

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
COUNCIL MEETING AND PROCESS EFFICIENCIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the documents under this agenda item and offers the following comments and recommendations.

At its best, the Council is a good example of how deliberative, stakeholder processes should work, churning through complex issues and reaching informed decisions based on science and guided by stakeholders and the public. That said, efforts to improve efficiency and streamline the Council process are always welcome.

The GAP supports the strategic planning exercise outlined in the whitepaper. Emerging from COVID, and with many major new issues on or soon to be on the Council's workload, it is an opportune time to review and revise strategic planning at the Council.

The GAP discussed the trade-offs between in-person and virtual meetings, as well as hybrid options. Virtual meetings may allow for greater participation and greater diversity of stakeholder input because people who would not otherwise attend can provide input. At the same time, a virtual option may diminish attendance over time, especially the focused and active participation required of advisory body members. In-person meetings allow for relationship building and critical opportunities to work through issues outside of the meeting itself. Ultimately, we decided that the ability to provide virtual testimony to the Council is a valuable addition, but that in-person meetings are critical to the continued smooth functioning of the GAP. While the GAP feels strongly about regular in-person GAP meetings, virtual prep meetings, as the GAP and other advisory bodies conducted in advance of the September meeting, offer process efficiencies at low cost.

Finally, recognizing that each council is different and that processes have emerged from the unique fisheries, stakeholders, and geographic contexts of each, it may still be valuable for this process to explore what lessons might be gleaned from other councils in terms of advisory body and council meeting timing, report reading vs. summarization, topic-specific meetings, and other topics.

PFMC
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