

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## ADVISORY PANEL MINUTES October 4-8, 2016 Anchorage, AK

The following members were present for all or part of the meetings (absent ~~stricken~~):

Shannon Carroll	Jeff Favour	Paddy O'Donnell
Ruth Christiansen	John Gruver	Joel Peterson
Kurt Cochran	Jeff Kauffman	Jeff Stephan (Co-Vice Chair)
<del>John Crowley</del>	Alexus Kwachka	Ben Stevens
Jerry Downing	Craig Lowenberg	Matt Upton (Co-Vice Chair)
Angel Drobnica	Chuck McCallum	Ernie Weiss (Chair)
Dan Donich	Art Nelson (10/4 only)	Sinclair Wilt

The AP recommends the Council adopt the AP Handbook. *Motion passed 20/0.*

### **C1 BSAI Crab Management**

The AP recommends the Council adopt the 2016 Crab SAFE Report and the 2016/2017 OFL and ABC specifications as recommended by both the Crab Plan Team and SSC.

*Motion passed 19/0*

The AP recommends the Council initiate a discussion paper on Tanner crab bycatch in the directed groundfish fisheries. This discussion paper should assemble all the relevant bycatch information including spatial maps overlaying the existing closure areas with bycatch by gear type and survey data, the size and sex of crabs caught as bycatch by gear type, as well as overall bycatch amounts by gear type. The AP recommends the Council place priority on this discussion paper as well as the Bristol Bay Red King Crab PSC discussion paper and the Initial Review of Snow Crab PSC Limits.

*Motion passed 14/6*

#### Rationale in Favor:

- The Tanner crab fishery is not overfished, overfishing is not occurring, nor is the stock approaching an overfished status. However, the directed commercial fishery is facing a closure for 2016-2017 season as well as a closure for the next few years.
- Bycatch in the directed groundfish fisheries will still be allowed and is based on crab abundance from the survey. PSC allowances for 2016 were 830,000 Tanner crab in Zone 1 and 2,520,000 Tanner crab in Zone 2. While abundance in the east decreased significantly, it is reasonable to

expect that bycatch numbers in the west will be similar given that survey abundance numbers were similar to last year. This clearly demonstrates a situation where the conservation burden rests solely on the directed fishery.

- This information would help inform the impact of groundfish bycatch on the overall stock as well as the efficacy of the current closure area for groundfish gear.
- Survey numbers for 2016 and their relationship to the State of Alaska harvest strategies emphasize the importance of developing a solution for all Bering Sea crab PSC. There is a need for management to be better able to answer the question as to whether current PSC measures are beneficial, to the greatest extent practicable, for protecting crab stocks while minimizing any potential disruptions to the groundfish fisheries.

Rationale in Opposition:

- Crab bycatch data is already readily available through annual co-op reports.
- The trawl sector has adopted gear modifications that reduce crab mortality.
- The State of Alaska sets the harvest policy and bycatch is only one consideration.
- The AP should not be directing the NMPFC what issues should be prioritized.

The AP recommends the Council request the following from the State of Alaska:

1. A description of each of the State's harvest strategies for Tanner crab, Snow crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, and St. Matthew's blue king crab, including an explanation for each of the various components of the individual strategies; a description on how each of the harvest strategies intersects with the Federal stock assessment process; and consideration of how each of the harvest strategies meets the requirements of the Federal Crab FMP.
2. Convene the Joint Protocol Committee to discuss and develop potential ways for which the cooperative Bering Sea crab management structure can be improved.

