

PROCESSOR ADVISORY GROUP

January 27, 2016

TWENTY FIRST ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

IPHC 92nd Annual Meeting - Juneau, AK

CHAIR: Tom McLaughlin, Seafood Producers Cooperative

CO-CHAIR: Blake Tipton, S.M. Products

The Processors Advisory Group convened at 10:40 a.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2016. HANA president Blake Tipton opened the meeting with a call to order and introduction of all present. There were 17 companies, including two proxies. There were six Canadian companies and 9 U.S. companies. Attendance was the same on both days.

As required in the PAG Rules of Procedure, when the PAG convenes in the U.S., the chairperson is a resident of the U.S. and the vice chair is a resident of Canada. A nomination and election process was held shortly after the introductions. Tom McLaughlin was elected Chair and Blake Tipton Vice-Chair.

The PAG is grateful to the visiting experts who provided more information on a variety of subjects. Thank you to:

Ian Stewart and Heather Gilroy from the IPHC staff

Rachel Baker from the NMFS

Chris Burrows from the U.S. Coast Guard

Bruce Turrus from Canadian Groundfish Society

Mark Fina from the Alaska Seafood Coop

Robert Jones from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Dan Hull, from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Staff Regulatory Proposals

Season Dates:

The PAG approved by a unanimous vote of 17-0 to recommend an opening date of 19 March, 2016 and a closing date of 31 October 2016.

It has been the tradition of the PAG to support a Saturday opening so that fresh fish can arrive in the market for weekend sales. We continue to support a later opening this year for several reasons. A very important reason is that the Boston Seafood Show is March 6, 7, and 8th this year. Every halibut buyer will be there, making purchases from the

fleets difficult. There are unfavorable tides the week before which would likely result in a soft opening.

We have traditionally supported an earlier closing, and do again this year, for Sunday October 31. We have said before and continue to express the significant drop in market interest when quantities go down at the end of the season. That coupled with deterioration of the weather in most areas, and increased problems with quality, support our recommendation. Finally, we strongly support that closure date so that the IPHC can collect and process data for the stock assessment in a timely manner.

Retention of Tagged Halibut Regulations:

The PAG supports the staff recommendation. The vote was unanimous.

Log regulations for the Alaska Commercial Fishery:

The PAG supports the staff recommendation, by unanimous vote.

Government Agency Regulatory Proposals

Catch Share Plans

The PAG supports the catch share plans developed by the PFMC for Area 2 and the NPFMC for Area 4CDE, as well as the CSP developed by the DFO for Area 2B, by unanimous vote.

The PAG supports the catch share plan developed by the North Pacific Council in 2C and 3A, by unanimous vote.

Allowing Longline Pot Gear as a Legal Commercial Halibut Gear in the Gulf of Alaska (Area 2C, 3A, and 3B)

The PAG support the retention of halibut in pot gear as the Council action described with the addition of a sunset clause after three years.

The PAG agrees with the intent to allow IFQ holders to retain incidentally caught halibut, to reduce wastage. There was some discussion about the potential for gear conflicts.

Industry Regulatory Proposals

Lowering the Commercial Fishery Size Limit to 30 inches

The PAG opposed this proposal by a vote of 12-3.

Amend Current IPHC fish ticket reporting requirements for the Area 2A tribes

The PAG supported this proposal by a unanimous vote.

Revise US commercial fishing logbook requirements for operators to complete a logbook for fishing trips, from the current definition of when “fishing for halibut”, to “making a landing of halibut”

This issue has been resolved by all the parties involved, so the PAG took no action.

Establish a maximum size retention limit of 60 inches

The PAG took no action on this proposal.

Four separate proposals concerning fishing on spawning grounds, protecting fish over 72 inches, barbless hooks, etc.

The PAG took no action on these proposals, as they were submitted past the deadline.

Catch Limits

The PAG approved the following amounts for catch limits in each area.

Area 2A	1.42 million pounds
Area 2B	7.35 million pounds
Area 2C	6.87 million pounds
Area 3A	10.10 million pounds
Area 3B	2.71 million pounds

Area 4A	1.39 million pounds
Area 4B	1.16 million pounds
Area 4CDE	1.64 million pounds
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TOTAL	32.63 million pounds

The PAG supports these numbers in Area 2 because the WPUE for survey and the commercial fishery has been improving or stable in all of Area 2. We feel Area 2 is more homogenous than other areas because Area 2A, 2B, and 2C have a better accounting of all removals and there is no trawling in Area 2C.

We applied a harvest rate of 29.3 based on what 2B has been harvesting for the last four years, across Area 2.

Harvest Policy Analysis

The PAG discussed the Harvest Policy at great length this year, agreed to strongly recommend that the Commissioners put a high priority on a review of the current Harvest Policy and identify improvements that need to be made. Perhaps part of this request would be a good task for the MSAB.

The PAG adjourned at 3 p.m.

PAG MEMBERS
2016 IPHC Annual Meeting
Juneau, AK

United States

Canada

Central Bering Sea Fishing Association	AERO Trading
Dana F. Besecker Company	CANFISCO
Hartman Group	French Creek Seafoods
Icicle Seafoods	S.M. Products (BC) Ltd.
Kachemak Bay	Scarlet Point Seafoods
Northport Fisheries	Seven Seas Fish Company
Pacific Seafood Group	

