



**ADVISORY PANEL  
Motions and Rationale  
December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

REPORT

December 3-6, 2024 – Anchorage, AK

*The Advisory Panel met on Tuesday, December 3, through Friday, December 6, 2024, at the Egan Center in Anchorage, AK. The following members were present for all or part of the meetings:*

Agayar, Tiffany	Johnson, Jim	O'Donnell, Paddy
Briggie, Tamara	Kavanaugh, Julie	Price, Landry
Burk, Eva Dawn	Laitinen, Rick	Radell, Chelsae
Carroll, Shannon <b>(Chair)</b>	Lowenberg, Craig	Wilkins, Paul <b>(Co-VC)</b>
Evens, Nels	Maktuayak	Zagorski, Suzie
Gudmundsson, Gretar	Mann, Heather <b>(Co-VC)</b>	
Heuker, Tim	Howard, Lauren	

**C1 BSAI Groundfish Specifications**

**Motion**

**C1 BSAI Groundfish Specs**

The AP has reviewed the 2024 Ecosystem Report for the EBS and AI. The AP greatly appreciates the work put into this detailed report each year.

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2024 BSAI Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.

The AP recommends the Council approve the final 2025 and 2026 BSAI groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Pacific Cod TACs have been adjusted for the State Water cod fisheries.

The AP recommends the Council approve no reduction from max ABC for the 2025 and 2026 ABC Flatfish Reserves. (NO TABLE Associated)

The AP recommends the Council approve the 2025 and 2026 PSC limits and apportionments as assigned to their respective target fisheries as provided in Tables 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 (attached).

The AP recommends the Council approve the halibut discard mortality rates for 2025 and 2026 as shown in Table 20 (attached).

***Motion passed: 18/2***

***Rationale in Favor of Motion***

- *The collaboration among analysts, authors, contributors, and especially industry members is key to this process for the Bering Sea.*
- *These recommended TAC levels take into account changes from stock assessment updates, plan team recommendations and the SSC's recommended OFLs and ABCs . The proposed TACs take into account deductions for state water fisheries (BSAI cod), statutory minimums (AI pollock ), and any adjustments necessary for sea lion protection.*
- *The sum of the BSAI TACs cannot exceed 2 million mt and the proposed TAC sheet balances to that number.*
- *The Bering sea pollock TAC of 1.375 million metric tons reflects the suggestion from multiple industry representatives and CDQ groups. It's a scientifically sound and 6% increase from 2024. This increase is still over 1 million metric tons lower than the robust, scientifically based, and more conservative ABC recommendation from Plan Team and SSC.*
- *The Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Pacific Cod TACs are set equal to ABC after accommodating for the State GHL fisheries, of which the DH GHL fishery saw another increase in P.Cod allocation. P.cod is harvested by various fishery sectors with a range of gear types, therefore providing the maximum harvest opportunity. Overall the BSAI TAC has decreased from 2024 by about 9%.*
- *The 2025 and 2026 BSAI sablefish ABC was reduced by 5% to reflect the SSC's recommendation, but is still a slight increase from the 2024 ABC. Overall the BSAI sablefish TAC is not increased from 2024. It is however apportioned in relation to the subarea ABC changes. So, relative to 2024, the BS TAC is increased and the AI TAC is reduced. This also reflects more utilization by both sectors in the Bering Sea versus the Aleutian Islands.*
- *There is a decrease in the Yellowfin sole TAC supported by both the Amendment 80 fleet and the YFS TLAS participants to accommodate for the increase in pollock TAC and balance the BSAI TAC sheet.*
- *There have been slight adjustments to some flatfish TACs to either be more proportionate to recent 2024 catch or to accommodate potential catch amounts or allocation needs in 2025. The flatfish/non-pollock TACs reflect the recommendations by industry representatives in both the pollock and non-pollock sectors.*
- *The PSC allocations have been maintained except for adjustments to Herring, Halibut, and Crab, which reflect changes established by regulations. The AP heard from staff and the public about some of these changes like the State Of Alaska's herring estimate, ABM halibut, and PCTC halibut.*
- *There was concern expressed by an AP member about increasing sablefish TAC in the Bering Sea due to the decrease in the 2023 Longline survey, lack of a 2024 longline survey, and an overall decrease in the 2023 bottom trawl survey. The biomass in the Bering Sea is still primarily composed of immature fish and increased fishing pressure on these fish could have long term negative impacts to this long lived species.*

***Rationale in Opposition to motion:***

- *None provided*

Table 1.SSC recommended OFL, ABC Groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (metric tons) for 2025-2026

Species	Area	2024			Catch as of 11/23/2024	2025			2026		
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC
Pollock	BS	3,162,000	2,313,000	1,300,000	1,309,114	2,957,000	2,417,000	1,375,000	2,496,000	2,036,000	1,375,000
	AI	51,516	42,654	19,000	4,981	55,728	46,051	19,000	56,231	46,437	19,000
	Bogoslof	115,146	86,360	250	23	77,354	58,015	250	77,354	58,015	250
Pacific cod	BS	200,995	167,952	147,753	120,040	183,509	153,617	133,602	169,243	141,520	123,077
	AI	18,416	12,431	8,080	3,853	16,782	13,376	8,694	16,273	12,973	8,432
Sablefish	BSAI/GOA	55,084	47,146	n/a		58,532	47,605	n/a	57,797	47,008	n/a
	BS	n/a	11,450	7,996	4,720	n/a	13,203	8,996	n/a	13,037	8,996
	AI	n/a	13,100	8,440	1,414	n/a	11,566	7,440	n/a	11,421	7,440
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	305,298	265,913	195,000	85,373	299,247	262,557	135,000	305,039	267,639	145,000
Greenland turbot	BSAI	3,705	3,188	3,188	769	2,598	2,013	2,013	2,059	1,594	1,594
	BS	n/a	2,687	2,687	464	n/a	1,697	1,697	n/a	1,344	1,344
	AI	n/a	501	501	305	n/a	316	316	n/a	250	250
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	103,280	87,690	14,000	10,215	104,428	88,683	14,000	102,472	87,035	14,000
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	8,850	7,498	7,498	5,115	8,019	6,800	6,800	7,790	6,606	6,606
Northern rock sole	BSAI	197,828	122,091	66,000	29,359	165,444	157,487	75,000	166,220	158,225	75,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	81,605	67,289	35,500	12,707	101,621	83,807	36,000	106,283	87,700	36,000
Alaska plaice	BSAI	42,695	35,494	21,752	10,241	34,576	28,745	15,568	33,965	28,230	15,934
Other flatfish	BSAI	22,919	17,189	4,500	3,093	26,083	19,562	4,500	26,083	19,562	4,500
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	49,010	41,096	37,626	36,040	44,594	37,375	33,458	43,084	36,578	33,490
	BS	n/a	11,636	11,636	10,702	n/a	10,121	10,121	n/a	9,905	9,905
	EAI	n/a	7,969	7,969	7,780	n/a	6,278	6,278	n/a	6,144	6,144
	CAI	n/a	5,521	5,521	5,250	n/a	5,559	5,559	n/a	5,441	5,441
	WAI	n/a	15,970	12,500	12,308	n/a	15,417	11,500	n/a	16,058	12,000
Northern rockfish	BSAI	23,556	19,274	16,752	8,785	22,848	18,694	12,000	22,284	18,232	12,000
Blackspotted/Rougheye Rockfish	BSAI	761	569	569	618	838	706	706	902	766	766
	BS/EAI	n/a	388	388	179	n/a	408	408	n/a	441	441
	CAI/WAI	n/a	181	181	439	n/a	298	298	n/a	325	325
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	706	530	530	151	631	473	473	631	473	473
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,680	1,260	1,260	1,351	1,406	1,054	1,054	1,406	1,054	1,054
	BS	n/a	880	880	783	n/a	639	639	n/a	639	639
	AI	n/a	380	380	568	n/a	415	415	n/a	415	415
Atka mackerel	BSAI	111,684	95,358	72,987	72,176	122,622	103,247	82,000	107,889	92,361	82,941
	BS/EAI	n/a	41,723	32,260	31,769	n/a	46,650	39,000	n/a	41,731	41,731
	CAI	n/a	16,754	16,754	16,654	n/a	26,511	24,443	n/a	23,716	23,716
	WAI	n/a	36,882	23,973	23,753	n/a	30,087	18,557	n/a	26,914	17,494
Skates	BSAI	45,574	37,808	30,519	25,900	44,086	36,523	27,646	43,285	35,833	27,646
Sharks	BSAI	689	450	400	174	689	450	400	689	450	400
Octopuses	BSAI	6,080	4,560	400	240	6,080	4,560	400	6,080	4,560	400
<b>Total</b>	BSAI	<b>4,609,077</b>	<b>3,476,801</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>1,746,452</b>	<b>4,334,715</b>	<b>3,588,401</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>3,849,059</b>	<b>3,189,821</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>

