



D5 IFQ Program Review

December 2024 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Anna Henry
- Other Presenters: Marcus Hartley (Northern Economics), Caleb Taylor (NMFS AKRO)
- Action Required:
1. Receive IFQ Program Review report
 2. Receive IFQ Committee report
 3. Recommend any changes to document prior to finalization
 4. Consider any proposed actions for the IFQ Program (under this agenda item or E Staff Tasking agenda item)

BACKGROUND

The Council approved the Sablefish and Halibut Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program in 1991 and the program was implemented for the 1995 fishing season. The IFQ Program was developed to address issues associated with the race-for-fish that had resulted from the open-access and effort control management of the halibut and sablefish fisheries. Specifically, the Council identified several problems that emerged in these fisheries due to the previous management regime, including increased harvesting capacity, decreased product quality, increased conflicts among fishermen, adverse effects on halibut and sablefish stocks, and unintended distributions of benefits and costs from the fisheries. The fundamental component of the IFQ Program is quota share (QS), issued to participants with a history of harvest in the fishery, which is translated into annual IFQ allocations in the form of fishable pounds.

Section 303A of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) requires the Council and NMFS to review all Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs), including those programs approved prior to the enactment of the reauthorized MSA in 2007. Reviews are intended to evaluate the program's performance in meeting its goals and objectives as outlined in the MSA, including the impact on harvesting and processing sectors, and fishery dependent communities. The MSA also specifies that reviews of these LAPPs should occur no less frequently than once every seven years. The most recent Sablefish and Halibut IFQ Program Review was finalized in December 2016. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Advisory Panel (AP) and Council reviewed and approved a workplan for this IFQ Program Review in October 2023. The document prepared serves as the program review that meets this MSA requirement. It also serves as the Allocation Review required under National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Allocation Policy Directive 01-119 established in 2016 along with two associated Procedural Directives.

The [IFQ Committee](#) is meeting on December 2, 2024, to review the IFQ Program Review report. A meeting report will be posted for the Council thereafter.

Action Required/Next Steps

At this meeting, public and the Council bodies may provide feedback on two items: the Program Review’s completeness in evaluating IFQ Program impacts, as well as whether the IFQ Program continues to meet the Council’s original goals. The Council’s typical process for Program Reviews is illustrated in the figure below. Unless the Council specifically asks to review the document again, the IFQ Program Review will be finalized after incorporating any Council input from this meeting, and the final version of the review will be posted on the [Council website](#).

Secondly, the Council may consider whether to initiate any action based on the review of the report. A program review itself is not an “action document”; however, it provides a unique opportunity to consider the program holistically. Following review of this information and associated public testimony, any changes to the program that may be warranted could be initiated by the Council. This could occur through the initiation of a discussion paper, or if the action is defined enough to articulate a purpose and need statement and set of alternatives, through an analysis. The Council may initiate a proposal for action during this agenda item or during ‘E Staff Tasking’ agenda item, or at a subsequent meeting.

