

## **Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessment regarding**

### **CONTINUATION OF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM QUOTA POUNDS PASS-THROUGH**

**November 2014**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrative Order 216-6 (May 20, 1999) contains criteria for determining the significance of the impacts of a proposed action. In addition, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 C.F.R. §1508.27 state that the significance of an action should be analyzed both in terms of “context” and “intensity.” Each criterion listed below is relevant to making a finding of no significant impact and has been considered individually, as well as in combination with the others. The significance of this action is analyzed based on the NAO 216-6 criteria and CEQ’s context and intensity criteria. These include:

1) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to jeopardize the sustainability of any target species that may be affected by the action?

**Response:** The proposed action would not jeopardize the sustainability of any target species affected by the action. No significant impacts are anticipated because the continuation of the AMP Adaptive Management Program (AMP) pass-through does not alter fishing effort or behavior. Further, Quota Pounds (QP) are distributed within the sustainable levels set in the harvest specifications, which are analyzed through the harvest specification process and are based on the best available science. This determination is supported by the information presented in section 4.2.

2) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to jeopardize the sustainability of any non-target species?

**Response:** The proposed action would not jeopardize the sustainability of any non-target species affected by the action because this action would not increase the harvest of non-target species. Additionally, the AMP QP is calculated from the Shorebased Trawl allocation, which is established within the harvest specifications for each target and overfished groundfish species. Finally, this action will not result in changes to fishing behavior in a manner that will affect non-target species.

3) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to cause substantial damage to the ocean and coastal habitats and/or essential fish habitat as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and identified in fishery management plans (FMPs)?

**Response:** The proposed action would not cause substantial damage to the ocean, coastal habitats, or essential fish habitat over what has previously been considered in other National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents. This action is not expected to result in changes

to fishing behavior and/or effort that would change the impacts from the current fishery. This determination is supported by the information presented in section 4.1.

4) Can the proposed action be reasonably expected to have a substantial adverse impact on public health or safety?

**Response:** The proposed action would have no impact on public health or safety because no changes in fishing behavior and/or effort are expected under the proposed action. Since impacts on public health or safety are not expected, they were not further evaluated in the environmental assessment (EA).

5) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to adversely affect endangered or threatened species, marine mammals, or critical habitat of these species?

**Response:** The proposed action is not expected to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or marine mammals beyond what has been considered in current Biological Opinions for the fishery because this action is not expected to result in changes to fishing behavior or effort (see section 4.2).

6) Can the proposed action be expected to have a substantial impact on biodiversity and/or ecosystem function within the affected area (e.g., benthic productivity, predator-prey relationships, etc.)?

**Response:** The proposed action would have no impact on biodiversity and/or ecosystem function within the affected area. No impacts are anticipated because the proposed action is not likely to result in changes to fishing behavior and effort. Impacts of the trawl fishery on biodiversity and ecosystem function have been evaluated in other NEPA documents, and this action is not anticipated to have impacts that have not been analyzed (see section 4.1).

7) Are significant social or economic impacts interrelated with natural or physical environmental effects?

**Response:** This action would have no significant interrelated social or economic impacts. Although the action may have social and economic impacts, none are anticipated to be interrelated with significant natural or physical environmental effects. A summary of the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the alternatives can be found in section 4.4 of the EA.

8) Are the effects on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?

**Response:** No, the effects on the human environment from this action are not expected to be controversial. The proposed action would continue the same allocation procedure that has been in place since 2011 (see section 4.0).

9) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in substantial impacts to unique areas, such as historic or cultural resources, park land, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas?

**Response:** There will be no impacts on unique areas, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecological critical areas because the proposed action is not likely to result in changes to fishing behavior or effort.

10) Are the effects on the human environment likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks?

**Response:** The effects on the human environment from the proposed action are neither unique nor unknown. No impacts are anticipated that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks because the proposed action is to continue the allocation procedures in place since 2011 and is not expected to result in changes to fishing behavior (see section 4.0).

11) Is the proposed action related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts?

**Response:** The proposed action is not anticipated to have cumulatively significant impacts. This action is not anticipated to set a precedent for future actions because the action continues the allocation procedures in place since 2011 but does not restrict future changes to the allocation of the AMP QP. Further, this action is not part of a larger action that must be analyzed under NEPA (see section 4.5).

12) Is the proposed action likely to adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources?

**Response:** No impacts to districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are expected to occur are anticipated because the proposed action is not likely to result in changes to fishing behavior or effort. Additionally, no impacts are expected that may cause loss or destruction of significant cultural, scientific, or historical resources (see section 4.0).

13) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in the introduction or spread of a non-indigenous species?

**Response:** Activities under the proposed action will not involve the transport of non-indigenous species and therefore, this issue is not discussed in the EA. The fishing vessels participating in the proposed action would not increase the risk of introduction through ballast water or hull fouling. Disposition of the catch does not include any translocation of living marine resources, nor use of any nonindigenous species as bait.

14) Is the proposed action likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration?

**Response:** This action would not set a precedent for future actions because the action continues the allocation procedures in place since 2011 but does not restrict future changes to the allocation of the AMP QP.

15) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to threaten a violation of Federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment?

Response: This action would not threaten any Federal, state, or local law or requirement for the protection of the environment. The management measures allocating the AMP QP were developed in cooperation with state managers through the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council).

Chapter 5 of the EA describes potentially applicable cross-cutting mandates, and the proposed action would be implemented to comply with these laws and executive orders for the protection of the environment.

16) Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in cumulative adverse effects that could have a substantial effect on the target species or non-target species?

Response: The proposed action is not expected to result in cumulative adverse impacts. The AMP QP is allocated within the harvest specifications for each species. Groundfish fisheries are managed in a sustainable manner consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law and are evaluated every two years through the Council's harvest specifications and management measures process. Therefore, any expected impacts to groundfish or non-target species may be addressed on a biennial basis through changes to the harvest specifications and management measures. For Endangered Species Act listed species, the current groundfish fishery was evaluated through a Biological Opinion in 2012 and this action would not create further impacts to any listed species evaluated in that Biological Opinion (see section 4.5).

**DETERMINATION**

In view of the information presented in this document and the analysis contained in the 2014 final EA, it is hereby determined that the proposed action will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. In addition, all beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for this action is not necessary.

  
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Deputy Regional Administrator  
NMFS, West Coast Region

11/25/14  
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Date