Sources: 2024 OFLs, ABCs, and TACs are from

Table 15—Final 2025 and 2026 ABC Surplus, ABC Reserves, Community Development Quota (CDQ) ABC Rese  
in the BSAI for Flathead Sole, Rock Sole, and Yellowfin Sole

[Amounts are in metric tons]

sector	2025 Flathead sole	2025 Rock sole	2025 Yellowfin sole	2026 <sup>1</sup> Flathead sole
ABC	83,807	157,487	262,557	87,700
TAC	36,000	75,000	135,000	36,000
ABC surplus	47,807	82,487	127,557	51,700
ABC reserve	47,807	82,487	127,557	51,700
CDQ ABC reserve	5,115	8,826	13,649	5,532
Amendment 80 ABC reserve	42,692	73,661	113,908	46,168

<sup>1</sup> The 2026 allocations for Amendment 80 species between Amendment 80 cooperatives and the Amendment 80 limited access sector will not participate in the program by November 1, 2025.

Table 16–Final 2025 and 2026 Apportionment of Prohibited Species Catch Allowances to Non-Trawl Gear, the CDQ Program, Amendment 80, and the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors

PSC species and area and zone <sup>1</sup>	Total PSC	Non-trawl PSC	CDQ PSQ reserve <sup>2</sup>	Trawl PSC remaining after CDQ PSQ	Amendment 80 sector <sup>3</sup>	BSAI trawl limited access sector <sup>4</sup>	BSAI PSC limits not allocated to Amendment 80 <sup>3</sup>
Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI	3,079	710	315	n/a	1,309	745	n/a
Herring (mt) BSAI	2,651	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	12,850,000	n/a	1,374,950	11,475,050	5,639,987	3,688,081	2,146,982
<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

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

<sup>2</sup> The PSQ reserve for crab species is 10.7 percent of each crab PSC limit.

<sup>3</sup> Amendment 123 sets the BSAI halibut PSC limit for the Amendment 80 sector annually based on the most recent halibut abundance estimates from the IPHC setline survey index and the NMFS AFSC Eastern Bering Sea shelf trawl survey index (88 FR 82740, November 24, 2023). The Amendment 80 Program reduced apportionment of the trawl PSC limits for crab below the total PSC limit. These reductions are not apportioned to other gear types or sectors.

The Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program (PCTC) reduced the Pacific cod PCTC PSC limit for halibut by 12.5 percent in 2024 and 25 percent in 2025 (679.131(c)(1)(iii)(A and B)). The PCTC Program reduced the Pacific cod PCTC PSC limit for crab by 35 percent each year (679.131(c)(1)(iii)).

Table 17–Final 2025 and 2026 Herring and Red King Crab Savings Subarea Prohibited Species Catch Allowances for all Trawl Sectors

Fishery categories	Herring (mt) BSAI	Red king crab (animals) Zone 1
Yellowfin sole	153	n/a
Rock sole/flathead sole/Alaska plaice/other flatfish <sup>1</sup>	77	n/a
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	8	n/a
Rockfish	8	n/a
Pacific cod	14	n/a
Midwater trawl pollock	2,359	n/a
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>2,3</sup>	31	n/a
Red king crab savings subarea non-pelagic trawl gear <sup>4</sup>	n/a	24,250
Total trawl PSC	2,651	97,000

<sup>1</sup>“Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, flathead sole, Greenland

<sup>2</sup>Pollock other than midwater trawl pollock, Atka mackerel, and “other species” fishery category.

<sup>3</sup>“Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

<sup>4</sup>In December 2024, the Council recommended and NMFS approves that the red king crab bycatch limit for non-pelagic trawl fisheries within the RKCSS be limited to 25 percent of the red king crab PSC allowance (see § 679.21(e)(3)(ii)(B)(2)).

Note: Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 18—Final 2025 and 2026 Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for the BSAI Trawl Limited Access Sectors and Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program

BSAI trawl limited access sector fisheries	Prohibited species and area <sup>1</sup>				
	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	3,521,726	346,228	1,185,500
Rock sole/flathead sole/other flatfish <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Greenland turbot/arrowtooth flounder/Kamchatka flounder/sablefish	-	-	-	-	-
Rockfish, April 15-December 31	5	-	2,971	-	1,000
Total Pacific cod <sup>3</sup>	315	2,955	148,531	60,000	50,000
AFA CP Pacific cod	6	278	13,962	5,640	4,700
PCTC Program Pacific cod, A and B season	220	1,653	83,096	33,567	27,973
Trawl CV Pacific cod, C season	15	134	6,728	2,718	2,265
PCTC Program unallocated reduction	73	890	44,744	18,075	15,062
Pollock/Atka mackerel/other species <sup>4</sup>	175	197	14,854	5,000	5,000
Total BSAI trawl limited access sector PSC	745	26,489	3,688,082	411,228	1,241,500

<sup>1</sup> Refer to § 679.2 for definitions of areas and zones.

<sup>2</sup> “Other flatfish” for PSC monitoring includes all flatfish species, except for halibut (a prohibited species), Alaska plaice, arrowtooth flounder, Amendment 122 established the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative (PCTC) Program that further apportioned the BSAI trawl limited access sector Pacific cod PSC limits between AFA CPs, PCTC A and B-season, and open access C-season (§ 679.131(c)(1)(i) and (ii)). In 2024, NMFS will apply a 12.5 percent reduction to the A and B season trawl CV sector halibut PSC apportionment after the Council recommends and NMFS approves the BSAI trawl limited access sector’s PSC limit apportionments to fishery categories. In 2025 and every year thereafter, NMFS will apply a 25 percent reduction to the A and B season trawl CV sector halibut PSC apportionment. The crab PSC limits are reduced for the A and B season trawl CV PSC limit by 35 percent each year to determine the overall PCTC Program (§ 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 limited access fishery in the C season. Because the annual halibut PSC limit for the PCTC Program is not a fixed amount established in regulation and, instead, is determined annually through the harvest specification process, NMFS must apply the reduction to the A and B season apportionment of the trawl CV sector apportionment to implement the overall PSC reductions under the PCTC Program.

<sup>4</sup> “Other species” for PSC monitoring includes skates, sharks, and octopuses.

**Note:** Species apportionments may not total precisely due to rounding.

Table 19—Final 2025 And 2026 Halibut Prohibited Species Bycatch Allowances for Non-Trawl Fisheries

Halibut mortality (mt) BSAI					
Non-trawl fisheries	Seasons	Catcher/processor	Catcher	All Non-Trawl	
Pacific cod	Total 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	49
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	/10

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



Table 20–2025 and 2026 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	86
Non-pelagic trawl	Catcher vessel	67
Hook-and-line	Catcher/processor	9
Hook-and-line	Catcher vessel	9
Pot	All	21

## **C2 GOA Groundfish Specs**

The AP has reviewed the 2024 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) and GOA Groundfish Plan Team reports, and appreciates the thoroughness of the work by all contributors.

