



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

March 24, 2015

Ms. Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: NMFS Climate Science Strategy Comment

Dear Ms. ^{Eileen}Sobeck:

Dr. Jason Link, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Senior Scientist for Ecosystems, briefed the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) on the agency's Draft Climate Science Strategy document at its March 2015 meeting. The Pacific Council supports the Strategy and the list of priority actions described in Chapter 3 of the document. The Pacific Council encourages NMFS to identify and obtain new funding and resources to implement the Strategy that does not impinge on funding to continue current levels of data collection, analyses, and stock assessments.

The Strategy is particularly relevant to the Pacific Council because of our Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), which was finalized in 2013. The FEP identifies a range of initiatives to facilitate ecosystem-based fishery management by the Council. Under the Cross-FMP Effects of Climate Shift Initiative the Council would assess and articulate its questions about the longer-term effects of climate change on its managed species, so as to better direct public and private efforts to provide management-relevant science. Whereas individual fisheries management plans will likely examine the potential impacts of climate change on particular species, the focus of this initiative would be on the combined, long-term effects of such changes on multiple species across all management plans. The Council concluded that the intent of this initiative is aligned with the NMFS Climate Science Strategy and directed its Ecosystem Working Group to revise the description of this initiative to make it better-align with the objectives described in the Strategy document.

The NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team annually prepares a State of the California Current Ecosystem (CCE) Report for the Council. This Report contains a variety of indicators chosen to provide an update-to-date and synoptic view of ecosystem status. The Council has directed its advisory bodies to begin work on a new initiative to refine and improve the indicators included in the State of the CCE Report so that they better-support the Council's ecosystem-based management policies.

This initiative aligns with Strategy Objective 6, Track trends in ecosystems, living marine resources (LMRs), and LMR-dependent human communities, and provide early warning of change. The State of the CCE Report could evolve over time to include reference points to

incorporate ecosystem considerations into management decision-making as described in Strategy Objective 1, Identify appropriate, climate-informed reference points for managing LMRs.

As discussed in the Strategy, the climate and oceans are changing, and managers will require the information necessary to address our marine resource stewardship mission under these changing conditions. The Pacific Council strongly supports the Strategy as one element supporting this mission.

Sincerely,



D.O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

KRD:kma

cc. Dr. John Stein
Dr. Cisco Werner
Dr. Jason Link
Ms. Valerie Termini
Council Members
Ecosystem Workgroup
Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel