

Draft Range of Alternatives for the Proposed Transfer of Management Responsibilities for Area 2A Pacific Halibut Fisheries with Focus on the Non-Indian Directed Commercial Fishery

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| CDFW | California Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| CSP | Catch Sharing Plan |
| COP | Council Operating Procedure |
| Council | Pacific Fishery Management Council |
| IPHC | International Pacific Halibut Commission |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NMFS | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| NOAA | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| ODFW | Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| WDFW | Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| WCR | NMFS West Coast Region |

List of Alternatives for Consideration

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Background

During the November 2019 Council meeting, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provided a report regarding the potential process and workload for the transition of management of the non-Indian directed commercial halibut fishery (directed fishery) from the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) to the Council and NMFS ([Agenda Item F.3.a NMFS Report 1, November 2019](#)). At the conclusion of Council discussion, the Council recommended staff from the Council and NMFS West Coast Region (Project Team) develop a report for the March 2020 meeting describing how the Council might proceed with the transfer of management responsibilities. The Project Team has discussed this action extensively, drafted a purpose and need statement, developed a scope of action, and a potential range of alternatives. An outline of past Council discussions on the transition topic is provided in Appendix B, Table 1.

1.0 Purpose and Need

The proposed action is to transition management of the non-Indian Pacific halibut (halibut) fisheries within IPHC regulatory Area 2A from IPHC to the Council and NMFS, with a focus on the directed fishery. Area 2A (waters off the coast of Washington, Oregon, and California) is the only area where halibut fisheries are still managed directly by IPHC. IPHC currently issues licenses¹ for all Area 2A fisheries, and solely manages the non-Indian directed commercial fishery. The purpose of the action is to provide Area 2A managers and stakeholders a direct role in the management of all Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries, including the non-Indian directed commercial fishery.

This action is needed because IPHC requested that management of the non-Indian directed commercial fishery be transferred to Area 2A managers as soon as possible. In a [letter](#) addressed to the Council on October 17, 2019, IPHC stated their "...desire for the IPHC to move full management of the [IPHC Regulatory Area 2A Non-Indian Directed Commercial] fishery from the IPHC (an international fisheries management body) to the relevant domestic agencies."

2.0 Proposed Scope of Action

Currently, the directed fishery opening date(s), duration, and vessel trip limits are determined by IPHC and implemented in IPHC regulations. IPHC requested transfer of management for only the non-Indian directed commercial fishery; however, when scoping this request, it seemed prudent to consider management aspects for all Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries, especially when considering the licensing strategy (See [Workgroup Report, June 2019](#)). Therefore, the proposed action as noted under the Purpose and Need section is broad in scope so that the Council could consider transferring the licensing authority for all Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries. Note that this action does not include the treaty Indian fisheries.

The Council's Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP, or Plan) for Area 2A fisheries contains the framework to allocate and manage catch for the annual Area 2A total allowable catch (TAC), also known as the fishery constant exploitation yield (FCEY). The FCEY is developed and approved by IPHC each January. The CSP framework is implemented in both IPHC regulations and domestic regulations (implemented by NMFS) as published in the *Federal Register*. The CSP provides details regarding preseason and inseason management of the treaty Indian fisheries and non-Indian fisheries (including directed commercial, incidental commercial during longline sablefish, incidental commercial during salmon troll, and recreational charter). Therefore, the Council is positioned to address management, bycatch, and economic concerns related to all Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries. Additionally, the Council

¹ The term 'permitted' is synonymous with 'licensed' and 'registered'. IPHC documents generally use 'license' and NMFS/Council use 'permit.'

has a well-established process for public input and participation, and meeting locations rotate around the continental U.S. West Coast. The IPHC public process differs from the Council, and meeting locations rotate between Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska, which can be challenging for Area 2A stakeholders wishing to participate in the IPHC public process.