1. The AP recommends that the Council approve the 2024 GOA Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.
2. The AP recommends that the Council approve the final 2025 and 2026 Gulf of Alaska Groundfish harvest specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC, and the TACs as shown in the attached Table 1. The TACs for both GOA Pacific cod and pollock have been adjusted to account for the State Water Guideline Harvest Level Fisheries. The GOA Pacific cod adjustments are shown in Table 2 in the action memo.
3. The AP recommends that the Council set the final 2025 and 2026 Pacific halibut PSC limits, allowances, and apportionments in the GOA as shown in Tables 3-5 in the C2 GOA action memo.

*Motion passed: 18/1*

### ***Rationale in Favor of Motion:***

- *In October, the Council adopted proposed harvest specifications for OFL and ABC for 2025 and 2026 which is the natural starting point for final specifications at the December meeting. Species ABCs and OFLs were revised based on new data and/or methodologies presented by the Plan Team at November's meeting. Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) are an integral part of the Council's Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation ("SAFE") document, and they include assessments based on ecosystem indicators that reflect the current status and trends of ecosystem components ranging from physical oceanography to biology and human dimensions.*
- *Table 1 reflects the SSC's adjustments to the sablefish ABCs relative to the Plan Team's recommendations.*
- *Final Halibut DMRs were reviewed and adopted at the October council meeting. There are no changes to these halibut DMRs since the October Council meeting, and are not necessary as part of this motion.*
- *The AP noted this is a thorough, statistically sound specification process which provides us the ability to make decisions using the best available science.*

*The "no" vote was due to technical reasons, not philosophical opposition.*

Table 1. SSC recommended OFL and ABC for Groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska (metric tons) for 2025 and 2026

Species	Area	2024			Catch 11/1/2024	SSC Recommended 2025			SSC Recommended 2026			
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	TAC	OFL	ABC	TAC	
Pollock	State GHL	n/a	4,769		3,640	n/a	4,526		n/a	3,326		
	W (610)	n/a	38,882	38,882	31,457	n/a	37,344	37,344	n/a	27,453	27,453	
	C (620)	n/a	90,937	90,937	71,571	n/a	82,265	82,265	n/a	60,477	60,477	
	C (630)	n/a	50,587	50,587	20,534	n/a	51,605	51,605	n/a	37,936	37,936	
	WYAK	n/a	5,565	5,565	1,382	n/a	5,282	5,282	n/a	3,883	3,883	
	Subtotal	269,916	190,740	185,971	124,944	210,111	181,022	176,496	153,971	133,075	129,749	
SEO	12,998	9,749	9,749		12,998	9,749	9,749	12,998	9,749	9,749		
Total	282,914	200,489	195,720	124,944	223,109	190,771	186,245	166,969	142,824	139,498		
Pacific Cod	W	n/a	8,745	8,121	4,216	n/a	8,710	6,097	n/a	8,182	5,727	
	C	n/a	20,590	15,442	14,401	n/a	20,506	15,379	n/a	19,263	14,447	
	E	n/a	2,937	2,203	489	n/a	2,925	2,194	n/a	2,748	2,061	
	Total	38,712	32,272	23,766	19,106	38,688	32,141	23,670	36,459	30,193	22,236	
	Alaska-wide OFL and ABC	AK Total	55,084	47,146	n/a	21,759	58,532	47,605	57,797	47,008	47,008	
Sablefish	W	n/a	4,699	4,699	2,620	n/a	4,746	4,746	n/a	4,687	4,687	
	C	n/a	9,651	9,651	6,698	n/a	9,744	9,744	n/a	9,622	9,622	
	WYAK	n/a	2,926	2,926	2,295	n/a	2,686	2,686	n/a	2,652	2,652	
	SEO	n/a	5,320	5,320	4,073	n/a	5,660	5,660	n/a	5,589	5,589	
	GOA Total	n/a	22,596	22,596	15,686	n/a	22,836	22,836	n/a	22,550	22,550	
Shallow-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	23,337	13,250	63	n/a	23,755	13,250	n/a	23,902	13,250	
	C	n/a	27,783	27,783	2,742	n/a	28,279	28,279	n/a	28,455	28,455	
	WYAK	n/a	2,778	2,778	1	n/a	2,828	2,828	n/a	2,846	2,846	
	SEO	n/a	1,667	1,667	1	n/a	1,697	1,697	n/a	1,707	1,707	
	Total	68,121	55,565	45,478	2,807	69,277	56,559	46,054	69,610	56,910	46,258	
Deep-Water Flatfish	W	n/a	237	237	8	n/a	234	234	n/a	231	231	
	C	n/a	2,655	2,655	78	n/a	2,616	2,616	n/a	2,568	2,568	
	WYAK	n/a	1,856	1,856	3	n/a	1,828	1,828	n/a	1,795	1,795	
	SEO	n/a	2,314	2,314	2	n/a	2,280	2,280	n/a	2,238	2,238	
	Total	8,387	7,062	7,062	91	8,263	6,958	6,958	8,114	6,832	6,832	
Rex Sole	W	n/a	3,367	3,367	23	n/a	3,382	3,382	n/a	3,353	3,353	
	C	n/a	13,639	13,639	474	n/a	13,698	13,698	n/a	13,562	13,562	
	WYAK	n/a	1,453	1,453	1	n/a	1,436	1,436	n/a	1,413	1,413	
	SEO	n/a	2,905	2,905	-	n/a	2,871	2,871	n/a	2,825	2,825	
	Total	25,978	21,364	21,364	498	26,002	21,387	21,387	25,743	21,173	21,173	
Arrowtooth Flounder	W	n/a	30,409	14,500	486	n/a	33,593	14,500	n/a	33,716	14,500	
	C	n/a	64,871	64,871	16,329	n/a	68,261	68,261	n/a	68,511	68,511	
	WYAK	n/a	7,870	7,870	29	n/a	6,695	6,695	n/a	6,719	6,719	
	SEO	n/a	16,099	6,900	22	n/a	10,998	10,998	n/a	11,039	11,039	
	Total	142,485	119,249	94,141	16,866	142,832	119,547	100,454	143,347	119,985	100,769	
Flathead Sole	W	n/a	13,273	8,650	145	n/a	13,592	8,650	n/a	13,757	8,650	
	C	n/a	21,307	21,307	763	n/a	21,817	21,817	n/a	22,083	22,083	
	WYAK	n/a	3,876	3,876	0	n/a	3,970	3,970	n/a	4,018	4,018	
	SEO	n/a	2,047	2,047	0	n/a	2,097	2,097	n/a	2,122	2,122	
	Total	49,414	40,503	35,880	908	50,587	41,476	36,534	51,176	41,980	36,873	
Pacific ocean perch	W	n/a	1,787	1,787	1,667	n/a	1,753	1,753	n/a	1,688	1,688	
	C	n/a	28,757	28,757	21,294	n/a	28,209	28,209	n/a	27,156	27,156	
	WYAK	n/a	2,110	2,110	1,946	n/a	2,070	2,070	n/a	1,993	1,993	
	SEO	n/a	7,065	7,065	-	n/a	6,930	6,930	n/a	6,672	6,672	
	Total	47,466	39,719	39,719	24,907	46,562	38,962	38,962	44,826	37,509	37,509	
Northern Rockfish	W	n/a	2,535	2,535	315	n/a	1,396	1,396	n/a	1,346	1,346	
	C	n/a	2,280	2,280	817	n/a	3,680	3,680	n/a	3,549	3,549	
	E	n/a	-	-	-	n/a	-	-	n/a	-	-	
	Total	5,750	4,815	4,815	1,132	6,064	5,076	5,076	5,848	4,895	4,895	
	Shortraker Rockfish	W	n/a	34	34	15	n/a	34	34	n/a	34	34
C		n/a	189	189	137	n/a	189	189	n/a	189	189	
E		n/a	424	424	191	n/a	424	424	n/a	424	424	
Total		863	647	647	343	863	647	647	863	647	647	
Dusky Rockfish		W	n/a	145	145	71	n/a	209	209	n/a	199	199
	C	n/a	7,365	7,365	2,122	n/a	5,818	5,818	n/a	5,527	5,527	
	WYAK	n/a	84	84	5	n/a	215	215	n/a	204	204	
	SEO	n/a	30	30	-	n/a	96	96	n/a	91	91	
	Total	9,281	7,624	7,624	2,198	7,705	6,338	6,338	7,319	6,021	6,021	
Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish	W	n/a	197	197	51	n/a	224	224	n/a	229	229	
	C	n/a	315	315	140	n/a	359	359	n/a	366	366	
	E	n/a	525	525	98	n/a	597	597	n/a	608	608	
	Total	1,555	1,037	1,037	289	1,576	1,180	1,180	1,631	1,203	1,203	
	Demersal shelf rockfish	W/C/WYAK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	361	271	n/a	271	271
SEO		376	283	283	153	524	394	394	524	394	394	
Total		376	283	283	153	885	665	665	885	665	665	
Thornyhead Rockfish		W	n/a	314	314	35	n/a	206	206	n/a	206	206
		C	n/a	693	693	65	n/a	590	590	n/a	590	590
	E	n/a	621	621	64	n/a	542	542	n/a	542	542	
	Total	2,170	1,628	1,628	164	1,784	1,338	1,338	1,784	1,338	1,338	
	Other Rockfish	W/C/WYAK	n/a	1,353	1,353	511	n/a	1,084	1,084	n/a	1,084	1,084
SEO		4,977	3,774	1,653	541	4,618	3,505	1,384	4,618	3,505	1,384	
Total		6,200	4,700	4,700	380	6,200	4,700	3,000	6,200	4,700	3,000	
Atka mackerel		W	n/a	745	745	163	n/a	745	745	n/a	745	745
		C	n/a	1,749	1,749	815	n/a	1,749	1,749	n/a	1,749	1,749
	E	n/a	341	341	140	n/a	341	341	n/a	341	341	
	Total	3,780	2,835	2,835	1,118	3,780	2,835	2,835	3,780	2,835	2,835	
	Longnose Skate	W	n/a	104	104	35	n/a	104	104	n/a	104	104
C		n/a	1,894	1,894	461	n/a	1,894	1,894	n/a	1,894	1,894	
E		n/a	538	538	220	n/a	538	538	n/a	538	538	
Total		3,380	2,536	2,536	716	3,380	2,536	2,536	3,380	2,536	2,536	
Other Skates		GOA-wide	887	665	665	547	887	665	665	887	665	665
Sharks	GOA-wide	6,521	4,891	4,891	1,288	6,521	4,891	4,891	6,521	4,891	4,891	
	GOA-wide	1,307	980	980	197	1,307	980	980	1,307	980	980	
Octopuses	GOA-wide	1,307	980	980	197	1,307	980	980	1,307	980	980	
	TOTAL	765,608	599,784	520,020	214,879	709,422	590,762	539,404	649,064	539,295	489,216	

