

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Thursday, September 6, 2018. The meeting was attended by committee members Dave Hanson (Chair), Rich Lincoln, Herb Pollard, Christa Svensson, and Marc Gorelnik; Council member Pete Hassemer; Council staff Chuck Tracy, Mike Burner, and Jennifer Gilden; Liz Cerny-Chapman (Ocean Conservancy), and Jessi Doerpinghaus (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife).

The LC first heard a staff review of recent Federal legislation (Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 1). In particular, the LC notes that California Senate Bill 1017 passed the California assembly on August 31. This bill, which has not yet been signed by Governor Brown, phases out the drift gillnet fishery in California. Under the bill, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife must develop a program by March 31, 2020 to voluntarily transition the holders of drift gillnet permits out of the fishery; those who participate would be exempted from the swordfish permit fee. Under the bill, drift gillnet permits could not be transferred after March 31, 2019, and all permits must be surrendered or revoked by January 31 of the fourth year after funding for the program is received by the state. Two industry letters in opposition to the bill are provided (Agenda Item F.2, Supplemental Attachments 8 and 9).

The LC also discussed two features of HR 200. The first was a proposed new definition of essential fish habitat; the new wording excludes “areas previously covered by land or a freshwater environment” in states with a certain amount of land loss. The wording is intended to apply to Louisiana, but could have unintended consequences on anadromous fish on the West Coast, such as those in the San Joaquin River. The second feature discussed was a proposed exemption to annual catch limit (ACL) requirements for transboundary stocks that could possibly be applied to numerous West Coast groundfish stocks not covered by an international agreement or treaty (like the whiting treaty). The LC will continue to monitor these issues as (and if) MSA reauthorization legislation continues to move through Congress.

The Council did not receive any Congressional requests for comment at this time.

Next Meeting

The LC proposed tentatively scheduling a meeting at the November Council meeting, dependent on whether the Council receives requests for comment on legislation by October 5, the *Federal Register* notice filing deadline.