



**ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
October 7-8, 2026**

The Advisory Panel met Wednesday, October 7, through Thursday, October 8, 2026, at the Egan Center in Anchorage, AK. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings:

Tiffany Agayar	Lauren Howard	Chance Miller
Tamara Briggie	James Johnson	Landry Price
Eva Dawn Burk	Maktuayaq Johnson (virtual)	Chelsae Radell (Co-Vice Chair)
Bernie Burkholder	Rick Laitinen	Annika Saltman
Shannon Carroll (Chair)	Craig Lowenberg	Paul Wilkins
Nels Evens	Heather Mann (Co-Vice Chair)	Susie Zagorski

C2 BSAI Crab Harvest Specifications

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council adopt the 2026 Crab SAFE Report, as well as the 2026-27 OFL and ABC as recommended by the SSC for Bristol Bay Red King Crab, EBS Tanner Crab, EBS Snow Crab, and the 2026-27 and 2027-28 OFL and ABC as recommended by the SSC for St. Matthew Island Blue King Crab, and lastly, the rollover of OFL/ABC for Western Aleutian Islands red king crab for the year 2026-27.

Motion passes 17-0

Rationale in Support of Main Motion

- *The AP thanked both the CPT and SSC for their diligence and work to prepare these recommendations.*
- *The AP also showed appreciation to the CPT and SSC for their recognition of the continued high abundance of hybrids in this year's trawl survey and the challenges they continue to create. The AP also acknowledged the challenges of these hybrids in the assessment and research, but that there are also opportunities for increased harvest and economic value back to industry and the importance for continued discussion of next best steps.*

D1 Charter Halibut Permits Data Request – Discussion Paper, Committee report

AP Motion

The Advisory Panel recommends that the Council initiate an analysis to explore the potential effects of eliminating or modifying the cap for Guided Angler Fish described under (§ 300.65(c)(5)(ii)(D)(1)(iv)) In IPHC Areas 2C and 3A either permanently or for a set duration.

Analysis should also include a section exploring the possibility of NMFS to change the annual transfer cap of IFQ to the RQE described at (679.42(f)(8)(i)) from 1% to 2%.

D1 Amendment

Amendment to strike “The advisory panel recommends that the council initiate an analysis to explore the potential effects of eliminating or modifying the cap for Guided Angler Fish described under (§ 300.65(c)(5)(ii)(D)(1)(iv)) In IPHC Areas 2C and 3A either permanently or for a set duration.”

Amendment failed 14-4

Main Motion passed 14-4

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *GAF provides annual flexibility to CHP holders and operators who own or lease commercial QS. The RQE provides a sector-wide benefit through permanent acquisition of quota share with the interest of providing regulatory stability. The AP noted it is important to analyze whether meaningful GAF access can be maintained while preserving appropriate safeguards for the commercial sector and fully accounting for commercial, charter, and quota-market effects will provide the tools required for council action.*
- *The AP recommended that the analysis should evaluate alternatives for maintaining a meaningful, separately defined GAF transfer allowance while preserving appropriate limits and safeguards on the overall amount of commercial halibut quota made available to the charter sector. It should consider recent demonstrated GAF use, impacts on commercial QS availability and value, impacts on entry-level commercial participants, and the effects on CHP holders that rely on GAF including CHP holders who own commercial QS/IFQ and self-transfer GAF.*
- *A significant percentage of 3A GAF transfers over time have been self transfers. An unintended impact of the GAF : RQE roll out is to those commercial fishermen / charter operator QS holders, and analysis could provide a roadmap to extending the ability to self transfer. While 2c has fewer self transfers, anyone qualified to purchase QS and who did so to self GAF should have a path analyzed to be allowed to continue to do so.*
- *The intent of the second element of the motion recommends that the council evaluate increasing the annual RQE QS acquisition cap from 1% to 2% in Area 2C, without changing the existing 10% cumulative limit on RQE QS holdings. This would allow for a faster acquisition of quota share. Evaluating this interaction before increased RQE holdings begin to displace the existing and tenured management tool. GAF and the RQE serve different purposes.*
- *An AP member commented that the 2c fishery is currently on the floor of commercial viability, and decreases in 2c management measures result in almost linear increases in the unguided rental sector. Inaction here could drive more operations to bypass management measures by providing unguided rental – they simply won’t be able to compete. The AP felt analysis exploring changes that could be made so that GAF use would not be constrained as the RQE acquired quota is warranted.*

