

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
April 5-8, 2022 - Anchorage, AK

C4 CGOA Rockfish

The AP recommends the Council release the analysis for final action and select the following preliminary preferred alternative (shown in **bold** with new language underlined).

Purpose and Need

Since 2007, the Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Pilot Program and final Rockfish Program have improved conservation, fish quality, and stability for participants. Program reviews have shown increased vessel accountability, controlled fleet capacity, improved safety, and reduced bycatch. Given changes in the fishery since implementation, several changes to the program regulations would increase flexibility and efficiency, improve functionality, and better ensure the rockfish TACs are fully harvested and landed in Kodiak as intended.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Change the season start date and modify the harvesting, processing and cooperative holding caps (options are not mutually exclusive).

Option 1: Change the Rockfish Program season start date from May 1 to April 1.

Option 2: Eliminate the CV cooperative holding cap (30% CQ QS assigned to CV sector).

Option 3: Increase the processing cap to 35 – 40% of the CV quota share pool for sablefish, cod and/or primary rockfish.

Option 4: Revise the vessel aggregated rockfish (POP, northern rockfish and dusky rockfish) harvesting cap by capping only POP harvests at 8% of the CV POP quota share pool.

Motion passed 17-0

Rationale in Favor:

- *All five of the catcher vessel rockfish cooperatives all support Alternative 2 with each of the four options for changing the season start to April 1; eliminating the cooperative holding cap; raising the processing cap from 30% to 40% for primary rockfish, sablefish and Pacific cod; and modifying the harvesting cap to only cap Pacific Ocean Perch. These options will improve flexibility for all Rockfish Program participants including harvesters, processors, and the community of Kodiak.*
- *Under Option 1, changing the season start date from May 1 to April 1 will provide additional flexibility to fully harvest and process the available TACs and to fill in the times of year with low fishery landings to Kodiak. Changing this date to does not require or obligate fishing automatically begin on April 1 but simply provides the opportunity for the cooperatives.*

- *Under Option 2, the analysis points out that the cooperative holding cap is unnecessary and no longer serves a function since the design of the program allows a harvest cooperative to annually associate with any processor it chooses, and a processor can work with more than one cooperative. The processing caps serve as the controls on consolidation, not the cooperative cap. Eliminating the cooperative cap would remove some administrative burden for the cooperative and cooperative manager.*
- *Under Option 3, raising the processing cap to 40% for sablefish, Pacific cod and primary rockfish is necessary to help ensure that all quota is able to be landed. When the original processing cap was implemented in 2012 there were 7 processors active in the fishery but now there are only 4. With the loss of 3 processors, it is difficult to get the entire quota processed without exceeding the existing cap. Regulating processing via a limiting cap does not result in more processors but instead strands harvest since processors can't buy more thus resulting in harvesters being unable to find a market to deliver to. The fishery season ends November 15, and if a processor shuts down for the season early for any reason, as one processor did in 2021 and likely will again, it puts further constraints on both the ability to harvest and process the remaining quota.*
- *For Option 4, currently the shoreside sector of the rockfish program does not harvest the available quotas for either northern or dusky rockfish. There are 26-28 catcher vessels that typically participate in the program but only a few of these CVs harvest the majority of the northern and dusky rockfish given that these two species are more difficult to catch thus requiring more knowledge and experience. As the analysis notes, removing both northern and dusky rockfish from the harvesting cap will provide both an incentive and the ability for those few CVs that have routinely harvested a larger portion of northern and dusky rockfish to catch more. In addition, the analysis notes that only one to three CVs have approached the harvest cap and based on the participation patterns of the CVs since implementation of the Rockfish Program, revising the vessel use cap for these two species only will likely not contribute to CV consolidation in the fishery.*