

WEST COAST REGIONAL OPERATING AGREEMENT INITIAL REVIEW

In September 2015, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released final Operational Guidelines (OG), which provided guidance on development review and implementation of Federal fishery management plans, amendments and regulations (Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1). The guidelines replaced the previous version released in 1997, and provided goals, objectives, and guiding principles for the OG, and guidance for content of Regional Operating Agreements (ROAs). ROAs are documents that describe roles and responsibilities of the regional Council staff and its corresponding NMFS/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration General Counsel regional partners in planning, developing, and approving fishery management plans, amendments, and regulations.

The Pacific Council and NMFS West Coast partners have an ROA that was signed in 2013 (Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 2). The current ROA was intended to document existing processes and not to impose any desired changes in the roles and responsibilities of the parties. The new OG requires parties to review their ROA by 2016, and provide the opportunity to revise the ROA to update procedures and make any desired changes. At this meeting, the Council should provide guidance and comments to staff on potential revisions to the ROA, with the objective of finalizing a new ROA, if necessary, at the November 2016 Council meeting.

Council Action:

1. Review and provide guidance on revising the ROA.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1: Operational Guideline for the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Fishery Management Process.
2. Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 2: Operating Agreement Among the Pacific Fishery Management Council; NOAA Fisheries Service West Coast Regional Office; NOAA Fisheries Service Northwest Fisheries Science Center; NOAA Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center; NOAA Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement, Northwest; NOAA Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement, Southwest; NOAA General Counsel, Northwest Section; and NOAA General Counsel, Southwest Section.

Agenda Order:

- G.2 West Coast Regional Operating Agreement Initial Review Chuck Tracy
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Review and Provide Comments on the West Coast Regional Operating Agreement