The Project Team focused the scope of action on authorizing the transfer of licensing authority for all Area 2A fisheries and transferring management of the non-Indian directed commercial fishery from IPHC to the Council (See items 1 through 3 below). The proposed scope of action would include the development of a licensing system for all Area 2A fisheries and development of regulatory authority for NMFS to manage opening date(s), duration, vessel trip limits and inseason actions for the directed commercial fishery.

Because there are differences in IPHC and NMFS fishery management processes, NMFS notes that the timing to consider and implement inseason actions may not be as expeditious as the IPHC process. Therefore, the Council and NMFS will need to examine reasonable options that provide NMFS the flexibility to adjust and announce changes via the *Federal Register* as needed and allowable under the Administrative Procedure Act. For example, setting season opening dates every two weeks may not provide NMFS enough time to compile data, adjust vessel limits and announce any changes in the *Federal Register*.

The proposed scope of action is intended to:

- (1) Develop a permitting process and mechanism administered by NMFS to issue permits for Area 2A Pacific halibut fisheries. This scope would include all licenses currently issued by IPHC: non-Indian directed commercial, commercial incidental salmon troll, commercial incidental sablefish, and recreational charter.
- (2) Transfer management of the non-Indian directed commercial fishery from IPHC to the Council and NMFS. This scope includes development of a schedule, process, and regulatory language to determine the season structure (start date, open periods, duration, vessel limits, etc.) within the overall season established by IPHC. This scope includes both preseason and inseason protocols to ensure access to available harvest and timely notification of such changes.
- (3) Identify lead entities and management responsibilities for preseason, inseason, and post season activities.

3.0 Range of Alternatives

3.1 Council Process to Transfer Management and Associated Tasks

Assuming responsibility for managing commercial halibut fisheries would require developing protocols for a new permitting process, a preseason process, protocols for inseason management, amending the CSP and Council Operating Procedure (COP) #9, and identifying management entities and staff responsible for such tasks. The Council's public process provides an opportunity to solicit stakeholder input on the issues associated with these proposed actions.

To help inform the Council on halibut-related topics associated with the management transfer, the Council could consider different options on how to receive input. Status quo would be for the Council to continue utilizing the current "Project Team" of NMFS and Council staff to complete the management transfer work. The Council could also choose to maintain the current Project Team and consider the need to establish an advisory body after the transition is complete. Another option is to establish either an ad-hoc or permanent advisory body now to assist in the management transfer work and the development of the directed fishery

framework, and potentially assist in future management which includes preseason, inseason and post-season tasks.

For Council consideration, alternatives for how to best inform the Council on topics related to the halibut management transition:

- Alternative 1: No Action: Status quo (no official advisory body)
 - Option could include:
 - a. Maintain the current ‘Project Team’ consisting of NMFS and Council staff until transfer is complete. Consider establishing a formal advisory body after transfer is complete.
- Alternative 2: Establish official advisory body representatives now
 - Options:
 - a. Establish an ad-hoc advisory body to perform tasks associated with the management transfer, which would remain in place until the task(s) are achieved.
 - b. Establish a permanent advisory body and assign the task of management transfer in the short-term and advise the Council on the technical and/or managerial aspects related to the halibut fisheries in long-term.
 - c. Expand current advisory bodies (Groundfish Advisory Subpanel and/or Groundfish Management Team) to include new members or identify current members as halibut representatives to work on the management transfer in the short-term and advise the Council on the technical and/or managerial aspects related to the halibut fisheries in long-term.

The details of identifying management entities and staff responsible for setting preseason management and inseason actions could be further refined (see section 3.4).

3.2 Fishery Management Process

The Council has begun the process to assume management of the directed fishery. The Council already has in place the protocol necessary to set fishery limits for incidental halibut retention in the salmon troll and longline sablefish commercial fisheries as described in the CSP and COP 9 (decided in March/April). These protocols are not expected to change. The protocols and regulations for the recreational charter fishery are also not expected to change (September/November).

