

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Thursday, April 6, 2017. The meeting was attended by committee members Mr. Dave Hanson (Chair), Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Mr. David Crabbe, Mr. Rich Lincoln, and Mr. Herb Pollard; Council members Mr. Buzz Brizendine, Mr. Pete Hassemer, Ms. Michele Culver, Mr. Phil Anderson, and Mr. Frank Lockhart; Council staff Ms. Jennifer Gilden, Mr. Chuck Tracy, Mr. Mike Burner, and Mr. Don Hansen; and Ms. Corey Ridings, Mr. Steve Freese, Ms. Christina Durham, Mr. Tom Libby, and Ms. Melissa Mahoney.

The LC first heard a staff review of recent Federal legislation (Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 1).

HR 200 Comment Letter

Recently the Council received a request from Rep. Jaime Herrera-Beutler of Washington to comment on HR 200 (Don Young; the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act; Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 2). HR 200 is very similar to HR 1335 (114th Congress) and HR 4742 (113th Congress), both of which have been the subject of Council review and letters (Attachments 3 and 4). Currently, HR 200 is the only bill addressing Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization. It is possible that hearings on HR 200 could occur this summer, although the current schedule is somewhat vague.

The LC discussed HR 200, and Council staff subsequently drafted a letter responding to Rep. Herrera-Beutler's request. The text of the letter is based on discussion at the LC meeting as well as on Council positions stated in previous letters on HR 1335 and HR 4742.

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) is also drafting a letter on HR 200 in preparation for a potential request for comment (Attachment 5). In addition to responding to the request from Rep. Herrera-Beutler, the Council's letter could be used to express Council positions for inclusion in the CCC letter.

Dungeness Crab Management

In December 2016, the Council sent a requested letter to Senator Maria Cantwell (WA) on the West Coast Dungeness Crab Act. Senator Cantwell resubmitted the bill as HR 61 in the current Congressional session. This Wednesday, April 5, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved the bill. According to committee staff, the legislation will move to the Senate floor in the near future. A companion bill has already passed the House.

Based on information from Dave Whaley, the Legislative Monitor on contract with the Regional Councils, a hold was placed on the bill last year, but it seems less likely that a hold will be placed this year.

Future Meetings

The LC proposes to meet in conjunction with the June Council meeting.