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## NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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# D4 Harvest Control Rule Development

February 2026

## Action Memo

Council Staff: Dr. Diana Stram

Other Presenters: Dr. Kirstin Holsman (AFSC), Dr. Jim Ianelli (AFSC), Katie Palof (ADFG)

Action Required:

1. Receive progress report on continued HCR work; reports from the Joint Groundfish Plan Teams and Crab Plan Team
2. Provide feedback to guide scope of a discussion paper for June 2026

## BACKGROUND

**This agenda item is for the SSC only.**

The Council is considering the potential use of climate-resilient harvest control rules (HCRs) to specify Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) limits. Current HCRs are specified under the BSAI and GOA Groundfish and BSAI Crab fishery management plan (FMP) Tier systems. Ongoing work at the AFSC by the ACLIM and GOACLIM teams indicates that alternative HCRs or similar mechanisms for some or all stocks may be more responsive over a longer time frame to changing environmental conditions. Climate resilient HCRs have the potential to perform better to protect spawning biomass for some stocks during climate shocks and under rapidly changing marine environmental conditions.

Staff will provide an overview of the background of this initiative, and progress to date since the SSC last took up this agenda item in June 2025. A reference document is also posted to the eAgenda. At the request of the SSC and the Council, the Crab Plan Team and the Joint Groundfish Plan Teams received presentations from the HCR analytical team during their fall and January meetings. Reports from the CPT and JGFPTs are posted to the eAgenda, and an overview of their discussions and recommendations will be provided to the SSC by the Chairs of those Plan Teams at this meeting.

At this meeting, the SSC has the opportunity to provide feedback to the HCR team to assist in the scoping and development of a comprehensive discussion paper for the SSC, AP, and Council, planned for the June 2026 Council meeting. The intent is for the June discussion paper to provide enough information for the Council to initiate an action, with a purpose and need statement and alternatives, should that be their interest.

As currently conceived, the discussion paper will include the following topics as sections. The presentation will provide more detail about how the team intends to structure the discussion under each. Feedback from the SSC will inform areas of emphasis and additions or revisions to the outlined paper.

1. **Status and goal(s) of this effort:** Potential refinements being considered to current biological reference points and HCRs to provide additional adaptability to changing climate. Are there novel problems arising and if so what are the solutions (ABC / OFL specifications)?
2. **Priority species and stocks:** species or groups of species of particular interest
3. **Performance and evaluation options:** priority (and overarching) performance metrics (both under development as well as a potential process to develop social indicators)

4. **Alternative options for scientific advice:** Review current and potential options for next generation stock assessment models, environmental forecasts, risk assessment methods and alternative HCRs.
5. **Management decision options and timing:** Discuss examples and alternative policy options (summarize options from within and outside of Alaska).
6. **Review options for ongoing communication and engagement:** Review alternative plans for regular feedback and communication regarding the progress of analysis (if initiated by the Council in June) via Plan Team, SSC, Advisory Panel, Council, public, etc.
7. **Duration, timeline and milestones.** Implementation details including proposed timeline for ongoing and future work, goals, milestones, and potential deliverables from the workplan analysis.