

Referenced Excerpts from the Pacific Fishery Management Council Pacific Coast Groundfish Plan as amended through Amendment 19 [July 2008]

6.2.3 Non-biological Issues—The Socioeconomic Framework

From time to time, non-biological issues may arise that require the Council to recommend management actions to address certain social or economic issues in the fishery. Resource allocation, seasons, or landing limits based on market quality and timing, safety measures, and prevention of gear conflicts make up only a few examples of possible management issues with a social or economic basis. In general, there may be any number of situations where the Council determines that management measures are necessary to achieve the stated social and/or economic objectives of the FMP.

Either on its own initiative or by request, the Council may evaluate current information and issues to determine if social or economic factors warrant imposition of management measures to achieve the Council's established management objectives. Actions that are permitted under this framework include all of the categories of actions authorized under the points of concern framework with the addition of direct resource allocation. If the Council concludes that a management action is necessary to address a social or economic issue, it will prepare a report containing the rationale in support of its conclusion. The report will include the proposed management measure, a description of other viable alternatives considered, and an analysis that addresses the following criteria: (a) how the action is expected to promote achievement of the goals and objectives of the FMP; (b) likely impacts on other management measures, other fisheries, and bycatch; (c) biological impacts; (d) economic impacts, particularly the cost to the fishing industry; (e) impacts on fishing communities; and (f) how the action is expected to accomplish at least one of the following, or any other measurable benefit to the fishery:

1. Enable a quota, HG, or allocation to be achieved.
2. Avoid exceeding a quota, HG, or allocation.
3. Extend domestic fishing and marketing opportunities as long as practicable during the fishing year, for those sectors for which the Council has established this policy.
4. Maintain stability in the fishery by continuing management measures for species that previously were managed under the points of concern mechanism.
5. Maintain or improve product volume and flow to the consumer.
6. Increase economic yield.
7. Improve product quality.
8. Reduce anticipated bycatch and bycatch mortality.
9. Reduce gear conflicts, or conflicts between competing user groups.
10. Develop fisheries for underutilized species with minimal impacts on existing domestic fisheries.
11. Increase sustainable landings.
12. Reduce fishing capacity.
13. Maintain data collection and means for verification.
14. Maintain or improve the recreational fishery.

The Council, following review of the report, supporting data, public comment, and other relevant information, may recommend management measures to the NMFS Regional Administrator accompanied by relevant background data, information, and public comment. The recommendation will explain the urgency in implementing the measure(s), if any, and reasons therefore.

The NMFS Regional Administrator will review the Council's recommendation, supporting rationale, public comments, and other relevant information, and, if it is approved, will undertake the appropriate method of implementation. Rejection of the recommendation will be explained in writing.

The procedures specified in this chapter do not affect the authority of the Secretary to take emergency regulatory action as provided for in Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act if an emergency exists involving any groundfish resource, or to take such other regulatory action as may be necessary to discharge the Secretary's responsibilities under Section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

If conditions warrant, the Council may designate a management measure developed and recommended to address social and economic issues as a routine management measure, provided that the criteria and procedures in Section 6.2.1 are followed.

Quotas, including allocations, implemented through this framework will be set for one-year periods and may be modified inseason only to reflect technical corrections to an ABC. (In contrast, quotas may be imposed at any time of year for resource conservation reasons under the points of concern mechanism).