

COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PRIORITIES

In January, Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) members met in a [committee-of-the-whole](#) (COTW) format to discuss possible changes to Council priorities and to the way in which operations are conducted. This meeting was in response to several prior discussions regarding the Council's long term budget prognosis, staff and advisor workload, and the need to address these challenges while maintaining and enhancing the Council's decision-making process. This meeting resulted in several outcomes as summarized in the April 2024 Report (Agenda Item G.2.a, COTW Report 1) and a request that the Executive Director compile recommendations and bring them to the Council for further consideration at a subsequent meeting. The full Council adopted the COTW's recommendations at their April 2024 meeting.

The COTW discussion can be described in two main parts: 1) a discussion of how to prioritize Council agenda topics, and 2) a discussion of how to change Council operations in ways that reduce expenses and meeting demands. The COTW was able to coalesce around a definition of "core" Council responsibilities based on the understanding that there are certain statutory obligations and parallel law that the Council must consider to carry out the business of fishery management. The COTW also discussed the spectrum of activities that fall beyond these core activities, but it did not attempt to prioritize them. One request of staff was that a tool be developed that could assist the Council in narrowing its scope of agenda topics that are not defined as "core" if conditions necessitate that this be done. Considerations for how the Council could go about prioritizing its work are described in Attachment 2.

The COTW's discussion around Council operations led to a relatively specific discussion about the way in which the Council does business and how things could be changed. This discussion covered matters related to meeting format, the sequencing of agenda topics throughout the year, advisory body reports, roles and responsibilities within the Council, and more. This discussion subsequently led to the request that the Executive Director provide the Council with his recommendations, which are included as Attachment 1. Council operations and related budget implications are the focus of these recommendations. Particular recommendations within the Executive Director report are contained within Table 1 and Table 2, and road map for implementing most of these recommendations is contained as section 5.

It is envisioned that a minimum of two meetings will be necessary in order to implement any changes to Council operations. Relatively simple changes that require a change to the Council's Operating Procedures, which would be brought back for approval at a later meeting and adoption if the Council provides direction at this meeting. More complicated matters may take longer. The Executive Director's recommendations outline a variety of possible changes to operations. Most of these recommendations would need further consideration by Council staff, advisory groups, and partner agencies before being implemented.

At this meeting the Council is being asked to specify proposed recommendations it has for changing the nature of Council operations. To help inform these recommendations, Advisory Groups and the public are encouraged to focus their input on the areas of the Council process where they have the most relative expertise. For example, Advisory Subpanels and Management Teams are encouraged to provide the Council with input relative to their own operations, specify any recommendations they may have for improving these operations in light of the Council's long term financial prognosis, and outline how any changes being considered could affect their ability to provide advice to the Council.

Any proposed changes adopted by the Council are likely to require the development of revised process regarding scientific work products, flow of advisory body work, and possible changes to Council Operating Procedures, among others. Changes that the Council would like to make will thus result in the consideration of further detail regarding implementation at a subsequent meeting, which is likely to be November due to necessary coordination with other agencies and partners.

Council Action:

Review Executive Director Recommendations and Adopt Changes for Public Review, Provide Guidance on Next Steps:

- 1. Adopt proposed changes to Council operations and process.**
- 2. Provide direction to staff, National Marine Fisheries Service, and advisory groups as necessary to more fully develop and evaluate proposed changes for implementation.**
- 3. Consider staff paper on agenda item prioritization. Provide guidance on the method for agenda item prioritization and which items should be prioritized.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 1: Executive Director's Recommendations.
2. Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 2: Council Staff Report on Agenda Topic Prioritization Methods.
3. If received, public comments are electronic only (see e-portal).

Agenda Order:

C.2 Operations and Priorities

- a. Executive Director's Recommendations
- b. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Review Executive Director Recommendations and Adopt Changes for Public Review, Provide Guidance on Next Steps

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