

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) is grateful for the work of the Council staff to sort through Executive Order 14008 (E.O.) for the sections that may be of most relevance to the Council. We note that Section 216(c) of the E.O. directs the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to “collect input from fishermen, regional ocean councils, fishery management councils, scientists, and other stakeholders on how to make fisheries and protected resources more resilient to climate change, including changes in management and conservation measures, and improvements in science, monitoring, and cooperative research.”

The Council has already committed considerable time and staff resources to the topic through the Climate and Communities Initiative. As we discuss in our supplemental report for Agenda Item I.2, we expect the September 2021 meeting to be when the EWG and other advisory bodies will share the more synthesized and refined ideas from the winter scenario planning workshops. If representatives from NOAA will be attending a Pacific Council meeting to collect input in support of the E.O., we recommend they attend that meeting.

Implementation of the full E.O. would require significant investment in ocean sciences of all disciplines. The Council’s conservation and management actions and priorities under the fishery management plans and ecosystem-related work under the Fishery Ecosystem Plan are heavily dependent on research and monitoring by the NOAA science centers. The Council has received briefings on how stretched NOAA’s science resources are at present. The Council may wish to refer to recent NOAA reports on the state of investment in NOAA science when responding to the E.O., particularly the June 2019 reports from the Southwest Fisheries Science Center ([Agenda Item F.1.b, Supplemental NMFS SWFSC Presentation 1](#)) and from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center ([Agenda Item I.1.b, Supplemental NMFS NWFSC Presentation 1](#)). During Open Comment at this March 2021 meeting and the report from the Science Centers, the Council was again briefed about the long-term challenges that increasing costs place on core surveys like the groundfish bottom trawl survey. To achieve climate-ready fisheries we would likely need to expand West Coast monitoring and research activities to ensure that managers are operating with sufficient data and understanding.