

Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition

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Eric Olson, Chairman

January 28, 2013

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

605 West 4th Avenue

Anchorage, Alaska 99801

In Re: Agenda Item C3 Western Gulf Trawl Bycatch Management

Dear Chairman Olson:

The Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition wishes to thank the Council for agreeing to consider the concerns that we raised concerning trawl bycatch management measures in the Gulf of Alaska. When the Kodiak trawl fleet began the path to rationalization, we realized that in order to preserve our pollock and P. cod fisheries we would have to move in that direction as well.

Our members represent the majority of the <60' trawlers in the Western Gulf pollock and P. cod trawl fisheries and are based in Sand Point and King Cove. After the December, 2012 NPFMC meeting, we committed to meet and prepare documents that would provide the Council with the tools to begin the process of placing the WGOA trawl bycatch management measures to its cycle of regulatory development.

We met in Sand Point on January 18-21, 2013 to develop elements we believed reflected PFC's commitment to preserve the locally based small boat fleet, recognize the importance of hired skippers, continue to provide crew jobs, and protect the pot only P. cod fleet.

We are asking that the Council set a control date for the WGOA pollock trawl fishery, the WGOA P. cod trawl fishery, and the WGOA P. cod pot fishery. We have suggested February 1, 2013, but understand that the Council may need to consider a somewhat later date given that the WGOA pollock and P. cod fisheries are currently underway.

The membership believes that “fishing for history” may have already begun given that the CGOA is already on track to adopt a catch share program. For that reason, we have asked that in addition to providing qualifying years, the WGOA program specify that at least 10 deliveries during the qualifying years to eliminate speculative landings.

The Peninsula Fishermen’s Coalition is also asking that quota share be issued in three categories: (1) “A” shares to vessels <60’; “B” shares to vessels >60’; and “S” shares to skippers. It is extremely important to PFC that the small vessel fleet continues to thrive because it is the backbone of the King Cove and Sand Point communities. These small vessels are family owned and operated, providing local employment during the winter months, and opportunity for young fishermen to work their way into vessel ownership. Crew have the opportunity to become skippers, and then vessel owners only if there are enough vessels still fishing.

We should point out that we have tailored our proposal to fit the needs of the WGOA small vessel fishery. We assume that the large vessels may not share our concerns about things like consolidation, and we expect that folks from that part of the WGOA fleet will provide amendments for their sector that are suitable to meet their needs.

We do not want to see the kind of consolidation that occurred in the BSAI crab, BSAI pollock, and the halibut fisheries. We understand why consolidation was appropriate in those fisheries, but it is not appropriate here. Therefore, we ask that transfer of A shares be restricted so that vessels with B shares cannot acquire A shares, and that S shares be limited to fishermen who do not hold A or B shares.

As for processor protection, we were unsure just where the recent court cases leave the Council. Shore based processing is the backbone of a small boat fleet. We have two long term processors in the area, Trident Seafoods and Peter Pan Seafoods. From time to time there have been other processors, particularly in the P. cod fishery. Naturally, it is important to the fishermen and to the communities of King Cove and Sand Point that processors remain healthy in both communities.

However, we do not want to set up a situation like that in the BSAI crab rationalization program where fishermen are forced to deliver to a particular processor and where processing rights can transfer from one community to another. We have indicated our desire to protect the

communities of King Cove and Sand Point as well as Akutan, Dutch Harbor, and possibly False Pass by asking that future landings be in proportion to historical averages.

Without a better understanding of currently legal options, this provision is currently not very well fleshed out. We are hoping that during the analytical process we will gain a better understanding of the possibilities.

As for cooperatives, we have two goals; (1) allow coops to form in order to manage individual bycatch limits, set gear requirements, set fishing times and other rules that enable the WGOA trawl fleets to maximize TAC harvest while minimizing bycatch, and (2) avoid fleet consolidation. Since the P. cod pot fishery is not under bycatch restrictions, we have not provided a coop alternative.

