

Commercial Groundfish (23 proposals)

PROPOSAL 2

5 AAC 5 AAC 28.250. Closed Waters in Prince William Sound Area.

Reopen waters closed to the harvest of groundfish in Prince William Sound, as follows:

5 AAC 28.250. Closed waters in Prince William Sound Area

~~(a) Groundfish may not be taken with pots in the waters enclosed by lines from Point Whitshed to Point Bentinek, from Cape Hinchinbrook Light to Seal Rocks Light to Zaikof Point at 60° 18.48' N. lat., 146° 55.10' W. long., and from a point at 60° 11' N. lat., 147° 20' W. long. on the northwest side of Montague Island, north to a point at 60° 30' N. lat., 147° 20' W. long., then east to a point at 60° 30' N. lat., 147° 00' W. long., then northeast to Knowles Head at 60° 41' N. lat., 146° 37.50' W. long., except that groundfish may be taken with pot. (1) within Orea Bay, east of 146° 37.50' W. long., excluding the waters of Port Gravina north of a line from Gravina Point to Red Head at 60° 40.25' N. lat., 146° 30.22' W. long.; (2) in waters not more than 75 fathoms deep within waters enclosed by a line from Johnstone Point Light to Montague Point at 60° 23' N. lat., 147° 06' W. long., to Middle Point at 60° 20.50' N. lat., 147° W. long. to Schooner Rock Light (Zaikof Point) to Cape Hinchinbrook Light.~~

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This will correct the action previously taken that closed one gear type out of waters of what is some of the most productive pcod grounds in Prince William Sound during some years. This regulation was passed under the guise of protecting juvenile tanner crab, however with new slinky pot technology crab bycatch is no longer a large issue. If anything, allowing pot harvest in this area will help the crab stocks by reducing predatory pcod biomass. This will also help to curb rockfish bycatch by incentivizing fisherman to fish with slinky pots opposed to hook and line. *Rev.*

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

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth B Jones

(HQ-F24-008)

PROPOSAL 3

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful Gear for Prince William Sound Area.

Modify Prince William Sound groundfish pot specifications, as follows:

(c) A groundfish pot may be attached to a line connected to another groundfish pot. Groundfish pots may be connected if each end of the buoy line is marked as specified in 5 AAC 28.050. **Groundfish pots as defined in 5 AAC 28.050 may have individual tunnel eye openings with a perimeter greater than 36 inches in the Prince William Sound regulatory area if unused Halibut IFQ is on board.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Fishermen in the halibut fishery in Prince William Sound fish in the area using IFQ quota from the federal 3A region of which PWS is a part. Those fishermen may wish to fish for halibut with pots to avoid whale depredation issues and reduce bycatch both of which are problems in PWS. The removal of the maximum perimeter size for groundfish pot openings for the PWS area will allow fishermen to

better and more effectively fish for halibut with pots and will have an additional benefit of reduced bycatch.

This issue was considered at the federal level recently for the halibut IFQ fishery and regulations there were changed to allow for larger pot openings when fishing for halibut. This change would bring regulations in PWS state waters into coordination with the new federal regulations in the halibut fishery.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I discussed this issue with other some other fishermen and mentioned it to the area Fish and Game groundfish manager but did not discuss in detail.

PROPOSED BY: Brett Roth (HQ-F24-129)

PROPOSAL 4

5 AAC 28.265. Prince William Sound Rockfish Management Plan

Restrict gear in Prince William Sound relative to the rockfish guideline harvest level, as follows:

