

Halibut & Sablefish IFQ program (excerpt from the April 2002 Council Newsletter)

The Council made a final decision on two separate actions. First, the Council unanimously approved three recordkeeping and reporting changes to the halibut and sablefish IFQ regulations. If approved by the Secretary, these changes would: 1) modify prior notice of landing (PNOL) reporting requirements by a) replacing the reporting of “registered buyers” with “location of landings” and b) change the minimum PNOL reporting requirements from six hours to three hours; 2) eliminate the shipment report and require that IFQ species be reported on the product transfer report, and 3) require a verbal departure report instead of the vessel clearance requirement for vessels with IFQ halibut or sablefish leaving the jurisdiction of the Council. The first changes would modify federal regulations; the last proposed change are plan amendments (BSAI and GOA Plan Amendments 72/64). Staff contact is Jane DiCosimo.

Secondly, the Council approved allowing 42 eligible Gulf of Alaska coastal communities to hold commercial halibut and sablefish catcher vessel QS in Areas 2C, 3A, and 3B for lease to community residents (GOA Plan Amendment 66). Current regulations only allow persons who were originally issued catcher vessel QS or who qualify as IFQ crew members by working 150 days on the harvesting crew in any U.S. commercial fishery to purchase catcher vessel (B, C, and D category) quota share. The Council approved allowing rural, coastal communities with no road access, populations of less than 1,500, and documented participation in the halibut and/or sablefish fisheries to hold a maximum of 3% of the Area 2C, 3A, or 3B halibut QS and 3% of the SE, WY, CG, or WG sablefish QS in each of the first seven years of the program, with a 21% total cap by area, unless modified earlier through a review process specified by the Council.

The Council approved several specific provisions to the IFQ program that will apply only to quota share held by community entities. These include: individual community use caps, cumulative caps for all eligible communities, block restrictions, restrictions on the class of quota share communities may purchase, limitations on the sale of community quota share, and restrictions on the amount of IFQ that may be held by individual residents and on individual vessels. The Council also approved several performance standards to clarify the goals of the program and to ensure that community-held quota share is used in the manner in which it was intended for the benefit of community residents. The Council will review the program after five years of implementation to evaluate whether changes need to be made to the structure of the program and to assess the communities’ compliance with program guidelines.

The Council will also appoint a community QS implementation committee, in order to ensure that the program is implemented as intended. This Committee will not be meeting in the near future, but nominations are open, and will be until May 30. The Council motion on this issue, including the list of eligible communities, and the public review draft of the analysis are on the Council website. Staff contact is Nicole Kimball.