This provision will also require more work, since we don't want fleet consolidation. We understand that the Council does not have to be closely involved in setting up coop rules, unless multiple cooperatives are formed. While PFC would like to "keep it simple," it seems to us that there might need to have at least two coops, one for A share vessels and one for B share vessels.

We included a catch share plan for the P. cod pot fishery in our proposal for the reasons we testified to at the December, 2012 meeting. The sector split did not provide the same kind of protection to the pot sector here in the WGOA that it did in the CGOA. This is because nearly all of our members participate in both the P. cod trawl and pot fisheries. The vessels that only participate in the P. cod pot fishery would be at a terrible disadvantage if only the trawl sector was issued catch shares. So, while the trawl vessels need catch shares to deal with bycatch issues, the pot sector needs catch shares to deal with the trawl sector.

We worked with Kenneth Mack, President of the Western Gulf Pot Sector Fishermen. That organization endorses our P. cod pot proposal, and he has provided a letter to the Council. That organization is also petitioning the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to limit entry into the State water P. cod fishery. We will be supporting that effort too.

Finally, we are still asking that the Council and NMFS change the boundary between the WGOA (610) and CGOA (620) to the 157 degree line. This will provide a unified program that recognizes fleet behavior.

Of course, we wish we could participate more fully in your meetings as this program moves along, but our fishing seasons will preclude attendance at most meetings. Thank you for taking to hear us at your December, 2012 meeting, and for adding this item to your very busy agenda in February. We hope that you will go forward with this program, and we look forward to working with you in the months to come.

Sincerely,

Beth Stewart, Executive Director

Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition

Kiley Thompson, President (F/V Decision)

A.J. Newman, Vice President (F/V Lady Lee Dawn)

Ben Ley, Treasurer (F/V Alaskan Lady)

Mike Alfeiri (F/V Ocean Storm)

Jody Cook (F/V Cape Reliant)

John Degroen (F/V Primus)

Tom Evich (F/V Karen Evich)

Dwain Foster (F/V Heather Margene)

Joe Puratich (F/V Marauder)

Steven Galovin (F/V Shawna Rae)

Art Holmberg (F/V Tern)

Melvin Larsen (F/V Temptation)

Robin Larsen (F/V Courtney Noral)

Taylor Lundgren (F/V Primus)

Tom Manos (F/V Alaskan Lady)

Pete Schoenberg (F/V Equinox)

Corey Wilson (F/V Justin Case & F/V Miss Courtney)

PFC WGOA Pollock Trawl Catch Share Plan

Purpose and Needs: The Peninsula Fishermen’s Coalition submits the following plan to develop a program that will allow the fleet to obtain pollock TACs while minimizing impacts to Chinook salmon. It is our purpose to maintain local economies, continue to provide maximum employment, recognize skipper participation, and provide a viable means of entry to young fishermen. *(Note: This statement is not meant to take the place of the Problem Statement that is drafted by the Council, but to outline PFC’s goals.)*

Participation Criteria: To be eligible, a vessel must have made at least 10 deliveries of trawl caught pollock in the directed Western Gulf pollock fishery between 2000 – 2012. Eligible vessels will have quota share issued based on landings in the directed pollock fishery between 2000 – 2012.

Option 1:	Drop 0 years	Option 3:	Drop 2 years
Option 2:	Drop 1 year	Option 4:	Drop 3 years.

Sub-Option: Vessels owned by CDQ groups are not eligible to receive quota share.

Vessel Size Categories: “A” shares shall be awarded to vessels <60’ and “B” Shares shall be awarded to vessels >60’. “A” shares may not be bought, leased, or otherwise transferred or used on vessels >60’. “B” shares may be bought, leased, or transferred by any size vessel.

This provision provides for community stability and maintains the fleets based in Sand Point and King Cove.

Ownership Caps: No vessel may own more than:

Option 1:	5%
Option 2:	8%
Option 3:	10%

of the pollock quota. Grandfather Clause: Any vessel whose initial allocation exceeds the cap may fish all shares issued, but may not acquire additional shares.

