



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:BYC 14-002

Agenda Date2/3/2014

Agenda Number:C-7

Eric Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:
BSAI Halibut PSC - Updated Discussion Paper

ESTIMATED TIME:
2 hours

ACTION REQUIRED:
Review updated discussion paper.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2011, the Council requested development of discussion papers on reducing Pacific halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) limits in both the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA). Council action was taken in June 2012 to reduce GOA halibut PSC limits. Those reductions have been approved by the Secretary and are pending implementation in Federal regulations to coincide with implementation of groundfish harvest specifications for 2014/2015.

In March 2012, the Council requested a discussion paper to begin development of analyses to consider potential changes to the BSAI halibut PSC limits. Two papers were presented by Northern Economics to the Council also in June 2012. The first paper summarized the FMP basis of the current halibut PSC specifications, and the second summarized groundfish harvests wholesale values and halibut PSC by target fishery for 2003-2011. In February 2013, the Council requested that the second of the 2012 discussion papers be updated to include information for 2012, and include a discussion of potential management tools. This discussion paper (Item C-7) summarizes the results of a number of separate inquiries (see below), which will be reviewed by the Council to identify its next steps.

Section 2 contains a brief summary of closures due to halibut PSC Limits

Section 3 contains an overview of historical bycatch amounts relative to current PSC limits

Section 4 contains summaries of halibut bycatch mortality by sector in BSAI target fisheries for pollock, Pacific cod and yellowfin sole, as well as a summary of halibut bycatch mortality in fisheries prosecuted by the Amendment 80 CPs.

Section 5 contains excerpts from the November 11, 2012 "Report of the Halibut Bycatch Work Group" which describes several long-term options to reduce halibut bycatch.