Rationale in Opposition of Motion

- *AP members in opposition felt that allowing GAF to continue on and even expand alongside the RQE would create a much larger re-allocation scheme than the 10% reallocation that was analyzed and decided upon by the Council the last time the Catch Share Plan was opened up to reconsider allocations.*
- *The AP noted that the RQE is only in its first year of activity, but that they have raised money, bought quota, and though the relief is not immediate, the program could be considered a success by those metrics. Time should be given for the RQE to grow their allocation and function before making further reallocation changes.*
- *AP members felt that the underlying problem with the decrease in halibut harvest in the charter sector is primarily driven by abundance of the resource, noting that between 2017-2026 both charter and commercial have taken a 30% reduction in halibut allocation. During this same time period, the AP noted many charter lodges and independent operators have diversified into the assisted unguided model. Since this model gives the ability to market trips where an angler can harvest 2 halibut of any size if you drive the boat yourself, the AP felt it was driving a significant increase in the harvest by this sector. In 2025, the unguided sector was over their annual allocation by 35%. Since that harvest is deducted from the total allowable catch before allocations for the commercial and charter sector are set, in 2C, the impact has become significant and the 2026 allocation for charter and commercial was deducted by 10%, not due to conservation, but to increased harvest in the unguided recreational halibut sector.*
- *AP members felt the issue is not the Catch Share Plan, the RQE or the phase out of GAF, but is due to a combination of record low abundance and a growing unguided sector. The unguided fleet is eroding the allocation to the charter sector and the charter sector's response is to say "we need more allocation to our sector."*
- *The way this motion is written would allow for an analysis of an unlimited reallocation through GAF lease to the charter sector. This is opening up a re-allocation issue that was "solved" through the creation of the RQE before the RQE has even had a chance to function. Re-opening the re-allocation options is the same as re-opening the Catch Share Plan.*
- *Before any re-allocation schemes, such as extending GAF, are explored, there needs to be a mechanism to monitor and regulate the unguided rental boat sector. As long as that sector continues to grow and harvest halibut at a 2 fish of any size level, any amount of re-allocation will not help. The unguided rental boat issue to take precedence over new analysis or new action.*

C1 Observer 2027 Annual Deployment Plan

AP Motion

The AP acknowledges the receipt of the 2027 Draft Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) and the PCFMAC Report, noting appreciation for staff's work on these items, particularly the successful CIE Review and long-awaited cost saving measures in Fixed Gear EM.

The AP supports and encourages the Council to adopt all of the recommendations from the PCFMAC.

Motion passes 18-0

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *The AP expressed appreciation to the Observer Program for their successful CIE review, noting that this is a big deal. Our Observer Program designed the most statistically robust sample design to collect fishery-dependent data that we can for the given budget. The only thing that could further improve our monitoring in the ADP is more money to increase rates.*
- *The AP thought it was especially important to note the PCFMAC's recommendation to have the Observer Program present to the IPHC about the CIE review and an overview of monitoring coverage in the directed halibut fishery and fisheries that incidentally encounter halibut to ensure the IPHC has accurate information regarding monitoring.*
- *While the AP supported NMFS and PCFMAC's recommendations to implement the respective strategies for 2027 and 2028 to reduce the number of inactive vessels in the Fixed Gear EM pool, they reiterated PCFMAC concern for the following:*
 - *If a vessel is removed from the EM pool and moved to the observer stratum due to low participation in EM, but is selected to carry an observer for a trip, there should be a process to evaluate whether they actually have space to carry an observer with some ability for a waiver or exemption. The AP noted they specifically should not have to carry one less crew member to take an observer since that makes the trip significantly less efficient to fish.*
 - *If someone buys a vessel that is new to them, but the vessel had been previously removed from the Fixed Gear EM pool, there should be a process for reviewing the individual person's EM participation history or quota holdings to prove they are a good application for the Fixed Gear EM pool. The AP noted that the Observer Program and NMFS Restricted Access Management (RAM) division, who tracks permits and quota, should be able to communicate; new owners shouldn't be penalized for a past owner's history.*
- *The AP noted that although moving vessels into the no selection pool did not show any cost savings, they supported the PCFMAC's recommendation to review whether vessels with high amounts of effort could be moved into the Fixed Gear EM pool and provide overall cost effectiveness by improving the amount of monitored catch in the stratum. They noted that while most vessels in the no-selection pool have very little fishing effort, the analysis showed there are a number of vessels with very high-level of fishing effort in that pool.*

C3 BSAI Groundfish – Proposed specifications

AP Motion 1

The AP recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2027 and 2028 BSAI groundfish specifications for OFLs, ABCs, and BRDs as recommended by the SSC and set proposed TACs, with all proposed specifications consisting of rollovers of 2026 final specifications from 2026/2027 harvest

specifications. The proposed TACs for both BS and AI Pacific cod have been adjusted to account for the State water GHL fisheries. The proposed TACs for sablefish have also been reduced in the BSAI by 5% to accommodate the GHL fishery.

The AP Recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2027 and 2028 seasonal and spatial allowances for Atka Mackerel as shown in Table 3.

The AP recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2027 and 2028 flatfish ABC reserves, annual and seasonal PSC limits and apportionments in the BSAI as provided in Tables 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

The AP recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2027 and 2028 halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) for the BSAI as shown in Table 12.

Tables 1, 3, and 7- 12 can also be found in the meeting agenda under C3.

