

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



OFFICIAL BUSINESS

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
1007 West Third, Suite 400
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

April 27, 2020

TRANSMITTED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Councilmembers,

We represent the halibut users in house districts across Alaska. The recent decisions of the International Pacific Halibut Commission to cut allocations for 2020 has exacerbated the struggle for the halibut industry that could have long term effects on the economic stability in our districts.

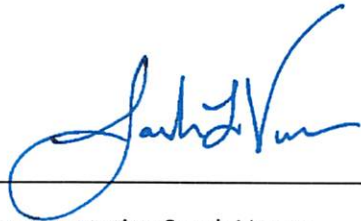
Maintaining a sustainable halibut fishery with abundance-based management is a goal shared among commercial, personal, sport and subsistence users alike. Restricting harvest in order to protect stock and maintain biomass for means of conservation is expected. However, Alaskan stakeholders in our districts are specifically concerned about the NPFMC's deliberate decision to allow static commercial bycatch allocations of halibut each year to the trawl fleet despite changes in biomass assessment. If halibut is in decline and conservation measures warranted, shouldn't conservation be equally applied to all stakeholders?

As members of the Alaska House of Representatives with large fishing districts, we are deeply concerned that the NPFMC is ignoring the pleas of sport, charter, and commercial fisherman throughout Alaska to provide equity among halibut resource users. Allowing high levels of halibut bycatch appears to undermine the NPFMC's stated intent for all users to share the conservation burden in order to rebuild the resource.

We understand that a regulatory change to establish abundance-based halibut bycatch caps for the BSAI is currently underway. Please take quick action on this measure and work on a similar objective in the Gulf of Alaska with the goal of implementing conservation measures that will protect the resource while

displaying equity within the fishery. Thank you for your efforts to sustain a thriving fishing industry in Alaska.

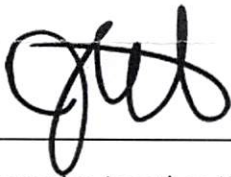
Respectfully,



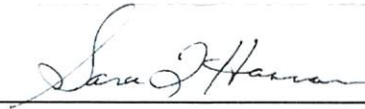
Representative Sarah Vance



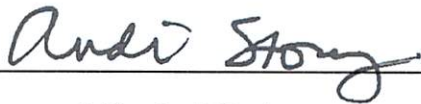
Representative Dan Ortiz



Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins



Representative Sara Hannan



Representative Andi Story



Representative Ben Carpenter



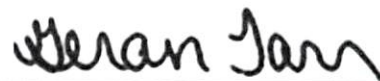
Representative Mel Gillis



Representative Mike Prax



Representative John Lincoln



Representative Geran Tarr