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To: Erin Reinders, Mayor Tutikoff, and Council Members

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: December Fishery Activities

This week I have been attending the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meeting online. The Council will be meeting through Friday, but most of the major items such as Bering Sea Aleutian Islands, (BSAI) Gulf of Alaska, (GOA) Groundfish specifications, Pacific Cod CV Lapp Program Cook Inlet Salmon have been taken care of by today. Here is a breakdown of the issues they have acted on. I have attached the Council motions on the various issues with this memo.

C-1 Charter Halibut- the Council made recommendations to the International Pacific Halibut Commission on Charter Halibut Area 2-C Southeast Alaska and Area 3-C Central Gulf of Alaska.

For Area 2-C if the harvest is between 650,000- 751,000 lbs. 1 fish daily bag limit and apply a 35% buffer reduction on COVID-19 for Halibut removals in 2021 season.

For Area 3-C bag limit of 2 Halibut 1 fish of any legal size and 1 fish of 32" or less. No fishing on Wednesdays 1 charter trip per day different regulations if the harvest levels are set between 1.85-1.93million pounds.

C-2 Cook Inlet Salmon, a very controversial issues which the Council spent a day and half on which would close 50% of the federal waters in lower Cook Inlet to salmon drift net harvesters, severely impacting harvesters' processors, and communities. Over 100 testifiers of harvesters, processors, support sector business and elected officials both local and state argued for the Council to adopt Alt. 2 which would have allowed joint federal and state management in Lower Cook Inlet. That option was not viable due to the State of Alaska refusing to participate in a joint management scenario. The Council was basically locked in to supporting Alt 4 which they to a person did not support. This issue was driven by the Sport Fish Sector in Cook Inlet that are very well funded and politicly connected to get more salmon into the river systems for their use. I believe this issue id far from over it was clear that folks were going to talk to the Alaska Delegation in DC about changes to Magnuson-Stevens Act that could get the federal more federal management in federal waters and lawsuits may come as well challenging this ruling.

C-3 BSAI Groundfish Specifications, the Council the Bering Sea specification late last night overall we are in surprisingly good shape the Pollock TAC for FY21 was reduced by 6% from last year's TAC of 1.425MMT to 1.375MT a 50,000MT reduction. In FY 22 the TAC is increased to 1.40MMT. Let us hope we do not have poor fishing again in the FY 21 B season fishery. The Pacific Cod fishery is projected to continue a decline from the reports from NOAA scientists, they project continued poor recruitment for the next few years. The TAC for FY 21 saw a 22% reduction in the TAC from FY 20 of 141,000MT in FY20 to 111,000MT in FY 21 and further reduced the TAC in FY22 to 95,000MT. The Aleutian Island Pacific cod fishery for FY 21 and FY 22 is basically at status quo levels for the next two years. In the Amendment 80 if you look at the attached BSAI Groundfish Species spread sheet the Sole, Perch and Mackerel fisheries these species are doing well large increases in the TAC for Yellowfin Sole and Rock Sole, Mackerel, Rockfish and Perch species are at status quo levels. I had expected larger reduction on Pollock so let us hope the fishery performs well in FY21.

Species	FY 21 OFL	FY 21 ABC	FY 21 TAC	FY 22 OFL	FY 22 ABC	FY22 TAC
EBS Pollock	2.59MMT	1.626MMT	1.375MMT	2.36MMT	1.48MMT	1.40MMT
EBS P- Cod	147,949MT	123,805MT	111,380MT	113,479MT	106,852MT	95,053MT
Aleutian Cod	27,400MT	20,600MT	13,796MT	27,400MT	20,600MT	13,796MT

C-5 BSAI Pacific cod Trawl Catcher Vessel LAPP Program, this was the Council initial review of the large and complicated document. The Council spent a day and half reviewing the 14 elements in the document and close to 40 testifies under public comment. The motion is 9 pages long and the Council worked off what the Advisory Panel presented that Councilmember Baker who is the Deputy Commissioner of ADFG made the additions in bold and underlined the language deleted is in the various elements have strikethroughs. Some of high points in the motion in Element 3 PSC Bycatch limits to the CV sector they increased for analysis up to 35% from 25%. In Element 5 they keep in harvester shares for processors with a range of 5% to 30% in the Whiting fishery in Oregon the harvester shares for processors were set at 25%. In Element 1. They took out the language that restricted the number of cooperatives that could be formed and no limitation on the number of LLP licenses need to form a cooperative. Under Element 4 they made some major changes to Gulf of Alaska side boards section for AFA and non-AFA vessels. Under Element 7 Commission Baker did a major rewrite of this element on the transfer of any eligibility and catch history /harvest shares associated with the LLP license. In Element 14 CV trawl quota can be fished on CV pot gear which means a trawler in a cooperation can fish with pot gear if they so choose and quota derived from the program is not permanently designated as pot CV quota bycatch limits will apply within the CV trawl cooperative amounts.

Lastly the Unalaska Native Fishermen Association request to be include in the analysis for a community cod allocation a community cod allocation and may include analysis of a portion of jig cod allocation as well. This will be handled as a trailing amendment under staff tasking two Council members yesterday went on the record just before voting on the main motion stated that was their intention and probably will not come up until Saturday. Dustan Dickerson and I testified on this issue; I believe it went well.

The Council is still working on the issues listed below and possibly may not finish up until late on Friday or on Saturday morning, I will send a report and their motions on these issues when the Council completes their work

C-4 GOA Groundfish Specification

C-6 BSAI Pot Cod Catcher Processors,

E- Staff Tasking,

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

1. C-1 Motion Charter Halibut
2. C-2 Motion Cook Inlet Salmon
3. C-3 Motion BSAI Groundfish Specifications
4. C-4 Motion GOA Groundfish Specifications N/A yet
5. C-5 Motion BSAI Pacific cod Trawl Catcher Vessel LAPP Program
6. C-6 Motion BSAI Pot Cod Catcher Processors, N/A yet
7. E- Motion Staff Tasking N/A yet