

MAKAH TRIBAL TESTIMONY ON IN-SEASON ADJUSTMENT IN GROUND FISH FISHERY

Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the Council. For the record my name is Russell Svec, Fisheries Manager for the Makah Tribe and with me this morning is Steve Joner, fishery biologist, and Brandon Bryant, groundfish biologist for the Makah Tribe.

The Makah Tribe proposes an in-season adjustment for groundfish for the remainder of 2006. We need the ability to redistribute the bi-monthly trip limits for Dover sole and arrowtooth flounder. We want to combine the bi-monthly cumulative limits for July and August, for September and October, and for November and December to give more flexibility to harvest these abundant species, while keeping bycatch rates low on Pacific Ocean perch (POP), canary rockfish, widow rockfish, and darkblotched rockfish.

We have two purposes for this in-season adjustment:

- The first purpose is to take our harvest guideline of Dover sole (476.3 mt) arrowtooth flounder (1360.8 mt) and blackcod without exceeding the caps on Pacific Ocean Perch and other depleted rockfish species, or on blackcod. We also want to minimize the bycatch of Pacific halibut during this period.
- In addition, we want to test different gear configurations in combination with area management to reduce impacts on these bycatch species.

Our fisheries for Dover sole and arrowtooth flounder currently have high catch rates and are relatively clean in terms of bycatch. The fishery targeting on Dover sole and arrowtooth flounder has a bycatch rate of 8.8 percent blackcod, and only 0.3 percent Pacific Ocean perch. Applying these bycatch rates to the remaining harvest targets for Dover sole and arrowtooth flounder, we could expect a bycatch of 6 metric tons of Pacific Ocean perch; however, our bycatch caps on blackcod would reduce the catch of Dover sole and arrowtooth flounder, so it is more likely that the POP bycatch would be even lower – perhaps by as much as half.

These bycatch numbers are well within the guideline for these species.

To achieve the second objective, we want to compare the difference in bycatch rates between standard bottom trawl gear with small footrope, and pineapple – cutback headrope gear. When we have the results from this commercial evaluation fishery, we will prepare a report to the Council summarizing our findings. We hope to have this report ready by the November 2006 Council meeting.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal. We'd be glad to answer any questions you might have about this fishery.