

PROPOSAL 6

5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands Subdistrict Pacific Cod Management Plan.

Limit fishing for Pacific cod in the Adak section of the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict to vessels 60 feet or less overall length and establish a guideline harvest level rollover provision, as follows:

“In the Adak Section, vessels using trawl, pot, and jig gear must be 60 feet or less OAL and vessels using longline gear must be 58 feet or less OAL.”

STRIKE the following language: "When the state-waters season is open in all state waters west of 170° W long, vessels using trawl gear may not exceed 100 feet OAL, vessels using groundfish pot gear may not exceed 125 feet OAL, and vessels using mechanical jig or longline gear may not exceed 58 feet OAL.”

In addition, establish a rollover provision that would open fishing to other vessel lengths through Emergency Order if there is not meaningful participation from the under-60 fleets by a date certain. This provision should give adequate time for under-60 fleets to show intent to harvest the GHL through active participation in the early season. Through coordination between industry, and state and federal managers, distinct alternatives for dates and trigger amounts will be developed and submitted to the Board for consideration via Record Copy.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Maintain opportunity for boats under 60 feet to harvest Pacific cod in the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict state-water fishery.

This fishery was established in 2006 to provide economic opportunity to small boats and local processors in the Aleutian region, but lack of in-region processing capacity has often made it difficult for the small boat fleet to prosecute this GHL. Due to underharvest, the management plan was recently amended to include larger vessels in the Adak section once all state-waters west of 170° W long open for Pacific cod. However, recent changes have improved effort by and processing capacity for under-60 vessels, and over time they have demonstrated that given opportunity and a viable market, the under-60 fleets can successfully harvest this quota. Therefore it is important that inclusion of the larger vessel fleets be an optional condition predicated on a significant lack of participation from the under-60 fleet, not a guaranteed opening.

Precedent for these state-water fisheries establishes priority opportunity for small-boat harvests and delivery to shore-based processors, which generates an important benefit for the region and the state of Alaska. Upholding the initial vessel length limitations, with the inclusion of a rollover provision, maintains the original intent of these state-water fishery resources, recognizes the increased capacity for harvest and processing by small boats and shore-based plants, and provides reasonable contingencies that will prevent underharvest.

PROPOSED BY: Under Sixty Cod Harvesters

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