

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Motions and Rationale**  
**December 3-6, 2024 - Anchorage, AK**

**D3 BSAI Crab C-shares**

**Motion**

The Advisory Panel recommends the Council initiate a regulatory action with the following purpose and need statement and suite of alternatives for public review.

**Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of this action is to encourage new entrants and to increase opportunity for active crab fishermen in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization (CR) Program by increasing flexibility around c-share requirements (also known as crew shares or CVC and CPC). This action is needed to address new challenges in the CR program in recent years that have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic, small or closed fisheries, less vessels participating in fisheries limiting opportunity and decreasing the value of c-shares. This situation makes it difficult for crab captains and crew to meet eligibility requirements to buy c-shares and has a chilling effect on new entrants in the fishery. In addition, the use caps for some CR program fisheries are so restrictive it further limits opportunity for and disadvantages active crab fishermen.

**ALTERNATIVES**

**Alternative 1 – No Action/Status Quo** eligibility requirements for buying c-shares and c-share use caps.

**Alternative 2 – Revise Eligibility Requirements to Purchase/Receive C-Shares**

Allow time tendering to count toward the 150 days and increase time to 3 years to participate in a CR fishery trip.

For transfer of CVC QS and CPC QS require that an individual must be a U.S. citizen with:

- (1) at least 150 days of sea time as part of a harvesting crew in any U.S. commercial fishery or on a tender vessel operating in support of a commercial fishery managed by the State of Alaska or in a Federal commercial fishery in the EEZ off Alaska. Individuals may combine their participation as crew on a tender vessel in State and Federal commercial fisheries to meet this requirement; and
- (2) participation as crew in at least one fishing trip of the CR Program fisheries in the ~~365 days~~ 3 years prior to the date the transfer application is submitted to NMFS.

**Alternative 3 – Increase C-Share Use Caps only for Bering Sea crab stocks**

	<b>No Action</b>	<b>Option 3.2 middle limit</b>	<b>Option 3.3 upper limit</b>
<b>BBR</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>BSS</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>EBT</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>WBT</b>	<b>2% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>SMB</b>	<b>4% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>PIK</b>	<b>4% cap</b>	<b>5% cap</b>	<b>10% cap</b>
<b>EAG</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>
<b>WAG</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>
<b>WAI</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>	<b>20% cap</b>

The action alternatives are not mutually exclusive.

***Motion passed unanimously.***

***Rationale in support of the Motion***

- *This action would explore avenues to increase flexibility for existing or new entrants into the crab rationalization program. This is especially important considering recent challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, low harvest levels, and erratically opened fisheries. Many of these factors have contributed to fewer vessels participating in the CR program, and associated reductions in opportunities for crew to meet existing ownership qualification thresholds.*
- *This action could increase opportunities for new entrants and promote more economic stability and resiliency, which are key objectives of the CR program.*
- *The alternatives proposed would explore options that would closely mirror recent regulations for maintaining C-shares, which could help incentivize new entrants while also helping to streamline existing processes. They would also retain requirements to be a recent participant in the CR Program fisheries, to keep that tie with crab fisheries.*
- *The AP noted that some unknowns and concerns with permanent changes to the C-share ownership eligibility should be further analyzed in the next iteration so the Council can make an informed decision when thinking about impacts to the overall CR program.*
- *Over time, the pool of qualified applicants for C-shares has diminished. This action may increase those numbers to more closely reflect the pool size of qualified applicants during CR implementation.*

- *AP members noted that many CR crab vessels participate in tender operations outside crab seasons, and including tender sea time in the qualifications threshold may increase C-share ownership opportunities for crew that are already associated with crab fishing but may not be getting the sea time needed during shortened crab seasons.*