The season structure, start dates, duration, and vessel limits for the directed fishery are currently determined and implemented by IPHC. IPHC has a two-meeting process consisting of an interim meeting in November and an annual meeting the following January. At the IPHC annual meeting, allocations for the IPHC regulatory areas, including Area 2A are decided. The Area 2A FCEY is usually set by IPHC by early February. Additionally, IPHC sets the season structure (overall annual season dates, and fishing periods within that season) for the directed fishery. Under current IPHC protocol, once the season structure, subquota to the directed fishery, and number of licenses issued are known, IPHC then sets the initial vessel limits and issues a public notice announcing the vessel limits and season open date(s) and hours.

Historically, the directed fishery has begun on the last Wednesday in June with a 10-hour open period and continued every other Wednesday until the quota is reached. There have been 2-3 open periods per year since the early 2000s. The current structure of the directed fishery typically requires inseason management, with any changes being decided and implemented solely by IPHC. Catch and participation data from the previous opener are reviewed by IPHC, and vessel limits are adjusted accordingly for the next scheduled opener. If the balance of the allocation is too small for another opener, the fishery is closed, and the remaining allocation may be transferred to the salmon troll incidental fishery. IPHC can make these

determinations and implement the regulations within the two-week interval of the scheduled fishing periods.

As noted in Section 2.0, the public notice process IPHC uses to implement regulation changes inseason is much quicker than NMFS' regulation process. Once fishery management is transferred and administered through the NMFS regulatory process, changes to the fishery inseason may take up to 30 days to analyze new data and implement needed changes through the NMFS regulatory process. This will require a thoughtful and deliberate structure for the preseason fishery management process. This change in process time is especially important for any inseason management activities necessary to ensure the fishery can access, but not exceed, the harvestable subquota.

The Council will have to consider several details associated with the management of this fishery both preseason and inseason. The Council has indicated that until the transition process is complete, the general management approach for this fishery (using limited fishing periods and vessel size-based trip limits) will be maintained, utilizing IPHC's current process, in order to ensure a prompt and seamless transfer. IPHC has agreed to share the information needed to make vessel limit determinations using IPHC's approach as the Council and NMFS assume management responsibility.

The directed fishery generally starts after the June Council meeting and concludes before the September Council meeting, meaning the Council will not have a forum to discuss inseason management and may need to develop a general policy for NMFS to take action inseason. The current inseason process used by IPHC cannot be implemented by the Council or NMFS without some adjustments. The Council should discuss what the most expedient and transparent process would be to gather and analyze data, determine and implement change, and announce changes inseason.

The Council will need to consider modifying the CSP or develop another process that will address when and how the season structure and vessel limits are set, define roles and responsibilities of the management entities, and identify a public notification process. A range of alternatives has been developed to assist the Council, but it is not exhaustive.

3.2.1 Preseason Management Process

The Council will need to establish a framework for the directed fishery to decide how and when to set the open periods, duration, and vessel limits.

The Project Team supports the continued use of vessel limits, and the IPHC methods for using vessel classes and determining vessel limits, at least initially. A general description of the methods used to distribute the subquota between the various vessel classes can be developed and updated annually as needed. Data used to determine vessel limits (number of permits issued and number per vessel class) is derived from permit applications received and the sector allocation.

Along with the schedule and process for determining the season dates, etc., the Council may want to consider when to set the initial vessel limits for the directed fishery. Typically, the Council uses a two-meeting public process; the first to adopt preliminary recommendations for public review, and the second to adopt final recommendations. The Council has an established CSP process that considers the framework for recreational season structures at the September and November Council meetings for the upcoming year. The Council also considers incidental halibut landing limits for salmon troll and sablefish at the March and April Council meetings. The Council should consider when the annual details for the directed fishery will be scheduled on the Council agenda.