Motion passed 18-0

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *This motion recommends the Council initiate proposed rulemaking for the upcoming 2-year harvest specifications.*
- *The AP appreciates the staff, plan team members, survey crews, etc for their hard work and quick turnaround of this information, including the efforts to mitigate timing impacts to final assessments in the event of future lapse in appropriations.*
- *Tables 1, 3, and 7-12 reflect the Plan Team's recommendations and serve as placeholders until the final SAFE reports are complete. The AP also noted that the proposed PSC tables 8 and 9 have been updated to reflect the Herring Biomass letter from ADFG that was received early, but noted that they remain proposed tables and changes may still occur in December during final specifications.*
- *The AP heard concerns about reductions in capacity within the Age and Growth program and for surveys. Since both provide important data streams for stock assessments, the AP encourages the Council to highlight these capacity concerns and take opportunities to raise them with the Administration.*

Table 1. AP OFL, ABC, and BRD recommendations (metric tons) for BSAI Groundfish Proposed

Species	Area	2026			Catch as of 9/8/2026	Recommended 2027-2028			
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	BRD	TAC
Pollock	EBS	2,496,000	2,036,000	1,375,000	1,125,707	2,496,000	2,036,000		1,375,000
	AI	56,231	46,437	19,000	2,478	56,231	46,437		19,000
	Bogoslof	77,354	58,015	250	165	77,354	58,015		250
Pacific cod	BS	169,243	141,520	123,077	111,824	169,243	141,520		123,077
	AI	16,273	12,973	8,951	6,084	16,273	12,973		8,951
	BSAI/GOA	57,797	47,008		19,226	57,797	47,008		
Sablefish	BS			8,996	2,723			13,037	8,996
	AI			7,440	831			11,421	7,440
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	305,039	267,639	145,000	67,518	305,039	267,639		145,000
	BSAI	2,059	1,328	1,328	178	2,059	1,328		1,328
Greenland turbot	BS			1,120	121			1,120	1,120
	AI			208	57			208	208
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	102,472	87,035	14,000	4,820	102,472	87,035	14,000	14,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	7,790	6,606	6,606	1,953	7,790	6,606	6,606	6,606
Northern rock sole	BSAI	166,220	158,225	75,000	35,917	166,220	158,225	75,000	75,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	106,283	87,700	36,000	16,216	106,283	87,700	36,000	36,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	33,965	28,230	15,682	4,143	33,965	28,230	15,682	15,682
Other flatfish	BSAI	26,083	19,562	4,500	3,754	26,083	19,562		4,500
	BSAI	43,084	36,578	33,490	18,945	43,084	36,578		33,490
Pacific Ocean perch	BS			9,905	3,070			9,905	9,905
	EAI			6,144	3,366			6,144	6,144
	CAI			5,441	4,050			5,441	5,441
	WAI			12,000	8,459			16,058	12,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	22,284	18,232	12,000	8,389	22,284	18,232		12,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	902	766	766	439	902	766		766
	EBS/EAI			441	101			441	441
	CAI/WAI			325	338			325	325
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	631	473	473	50	631	473		473
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,406	1,054	1,054	527	1,406	1,054		1,054
	BS		639	639	160			639	639
	AI		415	415	367			415	415
Atka mackerel	BSAI	107,889	92,361	82,941	59,986	107,889	92,361		82,941
	EAI/BS			41,731	24,297			41,731	41,731
	CAI			23,716	19,991			23,716	23,716
	WAI			17,494	15,698			26,914	17,494
Skates	BSAI	43,285	35,833	27,646	14,312	43,285	35,833		27,646
Sharks	BSAI	689	450	400	157	689	450		400
Octopuses	BSAI	6,080	4,560	400	150	6,080	4,560		400
Total	BSAI	3,849,059	3,188,585	2,000,000	1,487,705	3,849,059	3,188,585		2,000,000

Beginning in 2026, the Groundfish Plan Teams and Council bodies will use new terminology for groundfish harvest specifications. The purpose of this endeavor is to make the following distinction: the ABC (ACL) is specified at the stock or stock complex level, and the overall TAC for a stock or stock complex cannot be set above ABC. ABC is tied to MSA requirements and accountability measures (AMS). Spatial apportionments are based on survey data, fishery data, or a combination of the two data types, and are meant to inform distribution of the TAC across areas. These spatial apportionments will be referred to as Biologically-informed Recommended Distributions (BRD).

OFL = Overfishing Limit

ABC = Acceptable Biological Catch

BRD = Biologically-informed Recommended Distribution

TAC = Total Allowable Catch

Source: 2025 and 2026 Final BSAI Harvest Specifications; Catch Accounting System. BSAI catch (not AK wide catch) for sablefish included in catch total.

Table 3—Proposed 2027 and 2028 Seasonal and Spatial Allowances, Gear Shares, CDQ Reserve, ICA, and Amendment 80 Allocations of the BSAI Atka Mackerel TAC (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector ¹	Season ^{2 3 4}	BS/EAI	CAI ⁵	WAI ⁶
TAC ¹	Total	41,731	23,716	17,494
CDQ reserve ¹	Total	4,465	2,538	1,872
	A	2,233	1,269	936
	Critical Habitat	n/a	761	562
	B	2,233	1,269	936
	Critical Habitat	n/a	761	562
non-CDQ TAC	Total	37,266	21,178	15,622
ICA ¹	Total	800	100	20
Jig ^{1 6}	Total	0	n/a	n/a
BSAI trawl limited access	Total	3,647	2,108	n/a
	A	1,823	1,054	n/a
	Critical Habitat	n/a	632	n/a
	B	1,823	1,054	n/a
	Critical Habitat	n/a	632	n/a
Amendment 80	Total	32,819	18,970	15,602
	A	16,410	9,485	7,801
	Critical Habitat	n/a	5,691	4,681
	B	16,410	9,485	7,801
	Critical Habitat	n/a	5,691	4,681

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

¹Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii) allocates the Atka mackerel TACs, after subtracting the CDQ reserves, ICAs, and the jig gear allocation, to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors. The allocation of the ITAC for Atka mackerel to the Amendment 80 and BSAI trawl limited access sectors is established in table 33 to 50 CFR part 679 and § 679.91. The CDQ reserve is 10.7 percent of the TAC for use by CDQ participants (see § 679.20(b)(1)(ii)(C)).

