



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 5, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

FROM: James W. Balsiger, Ph.D. 
Administrator, Alaska Region 

SUBJECT: Categorical Exclusion for Amendment 108 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area, Amendment 100 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska, and Amendment 46 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs, XRIN 0648-XD682

NAO 216-6, Environmental Review Procedures, requires all proposed actions to be reviewed with respect to environmental consequences on the human environment. This memorandum summarizes the determination that Amendment 108 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP), Amendment 100 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA FMP), and Amendment 46 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (Crab FMP) qualify to be categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Description of the Action

In December 2014, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) voted unanimously to adopt a motion to revise three FMPs to correct FMP text that is inconsistent with the intent of the license limitation program (LLP) and Federal regulations implementing the LLP. The proposed amendments would align the FMP text that establishes the minimum size standards for exempting small vessels from the LLP in the BSAI groundfish and king and Tanner crab fisheries, and the GOA groundfish fisheries, with the original intent of the LLP, current operations in the fisheries, and Federal regulations.



The purpose of this action is to minor text omissions in the BSAI FMP, the GOA FMP, and the Crab FMP. All changes to an FMP, even minor changes, require an FMP amendment that is approved by the Council. The proposed changes are minor, but are necessary to clarify management measure in these fisheries.

Effects of the Action

Since the implementation of the LLP, fisheries in the BSAI and GOA have been conducted according to Federal regulations and not the FMP texts; therefore, there would be no change to fishing behavior or fisheries management in the exclusive economic zone off Alaska if these amendments are approved. The action is not expected to have any effects on the human environment. The action maintains current conditions for the user groups, communities, and participants of other fisheries consistent with the status quo. Moreover, this action would not change safety conditions or create management or enforcement issues.

Categorical Exclusion

In preparing this categorical exclusion (CE), I have considered the factors in NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6 section 5.05 as to the appropriateness of a CE relevant to the activity. This action would not result in any changes to the human environment. Each FMP amendment clarifies the existing fishery management policies and Federal regulations. Moreover, the amendments contain no new management measures, and no implementing regulations would be required for these amendments. These amendments are minor technical corrections to the three FMPs and would have no impact individually or cumulatively on the human environment. Therefore, Amendment 108 to the BSAI FMP, Amendment 100 to the GOA FMP, and Amendment 46 to the Crab FMP are categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis per NAO 216-6 section 6.03a.3(b)(2).