

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Dr. Dave Hanson provided a Legislative Update to the Budget Committee. He reported that congressional conference committees to resolve fiscal year (FY) 2002 appropriations (including the Council's calendar year (CY)2002 budget) are expected to meet in the next two weeks. However, it now appears final budget approval will likely come in an omnibus bill after Thanksgiving.

The Budget Committee received an Executive Director Report by Dr. Donald McIsaac that included five items: status of additional Council funding pursuits in 2001, status of CY2001 base grant expenditures and year end projection, status of the grant to augment the Council effort to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and provide assistance for the groundfish environmental impact statement (the NEPA grant), status of 2002 grant submission, and status of 2003 meeting site selection.

With regard to the status of additional funding pursuits in 2001, Dr. McIsaac noted funds have been received in several categories and others are pending action on congressional appropriations for CY2002. The funding opportunities already realized include the carryover of CY2000 funds for Strategic Plan implementation, additional funds to support development of the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (HMS FMP) in 2001, funding to augment NEPA related activities, and funding for assistance to the groundfish environmental impact statement (EIS). The NEPA funding is combined into one grant with the groundfish EIS. Other funding issues still pending congressional action on the CY2002 budget include additional funding to implement the HMS FMP, groundfish marine reserves, and other groundfish Strategic Plan priorities.

Congressional appropriations which include the Council's CY2002 budget are still pending and the differing amounts in the House and Senate bills should be resolved by appropriations conference committees in the near future. Thus, the CY 2002 funding base level for the Council is unknown at this time, and a grant application has not been submitted. The staff will use the priorities adopted at the September Council meeting within the funding level available for CY2002.

The Budget Committee received an update of the staff efforts on meeting site alternatives for 2003. A motion passed the Budget Committee to recommend the Council provides staff flexibility in negotiating final contracts with hotels in the Portland/Vancouver area for the April and September meetings and the Sacramento area for the March and June meetings. For the November 2003 meeting location, the motion provided staff leeway in negotiating with hotels in Southern California (San Diego) as the preference and Sacramento as the alternative location.

The status of the CY 2001 budget was discussed by the committee, and staff indicated that overall expenditures were near projections of the original budget with some potential year end funds remaining. The staff will continue to monitor the status until the end of the calendar year. The recommendation is to spend some remaining year end funds to purchase needed equipment for the Council office and to carryover other funds to CY 2002 to fund activities related to completion of the HMS FMP. The two primary needs for the Council office were identified as a new server to accommodate the expanding information technology needs of the staff and furnishings to complete the new office and provide for new personnel. If year end projections change significantly, a Budget Committee conference call will be convened to guide final resolution of the budget.

Dr. Hanson reported on an issue regarding airline tickets and the travel agency that handles the Council travel. He advised the Council to carefully check the amount charged for each air fare based on his recent experience. The agency changed his ticket from a cancelled flight to a much more expensive replacement flight without conferring with him and contrary to airline regulations.

PFMC
11/02/01