²Sections 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(A) and 679.22(a) establish temporal and spatial limitations for the Atka mackerel fishery.

³The seasonal allowances of Atka mackerel for the CDQ reserve, BSAI trawl limited access sector, and Amendment 80 sector are 50 percent in the A season and 50 percent in the B season.

⁴Section 679.23(e)(3) authorizes directed fishing for Atka mackerel with trawl gear during the A season from January 20 to June 10, and the B season from June 10 to December 31.

⁵Section 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(1)(i) limits no more than 60 percent of the annual TACs in Areas 542 and 543 to be caught inside of Steller sea lion critical habitat; § 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(1)(ii) equally divides the annual harvest limits between the A and B seasons as defined at § 679.23(e)(3); and § 679.20(a)(8)(ii)(C)(2) requires that the TAC in Area 543 shall be no more than 65 percent of BRD in Area 543.

⁶Sections 679.2 and 679.20(a)(8)(i) require that up to 2 percent of the Eastern Aleutian District and Bering Sea subarea TAC be allocated to jig gear after subtraction of the CDQ reserve and ICA. The proposed amount of this allocation is 0 percent. The jig gear allocation is not apportioned by season.

Table 7–Proposed 2027 and 2028 ABC Surplus, ABC Reserves, CDQ ABC Reserves, and Amendment 80 ABC Reserves in the BSAI for Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Sector	Flathead sole	Rock sole	Yellowfin Sole
ABC	87,700	158,225	267,639
TAC	36,000	75,000	145,000
ABC surplus	51,700	83,225	122,639
ABC reserve	51,700	83,225	122,639
CDQ ABC reserve	5,532	8,905	13,122
Amendment 80 ABC reserve ¹	46,168	74,320	109,517

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

¹The 2028 allocations between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not be known until eligible participants apply for participation in the program by the deadline of November 1, 2027.

Table 8–Proposed 2027 and 2028 Apportionment of Prohibited Species Catch Allowances to Non-Trawl Gear, the CDQ Program, Amendment 80, and the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

PSC species and area and zone ¹	Total PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve ²	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector ³	BSAI trawl limited access sector	BSAI PSC limits not allocated to Amendment 80
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,079	710	315	n/a	1,309	745	n/a
Herring (mt) BSAI	2,015	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	97,000	n/a	10,379	86,621	43,293	26,489	16,839
<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	6,764,586	n/a	723,811	6,040,775	2,969,041	1,941,505	1,130,229
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 1	980,000	n/a	104,860	875,140	368,521	411,228	95,390
<i>C. bairdi</i> crab (animals) Zone 2	2,970,000	n/a	317,790	2,652,210	627,778	1,241,500	782,932

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

¹Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

²The PSQ reserve for the CDQ Program for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

³The halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector is determined annually based on the most recent halibut biomass estimates from the IPHC setline survey index and the NMFS AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index (§ 679.21(b)(1)(i)(A) through (C)). NMFS uses both halibut biomass estimates such that the value at the intercept of those survey indices from table 58 to 50 CFR part 679 is the Amendment 80 sector halibut PSC limit.

Table 9—Proposed 2027 and 2028 Herring and Red King Crab Savings Subarea Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for All Trawl Sectors (Herring amounts are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

Fishery categories ¹	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	116	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish ²	59	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	6	n/a
Rockfish	6	n/a
Pacific cod	11	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	1,793	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ^{3 4}	24	n/a
2026 Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear ⁵	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,015	97,000

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

¹Target fishery categories are defined at § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (e)(3)(iv).

²“Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

³Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and “other species” fishery category.

⁴“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

⁵In October 2026, the Council recommended and NMFS proposes that the red king crab bycatch limit within the RKCSS be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC limit (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(2)).

Table 10—Proposed 2027 and 2028 Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors and Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Programs (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton. Crab are in number of animals.)

BSAI trawl limited access sector fisheries ²	Prohibited species and area ¹				
	Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1	<i>C. opilio</i> (animals) COBLZ	<i>C. bairdi</i> (animals)	
				Zone 1	Zone 2
Yellowfin sole	250	23,337	1,853,931	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish ³	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rockfish April 15-December 31	5	n/a	1,564	n/a	1,000
Total Pacific cod ⁴	315	2,955	78,191	60,000	50,000
AFA CP Pacific cod	6	278	7,350	5,640	4,700
PCTC Program Pacific cod, A and B	220	1,653	43,744	33,567	27,973
Trawl CV Pacific cod, C season	15	134	3,542	2,718	2,265
PCTC Program unallocated reduction	73	890	23,555	18,075	15,062
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species ⁵	175	197	7,819	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access sector PSC	745	26,489	1,941,505	411,228	1,241,500

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

¹Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

²Target fishery categories are defined at § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(B) and (e)(3)(iv).

