

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) PROPOSAL
FOR GROUND FISH ALLOCATION COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

**Regional Landing Zones—Promoting Sustained Participation and Stability of
Groundfish-Dependent Fishing Communities**

Proposal: Add a landing requirement alternative to A-1.2 “IFQ Management Units” that would tie a set percentage of QS to regional zones.

Purpose: To provide stability to coastal communities and prevent excessive geographic consolidation of the fleet while allowing for a reasonable level of consolidation and improved harvesting cost efficiency in the fleet.

Description of the Proposal

- Two basic types of QS would be issued for target species: zone-specific QS and freely transferable QS. QP from zone-specific QS could only be landed in the zone for which the QS was issued. Zone-specific QS would be transferable but the QP associated with that QS would always have to be landed within the specified zone.
- Zones would be limited in number (i.e., 2-6 per state with a coastwide maximum of 10), designed and nominated by the states, and approved by the Council. The states could design individual zones to encompass a single port or group of ports. WDFW would likely nominate 2 zones: Bellingham-North Coast and South Coast-Columbia River.
- The Council would decide the overall split between zone-specific and freely transferable QS (e.g., 80% zone-specific, 20% fully transferable). Each permit owner or processor would be allocated the same split of zone-specific and freely transferable QS. The analysis should consider a reasonable range of zone-specific/freely transferable splits (e.g., 80/20, 75/25, 50/50).
- Zone-specific QS would be issued to permit owners based on the permit’s landings history over a time period chosen to reflect recent conditions (e.g., 2005-2007). For each target species, permit owners would receive zone-specific QS based on the proportion of landings history in each zone.
- The Council could maintain some degree of control over the IFQ system and adaptively manage the system by varying the split of zone-specific to freely transferable QS, redistributing QS among zones, permitting limited transfers between zones, adding or subtracting zones, etc.

Rationale

The EIS predicts that the non-whiting trawl fleet is expected to consolidate 50-66 percent under an IFQ system down to 40-60 vessels (section 4.17.2.1; p. 300). The consolidation, driven primarily by harvesting cost efficiency, is also expected to shift the geographic distribution of fishing effort and landings. While increased efficiency should translate into increased profits for quota holders remaining in the fishery, there is no guarantee that the benefits would be distributed evenly among the states or achieved without substantial disruption to local economies. Like with the LE trawl buyback program where some ports lost all of their vessels, some communities could be disproportionately harmed by consolidation of the fleet.

The regional landings requirement envisioned by this proposal would be intended to mitigate against such disproportionate harm by ensuring that groundfish dependent communities continued to receive a percentage of their recent landings. Consolidation could occur rapidly under an IFQ system (section 4.17.2.1; p. 301). The Adaptive Management option (A-3) under consideration would give the Council means to address unforeseen consequences after this consolidation has occurred. In contrast, a regional landings requirement would be an additional or alternative tool intended to give the Council more direct and proactive control over the geography of the fishery.

Section 303A of the MSA (16 U.S.C. 1853a)

(5) ALLOCATION.—In developing a limited access privilege program to harvest fish a Council or the Secretary shall—

...

(B) consider the basic cultural and social framework of the fishery, especially through—

*(i) the development of policies to promote the sustained participation of small owner-operated fishing vessels and fishing communities that depend on the fisheries, including **regional or port-specific landing or delivery requirements**; and*

(ii) procedures to address concerns over excessive geographic or other consolidation in the harvesting or processing sectors of the fishery;