For Council consideration, alternatives for the schedule and process for setting seasons and initial vessel limits:

- Alternative 1 – No set schedule or process for considering annual fishery details established at this time.
- Alternative 2 – Identify a process and schedule for considering annual fishery details
 - Options for this alternative include:
 - a. Council considers fishery structure during the CSP process in September and November;
 - i. initial vessel limits considered in March or April
 - ii. initial vessel limits determined by NMFS and included in regulation package and announced prior to the start of the fishery.
 - b. Council considers fishery structure and vessel limits at the March and April meetings;
 - c. Council considers fishery structure and vessel limits at the April/June meetings
 - d. Combination of any of the above options

3.2.2 Inseason Management Process

The current structure of the directed fishery typically requires inseason management, with any changes being decided and implemented solely by IPHC. IPHC can collect and analyze the inseason data, decide on needed changes, implement the regulations, and announce the change all within the two-week interval of the scheduled fishing periods.

The Council should consider a process for addressing potential inseason adjustments to the fishery. When the directed fishery is structured with 10-hour periods every other week, this typically required IPHC to make an inseason adjustment to the vessel limits after the initial open period, if enough quota remained. IPHC would calculate the reduced vessel limits and announce the change. Since the fishery had a set structure (dates, duration, start time) no other adjustments were needed. Once the quota was reached, IPHC would announce the fishery closure if dates remained on the initial season structure. If the duration of the open period(s) in this directed fishery are increased significantly (e.g., two or three days in duration), then there may be no need for inseason action other than closing the fishery.

As noted, inseason action for this fishery in the past has been a reduction in vessel limits to remain within the subquota. Once the Council and NMFS gain management of the fishery, if inseason action is anticipated, then the structure of the fishery – mainly the interval between open dates – may need to be about 30 days apart in order to compile and analyze the data and implement change. Another consideration would be to include conditional responses in the preseason planning process to address any inseason action needed. For example, a table describing how vessel limits would be distributed after the initial period based on the balance of subquota.

For Council consideration, alternatives for how inseason adjustments to the fishery are addressed:

- Alternative 1 – no process established for inseason action
 - Option could include detailing anticipated changes during the preseason process.
- Alternative 2 – Establish a process for inseason action where NMFS would implement and announce changes through its regulatory process
 - Options could include:
 - a. NMFS determine appropriate change (similar to IPHC method)
 - b. Staff from NMFS, Council, and coastal states determine appropriate change (similar to halibut sport inseason method)

- c. Coastal states with stakeholder input recommend change, with Council and NMFS approval (similar to salmon troll inseason process)

3.3 Permitting Process for Participants

IPHC currently issues four types of annual halibut vessel licenses (permits) for IPHC regulatory area 2A (West Coast) for the following fisheries: 1) directed commercial, 2) incidental commercial during longline sablefish north of Point Chehalis, 3) incidental commercial during salmon troll, and 4) recreational charter. IPHC does not issue licenses for any other regulatory areas. License applications must be submitted using an online form to IPHC by specified deadlines: March 15 for the incidental fisheries and April 30 for the directed commercial fishery. There is no deadline for the recreational charter vessel licenses. IPHC also determines if a particular halibut license can be held in conjunction with another halibut license. “Proof of license” is currently required, meaning license holders are required to carry a license onboard the vessel and make it available upon request; applicants are issued a paper license by IPHC. In addition, NMFS maintains a master log of permitted participants which is shared with enforcement personnel and management entities as needed. The Project Team suggests the Council and NMFS maintain IPHC’s current rules for which halibut permits can be held in tandem, at least initially. However, consideration would need to be given to the timing of Council meeting dates and current deadlines for applications.

The Council should consider:

1. Which Area 2A halibut fisheries would be issued permits;
2. Development of application process;
3. Application deadlines;
4. Notification for issuance of permit;
5. Proof of permit.

3.3.1 Which Area 2A Halibut Fishery Permits to Issue

As part of the management transfer, the Council and NMFS will take the responsibility of issuing the permit for the commercial directed fishery. However, since it is the desire of IPHC to discontinue its fishery management tasks for halibut fishing in Area 2A, the Council should consider including all Area 2A halibut fisheries in the new permitting system during the transfer process. Having two independent permitting systems (IPHC and NMFS) would require substantial coordination between the two entities and cause additional burden to stakeholders wishing to participate in multiple Area 2A halibut fisheries.