Source: 2024 and 2025 Final GOA Harvest Specifications; Catch Accounting System. GOA catch (not AK wide catch) for sablefish included in total.

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
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C3 BSAI Crab Specifications – Norton Sound Red King Crab

The AP acknowledges the receipt of the CPT report and SAFE document. The AP recommends the Council approve the 2025 OFL and ABC for NSRKC as recommended by the SSC.

*Motion passed unanimously.*

*Rationale in Favor of Motion*

- *The AP appreciates the effort and work-product provided by the CPT and SSC.*

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Motions and Rationale**  
**December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

**C4 2025 Charter Halibut Annual Management Measures**

**Motion 1**

**For IPHC Area 2C:**

All allocations shown below include a daily bag limit of one halibut and a reverse slot size limit where the upper limit is fixed at O80 (halibut 80 inches or longer may be retained), and a restriction of 1 trip per charter vessel per day with retention of halibut and 1 trip per charter halibut permit per day.

- 1) If the allocation falls within the range of 0.897 Mlb and 1.013 Mlb:
  - Begin with a lower size limit of U38 (retained halibut must be less than or equal to 38 inches in length) and increase this limit until the allocation is reached, as indicated in **Table 2C.7a** of the ADF&G analysis.
- 2) If the allocation is less than 0.897 Mlb but greater than or equal to 0.752 Mlb:
  - Begin with a lower size limit of U38 (retained halibut must be less than or equal to 38 inches in length) closing Tuesdays starting September 9 working to May 13 until the allocation is reached, as indicated in **Table 2C.7a** of the ADF&G analysis.
- 3) If the allocation is less than 0.752 Mlb but greater than or equal to 0.715 Mlb:
  - Begin with a lower size limit of U37 (retained halibut must be less than or equal to 37 inches in length) closing Tuesdays from Sept 9 to June 24, and closing additional Tuesdays working to May 13 until the allocation is reached, as indicated in **Table 2C.7a** of the ADF&G analysis.

**For IPHC Area 3A:**

All allocations shown below include, unless otherwise specified: a daily bag limit of 2 halibut; one fish of any size and one fish with a maximum size limit of 28 inches; 1 trip per charter vessel per day with retention of halibut; and, 1 trip per charter halibut permit per day.

- 1) If the allocation is less than or equal to 2.079Mlb, but greater than or equal to 1.762Mlb, apply:
  - Close Wednesdays as needed to keep charter harvest removals within the Area 3A allocation, as indicated in **Table 3A.13** of the ADF&G analysis.
- 2) If the allocation is less than 1.762Mlb, but greater than 1.497Mlb:
  - In addition to all closed Wednesdays and a second halibut 28 inches or less, close as many Tuesdays as needed to keep the charter harvest removals within the Area 3A allocation, as indicated in **Table 3A.14** of the ADF&G analysis.
- 3) If the allocation is below 1.497Mlb:
  - In addition to closing all Tuesdays and Wednesdays, lower the size of the second fish to as low as 26 inches, until the projected charter harvest removals meet the allocation. This covers allocations as low as 1.425Mlb as indicated in **Table 3A.16** of the ADF&G analysis.

*Motion passed: 18/1*

***Rationale in Favor of Motion***

- *This is a part of the annual process of establishing regulations for guided-recreational anglers harvesting halibut on charter vessels in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A.*
- *The Charter Halibut Management Committee met in both October and December and this motion reflects the sector’s preferred regulations that are most likely to meet IPHC allocations.*

***These recommendations capture both increases in allocation and declines.***

**Specific to Area 2C:**

- *These recommendations reflect a diverse set of angler expectations between ports and areas as well as low and decreasing allocations in a time of increasing effort in the 2C charter sector; which contributes to increased harvest. There was strong debate and diverse opinions within the committee itself. It took thoughtful and strong compromise to arrive at a vote to support these measures.*
- *Effort increases for the 2024 season showed largely in ports with cruise ships. With the amount of halibut allocation available to the 2C guided sport fishery, the Committee did not believe that there should be two halibut trips in a single day.*
- *While 2C Committee members recognized that these sets of regulations do not account for up to a 25% decline, they represent a significant decline in harvest and 2C committee members felt including regulations to account for further declines in harvest was not appropriate and something they could not support. The Council has the option to modify the motion to reflect greater declines.*

**Specific to Area 3A:**

- *These recommendations mirror the regulations of previous years and are aimed at providing a consistent regulatory scheme that may add stability to client experience and expectation year-to-year.*
- *The AP recommendations also represent up to a 25% decline in harvest opportunity, which reflects the request of IPHC for a large drop in allocation in the IPHC Risk Tables presented at the Annual Meeting.*

**Rationale in Opposition to Motion**

- *For Area 2C, no recommendations were made for harvest levels lower than 0.715 Mlb. With current conversations in IPHC noting cuts of 15-25%, motion 2C measures only account for cuts up to 12%.*
- *Understanding that NMFS will address issues of conservation if catch levels are set at lower levels than the measurements provided, it is still troubling that the committee was unable to accept the possibilities of lower catch rates nor consider measures that they deem appropriate for those harvest levels.*
- *Having NMFS make changes to the Charter Halibut Management Measures that are outside the scope of this motion leave out stakeholder input and participation through both the council and committee process.*

## Motion 2

The AP recommends the Council initiates an analysis of CHP use of transferable, non-transferable, CQE, and Military permits for areas 2C and 3A.