Skipper Shares (S Shares): The purpose of this section is to recognize the role of hired skippers in this fishery and to provide a means of entry for new skippers. Skippers, as verified by *contracts with vessel owners or by fish tickets*, shall receive:

Option 1:	10%
Option 2:	15%
Option 3:	25%

of the quota share issued to qualified vessels. The total skipper share allowance for each vessel shall be divided between eligible skippers based on landings accrued by each skipper.

Skipper eligibility will be based on participation between 2008 – 2012.

Such shares are subject to all other transfer restrictions; Skipper shares may only be transferred to a person who does not own any A or B shares; and holders of Skipper shares must be on board when their shares are harvested and landed.

Community Protection Landing Requirements:

All shares of trawl caught pollock must be processed in King Cove, Sand Point, Akutan, or Dutch Harbor in proportion to the average of landings in a community between:

Option 1: 2005 – 2012

Option 2: 2010 – 2012.

This provision keeps processing within the current communities, thereby protecting the existing plants without granting them processing rights, thus avoiding the need to set up ROFRs.

Cooperative Formation: Coops may be formed in order to manage individual vessel bycatch limits, gear requirements, and other measures that provide for the orderly harvest of the pollock TAC while staying below the bycatch allocation(s).

PFC WGOA Pacific Cod Trawl Catch Share Plan

Purpose and Needs: The Peninsula Fishermen’s Coalition submits the following plan to develop a program that will allow the fleet to obtain Pacific cod trawl allocations while minimizing impacts to Chinook salmon and halibut. It is our purpose to maintain local economies, continue to provide maximum employment, recognize skipper participation, and provide a viable means of entry to young fishermen. *(Note: This statement is not meant to take the place of the Problem Statement that is drafted by the Council, but to outline PFC’s goals.)*

Participation Criteria: To be eligible, a vessel must have made at least 10 deliveries of trawl caught P. cod in the directed Western Gulf P. cod fishery between 2000 - 2012. Eligible vessels will have quota share issued based on landings in the directed P. cod fishery between 2000 - 2012:

Quota share will be based on the eligible vessels landings in its highest years within the qualifying period.

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|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Option 1: | Drop 0 years | Option 2: | Drop 1 year |
| Option 3: | Drop 2 years | Option 4: | Drop 3 years. |

Sub-Option: Vessels owned by CDQ groups are not eligible to receive quota share.

Vessel Size Categories: “A” shares shall be awarded to vessels <60’ and “B” Shares shall be awarded to vessels >60’. “A” shares may not be bought, leased, or otherwise transferred or used on vessels >60’. “B” shares may be bought, leased, or transferred by any size vessel.

This provision provides for community stability and maintains the fleets based in Sand Point and King Cove.

Ownership Caps: No vessel may own more than:

- | | | |
|-----------|----|-----------|
| Option 1: | 2% | Option 5% |
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of the P. cod quota. Grandfather Clause: Any vessel whose initial allocation exceeds the cap may fish all shares issued, but may not acquire additional shares.

Skipper Shares (S Shares): The purpose of this section is to recognize the role of hired skippers in this fishery and to provide a means of entry for new skippers. Skippers, as verified by *contracts with vessel owners or by fish tickets*, shall receive:

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| Option 1: | 10% |
| Option 2: | 15% |
| Option 3: | 25% |

of the quota share issued to qualified vessels. The total skipper share allowance for each vessel shall be divided between eligible skippers based on landings accrued by each skipper.

Skipper eligibility will be based on participation between 2008 – 2012.

Such shares are subject to all transfer restrictions; Skipper shares may only be transferred to a person who does not own any A or B shares; and holders of Skipper shares must be on board when their shares are harvested and landed.

Owner-On-Board Provisions: We are not in favor of requiring “A” and “B” quota share holders to be onboard during fishing.

Community Protection Landing Requirements:

All shares of trawl caught P. cod must be processed in King Cove, Sand Point, or Akutan in proportion to the average of landings in a community between:

Option 1: 2005 – 2012

Option 2: 2010 – 2012.

This provision keeps processing within the current communities, thereby protecting the existing plants without granting them processing rights, thus avoiding the need to set up ROFRs.