NMFS reported that once a new permitting system is in place, that system could easily be used to issue all permits pertaining to halibut fishing in Area 2A (directed commercial, incidental commercial during longline sablefish, incidental commercial during salmon troll, and recreational charter).

Under current IPHC regulations, applicants are required to choose which halibut fishery to participate in, and some licenses may not be held in conjunction with others. For example, an applicant for an incidental salmon troll permit may not also apply for a directed fishery permit.

For 2019, IPHC issued these licenses:

- 195 directed commercial-only licenses
- 19 licenses issued for directed commercial and incidental sablefish
- 16 incidental sablefish-only licenses
- 228 incidental salmon licenses
- 84 charter licenses

For Council consideration, alternatives for which 2A halibut fishery permits to issue:

- Alternative 1 – Issue permits only for the Area 2A non-Indian directed commercial halibut fishery
- Alternative 2 – Issue permits for a combination of some, or all Area 2A halibut fisheries
 - Options could include a combination of commercial directed, incidental salmon troll, incidental sablefish, and recreational charter halibut fisheries.

3.3.2 Application Deadlines

The IPHC application deadline for the directed fishery is April 30. Given the timing of the Council’s annual meetings and typical start date (late June) of the directed fishery, the Council should consider adjusting the deadline to an earlier date, so management decisions for the directed fishery can better align with the Council’s annual meeting schedule and coincide with the schedule and process for preseason planning. The number of permits, and the vessel class assigned to each permit, is information needed to determine the vessel limits. NMFS will process the permits and report the details after the application deadline has passed.

The IPHC application deadline of the incidental fisheries is March 15. The Council could also consider adjusting the due dates so that all commercial application deadlines are the same. This approach may be more efficient and consistent for the stakeholders and NMFS.

For Council consideration, alternatives for application deadlines:

- Alternative 1 – Status quo: Maintain the IPHC application deadline for the directed fishery of April 30.
- Alternative 2 – Adjust the deadline to an earlier date
 - Options could include:
 - a. Application deadline February 1 for directed fishery,
 - b. Application deadline March 1 for directed fishery
 - c. Application deadline March 15 for directed fishery;
 - d. Application deadline within the range listed above;
 - e. Options could also include the same deadline for the incidental fisheries
- Alternative 3 – allow NMFS to determine the appropriate application deadlines

3.3.3 Development of an Application Process

Currently, NMFS does not have a system in place to accept applications and issue permits specifically for halibut fisheries. The transfer of management will require a new system to be identified and a process developed. In their report submitted in November 2019, NMFS provided three options for a new platform or system that would allow participants to submit applications to obtain permits for the directed fishery.

For Council consideration, alternatives for a permit platform to submit and receive halibut applications:

- Alternative 1 – Allow NMFS to determine the appropriate application platform
- Alternative 2 – NMFS develops new electronic permit platform
 - Options for developing a new platform for receiving applications could include:
 - a. A web-based application. This is like the current IPHC system (status quo) where applications are submitted online. No postal or email applications. Processing time likely shorter than Option ‘b’ or ‘c.’
 - b. Phone based (call-in) application. Participant provides information for application via phone call. NMFS staff review call-log and process information. Processing time likely longer than Option ‘a.’

- c. Web-based application with supplemental requirements. Participant submits application electronically through web-based system, along with any additional supplemental documents that may be required.

All vessels would need to meet registration and safety requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard and state agencies.

After the application deadline has passed, NMFS staff would begin the process to review all applications received for completeness and for vessel compliance. NMFS staff would accept all viable applications as eligible for a permit.

Under Alternative 2, Option 'c', requirements for supplemental material or additional criteria could be developed through the Council process and NMFS rulemaking. Although the Council may consider Option 'c', it could be an undue burden to both applicants and NMFS staff as it would require a lengthier processing time and increased workload.

NMFS estimates that the timeline to complete the task of developing a new electronic platform is essentially the same for each option.

3.3.4 Notification for Issuance of Permit

Once the participant submits the permit application required, information and documentation are verified, NMFS would issue a response to the applicant to signal issuance of a permit. How the participant is notified of permit issuance -or denial of permit - may require Council consideration.

