

## GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received an overview of this agenda item from Mr. Todd Phillips of Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff on our June 10 webinar, and reviewed the materials in the briefing book. Additionally, some members of the GMT listened to the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel's June 25 briefing on this agenda item. No new information on proposed aquaculture or wind energy sites has been provided since the April 2021 Council meeting, so this report focuses on the Council's future involvement in these processes.

The GMT acknowledges the importance of this issue to the fishing industry and the need to have knowledgeable individuals engaged in the process. However, the GMT, among others in the Council process, are primarily tasked with accomplishing regulatory mandates, such as catch share program reviews, inseason tracking, and harvest specifications, while addressing a number of other emerging groundfish fishery needs and requests by stakeholders. The team's groundfish-specific priorities make it challenging to analyze or comment on all other items (including habitat and administrative) that affect groundfish fisheries.

The GMT would still like to remain apprised of any marine planning issues pertinent to groundfish fisheries and to have the option to weigh in as needed. For that reason, **the team recommends a flexible liaison model for Options A, B, or C ([Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 1, June 2021](#)), in which Advisory Bodies (AB) are invited to each Habitat Committee or Marine Planning Advisory Body (HC/MPAB) meeting to serve as expert advisors on issues pertinent to their Fishery Management Plan and would coordinate with their respective Council staff to determine if attendance is needed and/or useful.** This would allow the GMT to largely maintain focus on existing workload while also participating in the marine planning process as feasible. Under Option D, adding three additional meeting days and 9 additional hours of Council floor time that the GMT may need to track, per year, would divert time away from the team's existing obligations. Additionally, as part of their other agency duties, GMT members will continue to track this issue, and the GMT will provide comment and analysis when marine spatial planning issues explicitly connect to fisheries management or the Council prioritizes an action.

The GMT would also find it more efficient if the HC/MPAB were primarily tasked with capturing the input of liaisons/advisors in a meeting report, much like what is done in groundfish Stock Assessment Review Panels, as opposed to relegating the task of writing statements and recommendations to the various ABs who are already balancing many FMP-related agenda items.

Lastly, given the rapid pace at which offshore wind development is being explored off the West Coast, along with gaps in scientific knowledge related to impacts to this region's habitat and fish stocks, the GMT urges the Council to quickly establish an advisory body that can begin the process of engaging in important upcoming planning meetings outside of the Council process and exploring any potential impacts to the Council's fisheries.