*A motion to delete item 2 above, failed 13/7.*

*Motion passed 14/6.*

Rationale in Favor:

- The Tanner crab fishery is not overfished, overfishing is not occurring, nor is stock approaching an overfished status. The mature male biomass = 100 million pounds; the OFL = 56 million pounds; and the ABC = 45 million pounds. However, based on the current State of Alaska harvest strategy, the directed commercial fishery is facing a closure for the 2016-2017 season as well as a closure for the next few years. Such a closure will have dramatic economic consequences, now and into the future, for directed harvesters, processors, and coastal communities.
- Every Federal FMP developed must be consistent with the National Standards under the MSA. While management is deferred to the State of Alaska under the FMP, such a cooperative structure assumes that the harvest strategies utilized by the State will be consistent with the National Standards; however, the current resource management situation does not align with National Standards 1, 2, and 8.
- The Federal FMP specifically establishes a cooperative State/Federal management structure, but the two bodies have been operating without much overlap or coordination for many years. The best way to ensure effective and efficient cooperative management is to make sure that the two bodies responsible for management understand one another through a clear and transparent

process and that they have the opportunity to discuss potential areas of improvement as appropriate.

- This action is envisioned as the first step towards the long-term improvement of the cooperative management structure under the Federal Crab FMP. It is intended to be deferential to the State with regards to staff time and other such considerations. It is not intended to take priority over current actions being explored to address the commercial Tanner crab fishery for 2016-2017.

#### Rationale in Opposition:

- There is not consensus amongst the crab directed fishery stakeholders that this is the best approach to pursue resolution of the crab issues.
- Stakeholders believe the issues identified in the motion should be addressed through the existing inter-agency coordination process.

## **C2 Groundfish Harvest Specifications**

The AP recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2017 and 2018 Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC in C2 action memo under Item 2; rollover TACs adopted for 2017 ([Attachment 1](#)); Tables 14, 16 and 17 for PSCs in Item 3; and rollover the flatfish flexibility reserves for 2017 and 2018 (Table 13) ([Attachment 2](#)). *Motion passed 17-0*

The AP recommends the Council adopt the proposed 2017 and 2018 Gulf of Alaska groundfish specifications for OFLs and ABCs as recommended by the SSC and set TACs as shown in [Attachment 3](#), with all proposed specifications consisting of rollovers of final specifications from 2017. The TACs for both Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod and Pollock have been adjusted to account for the State water GHLL fisheries. The Gulf of Alaska Pacific cod adjustments are shown in the C2 action memo under Item 5.

The AP recommends that the Council set the 2017 and 2018 annual and seasonal Pacific halibut PSC limits and apportionments in the Gulf of Alaska as provided in Tables 9, 10, and 11 of Item 6 in the action memo. *Motion passed 19/0.*

## **C3 EM Integration**

The AP recommends the Council release the EM Integration Analysis for public review and final action as scheduled in February 2017 December 2016. We further recommend the Council identify Alternative 2 as a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA), including provisions that:

- Allow EM as a potential tool for compliance monitoring when fishing in multiple IFQ areas; and
- Initiate a trailing amendment to require full retention of rockfish species on all fixed gear CV's regardless of at sea monitoring strata.

The AP further recommends the Council task staff, the OAC, and the EM workgroup with the development of options and analytical tools to better evaluate the optimization of EM as an integrated component of the Annual Deployment Plan process. An initial framework for this optimization should be part of the October 2017 review of the 2018 ADP.

*Amended motion passed 19/0.*

### Rationale:

- The AP motion is consistent with the OAC and EM Workgroup recommendations.
- The PPA of Alternative 2 focus discussions on enforcement considerations, to guide future field work, and to initiate cost and data quality optimization work required prior to implementation.
- Full retention of rockfish will reduce waste, provide consistent regulations for all rockfish species and management areas, reduce operator uncertainty when trying to comply with MRA regulations, and provide an opportunity for heightened shore-based catch accounting measures in the future if rockfish species become binding. This already occurs for DSR in SE AK and works very well for both small and large vessels.

