

**PROPOSAL 9**

**5 AAC 28.267. Prince William Sound Pacific Cod Management Plan.**

Combine the Pacific cod longline and pot gear allocations and close the longline fishery for Pacific cod when the commercial halibut fishery is closed, as follows:

Amend the PWS Cod management plan to:

1. Combine the allocation of longline and pot quota.
2. Eliminate longline fishing for pacific cod in state waters when the halibut IFQ fishery is not open

5 AAC 28.267. Prince William Sound Pacific Cod Management Plan as written is difficult to read and interpret. If the board is to pass this regulation we hope the department will take this opportunity to rewrite the regulation to be more accessible and clear.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Modify the Cod Management Plan to allow for the continued switch from longline gear to pot gear, which will result in reduced bycatch of rockfish and other non-target species. These regulatory changes will both incentivise pot use in the cod fishery while not disenfranchising current participants who catch cod alongside their IFQ halibut.

The regulatory change implemented by the Board of Fisheries in 2023 to allow the use of longlined slinky pots for cod was very successful and resulted in the pot allocation being fully harvested, for the first time in years, in 8 days. This success necessitates an adjustment to the allocation between pot and longline vessels. Because many of the boats participate in both the longline and pot fisheries, it makes little sense to split these quotas. We believe by simply combining the allocations for pots and longline, the fleet will switch to pot fishing on their own because it is less labor-intensive.

Additionally we propose an adjustment of the season for longline cod to coincide with the IFQ Halibut fishery. Many fishermen will combo fish both halibut and cod in the same trip and this should be encouraged. However, the current regulation opening the longline cod fishery when the halibut fishery is closed results in bycatch of halibut that must be released. This season date change will also further encourage the adoption of pots by cod fishermen who wish to fish for cod while the halibut fishery is closed.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU)

(EF-F24-136)

\*\*\*\*\*