

NPFMC Halibut ABM Stakeholder Committee
Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures
October 2018

1. **Purpose:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will establish an issue-specific Halibut Abundance-based management (ABM) Stakeholder Committee (committee) to draft alternative scenarios from within the current alternative set for the forthcoming BSAI Halibut ABM EIS/RIR.
2. **Tasks for Committee:**

Task 1: The committee's primary function is to provide a range of up to four different scenarios from within the current alternative set, specifying each individual option from the different elements and options within the suite of three action alternatives¹. Each example scenario provided to the Committee for consideration should also provide a written rationale detailing how this combination of elements and options provided in the scenario is intended to address the Council's Purpose and Need statement and the 5 management objectives below:

The current fixed yield-based halibut PSC caps are inconsistent with management of the directed halibut fisheries and Council management of groundfish fisheries, which are managed based on abundance. When halibut abundance declines, PSC becomes a larger proportion of total halibut removals and thereby further reduces the proportion and amount of halibut available for harvest in directed halibut fisheries. Conversely, if halibut abundance increases, halibut PSC limits could be unnecessarily constraining. The Council is considering linking PSC limits to halibut abundance to provide a responsive management approach at varying levels of halibut abundance. The Council is considering abundance-based PSC limits to control total halibut mortality, particularly at low levels of abundance. Abundance-based PSC limits also could provide an opportunity for the directed-halibut fishery and protect the halibut spawning stock biomass. The Council recognizes that abundance-based halibut PSC limits may increase and decrease with changes in halibut abundance.

- Halibut PSC limits should be indexed to halibut abundance
- Halibut spawning stock biomass should be protected especially at lower levels of abundance
- There should be flexibility provided to avoid unnecessarily constraining the groundfish fishery particularly when halibut abundance is high
- Provide for directed halibut fishing operations in the Bering Sea.
- Provide for some stability in PSC limits on an inter-annual basis.

The committee will provide their recommendations to the Council as early as possible for consideration by the Council within the alternative set. Once approved by the Council,

¹ Per Council discussion in October 2018 and with appropriate accompanying rationale, elements and options and/or management measures outside of the current alternative set may be considered by the committee as necessary.

the scenarios will be provided to the analytical workgroup for inclusion as example scenarios for simulation in the EIS/RIR.

Task 2: The committee may meet to discuss and provide recommendations on appropriate performance metrics for evaluating Council objectives for the analysis. Note the priority for the committee is to develop the scenarios first.

2. **Membership:** Committee members will be appointed by the Council chairman from members of the public. The committee is intended to include a range of interested stakeholders from both the directed BSAI groundfish and directed Area 4 halibut fisheries. Interested members of the public should submit a letter of interest and brief resume to the Council chairman and Executive Director.
3. **Organization:**
 - The committee chairman will be appointed by the Council Chairman from sitting members of the Council.
 - Council staff for the committee will be designated by the Council Executive Director. Council staff will be available for feedback and clarification but will not be providing additional analyses to the committee.
 - The Committee may recommend and the Council will set meeting agendas.
 - The Committee will report directly to the Council.
4. **Role and responsibility of stakeholder members:** Stakeholders should develop proposed scenarios and performance metrics prior to the committee meeting(s) and discussed and refined during the committee meeting. Council staff will make available previously-developed background information on alternatives and performance metrics.
5. **Public comment:** Opportunity for public comment for each issue will be provided as time allows. The committee chairman will maintain control of public comment opportunities.