DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 672 and 675

Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska; Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability of amendments to fishery management plans and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 18 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (BSAI FMP) and Amendment 23 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA FMP) for Secretarial review and is requesting comments from the public. Copies of the amendments, the draft supplemental environmental impact statement/regulatory impact review/initial regulatory flexibility analysis (DSEIS/RIR/IRFA) may be obtained from the Council (see "ADDRESSES").

DATES: Comments on the amendments should be submitted on or before February 4, 1992.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Steven Pennoyer, Director, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, Alaska 99802. Copies of the amendments and the DSEIS/RIR/IRFA are available on request from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 103136, Anchorage, AK 99510 (telephone 907-271-2809).


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act) (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.) requires that each regional Fishery Management Council submit any fishery management plan or plan amendment it prepares to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) for review and approval, disapproval, or partial disapproval. The Magnuson Act also requires that the Secretary, on receiving the plan or amendment, must immediately publish a notice that the plan or amendment is available for public review and comment. The Secretary will consider the public comments received during the comment period in determining whether to approve Amendments 18 and 23.

If approved, Amendment 18 to the BSAI FMP would:

1) Allocate the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) to inshore and offshore components of the fishery as follows:
   - 35 percent for inshore and 65 percent for offshore in year 1.
   - 40 percent for inshore and 60 percent for offshore in year 2.
   - 45 percent for inshore and 55 percent for offshore in year 3, and subsequent years;

2) Assign up to 7 1/2 percent of the initial TAC for pollock to selected communities of the West Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, beginning in 1992, based on recommendations of the Governor of Alaska; and

3) Establish a catcher vessel operational area (CVOA) within the BSAI area that would allow directed fishing for pollock by the inshore component only, except for a limited amount of pollock that may be taken from the CVOA by the offshore component during the pollock roe season (January 1-April 15).

If approved, Amendment 23 to the GOA FMP would allocate 100 percent of the pollock TAC to the inshore component, except for reasonable amounts of bycatch for the offshore component, and 90 percent of the Pacific cod TAC to the inshore component.

If implemented, Amendments 18 and 23 would cease to have effect at midnight, Alaska local time, on December 31, 1998.

Regulations proposed by the Council to implement these amendments are scheduled to be published within 15 days of this notice.

List of Subjects 50 CFR Parts 672 and 675

Fisheries, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.


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Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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