³“Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland turbot, Kamchatka flounder, rock sole, and yellowfin sole.

⁴The BSAI trawl limited access sector Pacific cod PSC limits for halibut and crab are split between AFA C/Ps, PCTC A and B-season for trawl CVs, and open access C-season (§ 679.131(c) and (d)). The halibut PSC limits are reduced for the A and B season trawl CV sector by 25 percent each year (§ 679.131(c)(1)(iii)). The crab PSC limits are reduced for the A and B season trawl CV sector by 35 percent each year (§ 679.131(d)(1)(iii)). Any amount of the PCTC Program PSC limit remaining after the B season may be reapportioned to the trawl CV open access fishery in the C season.

⁵“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

Table 11—Proposed 2027 and 2028 Halibut Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for Non-Trawl Fisheries (values are rounded to the nearest metric ton)

Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	C/P	CV	All Non-Trawl
Pacific cod	Annual Pacific cod	648	13	661
	January 1-June 10	388	9	n/a
	June 10-August 15	162	2	n/a
	August 15-December 31	98	2	n/a
Non-Pacific cod non-trawl-Total	May 1-December 31	n/a	n/a	n/a
Groundfish pot and jig	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Sablefish hook-and-line	n/a	n/a	n/a	Exempt
Total for all non-trawl PSC	n/a	n/a	n/a	710

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 12—Proposed 2027 and 2028 Pacific Halibut Discard Mortality Rates (DMR) for the BSAI

Gear	Sector	Halibut discard mortality rate (percent)
Pelagic Trawl	All	100
Non-Pelagic Trawl	Mothership and catcher/processor	84
Non-Pelagic Trawl	Catcher vessel	64
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Pot	All	18

Note: Seasonal or sector apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

C3 GOA Specs

AP Motion 2

The AP recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2027 and 2028 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs, as recommended by the SSC and set TACs shown in Table 1. Final specifications will be approved in December 2026. The TACs for both GOA cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water GHL fisheries. The proposed GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in Table 2. The AP recommends that the Council adopt the proposed 2027 and 2028 annual and seasonal Pacific halibut PSC limits and apportionments in the GOA as provided in Tables 9, 10, and 11 and the proposed 2027 and 2028 halibut discard mortality rates (DMRs) for the GOA in Table 12.

Motion passes 18-0

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *At this meeting the Council will recommend for proposed rulemaking the GOA groundfish harvest specifications for the upcoming two-year period (2027 and 2028) which will notify the public of expected Council action to set final harvest specifications in December 2026.*
- *Final harvest specifications in December 2026 will be based on stock assessment reports included in the Groundfish SAFE reports for the GOA that will be released in November 2026.*
- *The AP noted appreciation for the work of the survey teams, assessment authors, and plan team for all their hard work during the annual specification process, particularly after adjusting to the disruption in the process last year.*

The AP also noted that the comments made regarding data availability and assessments made under the BS motion apply to the GOA specification process as well.

C3 Sablefish

AP Motion 3

The AP recommends the sablefish stock assessment team explore additional stock assessment models and methods not limited to 25.12_1Reg_Cont (Status Quo), 26.1_1reg and 26.2_FAA for the November Joint Groundfish Plan Team and December Council meetings.

The AP recommends the Sablefish stock assessment team explore the following models:

1. Model 26.1_1Reg with carryover apportionment.
2. A three year phase in of the 26.2 FAA model and how it would be apportioned through all regions (AI, BS, WGOA, CGOA, WYAK, SEO).
3. Model 26.2_FAA with domed selectivity for the model and the survey for the Bering Sea.
4. A sensitivity run that uses the M value from 26.1_1Reg in model 26.2_FAA.

Finally, the AP supports reestablishment of comprehensive annual surveys for this valuable stock and the use of commercial size composition and CPUE data.

Motion passed 18-0

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *The AP acknowledged and discussed the potential changes to the model used in the coastwide sablefish stock assessment, which comes as the result of a change in the sablefish longline survey design and a CIE review that was conducted. They specifically noted the Joint Plan Team minutes, which mentioned that there currently is no biological concern for the stock and there is evidence pointing towards continued strong recruitment classes.*
- *Due to the significant potential reductions in coastwide sablefish ABC under these new models (ranging from an 18% reduction under Model 26.1 to a 32% reduction under 26.2_FAA), the AP noted that there has been a large outcry by sablefish stakeholders of all sectors in opposition to the new proposed models.*
- *The AP felt the recommendations included in this motion are responsive to the public testimony as well as recommendations that came out of the SSC, noting specifically that the first two model frameworks listed came from stakeholder recommendations in written and public testimony and the third and fourth recommendations came from SSC deliberation.*
 - *The first model option would reintegrate carryover data from the non surveyed region into the modeling framework.*
 - *The second model option would look at a way to phase in the proposed 26.2 FAA model over several years, rather than taking the 32% coastwide reduction in a single year.*
 - *The third option would be able to more specifically model sablefish population trends that are more region specific that do not fit a Coastwide trend model.*
 - *The fourth model option would allow for an understanding of the treatment of M in both of the new models relative to other changes between the two models.*
- *AP members recognized that an AP request for new model parameters outside of SSC recommendations is not common practice, but that the unprecedented ABC reduction without a biological concern warranted an expanded look at the options to minimize sudden impact to stakeholders.*
- *An AP member noted that the proposed reductions are of such a significant scale, that if they were to be implemented without a phase in, it could force the processing sector to have to make determinations about opening smaller seasonal processing locations which could further disadvantage harvesters.*
- *An AP member expressed concern with supplementing judgement on scientific recommendations but noted the need for better communication regarding the model changes and resulting decline in harvest levels. They expressed concern regarding public trust in science when such dramatic changes happened without adequate outreach.*