## **C4 2017 Observer Program ADP**

*The following was offered as a substitute motion and passed 16/3.*

The AP recommends the Council support the following recommendations for the draft 2017 Annual Deployment Plan:

1. Use the trip-selection method to assign observers to vessels in partial coverage in 2017.
2. Deploy observers in the trip-selection pool, with optimal allocation based on discarded catch. Resulting in the preliminary deployment rates for the trip-selection strata in 2017 as follows:

Hook-and-line (11%)  
Tender hook-and-line (27%)  
Pot (3%)  
Tender Pot (6%)  
Trawl (18%)  
Tender Trawl (14%)

3. The no selection pool would include catcher vessels 1) less than 40 ft and vessels fishing with jig gear 2) EM selection pool that have opted-in to the EM selection pool and will participate in the 2017 EM cooperative research pre-implementation plan.
4. No temporary exemptions from observer coverage are allowed due to insufficient life raft capacity, given the option for these vessels to be in the electronic monitoring pool in 2017.
5. Continue the policy (programming in ODDS) that prevents a 40 – 57.5-foot fixed gear vessel from being selected for a third consecutive observer trip.
6. Maintain the ability for vessels to log up to three trips in advance in ODDS.
7. Continue to encourage ODDS trip number to be entered voluntarily on groundfish landing reports to facilitate data analysis and provide a better link between ODDS and eLandings.
8. Maintain the current Chinook salmon sampling protocols to identify stock of origin.
9. Continue to conduct outreach in fall and winter 2016/2017 as appropriate. The AP recommends that the Council request more information about logging trips in a tender stratum be included in the final ADP.

The AP recommends that the Council begin to consider approaches to address low coverage rates for the 2018 ADP process that include the following: (1) **prioritize** ~~consider~~ ways to optimize coverage within the current program budget (PSC limited fisheries and efficiencies within the sampling design); (2) request Federal funding; and (3) **evaluating the present fee structure** ~~increase the fees.~~ **[Motion to change language passed 19/0]**

Incorporation of outcome metrics such as precision estimates (coefficients of variation or percent standard errors, CV's or PSE) on discards as part of the Annual ADP process. **[Motion to add item passed 19/0]**

*Final amended motion passed 19/0.*

Rationale:

- Staff reports noted core purpose of Observer program is to provide estimates of at-sea discards. Understanding how proposed deployment rates will affect the accuracy and precision (variance) of those estimates is critical to evaluating alternatives in the ADP.
- The Gap analysis currently included in ADP does not provide information on anticipated accuracy and precision of catch estimates resulting from ADP deployment options. Adding this metric will provide the Council with an additional tool to future ADP's will improve evaluation of alternate deployment options,
- AP recognizes that precision goals may be different for PSC vs. managed species or other species such as invertebrates. Incorporating precision estimates into the APD process will facilitate the development of priorities.
- Follows the 2017 annual deployment plan and captures the OAC report while keeping parts of the program that are important to keep in place, as we have a shortfall of money.

## **C5 Shortage of Fixed Gear Lead Level 2 Observers**

The AP recommends the Council move forward the discussion paper addressing the shortage of fixed gear Lead Level 2 (LL2) observers (agenda item C5) for analysis. The analysis should include consideration of options 1, 2, 4 and 6 as described in the discussion paper and in the October 2015 Council motion:

- Option 1: Allow deployment of a non-fixed gear LL2 observer on FLC vessels if the only alternative is that the vessel must stand down:
  - Deploy any non-LL2 observer
  - Deploy a trawl LL2 observer
- Option 2: Allow observer experience on fixed gear vessels in other regions to count towards LL2 certification.
- Option 4: Institute an at-sea training component to the Federal observer training program, whereby the agency would pay for fixed gear LL2 certification.

The analysis should also include Option 6 developed by the Observer Program, with the sub-option added by the Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) referenced below.

- Option 6: Allow freezer longline (FLL) vessels with flow scales to choose between a single LL2 observer or two level 2 observers
  - Sub-option 1: Allow FLL vessels with flow scales to choose between a single LL2 observer, *or a level 2 and level 1 observer.*

The AP also supports further exploration by the Observer Program of non-regulatory actions to support fixed gear LL2 observers, as proposed in Section 5.7 of the discussion paper.

