

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. The meeting was attended by committee members Dave Hansen, Marc Gorelnik, Bob Dooley, Virgil Moore, and Christa Svensson; Council staff Jennifer Gilden; and Liz Cerny-Chipman.

The LC first heard a staff review of recent Federal legislation (Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1). The LC received an informal request to discuss the Restaurants Act (S. 4012/H.R. 7197), which would establish a \$120 billion revitalization fund to help independent restaurants deal with the long-term challenges of COVID-19. There are no clauses specifically relating to seafood or fishermen. The program would only run through December 31, 2020, and then any leftover money would be deposited back in the treasury.

On August 3, 2020, the Council received a written request from a Senate staffer asking for a letter of support for the bill. Because the bill did not refer to fisheries or Council management, and to avoid the appearance of lobbying, the LC chose not to draft a letter responding to it.

The LC did note that a discussion draft bill is being circulated that would propose closing 30 percent of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone to all extractive activity (including fishing) in order to protect biodiversity. The bill has not been introduced, may not be introduced during the current Congressional session, or may be amended before introduction. Staff will track any developments on this front and report them to the LC and Council.

Future Meetings

Although it is unlikely that there will be substantial Congressional activity between September and the November Council meeting due to the election, the LC recommends putting a placeholder in the October meeting agenda in case the biodiversity bill referred to above moves forward.

PFMC
09/16/20