

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council's) Budget Committee (BC or Committee) met on Friday, April 5, 2024, to receive information regarding Council's 2025-2029 Grant Application Process and the no-cost extension timeline, process, and initial proposed use of funds.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region (WCR) – Sustainable Fisheries Division Budget Update

Mr. Ryan Wulff noted that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Appropriations have been passed and indicated that NMFS funding remained steady compared to prior years. He noted there was continued support, as in past years, for West Coast groundfish surveys and electronic monitoring video review. The FY 2025 President's Budget request was released on March 11 and is currently under consideration by Congress. Mr. Wulff indicated that Headquarters is still reviewing the Council's Inflation Reduction Act proposals but anticipates decisions should be made soon.

Executive Director's Reports

Mr. Burden reviewed the process and timeline for developing the 2025-2029 grant application. This grant, in comparison to prior grants, would be planned as a four-year grant with one year built in as the extension year to align with Department of Commerce requirements. NMFS leadership recommended that the Council plan for a year 1 grant budget (2025) that is consistent with 2024 funding. Future years should include an increase of 5-10% to allow for funding flexibility if appropriations allow for such an increase. The grant application package is due to NMFS mid-August.

Mr. Burden discussed initial staff proposed use of the extension funds with staff priorities being strategic investments in technology and equipment; 2024 projects that continue into 2025 and funding of staff liability accounts. The initial budget and projects are anticipated to be brought to the BC at the September Meeting as the no-cost extension request deadline is November 1.

Budget Committee Discussion on Activities

The BC discussed the grant process and supported the timeline proposed by staff that would bring the grant application package to the Committee in June 2024 for review. This review would be in addition to the calendar year (CY) 2024 operational budget's adoption.

The BC discussed the likelihood of a no-cost extension (NCE) to the Council's current grant being in place in 2025. The BC agreed with the staff proposal to consider the NCE proposal and related materials during the September Council meeting, and some further information forward in June if possible. The BC also recommended that staff provide more details regarding investments including the benefits of purchase in 2024 and the details of extension projects for evaluation.

The BC discussed public comment regarding The Nature Conservancy's planned workshops and offer to assist the Council. Mr. Burden suggested evaluating the budget implications of any co-sponsored project at the June BC meeting when the full suite of Council expenditures will be considered and additional information regarding the status of Inflation Reduction Act funds will likely be provided.

Budget Committee Recommendations:

- 1. Hold a June 2024 BC Meeting to review the 2025-2029 Grant Application and CY 2024 Operational Budget**
- 2. Hold a September 2024 BC Meeting to review No-Cost Extension list of projects and proposed staff budget.**

PFMC
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