



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 12, 2024

TO: Pacific Council Members of the Committee of the Whole and Interested Persons

FROM: Mr. Merrick Burden, Executive Director

SUBJECT: January 18-19, 2024 Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Committee of the Whole (COTW) will meet Thursday, January 18 – Friday, January 19, 2024 at the Hyatt Place Portland Airport/Cascade Station, 9750 NE Cascades Parkway in Portland, OR 97220. The COTW will convene their sessions starting Thursday, January 18 and Friday, January 19 at 8:00 a.m. in Meeting Room 3-4. The meeting will go until 5:00 p.m. each day or for when business is completed for the day.

All meetings are open to the public and opportunities for public comment have been scheduled for each meeting day.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Council priorities and operations in the context of current and long-term budget considerations. These considerations will inform 1) the Council’s next budget cycle, and 2) the utilization of limited Council resources in an inflationary financial environment. To achieve these objectives, the committee will consider three substantive matters that include: 1) Council priorities, 2) State contracts and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding, and 3) Council operations. Recommendations stemming from this meeting will be brought to the Council for further consideration and possible adoption.

This meeting is the outgrowth of our prior conversations on “Council efficiencies” as well as conversations regarding Council budget deficits and the concerns over medium-term and long-term financial status. These matters closely relate to the capacity of the Council, Council advisors, and Council staff to take on increasing workload demands at a time of relatively substantial turnover. These considerations are strategic matters concerning the function of the Council as an organization and this necessitates focused consideration and deliberation by Council members. This need is what has justified a meeting of Council members in a COTW format.

The general purpose of a COTW is to relax the usual rules, formalities, and limits on debate that take place during a Council meeting. This allows for a more open exchange of views without the urgency of a vote or many of the formalities that precede it. As with other Council committee or advisory body meetings, a COTW meeting is a committee meeting. The agenda topics have been referred to the COTW by the Council. Any conclusions or advice stemming from a COTW is

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referred to the Council as recommendations for consideration, adoption and/or refinement by the Council. In other words, no decisions are made at this meeting.

This two-day meeting is being organized to have a major focus on Council priorities during the first day, and a major focus on operations on the second day.

- The first day will start with a collection of agenda items organized as “Agenda Item A”. This includes the agenda overview, an “ice-breaker” to help set the tone for the meeting, and a review of background and baseline information. The time spent on Agenda A items is limited and substantial discussion is not envisioned at this portion of the agenda.
- Later in the first day we will begin a collection of items organized as “Agenda Item B”, which is a collection of items focused on Council priorities. This will include a review of Council statutory and other responsibilities and estimates of Council budgets in relation to varying Council priorities. Here the committee will be asked to develop its first set of recommendations. These recommendations should address the question, “What constitutes the core activities of the Council?” To the extent non-core items can be further prioritized, it would be appropriate to do so.
- Following a consideration of Council priorities, the COTW will consider “Agenda Item C” which includes two discussions. The first discussion concerns state liaison contracts and how the funds are being used in support of Council activities. This will be the first time we dig into Council liaison contracts and it is envisioned this may be the first of two or more discussions over the next few months regarding state liaison contracts and the rationale behind the use of those funds. The committee should consider the information brought forward and identify whether there are additional questions relevant to the appropriate management of these funds. The second discussion concerns IRA projects. After consulting with various National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) offices and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), Council staff have reduced the number of proposals for the January 31 proposal deadline to three. The committee should provide feedback on these proposals. There may be an additional opportunity for IRA funding later this year. In anticipation of this possibility, the committee should identify whether there are any particular projects they’d like considered for that possibility.
- The majority of the second day will be spent discussing Council operations, with several agenda topics organized under “Agenda Item D”. This portion of the meeting should be viewed as building blocks that work up to recommendations regarding potential operational changes that the committee believes are appropriate for further consideration. The first building block should be viewed as “guiding principles” for ensuring a sound Council process. These principles would then guide any consideration that is given to Council operational changes. The second building block is intended to result in a shared understanding of the committee regarding the challenges the Council faces, how they may pose problems in ensuring a successful Council process and sound decision-making. These two building blocks are then brought together into the third discussion, which asks the committee to identify operational changes that staff should further analyze for Council consideration.

Staff briefing papers are provided for most agenda topics to provide background and to spur consideration of these topics in advance. Staff are prepared to speak to these papers and to answer

questions regarding them during the committee meeting, but it is expected that members will have read materials in advance.

Recommendations from this meeting will be brought to the Council at the April 2024 meeting for possible adoption and/or refinement. Recommendations may be further considered in June, if necessary. This timeline will allow any decisions made by the Council to inform the development of the Council's next grant period, the development of the 2025 Council budget, and further IRA grant proposals if appropriate.

In summary, the tasks for the committee are:

1. Provide recommendations regarding Council priorities and core activities.
  - Recommendations should be developed in two parts that include:
    - i. Core versus non-core activities of the Pacific Council.
    - ii. To the degree that “non-core” activities can be further prioritized or ranked, it would be appropriate to do so.
2. Provide feedback to staff regarding Inflation Reduction Act proposals.
  - IRA proposal feedback should occur in two parts:
    - i. Feedback on proposals due January 31.
    - ii. Guidance on any future proposals in case additional IRA funds are available later in 2024.
3. Identify whether additional information is needed regarding the use of state liaison contracts.
  - If additional information is needed to consider setting state liaison funding amounts, identify what that additional information is. This information would then fold into the Council's annual budget process.
4. Develop recommendations regarding any changes to Council operations as appropriate. In order to sufficiently guide these changes, the committee should:
  - Identify factors that are important for a well-functioning Council.
  - Identify challenges or constraints facing the Council that affect – or may affect – the ability to have a well-functioning process and sound decision-making.
  - Identify a draft set of operational change considerations for staff to flesh out and bring back to the Council, using the prior factors as a guide in doing so.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council process and management of Pacific fisheries.

MJB:rdd

Enclosures include:

1. Informational: Fast Facts Sheet of General Information
2. Informational: Overview and Orientation Document
3. Agenda Item A.1: Proposed Committee-of-the-Whole Agenda
4. Agenda Item A.3: Council Fiscal Status and Outlook
5. Agenda Item B.1: Council Priorities and Activities Categorized
6. Agenda Item B.2: Aligning Council Priorities with Finances
7. Agenda Item C.2: Overview of Inflation Reduction Act Proposals
8. Agenda Item D: Staff Paper Regarding Council Operations

PFMC  
01/12/24