



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2023

TO: Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Salmon Technical Team, Model Evaluation Workgroup, and Interested Persons

FROM: Robin Ehlke, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: September 2023 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet in person for their [September 2023 meeting](#) September 7-14, 2023 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane City Center, 322 N Spokane Falls Court, in Spokane, Washington. The Salmon Technical Team (STT) and the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) will each hold a one-day meeting online. The STT will meet Wednesday, September 6 beginning at 8:30 a.m. and the SAS will meet Friday September 8 beginning at 8 a.m. The Model Evaluation Workgroup will not meet but is welcome to attend the online meetings. All meetings are open to the public and an opportunity for public comment has been scheduled on the Advisory Body agendas.

The Council will consider salmon agenda items and additional matters of interest at this meeting. The briefing book materials attached to this memorandum provide detailed information for these items on the Council's September 2023 agenda. The following agenda items summarized below may be of particular interest to the STT and SAS. Please note that the Council will continue to encourage participants to obtain briefing book materials electronically via our website. Printed materials may not be available at the meeting.

C.1 National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) Report: a report will be provided by NMFS to update the Council on any salmon-related topics, which may include performance reports for specific salmon stocks required under a Biological Opinion and any updates to Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing determinations or ESA petitions.

C.2 Methodology Review – Final Topic Selection: In April, [five topics](#) were identified as candidate items for review. The STT and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will report on the topic readiness for review at the September meeting, and the Council will prioritize the topics for the October salmon methodology review. In November, the STT and SSC will provide to the Council the results of the review and any recommendations for change, as needed.

C.3 Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 24: Southern Resident Killer Whale Chinook Threshold Clarifications: The Council is scheduled to adopt for public review proposed changes to the Pacific Salmon FMP under Amendment 24. The proposed revision is in section 6.6.8 of the

current FMP which covers management measures for Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW). It was anticipated when the SRKW management measures were adopted that the models used to determine the threshold would be periodically updated and may result in a change to the numerical value of the Chinook threshold. The proposed language does not change the methods or analysis used in determining the threshold. The proposed revision is intended to clarify the process for alerting the Council of any potential changes to the numerical value of the Chinook abundance threshold.

D.1 Preliminary Catch Sharing Plan and Regulations for Implementation in 2024 or Later: The Council is considering potential changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Charing Plan (CSP) and regulations to be implemented in 2024, or later. Routine changes to the structure of the sport seasons and the non-tribal directed commercial fishery season are considered in September and finalized in November annually. In June 2023, the Council identified additional [halibut topics](#) that warranted further analysis. The Council will review all the information available and adopt potential changes for public review. Final action for establishing the 2024 Pacific halibut fisheries is scheduled for the November 2023 Council meeting. For items that cannot be resolved or fully addressed by November 2023, work will continue over the winter and spring with the goal of revisiting the remaining topics in June 2024, and implementation when practical.

H.1 Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary Designation: The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (Chumash NMS) draft designation documents and regulations are expected to be released in late summer or fall of 2023. If the draft documents are publicly available in time, the Council and its Advisory Bodies may develop comments. Consistent with the National Marine Sanctuary Act (16 CFR 32 § 1431), the Council was given the opportunity in 2022 to prepare draft fishing regulations that the Council “may deem necessary to implement the proposed designation.” The Council considered this opportunity at its November 2022 meeting and determined that additional fishing regulations were not warranted at that time but should additional information arise that may justify such regulations in the future, that the Council would reconsider this position (see December 2022 [correspondence](#)). At this time, the NMS Program has not indicated that fishing activity is proposed to be managed as part of the Chumash NMS. However, the Council and advisory bodies should consider whether any ancillary regulations (e.g., vessel speed limits or bottom contact rules) could potentially affect fishing activities. Council and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries staff are hosting a [webinar](#) on August 24th from 2-4 pm to give an overview of the item for interested Council participants. This will be the primary opportunity to gather information and ask questions so please do your best to participate in this webinar.

H.2: Greater Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries Coral Restoration and Research Plan – Scoping: The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is proposing that the Council consider closing select areas of the Greater Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries to protect coral restoration and research sites. Council and ONMS staff are hosting a [webinar](#) on August 24th from 2-4 pm to give an overview of the item for interested Council participants. At the September Council meeting, the Council and its advisory bodies should consider the ONMS scoping document (H.2.a ONMS Report 1) and other agenda item materials, provide guidance on the proposed coral research and restoration areas, and consider which fisheries these closures should apply. This will be the primary opportunity to gather information and ask questions so please do your best to participate in this webinar.

H.3 Marine Planning Update: The Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Council) Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online July 27, 2023, to hear updates on offshore wind energy activities on the West Coast. MPC Report 1 includes updates from the states, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the West Coast Ocean Alliance, and a Tribal update. This report

is largely informational and includes upcoming events and other information. The five offshore wind lease holders are developing Fishery Communication Plans (FCPs), which are due by September 29. However, it is not clear whether those FCPs will be available for review and comment prior to the September Council meeting.

H.5 National Marine Fisheries Service Geographic Strategic Plan and Regional Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan: NMFS has completed its national level [Strategic Plan for 2022-2025](#) and [Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy](#) and has begun work on regional versions of those policy documents: the geographic strategic plan and Regional EEJ implementation plans. The West Coast Geographic Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 is expected to be in the advance briefing book, but there will not yet be any documents on the regional EEJ implementation plan available for the September Council meeting. The NMFS strategic plans are a high-level planning document that covers substantially more than environmental justice issues.

H.6 National Standards 4, 8, 9 Considerations and National Standard 1 Technical Guidance: Recent fishery management challenges related to climate change and equity and environmental justice have led NMFS to issue an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR), seeking comment on how these guidelines might be changed—in particular with respect to the named challenges. The ANPR is focused on National Standard 4 (allocation); National Standard 8 (communities); and National Standard 9 minimization of bycatch and related mortality. With respect to National Standard 9, the ANPR also mentions some other challenges: the practicability standard for reduction of bycatch and bycatch mortality and modifications that might further decrease bycatch or bycatch mortality, and waste reduction. This ANPR is seeking comment on the scope of issues to potentially be addressed in a subsequent revision to the National Standard guidelines for NS 4, 8, or 9 and ideas on how to ensure that these National Standards remain relevant in the context of the identified challenges. NMFS made a [presentation on the ANPR](#) under open comment at the June meeting and this agenda item provides an opportunity for advisory body input. The comment deadline is September 12, but NMFS has indicated that they will look forward to receiving a letter from the Council as soon as possible after the September meeting.

Please take the necessary time needed to review and familiarize yourself with briefing materials thoroughly before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council's management process.

RDE:kma

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A – Council Agenda and Executive Director's Report
2. Agenda Item C – Salmon Management
3. Agenda Item D – Pacific Halibut Management
4. Agenda Item E – Habitat Issues
5. Agenda Item H – Council Administrative Matters
6. Informational Reports
7. Proposed SAS Agenda
8. Proposed STT Agenda
9. Proposed SSC Agenda

PFMC
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