

Public Testimony on Groundfish Agenda Items

Harold Sparck, Qaluyaat and Kokechik Fisheries. Mr. Sparck spoke on his amendment proposal to close Bering Sea Statistical Area 514 to trawling from May through July of each year. He believes this is a conservation problem and that the Council should consider taking action this year. Fishermen in this area have the capacity to harvest and process the fish in this area and it is important to their economy. He also proposed a similar closure for the Dutch Harbor area which evidently was not reviewed by the plan team.

Barry Collier, PSPA, spoke in favor of the proposal for DAP priority access around Unalaska and Dutch Harbor. The Council should encourage development of priority access for domestic processors during 1987.

Ted Evans, Alaska Factory Trawlers Assn., had the following comments on amendment proposals:

GOA Proposal 1: supports sablefish limited entry as long as it applies only to longline and pot gear.

GOA Proposal 2, management of groundfish bycatch: they support the AP's recommendation to defer to a Council workgroup.

GOA Proposal 3, fixed sablefish quota system: they support analyzing it during this amendment cycle.

GOA Proposal 4, closure of juvenile halibut habitat near Kodiak to bottom trawling: recommend deferring it to bycatch workgroup.

GOA Proposal 5, reporting requirements for at-sea transfers: concerned about the multitude of reporting requirements; combined with Amendments 14 & 15, this would require three different reports on catches. Council and NMFS should get together and determine the needs and go out for public comment.

GOA Proposal 6, expand economic data: same as comments for Proposal 5.

GOA Proposal 10, fishing seasons framework: setting seasons can be an allocative measure and doesn't think they should be frameworked.

GOA Proposal 13, sablefish size limit: doesn't think this is appropriate for trawl fleet; believes it would result in wastage.

GOA Proposal 14, harvest ceiling for bottom trawling in eastern GOA: the proposal is confusing and would have to have more information before making comments.

BSA Proposal 1, priority DAP access within 100 miles of Dutch Harbor: could not support designation of special zones for economic purposes. If the

proposal does go out for review, they would like to see some alternatives, including fees on factory ships receiving fish from JVs.

BSA Proposal 5, raise OY range to 2.4 million mt: if the OY is raised, the excess fish would most likely go to foreign fisheries; this was considered by the Council last year and defeated.

On the trawl mesh proposal submitted by AFTA, Mr. Evans pointed out that if the OY is raised there would be more pressure on the pollock stock and that is why they have submitted this proposal.

Paul Fuhs, Mayor of Unalaska, submitted additional information to support his proposal for DAP priority access within 100 miles of Dutch Harbor. He stressed that the proposal is not just for shoreside processors, but for priority for all American processing interests.

Val Angason and Trefon Angason, Great Pacific Fish Co. They are involved in joint ventures in the Bering Sea and if the Council approves the DAP priority access proposal their operations would be bankrupt. The Council should not create a monopoly for a few onshore operators.

Thorn Smith, NPFVOA. They feel that there are other methods of encouraging DAP priority besides creating an exclusive zone around Unalaska and Dutch Harbor. The major problem seems to be transportation which could be solved by tenders. When elements of solving a problem are apparently at hand, the Council and management agencies should back off making regulations and let industry solve the problem.

Hugh Reilly, Westward Trawlers, Speaking on the DAP priority proposal, he referred to Amendment 6 to the Bering Sea Groundfish FMP. Even though the amendment was not approved, the problem was solved within the industry. Believes this is the same type of situation.

Al Burch, Alaska Draggers Assoc., feels the Council should not go forward with the DAP priority proposal for the same reasons mentioned by Thorn Smith and Hugh Reilly.

Peter Block, Northern Deep Sea Fisheries, said there are ongoing discussions to make progress in supplying domestic processors and doesn't think this (DAP priority) proposal is the answer.

Dean Adams, FVOA, F/V QUEST. Referring to sablefish limited entry, Mr. Adams said they cannot afford to allow the sablefish fishery to evolve into the same type of problems as in the halibut fishery. Unlimited effort will result in lost gear and wasted fish and health and safety hazards.

Bob Alverson, John McHenry, FVOA. Support AP recommendation to go ahead with analysis of the sablefish limited entry proposal. Also would like to see the sablefish size limit proposal go forward. There should be sufficient data available within NWAFC to develop this proposal.

Mark Lundsten, Seattle fisherman. Encouraged the Council to move quickly on sablefish limited entry before it becomes like the halibut fishery.

Eric Olsen, F/V LORELEI II. Supports the sablefish limited entry and sablefish size limit proposals.

Rich White, Great Land Seafoods, spoke in favor of the DAP priority access proposal. Stressed that the proposal is not just for shoreside processors, but all DAP operations.

Steve Dickinson, Japan Longliners and Hokuten Trawlers, spoke in favor of their proposal to prohibit joint venture trawling for pollock in the Bering Sea during May and June. There is virtually no fishery for pollock in May and June; the flesh of the pollock right after the spawning season is not of good quality. But now that demand is beginning to exceed supply some fishermen may be forced to continue to fish during this season in order to ensure a supply will be available under the current pooling system. He feels that if the proposal should go out for public review it will receive substantive industry support. If not, the Council doesn't have to continue with it.

Steve Johnson, American High Seas Fisheries Assn., asked the Council to support their proposal to prohibit pollock roe stripping in the joint venture fisheries off Alaska.

Bart Eaton, on behalf of Trident Seafoods, Icicle Seafoods, Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Columbia Ward Fisheries, Kemp, and Sea Alaska Products, asked the Council to support the DAP priority proposal to be developed during this amendment cycle.

Ron Hegge, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn., supports the sablefish limited entry proposal to go out for public review. Also support the proposals for reporting requirements for at-sea transfers and the sablefish size limit.

Harold Thompson, Sitka Sound Seafoods, said that limited entry in the sablefish fishery would also benefit processors to avoid having all the fish come in at the same time. Also supports the sablefish size limit and is in favor of some sort of domestic observer coverage in the Gulf.

Thorn Smith, NPFVOA, said they are concerned about the lack of JVP for pollock in the Gulf. They don't feel that DAP fisheries will take all the fish allocated to them. On sablefish limited entry, Mr. Smith pointed out that NPFVOA has traditionally opposed limited entry as a management measure.

Chris Blackburn, Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, recommended that the bycatch measures in GOA Proposals 2 and 4 be referred to the Council bycatch workgroup. They support including Proposal 11 on bycatch controls for prohibited species in the current amendment cycle and encouraged the Council and NMFS to continue to try to get observers on domestic vessels in the Gulf.

Al Burch, Alaska Draggers Assn., said he is particularly distressed with the proposal for sablefish limited entry because he was assured only a year ago that they would have no problem entering this fishery if they wanted to do so. If this goes forward, they will be prevented from doing so. Recommended the Council refer GOA Proposal 4, to protect juvenile halibut habitat near Kodiak, to a Council workgroup. On GOA Proposal 14, he has some concern that this is another "trawler bashing" scheme, but encouraged the Council and NMFS to work with ALFA to determine the problem and find solutions.

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Joe Nord, Allied Processing, spoke on limited entry and suggested various ways of approaching it, i.e., lotteries, etc. Supports the concept of DAP priority access.

Phil Chitwood, Marine Resources Co., Int'l. Spoke on the proposed closure of Bering Sea Statistical Area 514. This would be very detrimental to their fleet. It could mean \$25 to \$30 million in lost revenues if this area is closed.