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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **International Pacific Halibut Commission Cuts Commercial Quota and Brings Charter Catch in Line with Harvest Limit in Southeast**

### *Overall Commercial Quota Cut statewide*

On January 28, at its 2011 annual meeting the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) took action to reduce the overall U.S. and Canadian commercial halibut quotas in response to biological concerns from the West Coast to the Bering Sea. The cuts will be particularly severe in Southeast Alaska (Area 2C) where the commercial quota is being cut 47% from 4.40 million pounds in 2010 to 2.33 million pounds in 2011.

Linda Behnken, President of the Halibut Coalition, said, "We are deeply concerned about the financial impacts of this quota reduction on small family owned businesses throughout Alaska. Cumulative quota reductions mean Southeast fishermen will only be allowed to harvest 27% of what they harvested in 2007. Southcentral halibut fishermen have also taken a cut. These quota reductions come at a time when the Southeast guided sport industry has exceeded its guideline harvest level (GHL) every year since 2004 for a cumulative overage of 3.3 million pounds. The quota reductions are painful, but commercial fishermen will respect the limits that have been set. We expect the guided sport industry to do the same. Everyone has to share in conserving and rebuilding the resource."

At its 2010 annual meeting the IPHC indicated they would consider taking action to control the charter harvest in 2011 if the United States did not implement a catch share plan for the 2011 season to control the charter harvest. The National Marine Fisheries Service has indicated that it will not implement the catch share plan adopted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) until 2012; this would result in a seventh consecutive charter overage in 2011 unless the IPHC takes meaningful action. The International Pacific Halibut Commission ("IPHC") has stated: "The lack of compliance with the GHL targets will exacerbate the present

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conservation problem.... The increased charter catch will delay the rebuilding of the Area 2C resource....”

Accordingly, at this recent meeting the IPHC took action to impose a 37 inch maximum size limit on guided sport halibut caught in Southeast. Management options considered by the IPHC were analyzed as part of the NPFMC’s catch sharing plan and are contained in [reports](#) prepared for the IPHC Commissioners and concerned public. Commissioners indicated this was a difficult decision but they had to protect the health of the resource.

It is important for the public to know that the 37 inch maximum size limit does not apply to non-guided anglers in Southeast and does not apply to guided or non-guided angles in other areas in Alaska.

The IPHC is emphatic that all halibut users must stay within catch limits and participate in rebuilding stocks when necessary.

The Halibut Coalition membership includes thirteen commercial fishing and processing associations, subsistence harvesters, and anglers who support the Coalition’s mission to protect the sustainability of the Pacific halibut resource, ensure fair and equitable allocation of the halibut resource among all sectors, and promote rational management of the halibut fishery.

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### Background Information

International Pacific Halibut Commission <http://www.iphc.int/>

North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
[http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current\\_issues/halibut\\_issues/halibut.htm](http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/halibut_issues/halibut.htm)

National Marine Fishers Service Alaska Region  
<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/halibut/sport.htm>

Halibut Coalition <http://halibutcoalition.org/>

KFSK Radio, Petersburg (News report with audio from IPHC Commissioners)  
[http://kfsk.org/modules/local\\_news/index.php?op=se&page=1#](http://kfsk.org/modules/local_news/index.php?op=se&page=1#)