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NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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D3 IFQ/ CQE Adjustments

October 2026

Action Memo

Council Staff: Sarah Marrinan
Other Presenters: Lis Henderson (NMFS)
Action Required: 1. Review expanded discussion paper
2. Identify next steps for proposals if desired

BACKGROUND

At this meeting the Council will review an expanded discussion paper that provides preliminary assessments to proposed changes in the Pacific Halibut and Sablefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program. Some of the proposed changes are specific to Community Quota Entity (CQE) participation in the IFQ fisheries.

This expanded discussion paper was tasked after the Council reviewed an initial discussion paper in October 2025. This initial discussion paper contained a series of topics that emerged from the more comprehensive review of the IFQ Program in December 2024.

In total, this expanded discussion paper covers nine proposed items, including:

Transfer Eligibility Certificate (TEC) requirements

1. Allow time tendering in any federal or state commercial fishery off Alaska to count toward the 150-day TEC requirement to receive annual IFQ
2. Replace the existing NMFS interim policy with a regulation to establish a minimum age to be eligible to receive IFQ or QS by transfer (*e.g.*, 12, 16, 18)
3. Consider waiving the TEC requirement for individuals fishing annual IFQ derived from CQE-held quota share

CQE operations

4. Ability of CQE to assign and manage quota in-season (*e.g.*, explore processes similar to Community Development Quota permitting for halibut or hired masters permits)
5. Potential to increase or remove the 50,000 lb sablefish vessel use cap for the Aleutian Islands CQE Program
6. Potential to increase the amount of quota an individual Gulf of Alaska CQE can hold. (No change to the overall cap for the entire program: 21% of the total halibut QS and 21% of the total sablefish QS in each IFQ regulatory area in which CQEs are eligible to hold QS)
7. Background and clarification on whether current regulations allow CQEs in the Gulf of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands to hold federal processing permits

Unload/landing issues

8. Potential to waive the prior notice of landing requirement and restricted unload hours for small IFQ/CQE deliveries (*e.g.*, $\leq 2,000$ lb)
9. Expansion of the designated unload areas for tenders receiving IFQ or CQE halibut or sablefish

Proposed items 1-4 above were retained from the initial discussion paper, and items 5-9 were added in October 2025. The discussion paper provides a description of each of the nine proposed items, background on existing regulation relevant to each of the items, and an initial assessment of the potential changes.

After this review, the Council may choose which proposed items, if any, to move forward in another discussion paper or an initial review analysis. Section 6 of the discussion paper describes potential next steps and the tradeoffs in moving items forward together versus in separate actions. Neither the Council's IFQ Committee nor the Enforcement Committee directly participated in this round of review; however, the Council may consider reliance on its committees for additional review and insight if any of these actions are to move forward.