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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 260305-0066, RTID 0648-XF882]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific cod in the Bering Sea Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod, except for the Community Development Quota program (CDQ), in the Bering Sea subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the non-CDQ allocation of the 2026 Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), November 25, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Olson, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (FMP) prepared and recommended by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The non-CDQ allocation of the 2026 Pacific cod TAC in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI is 109,908 metric tons (mt) as established by the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (91 FR 11750, March 10, 2026). In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(i), the Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that the non-CDQ allocation of the 2026 Pacific cod TAC in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI will soon be or has been reached. Therefore, the Regional Administrator is establishing a directed fishing allowance of 109,077 mt and is setting aside the remaining 831 mt as incidental catch to support other anticipated groundfish fisheries. In accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), the Regional Administrator finds that this directed fishing allowance will be or has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for Pacific cod in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI, except for CDQ, to prevent exceeding this subarea's non-CDQ allocation of the Pacific cod TAC.

While this closure is effective, the maximum retainable amounts at 50 CFR 679.20(e) and (f) apply at any time during a trip.

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest, as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data on Pacific cod catch in a timely fashion and would delay the directed fishing closure of non-CDQ Pacific cod in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public

comment because the most recent, relevant data on non-CDQ Pacific cod catch in the Bering Sea subarea of the BSAI only became available as of November 23, 2026.

There is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to establish an effective date less than 30 days after date of publication. This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

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

Dated: November 23, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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