



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

B2 GOA AM109AM Approval

June 2020

May 5, 2020

Mr. David Witherell, Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Mr. Witherell:

We have approved Amendment 109 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (RIN 0648-BJ35). This amendment modifies Central and Western Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Pacific cod seasonal apportionments to increase the trawl catcher vessel (CV) sector's A season total allowable catch (TAC) while proportionally decreasing the sector's B season TAC.

A final rule to implement Amendment 109 accompanies the FMP amendment and should publish in the *Federal Register* shortly. The final rule will also implement the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's regulatory amendment to combine the Central and Western GOA trawl CV pollock fishery A and B seasons into a single season (redesignated as the A season) and the C and D seasons into a single season (redesignated as the B season) and to change the annual start date of the redesignated pollock B season from August 25 to September 1.

The purpose of Amendment 109 and the regulatory amendment is to reduce operational and management inefficiencies in the Central and Western GOA trawl CV pollock and Pacific cod fisheries. Modifying the seasonal allocations of pollock and Pacific cod could allow the fisheries to more fully harvest the TAC of GOA pollock and Pacific cod, increase management flexibility, and potentially decrease prohibited species catch while not redistributing fishing opportunities between management areas or harvest sectors.

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.

Administrator, Alaska Region

