

ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN
CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE UPDATE

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) thanks the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) for their report (Agenda item F.2.a) regarding the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Climate and Communities initiative. Climate variability and change pose substantial challenges to fisheries participants and managers, and we appreciate the thoughtfulness and consideration given by the EWG in their report.

We support the conceptual framework as presented by the EWG. We propose slight adjustments regarding the goal statement – we recommend that within the goal statement, the term “to consider” should be replaced with “to develop actionable strategies” so that the Council’s intention of application is stated from the beginning of the initiative. Additionally, we recommend that in forthcoming documents, the goal and three objectives are formatted such that they are easy to identify.

In response to part of proposed objective two, regarding *how Council decisions may be affected by climate science forecasts*, the EAS recommends that the Council consider how forecasts could be used by both fisheries participants as well as managers. Preparing an illustration of how Council decisions could be affected by climate science forecasts might be helpful to better understand what this means. For example, if we had a warm blob indicator, how would it have been used by the Council? Could it have been communicated in a way useful to participants? A few well-developed scenarios could demonstrate how the Council’s decision-making process could take advantage of additional climate information.

Objective three aims *to use information to better characterize uncertainty and manage risk in its future decision-making, and to improve the flexibility and responsiveness of our management actions to near-term climate shift and long-term climate change*. The EAS agrees that while flexibility of management actions to address changing conditions of any type, including climate variability and change, is important, it should be noted that more flexibility is not always better. Flexibility should instead be understood in the context of adaptive management.

While this initiative is still under development, it is a critically important topic. Understanding the impacts of climate variability and change on the ecosystem and communities is challenging, but ecosystem resilience is vital if our fisheries are to thrive. The California Current ecosystem is highly complex and our quantitative understanding is still developing. We recommend that interpretation and application of information be scaled appropriately and that gaps in information be clearly identified.