D3 IFQ/CQE Motion

AP Motion

The AP recommends the Council adopt a Purpose and Need and the following suite of alternatives for initial review. The Purpose and Need could include these recommendations:

- Commercial fisheries have long served as the cultural, social, and economic foundation for coastal Alaska communities, providing jobs and income, food security, and multi-generational knowledge and cultural transfer.
- While the CQE program was designed to create greater access for GOA communities, over the past two decades, the high cost of halibut IFQ and administrative burden of starting and managing a CQE has limited its success.
- The CQE program intended to maintain commercial fishing opportunities in rural coastal Alaskan communities to revive economic opportunity and rebuild infrastructure essential to the harvesting, processing, and marketing of seafood, the local employment and economy, the generations of connections to the sea, and the long-term viability of the community itself.
- These actions intend to help enhance access to the halibut and sablefish resource by residents of fishery dependent communities.

Alternative 1: No Action

Alternative 2: Modify the following provisions of the IFQ and CQE programs:

Element 1. Allow time tendering in any US federal or state commercial fishery to count towards the 150-day eligibility requirement to receive IFQ or QS by transfer (TEC).

Element 2. Replace the existing NMFS interim policy with a regulation to establish a minimum age to be eligible to receive IFQ or QS by transfer:

- a. 11
- b. 14
- c. 16

Element 3. Allow a CQE to assign and manage quota in-season through the use of the hired master system.

- a. Waive minimum eligibility requirements (TEC) for eligible fishermen fishing CQE quota similar to the regulations for hired masters.
- b. Allow QS or IFQ transfers to persons under 18 years of age.

Element 4. Increase the amount of quota an individual GOA CQE can hold. (No change to the overall cap for the entire program: 21% of the total halibut QS and 21% of the total sablefish QS in each IFQ regulatory area in which CQEs are eligible to hold QS)

- a. Area 2C (per community)
 - i. 1% (status quo)
 - ii. 1.5%
 - iii. 2%
- b. Area 2C, 3A,3B combined (per community)
 - i. 0.5% (status quo)
 - ii. 1%
 - iii. 2%
- c. Recommend changes to the CQE regulations to allow a regional CQE to hold up to the community level cap for each individual community it represents.

Element 5. Waive the prior notice of landing requirement and restricted unload hours for small IFQ deliveries. Analysis should include consideration of Element 6 and the ability of tenders to receive IFQ delivery at an amount sufficient to service a remote CQE community without a currently operational processor.

- a. 1000 lbs
- b. 1500 lbs
- c. 2000 lbs

Element 6. Expand IFQ unloading areas by:

- a. Adding All GOA CQE communities listed in table 21 to Part 679 in 50 CFR
- b. Provisions to tie Element 5 and 6 together
- c. Allowing IFQ to be received by a tender vessel for delivery to a buying station or registered buyer in a port.

None of these elements are mutually exclusive and may be selected in combination.

Motion passes 17-0

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *The motion is responsive to the majority of oral and written public testimony received by the AP. However, the motion maker did clarify that while these alternatives and elements do not address some issues specific to the community of Adak, that omission should not be interpreted as action not being necessary. Rather, the motion maker felt there were larger nuances specific to Adak that were challenging to fit into this action and that the AP should defer to the Council taking those into consideration as to how to address them.*

Specific to Element 1:

- *This expansion would help broaden access to a TEC without eroding the initial premise to make IFQ available to crew members from fishing vessels by providing additional opportunities for deckhands to accrue days towards their TEC requirements. Tendering is an entry level position into the commercial fishing industry, many tender crew go on to also work on harvesting vessels, sometimes even the tender vessel also prosecutes fisheries outside of their tendering season.*
- *The motion maker noted that Element 1 was modeled after a similar change made in the Crab Rationalization Program.*

Specific to Element 2:

- *The AP heard public testimony that CQE's have youth under 18 who have interest in fishing the CQE quota. Across Alaska and especially in rural coastal communities, fishing families raise their kids on their commercial fishing boats and start crewing with their parents. Some have even gone on to their own quota by the ages of 10, 12, 14 and CFEC limited entry permits by the age of 16.*

- *The AP noted that although the discussion paper indicated potential legal issues with contracts and responsibilities associated with IFQ transfer and ownership, parental consent or co-signature is commonplace and could easily replace these concerns.*

Specific to Element 3:

