

Council motion

Staff Tasking: Executive Order 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness

June 10, 2025

In response to the Secretary of Commerce's request for each regional fishery management council to provide recommendations, a workplan, and timelines pursuant to Section 4(a)(i) of EO 14276 to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and increase production, the Council requests staff develop and submit a workplan around the following recommendations by the September 30, 2025 deadline. The Council may finalize any supplemental recommendations for a second submittal after additional public comment and B reports at the October 2025 meeting.

Council Actions Already in Progress which Respond to EO 14276 (Section 3 of NMFS discussion paper)

- Modification to the pelagic trawl gear definition
- Modification to maximum retainable amount calculations
- Crab Program report and information requirements
- Removal of Economic Data Reporting requirements
- Changes to minimize incremental costs billed to industry (from cost recovery)
- Modification to eligibility requirements and use caps for crew quota shares in the BSAI Crab Program
- Allow use of NMFS approved scales in the sablefish fishery
- Evaluate earlier Aleutian Islands golden king crab fishery start date
- Changes to pot gear regulations to improve consistency and increase operational flexibility across pot gear fisheries
- IFQ transfer, CQE, and beneficiary changes (includes waiving or reducing the transfer eligibility requirements for CQE eligible community residents fishing CQE-held quota share)
- Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program electronic monitoring

Council Actions Already Submitted to NMFS for Rulemaking (Section 4 of NMFS discussion paper)

- Recreational Quota Entity Funding (charter halibut stamp)
- BSAI Amendment 125 - Additional Pacific cod harvest opportunity for small vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear
- Small Sablefish Release – Operational flexibility for fixed gear to carefully release small sablefish
- Area 4 Halibut IFQ Vessel Use Caps - Provide additional harvest opportunities for vessels that were constrained by the previous vessel use cap.
- Sablefish Season Start Time - Provide additional flexibility for NMFS to set the time of day annually for the sablefish IFQ fishery to open.
- Standardize the reporting time limit for assigning a management program to a haul, including CDQ Program if applicable

New Actions to Reduce Regulatory Burden (Section 5 of NMFS discussion paper)

The Council requests Council and NMFS staff sort the reporting and streamlining actions under Section 5 of the NMFS discussion paper into at least three vehicles for inclusion in the Council response to EO 14276: 1) minor recordkeeping and reporting regulations and streamlining for which the SOC can use 305(d) authority under the Magnuson Stevens Act; 2) omnibus package for recordkeeping and reporting, monitoring, or streamlining regulations that must go through the Council process due to FMP language; or 3) regulations that could be included in analytical packages already underway, without significant delay. If possible, prioritize these actions for efficient and timely implementation.

In addition to those actions proposed under Section 5, include the following proposed changes in the appropriate vehicle(s) above:

- Modify the endorsement criteria at § 679.53(a)(5)(iv) to allow hauls sampled in the At-Sea Hake Observer Program and/or shoreside plant offloads in Alaska to count towards the minimum sampled haul requirement of a Lead Level 2 (LL2) certification in Alaska
- Modify the minimum sampled haul requirement to obtain LL2 certification on trawl vessels to 60 sampled hauls rather than 100 sampled hauls
- Grant the Observer Program the authority to waive fixed gear LL2 requirements when no fixed gear LL2 observers are reasonably available
- Eliminate the weight deduction for bled sablefish at the time of delivery

The Council response should also convey interest in pursuing NMFS process improvements to reduce regulatory burden (*Section 6.10 of NMFS discussion paper*):

- Increase ability to use MSA 305(d) rulemaking authority for recordkeeping and reporting and other minor issues
- Remove the national NMFS Policy 01-119 specifying the need for regular allocation reviews
- Streamline the charter halibut management measures timing to provide more time for charter businesses to plan