*Motion passed 17/0.*

Rationale:

- This motion is consistent with the OAC recommendations on this discussion paper.
- Data detailed in the discussion paper indicate a continued shortage of LL2 observers available for deployment on the FLL fleet. Industry comments support this data.

- There continues to be a strong risk that FLL vessels miss fishing days due to a lack of fixed-gear, LL2 observers to place on the vessels.
- Interim action by FLL vessel owners to voluntarily pay for second observers to be deployed on their boats for training purposes have helped address critical shortage of fixed-gear LL2 observers, but at a high cost to the fleet.
- A long-term solution to the LL2 observer shortage remains needed.
- Concerns about a shortage of LL2 observers for the FLL fleet have been voiced since 2011.
- As highlighted in the discussion paper and in public comments, several FLL vessels have lost fishing days due to a shortage of LL2 observers to be deployed on the fleet.
- Council has considered action on this issue since 2014 and industry and agency representatives have engaged in efforts to develop solutions.
- Shortages of fixed-gear LL2 observers resulting from the 2012 Final Rule predicted by industry were realized in 2013 and 2014, with continued risk for additional shortages.
- Since 2014, FLL vessel owners have voluntarily paid for second observers to be deployed on their boats for training purposes.
- To date, FLL vessel owners have paid over \$370,000 to accommodate observer training.
- These costs will only increase until a long-term remedy is developed.

## C6 Review of Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Program

The AP appreciates the work staff has put into the draft review and recommends that the draft review be brought back for final review with the addition of a section that describes the benefits of consolidation limits and entry level provisions on the overall program success. **Further, the AP would like to look at the positive and negative sides of consolidation.** *[Motion to add language passed 20/0]*

*Amended motion passed 19/0.*

### Rationale:

- The draft review is comprehensive and will benefit from the addition of a section that consolidates the benefits of consolidation limits and entry level provisions to overall program success so that stakeholders can make informed decisions and bring them to Council through the IFQ committee.

The AP recommends that future NIOSH hazard assessment reports of the halibut sablefish IFQ program include a broader range of years (1984-1994) that better characterizes pre-implementation fishing.

*Motion passed 18/0.*

### Rationale:

- In order to measure safety trends in the IFQ fishery, future NIOSH hazard assessment reports on the IFQ program should capture a broader range of years of pre IFQ implementation fishing.

*The following amended motion failed 9/9:*

*The AP recommends that the Council request a discussion paper exploring how to increase entry level opportunities in the **halibut and sablefish** [amendment passed 12/6] IFQ fisheries through creation of community fishing associations (CFA) and/or regional fishery association entities (RFAE), **which would include CQEs.** [amendment passed 18/1]*

*The discussion paper should include the following information:*

- *Transfers of IFQ between initial recipients and new entrants in terms of scale and costs.*
- *Duration of ownership and costs associated in terms of loans, or other fixed costs.*
- *Extent of quota use agreements in terms of scale, rates, participants, and structure (how fuel and other trip costs are allocated).*
- *Measures that could fund quota for a CFA and/or RFAE from: (1) initial recipients; (2) existing quota holders; (3) transfers; and/or (4) quota use arrangements.*
- *Funding a CFA and/or RFAE through grants, partnerships with CDQ / Alaska Native Corporations, fundraising, or incentivized gift IFQ transfers*
- *Existing legal, regulatory, barriers or challenges to the success of CFA and/or RFAE.*
- *Amount of quota necessary for CFA and/or RFAE to be sustainable.*
- *Governance structures of CFA and/or RFAE.*

*Rationale in Favor of failed motion:*

- *Entry level opportunities to the IFQ programs appears to be impacted by the high cost of quota that can make it difficult for owner/operator participation, particularly in rural communities.*
- *Public testimony indicated in some years more than 50% of quota is leased via hired skippers, walk-ons, and other arrangements, typically at high rates (>60%). Leasing IFQ increases the burden on owner/operators trying to pay their crew, maintain vessels and gear, while also making a living.*
- *A major challenge to the success of existing Community Quota Entities, and any Regional Fishing Association Entity or Community Fishing Association that could form, is how to find adequate funding. These entities need to be better understood in order to make sure they don't make it more difficult for owner/operator participation or increase the cost of IFQ.*

