

Council Motion
C4 Greenland Turbot
October 8, 2022

Add the following text to the end of the current Purpose and Need Statement (new text in bold)

Whale depredation is precluding directed fishing for Greenland turbot by commercial hook-and-line (HAL) gear vessels in the Bering Sea. Participation in this fishery has been a significant source of income for a number of HAL CP vessels that primarily target Pacific cod. The importance of turbot fishing increased for these vessels as Pacific cod TACs in the Bering Sea saw major declines between 2012 and 2021. Although single pot gear is currently authorized for Greenland turbot, single pots have not been deployed because of their inefficiency in the depth and location where the fishery occurs. A regulatory amendment that would allow vessels to use longline pots when fishing for Greenland turbot would likely resolve the depredation problem and allow this fishery to resume. Other benefits of reduced whale depredation on Greenland turbot could include improved catch accounting for managers, and data quality for the Greenland turbot stock assessment. **The use of longline pots could disrupt historic and current participants in the HAL CP and the Amendment 80 sectors should it encourage new entrants with no previous activity in the fishery.**

Alternatives (added alternative 3 and designate alternative 3 and Option 1 as a preliminary preferred alternative – PPA is underlined)

Alternative 1: No Action. (Longline pot gear is not authorized for Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea Subarea)

Alternative 2: Authorize the use of longline pot gear when directed fishing for Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea subarea

Alternative 3: Authorize the use of longline pot gear only for vessels in the HAL CP sector when directed fishing for Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea subarea

Option 1: Exemption from the 9-inch maximum tunnel opening restriction. (The 9-inch maximum tunnel opening requirement does not apply to longline pots used to directed fish for Greenland turbot in the Bering Sea subarea.)