Notifying the applicant of permit issuance or denial could be done electronically, via phone system (confirmation code provided), through the postal system, or a combination of methods. Notification could include a simple electronic code indicating the application was approved (with no copy of a permit); could include an electronic or physical copy of the permit issued or notice of denial, or a combination of methods.

In a web-based application system, an electronic confirmation code or notice of denial could be sent once the application is received and processed to notify the applicant. For the phone-based system, notification would require NMFS staff to review the call-log and issue a confirmation number or notice of denial. A physical permit or notice of denial could be sent to each viable applicant, which would also cause additional cost and workload for NMFS.

The timeliness for issuing notice of a permit may also vary depending on the new permit system used and the permit format issued. Web-based systems will process applications quicker than a phone-based system and could be set up to send electronic notifications. Electronic notifications will be quicker than postal notifications. Telephone notifications may be too unreliable for further consideration.

Preliminary discussions with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel suggest that participants would like the option of a physical permit (or document to print) to show enforcement and first receivers when internet access is unavailable.

IPHC accepts applications only through their web-based system and issues the physical permit via postal mail. A master log of permitted participants will continue to be maintained by NMFS and shared with enforcement personnel and State agencies as needed.

For Council consideration, alternatives for notification of issuance of permit:

- Alternative 1 – Allow NMFS to determine the appropriate means of notification
 - This could include, but not limited to, the options listed in Alternative 2 below.

- Alternative 2 – Formal notification upon application approval or denial
 - Options include:
 - a. Confirmation code, or unique number, sent via web-based system, text message or email, no permit attached;
 - b. Confirmation sent via web-based system, text message, or email, no permit attached;
 - c. Provide a paper permit via postal mail (current IPHC method);
 - d. Provide an electronic permit via a web-based system for participant to access;
 - e. Provide an electronic permit via text message or email for participant to access and/or print;
 - f. Provide a combination of both electronic and paper notifications;
 - g. Combination of any of the above

3.3.5 Proof of Permit

Currently, participants are required to have proof of permit onboard the vessel and made available upon request. The Council may consider if there will be a requirement for the participant to show proof of permit.

For Council consideration, alternatives for proof of permit onboard:

- Alternative 1 – No requirement for proof of permit to be onboard fishing vessel
 - Master log of all registered participants used to verify permit
- Alternative 2 – Require proof of permit to be onboard fishing vessel
 - Options for requiring proof of permit include:
 - a. Physical (paper or sticker) permit made available for inspection upon request (IPHC status quo);
 - b. Electronic/digital permit made available for inspection upon request;
 - c. Digital or electronic notice of issuance of permit, sent via web-based system or email;
 - d. Any combination of, or all formats acceptable

3.4 Roles and responsibilities

The Council will need to decide which management entity(s) will be responsible for any tasks related to management of the fishery during and after the transfer. This includes preseason, inseason and postseason tasks. As the transition progresses and is eventually complete, roles and responsibilities may need to change. Some of the tasks will be inherently assigned; issuing permits and implementing regulations will fall to NMFS. In Appendix B, Table 2 is an organizational chart that identifies (current) lead staff and roles. Table 3 describes potential changes to current roles and responsibilities by management entity.

For Council consideration, alternatives for assigning new roles and responsibilities to management entities resulting from management transfer:

- Alternative 1 – No assigned roles and responsibilities other than those identified or considered within this document. Council could wait until transfer is complete.
- Alternative 2 – Assign roles and responsibilities
 - Options under this alternative include:
 - a. NMFS staff responsible for permits and management (comparable to IPHC process).
 - b. Management responsibilities assigned to state entities
 - c. Management responsibilities shared between state entities and NMFS

4.0 Appendix A - Workload and Timeline

Generally, it requires at least three Council meetings to adopt major changes to a fishery to accommodate an open transparent process that encourages public input; these meetings need not be consecutive. NMFS has provided a detailed timeline with principal achievements outlined in the November report ([Agenda Item F.3.a NMFS Report 1, November 2019](#))

