



# Pacific Fishery Management Council

7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101 Portland, OR 97220-1384  
Phone 503-820-2280 | Toll free 866-806-7204 | Fax 503-820-2299 | [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)  
Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

February 13, 2024

RE: A.4 Executive Director's Report

Dear Council Members:

The Executive Director's report to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council, PFMC) typically provides information on Informational Reports, changes to Council membership, Advisory Body and Committee alternates that are in place for the current meeting, activities of staff and Council members that have occurred since the last meeting, and other updates not announced elsewhere that may warrant summarization.

## Council Roster

- Mr. Curt Melcher has identified Mr. Justin Ainsworth as a Council designee for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

## Informational Items

Several Informational Reports are included in your Briefing Book. These include:

- Informational Report 1: FY 2024 NOAA Marine Recreational Information Program Implementation Plan
- Informational Report 2: NWFSC Informational Report on Data Moderate Assessments
- Informational Report 3: *Federal Register* Draft 2022 Marine Mammal Stock Assessment Reports
- Informational Report 4: Proposal to Study Costs Associated with Elements of the West Coast Groundfish Trawl Catch Share Program (Phase 2)
- Informational Report 5: Prey Increase Program for Southern Resident Killer Whales
- Informational Report 6: Sacramento and Klamath River fall Chinook fishery resource disaster

## Advisory Body Alternates

At the time of drafting this memo, we will have a few alternates at this meeting as indicated in the table below.

Advisory Body	Seat	Member name	Alternate name
GMT	CDFW	Vacant	Thompson Banez
SAS	OR Troll	Vacant	Mark Newell
EAS	WA At-Large	Vacant	Catalina Burch
EAS	OR At-Large	Gway Kirchner	Theresa Labriola

### **Inflation Reduction Act Proposals**

Two proposals have been submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to receive funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). In total, the PFMCM has asked for \$2.5 million to A) provide financial support for staff in order to manage IRA projects (the first proposal), and B) provide financial support for three specific projects (the second proposal). The three projects that the Council has proposed include:

- Community vulnerability and resilience: This project would involve the development of an analytical tool to help tie community vulnerability and resilience to management actions being taken by the Council.
- Adaptive response capability: This project would involve an assessment of Council processes as they relate to the ability to make timely management decisions and identify places where processes could be enhanced or made more efficient.
- Interactions with protected species: This project would address the conflicts and interaction that exist between fisheries and protected species and identify measures to reduce and minimize these conflicts.

NMFS Headquarters indicates that we should be made aware of whether our proposals have been viewed favorably by sometime in March. Funding may be provided in the March or April timeframe.

### **Select Activities**

In December, staff from the NMFS West Coast Region and staff from the Pacific Council met in a workshop format to discuss our mutual work products in support of Council managed fisheries. Topics of discussion included: the Regional Operating Agreement, the use of plans and templates to foster greater workload efficiency and effectiveness, aligning staff analytical efforts with relevant policy and law (e.g. NEPA, EO 12866), and more. This was a highly valuable exercise that should pay many dividends as we develop analytical products to support Council actions. Special thanks to Keeley Kent and Kelly Ames for organizing, and to all that attended.

Council staff are making progress on the Council's earlier direction regarding the creation of a "respectful workplace" during Council-sponsored activities. Council staff have worked with multiple advisory bodies to develop operational guidelines that complement the [ground rules](#) adopted by the Council. These are near completion and will be posted to our website soon. In addition, we have collaborated with staff from other Regional Councils to investigate whether resources exist to help advance training and education for Council participants. We will continue making progress on this item over the next handful of months.

In December, Kit Dahl and Christa Svensson attended the 20<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission in Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

In January, Council staff held our annual work planning session. The focus of this year's meeting was on the organizational change that will be occurring at multiple levels of the Council throughout 2024, and what we can do to help ensure a successful transition during this time.

In January, the west coast Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) steering committee met to discuss plans for the next year and possible improvements to the program. The steering committee, which consists of several current and former Council members, stakeholders, and the Executive Director, discussed a variety of possible improvements. These include: expanding outreach to a wide array of stakeholders, making refinements to educational materials, dates and locations of future meetings, and more.

In January, Council members met in a committee-of-the-whole format to discuss Council finances, priorities, and operations. A report of this committee meeting, including recommendations arising from it, will be made available at the April Council meeting. Due to the large degree of interest in this meeting, we are assembling an all-advisory body briefing on March 29<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this briefing is to summarize the meeting, its outcomes, and future process expectations. One request that arose from the committee of the whole meeting is that I develop a set of recommendations for changing Council operations. I plan to make these recommendations available at the June meeting.

### **Changes to Personnel**

In January we welcomed Hayden York to the Council staff, with the title of Technical Operations Specialist. Hayden has worked with the Council previously, helping us install the Ring Central system that we now use widely. Hayden is proving to be a quick learner and is already making valued contributions to the staff office. Please help welcome Hayden to our organization.

Sandra Mondal left the Council in December, after nearly 30 years. During her tenure Sandra supported the Council well, she made a large impact on the Council process, and made many friends. Her contributions were many and will continue to benefit the Council for many years to come.

As of the drafting of this report, we are in the process of filling three vacancies. These include an economist to backfill Jim Seger's upcoming retirement, a staff officer to help support IRA projects and staff our CPS advisory bodies, and a meetings and events specialist to backfill Renee Dorval's upcoming retirement.

### **Change to Council Seating Arrangement**

Partially as a result of our staffing changes, we are relocating some of the staff seats around the Council table. Three IT support staff will now be located on the elevated platform that faces the Council and there will no longer be an IT or admin seat at the Council table. Staff from the elevated platform will be processing and presenting motions, helping with online connectivity and broadcasting, and managing audio equipment. To help make this transition as easy as possible please continue to send any motions you would like to make in a Word document to [motions@pcouncil.org](mailto:motions@pcouncil.org).

### **General Information**

The declared COVID health emergency is over; however, we are continuing to provide COVID protocols within the "General Information" materials in your Briefing Book. We encourage everyone to bring masks and tests to the meeting in case they are needed. We will have a limited supply available within the ballroom and Secretariat.

Sincerely,



Merrick J. Burden  
Executive Director

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