- (a) A vessel may not land or have on board more than a combined total of 3,000 pounds (round weight) of all rockfish species within five consecutive days.
- (b) In the Prince William Sound Area, when fishing in a directed fishery, other than for rockfish, a CFEC permit holder must retain all rockfish, except that
 - (1) unless otherwise specified in this section, all rockfish in excess of 10 percent, round weight, of all directed species on board the vessel must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket; any proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish shall be surrendered to the state;
 - (2) during the sablefish fishery, all rockfish in excess of 20 percent, round weight, of all sablefish on board the vessel must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket; any proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish shall be surrendered to the state;
 - (3) during a season for Pacific cod, all rockfish in excess of five percent, round weight, of all Pacific cod on board the vessel must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket; any proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish shall be surrendered to the state;
 - (4) during the directed walleye pollock pelagic trawl fishery, all rockfish in excess of one-half percent, round weight, of all walleye pollock on board the vessel must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket; any proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish shall be surrendered to the state.
- (c) The guideline harvest level is 150,000 pounds (round weight) for all rockfish species combined.

(5) When the guideline harvest level has reached 80 percent of the 150,000-pound GHL auto-bait gear is prohibited within Prince William Sound

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In recent years the rockfish GHL has been approached or exceeded in the commercial fishery. Limiting the use of auto-bait gear in Prince William Sound when approaching the GHL would alleviate this and prove effective due to the sheer number of hooks an auto bait vessel can fish versus hand baited vessels.

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

PROPOSED BY: Kalistrat Kuzmin

(HQ-F24-132)

PROPOSAL 5

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area.

Adopt a provision to close waters to specific groundfish gear types for rockfish conservation, as follows:

5 AAC 28.230 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

...

(x) To conserve groundfish species, the commissioner may close areas to commercial fishing with specific gear types by emergency order.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The department has growing concerns about the status of rockfish stocks in Prince William Sound (PWS). Rockfish stock status is generally declining across most of the state and the department has restricted many directed rockfish fisheries to conserve these long-lived fish. In some areas of the state most of the rockfish harvest occurs as bycatch in fisheries targeting halibut or other groundfish species. The department has restricted state-managed commercial, sport, personal use, and subsistence fisheries for rockfish for conservation purposes. However, the department does not have authority to restrict the commercial halibut fishery to address rock fish bycatch concerns.

The *Prince William Sound Rockfish Management Plan* (5 AAC 28.265) establishes a rockfish guideline harvest level (GHL) of 150,000 lb and requires full retention of all rockfish caught when participating in a directed commercial groundfish or halibut fishery in the PWS Area. The plan also sets rockfish trip limits, by fishery, as a percentage of the round weight of the directed species on board the vessel. Any amount of rockfish that exceeds this bycatch limit is accounted for as overage and the proceeds from the rockfish overage sale are surrendered to the state.

To stay within the 2023 annual PWS rockfish GHL the department reduced rockfish bycatch limits and did not open the parallel Pacific cod season in PWS. The department further sought the assistance of participants in the halibut longline fishery to set gear away from aggregates of rockfish. This proved ineffective and the GHL was exceeded when harvest in the halibut longline fishery was still expected to continue for another 2 months. In October 2023, the board adopted an emergency regulation to delegate authority to the department to close commercial fishing with specific gear types in areas of high rockfish bycatch. That emergency regulation has expired. The department has determined that the authority to close these areas is necessary for conservation of the resource and prevent overharvest of a bycatch rock fish species.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F24-138)

PROPOSAL 6

5 AAC 00.000. Regulation language goes here.5 AAC 28.265. Prince William Sound Rockfish Managment Plan.

Allow for release of rockfish in mechanical jig and hand troll fisheries, as follows:

5 AAC 28.265. Prince William Sound Rockfish Management Plan

(b) In the Prince William Sound Area, when fishing in a directed fishery, other than for rockfish, a CFEC permit holder must retain all rockfish, except that

...