Analysis would include separate data for Areas 2C and 3A of the following:

1. Trends in transfer (including lease transfer of transferable, non-transferable, and CQE permits), consolidation, and retirement since implementation;
2. Trends in usage since program implementation for each permit type (transferable permits only needed to hit a 15-trip threshold, and non-transferable permits a 5-trip threshold)
3. Trends and projections of latent capacity in terms of both permits and angler endorsements
4. Projections of the effects of latency by area with CHPs at low, medium and max usage on harvest measures, with and without RQE aggregate caps reached

The AP recommends the Council direct NMFS and RAM to address the issuance of Charter Halibut Permits (CHP) to Community Quota Entities that are no longer active and consider the issuance trigger for these permits to be based on:

- a. Reporting requirements and/or
- b. Demonstration of the CQE being an active entity. I.e. Non-profit in good standing

Amendment failed: 5/15 (strikeout second half of motion, starting with the AP recommends...)

**Main Motion passed: 16/4**

### ***Rationale in Support of Motion 2***

- *This motion is considering recommendations directly from the Charter Halibut Committee. This data could be useful in understanding disappearing angler opportunity in the charter halibut fishery and in projecting how latent capacity in the permit program might affect future angler effort and the resulting effects on harvest measures.*
- *At the onset of the CQE program many communities developed non-profit entities and applied to become CQE's. Most of these CQE's were dissolved and are no longer in good standing as non profit entities. There are currently 5 CQE's which are either dissolved or not in good standing that have been issued CHP's most recently in 2024. Hydaburg, Coffman Cove, Edna Bay, Point Baker, Whale pass. Without any reporting requirement it is unclear if these are being used and if they are, then it is not legal. An AP member has been helping with the development of a CQE in Southeast Alaska and has spoken to both RAM and NMFS about this issue. It is something they have noted as needing to be fixed and a request from the Council could help to address this issue or look into it in the same analysis as requested above.*

### ***Rationale in Opposition to Motion 2***

- *Including the second part of the request goes further than the Charter Halibut Committee recommendation and was not something that was actually brought to the AP in written or oral public comment or via the staff presentation.*
- *There are concerns about including the second part of the motion because the impacted organizations or individuals may not even be aware of what is being proposed or what actions could be taken related to CQE.*



## **ADVISORY PANEL Motions and Rationale December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

### **D1 Climate planning**

The Advisory Panel (AP) recommends the Council continue its efforts toward climate readiness, resilience, and responsiveness in fishery management by:

1. Advancing the Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) Recommendations:
  - Endorsing the three key elements outlined in the CCTF's Climate Readiness Synthesis and Final Report.
  - Supporting the rapid development and implementation of a Climate Resilience Workplan based on these recommendations.
2. Crafting a Climate Resilience Workplan:
  - Developing the workplan in a way that considers but is not bound by other climate-related initiatives at the Council, particularly the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).
3. Integrating Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Protocols:
  - Utilizing existing frameworks, such as the LKTKS Protocols, as foundational elements in Council processes.
  - Strengthening two-way engagement with Tribes and stakeholders to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge and diverse perspectives into fisheries management decisions.
4. Promoting Collaborative, Transparent, and Inclusive Climate Work:
  - Ensuring future climate-related activities are highly collaborative, transparent, and accessible, creating equitable pathways for Tribes, stakeholders, and the public to engage meaningfully.
  - Supporting the principles of Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM) to address both short- and long-term climate impacts.
  - The AP encourages Council staff to engage with the Alaska Fishery Science Center (AFSC) to incorporate climate synthesis information into agenda items, ensuring scientific insights are effectively integrated into decision-making processes.

***Motion passed unanimously.***

***Rationale in Favor of Motion***

- *There is an urgent need for action on this item as climate change is severely impacting marine ecosystems and communities, presenting significant challenges for fisheries management.*
- *Climate change risks exacerbate existing ecosystem issues and inequities, particularly for subsistence and Tribal communities.*
- *Fisheries management should ensure the well-being of ecosystems and communities in a way that is equitable and respectful of Tribal sovereignty and subsistence needs.*
- *Tribes bring millennia of knowledge, tools, and stewardship practices that are critical to shaping climate-resilient fisheries.*
- *As highlighted in the Climate Readiness Synthesis and the CCTF's Final Report, efforts toward co-production, collaboration, consultation, cooperation, and co-management with Tribes are essential for evolving federal fisheries management.*
- *A dedicated work plan aligned with the Council's goals would be highly valuable to guide climate resilience efforts. The work plan should progress independently of other initiatives to ensure timely action and sustained momentum.*
- *Previous Council work on Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS), community engagement, and Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM) should be utilized and adequately resourced to support implementation.*
- *Future climate work must be transparent, accessible, and inclusive, prioritizing meaningful engagement with Tribes, stakeholders, and the public.*
- *Concrete pathways and actions are needed to ensure true implementation of climate resilience strategies, addressing both short- and long-term challenges.*
- *By committing to these principles, the Council can foster climate resilience and support the sustainability of ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.*
- *This agenda item should remain a standalone item and stay a priority for the AP on the April 2025 agenda and future timelines.*
- *AP members noted that the IRA timeline for the 2026 PEIS is scheduled to have the Draft PEIS review occur in April or June 2026, and expressed concern that schedule may interfere with harvesting, especially from those within the Tribal Sector. Additionally, that if at all possible, to have any PEIS meetings scheduled in Anchorage*

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Motions and Rationale**  
**December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

**D2 BSAI Crab Arbitration**

**Motion 1**

The AP recommends that the Council initiate an expanded discussion paper with the following alternatives:

Alternative 1. No action

Alternative 2. Changes to the regulations governing the arbitration process.

Option 1. Remove the requirement that the arbitrator can only select a remedy proposed by one side. Allow the arbitrator to select an independent or compromise remedy based on the facts provided in the arbitration.

Option 2. Allow parties to receive the arbitrator's written report and rationale, as well as a publicly available report providing key rationale (without including confidential information).

Option 3. Remove the requirement for a market report.

Option 4. Remove the arbitration option for non-performance.

**'Option 5: Bond requirement to protect harvesters against failure to pay for processed crab**

Alternative 3. Specify conditions for IFQ and IPQ holders to withdraw their applications for quota after being accepted by NMFS.

Option 1. IFQ and IPQ holders can withdraw their applications for quota within 48 hours of BSAI crab rationalization species TACs being announced.

*Amendment 1 (add option 5): passed unanimously*  
*Main motion passed: 13/4 (2 abstaining)*

***Rationale in Favor of Motion***

- *Very few active processors remain in the fishery – this year there are only 1-2 processors actively processing crab, which makes it appropriate to request the Council initiate a regulatory amendment at this meeting to evaluate potential changes primarily associated with the arbitration system, to reduce cost, burden, and uncertainty in the program.*

- *The processor risk associated with these fisheries is very high, especially given closures and low TAC levels and it is likely even fewer crab processors will apply for their processing quota moving forward because they cannot continue to sharematch, be subject to arbitration, and commit to operating well prior to the TACs being announced and risk losing money in these fisheries.*
- *The options detailed in the motion and retained the overall structure and policy objectives of the original program. Actions the Council can take to increase transparency and flexibility and lower costs are worthwhile and necessary.*
- *The motion does not seek to eliminate the arbitration program or even make significant changes to it as there needs to be some means of arbitrating price disputes, since some harvesters may be matched with a processor not of their choosing. There is also a complicating dynamic: the program allows for non-active processors to own processing quota - they then match with harvesters and find custom processing arrangements with active processors, circumventing the system.*
- *Specific to Alternative 2:*
  - *This change would allow the arbitrator to select an independent or compromise remedy based on the facts provided in the arbitration. While the thought is that the current 'baseball style' arbitration results in both sides bringing more moderate proposals to the table, it also serves to stifle the arbitrator's latitude to support a compromise solution.*
  - *Currently participants receive the arbitrator's decision but have no rationale provided or understanding of the thought process or key information relied upon to come to a decision. As the paper states, currently the arbitrator's decision is final and issued without explanation (p. 4). Nobody is learning anything from each arbitration except whether they won or lost.*
  - *The market report is just one of the four data reports or agreements that must be paid for by participants and submitted annually, well prior to the fishery opening. It is intended to provide baseline information concerning the current market and help establish a reasonable price, although it has no binding effect and must be released at least 50 days before the season opening, which lessens its relevance.*
  - *The concern here is that non-active IPQ holders who are matched with IFQ holders will be liable for paying for crab, even if they cannot find a processor to process their crab. The analysis would detail any additional risk for harvesters that may arise.*
- *Specific to Alternative 3*
  - *Allow a specified time period after crab TACs are announced, in which IFQ or IPQ holders can withdraw their applications for quota.*
  - *This would provide increased regulatory certainty for an option that is already being used by processors due to low TACs and increased risk under the arbitration program.*
  - *The certainty is needed so that IPQ holders can make decisions before share matching begins.*
  - *Currently this is the only tool available for processors to avoid share matching but the timing of the TAC announcement and share matching process provides very little time to make a decision to withdraw.*