- *The AP noted that administrative work for the CQE is heavy, especially when working with larger volumes of fishermen which equates to larger volumes of paperwork and reporting. The current QS transfer system for the CQE is burdensome and troublesome from an administrative perspective.*
- *The AP heard testimony that when managing A shares or hired masters with the hired master system under eFish, the administrator is able to assign quota to the fishermen as needed as well as track landings and progress throughout the season. However, when the CQE program was developed, using a similar system for eligible community member use was an oversight. The CQE quota is always owned by the community CQE, and only temporarily/seasonally transferred to the eligible community member. But the current transfer system treats this quota like regular quota and it is transferred to the community member, but then cannot be tracked or differentiated from other quota owned or used by this individual. In addition to challenges for the CQE and community members using, the lack of tracking has also posed problems for enforcement and the agency when looking at landings, vessel use caps and individual use caps.*
- *The AP noted that the inability to both track and differentiate the CQE quota is more than just a CQE administrative problem. We highly recommend addressing this issue now rather than waiting for the IFA to be developed. The AP felt that the Agency can use the current hired master system and create a mechanism to designate the CQE quota to this system. This would decrease the overall burden on both the CQE administration, RAM/NMFS staff as well as enforcement.*

Specific to Element 4

- *The AP noted that IFQ ownership caps in the sablefish and halibut fisheries are important to preserve a larger, diversified fleet of vessels. This action has potential to provide more economic benefits to be distributed in the communities and allow CQE's to provide larger blocks of quota to eligible community members. The overall CQE program cap of 21% would remain unchanged and increases should still be tied to abundance, measured as a percentage of the IFQ and vary annually with TAC setting.*
- *A regional CQE that represents multiple communities is currently held to the same individual community cap. When quota is purchased for the CQE it is designated to the community it will be used in. It cannot be easily transferred or sold and is held by that community and made accessible to only residents of that community. The regional model is allowed under current*

regulations, but as written, the regulations do not provide the same opportunity for the regional model CQE communities as a single community CQE.

- *Many CQE's feel the current cap levels are constricting, especially when looking for long term funding and investment in the program. To make a true economic impact on a community, the more quota made available to the residents, the better.*

Specific to Element 5

- *There are numerous small boat fishermen who target small amounts of IFQ on shoulder seasons or between openers for state fisheries. These vessels are largely restricted in their ability to go out in unfavorable weather conditions and utilize short weather windows to prosecute their fishery. The PNOL is required for any targeted IFQ landing and between enforcement, call center and processors this restricts offload hours from 6 am to 6 pm. It also requires a vessel to call in their landing 3 hours prior to the offload beginning. For most small vessels, they will not have the ability to make that call until they are back in cell service, near town which often leads to a delay in delivery that can add an extra day to a vessel's ability to turn around and leave the dock again.*
- *The analysis notes that these deliveries make up 46-50% of total deliveries but only 6.8-11% of the total halibut IFQ landed weight. We would encourage further analysis to include a cost analysis of monitoring this level of catch. There is a potential that a disproportionate amount of money is being spent for a modest return in data.*
- *Removing the PNOL would not necessarily mean that 46-50% of these landings would go unmonitored, it would mean that enforcement would not have 3 hours notice prior to the landing. Most enforcement offices are located within minutes of the dock and offloads can still be monitored during normal operating hours or as needed.*
- *The PNOL was intended to allow enforcement the opportunity to access remote or unmanned ports throughout Alaska.*
- *We would encourage further analysis to also show how many of these landings are occurring in remote, unmanned ports versus ports with enforcement offices where landings can easily be audited without the 3 hour notice needed to transit to a remote port.*
- *This element pairs with Element 6 because it would allow tenders to receive deliveries in remote ports.*

Specific to Element 6:

- *Many CQE communities do not have an operational processor, nor easy access to a processor. They are also not all on the list of designated ports for offload regardless of their history as commercial fishing ports. This creates large barriers to participating fishermen and limits participation to community residents with a larger vessel that can access the processors in other communities. In the summer months when most CQE fishing activity is occurring there*

are a large number of tender vessels operating and transiting in many GOA regions, especially in SE Alaska. This request for analysis is to increase opportunities for communities which were once thriving fishing communities with active processors to rebuild their fleets and provide market access for their fish that does not require potentially dangerous and long distance transit to the nearest larger community with an active processor.

- *This action would be best combined with the request in Element 5 to remove the PNOL to allow the vessels the flexibility to work with the tenders schedules. This would also be largely utilized for deliveries under 2000lbs and the AP would recommend them being analyzed together.*
- *A registered buyer permit is not as simple as it sounds; it requires permitting from the State of Alaska department of revenue, ADFG, DEC and other equipment constraints. Tenders are operating for processors which hold these permits for their facilities. It would be helpful if this requirement could be waived or if a tender could act as a buyer for their employer who holds the Registered Buyer Permit.*

E Staff Tasking Motion

AP Motion

The advisory panel recommends that the Council initiate a sector-neutral review of Pacific halibut mortality in the Gulf of Alaska including trawl PSC, fixed-gear and directed commercial discard mortality, and charter release mortality.

The review should evaluate whether current PSC apportionments, discard-management measures, minimum-size requirements, and charter release-management measures remain appropriately calibrated to current stock conditions, actual mortality, and demonstrated fishery performance, and should identify practicable opportunities to reduce avoidable halibut mortality. The analysis should also consider the age and size composition of mortality. The Council should coordinate with or request appropriate analysis from the IPHC.

