

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENTS AND COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the documents under this agenda item and documents from prior Council meetings related to the issue brought forward in public comment by Ms. Corey Ridings, Ocean Conservancy, and Mr. Mike Conroy, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, and has the following recommendations.

Offshore Projects Committee

Ms. Ridings and Mr. Conroy suggest creating either an ad hoc or standing committee to tackle primarily offshore wind energy issues. The GAP understands the impacts of offshore development to fisheries is a clear and present concern. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) and some state processes leave little room for seafood industry engagement outside of elected officials or agency representatives. Therefore, it is critical for fishery participants to be aware of and engage in offshore energy development activities, early and often. The Principal Power project (planned originally for the Jordan Cove liquified natural gas project off of Coos Bay, OR., but later split off as an independent wind farm project) set a clear precedent for how not to plan an offshore energy development project and fishery participants are grateful that after a collective, eleventh-hour, effort by the seafood industry and the state legislature, that project was disbanded. However, it set a clear example for why fishery participants should have meaningful engagement at the earliest stages of project development.

In this vein, the comment letter outlining the need for a Council offshore development committee is clearly a well-intentioned recommendation. However, the GAP is grappling with how the Council can optimally engage with offshore energy proponents as well as BOEM and other agencies in a meaningful way to prepare for and respond to proposed offshore development activities. It is not clear to the GAP if establishing a new Council committee is the best means to ensure stakeholder engagement about this topic for several reasons. This type of cross-Fishery Management Plan issue could require representation from numerous fisheries as well as agency staff with varied expertise, resulting in a large, potentially cumbersome, committee. The form and function of the committee is unclear; it has been suggested that such a committee could be the eyes and ears of the Council to keep Council members and fishery participants apprised of offshore development activities, but that seems a role better suited for Council staff in their work with their respective advisory bodies and for the Council.

It is also unclear what types of recommendations and/or work products would be produced by this type of Committee and how their output would be used by the Council, who has a limited role in the offshore development arena. The GAP suggests the Habitat Committee might be the appropriate Council committee to track these issues for the Council family, in general, and that Council staff could monitor development activities that could have specific effects on their respective advisory bodies. For example, the GAP and the Habitat Committee have tracked these projects over the years and advised the Council of potential areas of intersection. The Council has responded with recommendations and/or letters to other agencies suggesting changes to proposed

research, increasing awareness of the ocean habitat and ecosystems and potential effects to the fishing industry. This has proven effective in the past and continued engagement of this kind is essential.

Moreover, various levels of engagement on local and state levels are already occurring. As the Council noted at its September 2020 meeting, Council member Dr. Caren Braby, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, is a member of the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEM) Oregon Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force. Habitat Committee member Mr. Eric Wilkins, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, is a member of the BOEM California Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force. Several other advisory body members are also engaged in trade associations or processes relating to offshore energy. In addition, the [Responsible Offshore Development Alliance](#) recently formed a West Coast branch and is paying close attention to these issues. It is well-equipped to provide industry engagement on west coast offshore development activities.

To summarize, the GAP clearly recognizes the importance of the seafood industry, the Council and, more specifically, National Marine Fisheries Service, to be engaged in any agency discussion about permitting proposed competing offshore uses, particularly offshore wind, and the potential for significant fishery disruptions from these projects. It is imperative the Council and its advisory bodies remain vigilant to these issues, complementing any state or local efforts.

The GAP believes Council committees should have a clear purpose, function, and justification for expending Council time and resources to staff them. Given the information available, it seems premature to form this committee at this time. The GAP is comfortable with continued engagement by the Habitat Committee in covering offshore energy projects and for Council staff to track these projects and provide information to their respective advisory bodies as warranted.

[Cost Recovery Committee](#)

The GAP supports formation of a Cost Recovery Committee as discussed on the Council floor under Agenda Item G.2, National Marine Fisheries Service Report earlier at this meeting.

PFMC
11/18/20