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PUBLIC NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Request for Industry Cooperation To Avoid Sablefish Bycatch in the At-Sea Whiting Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that bycatch of Sablefish North of 36° N. latitude in the at-sea whiting fishery is accumulating at a higher than anticipated rate for 2018. As of May 30, 2018, the estimated bycatch of Sablefish North of 36° N. lat. in the at-sea whiting sectors was approximately 26 metric tons (mt), more than half of the 2018 set-aside. The Catcher-Processor (CP) sector has caught 19.72 mt thus far in 2018, and the Mothership (MS) sector has caught 6.38 mt.

In 2017, we estimated that the at-sea whiting fishery caught 153 mt Sablefish North of 36° N. lat., which is more than three times the 50 mt set-aside for the at-sea whiting fishery. The CP caught 67.53 mt and the MS caught 85.64 mt in 2017. This excess catch contributed to an annual catch limit overage for Sablefish North of 36° N. lat. in 2017.

We are requesting that industry voluntarily avoid bycatch of Sablefish North of 36° N. lat. in the at-sea whiting fishery for the remainder of 2018 to prevent exceeding the set-aside, and potentially the 2018 annual catch limit, for this highly attained species.