

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Final Motion June 12, 2017
E1 Staff Tasking – Halibut Retention in BSAI Sablefish Pots

The Council requests that staff develop a discussion paper outlining steps necessary to allow retention of Pacific halibut in pot gear in the sablefish IFQ fishery in the BSAI. The IPHC recently amended its gear regulations to make pot gear a legal gear type for retaining halibut throughout Alaska as authorized by the Council in response to GOA FMP Amendment 101. However, Federal regulations at 679.2 limit the definition of legal pot gear for the harvest of halibut as “longline pot gear” harvested “from any GOA reporting area,” because that was the action recommended by the Council. As a result, halibut taken with pot gear in the BSAI must currently be discarded.

The discussion paper should outline how the Council’s action and coordination with IPHC would differ if the intent of an action is to allow (1) retention of incidentally caught halibut in pot gear in the sablefish IFQ fishery, or (2) a directed BSAI halibut IFQ pot fishery.