

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) was not able to fully discuss the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act (MSA) because the request for input came after the CPSMT had met to discuss September Council agenda items. Following a brief review however, much of the proposed MSA text regarding the subject of “forage fish” is similar to what appeared in HR2236, on which the CPSMT submitted a report in June 2019 ([Agenda Item D.3.b, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1](#)). Therefore, the CPSMT maintains the view that some of the proposed changes may not be feasible, may be nearly impossible to implement, and would adversely affect the management of coastal pelagic species (CPS) fisheries.

Primarily, a proposed change to Section 303 of the MSA on Content of Fishery Management Plans seems problematic for CPS fisheries management because the change adds the requirement that “[FMPs shall] when setting annual catch limits for forage fish fisheries, assess, specify, and reduce such limits by the diet needs of fish species and other marine wildlife, such as marine mammals and birds, for which forage fish is a significant part of their diet.” Thus, the management limits set for “forage fish” defined by this bill would need to account for diet needs of many species, and this determination or accounting would require information such as current estimates of populations for all the predatory species that utilize forage fish, and adequately precise information about their diets to account for their prey switching capabilities. To accomplish this in a scientifically meaningful way year after year given the population dynamics of the wide array of species involved is a monumental task and complying with this bill would thus be impracticable.

PFMC
9/14/21