

Problem Statement and Suite of Alternatives for Amendment Package 84B (**bold** are additions from February 2007 Council meeting)

Problem Statement:

The Council and NMFS have initiated action to exempt AFA qualified and CDQ vessels participating in the intercooperative voluntary rolling hotspot system (VRHS) from regulatory Bering Sea salmon bycatch savings areas. Analysis and refinement of the current salmon savings areas may be necessary in the event pollock vessels either surrender or lose their exemption and return to fishing under the regulatory salmon bycatch program.

Further, alternatives to the VRHS system and/or the regulatory salmon bycatch program should be developed to assess whether they would be more effective in reducing salmon bycatch. The following amendment packages are not intended to preclude the intercooperative annual review as required under Amendment 84.

Amendment Package B-1

Establish new regulatory salmon savings systems taking into account the most recent available salmon bycatch data. In developing alternatives include an analysis of the need and implementation strategy for appropriate caps as bycatch control measures. This package should be completed first and implemented when ready so that salmon savings regulations are based on the best available information.

Option: Adjust the Chinook and non-Chinook regulatory closure areas periodically based on the most current bycatch data available, such as the 2-3 year rolling average of bycatch rates by species and area.

Process for determining caps:

A Council appointed workgroup (with analysts' assistance) will evaluate approaches for establishing caps and make recommendations to the Council accordingly.

Types of caps under consideration (by species):

- **Trigger caps (closes discrete areas to in-season fishing)**
- **Fixed cap (closes all areas to the pollock fishery)**

Methodologies to consider in evaluating appropriate caps:

1. **Abundance-based caps (this would be a framework only since required information is currently unavailable)**
2. **Fixed caps: updated fixed values caps**
3. **Combination (e.g., a stair-step of catch limits based on some measure of abundance)**

Candidate closure areas:

Council to review suggested closures for inclusion in analysis (analysts to provide candidate closures for Council review)

Time/area closures:

1. **Evaluate discrete areas with individual trigger limits by area**
 - **Option to close during discrete temporal periods only**
2. **Evaluate discrete areas with aggregate trigger limits to close all areas**
 - **Option to close during discrete temporal periods only**
3. **Fixed temporal closure (closes during a discrete time period(s) annually and is not dependant upon a trigger to close)**