*Rationale Against failed motion:*

- *Some AP members opposed the motion because it does not go far enough - should look at a discussion paper that applies to all rationalized fisheries.*
- *Other AP members are opposed to the CFA concept being applied to IFQ or any fisheries.*
- *Some AP felt that it was more appropriate to provide these suggestions to the IFQ Implementation Committee rather than to add alternatives at initial review.*

## **C7 Area 4 Halibut IFQ Leasing**

The AP recommends the Council move forward for an additional initial review of analysis on action that would allow CDQ groups to lease IFQ in years of low halibut abundance in Areas 4CDE and Area 4B, with the following alternative and options:

**Alternative 2:** Allow CDQ groups to lease halibut IFQ in Areas 4B, 4C and 4D in years of low halibut catch limits in regulatory Areas 4B and 4CDE. Any IFQ transferred to a CDQ group under this provision would be added to their available halibut CDQ, intended for use by residents with a halibut CDQ permit and a CDQ hired master permit. No vessel over 51 feet LOA would be eligible to harvest the leased IFQ and vessels would have to comply with IFQ use restrictions.

**Option 1:** Defining 'low catch limits' for the purpose of allowing leases. Designation of low catch limits is independently determined for Areas 4B and 4CDE. The threshold for designating a year of low halibut catch limit in each area is less than:

Sub-option 1: 1.5 million pounds for Area 4CDE

Sub-option 2: 1 million pounds for Area 4B

**Option 2:** IFQ class designations do not apply when IFQ is being leased by a CDQ group.

**Option 3:** Leased Area 4D IFQ may be fished in Area 4E.

**Option 4:** Any Area 4B, 4C, or 4D catcher vessel QS transferred after December 14, 2015 may not be leased as IFQ to CDQ groups under this action for a period of 5 years.

The AP also supports additional analysis of the following: placing a cap on the amount of quota leased to CDQ groups; limiting the number of years that an individual QS holder can lease out quota; limiting the pool of QS holders eligible to lease based on the amount of quota share held; and further investigating potential impacts on the pool of quota holders who are currently fishing on vessels they do not own in Areas 4B and/or 4CDE and on the walk-on businesses that support these quota holders.

*Motion passed 17/2.*

Rationale:

- This is to be considered only a mitigation action and intended to provide temporary relief should halibut fishers in Areas 4B and 4CDE be faced with quota levels that put them in desperation mode.
- The intent of this action is twofold: (1) to prevent halibut IFQ from being 'stranded' when costs of pursuing the IFQ fishery are greater than the potential revenues generated by the reduced halibut quotas; and (2) to provide additional amounts of halibut to fishermen in CDQ villages, many of which in recent years have not been able to pursue halibut due to low abundance.
- The additional issues requested for analysis are responsive to stakeholder concerns regarding: further consolidation; limiting new entrant opportunities; and, potential impacts on businesses reliant on walk on quota holders.

## **D1 BSAI Halibut Abundance-based Management PSC limits**

**The AP recommends the Council and Halibut PSC Workgroup develop performance metrics and quantitative tools to evaluate the tradeoffs between the competing objectives for this action including:** The AP recommends the Council prioritize the objectives for this action in the following way:

*[motion to revise introduction passed 17/1]*

Rationale: At this time, it is difficult for stakeholders to gauge the potential biological and economic impacts of any action taken under this agenda item. The development of specific performance metrics and quantitative tools (i.e., losses to both the directed halibut fishery and the groundfish trawl fishery; the impact of various control rules on halibut spawning stock biomass) will allow for a thorough and robust evaluation of the trade-offs between the multiple objectives identified in the discussion paper.

