

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Legislative Committee (LC) met on Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss recent legislative activities and offers the following comments.

The LC discussed H.R. 4690, the *Sustaining America's Fisheries Act of 2021*, which was recently considered by the House Natural Resources Committee. The LC notes that the bill and several amendments proposed during its consideration reflected comments that had previously been made by the Council Coordination Committee, including comments made by Chairman Gorelnik during testimony in 2021. Several aspects of the bill were discussed by LC members, especially on the use of the term “practicable.” This term is widely used in the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and has substantially influenced the way policy is crafted around matters such as bycatch. Removing or substituting the word “practicable” for another word could lead to substantial changes to the manner in which the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) – and other councils – develop policy around key issues. The Legislative Committee understands that legislation around Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization is unlikely to pass in the current Congress.

The Legislative Committee discussed other bills that had been recently introduced that affect or relate to west coast fisheries matters and that may be of interest to the Council. These include:

- S. 4717, the *Stop the Spread of Invasive Mussels Act of 2022* and H.R. 8965, a bill to amend the River and Harbor Act of 1958, to improve provisions relating to invasive species management, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 6865, the *Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022* and S. 4802, the *Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022*.
- S. 4811, the *Boosting Long-term U.S. Engagement in the Pacific Act* or *BLUE Pacific Act*.
- S. 4773, the *Fighting Foreign Illegal Seafood Harvests Act of 2022* or the *FISH Act of 2022*.

These bills have the potential to affect West Coast fisheries and fishery resources in a variety of ways. For example, bills addressing invasive species appear to add to efforts being undertaken by West Coast states to control the spread of invasive species. Minimizing the spread of invasive species is important for the conservation of habitat used by Council-managed species. In the case of Coast Guard reauthorization, the committee understands that this legislation may address matters of interest to West Coast fisheries, including the use of aquatic invasive species on fishing gear and the use of two-year dockside safety examinations in favor of alternative safety compliance.

The LC and staff will continue to monitor new and recently introduced legislation for matters that may be of interest to the Council. The LC has proposed meeting next at the April 2023 meeting of the Pacific Council.