



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:Catch 14-008

Agenda Date6/2/2014

Agenda Number:C7

Eric Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:
CDQ Pacific Cod Fishery Development - Initial Review

ESTIMATED TIME:
4 hours

ACTION REQUIRED:
Initial review on EA/RIR/IRFA for development of CDQ Pacific cod small vessel fishery

BACKGROUND

In October 2013, representatives from the Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups introduced a proposal to make regulatory changes or exemptions that would encourage local development and participation in the harvest of CDQ Pacific cod allocations in both a directed CDQ Pacific cod fishery and while targeting CDQ and Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) halibut. As a result of this testimony, the Council requested a staff discussion paper, presented in February of 2014. In February, the Council initiated an analysis, establishing a purpose and needs statement and alternatives.

The purpose of this action is to create a regulatory structure for the harvest of CDQ Pacific cod that promotes harvest opportunities for the CDQ small vessel fleets, and effectively allows CDQ and IFQ halibut harvesters, less than or equal to 46' in length the ability to retain CDQ Pacific cod in excess of the 20 percent MRA of halibut. The difference between the vessel requirements for directed CDQ halibut fishing and directed CDQ Pacific cod fishing means that any Pacific cod incidentally caught in the halibut fishery is generally not able to be retained by small vessels for commercial use. Adjusting the regulations for these fisheries could reduce Pacific cod discards and increase efficiency in the halibut CDQ fishery. Particularly in light of recent declines in halibut quota, CDQ fleets would benefit from the ability to retain their allocation of Pacific cod for commercial sale to supplement their income from CDQ halibut harvest. This action would be in line with Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) policy objectives of supporting employment and growth in the communities.

The alternatives adopted by the Council in February 2014 are as follows:

Alternative 1. Regulatory status quo.

Alternative 2. Increase the maximum retainable amount (MRA) up to 100 percent of the CDQ halibut landings for hook-and-line catcher vessels $\leq 46'$ LOA that hold Pacific cod CDQ. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod quotas.

Alternative 3. Create a new CDQ LLP for participating hook-and-line catcher vessels $\leq 46'$ LOA. Vessels with the CDQ LLP can participate in the CDQ directed Pacific cod fishery. Limit the number of LLPs each CDQ group would be provided. These LLP licenses would be non-transferable among CDQ groups. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod allocations. Vessels would be

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subject to the full coverage observer category consistent with existing full coverage observer requirements.

Option 1: Place these vessels in the partial coverage observer category. Incidentally caught halibut would accrue against the CDQ PSQ allocation.

Option 2: Place these vessels in the partial coverage observer category. Require vessels to retain any incidentally caught halibut. Incidentally caught halibut would accrue against the halibut CDQ allocation.

Alternative 4. Exempt hook-and-line catcher vessels participating in the CDQ Pacific cod fishery with $\leq 46'$ LOA from groundfish LLP requirements. All Pacific cod caught must be retained and accrues towards the CDQ Pacific cod allocations. Vessels would be in the partial coverage observer category.

Under all alternatives, the analysis will consider substitutes to VMS, such as a GPS electronic monitoring option for monitoring compliance with Steller sea lion protection measures, EFH, and HAPC closure areas.

At this meeting, the Council will make an initial review of the analysis. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has provided written recommendations on the current alternatives, and an interagency enforcement workgroup as well as the Observer Advisory Committee (OAC) have both provided written commentary from an enforcement and observer committee perspective.