### **Objectives**

- 1) protect the halibut stock spawning biomass.
- 2) provide for the sustained participation of directed halibut fishermen and fishery dependent communities in the BSAI halibut fishery.
- 3) provide a responsive management approach at varying levels of halibut abundance.



- 4) avoid unnecessarily constraining the groundfish fisheries at times of high halibut abundance.
- 5) **Stability in inter-annual PSC limits.** [*motion to add item 5 passed 18/0*]

### **Development of control rule and index alternatives**

To meet the objectives above, the AP recommends identifying and analyzing alternatives for the index and the control rules concurrently.

#### **Index**

The AP recommends that the Council develop a suite of alternatives for an appropriate abundance index, and that the alternatives include the following:

Alternative 1: Index halibut removals to the IPHC halibut standardized stock assessment survey (SSA survey).

Suboption: Index halibut removals to the IPHC halibut SSA survey for Area 4

Alternative 2: Index fixed gear PSC limit to the halibut SSA survey  
Index trawl gear PSC limit to the AFSC EBS shelf bottom trawl survey

Suboption: Index fixed gear PSC limit to the halibut SSA survey for Area 4

Alternative 3: Index PSC limits to an integrated blend of indices as suggested by the working group, with a range of weighting options for the GOA trawl survey component.

#### **Control rule**

In moving this action forward, the AP recommends the Council develop a suite of control rule alternatives.

The AP recommends the Council include a control rule alternative that provides for the sustained participation of directed fisheries and communities in the BSAI halibut fishery by providing a base level allocation to the directed halibut fishery, as permitted by availability of the resource. Such an alternative could create a catch sharing plan consistent with the objectives above, in conjunction with the use of alternative 1 index.

Floor: The AP also recommends including a control rule alternative that curtails halibut mortality in all fisheries at low thresholds of abundance (defined either by thresholds in the IPHC stock assessment or some other cut-off for spawning biomass in the assessment).

Starting Point: The AP recommends that the control rule alternatives include:

Option 1: a starting point that reflects current bycatch levels and expected future improvements in halibut bycatch levels.

Option 2: a biologically-based starting point, according to the current levels of abundance.

*Final amended motion passed 13/6*

#### Rationale In Favor:

This motion is responsive to, or reflective of, a couple of things:

1. The workgroup directed that we prioritize objectives.

2. The impetus for and the intent behind this agenda item (i.e., this action started in June 2015, in response to historic low harvestable abundance in the Area 4CDE halibut fisheries, and after the Council acknowledged that static PSC limits were a blunt tool to manage halibut bycatch).
3. The Council's purpose and needs statement which notes that relative PSC removals increase when abundance is low, which further reduces the amount and proportion of halibut available for the directed halibut fisheries and that PSC could be unnecessarily constraining during high abundance.
4. The concern that the workgroup did not explicitly consider sustained directed halibut fishery opportunity in the index modeling or tools for proposed control rule.
5. The SSC report on the agenda item, which, among other things, suggested that:
  - a broader suite of options for candidate abundance indices and control rules be examined together in subsequent analyses, rather than restricting analyses to a single index like the ABM at this stage.
  - the integrated index would likely have been ineffective at constraining PSC during the recent period of decline in coastwide halibut biomass.
  - a rule similar to our standard harvest control rule for groundfish species should be considered that would reduce PSC to zero at very low halibut abundances.

Rationale in Opposition:

The NPFMC manages halibut bycatch, the IPHC manages the directed halibut fishery and must take into consideration bycatch when setting catch limits. A reasonable objective for an NPFMC action cannot be to have the IPHC set catch limits at some vague level that the NPFMC hopes will achieve "sustained participation." NPFMC objectives should be within the scope of the NPFMC's authority and control.

The objectives and control rule for abundance halibut PSC indices must balance the MSA's National Standards, for example achieving optimal yield and reducing bycatch to the extent practicable. The objectives and control rule proposed here explicitly prioritizes the directed halibut fishery over consideration of other fisheries that the NPFMC also manages.

