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Date: October 17, 2021

To: Erin Reinders, JR Pearson, Michelle Price, Mayor Tutikoff and City Council

From: Frank Kelty, Fisheries Consultant

Re: Fishery Activities and for the week ending 10-15-21

I been attending the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meetings from Sunday 10-10-21 through Friday October 15-2021.

This week's Council meeting was a very long meeting with lots of public testimony on many important issues. The Bering Sea Crab situation had much testimony on the impacts of over 200 million dollars to harvests, processors, and communities. There were many recommendations were made on steps that needed to be taken such as more protection areas for crab stocks, reduced bycatch in the trawl and fixed gear fisheries. Under staff tasking at the end of the meeting the council passed motions to take emergency action to address many of the issues brought up on this agenda item including expanding the RKC savings area and take action to protect female King Crab. The Council also asked for a discussion paper on bottom contact by pelagic trawl gear, changes to trawl gear, and survey boundaries for Red King Crab surveys. The Council also approved the Overfishing and Allowable Biological Catch amounts for all crab species as recommend by the Science and Statistical Committee.

The Council also heard much testimony from residents from the Yukon and Kuskokwim River villages on the lack of salmon returns and the tremendous impacts it has had on Alaska First People they implored the NPFMC to take action to reduce salmon bycatch in the Pollock Fishery to zero for the 2022 fishing season. The Council passed a motion under staff tasking to get updated data on genetic stock identification, and a stock status update on Western Alaska Chinook, and Chum salmon stocks.

The Council took final action was passed on Catcher Vessel Trawl Pacific Cod Rationalization this issue was worked on for two and half days with over 60 testifiers. The motion alone is 10 pages long this issue has been worked on for three years. Some of the main impacts to Unalaska in this was that 22.5% of the allocation to the harvesters went to the BSAI shoreplants this allocation recognizes the investments made by the shoreplants in their operations in fishery dependent. The shoreplants will take those allocations and will have them fished by the trawlers that they work with at the various plants. The Council also placed sideboards on the BSAI trawlers for the protection of the Gulf of Alaska small trawlers that could be potential impacted BSAI

trawlers. The Council also increased the percentage of bycatch reductions on crab from 25% to 35% and Halibut bycatch remained at 25% for the catcher trawl vessels. The Council address the Aleutian Islands provisions by doing a set aside cod allocation of 12% for shoreplants in Adak which was less than the Aleutian Islands groups were asking for we will see if that set aside will enough to attract investment to the Adak shoreplant. This new Pacific Cod Trawl Catcher Vessel cooperative will have to have 100% observer coverage for this new LLAP program. A review of the program will take place after five years. The quota share allocations will be for 10 years and will have to be renewed.

The Council spent a good amount of time on the IFQ Omnibus package which moves forward to final action and public comment later in early 2022. The following changes and revisions were made to the IFQ fisheries. Some of the various changes included in Alt. 2 the NPFMC preferred alternative, sablefish pots for the southeast and west Yakutat at 200 pots. Allow slinky pots as legal gear in IFQ and CDQ fisheries, allow jig gear as legal gear in the sablefish CDQ fisheries. A proposed change in the tunnel opening to 9” when fishing sablefish, and pot gear retrieval requirement to 7 days for all Gulf of Alaska areas when fishing sablefish.

The Council adopted preliminary Groundfish Specifications for the BSAI and Gulf of Alaska 2022 fishing season these are place holder numbers approved in December of December of 2020 for the start fixed gear fisheries that start of January 1, 2022, before the final numbers approved and adopted at the December 2021 Council meeting are approved by the Secretary of Commerce in late January or early February.

At this meeting the Council adopted C-5 the annual Observer Deployment plan for the 2022 fishing season. The plan covers, hook and line, pot, and trawl fisheries. This includes an adjustment of 15% optimization for groundfish discards of Halibut, PSC and Chinook PSC. This plan maintains NMFS to release a vessel if they have had observers for 3 consecutive trips. No coverage in the observer pool for vessels using jig gear.

The Council also adopted the Halibut Catch Share Workplan and tentative scheduling for the catch share plan for IPHC Areas 2-c and 3-A.

The Council also under staff tasking Motion asked the Alaska Fisheries Science Center AFSC to address Climate and Fisheries Initiatives and have list 4 areas they want looked. They included the Fishery Ecosystem Plan Local and Traditional Taskforce plans. The Council wants the agency to work with other agency partners partially USFWS, and Landscape Conservative Community. The agency should send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce for additional funding. The Council also supports the Science and Statistical Committee comments and asked that agency plans be revised to respond to the SSC input.

Regards

Frank Kelty

Attachments:

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Motions

1. C-1 Motion Crab Specifications
2. C-2 Motion IFQ Omnibus Changes to the IFQ Fisheries
3. C-3 Motion RQE Program Funding for Charter Halibut
4. C-4 Motion BSAI Pacific cod Trawl Catcher Vessels LAPP Final Action
5. C-5 Motion Observer Deployment
6. C-6 Motion Preliminary BSAI and Gulf of Alaska Harvest Specifications
7. D-1 Motion Halibut Catch Share Workplace Review
8. Staff Tasking Motion salmon bycatch
9. Staff Tasking Motion Red King Crab Savings Area
10. Staff Tasking Motion Crab Initiatives
11. Staff Tasking Motion Small Sablefish Release
12. Staff Tasking Motion Climate Initiatives
13. Staff Tasking Motion Council Appointments