Cooperative Formation: Coops may be formed in order to manage individual vessel bycatch limits, gear requirements, and other measures that provide for the orderly harvest of the P. cod while staying below the bycatch allocation(s).

PFC Western Gulf Pacific Cod Pot Catcher Vessel Catch Share Plan

Purpose and Needs: The Peninsula Fishermen’s Coalition submits the following plan to develop a program that will protect the Pacific cod pot fishery when the Pacific cod trawl fishery catch share plan is developed. The P. cod trawl fishery needs a catch share program to reduce halibut, Chinook, and other bycatch caps recently imposed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

In the Western Gulf, virtually all of the <60’ P. cod trawl vessels also participate in the Western Gulf P. cod pot fishery. However, there are many vessels that use pots in this fishery that do not trawl. When the trawl cod fishery comes under a catch share plan, the pot only vessels could be at a great disadvantage. Peninsula Fishermen’s Coalition believes that simultaneous implementation of P. cod catch share plans will maximize the economic health of both sectors. The NPFMC’s cod sector allocations solved many problems, but because the small trawl vessels based in King Cove and Sand Point use both trawl and pot gear sector allocations alone will not adequately protect the small boat pot fleet. *(Note: This statement is not meant to take the place of the Problem Statement that is drafted by the Council, but to outline PFC’s goals.)*

Participation Criteria: Eligible vessels will have quota share issued based on landings in the directed P. cod pot fishery between 2000 – 2012.

Quota Share will be based on the eligible vessel’s landings in it highest _____ years.

Sub-Option: Vessels owned by CDQ groups are not eligible to receive quota share.

Vessel Size Categories: “A” shares shall be awarded to vessels <60’ and “B” shares shall be awarded to vessels >60’. “A” shares may not be bought, leased, or otherwise transferred or used on vessels >60’. However, “B” shares may be bought, leased or transferred by any size vessel.

This provision provides for community stability and maintains the fleets based in Sand Point and King Cove.

Skipper Shares (S Shares): The purpose of this section is to recognize the role of hired skippers in the fishery and to provide a means of entry for new skippers. Skippers, as verified by contracts with vessel owners or by fish tickets, shall receive:

- Option 1: 10%
- Option 2: 15%
- Option 3: 25%

of the quota share issued to qualified vessels. Such shares are designated as “S” shares. If more than one skipper is eligible for a single vessel’s skipper share allowance, the shares shall be divided between eligible skippers based on landings accrued by each skipper.

Skipper eligibility will be based on participation between 2008-2012.

Transfer Restrictions: Skipper shares may only be transferred to a person who does not own any A or B shares; and holders of Skipper share must be on board when their shares are harvested and landed.

Ownership Caps: No vessel may own more than ____% of the WGOA pot cod allocation. Grandfather clause: Any vessel whose initial allocation exceeds the cap may fish all shares issued, but may not acquire additional shares.

Community Protection Landing Requirements: All shares of WGOA pot cod must be processed in King Cove, Sand Point, or Akutan in proportion to the average of landings in a community between:

Option 1: _____

Option 2: _____

Owner-On-Board Provisions: We are not in favor of requiring quota share holders to be onboard during fishing.

Because the pot sector does not fall under any bycatch restrictions, there is no need to provide for cooperatives.

PFC WGOA Control Date and Boundary Change

The Peninsula Fishermen's Coalition has prepared three documents for the February, 2013 North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting that we hope will help the Council begin the process of developing catch share plans for the WGOA pollock trawl, P. cod trawl, and P. cod pot fisheries.

We are also asking the Council to take the following two actions:

- (1) adopt February 1, 2013 as the control date for these three fisheries in order to notify the public that participation in these fisheries from that date on will not be used to calculate a vessel's catch share, and
- (2) initiate action to change the boundary between area 610 and 620 (the Western Gulf of Alaska and the Central Gulf of Alaska) to the 157 degree line.

As we have testified, the proposed boundary change recognizes current and historical fishing practices for the vessels based in Sand Point and King Cove. Now that we are developing catch share plans for the only groundfish fisheries our vessels participate in, we think it is necessary to have those plans carry through the areas we have traditionally fished.