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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF893]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area; Cost Recovery Fee Notice for the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of standard prices fee percentage.

SUMMARY: NMFS publishes the fee percentage for cost recovery for the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative (PCTC) Program. The fee percentage for 2026 is 2.09 percent. This notice is intended to provide the 2026 fee percentage to calculate the required payment for cost recovery fees due by August 31, 2026.

DATES: The fee percentage is valid on [*insert date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER*].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tristan Mandeville, Fee Coordinator, 907-586-7105.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 304(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) authorizes and requires that NMFS collect cost recovery fees for limited access privilege programs. Cost recovery fees include NMFS' actual costs directly related to its management, data collection, and enforcement of the programs. Section 304(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act mandates that cost recovery fees not exceed 3 percent of the annual ex-vessel value of fish harvested under any program subject to a cost recovery fee.

NMFS manages the PCTC Program as a limited access privilege program. On August 8, 2023, NMFS published a final rule to implement the PCTC Program (88 FR 53704). The PCTC Program allocates total allowable catch of Pacific cod to trawl catcher vessels and processors in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI). Participants in the PCTC Program must form a cooperative and associate with a processor. The PCTC Program includes a process for calculating and administering cost recovery fees under 50 CFR 679.135. The annual PCTC Program cost recovery process builds on other existing cost recovery requirements implemented under other programs. The fee liability is based on the ex-vessel value of fish harvested in the PCTC Program. Each year, NMFS publishes a notice announcing the fee percentage in the **Federal Register**. The Regional Administrator sends invoices to cooperatives before August 1.

Each PCTC Program cooperative is responsible for payment of the cost recovery fee assessed on Pacific cod landed under the PCTC Program. Each cooperative must submit any cost recovery fee liability payment(s) no later than August 31. NMFS determines the total dollar amount of the fee due by multiplying the NMFS published fee percentage by the annual ex-vessel value of Cooperative Quota (CQ) landings under the PCTC Program, as described in this notice.

If a cooperative fails to pay its cost recovery fee liability by August 31, NMFS will disapprove that cooperative's application to transfer CQ and will not issue a CQ permit the following year until NMFS receives full payment of the fee liability from the cooperative. NMFS will not issue a CQ permit until NMFS receives a complete application for CQ issuance and confirmation of the full payment of any cost recovery fee liability.

Standard Price

For purposes of calculating cost recovery fees, NMFS uses a standard ex-vessel price (standard price) for Pacific cod. A standard price is determined using information on landings purchased (volume) and ex-vessel value paid (value). NMFS annually receives information used to calculate the Pacific cod standard price in the existing BSAI Pacific cod Ex-vessel Volume and Value Report, which is submitted in early November of each year. NMFS uses this existing data source to calculate standard prices and thus determine the annual PCTC Program fishery value, which, along with the direct program costs, is used to calculate the annual PCTC Program cost recovery fee percentage. The standard prices are described in U.S. dollars per pound for landings made during the previous year. NMFS published the standard price of $0.34 per pound for Pacific cod for Trawl Gear in 2025 in the **Federal Register** on December 5, 2025 (90 FR 56134).

Each landing made under the PCTC Program is multiplied by the standard price to arrive at an ex-vessel value for each landing. These values are summed together to arrive at the ex-vessel value of Pacific cod (*i.e.*, fishery value).

Fee Percentage

Annually, NMFS calculates the total costs directly related to the management, data collection, and enforcement of the program (direct program costs). NMFS captures direct PCTC program costs through an established accounting system that allows NMFS staff to track labor, travel, contracts, and procurement costs. For 2026, the direct program costs for the PCTC Program were tracked from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. A more detailed explanation will be provided in the annual Cost Recovery Report, which will be published in May of 2027.

NMFS then calculates the applicable fee percentage according to the factors and methods described at § 679.135 for the PCTC Program. NMFS used the standard price of $0.34 to calculate the fee percentage applied to landings made in 2026. NMFS determined the fee percentage that applies to landings made in the A and B seasons, which extend from January 20 to June 10, 2025, by dividing the direct program costs by the value of the catch subject to the cost recovery fee.

Using the fee percentage formula described generally above, the estimated percentage of direct program costs to fishery value for the 2026 calendar year is 2.09. For 2026, NMFS applied the fee percentage to each PCTC landing that was debited from a CQ allocation between January 20 and June 10 to calculate the fee liability for each cooperative. A PCTC Program cooperative's 2026 fee payments must be submitted to NMFS on or before August 31, 2026. Payment must be made in accordance with the payment methods set forth in § 679.135(a)(3).

The 2026 fee percentage of 2.09 percent is lower than the 2025 fee percentage of 3.00 percent. Net fishery management costs for 2026 decreased by approximately 17 percent when compared to 2025 and total fishery value increased by approximately 42 percent.

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

Dated: August 3, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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