(5) In the directed Mechanical Jig and Hand Troll fisheries, rockfish may be released using an approved deepwater release mechanism.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently the retention of all rockfish is mandated in all commercial groundfish fisheries. This is due to the high prevalence of barotrauma and subsequent low survival rates in released rockfish. In recent years, the department has done a lot of work with deepwater release mechanisms to improve survivability of released rockfish in the sport fisheries, and those devices are now required for all participants in the saltwater sport fishery. In most commercial fisheries, these deepwater release mechanisms are not feasible, however I believe that in directed jig fisheries they could be incorporated fairly easily. Jig fisheries are not that different then the sport fishery in prosecution, each fish is handled individually, and it would be fairly straightforward to have release mechanisms in place on your jigging machines, which you could easily use to release rockfish on your next drop of your gear. Having the option to release rockfish in this manner would have all the same benefits that it does in the sport fishery. The ability to release long-lived but low-value non-pelagic rockfish, rockfish species that the department wanted to protect, or in the case of Prince William Sound all rockfish while jigging for other species; would have clear conservation and management benefits.

I would like to see this put into regulation statewide, but I am aware that might not be possible during this Board cycle.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I have discussed this proposal conceptually with multiple ADFG staff members and all indicated that it seemed potentially workable.

PROPOSED BY: Joseph Person

(EF-F24-068)

PROPOSAL 7

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area.

Establish gear specifications for directed lingcod fisheries in Prince William Sound, as follows:

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area

....

(1) in the directed fishery for lingcod, lingcod may be taken only by mechanical jigging machine or hand troll gear.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to see the directed fishery for lingcod in Prince William Sound be brought in line with similar fisheries in the rest of the state and restricted to Mechanical Jig or Hand Troll gear only. Currently Prince William Sound is one of the only directed Lingcod fisheries that allows for harvest using longline gear. In practice this just means that people longlining for other species (basically halibut) can also register for the lingcod fishery and deliver lingcod on their lingcod card without being subject to bycatch limits.

This incentivizes fishing for halibut in areas and depths to maximize harvest of lingcod. The problem with this is that we have a significant issue with rockfish bycatch in the longline fishery in PWS whose preferred habitat coincides strongly with lingcod. I believe that bringing the directed lingcod fishery in line with regulations elsewhere in the state and restricting it to a jig fishery could help to reduce rockfish bycatch issues in PWS. Jig fisheries targeted on lingcod can avoid rockfish fairly well. By use of larger tackle used to target lingcod and the fact that in my experience one is highly incentivised to keep gear off the bottom rockfish impacts are very limited. Furthermore, in conjunction with this proposal, I have submitted another proposal requesting the usage of approved deepwater release mechanisms in directed jig fisheries in PWS. Unlike longlining, jig fisheries lend themselves very well to the release of rockfish via deepwater release mechanisms as part of the normal fishing process and the jig fishery has the potential to be almost perfectly clean in regards to rockfish bycatch.

It is likely that even in this case the majority of the lingcod GHL will be taken as longline bycatch, but I believe the removal of directed longline fishing for lingcod will produce some benefit in reducing rockfish bycatch. In both areas on either side of PWS (Lower Cook Inlet/SE Alaska) directed lingcod fisheries are restricted to jig gear types only.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I have discussed the issue of rockfish bycatch in PWS with several different ADFG staff. While they appropriately remained neutral on the allocative aspects of this proposal; there definitely seems to be a general consensus that rockfish bycatch in PWS is a problem that needs addressed; and management actions taken recently reflect that.

PROPOSED BY: Joseph Person (EF-F24-070)

PROPOSAL 8

28.267. Prince William Sound Pacific Cod Management Plan.

Modify the Prince William Sound pacific cod fishery guideline harvest level, as follows:

Increase the pacific cod allocation from the Eastern gulf Federal TAC from 25% maximum now to 35% minimum 50% maximum. If the P.W.S. pacific cod state water harvest reaches 90% or more increase 5% the following year if the harvest is less than 90% then it will decrease 5% the following year.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The P.W.S. state waters pacific cod qouta is allocated 25% from the Eastern gulf Federal TAC. Most of the time the P.W.S. state water pacific cod qouta is harvested 90% or more but the Eastern gulf Federal pacific cod TAC has almost never been harvested more than 50% on average maybe 25% is being harvested.

