

COMMERCIAL FISHERY REGULATION CHANGES: VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS,
SEABIRD AVOIDANCE, AND CATCH REPORTING
ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY

This document outlines the current problem statement and summary of the alternatives for regulatory changes to the non-Tribal directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery (DC halibut fishery).

The Council should consider the following questions while reviewing the materials for this agenda item and be prepared to offer further guidance to Council staff in response.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION

1. Does the problem statement accurately characterize the problem the Council is trying to address?
2. Are the range of alternatives sufficient to address the problem statement?
3. For any preliminary preferred alternative selected by the Council, how do the benefits compare to the costs to industry and management?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Enforcement Consultants (EC) have noted challenges when enforcing management measures pertaining to the DC halibut fishery. These challenges are (1) detecting if vessels only retaining Pacific halibut are fishing near or in closed areas intended to protect rebuilding species or sensitive habitats since these vessels are not required to carry VMS, which are used by enforcement to monitor where fishing occurs, (2) identifying violations with seabird avoidance gear requirements since vessels participating in the DC fishery and retaining both groundfish and halibut using bottom longline gear are required to follow seabird avoidance measure requirements (deploying streamer lines when setting gear) but vessels participating in the DC fishery using bottom longline gear and only retaining halibut are not, and (3) determining if halibut vessel limits or incidental harvest landing restrictions have been exceeded if fish receiving tickets do not list both pounds and number (count) of halibut landed

ACTION 1. Vessel Monitoring System

Under Action 1, the Council should specify either *No Action* or *Alternative 1* as their Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA). Under Alternative 1, the Council should specify the applicable waters, VMS ping rate requirements, and VMS status requirements.

- No Action: Status Quo
- Alternative 1: Require VMS on vessels participating in the DC halibut fishery
 - Component 1. Applicable waters
 - A. EEZ
 - B. Convention waters of IPHC Area 2A (0nm – 200nm)
 - Component 2. VMS ping rate requirement
 - A. Four times per hour (i.e. once every 15 minutes)

- B. Once per hour
- Component 3. VMS status requirement (when VMS unit must be turned on and transmitting location)
 - A. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
 - B. When participating in the DC halibut fishery and fishing during an open period

ACTION 2. Seabird Avoidance Measures

Under Action 2, the Council should specify either *No Action* or *Alternative 1* as their PPA. Under Alternative 1, the Council should specify the applicable waters.

- No Action: Status Quo
- Alternative 1: Require vessels participating in the DC halibut fishery using bottom longline gear to deploy streamer lines when setting gear.
 - Component 1. Applicable waters
 - A. EEZ
 - B. Convention waters of IPHC Area 2A (0nm – 200nm)

ACTION 3. Catch Reporting on Fish Tickets

Under Action 3, the Council should specify either *No Action* or *Alternative 1* as their PPA.

- No Action: Status Quo
- Alternative 1: Require that fish receiving tickets for landings of Pacific halibut from vessels participating in the DC halibut fishery and only landing Pacific halibut include both weight (pounds) and number (count).