

C3 - Cook Inlet Salmon FMP Amendment Council Motion, December 10, 2022

The Council recommends releasing the analysis for a new amendment to the Salmon FMP for public review and anticipated final action at the April 2023 Council meeting. This action is necessary so NMFS can implement an FMP amendment by the May 1, 2024 court-ordered deadline. The Council is not selecting a preliminary preferred alternative at this time.

Purpose and Need (unchanged from the Council's October 2022 motion)

The Council intends to amend the Salmon FMP to manage salmon fishing in the Federal waters of upper Cook Inlet. Federal management must be consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including the required provisions for an FMP specified in section 303(a). This proposed action is necessary to bring the Salmon FMP into compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act consistent with the 2016 Ninth Circuit decision and the recent summary judgment opinion of the Alaska District Court in UCIDA et al. v. NMFS.

Alternatives (unchanged from the Council's October 2022 motion except for adding the options summarized below)

Alternative 1: No Action.

Alternative 2: Federal management of the fishery in the EEZ with specific management measures delegated to the State.

Option 1: Delegate recreational salmon fishery management measures to the State (as described at Section 2.4.3, pg. 81) and include monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting measures (as described at Section 2.4.8.2, pg. 97) as well as standardized bycatch reporting methodology for the recreational fishery (as described at Section 2.4.9, pg. 98).

Option 2: Establish a peer review process that works in conjunction with the SSC as an option for an Annual Process for Determining the Status of the Stocks (as described in Section 2.4.7, pg. 91).

Option 3: Streamline the process to determine the status of stocks and set harvest specifications as a sub-option for an Annual Process for Determining the Status of the Stocks (as described in Section 2.4.7, pg. 94).

Alternative 3: Federal management of the fishery in the EEZ.

Option 1: Define optimum yield in terms of a range of annual catch limits (as described at Section 2.5.5, pg. 109).

Option 2: Streamline the process to determine the status of stocks and set harvest specifications as a sub-option for an Annual Process for Determining the Status of the Stocks (as described in Section 2.5.6, pg. 111).

Option 3: Adopt recreational salmon fishery management measures (as described at Section 2.5.9, pg. 113) and include monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting measures (as described at Section 2.5.7.2, pg. 113) as well as standardized bycatch reporting methodology for the recreational fishery (as described at Section 2.5.8, pg. 113).

Option 4: Fix a commercial salmon fishery closure date for the Cook Inlet EEZ as an option for establishing commercial fishing periods (as described in Section 2.5.11, pg. 94). Evaluate July 15 as a potential closure date, as well as a range of other potential closure dates in July.

Alternative 4: Federal management of the commercial fishery in the EEZ with the EEZ closed to commercial fishing.