

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE WHITE PAPER ON
BEST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE (BSIA)

In June 2017, the Pacific Council (Council) received a briefing from Dr. Richard Methot, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), on a white paper detailing a draft NMFS policy entitled, “[Framework for Determining that Fishery Management Decisions are Based on the Best Scientific Information Available \(BSIA\)](#)”. The Council commented the policy needs to consider the Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee’s (SSC’s) conclusions on BSIA before making a determination of their own. The Council also commented the SSC does not specify an acceptable biological catch (ABC) except for salmon and explained the SSC determines an overfishing limit (OFL) and the scientific uncertainty in estimating the OFL (sigma), which is used in conjunction with an overfishing probability (P*) decided by the Council to determine an ABC. Further, the Council agreed with the SSC suggestion that the new framework clarify that the requirement for BSIA applies to all stock assessments informing Council decisions, not just those conducted by NMFS. Finally, the Council urged the new policy result in an expeditious BSIA determination by NMFS to avoid delays in Council decision-making and NMFS rulemaking. The Council recommended BSIA determinations be made at the regional level and not made at NMFS Headquarters to avoid delay. Regional leadership has an intimate knowledge of the Council process and is involved in Council decisions and more able to make timely BSIA determinations.

Dr. Richard Methot will brief the Council on the latest draft of the BSIA white paper (Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1). The Council task is to review the draft BSIA white paper, consider the advice from the SSC and other advisory bodies, and provide comments on the plan to NMFS.

Council Action:

Provide comments on the NMFS Best Scientific Information Available white paper.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1: Framework for Determining that Stock Status Determinations and Harvest Specifications are Based on the Best Scientific Information Available.

Agenda Order:

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| C.3 | National Marine Fisheries Service White Paper on Best Scientific Information Available (BSIA) | John DeVore |
| a. | NMFS Report | Rick Methot |
| b. | Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies | |
| c. | Public Comment | |
| d. | Council Action: Review and Comment on the NMFS BSIA White Paper | |