

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Thursday, June 8, 2017. The meeting was attended by committee members Mr. David Crabbe (acting Chair), Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Mr. Rich Lincoln, and Mr. Herb Pollard; Council members Mr. Marc Gorelnik, Mr. Phil Anderson, Mr. Pete Hassemer, Ms. Marci Yaremko, Ms. Michele Culver, and Mr. Ryan Wulff; Council staff Ms. Jennifer Gilden, Mr. Chuck Tracy, Mr. Mike Burner, and Mr. Don Hansen; as well as Ms. Corey Ridings and Ms. Gillian Lyons.

Recent Legislation

The LC first heard a staff review of recent Federal legislation (Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1). A new bill has been introduced to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (HR 2023). The bill (which may eventually be folded into a reauthorization bill) has several provisions focused on the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions, but also contains provisions that could negatively affect the Council process. Specifically, HR 2023 would require the Secretary of Commerce to follow new procedures before approving exempted fishing permits, including peer review and certain determinations; and any EFP would expire after a year. Additionally, HR 2023 includes provisions to provide flexibility in rebuilding depleted species and the application of annual catch limits that may have repercussions for Pacific Council fisheries. The Council has not been asked to comment on HR 2023.

Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) Working Paper

The LC reviewed the consensus positions and the Pacific Council perspectives provided in the CCC working paper (Agenda Item C.3, Supplemental Attachment 7). The LC believes the working paper could be clarified, updated and strengthened. The Pacific Council positions in the working paper reflect the Council's previous positions as expressed in past letters and statements. The LC was particularly interested in confirming that the CCC consensus statements in the report comport with Pacific Council positions. In addition, both the Topic descriptions and the Pacific Council Perspectives should be updated to include topics in current legislation, such as HR 200 and HR 2023. Mr. David Crabbe, the Council's representative on the CCC Legislative Workgroup, will work with the Executive Director and the committee to make these changes.

Dungeness Crab Management

The LC discussed S 61 and HR 374, which remove the sunset provision regarding state management of Dungeness crab. An effort is currently underway to clear this bill on the Senate floor under the "unanimous consent" protocol (this is a way to quickly decide Congressional issues without taking a vote).

Future Meetings

The LC recommends maintaining a placeholder to meet in conjunction with the September Council meeting dependent upon congressional activity over the summer and potential future requests for Pacific Council comments.