

D-2 Halibut Charter Fishery (CATCH)
Council motion 10/13/14

Purpose and Need Statement

Alaska's guided halibut anglers have seen recent increases in regulatory restrictions due to declining halibut stocks and guided recreational allocations. There is currently no sector-wide mechanism to shift allocation between the commercial and guided recreational sectors. The current provision provided under the Catch Sharing Plan to temporarily transfer allocation known as GAF (Guided Angler Fish), may not be sufficient to ensure long-term planning and stability in regulations for all guided anglers. A market-based mechanism for the guided halibut recreational sector may be an effective means to supplement their annual allocations. Allowing an RQE (Recreational Quota Entity) to hold commercial halibut QS on behalf of guided recreational halibut anglers under a "willing seller and willing buyer" approach may result in less restrictive annual harvest measures for guided recreational anglers, while complying with total halibut removals under the guided halibut catch limits determined by the International Pacific Halibut Commission. The guided recreational halibut allocation under the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan would be combined with the halibut quota share held by the RQE to determine the annually adjusted total guided halibut allocation. The total allocation would be the basis for the determination of appropriate management measures for the guided halibut sector each year.

Alternative 1. No Action

Alternative 2. Establish a Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) as a qualified entity to purchase and hold commercial halibut QS for use by the guided halibut sector

Element 1. Number of entities

- Option 1. Two entities, one for each IPHC Regulatory Area 2C and 3A
- Option 2. One entity with two area quota pools, Area 2C and Area 3A

Element 2. Restrictions on transfers. Two-way transfers are allowed. Quota class and block designation is retained if the quota is transferred back to the commercial sector. (Options below are not mutually exclusive)

- Option 1. No restrictions
- Option 2. Annual limit on transfers to the RQE in each regulatory area (Area 2C and 3A)
 - Suboption 1. 30% – 50% of the average amount of commercial QS transferred in each area during the previous five years (*e.g., the Area 2C transfer limit is based on 30% – 50% of the average amount of commercial QS transferred in Area 2C in the previous five years*).
 - Suboption 2. 1% - 5% of commercial QS in each area based on a five-year average
- Option 3. Total (cumulative) limit on amount held by RQE by regulatory area (Area 2C and 3A)
 - Suboption 1. 10% - 40% of commercial QS based on five-year average
 - Suboption 2. 10% - 40% of each class of QS based on five-year average
 - Suboption 3. Transfers to mirror current GAF limits by area: 10% (Area 2C) and 15% (Area 3A) of area QS holdings each year.
- Option 4. Prohibit purchase of D class commercial quota share by the RQE.

Element 3. Setting of annual charter management measures. Use RQE quota share holdings as of October 1 each year as the basis to estimate IFQ pounds to add to the estimated guided recreational allocation under the catch sharing plan for the upcoming year. This amount must be maintained for the following fishing year. This estimated combined allocation would be used to recommend the guided recreational harvest measures for the following year. The procedural process steps and timeline would remain unchanged.

Alternative 3. Retirement of “latent” Charter Halibut Permits. Threshold for determining a latent CHP:

Option 1. The CHP has been fished less than 50 angler days in the previous 5 years.

Option 2. A CHP that has not been used by the CHP holder in the previous 3 years.