

**ADVISORY PANEL  
Motions and Rationale  
April 2025 - Teleconference**

**C1      Motion for the AP on C1, Area 4 Vessel Cap**

The AP recommends that the Council take final action on Area 4 Vessel Cap

Alternative 2, Option 1B, 5% of the Area 4 halibut TAC

Suboptions:

1. Specify that the IFQ held by Area 4B CQE does not accrue towards Area 4 vessel cap.
2. Action will be reviewed as part of the next scheduled IFQ Program Review.

*Main Motion passed 17-4*

***Rationale in Favor of Main Motion***

- *The AP felt this motion was responsive to public testimony by taking permanent action to relax Area 4 Vessel caps in a vast, remote region with additional fuel costs, processor challenges, and small vessels that prosecute the fishery.*
- *The AP acknowledged concerns about potential consolidation in regards to this action, but noted that there are still other regulations in place such as general prohibitions on transfers and leasing of CV IFQ, harvesting vessel size limitations, and quota use caps that prevent consolidation.*
- *This action will allow vessels to prosecute the Area 4 IFQ fishery with greater efficiency, as heard in public testimony. This is particularly important at a time of significant challenges in the seafood industry, which is facing consolidation even with regulatory measures in place.*

***Rationale in Opposition of Main Motion***

- *The AP recognizes that the collapse of processing capacity in Areas 4B and especially 4CD have created a crisis, particularly for the community of St Paul but some remain skeptical if permanent increases in the vessel caps are the right solution to the current problems. After 4 years without any vessel caps, halibut harvest in region 4 has continued to decline and the available data does not point to vessel caps as being the best solution. Low catch rates, lack of O32 halibut, whale depredation, and increased cost of operations all contribute to the current under-utilization.*
- *Table 5 on page 23 illustrates the decline in participation and the narrative reads, "Overall vessel participation has declined dramatically throughout the time series. Area 4 has seen particular declines in vessels in recent years, even when vessel caps have been removed, and a*

*large portion of the allocation has been left unharvested.” There is no obvious trend of additional vessels participating in Area 4 fisheries in years that vessel caps have been removed compared to previous years.*

- *Though AP members were sympathetic to the challenges they are having in all of area 4, some have concerns about setting precedents. Catch rates have a lot to do with stakeholder challenges, but that can be addressed in harvest management. All halibut fishermen took large cuts in halibut quota this year and remain hopeful that the abundance of halibut will rebound. If it does, eliminated or highly increased caps will be hard to reimplement.*