

Final Council Motion on SSL at 9:35 am - 12/9/00

- A. That the Council not adopt the conclusions of the BiOp of 11/30/2000 with regard to Steller sea lions or the RPAs contained therein.
- B. Call for a Council review and analysis of the proposed RPAs in the current biological opinion compared to the 1999 pollock and Atka mackerel RPAs, and RPA options in the 2000 draft EA for Pacific cod, to determine the potential benefits to recovery of SSLs versus the costs to the groundfish fishing industry.
- C. Move that the Council conduct an independent peer review of the BiOp and experimental design and to evaluate other possible explanations for the decline of Steller sea lions and the ability of Steller sea lions to recover. The peer review should include independent scientists and a subset of SSC members.
- D. Establish a committee to develop a proposal for RPAs and an experimental design that satisfies ESA mandates and is consistent, to the extent possible, with Magnuson-Stevens Act standards.

The Committee should be of a workable size, and include representatives for the Agency, the State, the SSC, Council industry & conservation community.

In developing the experimental design, we task the committee with testing the fisheries impacts hypothesis, and the differential impacts of various gear types.

The Committee should begin work ASAP, bringing an initial report back to the Council in April and thereafter as needed, with final recommendations to be presented to the Council (family) no later than December 2001.

- E. The Council announces its commitment to disregard 2001 catch history in any future rationalization plan, and
- F. The Council requests NMFS to:
 - 1. clarify coordinates of closed areas; and
 - 2. allow vessels to participate in State Pacific cod fishery without surrendering Federal groundfish permits.