

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Legislative Committee discussed current legislation provided in the briefing book. The committee is encouraged by Senate Bill 1106, legislation for national standards for fishing quota programs. The current bill reflects comments made by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) previously. It appears the legislation will move through Congress in the near future. The committee recommends the Council encourage fishery participants and other stakeholders to support the legislation. The committee also recommends the Council reaffirm their call to the groundfish industry to initiate development of individual fishing quota programs, notably for the limited entry trawl fishery.

The Legislative Committee discussed Senate Bill 1193, which would modify the Capital Construction Fund (CCF) to provide for withdrawals for fishermen leaving the industry. Generally, the Legislative Committee endorses efforts to reduce capacity and over-capitalization in West Coast fisheries. A revised CCF could provide a means to reduce capacity and capital. The current bill appears to be widely supported and the committee recommends the Council encourage its constituents to support the legislation. Broad constituent support will be especially helpful given the large number of congressional committees that will review and consider the CCF bill.

Comprehensive legislation to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act has not been introduced and is likely to be delayed due to competing legislative activity and changes to the chairs of the Senate Appropriations and Commerce committees. The Committee will continue to monitor congressional activity on this issue.

Relative to the West Coast groundfish buyback program, the committee reviewed the Notice of a Proposed Fishing Capacity Reduction Program (Exhibit H.1, Attachment 3). In April, the Council was informed by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that Council involvement, for the time being, would be limited to commenting on the proposed implementation process. The Legislative Committee would appreciate an update from NMFS about their expectations for Council involvement and workload.

Per Council guidance, Council staff continues to invite congressional representatives and their staff to Legislative Committee meetings and Council meetings. The Committee commends staff for their work and recommends the Council direct staff to continue to track fisheries-related legislation and provide input to congressional staff, as appropriate.

PFMC
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