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

PROPOSED BY: Dia Kuzmin (EF-F24-107)

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)

PROPOSAL 10

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

Modify pot limit in the Prince William Sound Pacific cod fishery, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 28.267 section (e) as follows:

(3) Pacific cod may be taken only with groundfish pots, mechanical jigging machines, hand troll gear, and longline gear, as follows:

(A) except as provided in (g) of this section, no more than 60 groundfish pots **heavier than 30lbs or 120 groundfish pots lighter than 30 lbs** may be operated from a vessel registered to fish for Pacific cod;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Encourage the adoption of slinky pot gear in the Pacific cod fishery by increasing the pot limit for the new lightweight longlined pots.

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-F24-137)

PROPOSAL 11

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

Reduce the Prince William Sound Pacific cod jig/hand troll allocation and create a new, larger allocation for pot and longline gear, as follows:

5 AAC 28.267. Prince William Sound Pacific Cod Management Plan

(e) During a state-waters season,

(1) the guideline harvest level for Pacific cod in the Prince William Sound Area is 25 percent of the estimated total allowable harvest of Pacific cod for the federal Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area; mechanical jigging machine and hand troll gear [and groundfish pot gear] is allocated **5 percent** [15 percent] of the guideline harvest level; **ground fish pot gear** and longline gear is allocated **95 percent** [85 percent] of the guideline harvest level, except that if.

(A) the guideline harvest level allocated to the mechanical jigging machine and hand troll gear [and groundfish pot gear] is taken in any calendar year, the mechanical jigging machine and hand troll gear [and groundfish pot gear] allocation will increase by five percent beginning the following calendar year to a maximum of **15 percent** [30 percent] of the guideline harvest level and the longline **and ground fish pot gear** allocation will decrease by a corresponding five percent the following calendar year to a minimum of **85 percent** [70 percent] of the guideline harvest level; and

(B) the guideline harvest level allocated to the mechanical jigging machine and hand troll gear [and groundfish pot gear] is not taken in any calendar year, the mechanical jigging machine and hand troll gear [and groundfish pot gear] allocation will decrease by five percent beginning the following calendar year to a minimum of **5 percent** [15 percent] of the guideline harvest level and the longline **and ground fish pot gear** allocation will increase by a corresponding five percent the following calendar year to a maximum of **95 percent** [85 percent] of the guideline harvest level

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current regulation and allocation does not encourage use of pot gear for the majority of the GH. Pot gear has been proven to reduce rockfish and halibut bycatch considerably. Recent out of cycle changes were passed at the 2023 AYK meeting, this change has allowed for long-lining of pots. This new change allowed for pot gear to harvest their allocation of the pacific cod GH for the first time in over two decades, it has proven to be a very successful way to harvest pacific cod efficiently while also reducing bycatch of both halibut and rockfish. It is also a substantially more user friendly method of fishing.

Halibut and Rockfish bycatch in the pacific cod fishery can be greatly reduced if more of the fishery is conducted using slinky pots. Fisherman looking to fish a cleaner gear type and access more of the GH should be celebrated and encouraged, unfortunately if left unchanged the current

allocation plan greatly dis-incentivizes fisherman from pursuing a cleaner fishing gear type. This proposed change would not force anybody currently participating to switch from hook and line to pots, however it would allow pot fisherman to access more of the total GHIL currently held exclusively for the hook and line fisherman.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I have worked with multiple other permit holders and interested parties on this idea.

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth B. Jones (HQ-F24-045)

PROPOSAL 12

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

Increase Pacific cod allocation for jig and pot gear to 50%, as follows:

Increase the PWS state water pot and jig pacific cod qouta to 50% from 20%.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In P.W.S. state waters rock fish bycatch qouta has been exceeded last couple years. Currently the pacific cod hook and line allocation is 80% and pot and jig is 20%. Increase the pot and jig qouta to 50% from 20% that would reduce the rock fish bycatch. With recent opening of long lining slinky pots the cod qouta has been fully harvested and pots have less bycatch that would conserve more rock fish.

