



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House Fisheries Committee

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HCR 25

Sponsor Statement

A motion to establish a bycatch/catch share program for the Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries has been under consideration by North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) since October of 2012. The catch share program is proposed as a means to slow the race for fish and minimize bycatch. This trawl catch share/bycatch proposal will be discussed at the April 2014 council meeting.

Past federal catch-share or “rationalization” programs such as Individual Fishing Quota system for halibut, and the Bering Sea Crab Rationalization have resulted in negative impacts to coastal communities as fisheries quota and access migrate away from local residents.

The federal Magnuson-Stevens Act provides a mechanism to protect coastal community interests through the Community Fishing Association (CFA) structure. The Magnuson-Stevens Act indicates that fishing communities can be recipients of catch shares under a rationalization plan. The allocation of quota share to CFAs can enhance catch share programs by anchoring economic development in communities, maintaining employment and fishing heritage in coastal communities, and incorporating community sustainability plans with clear stewardship requirements.

CFAs have been developed within fisheries rationalization programs on the east and west coasts. Coastal Alaskans from King Cove to Kodiak are actively engaging the NPFMC with requests that the CFA structure be included in a Gulf of Alaska trawl catch share program.

HCR 25 asks the Governor to request that the NPFMC protect coastal Alaska communities by including analysis of direct quota allocations to Community Fishing Associations at their upcoming April meeting.