The SSC identified significant problems within each of the indices being used on their own, or through an integrated model, for setting an abundance based approaches. Additional work needs to be done by the workgroup before the NPFMC recommends alternatives, including examining assumptions about halibut mortality, migration from the Bering Sea to other areas, and recent biological changes in their size at age. The consequences to all stakeholders of a failed approach to an abundance based halibut PSC limit would be devastating, we need to make sure we get this right.

***The following amendments to the motion above failed:***

*Revise item 2 under Objectives as follows, failed 3/15*

*2) provide for the sustained participation of directed halibut fishermen and fishery dependent communities in the BSAI halibut fishery, **with particular focus on St. Paul;***

*Revise item 4 under Objectives as follows, failed 9/9*

*4) avoid unnecessarily constraining the groundfish fisheries ~~at times of high halibut abundance.~~*

Add the following suboption under Alternative 2, failed 8/11.

**Suboption: index fixed gear PSC limit to the AFSC EBS shelf bottom trawl survey**

**The following substitute motion was offered prior to the amendments above. Motion failed 3/15.**

The AP recommends that Council direct the halibut abundance PSC work group to take into consideration the following in their subsequent analyses:

Consider a broader suite of options for candidate abundance indices and control rules be examined together in subsequent analyses, rather than restricting analyses to a single index like the ABM at this stage.

Equally weighting the two trawl-based indices may implicitly put more weight on a halibut in the GOA because the majority of smaller halibut occur in the EBS.

Maintaining flexibility and evaluating a suite of potential indices and control rules in the analyses before selecting the best index or combination of indices to meet the Council's objectives.

Different indices may need to be considered to meet different objectives, which could then be combined in a control rule or decision making framework that allows the Council to evaluate the tradeoffs between protecting spawning stock biomass, constraining PSC, and providing opportunities for a directed fishery.

Rationale in Support: The SSC comments provide appropriate guidance for the NPFMC for how to approach further analyses.

Rationale in Opposition: The NPFMC needs more direction than what was provided by the SSC, and the work group is requesting priorities be given to help them evaluate indices.

## **D2 Halibut DMRs**

The AP recommends the Council:

1. Endorse the new **process methodology** as outlined in the modifications to DMR calculation procedures.
2. Adopt the proposed DMRs for 2017 and 2018 as detailed in the Errata Appendix.
3. Encourage the Workgroup create a Technical Memo that outlines the calculations.

An amendment to replace "methodology" with "process" passed 20/0.

Amended motion passed 20/0.

Rationale: The AP appreciates the transparent process for setting DMRs.

The AP recommends the Council request the DMR working group consider incorporating additional data from the A80 fishery including quantifying how the length of time and volume of tows has changed in recent years, and is different across target fisheries, vessels, and areas (GOA/BSAI) which may impact mortality. The working group should also discuss different ways to ground truth viabilities calculations through tagging studies or other methods.

Also, to look at DMRs on a shorter timeframe than 10 years to increase incentive for the fleets to reduce bycatch. *This was added by amendment and passed 20/0.*

*Amended motion passed 20/0.*

Rationale:

- The old IPHC DMR numbers were averaged over 10 years. The new DMR process can set the average on a shorter time frame to give incentive for better handling of PSC.
- The size of tow needs to be taken into consideration which can vary by fishery and size of vessels. The existing DMRs are based on averages resulting in higher rates.

### **D3 EFH Descriptions**

The AP recommends the Council adopt the Ecosystem Committee's recommendations on updating EFH definitions and maps by species, life stage, and season.

*Motion passed 18/0.*

Rationale: The AP agrees with the Ecosystem Committee that, (1) the new maps present useful information that will be valuable in the conservation of habitat; and (2) combining different life stage and seasonal maps into one comprehensive map may prove problematic.

### **E Staff Tasking**

The AP approved the minutes from the April and June 2016 meetings.