

# **PROCESSOR ADVISORY GROUP**

**January 27, 2010**

## **FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING REPORT**

**CHAIR:** Joe Kyle, APICDA Joint Ventures, United States

**VICE-CHAIR:** Blake Tipton, S.M. Products (B.C.) Ltd., Canada

The Processor's Advisory Group meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by HANA President Joe Kyle. The first order of business was to nominate a U.S. chair for the meeting. Joe Kyle was nominated and approved unanimously. Blake Tipton was nominated and approved unanimously as co-chair.

Twenty three companies with 35 representatives attended the PAG meetings this year, representing a majority of halibut bought and processed in Alaska, British Columbia, Oregon and Washington. This attendance is the highest representation of the industry that PAG has had in our history.

The PAG is grateful to the additional guests who offered more information on a variety of subjects, and suffered our many questions. Thank you to:

Josh Boyle, Ray Reichl, Michael Cerne, Brian Chambers, and Brian Corrigan of the U.S. Coast Guard;

Ron Antaya of the National Marine Fisheries Service Enforcement;

Frank Snelgrove of the Department of Fisheries & Oceans;

Heather Gilroy, Claude Dykstra, Evangeline White, Ray Webster, Tim Loher, and Steven Hare of the IPHC staff,

and Tamee Mawani of DFO.

Before this year's meeting, PAG was asked if sports lodges who process their clients' fish could become members of the PAG. It is PAG's long-time policy to encourage individuals from other sectors or industries to attend our meetings. PAG's mission statement states "Any company or association, including sole-proprietorships, corporations, or partnerships, whose direct business is buying and/or processing commercially-caught Pacific halibut in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, or Oregon is eligible for PAG membership."

## **CATCH LIMITS**

Area 2A	0.81
2B	7.50
2C	4.40
3A	19.99
3B	9.90
4A	2.33
4B	2.16
4CDE	<u>3.58</u>
TOTAL	50.67

Coming up with catch limits was a difficult decision but took into account the steep declines recommended in Area 2 and continuing concerns within the PAG with the apportionment methodology. In general, the PAG wanted to support the staff recommendations by area, excepting Area 2. There was a strong consensus that Area 2 in general, and especially Area 2B, should be cushioned from the cuts recommended by staff.

In Area 3B, the PAG was concerned about the yo-yo apportionment and potential for unaccounted by-catch. In areas 4B, C, D, E, the PAG expressed discontentment with the disproportionate impacts of hook adjustments.

The catch limits recommended above passed by a vote of 10 – 7. The seven companies in the minority supported the increases recommended for area 2, but preferred to see Area 3A and 3B reduced to help support the increases in Area 2 (Area 3B, 9.2 million pounds and Area 3A, 19.90 million pounds).

## **SEASON DATES**

The PAG recommends a Saturday, March 6, 2010 opening day and closing day of Sunday October 31, 2010, by an 18-1 vote.

The PAG reiterates our long-held preference for an opening date on a Saturday or Sunday. The importance of a Saturday or Sunday opening puts halibut in the market for midweek sales and promotions.

The remainder of the Staff regulatory proposals:

- 3. Catch Sharing Plans in Area 2A and 4CDE**
- 4. Area 2A license requirement**
- 5. License numbers and State fish tickets, and**
- 6. Cape Spencer Light**

were supported by the PAG with a unanimous vote.

## **INDUSTRY PROPOSALS**

### **1. On board Filleting of Halibut.**

The PAG supports this proposal. The PAG also recommends that the Commissioners consider implementing by regulation Canadian guidelines for filleting halibut as the standard for the prohibition against filleting halibut in a manner that prevents the determination of the number of fish caught.

### **2. Harvest Ticket for Alaska Halibut and Blackcod.**

The PAG does not support this because we believe that the IPHC is not the correct venue to address it.

### **3. Survey Proposal Adjustment.**

The PAG opposes this proposal because it is our understanding that this is already encompassed by current practice.

### **4. 15-year Plan (Equal coast Wide Apportionment).**

PAG opposes this proposal and leaves it up to the IPHC staff to make this determination.

## **5. Analysis of Alternative Apportionment Approaches over a 15-year Time Horizon**

The PAG felt there was inadequate time to explore this proposal. We'd like to take more time to consider all the alternatives presented in the proposal.

The PAG also strongly recommends that measures be taken by IPHC and within each government's domestic agencies to ensure that all recreational fisheries catches are monitored in accurate numbers and appropriate management measures are taken to keep them within the domestic allocation.

The PAG also supports the continued effort to reduce halibut by-catch by other fisheries in all regulatory areas, but particularly the US managed fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. Concern was expressed about the amount of observer coverage in most, if not all, Gulf fisheries, potential under-reporting of trawl by-catch, and relatively low dockside monitoring in comparison to catch monitoring programs in Area 2B.

The PAG suggests that DFO and NMFS engage in more formal dialogue regarding halibut bycatch management in the Gulf as compared to Area 2B. In addition, the PAG encourages the Commission to incorporate these concerns in its annual letter to the respective governments.

This completes our report, respectfully submitted.

## PAG Attendees 2010

<b>United States</b>	<b>Canada</b>
APICDA Joint Ventures	Aero Trading
Arrowac Fisheries Inc.	Canadian Fish Co.
Bering Sea Fisheries & Logistics	French Creek Fisheries
Bellingham Cold Storage	Hart Corporation
Cape Flattery Fishermen's Coop	PASCO Seafoods
Dana F. Besecker Co., Inc.	SM Products (BC) Ltd.
Icicle Seafoods	
Island Seafoods	
North Pacific Seafoods	
Northport Fisheries	
Oak Bay Marine Group	
Pacific Star	
Peter Pan Seafoods	
Plitt North America	
Seafood Producers Coop	
Trident Seafoods	
Yakutat Seafoods	