


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke  
Executive Director 

DATE: June 11, 1997

SUBJECT: Halibut Management Issues - Area 4 Catch Sharing Plan

ESTIMATED TIME 3 HOURS (for all C-3 items)
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**ACTION REQUIRED**

Final review of Area 4 Catch Sharing Plan RIR.

**BACKGROUND**

In April 1997, the Council approved release of the public review draft of the EA/RIR to modify the Area 4 catch sharing plan. It resulted from a revised International Pacific Halibut Commission methodology for calculating Area 4A, 4B, and combined 4C-E catch limits. In response to public testimony, the Council added an alternative that would allow Area 4D and 4E halibut CDQs to be harvested from either area. The EA/RIR was mailed to you on May 14, 1997. Alternatives included in this analysis are:

- Alternative 1: Status quo.
- Alternative 2: Remove Areas 4A and 4B from the Area 4 catch sharing plan.
- Alternative 3: Allow Area 4D and 4E CDQ QS to be harvested in either Area 4D or 4E.

Alternative 2 addresses new biological information approved by the IPHC to better manage halibut stocks in Area 4. The IPHC has recommended moving to a biomass-based method for setting catch limits for Areas 4A, 4B, and 4C-E. It delayed implementing the methodology so the Council could revise its CSP accordingly. While the 1997 catch limits based on conservation differ little from status quo historical allocations, future density and habitat distributions for halibut are unknown. Application of the IPHC biomass-based method would protect the resource better than a fixed allocation based on historical landings.

Alternative 3 would benefit Alaska Native residents of the 52 Western Alaska CDQ communities because they would be able to harvest 4D and 4E CDQ QS in either area. For 1997, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation holds 80,040 lb in Area 4D and 78,000 lb in Area 4E. Coastal Villages Fishing Cooperative holds 83,520 lb of halibut CDQ in Area 4D and 182,000 lb in Area 4E. Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation and Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association hold 69,600 lb and 114,840 lb, respectively, in Area 4D.