



PO Box 22073
Juneau, AK 99802-2073
(425) 949-1810msg (206) 260-9111efax

halibutcoalition@gmail.com

www.halibutcoalition.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Judge's Ruling Allows One Halibut per Day Rule to Take Effect Tomorrow *Rule Will Help Protect Declining Halibut Resource in Southeast Alaska*

Contact:
Linda Behnken, Chair
Halibut Coalition
(907) 747-0695

Judge Rosemary Collyer of the Washington, D.C. U.S. District Court ruled today against a preliminary injunction that would have allowed charter boat clients in Area 2C to continue keeping two halibut per day despite fishery managers' objections. The new one halibut per day rule will take effect as scheduled tomorrow.

There are four standards for granting a preliminary injunction, including irreparable harm and a substantial likelihood of success on the merits of the case. The judge ruled that the plaintiffs did not meet the standards.

Halibut Coalition members are pleased with the outcome and say the new rule will benefit the halibut resource and all harvesters as well as American consumers by protecting the resource from overfishing by the charter fleet. Halibut Coalition members include subsistence, recreational, and commercial harvesters as well as processors.

"It's a huge step in the right direction," said Sitka subsistence and resident sport fisherman Randy Gluth. "The local subsistence fishermen have had to travel farther and farther and spend more and more on gas just to put food on their tables. The near-shore honey holes just quit producing because they got hammered day in and day out by charter boats. I hope this rule goes a long way in allowing the halibut to recover and ensuring all users can participate in the fishery in the future."

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Cordova District Fishermen • Deep Sea Fishermen's Union • Fishing Vessel Owners Association • Halibut Association of North America • Kachemak Bay Fisheries Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Sea Food Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance • United Cook Inlet Driftnetters Association • United Fishermen's Marketing Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters Association

It is vital that all harvesting sectors stay within the conservation limits set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to ensure a healthy halibut resource. However, the Southeast charter fleet has consistently gone over its Guideline Harvest Level (GHL), and last year exceeded it by 106 percent. If left unchecked, the charter fleet would exceed its GHL by an estimated 240 percent this year. The charter fleet's significant overharvest harms the halibut resource and the communities, fishermen, and processors that depend on the resource for food and jobs.

Judge Collyer has not yet set a date for when she will hear the merits of the lawsuit brought by the Charter Halibut Task Force (CHTF), but has directed the involved parties to propose a timeline for submitting documentation and scheduling the trial. The trial on the merits of the case will likely commence in July.

Halibut Coalition members intervening in the lawsuit include commercial fishermen, the Southeast coastal communities of Pelican and Port Alexander, processing sector members, subsistence fishermen, and the Hoonah Indian Association. All of the interveners support the federal managers' decision to restrict charter clientele to retaining one halibut per day.

In order for all harvesters – subsistence, unguided sport, commercial and charter – to benefit from the halibut resource in the future, the charter fleet must begin sharing in the conservation burden now. The one halibut per day rule will force the charter fleet to stay closer to its allotted GHL, leaving more fish in the water to help rebuild the depleted stocks.

The following harvesters and industry members are available to discuss this issue:

1. Linda Behnken, Executive Director and fisherman, Alaska Longline Fisherman's Association (Sitka), (907) 747-0695
2. Randy Gluth, subsistence and resident sport fisherman (Sitka), (907) 738-5325
3. Jev Shelton, Halibut Coalition and fisherman (Juneau), (907) 586-2242
4. Peggy Parker, Executive Director, Halibut Association of North America (processing sector), (Deming, WA), (360) 592-3116 or cell (360) 319-6208
5. Kathy Hansen, Executive Director and salmon fisherman, Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (Juneau), (907) 586-6652 (will auto forward)

Background material:

http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/halibut_issues/halibut.htm

Fact or Fiction? Halibut Fishing in Southeast Alaska

http://www.halibutcoalition.org/docs/Fact_or_Fiction.pdf

The One Halibut per Day Charter Rule: The Facts

http://www.halibutcoalition.org/docs/ONE_HALIBUT_RULE_FACTS_SHEET.pdf