

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON MARINE PLANNING

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a briefing on this agenda item from Mr. Kerry Griffin, Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff, and reviewed Briefing Book materials. The GAP very much appreciates the diligent efforts by Council staff and the Marine Planning Committee (MPC) in tracking marine planning activities, offshore wind in particular. The regular and comprehensive updates provided to the Council and advisory bodies, as well as the Council letters developed by Mr. Griffin and the MPC about marine planning activities are critically important, especially in communicating Council and fishery participant concerns about actions that will impact Council-managed fisheries.

The two MPC reports are primarily informational and, as noted, the GAP is grateful for the comprehensive overview of the status of offshore wind activities off the three coastal states and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Aquaculture Opportunity Areas. In addition to these informational items, [MPC Report 1](#) highlights the need to provide comments about further refinements to the Council's Policy/Guidance Document and [MPC Supplemental Report 2](#) recommends the Council consider drafting a letter via the quick response process about the US Coast Guard (USCG) Pacific Coast Port Access Route Study (PAC-PARS).

Relative to the Policy/Guidance Document, in previous reports the GAP has strongly supported the development of this document and complimented the authors on the depth, breadth, and quality of the information contained in the document. This document contains critically important information about Council-managed fisheries and the environment that supports sustainable management. In considering modifications to the current draft, the GAP reviewed the [Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel \(CPSAS\) report](#) and agrees with their recommended edits to the Policy/Guidance Document.

Relative to the draft [USCG Pacific Coast Port Access Route Study](#) released on Aug. 26, 2022, the GAP supports the MPC recommendation for the Council to authorize development of a letter by the MPC. The study “evaluates safe access routes for the movement of vessel traffic proceeding to or from ports or places along the western seaboard of the United States and aims to determine whether a shipping safety fairway (“fairway”) and/or routing measures should be established, adjusted or modified,” according to the Federal Register notice. GAP members note the fairways plan was created for the protection and safety of human life, to allow appropriate room for safe maneuvering and to prevent accidents that might have harmful impacts on the marine environment – especially in light of competing uses for offshore marine areas such as renewable energy and aquaculture.

To help inform the MPC, the GAP provides specific comments, below, about the proposed Pacific Coast Fairways.

After reviewing the information related to the PAC-PARS work, it is unfortunate that this information was not available during the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) comment period for the Coos Bay and Brookings offshore wind Call Areas. The GAP recommends the Council urge BOEM to fully account for information developed under the PAC-PARS.

Specifically, the Council should highlight the need to move the eastern boundary of the Coos Bay Call Area so that it does not overlap the “Coastal Fairway Zone” identified in the PAC-PARS. Additionally, BOEM should consider modifying the Coos Bay Call Area to accommodate the “Proposed Fairway” identified in the PAC-PARS report.

The GAP also recommends that, during the PAC-PARS comment period, a request be made to the USCG for “Proposed Fairways” to be added for Winchester Bay through the BOEM Coos Bay Call Area and to the Port of Brookings through the Brookings Call Area.

PFMC
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