

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 and heard a staff review of provisions in H.R. 6865- the *Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022*, recent legislative deliberations of the Council Coordination Committee (CCC), and a letter from U.S. Representative Jared Huffman to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations regarding a funding request for expanded rockfish surveys (Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 1). The LC noted that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has not received any formal requests for comment and there has been little progress on Federal fisheries legislation, in part, due to a delay in work on reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) in response to the passing of U.S. Representative Don Young.

At the March Council meeting, the Council and the LC requested staff review of [H.R. 6865- the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022](#), specifically provisions in the bill relative to automatic information system (AIS) requirements for fishing vessels. The bill was introduced by Representative Peter DeFazio, it passed the U.S. House on March 29, 2022, and was sent to the U.S. Senate where it has been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The bill authorizes appropriations through FY2023 for the Federal Maritime Commission and the U.S. Coast Guard and would expand the AIS requirements for fishing vessels. Currently, self-propelled commercial vessels of at least 65 feet overall in length are required to use AIS while operating on the navigable waters of the United States (generally defined as territorial seas within 12 nm). H.R. 6865 expands the requirement for AIS to the entire U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone for vessels more than 65 feet overall in length, while engaged in fishing, fish processing, or fish tendering operations. The LC expressed privacy concerns with the public availability of AIS information and felt that if the rationale for these expanded requirements is improved, domestic or international fishery monitoring vessel monitoring systems (VMS) would be a more reliable and secure tool.

In response to the recent assessments and associated data issues for quillback and copper rockfish, Representative Huffman sent a letter to the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Related Agencies requesting \$5,000,000 for the National Marine Fisheries Service-Northwest Fisheries Science Center to conduct coastwide fishery-independent assessments of rockfishes over rocky habitat beginning in California. The funding request remains under consideration and the LC expressed appreciation for Representative Huffman's letter and its elevation of this important matter.

Council Chair Gorelnik and Vice Chair Pettinger briefed the LC on legislative matters discussed at the May 2022 CCC meeting, particularly a [revised CCC consensus statement on forage fish](#) that was originally developed and reviewed by the Council in response to provisions in MSA reauthorization bills. It was reported that the recent revisions to the statement do not warrant Council revisitation and LC members will continue to track the matter when MSA reauthorization efforts resume.

Future Meetings

The LC does not recommend meeting at the September Council meeting, but LC members will be prepared to advise the Council on the need for a November LC meeting at that time.

PFMC
06/10/22