Motion fails 12-5

E Staff Tasking Motion

AP Motion 2

The Advisory Panel recommends that the Council task staff with developing a discussion paper evaluating the feasibility, costs, benefits, and implementation considerations associated with achieving 100% at-sea monitoring, through human observers, electronic monitoring (EM), or a combination of both, across all federally managed fisheries in the GOA.

The discussion paper should:

1. Evaluate existing monitoring requirements and coverage levels across GOA federally managed fisheries, identifying differences in monitoring coverage, catch and discard accounting, and individual vessel accountability for fisheries that have been allocated quota.

2. Examine the feasibility of achieving 100% monitoring across fisheries and gear types, including the effectiveness of existing and emerging electronic monitoring technologies, operational considerations, and vessel safety.
3. Evaluate alternative funding mechanisms, ranging from full industry responsibility for monitoring costs to expanded or modified cost-sharing approaches utilizing the existing Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) and partial coverage funding structure.
4. Assess the implications of differing monitoring coverage levels for the reliability of catch and bycatch estimates, individual vessel accountability, and the Council's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of conservation and bycatch reduction measures in GOA fisheries.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide the Council with the information necessary to evaluate a more consistent, transparent, effective, and equitable monitoring framework across all GOA fisheries, especially fisheries that have been allocated quota, before moving forward with a sector neutral examination of halibut mortality.

Rationale

The Council has received extensive public testimony in recent years calling for greater accountability, improved bycatch reporting, and additional measures to reduce incidental catch in federally managed fisheries. These concerns are legitimate and deserve careful consideration. However, if increased accountability is the objective, the Council should first examine monitoring requirements comprehensively across all fisheries and gear types in the GOA.

Accountability should be a fundamental expectation of every federally managed fishery, regardless of gear type.

Currently, substantial disparities exist in monitoring requirements among federally managed fisheries. Established component of federal fisheries management, they do not provide the same level of direct, vessel-specific accountability as comprehensive monitoring.

These differences are particularly relevant given the significant variation in discard rates among fisheries documented in recent Council staff reports.

At the February 2026 Council meeting, staff presented updated bycatch information demonstrating that, in 2025:

- Gulf of Alaska longline fisheries discarded 41.0% of their total catch by weight, compared with just 3.4% for GOA trawl fisheries.
- The GOA halibut longline fishery had a 49.2% discard rate, meaning nearly half of its total catch by weight was discarded.
- GOA Pacific cod longline fisheries had a 36.4% discard rate, compared with 10.3% for Pacific cod trawl fisheries.
- GOA pollock trawl fisheries had a discard rate of just 1.4%.

These are not isolated differences. Council staff's historical data demonstrate that GOA halibut longline discard rates increased from 36.6% in 2016 to 49.2% in 2025. During that same period, GOA pollock trawl discard rates remained between 0.9% and 3.2%.

These figures do not establish that differences in monitoring coverage cause differences in discard rates, nor do they account for the distinct operational characteristics of individual fisheries. They do, however, highlight why a comprehensive examination of monitoring requirements and the reliability of catch and discard accounting within rationalized fisheries is important.

It is difficult to argue for greater accountability in federally managed fisheries without first examining whether accountability standards are being applied consistently across fisheries.

This issue is especially relevant to ongoing discussions about halibut discard mortality in the Gulf of Alaska. Before considering additional measures that could substantially affect particular fishing sectors, the Council should have a clear understanding of how halibut catch, discards, and mortality are monitored and estimated across all fisheries that interact with the resource.

Reliable catch accounting and independent monitoring are essential to evaluating conservation measures, measuring their effectiveness, and ensuring confidence in management decisions. A comprehensive discussion paper would help the Council determine whether existing differences in monitoring requirements warrant further consideration.

The Council should also recognize that several fishing sectors have already made substantial investments in comprehensive monitoring. Catcher vessels participating in the Bering Sea pollock and Pacific cod trawl cooperative fisheries operate under 100% monitoring requirements and bear significant associated costs. These programs demonstrate that comprehensive monitoring is achievable, although the appropriate monitoring tools, funding mechanisms, and operational requirements may differ among fisheries.

At the same time, expanded monitoring requirements must be evaluated in the context of the management tools available to individual fisheries. Rationalized fisheries often have quota management systems and operational flexibility that allow participants to better manage their catch and bycatch. Non-rationalized fisheries, including portions of the Gulf of Alaska trawl fleet, do not necessarily have access to these same tools.

Importantly, this motion does not propose an immediate requirement for 100% monitoring across all fisheries. It simply requests that the Council examine the feasibility, costs, benefits, and potential consequences of moving toward a more consistent monitoring framework. It is a first step.

The Council has repeatedly emphasized the importance of accountability, accurate bycatch accounting, and effective conservation measures. Those principles should be considered across all federally managed fisheries, not selectively applied based on gear type or existing monitoring requirements.

It is really important for me to note that this is not a dig on the observer program. It is clear that staff spend a lot of time and energy trying to create an effective and robust program. It is hard for me to understand though why the halibut and sablefish IFQ fishery is not 100% observed as a rationalized fishery.

If the goal is greater accountability and better understanding of species discard mortality, the Council should begin with a comprehensive evaluation of accountability across the entire fleet. This discussion paper focuses on GOA rationalized fisheries as a first step and this data can help inform a discussion around all is a reasonable, measured, and necessary first step toward that objective.

Motion fails 11-6