



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File #: HAL 16-012, **Version:** 1

Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Charter Halibut Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) Program - Final action

STAFF CONTACT: Sarah Marrinan

ACTION REQUIRED:

Recommend final action on Charter Halibut Recreational Quota Entity

BACKGROUND:

The Council is considering an action that would set up regulations to allow for a charter halibut recreational quota entity (RQE) to purchase and hold commercial halibut quota share in IPHC Area 2C and 3A on behalf of charter angler in these corresponding areas. Under the Council's preliminary preferred alternative, RQE QS holdings as of October 1 of each year would be the basis to estimate IFQ pounds to add to the estimated charter catch limit. This new estimated charter catch limit would be used to analyze annual management measures for each IPHC Area, potentially providing the ability to relax certain charter restrictions for that season.

The Council has seen two iterations of Initial Review Drafts (December 2015 and April 2016). In April 2016, the Council established a preliminary preferred alternative of Alternative 2 (allow for an RQE) and dropped the remaining action alternative (Alternative 3, allow an RQE to purchase charter halibut permits). In addition to highlighting the preliminary preferred alternative and dropping some elements of the proposed action, the Council also added a few areas for analysis. **Primary areas of expansion in the analysis since the April 2016 draft include:**

- A revised Executive Summary.
- An expanded analysis on transfer restrictions, including:
 - Annual limits down to 0.5% of the commercial QS by area per year,
 - RQE cumulative limits that are inclusive of GAF usage, and sub-options to protect GAF users, and
 - Additional transfer restrictions on blocked QS >1,500 or 2,000 lb.
- An analysis on a new sub-option for the redistribution of QS in the event that the charter sector reaches the unguided recreational limit.
- A new section that considers program costs to an RQE.
- An expanded information on the authority and logistics of making the RQE responsible for a number of different federal, state and local fees.
- Expanded discussion on the size of sales in the QS market.
- An expanded analysis on the effects of an RQE on the commercial halibut sector, QS market and communities.
- An expanded discussion in the EA on the available information to examine possible localized effects on the halibut resource. An addendum to the EA was also made available on December 1, which includes several maps that highlight localized harvest intensity and discuss impacts relative to the status quo.

- This draft also includes NMFS recommendations on several alternatives and option.

At this meeting the Council will decide whether to affirm its preliminarily preferred alternative, and take action to allow for an RQE. If so, the Council will need to also recommend a preferred alternative on a number of new and expanded elements.