



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:BYC 14-004

Agenda Date4/7/2014

Agenda Number:C2

Eric Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

GOA Trawl Bycatch Management: Discussion Paper; Review Draft EDR forms

ESTIMATED TIME:

8 hours

ACTION REQUIRED:

Discussion Paper: Review the paper on the Council's proposed partial framework for a Gulf of Alaska Trawl Bycatch Management program. Provide direction on aspects that are identified as needing further Council input. Develop elements and options for analysis if practicable.

Review EDR forms developed for the catcher/processors and motherships (to be modified from the Amendment 80 EDR), trawl catcher vessels, and processors receiving deliveries from GOA trawl fisheries. Also review and approve, if acceptable, an approach that has been used for other EDRs to streamline regulations for the GOA Trawl EDRs.

BACKGROUND:

GOA Trawl Bycatch Management Discussion Paper

In October 2013, the Council directed staff to prepare a discussion paper reviewing a partial framework for a program to manage the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish trawl fisheries. Prior to that, the Council had reviewed discussion papers on trawl bycatch management and quota-based fisheries in February and June of 2013. In June 2013, the Council received eight written proposals on aspects that stakeholders would like to see in a new program.

The framework outlined in the Council's October motion focuses on the catcher vessel (CV) and shorebased processing components of the fishery. The proposed program would regulate the trawl fisheries in the Western GOA, the Central GOA, and the West Yakutat district. The reviewed framework addresses the following potential program elements: program eligibility, formation of CV cooperatives, existing harvest sector species allocations to be maintained, harvest sector allocations of Chinook salmon and Pacific halibut PSC, allocation of pollock and Pacific cod quota to CV cooperatives, pro rata allocation of PSC to CV cooperatives, a limited access opt-out fishery, observer coverage, quota transferability and consolidation limits, and regionalization of shoreside landings.

The paper provides a list particular issues that may require further Council input before proposed elements of the program framework can be fully analyzed (Section 1.3 of the paper).

Baseline data is provided on: PSC usage/rates and retained groundfish catch for the various GOA harvest sectors, areas, and target fisheries; the number of vessels and LLP licenses that are active in the fishery; and

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the proportion of retained groundfish harvest taken by the top three CV LLPs in each target fishery (by area).

The discussion paper covers several proposed elements that are intended to provide stability to fishery dependent communities under the program, but does not specifically address community fishing associations (CFA), or the like. CFAs were addressed to the extent possible in the October 2013 discussion paper, and the Council held a workshop on the subject at its February 2014 meeting. A summary of the proceedings from the February workshop is included here as an attachment. Issues pertaining to management of groundfish in State of Alaska waters were also addressed in the October 2013 discussion paper, and are not further discussed here.

Council action at this meeting may be to refine the program framework into elements and options for initial analysis, or to highlight areas of the framework that need to be further developed in another discussion paper.

GOA Trawl EDR Forms

NMFS is providing three proposed EDR forms to give the Council an opportunity to review and comment on their structure and content before they are finalized (forms attached). These forms were developed based on Council direction provided in October 2013.

NMFS is proposing to apply the same approach for streamlining GOA Trawl EDR regulations that was applied to the recent amendments to the Crab EDR and Chinook salmon bycatch EDR. A large portion of the regulatory amendment text for Amendment 80 at § 679.94 repeats the data field descriptions that are provided and more fully explained in the AM 80 EDR. If the detail in regulation is retained for this action, any future updates that the Council would like to make for the revised Amendment 80 EDR would require proposed and final rulemaking.

The draft regulations proposed for revising the Amendment 80 EDR focus on the requirements for who must submit data for a given trawl EDR by a specified date, to whom the EDR must be provided, and how it would be certified and verified. To simplify the current Amendment 80 regulatory detail, NMFS would apply the same procedure that has been used in the last two EDR amendments. Any revisions to GOA Trawl EDR forms prepared for review by OMB would be provided to the Council for review before submission to OMB.

NMFS requests that the Council indicate if this approach contained in the draft regulations is acceptable. Note that the proposed rule supporting these draft regulations will also be available for public comment after it is published in the Federal Register.