4.1 Council Workload Planning

- March 2020
 - Approve scope of transition process, including purpose and need.
 - Maintain the current Project Team to continue the transition work, or if necessary, establish an advisory body.
 - Review range of alternatives for transition of management of directed fishery.
 - Consider alternatives in this document
 - Consider other alternatives suggested through the Council process
 - Provide guidance for additional or modified alternatives as necessary
 - Consider adopting preliminary preferred alternatives.
 - Approve schedule to complete project.
- September 2020
 - Project Team identifies preliminary preferred alternatives (PPAs).
 - NMFS provides preliminary draft NEPA document.
 - Council adopts for public review preliminary draft NEPA transition document.
 - Council adopts for public review preliminary preferred alternatives.
- November 2020
 - Project Team presents updated PPAs.
 - NMFS provides updated preliminary draft NEPA document.
 - Council adopts final preferred alternatives (FPAs).
 - Council transmits recommendation to NMFS.

4.2 Timeline for Approval and Implementation

Timeline hinges on Council transmittal and that the Council takes final action in November 2020:

- March 2020 – range of alternatives provided, preliminary preferred alternatives identified
- May-August 2020 – preliminary draft NEPA document and PPAs (Council and NMFS staff)
- September 2020 – Council considers PPAs
- November 2020 – Council adopts FPAs
- November 2020- January: NMFS start PRA process and drafting proposed rule
- February 2021: NMFS publishes proposed rule
- February -March 2021: NMFS begins programming for new permitting system
- April 2021: NMFS public comment period ends
- May -August 2021: NMFS reviews comments, drafts final rule
- September 2021: NMFS submits final rule, concludes PRA
- November 2021: NMFS completes programming for new permitting system
- December 2021: NMFS tests new permit system
- January 2022: NMFS initiates new permit process

5.0 Appendix B - Tables

The IPHC Regulatory Area 2A non-Indian commercial directed Pacific halibut fishery structure has been a topic of discussion between the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) since May 2017, when the Council received a letter from IPHC recommending the Council consider a change in the management of the fishery. IPHC did not recommend a particular management structure for the fishery, but supported changes that would reduce the concentration of fishing effort. The Council has engaged in discussions regarding this request over several Council meetings since then. Outlined in Table 1 are some of the major discussion points during Council meetings:

| Table 1. PFMC Area 2A Halibut fishery management topics: |
|--|
| November 2018 Council meeting: IPHC provided a copy of a proposal for longer fishing periods (Agenda Item F.1.a, Supplemental IPHC Report 1). In response, the Council developed a list of issues and concerns, noting that the Council and its management partners could consider the structure of the directed fishery in a holistic way through a workshop. |
| March 2019 Council meeting: The Council directed Council members and staff to develop the scope of a workshop that could address management of the fishery. |
| April 2019 Council meeting: The Council reviewed the report (Agenda Item H.2 Supplemental Attachment 1, April 2019) which highlights management considerations that include licensing (i.e., permitting) and inseason management. Further direction by the Council was provided and includes the Council's intent to manage the directed fishery and continue development of a stakeholder workshop (Council Decision Document , April 2019). |
| June 2019 Council meeting: The Council reviewed the report (Agenda Item H.1 Attachment 1, June 2019) that outlines key questions for consideration and highlights that IPHC would like to discontinue their 2A vessel licensing system at some point in the future, so the timing of IPHC's withdrawal of issuing permits will likely be a key point of the transition plan. Plans for a workshop suspended. |
| September 2019 Council meeting: The Council submitted a letter to IPHC stating their intent to manage the fishery as soon as practicable (Agenda Item G.2 Supplemental Attachment 3 September 2019) and noted that a news release was sent to notify stakeholders that the Council will consider the 2020 season structure for the directed fishery for recommendation to IPHC, but does not intend to consider any major changes to the fishery management structure. |
| November 2019 Council Meeting: The Council received a response from IPHC that states their willingness to support the Council's efforts and a desire for the transition to conclude in time for the 2021 fishery (Agenda Item F.3.a IPHC Report 1 November 2019). Council adopts the 2020 season structure for recommendation to IPHC. |
| Council assigns NMFS/Council staff to draft document to describe purpose and need, scope of action and range of alternative for Council consideration in March 2020. |

