

C2 Charter Halibut Permit Usage – Discussion Paper

The AP recommends the Council request an expanded discussion paper on this issue.

Based on information in the C2 Permit usage discussion paper, it is evident that there is a significant amount of latent capacity contained within the Guided Halibut Sector.

If latent capacity becomes active in the future, it could threaten the guided halibut sector, which is managed to a hard cap allocation and other users of the halibut resource.

In order to consider addressing this issue, more information is needed regarding usage of originally issued permits, that have not been previously sold. In addition a finer scale of annual usage needs to be explored. Such as less than 20, 30 and 40 halibut trips per year.

In addition staff should look at the process for implementing an annual registration for CHP's. The purpose of this would be gather better information on the trends of usage for permits.

The goal of this discussion paper is to better understand the behavior of the fleet and permit holders. To identify and allow Council the opportunity to consider what steps to take on limiting future growth (latent capacity) of the charter fleet in one or both areas, if necessary in order achieve to objectives of the Halibut Catch Share Plan in the future. Staff should place priority on achieving these objectives, while minimizing constraints to existing business models.

Motion passed 21/0.

Rationale:

- The harvest of the guided halibut fishery in regulatory areas 2C and 3A is regulated by the Catch Share Plan. This includes a hard cap allocation. It has become clear the overages of the 3A charter fleet are linked to the new participation of at least 12 Coast Guard Inspected boats capable of taking 10 – 18 angers each day that have joined the fleet since the CSP was passed four years ago.
- According to Figures 1 and 2 on page 8, it is clear that 667 of 965 Charter Halibut Permits are currently fishing 50 days or less in each season. Furthermore 375 permits, more than 30 percent of the fleet is fishing less than 20 days per year.
- This latent capacity, if fully utilized would double charter effort in the future.
- This is a very real threat to the viability of the existing charter fleet as well, the longline fishery, subsistence and unguided fishermen.
- Clearly allowing this kind of excess capacity when considering a fishery that is struggling to be managed to a hard cap is not acceptable.
- For this reason I am suggesting we propose to the Council an expanded discussion paper that I hope will be used to fairly equitable limit future growth in this fishery, particularly in times of lower abundance. It is not my intent to revoke or limit existing participation.