



**The
Marine
Fish
Conservation
Network**

“... To Protect, Restore, and Conserve Marine Fish.”

Fishing Quota Standards Act of 2005

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Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) systems allocate a set percentage of the total annual quota for a species of fish in a particular fishery exclusively to individuals as quota shares. Well designed IFQ systems can increase seafood quality and value, foster resource conservation, and promote safety-at-sea, but IFQ systems, in and of themselves, do not guarantee that a fishery will be sustainably managed or result in appropriate socio-economic benefits. In fact, poorly designed and regulated quota systems often degrade fishing communities, create monopolies, and lead to overexploitation of fish resources and deterioration of the marine environment. If IFQs are to be an effective management tool, strong national standards must be in place to ensure conservation and the equitable distribution of fish resources. The “Fishing Quota Standards Act of 2005,” contains such standards. Below is a summary of the legislation’s key provisions.

No Compensable Property Right

The bill retains current law stating that IFQs are not compensable property rights and are revocable. This principle is strengthened by limiting IFQ systems and shares to a period not to exceed seven years, after which time they will be renewed if they are meeting defined criteria.

IFQ Systems and Shareholders Must Provide Additional Conservation Benefits

IFQ systems will be reviewed every seven years and decisions on whether to renew or modify the system or quota shares must be based on the outcome of the system review. Decisions to renew or modify IFQ systems or shares will be based on evaluations of whether the system is providing additional and substantial conservation benefits. Additional and substantial conservation benefits are measurable improvements in avoiding bycatch, preventing high-grading, reducing overfishing, rebuilding overfished stocks, and protecting essential fish habitat.

Protection for Individual Fishermen and Fishing Communities

To ensure that IFQ systems have broad participation, the bill requires the establishment of limits on the number of shares any person can control to prevent the consolidation of quota shares into the hands of a few. Preference is provided in initial allocations to fishermen who are engaged in fishing and have long-term participation in the fishery. An IFQ system must contain a mechanism to provide opportunity for new entrants. Finally, decisions on whether to approve an IFQ system must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the participants in the fishery.

Council Review of IFQ Systems

The bill requires each fishery management council to establish and maintain an individual fishing quota review committee, consisting of individuals with knowledge in fisheries management and no financial interest in IFQ fisheries, to conduct reviews of IFQ systems.