

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN or REGULATORY AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

North Pacific Fishery Management Council – Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee

Provide the following information – attach additional pages as necessary:

Name of Proposer: **United Catcher Boats** Date: August 18, 2006
Address: 4005 20th Ave. West, Suite 116, Seattle, WA 98199
Telephone: 206-282-2599

Fishery Management Plan: Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP

Brief Statement of Proposal (What is the problem?): Extend the Bering Sea pollock ‘B’ season ending date to December 1. Currently the pollock ‘B’ season closes at Noon on November 1. This proposal extends the Bering Sea pollock ‘B’ season fishery by one month. The problem is in some years, due to extensive running times to the fishing grounds combined with regulatory salmon bycatch closure zones and industry bycatch reduction programs (i.e. salmon and squid), the Bering Sea pollock catcher vessel coops need a longer time frame to harvest their pollock ‘B’ season allocations.

Need and Justification for Council Action (Why can’t the problem be resolved through other channels?): This problem may be reduced or go away altogether if the Bering Sea pollock TAC declines significantly. However, during years when the Bering Sea pollock TAC is fairly large, as experienced during the past few years, an extended B season would provide a cushion of relief for the inshore cooperatives. Additionally, some relief will be provided through a change of the A and B season splits; currently at 40% for the A season and 60% for the B season. A shift to 45/55 would help resolve the problem.

Foreseeable Impacts of Proposal (Who wins, who loses?): The members of the Inshore pollock cooperatives, especially the smaller vessels, benefit as extending the time allowed to fish in the Bering Sea pollock ‘B’ season will provide them more time to harvest their coop allocation. The Dutch Harbor, Akutan, and King Cove communities as well as the State of Alaska benefit as well by increased landings of pollock into these fishing communities.

Are there alternative solutions? If so, what are they and why do you consider your proposal the best way of solving the problem? We do not know of any alternative solutions.

Supporting Data & Other Information. What data are available and where can they be found? Be specific and cite references. Previous justification for the November 1 ending date of the BSAI pollock ‘B’ season in past Steller Sea Lion Biological Opinions was based on the assumption that the early winter time period was a critical time for sea lion pups as this was when they weaned from their mothers. Thus, under present SSL management measures, fishing for pollock from November 1 though January 20 is not allowed. Recent research on timing of pups weaning indicates that the early winter months are not nearly as critical as originally thought.

Offsetting Measures. OPTIONAL – What protection measures might be increased in the region to offset the proposed action? None

Signature: