

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON THE CLIMATE AND  
COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) appreciates the efforts of the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) and the Climate and Communities Initiative (CCI) to address climate change. Several SAS members have participated in their scenario planning workshops and contributed knowledge relative to salmon and the salmon fishery. We recognize that climate change is here, is ongoing, and likely intensifying. Climate change is affecting our fisheries with increased frequency, duration, and size of hypoxia zones and shifts in the relative species composition of salmon's forage fish, their abundances, and distributions. Climate change is extending zones and intensities of warm water and lower pH. Coastal upwellings, the basis of the richness of the California Current, are more unpredictable in size, timing, and duration.

Salmon fishers are witnessing the physical and biological changes. The Council must strive to be nimble in its fishery management to prepare the fleet and coastal communities for the likely negative effects of climate change as well as be prepared to take advantage of possible unforeseen opportunities. The Council should consider not only responding to climate change, but also ways to mitigate the potential negative impacts to salmon such as improved freshwater conditions, increased hatchery production, modernization of hatcheries, science driven improvements to hatchery practices, improved hydropower management, and habitat restoration.

The Council, through its EWG and advisory bodies, should educate the communities and elected officials of the likely scenarios the CCI has brought to light within the Council process. There should be regional coordination and cooperation among west coast communities to ensure the protection and wellbeing of the fishery resources. There should also be political and financial support when needed to protect fishing communities, the market, and sport fishing industries that depend on continued supplies of fishery resources.

The SAS appreciates the intense CCI process and the results of their scenario project. We also appreciate the support in terms of personnel and finances provided by the Council. We encourage the Council to follow the CCI recommendation to become more nimble and accelerate management changes as needed to respond to sudden and unexpected resource changes resulting from climate change. Strive for flexibility, encourage advisory bodies prepare for impacts of climate change, coordinate with the other Fishery Management Councils, and provide support for climate change scientists.