Table 2. Organizational list of contributors in halibut management (*list incomplete*)

| Organization | Name | Responsibility |
|--|--|---|
| NMFS WCR Sustainable Fisheries Division | Kathryn Blair [Contractor] | Inseason manager and lead regulation writer. |
| NMFS WCR Sustainable Fisheries Division | Frank Lockhart | Identify potential policy, regulatory, and administrative issues during development and review. Consultation on Indian interests and interactions between Commissioners, WCR and AKR. |
| NMFS WCR General Counsel | Caitlin Imaki Maggie Smith | Review and consultation on Indian and Halibut Act and other legal matters. |
| NMFS WCR Sustainable Fisheries Division | Peggy Mundy | Salmon and incidental halibut inseason manager. |
| NMFS WCR NEPA | Galeeb Kachra [Contractor] | Review document for completeness in terms of NEPA requirements during development and review. |
| NMFS WCR Protected Resources Division | | Consultation on Protected Species Impact Analyses. Consultation on development of measures and impacts on protected resources (if needed) |
| NMFS WCR Observer Program | Jon McVeigh | Consultation on bycatch and marine mammal interactions observed in the directed commercial fishery. |
| PFMC | Robin Ehlke | Pacific Fishery Management Council halibut staff point-of-contact |
| WDFW | Heather Hall | Lead staffer/contact for halibut in state agency |
| ODFW | Lynn Mattes, Christian Heath | Lead staffer/contact for halibut in state agency |
| CDFW | Caroline McKnight, Melanie Parker | Lead staffer/contact for halibut in state agency |
| IPHC | Lara Erikson, Caroline Robinson | IPHC contact for 2A commercial fishery management |

Table 3. List of roles and responsibilities necessary for Pacific halibut fishery management. Shaded areas denote potential change.

| Task | Currently performed by: | Post transition potentially performed by |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Setting TCEY/FCEY for Area 2A | IPHC | IPHC |
| Distributing FCEY for various Area 2A fisheries | Council | Council |
| Licensing | | |
| • Commercial and charter vessel licenses | IPHC | NMFS |
| • Recreational angler license | States | States |
| • Indian license | Tribes | Tribes |
| Setting vessel/bag limits (preseason and inseason) | | |
| • Directed commercial | IPHC | Council |
| • Incidental | Council | Council |
| • Recreational | Council | Council |
| • Indian | Tribes | Tribes |
| Setting overall fishing season | | |
| • Directed commercial | IPHC | Council |
| • Incidental | Council | Council |
| • Recreational | Council | Council |
| • Indian restricted and unrestricted seasons | Tribes | Tribes |
| Setting open and closed fishing areas | NMFS/Council | NMFS/Council |
| Conducting biological sampling | IPHC/States/Tribes | IPHC/States/Tribes |
| Development of fishery regulations/changes to fishery regulations | | |
| • Directed | IPHC | Council |
| • Incidental | Council | Council |
| • Recreational | Council | Council |
| Publication of fishery regulations (including inseason FRNs) | | |
| • Directed | IPHC/NMFS | NMFS |
| • Incidental | NMFS | NMFS |
| • Recreational | NMFS/IPHC/States | NMFS/IPHC/States |
| Inseason management and monitoring of fisheries | | |
| • Directed | IPHC | NMFS/States |
| • Incidental | Council/States/ IPHC | Council/States |
| • Recreational | States/NMFS | States/NMFS |
| • Indian | Tribes | Tribes |
| Providing observer coverage for directed commercial | NMFS | NMFS |
| Providing enforcement coverage of fisheries | NMFS/States/Coast Guard | NMFS/States/Coast Guard |