

## HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING

Mr. Kerry Griffin provided an overview of this agenda item to the Habitat Committee (HC). The HC considered the Executive Director's analysis of the four-state proposal on marine planning workload and focused its discussion on the four options for a Marine Planning Advisory Body (MPAB) as well as an alternative option submitted in public comment by West Coast Pelagic Conservation (WCP). The HC identified pros and cons with each option. **The HC recommends Option B as a short-term option** to address the immediate marine planning issues requiring Council attention until a new advisory body is formed. For the long-term, the HC supports the formation of an independent advisory body that provides a strong stakeholder/conservation presence, such as either the public option proposal submitted by WCP, or modifying Option C to reduce size and strengthen stakeholder representation. In support of our recommendations, the HC discussed the following:

- The HC has expertise on habitat issues, but expertise on fisheries, fishing and ecosystem issues is needed for the group to be effective at analyzing and communicating concerns on other subject areas in this interim role.
- There are likely to be additional types of ocean development beyond wind energy and aquaculture under the marine planning umbrella that would be better served by a new advisory body with broader expertise.
- Meeting with representatives from other ABs is challenging during Council meetings due to overlapping schedules. Meeting outside the Council's meeting could garner more participation. Flexibility will be important to ensure broad participation. Webinars will allow more flexibility, and additional meetings may be necessary to analyze Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM's) proposals.
- The BOEM Taskforce is a government body of government officials with no stakeholder, non-governmental organization, or public membership. The MPAB should have a stronger stakeholder presence to provide this missing voice in the BOEM process.