

## FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH CATCH SHARE PROGRAM REVIEW, INCLUDING FEDERAL ELECTRONIC FISH TICKETS FOR OPEN ACCESS SABLEFISH DELIVERIES

The Council began a review of its sablefish permit stacking program at its September 2013 meeting. Phase I of the program review includes:

- 1) an assessment of the program as it has performed against its original objectives;
- 2) early consideration of two issues for action—
  - a) rules for assessing permit control, and
  - b) electronic fish tickets; and
- 3) identification of additional issues for potential action.

The Council is scheduled to approve the final program assessment document and final preferred alternatives for the two action items at this meeting. If, during the review, additional issues for action are identified, a second phase of the review may be conducted for the purpose of considering action on these issues. These other issues would be added to the omnibus action under F.9 and prioritized along with other groundfish items at the September 2014 Council meeting.

The first phase of this review process will produce two separate documents: a program assessment and a document that presents and analyzes impacts for the two action issues.

The first of these two documents is the program assessment document (Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 1). Based on guidance provided at the April Council meeting, additional information on the following topics was added to the review: development of the permit system; post-implementation changes in the groundfish management regime; permit and vessel length distributions; Northwest Fishery Science Center safety study; tier utilization; community dependence on fisheries; regional economic benefits; and net revenue estimates. A pre-briefing book draft was made available to the public on May 12 (<http://www.pcouncil.org/2014/05/30362/pre-pub-rvw-draft-fgsps-0514/>), which included everything except the sections on permit and vessel length and Section 3.3 “Prevent Excessive Concentration of Harvest Privileges,” both of which are included in the final draft provided here.

The latter of these two documents (Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 2) is the Council decision analysis document, which is also the environmental analysis (EA) required under the National Environmental Policy Act and will fulfill the analytical requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law. On the issue of the rules for assessing the three-permit control limit, the Council selected Alternative 2a as its preliminary preferred alternative, which provides a limited exception to the rule—for 20 percent vessel ownership. Additionally, since the April Council meeting, Council staff has identified two additional areas in which the Council may wish to add provisions to the alternative: rules for assessing individual and collective control (ownership pass through), and rules on coordinated ownership. Strawman suboptions for Council consideration have been added to the action alternatives. Further, NMFS has identified a different approach for addressing the purpose and need for the action on the control limit and has provided that approach as Agenda Item F.6.a, NMFS Report 2. On the electronic fish ticket issue, in April the Council did not select a preferred alternative but did remove suboptions that would have maintained paper fish tickets and removed some language that contained

unnecessary implementation details. Additionally, NMFS has identified a number of implementing issues for Council consideration on this topic (Agenda Item F.6.b, NMFS Report 1).

In April of 2012, under its trawl trailing actions, the Council took final action on a decision to allow joint registration of trawl and fixed gear (longline and fishpot) permits to the same vessel at the same time. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is developing a Secretarial review and implementation package on this issue, which will be combined with the two action items being considered as part of this review. In June, after the Council takes final action on the fixed gear catch sharing program review and issues for action, a draft EA will be published and proposed regulations promulgated on all three issues. If NMFS identifies any questions regarding Council intent with respect to the joint registration issue (none have been identified as of the time of the advance briefing book), it may bring those questions to the Council under the omnibus considerations (Agenda Item F.3).

**Council Action:**

- 1. Provide guidance on finalization of the Phase I review document, as appropriate, including recommendations, if any.**
- 2. Select final preferred alternatives for the rules for assessing permit control and electronic fish ticket requirements.**
- 3. Identify Phase II issues for inclusion in the omnibus process, if any (Agenda Item F.9).**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 1: Public Review Draft Pacific Coast Groundfish Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Permit Stacking (Catch Shares) Program Review.
2. Agenda Item F.6.a, Attachment 2: Action to the Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery Managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, Including Measures to: Implement electronic fish tickets for sablefish landings; and Modify the own/control limit – Council Decision Document and Draft Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Impact Review.
3. Agenda Item F.6.b, NMFS Report 1: Implementation Issues Associated with Electronic Fish Tickets.
4. Agenda Item F.6.b, NMFS Report 2: Addendum to the Own/Control Limits Measure: A NMFS-Proposed Alternative and Concerns Regarding the Existing Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA).

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Approve Program Review Document, Adopt Phase I Final Preferred Alternatives on Own/Control Criteria and Electronic Fish Tickets; Scope Phase II Issues, as Necessary

Jim Seger