

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) AND STATUS OF PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES FOR INCIDENTAL CATCH RETENTION OF PACIFIC HALIBUT IN THE LIMITED ENTRY FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH FISHERIES

At its March 2011 meeting, the Council recommended advancing alternatives for Pacific halibut bycatch retention in fixed gear sablefish fisheries south of Point Chehalis, Washington, but to restrict application of alternatives for retention to the limited entry fixed gear sablefish sector, and to limit viable alternatives to those that do not increase impacts on yelloweye rockfish. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is scheduled to provide a process update on consideration of further developing alternatives and NEPA review of the Area 2A catch sharing plan.

Council Action:

- 1. Provide guidance on schedule and process expectations.**
- 2. Discuss agency participation and lead role.**
- 3. Provide guidance on alternatives for halibut bycatch retention as appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.3.b, NMFS Report: National Marine Fisheries Service NEPA Scoping Results on Catch Sharing Plan Implementation and Changes to Incidental Catch Retention of Pacific Halibut in the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery.
2. Agenda Item H.3.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Provide Guidance on the Review, Scheduling, and Further Development of Alternatives for Analysis

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