

**ADVISORY PANEL**  
**Motions and Rationale**  
**February 1-4, 2022 - Anchorage, AK**

**E Staff Tasking**

**Motion 1 - Rockfish Program Regulatory Changes**

The AP recommends the Council initiate analysis to modify the Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program.

The AP suggests the Council consider the following points when crafting a purpose and need statement:

- Expanding the season by changing the start date to April 1 from May 1 would provide flexibility and added protection against unforeseen circumstances for the fishery by allowing more time to harvest quota.
- The vessel harvesting cap and processing caps have become increasingly constraining.
- The number of shorebased processing facilities in Kodiak has decreased from seven in 2012 to four in 2021. This 42% reduction in the number of processors means it is increasingly difficult for vessels to find a processor for their fish, especially later in the season as processors approach their current caps or close for seasonal maintenance.
- The TACs are not fully taken for either dusky rockfish or northern rockfish by the catcher vessel sector, suggesting that the harvesting cap should only apply to Pacific Ocean perch (POP) not the aggregate rockfish catches to allow more dusky and northern rockfish to be harvested.
- A cooperative holding cap creates inefficiencies and may not be necessary as demonstrated by the BSAI cv cod LAPP analysis where multiple cooperatives can associate with one processor which is the same structure as the RP program.
- These modifications may help the CV fleet in more fully prosecuting these fisheries and bring more landings across Kodiak's docks.

Alternative 1: Status Quo

Alternative 2: Change the season start date and modify the harvesting, processing and cooperative holding caps (options are not mutually exclusive).

Option 1: Change the Rockfish Program season start date from May 1 to April 1.

Option 2: Eliminate the CV cooperative holding cap (30% QS assigned to CV sector).

Option 3: Increase the processing cap to 35 – 40% of the CV quota share pool for sablefish, cod and primary rockfish.

Option 4: Revise the vessel aggregated rockfish (POP, northern rockfish and dusky rockfish) harvesting cap by capping only POP harvests at 8% of the CV POP quota share pool.

*Motion passed 16-0*

*Rationale:*

- *The six catcher vessel rockfish cooperatives all support the four proposed Rockfish Program changes. This motion initiates an analysis to accomplish the cooperatives request. There are several recent analyses of the Rockfish Program to build upon for this action including the Emergency Rule analysis for the date change completed in first quarter of 2021 and the reauthorization program that occurred in February of 2020.*
- *The season start date was changed in 2021 from May 1 to April 1 via an emergency rule. The earlier start date was successful, providing additional flexibility to catch and process the available quotas within the program, and the shoreside industry would like to make this successful change permanent. Any potential biological impacts resulting from a permanent change in the season start date or duration will come out in the analysis.*
- *Presently, there are two shoreside cooperatives associated with the same processor that continue to form separately due to the current 30% cooperative holding cap. From an administrative and management perspective, it would be preferable to have one coop instead of two. When the Council took final action for the BSAI CV trawl cod LAPP, which was structured similar to the Rockfish LAPP, no cooperative cap was included. The BSAI CV trawl cod analysis supported that there was no real purpose for a cooperative cap because the program has both harvesting and processing caps, and processors can receive deliveries from more than one cooperative.*
- *The current processing cap is 30%. A modest increase to the processing cap between 35% to 40% is necessary for all quota to be able to be landed. When the processing cap was implemented in 2012 there were 7 processors active in the fishery, now there are only 4. With the loss of 3 processors it has become increasingly difficult to get quota processed without exceeding the existing caps. Regulating processing via a constraining cap does not result in more processors, instead it strands harvests since processors can't buy more and harvesters can't find a market to deliver to. The season ends November 15, and if a processor shuts down for the season early for any reason, as one processor did in 2021 and likely will again, it puts further constraints on the ability to process the remaining quota.*
- *The shoreside sector of the Rockfish Program does not harvest the available quotas for either northern or dusky rockfish. Available data indicates that 65% – 75% of northern rockfish and 27% – 59% of dusky rockfish has gone unharvested in the last three years. The vessels that approach the harvesting cap primarily catch Pacific Ocean perch so maintaining the 8% harvesting cap exclusively on Pacific Ocean perch will still restrict fishing behavior but will allow the more efficient and experienced vessels to harvest more northern and dusky rockfish, which are traditionally more difficult to catch.*
- *Overall, the modest changes being proposed for analysis are intended to better achieve the goals and objectives of the Rockfish Program by maximizing harvests for the available cooperative quota species. This will bring more fish across Kodiak's docks to its remaining processors, which need product in order to remain viable and avoid further consolidation. Fishery management programs are established and implemented based on the best available information at the time, but fisheries are dynamic and conditions change thereby necessitating modifications to a program in order to keep meeting its goals and objectives. The proposed*

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*changes in this motion will improve flexibility under the program and will ultimately provide for a greater opportunity to achieve OY as required under MSA National Standard 1.*

**Motion 2**

The AP approves the December 2021 AP minutes.