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

PROPOSED BY: Dia Kuzmin (EF-F24-178)

PROPOSAL 13

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

Increase bycatch limits for skates in the Prince William Sound Pacific cod fishery, as follows:

Allow 100% bycatch retention of long nose and big skate during the P.W.S. state water longline directed pacific cod and halibut fisheries until 25% of the Eastern gulf Federal TAC has been reached for skate. Before the federal pacific cod qouta reduction and with decreased skate bycatch allowance from 20% to 5% now there is alot less skate being harvested. Most years the federal skate TAC is around 50% being harvested. With recent reduced pacific cod qoutas skate harvest is very minimal now. It would give more opportunities for the mostly small vessel boat fleet and the local economies a needed boost.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Under current regulations there is very limited opportunity to harvest skate. Over the last several years some years large percentages of the Eastern gulf Federal TAC go unharvested. This is a very healthy resource that once supported a lucrative directed fishery. It currently is under utilized and could provide major economic benefits to coastal communities.

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

PROPOSED BY: Dia Kuzmin (EF-F24-104)

PROPOSAL 14

5 AAC 28.263. Prince William Sound Walleye Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery Management Plan.

Close the Prince William Sound walleye pollock pelagic trawl fishery, as follows:

Add a new section to 5 AAC 28.263. PWS Walleye Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery Management Plan.

- x) A direct Alaska pollock Pelagic trawl fishery in PWS is prohibited unless;
 - 1) No part or attachment to the Pelagic trawl gear makes contact with the seafloor habitat.
 - 2) There is no bycatch of Chinook salmon in the PWS Pollock Pelagic trawl fishery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Reduce the precipitous rise in Chinook salmon bycatch in PWS taken by the Pollock Pelagic Trawl fishery and reduce disturbances to the seafloor caused by trawling. Numerous Alaskans living in Interior and SouthCentral Alaska gather chinook salmon as part of their annual wildfood source from PWS, Protecting the habitat upon which our wildfood source depends has been the Alaska Outdoor Council's top purpose for decades.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. The proposal was developed through the Alaska Outdoor Council member clubs who depend on wildfood stocks from PWS as part of their annual wildfood source.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Outdoor Council (EF-F24-106)

PROPOSAL 15

5 AAC 28.263 Prince William Sound Walleye Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery Management Plan

Modify bycatch limits in the Prince William Sound pelagic trawl fishery, as follows:

- (d) During a directed walleye pollock pelagic trawl fishery, the total bycatch weight of all species combined may not exceed **an amount set by ADFG of xxx lbs** [FIVE PERCENT] **regardless** of the total round weight of the walleye pollock harvested.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current bycatch limits are set not to exceed five percent of the total round weight of the harvest. By putting a bycatch cap in regulations, it will make it so the bycatch amount doesn't increase if the GHF increases. This will help greatly in reducing bycatch. Additionally, it should be mandatory that bycatch is brought back to port and surrendered to ADFG.

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

PROPOSED BY: The Chenega IRA Council (HQ-F24-123)

PROPOSAL 16

5 AAC 28.263 Prince William Sound Walleye Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery Management Plan

Close the Prince William Sound pelagic trawl fishery, as follows:

Closure of the Prince William Sound Walleye Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery to preserve PWS.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It is our belief that the Prince William Sound (PWS) Walleye Pollock Trawl Fishery is causing significant damage to the ecosystem in PWS and should be closed.

There is sufficient evidence of this by looking at the bycatch species they are harvesting. After discussions with local ADFG staff, it's been determined that the rockfish bycatch is predominantly shortraker rockfish. Shortraker rockfish are a deepwater fish living in depths typically greater than 800' and are considered bottomfish. While the PWS Walleye Pollock Trawl Fishery is supposed to be a midwater trawl fishery, evidence suggests they are dragging the bottom based on their bycatch. Repeated years of dragging the bottom causes serious damage by destroying the natural seafloor habitat and disrupting the ecosystem.

