



North Pacific Fishery Management Council Takes Unprecedented Action on Halibut Bycatch

Today the North Pacific Fishery Management Council voted 8 to 3 to take action on Halibut Abundance-based Management that will result in devastating effects to the federal flatfish fishery off Alaska (the Amendment 80 fleet), no significant improvements to the halibut fishery, and a negative net benefit to the nation. The action will reduce halibut bycatch in the flatfish fishery up to 35%, which according to the Council's own analysis will result in a \$110 million loss to the Washington based flatfish fishermen, threaten thousands of living-wage, blue-collar jobs, and cause the loss of over 200 million affordable seafood meals.

Statement on the decision from Chris Woodley, executive director of the Groundfish Forum:

This is a very sad day for science-based fishery management in Alaska. For the first time in its history, the Council has ignored science and its own analysis and chosen a path that has no conservation benefit and results in a net negative benefit to the nation. We are also concerned that the analysis shows that this decision will not result in the increases in harvest quota that the directed halibut fishery is looking for. During its discussion, the Council ignored the potential that their action could put at least one flatfish company out of business, so we don't take this issue lightly. We believe this action does not meet the standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and we are exploring all options due to the unprecedented nature of this decision.