

entities according to the \$3.5 million in gross revenues criterion used by the SBA for catcher vessels. These small vessels harvested about 1,449 mt of sablefish in all their sablefish fisheries (some of this tonnage may have come from operations in the GOA). Another 71 vessels harvested amounts of sablefish below the minimum harvest threshold; these vessels only harvested a total of about 12 mt of sablefish. The 69 small vessels above the threshold averaged about \$1.1 million in all their fisheries (groundfish, crab, scallops, salmon and herring) in Alaska, and about \$229,000 from all their sablefish in Alaska. If the small entity revenue reduction is proportionate to the overall first wholesale "index" reduction in the area, and if the small entities catch all of their sablefish in the BSAI, the small entity revenue reduction would be about \$19,000. This would be about 8.3 percent of their sablefish revenues, and about 1.7 percent of their overall revenues.

The CDQ program provides a mechanism to allow local communities to benefit from the BSAI fisheries. Sixty-five regional communities have banded together into six Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups. Regulations require the allocation of proportions of the annual species specifications to the CDQ groups. The

CDQ groups may fish the allocations themselves, enter into joint ventures to fish them, or lease them out to fishing firms. These allocations generate large revenues for the CDQ groups. In 2001, the CDQ groups as a whole earned about \$43 million in royalties from the program; in 2002, they earned about \$46 million. Because the CDQ groups are non-profit organizations, they are treated as small entities for RFA purposes.

The sablefish first wholesale gross revenues from CDQ program allocations will decline by about 8% under the preferred alternative. This comparatively large percentage decline is associated with a relatively small decline in first wholesale value of about \$137,000. This decline in first wholesale value would be associated with a smaller decline in CDQ program royalties. Even if royalties were equal to first wholesale revenues, which they are not, this decline would be a small fraction of a percent of total CDQ program royalties.

The preferred alternative was compared to the four other alternatives evaluated during the specifications process. These alternatives are defined by TACs set so as to generate different harvest rates (F values). Alternative 1 sets a TAC to generate the harvest rate associated with the maximum ABC for

each species, Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative, Alternative 3 sets TACs to produce fishing rates that are half those of Alternative 1, Alternative 4 sets TACs to generate fishing rates equal to the most recent five year average rates, and Alternative 5 sets TACs equal to zero. Only Alternative 1 had a smaller adverse impact on small entities than the preferred alternative. However Alternative 1 would have increased sablefish harvests and would have failed to meet the objective of protecting the long run health of the sablefish stocks. Also, Alternative 1 would have authorized groundfish harvests in excess of the 2 million optimal yield cap for the BSAI.

The action does not impose new recordkeeping or reporting requirements on small entities. The analysis did not reveal any Federal rules that duplicate, overlap or conflict with the proposed action.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.* 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, and 3631 *et seq.*

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