PWS holds many resources utilized by several user groups and it is in the best interest of all user groups to preserve the waters for current and future generations.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was developed in conjunction with The Chenega Corporation, Raymond Nix, and information obtained from ADFG.

PROPOSED BY: The Chenega IRA Council (HQ-F24-124)

PROPOSAL 17

5 AAC 28.263 Prince William Sound Walleye Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery Management Plan

Establish observer requirements in the Prince William Sound pelagic trawl fishery, as follows:

(h) The commissioner **shall** [MAY] require **100% onboard electronic observation and 50% physical** onboard observers on a vessel during fishing operations.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Prince William Sound Walleye Pollock Trawl fishery is the only trawl fishery in the state with 0% observer coverage and is relying solely on the user group for accurate reporting. By requiring electronic and physical observation, this will allow verification of bycatch amounts and prevent over-fishing.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was developed in conjunction with The Chenega Corporation and ADFG for information.

PROPOSED BY: The Chenega IRA Council

(HQ-F24-125)

PROPOSAL 18

5 AAC 28.210. Fishing seasons for Prince William Sound Area.

Extend the season dates in the Prince William Sound sablefish fishery, as follows:

Extend the fishery closer from August 31st through the end of October.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Would like the board to consider extending the fishing period for the Prince William Sound Sablefish fishery through October.

This would enable permit holders more opportunity to fish their quota and potentially afford greater market flexibility.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I consulted with the current ADFG management biologist.

PROPOSED BY: Brad von Wichman

(EF-F24-086)

PROPOSAL 19

5 AAC 28.210. Fishing seasons for Prince William Sound Area. 5 AAC 28.206. Prince William Sound Area registration. 5 AAC 28.272. Sablefish harvest, possession, and landing requirements for Prince William Sound Area.

Modify the commercial fishing season for sablefish in Prince William Sound, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 28.210 to read:

(b) Sablefish may be taken in the Inside District **during the “A” Season** from april 15 through august 31 **and during the “B” season from September 15th - December 31st**. There is no open season for commercial sablefish fishing in the Outside District.

Amend 5 AAC 28.206 to read:

(c) In the Inside District, a Prince William Sound CFEC sablefish permit holder, or The permit holder's agent must register for the commercial sablefish fishery before 5:00 p.m. April 1st. **Registration for “B” season will open September 1st and close September 7th at 5:00 pm.**

Amend 5 AAC 28.272 to read

(c) In the Prince William Sound Area, the holder of a CFEC limited entry permit or interim-use permit to take sablefish may not take more than the [ANNUAL] **seasonal** amount specified by the department. The department will determine the [ANNUAL] **seasonal** amount as follows:

(1) the [ANNUAL] **“A” season** amount will be the sum of one-half of the annual harvest objective divided by the number of permit holders registered to fish in the commercial sablefish **“A” Season** fishery and one-half of the annual harvest objective multiplied by the average percentage of the harvest taken by the vessel category for which the CFEC permit was issued, as specified in 20 AAC 05.779, and divided by the number of permit holders registered to fish sablefish with the permits of that vessel category;

(2) the **“B” Season** amount will be the sum of one-half of the remaining annual harvest objective unharvested during the **“A” Season** divided by the number of permit holders registered to fish in the commercial sablefish **“B” Season** fishery and one-half of the annual

harvest objective multiplied by the average percentage of the harvest taken by the vessel category for which the CFEC permit was issued, as specified in 20 AAC 05.779, and divided by the number of permit holders registered to fish sablefish with the permits of that vessel category;

(3)[(2)] the average percentages of harvest for the vessel categories described in (1) and (2) of this subsection are as follows:

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Sablefish in PWS are managed under an individual quota system with each registered permit holder given a share of the GHL each year. In recent years, this system has resulted in much of the GHL being unharvested due to either registered permits not actually participating in the fishery, or not catching their allocated share. In 2023 only 50% of the GHL was harvested.

