

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an overview of current legislative issues from Ms. Jennifer Gilden, Pacific Fishery Management Council staff, reviewed the documents under this agenda item and offers the following comments.

The GAP understands the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, H.R. 8632, will not pass in this Congressional session, but another version of it will be introduced in the next session. GAP members identified several concerns with sections related to marine protected areas, wind energy, marine mammals, and more. Costs to support the bill would be high and government funding right now is questionable.

As we understand it, the proposed bill had little fishing and seafood industry involvement during development. To not include the impacted stakeholders is counterintuitive and generally creates unanticipated problems while buy-in from stakeholders is reduced. There are likely some components of the 350+ page bill the seafood industry could support, but the way this bill was developed and introduced is problematic. The fishing and seafood industry contributes low carbon-footprint protein to the nation and must be at the table from the start to develop new ocean-based climate solutions to mitigate the climate crisis.

While the Council has not been asked to weigh in on H.R. 8632 as of yet, the GAP believes it is important for Council members and staff to recognize this far-reaching legislation as written would be damaging to West Coast fisheries and the communities that depend on them. Further, the legislation, as currently written and introduced, undermines the stakeholder-driven transparent Council process. This kind of process should be avoided in the next iteration of the bill.

PFMC
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