### ***Rationale in Opposition to Motion***

- *The arbitration program is not broken. There have been exactly 2 arbitrations in the past 10 years. Both of those arbitrations were triggered by processors paying well below the price paid by other processors. Because of "Baseball style arbitration", harvesters only asked the arbitrator for a price paid by the lowest payers. Accessing the arbitration system is very difficult for harvesters. Because of their FCMA status, ICE is the only cooperative that can arbitrate.*
- *As long as harvesters must sharematch with IPQ holders the arbitration system must remain in place as it is the only viable means by which harvesters can ensure that they are paid a fair price for their catch.*
- *Responsive to public testimony and Reference to BSAO written comment letter.*
- *Arbitration is a safeguard for harvesters against bad actors. Without it, bad behavior is encouraged with no viable recourse by harvesters.*
- *Specific to Option 1*
  - *Baseball" arbitration keeps a lid on the arbitration system. The risk of losing is a powerful disincentive to arbitrate that would effectively be removed if the arbitrator can choose a compromise price. It is reasonable to assume that without "baseball" arbitration, there will be a significant increase in arbitration events and therefore increased costs.*
- *Specific to Option 2*
  - *The arbitration issues are not that complicated. If a processor offers a price that is well below what others pay, they may end up in arbitration.*
- *Specific to Option 3*
  - *Market Report adds unnecessary expense to the program and is not used.*
- *Specific to Option 4*
  - *Despite the fact that there has never been a performance arbitration, its presence acts as a deterrent to anyone who would otherwise fail to comply with the arbitrator's decision or the terms of a contract. This is an important protection for both parties that should remain in place. Without it, a very expensive civil suit is the only recourse.*
- *If an IPQ holder cannot perform on par with others, harvesters wouldn't want to deliver to them. For that reason, harvesters are not opposed to this option as long as the quota is distributed to other IPQ holders and not stranded.*

### ***Rationale in Favor of Amendment***

- *Prior to the recent closure and receivership of Peter Pan Seafoods, harvesters incurred the full cost of preparing for and prosecuting the season (insurance, fuel, bait, groceries, transport, crew, etc.) Crab was harvested, delivered, processed and sold yet due to the closure, harvesters were not paid, with no recourse due to arbitration and litigation being stayed by the receivership.*

## **Motion 2**

The AP recommends that the Council initiate an expanded discussion paper to review the cooperative program structures for the Gulf of Alaska rockfish program and the BSAI Pacific cod trawl catcher vessel program and evaluate how the existing BSAI Crab Rationalization Program could be modified to a cooperative program while maintaining community, harvester, and processor protections.

*Motion failed 12/6*

### ***Rationale in Opposition to Motion***

- *The program was working well until very low TACs became an issue. For the first time since it was developed, the emergency exemption from regionalization looks like it will be implemented this year. This will address the largest issue for IPQ holders, the custom processing fee.*
- *Since high processing costs and high custom processing fees are such a concern, perhaps the Council may want to look at a solution to “mailbox” processors.*

## **ADVISORY PANEL Motions and Rationale December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

### **D3 BSAI Crab C-shares**

#### **Motion**

The Advisory Panel recommends the Council initiate a regulatory action with the following purpose and need statement and suite of alternatives for public review.

#### **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of this action is to encourage new entrants and to increase opportunity for active crab fishermen in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization (CR) Program by increasing flexibility around c-share requirements (also known as crew shares or CVC and CPC). This action is needed to address new challenges in the CR program in recent years that have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic, small or closed fisheries, less vessels participating in fisheries limiting opportunity and decreasing the value of c-shares. This situation makes it difficult for crab captains and crew to meet eligibility requirements to buy c-shares and has a chilling effect on new entrants in the fishery. In addition, the use caps for some CR program fisheries are so restrictive it further limits opportunity for and disadvantages active crab fishermen.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

**Alternative 1 – No Action/Status Quo** eligibility requirements for buying c-shares and c-share use caps.

#### **Alternative 2 – Revise Eligibility Requirements to Purchase/Receive C-Shares**

Allow time tendering to count toward the 150 days and increase time to 3 years to participate in a CR fishery trip.

For transfer of CVC QS and CPC QS require that an individual must be a U.S. citizen with:

- (1) at least 150 days of sea time as part of a harvesting crew in any U.S. commercial fishery or on a tender vessel operating in support of a commercial fishery managed by the State of Alaska or in a Federal commercial fishery in the EEZ off Alaska. Individuals may combine their participation as crew on a tender vessel in State and Federal commercial fisheries to meet this requirement; and
- (2) participation as crew in at least one fishing trip of the CR Program fisheries in the ~~365 days~~ 3 years prior to the date the transfer application is submitted to NMFS.

**Alternative 3 – Increase C-Share Use Caps only for Bering Sea crab stocks**

	<b>No Action</b>	<b>Option 3.2 middle limit</b>	<b>Option 3.3 upper limit</b>
<b>BBR</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>BSS</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>EBT</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>WBT</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>SMB</b>	<b>4% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>PIK</b>	<b>4% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>EAG</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>
<b>WAG</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>
<b>WAI</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>

The action alternatives are not mutually exclusive.

***Motion passed unanimously.***

***Rationale in support of the Motion***

- *This action would explore avenues to increase flexibility for existing or new entrants into the crab rationalization program. This is especially important considering recent challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, low harvest levels, and erratically opened fisheries. Many of these factors have contributed to fewer vessels participating in the CR program, and associated reductions in opportunities for crew to meet existing ownership qualification thresholds.*
- *This action could increase opportunities for new entrants and promote more economic stability and resiliency, which are key objectives of the CR program.*
- *The alternatives proposed would explore options that would closely mirror recent regulations for maintaining C-shares, which could help incentivize new entrants while also helping to streamline existing processes. They would also retain requirements to be a recent participant in the CR Program fisheries, to keep that tie with crab fisheries.*
- *The AP noted that some unknowns and concerns with permanent changes to the C-share ownership eligibility should be further analyzed in the next iteration so the Council can make an informed decision when thinking about impacts to the overall CR program.*
- *Over time, the pool of qualified applicants for C-shares has diminished. This action may increase those numbers to more closely reflect the pool size of qualified applicants during CR implementation.*



- *AP members noted that many CR crab vessels participate in tender operations outside crab seasons, and including tender sea time in the qualifications threshold may increase C-share ownership opportunities for crew that are already associated with crab fishing but may not be getting the sea time needed during shortened crab seasons.*

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Motions and Rationale**  
**December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

**D4 AM 80 Program Review**

**Motion**

The AP recommends the Council accept the Amendment 80 Program Review after incorporating the corrections in written public comment.

