



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Mark Cedergreen, Chairman Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

August 8, 2011

Mr. Will Stelle, Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
7600 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

Re: Pacific Fishery Management Council Recommendations for Amendments to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan and Regulations to Modify the Intersector Allocations and the Trawl Rationalization Program

Dear Mr. <sup>Will-</sup>Stelle:

This letter transmits the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) recommendations to revise the Pacific coast trawl rationalization program implemented through Amendment 20 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and the intersector allocations implemented through Amendment 21 to the FMP. These recommendations include Amendment 21-1 (a modification of the intersector allocation amendment) and regulatory amendments pertaining to the trawl rationalization program.

Amendment 21-1 would:

- clarify that the Amendment 21 allocation percentages supersede the limited entry/open access allocations for certain groundfish species, and
- revise the amount of bycatch quota pounds that will be issued for the shoreside trawl fishery to cover Pacific halibut mortality, to better match the objective specified in Amendment 21.

The recommendations for regulatory amendments pertain only to provisions implementing Amendment 20 and include, including but not limited to:

- severability of the mothership catcher vessel (MS/CV) endorsement and associated whiting catch history assignments from the limited entry trawl permit,
- continuation of the Adaptive Management Program (AMP) quota pound pass-through, through 2014 of the Shorebased IFQ Program or until an AMP process is established, whichever is earlier,
- an exemption from the prohibition on processing at sea for qualified participants in the Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program,
- revisions to the observer coverage requirement while a vessel is in port and before the offload is complete,

- revisions to the electronic fish ticket reporting requirements,
- revisions to the first receiver site license requirement,
- further clarification on moving between limited entry and open access fisheries, and
- a process for end-of-the-year vessel account reconciliation.

Council-adopted amendment language for FMP Amendment 21-1, recommended for Secretary of Commerce approval, is enclosed as Attachment 1. Enclosed as Attachment 2 are the proposed regulations, which I deem to be necessary or appropriate for the purpose of implementing FMP Amendment 21-1 and the regulatory amendments recommended by the Council, and consistent with the final actions taken by the Council at its June 2011 meeting. Upon approval of the regulations, Appendix E to the FMP will be modified to reflect those regulatory changes modifying the trawl rationalization program, as per the procedures established under Amendment 20.

These recommendations were adopted by the Council at its June 2011 meeting. Elements of these issues were considered at the prior four Council meetings in a precursory manner. The administrative records of these meetings include numerous detailed reference documents that contain justification material, in various states of development, relevant to the Council final action. However, we note specifically below two key documents.

Enclosed as Attachment 3 is an Environmental Assessment: "Trailing Actions for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Trawl Rationalization Program, including 1. Pacific Halibut Trawl Bycatch Mortality Limit (Amendment 21-1), 2. Exemption from the Prohibition on Processing At Sea in the Shorebased IFQ Program, DRAFT Environmental Assessment." For those recommendations not covered in the enclosed draft environmental assessment, it is our understanding that National Marine Fisheries Service has made a determination that (1) they qualify for either a categorical exclusion under NEPA or no further NEPA analysis because the action is administrative and informational with negligible cumulative effects or (2) because the impacts have been adequately covered under previous NEPA documents. We have enclosed for your information Attachment 4, the analytical Council decision document "Trawl Rationalization-Issue: Severability of Whiting Mothership Catcher Vessel Endorsements/Catch History and Issue: Adaptive Management Program QP Pass-Through Council Decision Document."

The Council expects that additional rulemakings will follow and include other operational components of the catch share program, such as the requirements for new observer provider certification, an adaptive management program, a Cost Recovery Program, and program refinements the subject of further Council deliberations scheduled to begin at the September, 2011 Council meeting.

Should your staff have any questions regarding the Council's recommendations, please have them contact Mr. Jim Seger at the Council office.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

Enclosures

- Attachment 1, Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Amendment 21-1  
Proposed Amendatory Language
- Attachment 2, Proposed rule: Fisheries off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish  
Fishery Management Plan; Trawl Rationalization Program; Program  
Improvement and Enhancement
- Attachment 3, Trailing Actions for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Trawl Rationalization  
including 1. Pacific Halibut Trawl Bycatch Mortality Limit (Amendment 21-1), 2.  
Exemption from the Prohibition on Processing At Sea in the Shorebased IFQ  
Program, DRAFT Environmental Assessment
- Attachment 4, Trawl Rationalization—Issue: Severability of Whiting Mothership Catcher  
Vessel Endorsements/Catch History and Issue: Adaptive Management Program  
QP Pass-Through Council Decision Document

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- C:
- Ms. Kelly Ames, Pacific Council Staff
  - Mr. Mark Cedergreen, Chairman, Pacific Council
  - Dr. John Coon, Pacific Council Staff
  - Dr. Kit Dahl, Pacific Council Staff
  - Mr. John DeVore, Pacific Council Staff
  - Mr. Kevin Duffy, NMFS NWR
  - Ms. Jamie Goen, NMFS NWR
  - Mr. Kerry Griffin, Pacific Council Staff
  - Mr. Frank Lockhart, NMFS NWR
  - Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Vice Chair, Pacific Council
  - Ms. Mariam McCall, Legal Counsel, NMFS NWR
  - Mr. James Mize, Legal Counsel, NMFS NWR
  - Mr. Jim Seger, Pacific Council Staff
  - Mr. Dan Wolford, Vice Chair, Pacific Council