

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

#2004 – FB – 228

FINDINGS AND PURPOSE IN REGARD TO A MORATORIUM ON ENTRY OF NEW VESSELS INTO STATE GROUND FISH FISHERIES IN THE GULF OF ALASKA, AND FURTHER WORK OF THE BOARD'S GOA GROUND FISH RATIONALIZATION STEERING COMMITTEE

- (a)
 - (1) The goal of the state is to protect, maintain, and improve the fishery resources of the state, and manage their use and development in the best interest of the economy and the well-being of the people of the state, consistent with the sustained yield principle; and to promote the conservation and sustained yield management of Alaska's fishery resources and the economic health and stability of commercial fishing in Alaska by regulating and controlling entry of participants and vessels into commercial fisheries in the public interest and without unjust discrimination;
 - (2) The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) has undertaken an analysis of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries in the United States' exclusive economic zone off Alaska and has begun consideration of action that may result in significant reductions in the number of fishermen and vessels that may participate in those fisheries;
 - (3) In order to adequately protect Alaska's GOA groundfish resources and to protect participants dependent upon those fisheries from economic distress, management measures must be considered that will mitigate impacts from the pressures that will result from rationalization of the federal-water groundfish fisheries adjacent to the state's groundfish fisheries;
 - (4) A timely, temporary moratorium on effort in the state-managed groundfish fisheries will control growth during development of a long term plan for the management of GOA groundfish in the state-water fisheries.

- (b) The purposes of a moratorium on groundfish fisheries is to:
 - (1) immediately impose a moratorium on entry of new vessels into the state groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska to temporarily protect Alaska fisheries, fishermen, and those dependent on them for a livelihood from potential adverse consequences of action the North Pacific Fishery Management Council is expected to take to reduce participation in the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries in the United States exclusive economic zone off Alaska, while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on entry to Alaska's commercial fisheries;
 - (2) require, during the GOA groundfish moratorium, study of whether permanent limitation on entry into these fisheries is necessary, and if so, whether statutory changes are necessary in order to implement an effective limited access program in the groundfish fisheries; and
 - (3) provide time to pursue any statutory or regulatory changes found to be necessary to provide for the long-term management of Alaska's groundfish fisheries.

- (c) It is the intent of the board to carry forward to the steering committee proposal 257 for further development of a plan of action. The steering committee will report back to the board at its October 2004 work session with recommendations for further action.

The board's GOA Committee (board members Dersham, Art Nelson, and Morris) will consult with the NPFMC while developing a recommended total allowable catch (TAC) split for consideration by the full board. The range for analysis will be by species by area as follows:

- 1.) An amount equivalent to the total annual catch (for each groundfish species/group) from state waters (inside of 3 nautical miles [e.g., parallel and 25% Pacific cod fishery]) by all vessels will be managed directly by the board as a TAC/GHL equivalent to:
 - Option a) Highest amount taken in state waters by area
 - Option b) Highest amount taken in state waters by area plus 15%
 - Option c) Most recent four-year average harvest from state waters
- 2.) All catch inside 3 nautical miles by non-federal permitted vessels fishing the parallel fishery plus all catch under the 25% state water cod fishery and the PWS pollock fishery remains under the authority of the board.
- 3.) Only the catch associated with the 25% state water cod fishery and the PWS pollock fishery remains under the authority of the board.

During development of a specific plan of action recommendation to the full board, the board GOA Committee will continue to consult with the NPFMC to keep the NPFMC apprised and coordinate the board timeline with NPFMC final action.

Adopted:

February 23, 2004
Anchorage, Alaska


Ed Dersham, Chair

Vote: 7 - 0