

ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
April 5-7, 2023 - Anchorage, AK

E Staff Tasking

Motion 1 - C Share Motion

Purpose and Need:

The CVC and CPC shares have a participation requirement of one delivery during the previous 4 consecutive years. With the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, now in its third year, some crew members have not been able to comply with the participation requirement. With the unforeseen circumstance of the recent drastic decline of several BSAI crab stocks and the BSS stock and potential fishery closures or low harvest levels taking place on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, some crew members have not been able to comply with the participation requirement there will be less opportunity for crew to participate in crab fisheries because of limited numbers of vessels participating in the fishery restricting opportunity or due to pandemic restrictions making it more difficult. This action is needed to protect the crew that have invested in this fishery

Alternative 1 - No action

Alternative 2 - Modify the CVC QS and CPC QS active participation requirements (Options are not mutually exclusive)

Option 1: Restart the recent participation requirement after the pandemic and beginning in 2023/24 only count fishing years where at least 30 BSAI crab vessels fish. Do not count 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, through 2023/2024 toward the recent participation requirement.

Option 2: Give the Regional Administrator the authority to suspend the CVC QS and CPC QS recent participation requirement in years of low BSAI crab quota where few vessels fish (perhaps 30 or less that is a little less than half the current fleet) or due to other unforeseen circumstances (e.g. a pandemic).

Option 3: Expand participation requirements for non-initial issues to match the requirements of initial issues. In other words, within the previous three years, participate in a BSAI crab trip OR participate as crew in at least 30 days of fishing in a commercial fishery off Alaska.

Option 4: Do not revoke any CVC or CPC QS associated with a closed fishery

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Alternative 3 - Remove all CVC QS and CPC QS active participation requirements (Alternative 2 and 3 are mutually exclusive from each other.)

Alternative 4 - Reissue any CVC QS and CPC QS that was revoked between July 2023 and the effective date of the proposed action

Motion passed 15/0

Rationale in favor of the Motion:

- *The Council and AP received several comments on this issue at this Council meeting and previous meetings in recent years. The Council recommended and NOAA Fisheries implemented an emergency rule for this past season due to pandemic and low quotas in snow crab making active participation difficult. The Council also signaled the desire for a permanent fix to this issue.*
- *The pandemic restrictions have eased, the BSAI crab fisheries have collapsed with closed fisheries and historic low quotas limiting opportunity for c-shares holders to get out on a crab trip. This past season, the fishery had fewer than 20 active fishing vessels down from an average of 60. Due to these constraints, captains and crew in the crab fishery, including new entrants, risk losing their quota.*
- *This revised purpose and need and alternatives shifts this action to consider more situations that might affect fishermen's ability to participate in a crab trip including closed fisheries or low harvest levels.. This intends to give the NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator flexibility.*
- *The AP urges the Council and NOAA Fisheries to create policies and regulations that protect our active fishermen and new entrants in the Crab Rationalization Program during times of low or closed BSAI crab fisheries or other unforeseen challenging circumstances, like the pandemic.*
- *Some AP members felt that this motion was acceptable primarily because it was stated that the intent was not to supersede the prior Council action on this topic, thereby delaying it, only that it would signal to the Council for this meeting possible solutions to the problems communicated by staff.*

Motion 2 - Small Sablefish Release

Request staff revise small sablefish release document and bring action back for initial review in June 2023.

Revisions should include:

- 1) Updates to market and stock status
- 2) Consideration of reports on the subject provided by Dr. Matt Koopman and Dr. Ian Knuckey
- 3) Evaluation of uncertainty associated with voluntary release of small sablefish in the context of existing stock assessment and catch accounting uncertainty

Motion failed 5/10

Rationale in favor of the Motion:

- *A motion was made at the June 2022 Council meeting to schedule staff time to revise this analysis and bring this back onto the agenda. This has still not been done and the proposed action for June 2023 does not include a revised analysis, rather just discussion points to consider. This does not set the stage to move forward with action on an issue that has been lingering for over 3 years.*
- *The IFQ sablefish fleet has increasingly switched gear to longline pots and have been successfully prosecuting the fishery with little to no bycatch or incidents with whale depredation. Pots also increase the viability of sablefish to be released, as they surface very lively to the point that vessels have had to make modifications to their decks for containing the fish as they come aboard.*
- *Small sablefish release is legal in the adjacent state water black cod fishery in Southeast Alaska as well as the black cod fishery in other lower 48 states. The science exists to analyze the potential effects to the stock and catch accounting and we urge the Council to move forward on updating the analysis.*

Rationale in Opposition to the Motion:

- *According to the Staff Tasking memo, the Council has a staff paper on the June meeting schedule that seems to be intended to address difficulties associated with furthering analysis on small sablefish release.*
- *Many AP members supported the idea of taking a look at Small Sablefish Release, but the motion as written appears to include many of the items slated to come up in front of the Council in June and therefore appears to be redundant to a currently scheduled item.*
- *At prior meetings, Council staff and NOAA Fisheries have noted before the AP relating management and staffing difficulties with making progress on a Small Sablefish Release analysis. Now that an update to those efforts are on the June 2023 agenda, the motion does not appear to be necessary.*

Motion 3

Approve the minutes from the February 2023 meeting.

Motion passed 15/0