5% of the total catch. There is no conservation-related reason to prevent U.S. landings in excess of this amount. The Alaska Draggers Assn. supports the development of full utilization of the available sablefish resource by the American

fishing industry, but feels it is unfair to be limited to such a severe degree in their opportunity to market sablefish in joint ventures. Sablefish represents a significant percentage of the total catch in all areas they are trawling. They asked the Council to remove the limitation on American fishing to support the fullest possible domestic utilization of the total resource.

Ron Kutchick, Kodiak. He has participated in joint ventures out of Kodiak and is allowed to sell sablefish except when involved with a joint venture. He has received six telegrams from Bristol Bay fishermen and organizations asking the Council to give the Japanese longliners a fair deal.

Paul MacGregor. Mr. MacGregor said he had developed a solution to the problem which he felt would be mutually agreeable. The basic agreement would be to phase-in foreign effort this year in the western area of the Gulf after October 7. If the U.S. industry could harvest the entire sablefish quota in the gulf, then there would be no directed foreign sablefish longlining there for the remainder of 1984. The NPLGA vessels would only longline for Pacific cod in waters less than 350 meters.

End of public testimony.