

## ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE WORKSHOP REPORT

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) appreciates the presentation we received from facilitator Jonathan Star on this agenda item. We reviewed the *Report on Regional Workshops focusing on the Implications of Climate Change for West Coast Fisheries and Fishing Communities* and remain in strong support of this exercise to help prepare the Council for the uncertainty associated with climate change to both the oceans and the communities that rely on productive and harvestable fish stocks.

### Process Considerations

- The EAS notes the importance of this initiative resulting in action and that this body of work not “sit on the shelf.” The impacts of climate change on our fisheries, ecosystem, and communities should be actively addressed and the Council has appropriately made an investment in this initiative towards that end. Whatever path the Council decides to take should lead to concrete actions. As this work proceeds, the EAS would like to remain engaged and encourages the participation of other advisory bodies.
- We note that the report appeared to focus on the commercial sector and assume that this is due to gaps in stakeholder participation. We encourage the use of scenario planning tools to fill these gaps as a follow-up to the existing report.
- To better understand the nine priority areas, an analytical process to investigate the differential impacts of each area on each scenario could be useful to better understand the value and trade-offs associated with each. Prioritizing these nine areas could be helpful in moving forward. We note that in the report the nine priority areas are numbered thus potentially confusing, and suggest that the report is modified such that bullets are used instead of numbers.
- While the scenarios prompt critical analysis that should lead to management action, we also see them as a platform for ongoing conversations and stakeholder engagement around climate change and fisheries.

### Reactions to Report Priority Areas

- The EAS discussed the priority area of management flexibility and the need for Council management to build in the ability to be more responsive to the growing pressures of unforeseen and rapid environmental shifts that may result in unexpected fishing opportunities or increased resource risk. The workshop report and existing science suggest that adapting to climate change means that we are prepared to not only limit fisheries to address uncertainty and minimize risk, but also open new or expand existing fisheries in times of superabundances or shifting stocks. The EAS believes that the means to achieve this type of flexibility can only succeed if it is carefully designed, fully vetted, and built-in

up front so that fishery participants know what to expect. Management flexibility is about providing the right framework to act in both directions – towards precaution or towards opportunity when current conditions dictate. Advances in modeling can help us move beyond our current pace of management; we have many of the tools available and it is up to us to ask the correct questions.

COVID-19 provided a case study in how, when faced with rapid changes, management could be responsive in some areas, and has further underlined the need for management flexibility in response to climate preparation. The EAS notes that flexibility itself is an essential and complicated issue that requires careful consideration and sustained attention. **Addressing flexibility as a general concept is important to successfully respond to climate change impacts, and the EAS encourages the Council to continue investigating this priority area by digging deeper into specific meanings and possible actions through dedicated dialogue.**

- Improving real-time data collection could include tracking climate-related indicators to determine how our environment is changing in relation to the specific scenarios. Very likely the future will look different than any particular scenario; instead, the scenarios as developed provide a framework by which change can be evaluated into the future.
- It could prove helpful to evaluate which indicators in the California Current Ecosystem Status Report are sufficient and useful for tracking the effects of climate change and whether there is need to develop new or different indicators as part of this initiative or as part of the California Current Ecosystem Status Report process. A project or process led by the EAS/Ecosystem Workgroup or another Council group could focus on user/managerial indicators – as opposed to just Scientific and Statistical Committee-vetted indicators – around climate. Such a process could be revisited every 3-5 years to keep pace with climate change.

PFMC  
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