*Motion passed unanimously.*

***Rationale in Support of the Motion***

- *The document successfully outlines the Council's goals and objectives for the Amendment 80 program and the extent to which these goals and objectives have been attained to this point.*
- *The AP recommends that the data corrections and additional context outlined in written public comment from the Amendment 80 participants be incorporated before the finalization of this program review document. Vessels in the A80 program fish multi-species groundfish targets under a complex system of management rules and constraints within the Bering Sea, the Aleutian Islands, and the Gulf of Alaska. Given the nature of these fisheries, it often requires additional context to clearly convey the performance of the fleet. The addition of the corrections in written public comment will result in a more complete program review.*
- *While the AP did not include any follow-on actions relative to the program review, the AP flagged the upcoming MRA Adjustments action scheduled for initial review analysis in April. This action would further improve the retention of fish that are currently required to be thrown overboard as regulatory discards and would apply to various sectors including A80. Noting that one of the Council's main goals of Amendment 80 is the improvement of retention and utilization of groundfish within the sector, the MRA Adjustments action may further the achievement of this program goal.*

## **ADVISORY PANEL Motions and Rationale December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

### **D5 IFQ Program Review**

#### **Motion 1**

The AP recommends the Council accept the 2024 IFQ Program Review with the following changes:

- Revise tables on p. 131 and update tables 46-49
- Revise tables 57 and 58
- Incorporate recommendations from the IFQ committee

The AP recommends that the Council initiate a discussion paper considering the following items:

1. Mechanism for timely in-season transfer of CQE IFQ between members of a CQE.
2. Changes to the Transfer Eligibility Certificate
  - a. Waive or reduce the Transfer Eligibility Certificate Requirement for CQE eligible community residents fishing CQE quota share
  - b. Allow time tendering to count toward the 150 days of commercial fishery participation required for a Transfer Eligibility Certificate. Example language to regulation change could include:
    - i. For transfer of IFQ/QS require that an individual must be a U.S. citizen with at least 150 days of sea time as part of a harvesting crew in any U.S. commercial fishery or on a tender vessel operating in support of a **U.S.** commercial fishery managed by the State of Alaska or in a Federal commercial fishery in the EEZ off Alaska. Individuals may combine their participation as crew on a tender vessel in State and Federal commercial fisheries to meet this requirement.
  - c. Consider a range of options for the Transfer Eligibility Certificate Minimum Age Policy
3. Consider changes to the survivorship transfer privilege regulations at 50 CFR 679.41(k) to determine what happens to QS held by a beneficiary beyond the 3-year period.

Amendment 1 passed unanimously: (add U.S. and strike managed by the State of Alaska..)

***Main motion passed: 15/1***

#### ***Rationale in Favor of Motion***

- *The AP thanks Northern Economics and Council staff for a very thorough review of the IFQ program and especially including the socio/economic impacts of the program as well as the detailed data compiled in Appendix 1.*

- *During the AP presentation the presenter and AP members noted some problems with data on some specific figures in the document and recommended that the changes be made to update the data and subsequent findings based on that data.*
- *The IFQ committee made a number of recommendations and requests for clarifications and the AP would encourage the document to be updated with that information.*
- *The IFQ problem is not a perfect system and current economic conditions as well as recent fatalities and safety concerns mirror the fishery prior to rationalization. Vessels are going without necessary maintenance, it's hard to find crew, let alone experienced crew, the cost of operations are starting to outweigh the price of fish and it's become hard to make a living as an IFQ sablefish/halibut fisherman. When a fishery is not economically stable, it's hard to expect a new generation to come into it or allow those who are heavily invested in it to get out.*
- *After IFQ program implementation in 1995, some of the inequities caused by the initial allocation became visible and by 1998, almost a quarter of quota share that was issued to small coastal communities had been transferred away, or the person owning the quota share had moved away. This led to the CQE program formation in 2003, but the CQE program has not been very successful with very few communities owning quota.*
- *Many communities post IFQ saw large changes, Angoon, for example, started with 29 vessels and 33 quota-holders for both halibut and sablefish in 1995. By 2004, both numbers hit 0. As of 2024, there are now four quota-holders who own, in total, about 10,000 pounds of halibut, representing a 91% loss in halibut quota since 1995 in terms of pounds and a 100% loss of sablefish.*
- *AP members noted confidence in the CQE program as a viable program but some changes to relieve the administrative burden as well as the ability for residents to fish quota need to be addressed. For a CQE eligible community resident to receive quota share transfer they need to qualify for a Transfer Eligibility Certificate (TEC). The TEC requires a fisherman to demonstrate 150 days of commercial fishing experience. If you live in a community like Angoon, that no longer has any commercial fishing vessels, it's impossible to gain this experience, let alone exposure to the industry*
- *Many of the CQE eligible communities are predominantly Alaska Native and the traditional home of people who have relied on the sea for thousands of years for food and culture, many of whom practice subsistence fishing for halibut. The AP motion reflects options for reducing or suspending the TEC requirements for residents of CQE communities applying to fish CQE quota. If a fisherman in one of these communities wanted to receive QS transfer other than CQE quota, they would still need a TEC and days towards fishing the CQE quota can apply to these requirements.*
- *Quota share is transferred from the CQE to the fishermen and in the event that they are unable to catch the fish, transfer to another individual is not an easy process. Mechanisms for timely in-season transfer of CQE IFQ between members of a CQE should be considered. This was discussed at the IFQ committee and is noted in both written and public comment from the IFQ committee meeting and this meeting.*
- *The concept of allowing time tendering to count toward the 150 days of commercial fishery participation for quota share transfer eligibility was discussed during agenda item D3. Often tendering is an entry level job in the industry and allows a person to gain on-vessel experience and exposure to a number of commercial fisheries. Many tendermen also fish or go on to participate in other commercial fisheries. The AP recommends considering this for applicability to the TEC requirement for IFQ quota share transfer.*
- *Also noted in the IFQ committee and by NMFS were the TEC Minimum Age Policy and the Beneficiary Transfer Provision, and the AP encourages the Council to task staff with looking into the range of options for both of these regulations.*

## **Motion 2**

The AP requests the council initiate a discussion paper to explore the increase in discards and discard rates of groundfish species in the halibut IFQ fleet since the previous review. Identify whether the level of monitoring during that time period has exacerbated the discard rate, whether there are conservation concerns around the increase in discards and what incentives currently exist to minimize these discards moving forward.

***Motion passed: 13/4 (one abstention)***

### ***Rationale in Favor of Motion 2***

- *The first motion focuses on economic and social follow-on actions from the IFQ program review, but did not address an important objective related to bycatch which is not being met, specifically:
  - *Estimated discards and discard rates of FMP groundfish in the halibut IFQ fleet have increased since the previous review, 2023 reported the highest discard rate of FMP groundfish (55%) since observer data began to be used to estimate discard rates in 2013**
- *This fleet has some of the highest discard rates combined with the lowest observer coverage and it is important to understand why these discards are occurring. Most fishermen are generally not supportive of regulatory and other discards, and are always looking to improve the regulatory process.*
- *The objective related to bycatch is clearly not being achieved under the IFQ program and consideration should be given to why and whether there are adjustments to the program that could be made- improved observer coverage or EM monitoring or other management tools.*
- *MSA National Standard 9 requires that bycatch be minimized to the extent practicable. This is a timely motion since the IFQ review showed that the goal to reduce bycatch was not met. Waiting two more years to see the impact of ODDS changes to improve monitoring in the HAL sector is too long to wait, since the review noted the increase in groundfish discards since the last review. We all have a responsibility to improve retention and reduce discards.*

### ***Rationale in Opposition to Motion***

- *An AP member voiced opposition to the motion at this time, but supported the motion in the future. Citing the new ODDS deployment system will lead to more vessels providing data to inform the analysis.*

## Motion

The AP recommends the Council initiate an analysis to amend the BSAI Pacific cod trawl catcher vessel cooperative program. The Council should consider the following for analysis:

### Problem Statement:

- Since the development of the PCTC Program (through Amendments 120 and 122), there has been a decrease in the available number of both shoreside and at-sea processors. Such a decrease was not anticipated during the development of this cooperative-based program.
- A decrease in the overall availability of processors, the shoreside processor use cap, and the structure of the at-sea processing sideboard limit unnecessarily constrains trawl CV cod harvesters by limiting the amount of Pacific cod Cooperative Quota (CQ) that can be processed to less than 100%.
- Processing limitations under the PCTC Program result in a regulatory stranding of CQ and undermines the overall functionality and goals of the cooperative-based program.

