

**ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
June 2-5, 2025 - Newport, OR**

E1 Staff Tasking

AP Motion 1

The AP recommends the Council initiate a discussion paper to allow for directed fishing of IFQ halibut with pots in the Gulf of Alaska.

19-0 Motion Passes

Rationale in Support of Motion

- *In recent years, marine mammal depredation from orcas in the GOA directed fixed gear halibut fishery has begun to increase and there is concern from the fleet that this pattern will likely continue as their learned behavior of depredating on gear continues to expand and become more refined. This increases costs to fishermen because they have to set more gear and make more trips to harvest their quota.*
- *The reasoning and rationale for this action is the same as the prior action to legalize pot gear in the directed fixed gear fishery for halibut in the BSAI. This effort represents a responsive gear conservation engineering approach to address a fishery concern.*
- *Expanding the legal gear type definition in the GOA directed halibut fixed gear fishery to include pots could help alleviate the strain that this increased depredation is causing on the fleet and create regulatory uniformity in the directed halibut longline fleet for the BSAI and GOA, and decrease regulatory burden.*
- *The industry is in consensus and sees the need to include pot gear as a legal gear type, believing that there still is time to be proactive before the patterns of depredation grows further. Fishing with pots in the directed halibut fishery in the Bering Sea is already legal and gear innovation is occurring to design effective pots that can be used to harvest halibut.*
- *The managing body, the IPHC, has no concerns with expanding the legal gear type to include pots, as they are also working on gear innovation initiatives to try to minimize whale depredation in the directed halibut fishery.*
- *One AP member noted the concept is in the early stages of gear development, making it an ideal candidate for focused testing and evaluation through an EFP while the Discussion Paper is waiting to be scheduled. Given the decline in federal resources, using an EFP provides a practical way to advance gear research without relying solely on standard regulatory pathways. Utilizing an EFP would help inform the regulatory process and strengthen information gathering.*