

ENFORCEMENT CONSULTANTS REPORT ON  
COMMERCIAL-DIRECTED FISHERY REGULATIONS FOR 2021

The Enforcement Consultants (EC) have reviewed the material associated with Agenda Item I.3, Commercial-Directed Fishery Regulations for 2021, and have the following comments:

The EC submitted two statements in November 2019 regarding regulations pertaining to the directed 2A fishery and request the Council again consider the following comments:

The EC has previously asked for a 2-day opener (34-hour opener with proposed start of 0800 hours on the first day and end time on the second day of 1800 hours) and will continue to request this structure. It is important to reiterate that if the 3-day opener (58 hours) is permanently selected, enforcement of the fishery will include random patrols and spot checks versus a dedicated enforcement effort like in years past. Enforcement resource constraints prevent a pulse operation any longer than 2 days, which is of concern in this high value fishery.

In regard to when the fishery should begin, the EC supports starting the commercial 2A season no earlier than the fourth Monday in June each year to limit overlap with the recreational fishery.

The EC previously commented on split loads and would like to reiterate our comments from November 2019 Agenda Item F.3 (continuous offload); *The EC strongly supports retaining the single, continuous offload requirement. Multiple offload locations facilitates skirting the regulations and makes it challenging to track landing limits. Pacific halibut is the only species that requires single, continuous offload due to the individual value per fish of the species.*

The EC is aware of other species (such as salmon) that are valuable and do not require a continuous offload. The difference with halibut is the novelty and desire by consumers to purchase halibut and/or desire by some fishermen to take home and potentially sell off ticket and/or circumvent landing limits or length requirements. Salmon are often readily available which takes the “Gotta have it” out of the equation. If catch accounting is a management concern, which we believe it is, the EC again strongly recommends retaining the continuous offload requirement.

The EC would also like to reiterate comments from November 2019 Agenda Item F.3 as follows:

*Length/Class: The EC recommends requiring the licensed length of a vessel to be the official length on the vessel's USCG Certificate of Documentation or state Certificate of Number. Due to vessel size driving trip limits in the Non-tribal directed commercial fishery, there is a significant incentive for vessels to stretch up to the next length class. Using already established length from Coast Guard and state regulations simplifies the process for enforcement and industry.*

*Vessel Monitoring System (VMS): The EC recommends adding a requirement for vessels participating in any commercial Halibut sector to carry VMS. This will facilitate enforcement, particularly given the shift to a longer Non-Indian directed fishery. [This fishery follows the 100 fathom line and VMS is a vital enforcement tool to monitor locations of vessels.]*

*Logs: The EC recommends removing the log exemption for incidental Pacific halibut fishery during the salmon troll season.*

*72-hour pre-season closure and hold inspections: The EC recommends retaining the 72-hour pre-season closure and hold inspections.*

*Seabird Avoidance Measures: The EC observed confusion amongst the fleet this past summer as to when the regulations required them to deploy Seabird Avoidance gear. The EC recommends Seabird Avoidance gear be a requirement when participating in the Commercial 2A halibut fishery, regardless of whether a vessel retains groundfish or not.*

PFMC  
09/17/20