### Alternatives

Alternative 1. Status Quo

Alternative 2. Adjust the PCTC Program shoreside processing use caps and at-sea processing sideboard limits to the following:

Option 1: No company may process more than 30% - 50% of the Pacific Cod CQ. Applies only in years when three or less active shoreside processing companies are available to process PCTC cod.

Option 2: ~~Each~~ An eligible CP acting as a mothership may process up to 150% - 190% of its eligible CP's processing history. ~~This~~ applies only in years ~~which~~ when **only** one eligible CP submits a processing agreement to NMFS by November 1 of each year ~~that ensures~~ **ensuring that** the overall mothership sideboard limit is not exceeded.

*Note: Options 1 and 2 are not mutually exclusive.*

Alternative 3. In years when an originally qualifying catcher-processor (CP) does not operate as a mothership platform in the PCTC fishery, NMFS will assign the cod mothership endorsement to a catcher-processor LLP that didn't qualify under Option 1 (Sub-option 1.3) of Amendment 120. Qualifying criteria will be predicated on if that CP has taken directed cod deliveries from catcher vessels in the Aleutian Islands non-CDQ Pacific cod trawl fishery between 2008-2017 (in at least three years). In years when an originally qualifying CP does not operate in the fishery, processor quota share (under the PCTC Program) will be calculated based on the new CP's processing history.

*Note: Action Alternatives 2 and 3 are not mutually exclusive*

***Substitute Motion passed unanimously.***

### ***Rationale in Support of Substitute Motion***

- *AP members thought it was important to point out that this motion does not reflect that the PCTC Program is not working. Many Cooperative fisheries have had amendments and emergency actions to fix some initial issues that were unforeseen when the council developed them. The PCTC program participants are asking to tweak the program so that the program continues to work and have full utilization.*
- *Recent unforeseen events in the BSAI processing sector have made the Council's goal of bringing stability and predictability into the BSAI trawl CV cod fishery difficult to achieve.*
- *A reduction in the number of shoreside processing plants just ahead of the start of the 2024 season and the first year of PCTC Program implementation resulted in a number of trawl catcher vessels being forced to quickly find a new market (e.g., joining a new cod cooperative or leasing their available quota) if they were able. This was especially impactful to independent trawl catcher vessels. Ahead of the 2025 season, the remaining shoreside processors need to adjust processing plans to accommodate additional cod deliveries (if they are able and willing to do so).*
- *A reduction in the number of mothership platforms for 2025 due to plans that were shared during public testimony has resulted in only one offshore processing platform with the ability to take trawl CV deliveries of cod. The remaining offshore platform is prevented from receiving any additional deliveries from trawl catcher vessels due to the 125% processing limit imposed under the PCTC Program. This results in an increased number of catcher vessels being forced to find new markets, which is exacerbated by the reduction in the number of shoreside processing plants.*
- *Shoreside processors and offshore motherships are both integral to the success of the PCTC Program. Multiple markets are important to ensuring the continued viability and functionality of the overall program.*
- *While there have been changes in the number of PCTC processors, the original motion was too big of a response for a discrete problem.*
- *The substitute motion better reflects the goals of the PCTC program, including encouraging new entrants into the market.*
- *Given the recency of the processing issues being encountered since the time of final action under both Amendments 120 and 122, the data and information contained in these original analytical packages should still be relevant and applicable. As such, action should be able to be taken in a relatively quick and efficient manner to address these emerging concerns. Importantly, the proposed alternatives will not diminish any of the goals and objectives of either Amendment 120 or 122, but will instead allow them to be fully realized in the way originally intended by the Council under current conditions being faced by the fishery.*
- *Fishery stability and predictability are two core goals of the PCTC Program and a focus of fisheries in general. In a time where many fisheries are facing multiple challenges and stressors, it is important to initiate and support actions that promote commercial harvest and strong markets to the greatest extent possible. The proposed processing alternatives will help to achieve just that under the PCTC Program.*
- *The intent is not to create excessive shares, but rather give flexibility to the program and participants. There are multiple ownership caps and vessel use caps that still provide safeguards against excessive shares. Additionally, the AP heard from some processor representatives that relaxing caps when there are few processors available won't cause excessive share and there will still be a competitive market among them.*

- *Most fisheries, sectors, gear types rely on processors in the Bering Sea. Multiple fisheries are facing similar issues around processing and the lack or loss of them. To ensure that processors stay active and available, it's important to provide enough flexibility so that this program isn't running up against processing capacity issues or the issue of no backup for processing if any type of operation-halting emergency occurs.*
  - *Specific to the mothership cap limits proposed for analysis:*
    - *Lower end of range — expected to only add about 780 mt of additional offshore processing, which allows affiliated vessels of one of the mothership companies to deliver to that mothership, whereas now some of that fish must go shoreside.*
    - *Mid-point of range — allows CVs that can't deliver shoreside to deliver offshore.*
    - *Upper end of range — expected to add about 1,250 mt of additional processing capacity offshore. Allows CVs that have traditionally delivered offshore to continue doing so.*
  - *The substitute motion removed the option to consider removal of the processing cap, and drastically changed the structure and intent of the option for the at-sea sideboard processing limit. The amendment to Alternative 2, Option 2 in the substitute motion was intended to provide clarity and understanding.*
  - *Alternative 2, Option 2 would potentially allow an increase in the at-sea processing sideboard limit in years when only one mothership is operating and had notified NMFS of their operation by a certain time. This is different from the original motion in that the request was to analyze a range of potential increases for the at-sea processing sideboard limit regardless of one or two motherships actively operating, and that idea also has merit for consideration..*
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### ***\*Main Motion that was replaced by substitute motion***

The AP recommends the Council initiate an analysis to amend the BSAI Pacific cod trawl catcher vessel cooperative program. The Council should consider the following for analysis:

#### **Problem Statement:**

- Since the development of the PCTC Program (through Amendments 120 and 122), there has been a decrease in the available number of both shoreside and at-sea processors. Such a decrease was not anticipated during the development of this cooperative-based program.
- A decrease in the overall availability of processors, the shoreside processor use cap, and the structure of the at-sea processing sideboard limit unnecessarily constrains trawl CV cod harvesters by limiting the amount of Pacific cod Cooperative Quota (CQ) that can be processed to less than 100%.
- Processing limitations under the PCTC Program result in a regulatory stranding of CQ and undermines the overall functionality and goals of the cooperative-based program.

#### **Alternatives**

Alternative 1. Status Quo

Alternative 2. Remove the PCTC Program processing use cap found under 50 CFR 679.133(a)(5).



Option 1: In years when four or less active processing companies are available to process PCTC cod.

Alternative 3. Adjust the PCTC Program shoreside processing use caps and at-sea processing sideboard limits to the following:

Option 1: No company may process more than 30% - 50% of the Pacific Cod CQ.

Option 2: Each eligible CP acting as a mothership may process up to 150% - 190% of its eligible CP's processing history.

Sub option: These sideboard limits may be combined if the two eligible CPs submit an agreement to NMFS by November 1 of each year that ensures the overall mothership sideboard limit is not exceeded.

*Note: Options 1 and 2 are not mutually exclusive*

Alternative 4. In years when an originally qualifying catcher-processor (CP) does not operate as a mothership platform in the PCTC fishery, NMFS will assign the cod mothership endorsement to a catcher-processor LLP that didn't qualify under Option 1 (Sub-option 1.3) of Amendment 120. Qualifying criteria will be predicated on if that CP has taken directed cod deliveries from catcher vessels in the Aleutian Islands non-CDQ Pacific cod trawl fishery between 2008-2017 (in at least three years). In years when an originally qualifying CP does not operate in the fishery, processor quota share (under the PCTC Program) will be calculated based on the new CP's processing history.

*Note: Action Alternatives 2 and 3 (exclusive of the suboption) are not mutually exclusive with Alternative 4.*

## **Motion 2**

Move to approve the October 2024 AP minutes.

***Motion passed unanimously.***