



Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association

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September 26, 2017

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Submitted electronically to: npfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Re: Agenda Item C7 - Central GOA Rockfish Program Review

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on the Central GOA Rockfish Program.

Alaska Whitefish Trawler Association (AWTA) is a trade organization that has represented independently owned trawl catcher-vessels fishing in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea for over 40 years. Most AWTA vessels home port in Kodiak, Alaska and deliver groundfish to Kodiak 11 months out of the year. Kodiak is ranked the #2 port in the nation by volume, and groundfish deliveries by trawl vessels represent 60% of all fish across Kodiak's docks annually.

AWTA agrees with the assessment in the Initial Review document¹ noting that the Rockfish Program met almost all of the Council's goals and objectives for the program, including: increased vessel safety, a more rational distribution of fishing effort, increased vessel accountability and the ability to form cooperatives. All of these goals were accomplished without significant fleet or processor consolidation, and about the same number of vessels, processors and crew participate in the fishery today as prior to Rockfish Program implementation.²

The Rockfish Program is working. The review document demonstrates that this cooperative-based catchshare program benefits the fleet, processors and the community of Kodiak, with an increased net benefit to the Nation. The document reflects and articulates positive outcomes experienced by AWTA members. AWTA does not recommend substantial changes to the program and encourages the Council to consider developing similar programs for other Gulf trawl fisheries.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Skinner".

Rebecca Skinner, Executive Director
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association

¹ Rockfish Program Review Initial 9-15-17

² Rockfish Program Review at 10