



North Pacific Fisheries Association, NPFA

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North Pacific Fishery Management Council
1007 W. 3rd Avenue, Suite 400
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: D4 – RQE IFQ Committee Recommendation

Chairman Kinneen and Members of the Council,

The North Pacific Fisheries Association (NPFA) is a commercial fishing organization based in Homer, Alaska which represents about 80 local fishing operations. The halibut and sablefish IFQ program are an integral part of many NPFA members' fishing portfolios. Former and current members not only helped craft the IFQ program, but have evolved with the longline fishery over the past twenty-five years. NPFA continues to be involved and our membership represents past and future Council members, former and current AP members, members of the IFQ Committee, IPHC Commissioners and lifelong halibut and sablefish fishermen.

NPFA endorses the recommendations and prioritization of issues made by the NPFMC IFQ Committee at the March 25th and 26th meeting. Much of the IFQ Committee meeting was focused on addressing the three-year review of the sablefish pot fishery in the GOA. Four recommendations for further analysis were addressed by the committee in an effort to make the fishery function more efficiently, safely, and cost effectively for both Industry and the Agency.

The committee also addressed a number of other halibut and sablefish IFQ issues related to access opportunities for new entrants. Although these items are important and relevant to members of NPFA, we agree that there are more pressing issues to devote Council resources to. We also feel that the will of the IFQ Committee was more focused on addressing the issues immediately facing the functionality of the halibut and sablefish fisheries, but that there was an over-arching desire to continue to work on entry opportunities, potential transfer mechanisms of quota shares, etc.

NPFA commends the Council, staff and committee members for participating in an essential aspect of the process to help assist in guidance of management for the complex halibut and sablefish IFQ fishery. Although, the IFQ program has gone through its fair share of growing pains it continues to be an integral part of coastal Alaska's commercial fishing identity, and an important and essential fishery for many of our members.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Malcolm Milne
President, North Pacific Fisheries Association