



C2 RQE Fee Modification

October 2024

Action Memo

Council Staff: Sarah Marrinan
Other Presenters: Kurt Iverson (NMFS)
Action Required: 1. Review discussion paper with NMFS recommendations
2. Identify preferred alternative; adopt a final recommendation

BACKGROUND

This agenda item considers two modifications to the Council's April 2022 motion that recommended a charter halibut stamp program as a means to provide funding to the charter halibut Recreational Quota Entity (RQE).

NMFS has been moving forward with implementation of a charter halibut stamp program. Given the volume of halibut stamp transactions and the wide range of business models in the charter industry, NMFS's goal is to develop a program that is as simple and secure as possible under the circumstances. As the agency explored concepts to achieve these goals, two portions of the Council's April 2022 motion for a halibut stamp program posed challenges: NMFS's potential contract with the RQE to issue the stamps and to collect the fees, and tiered fees (\$20-\$40-60\$) used to purchase stamps.

NMFS provided a Discussion Paper for this meeting that provides essential background on the halibut stamp program and proposes to address the challenges noted above by 1) carrying out the fee collection and halibut stamp issuance through the NMFS Alaska Region eFish platform; and, 2) adopt a single fee for halibut stamps instead of using a tiered fee approach. Both changes add simplicity and less cost while still maintaining the Council's overall intent for the stamp program. If the Council agrees that NMFS should make these changes to the RQE funding provisions in the April 2022 motion, the Council would need to make a new motion to reflect their endorsement of the changes.

In June 2024, the Council received a presentation during the B2 NMFS management report regarding these RQE funding mechanism recommendation from NMFS. Because this item was not noticed on the agenda for the June 2024 meeting, the Council has scheduled this topic as an agenda item to consider a motion at this time. **The discussion paper posted under C2 has only minor revisions to the document posted and presented at the June Council meeting. Therefore, this item is only scheduled on the Council's agenda, and it will include only a brief staff report along with a public testimony opportunity and an opportunity for the Council to consider action.**