



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:HAL 17-035

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Dan Hull, Chairman
David Witherell, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Self-Guided Halibut Rental Boats - Discussion Paper

STAFF CONTACT: Steve MacLean (NPFMC) and Scott Meyer (NMFS)

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review Discussion Paper
- Action as necessary

BACKGROUND:

In June 2017, the Council requested that Council staff, NMFS staff, and ADF&G staff develop a discussion paper to explore mechanisms to create a registration for motorized rental boats that are intended to be used to harvest halibut in Areas 2C and 3A. Council staff consulted with Mr. Kurt Iverson (NMFS), Mr. Scott Meyer (ADF&G), and Mr. Trent Hartill (ADF&G) to develop this discussion paper in response.

An unknown number of commercial entities are offering rental boats to anglers to allow them to fish for halibut and other species without the assistance of a registered guide, which allows the anglers access to the unguided daily bag limit of two fish of any size, rather than being held to the more restrictive guided angler limit. Although legal under the current definition of guided sport fishing and sport fishing guide, some members of the public consider this a reallocation to the recreational fishing sector. In order to estimate the number of vessels available for rent to anglers, and the potential number of halibut harvested by those anglers, the Council requested a discussion paper exploring a potential registry of boats available in Areas 2C and 3A for rent to anglers intending to harvest halibut.

The paper examines both State of Alaska and Federal vessel registries and raises questions that should be addressed if the Council chooses to move forward with an analysis of alternatives. Specifically, staff recommends that the Council identify a problem statement and purpose and need statement from which alternatives can be developed.