We propose creating a fall "B" season that occurs every year after the close of the traditional fishery. Any share of the GHL unharvested during the traditional "A" Season would be redistributed and could be harvested by active permit holders during the "B" season. This change will not take anything away from existing permit holders, or change the existing allocation between permit types; it is simply giving more opportunity to fully utilize the resource. During the most recent 10 year period from 2014-2023, only 55% of the total GHL was harvested.

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-F24-130)

PROPOSAL 20

5 AAC 28.210. Fishing seasons for Prince William Sound Area. 5 AAC 28.206. Prince William Sound Area registration.

Modify the commercial fishing season for sablefish in Prince William Sound, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 28.210 to read:

(b) Sablefish may be taken in the Inside District **beginning concurrent with the opening of the federal sablefish IFQ fishery** [FROM APRIL 15] through August 31 There is no open season for commercial sablefish fishing in the Outside District.

Amend 5 AAC 28.206 to read:

(c) In the Inside District, a Prince William Sound CFEC sablefish permit holder, or the permit holder's agent, must register for the commercial sablefish fishery before 5:00 p.m. [APRIL 1] **February 15th**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current season timing excludes many participants in PWS Salmon fisheries from participating in the PWS sablefish fishery. These expanded dates will better align with the federal fishery in the Gulf and will allow fishermen to get the most value from their catch. The GHL for Sablefish has not been fully harvested in recent years in part due to the overlap of the season with other fisheries.

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

PROPOSAL 21

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful Gear for Prince William Sound Area.

Allow the concurrent use of longline gear and sablefish pot gear in Prince William Sound, as follows:

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area.

(j) Except as provided in k **& 1** of this section, in a groundfish fishery, a person may have only one type of legal gear on board the vessel.

(k) In a groundfish fishery, mechanical jigging machines and hand troll gear may be used at the same time. If mechanical jigging machines and hand troll gear are being used under this subsection, only that gear may be on board the vessel.

(l) In the Prince William Sound Sablefish and IFQ Halibut fisheries, longlines and pots may be used at the same time. If longlines and pots are being used under this subsection, only longline and pot gear may be on board the vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Fishermen in the Prince William Sound Sablefish fishery, as well as sometimes in the IFQ Halibut fishery in PWS, encounter issues with whale depredation. Pots have shown themselves to be an effective method of avoiding whale depredation and many fishermen currently use them for this reason.

This change, or one similar, if adopted by the board would give important flexibility to operators seeking to harvest their quota and reduce costs and save time for those operators as well. Firstly, if a boat encountered whale depredation, they could still have a viable method of harvest on that trip with their pot gear until the quota is filled or the whale depredations conditions improve. Without this change, vessels targeting sablefish and halibut with hooks can try fishing with pots but to do so not only do they have the expense of purchasing and setting up for the gear they also must return to port to switch gear types. This results in significant monetary and time costs to the fishermen and is a deterrent to trying to newer (to most) pot gear.

This change could result in additional benefits with fishermen such as being allowed to “try out” smaller sets of pot gear while longlining to see how it works for their vessel before committing to the substantial expense of buying a new gear type that they may not be familiar with. Pot gear will have additional benefits to the resource beyond avoidance of whale depredation, most notably reduced bycatch. Lastly, having and fishing both gear is currently legal in these fisheries in federal waters.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I discussed a similar and broader proposal with the Whittier AC, of which I am a member, who were in support of it and willing to submit it as an AC. This narrower proposal is modified from what they saw to be more specific to the Sablefish and Halibut fisheries due to my subsequent realization that PWS has separate longline and pot P. cod quotas and

therefore the simple change to “groundfish” gear I had presented to them could create confusion in those fisheries. I also consulted the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commercial Fish Manager for PWS Groundfish who was very helpful.

PROPOSED BY: Brett Roth (HQ-F24-120)

PROPOSAL 22

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful gear for Prince William Sound Area.

