

Adak Community Development Corporation

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January 29, 2021

Simon Kinneen, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
1007 W. 3rd Ave., Ste. 400
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Re: Staff Tasking - Halibut IFQ & Covid-19 Relief

Dear Chairman Kinneen,

ACDC requests that the NPFMC take action to provide exemptions during the 2021 season to the vessel use caps and owner on board requirements of the Halibut IFQ program in Area 4.

As evidenced by the recent extension of the Alaska Emergency Declaration, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact Alaska communities and fisheries. Recent outbreaks resulting in processor lockdowns throughout Western Alaska could be a sign of things to come.

In 2020 the Council took action to help address some of the challenges facing IFQ halibut and sablefish stakeholders in Alaska by allowing temporary emergency transfers of IFQ. This action was greatly appreciated and helped our fishery participants get fish out of the water and into the market.

The Council also acted in 2020 to temporarily remove vessel caps in area 4B and 4CDE. We anticipate continued challenges harvesting in Western Alaska during 2021. Area 4B was not fully harvested in 2020 due to a combination of factors including the closure of the Adak processor and limited air travel service. Allowing vessels with the capacity and capability to harvest fish in Area 4 will increase utilization of the area. We request a temporarily removal of vessel caps in Area 4 for 2021.

Minimizing unnecessary travel to Alaskan communities, protecting residents and fishing vessels from avoidable vectors of transmission and maximizing economic benefit remains a priority as we approach this season. We are asking the Council to adopt another year of emergency measures to allow for an Owner on Board exemption for all halibut IFQ stakeholders during the 2021 fishing season.

For much of the same reasons, ACDC also requests that the Council recommend that NMFS suspends the residency requirements applicable to the Adak CQE program.

ACDC held 125,612 lbs of Halibut IFQ in 2020, but we were only able to get 8,120 lbs of our quota harvested. This was due in part to the closure of the plant (for which the pandemic was a factor), which led to the loss of locally based boats as well as loss of residents.

With the pandemic ACDC was unable to find boats willing to take local "green horns" onto their vessels due to the need to quarantine to protect their regular crew, as well as the complications of picking up the resident in Adak to harvest a limited amount of quota to be delivered in Unalaska, and then making arrangements to get them back to Adak (which requires flying to Anchorage in order to fly back to Adak).

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Layton J. Lockett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Layton J. Lockett
President