Allow the concurrent use of longline gear and sablefish pot gear in Prince William Sound, as follows:

Amend the legislation to read:

(j) Except as provided in sections (k) **and (l)**, in a groundfish fishery, a person may have only one type of legal gear on board the vessel.

(l) When participating in PWS sablefish fishery or Halibut IFQ, longline gear and sablefish pot gear (as defined in subsection c) may be used at the same time. If longline gear and sablefish pot gear are being used under this subsection, only that gear may be on board the vessel.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Allow the combined use of pot gear and longline gear by fishermen participating in the PWS sablefish fisheries and the halibut IFQ fisheries. Currently a fisherman is not allowed to use both hooks and pots during the same trip in state waters. This needs to be changed to account for the recent adoption of black cod pots by the fleet. There isn't a restriction like this in the federal fishery, and because of this the fleet has been able to experiment with using pots to target black cod and halibut. Using pots reduces bycatch of non-target species like rockfish and also eliminates whale depredation. These are two things that should be encouraged in state waters.

Allowing both gear types to be used simultaneously in state waters will benefit fishermen and the resource in numerous ways: small boats could begin to use some pots, when normally they can only fish a limited number of sablefish pots and would fish hooks for combo black cod and halibut trips; fishermen could to continue to experiment with using pots to harvest halibut, which will result in lowered bycatch of rockfish and whale depredation; and it will eliminate a legal gray area for fishermen transiting state waters with pots and hooks aboard after fishing federal waters.

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-F24-132)

PROPOSAL 23

5 AAC 28.272. Sablefish harvest, possession, and landing requirements for Prince William Sound Area.

Prohibit the retention of sablefish from state waters, as follows:

Modify subsection (g) of 5 AAC 28.272. Sablefish harvest, possession, and landing requirements for Prince William Sound Area.

(g) An operator of a vessel retaining sablefish in federal waters may not [OPERATE GEAR] **retain sablefish** in state waters of the Prince William Sound Area during the same trip.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations make it impossible for an operator who owns federal sablefish quota to move between federal and state waters during a halibut trip. This is because when fishing in federal waters, a fisherman is required to retain sablefish if they have quota shares aboard whether or not they are target sablefish. This creates a situation where once a trip is started halibut fishing in PWS, the operator is not able to move to federal waters if they find poor fishing or unacceptable amounts of bycatch without first making an expensive run back to port to deliver. We believe the intent of this regulation was to prevent sablefish caught in federal or state waters being sold as one or the other. However, that is not a realistic scenario and will still be prevented under our proposed language and under standwide regulation 5AAC 28.070. This simple change in regulatory language will increase efficiency for fishermen and also has the potential to lower rockfish bycatch in PWS.

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-F24-133)

PROPOSAL 24

5 AAC 28.210. Fishing Seasons for Prince William Sound Area

Lengthen the commercial fishing season for sablefish in Prince William Sound, as follows:

5 AAC 28.210. Fishing seasons for Prince William Sound Area

(b) Sablefish may be taken in the Inside District from **April 1 through October 31**. There is no open season for commercial sablefish fishing in the Outside District.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Changes to the PWS Sablefish season dates. The Season dates were originally kept short in an effort to avoid whale depredation during spring and fall time when salmon were not running, however this regulation is now outdated with the invention of slinky pots and their effective reduction in the whale depredation. Adopting an expanded season will allow for fisherman to harvest earlier and later and participate in both the black cod and salmon fisheries. Further encouraging slinky pot adoption will reduce bycatch in the hook and line harvest methods. This idea came to the board in 2014 however that proposal only extended dates for pot fisherman, it was rejected at that time only because it did not include all gear types. While an expanded season will certainly incentivize pot fishing, this proposal if adopted would not prohibit somebody from fishing one gear type or another. During the COVID years ADFG expanded the season with little or no negative effects on the resource or participants.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I have worked with multiple other permit holders on this idea, these dates represent a compromise between multiple viewpoints.

PROPOSED BY: Kenneth B Jones (HQ-F24-007)
