

SUMMARY OF NOVEMBER 2024 COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) met October 16 and 17, 2024 in Arlington, Virginia. This report provides a summary of noteworthy items from that meeting. An official report of the meeting will be made available on the CCC website.

NMFS Priorities

Two issues were discussed as part of NMFS priorities, including the final policy regarding integration of the ESA and MSA, and a new paper that NMFS shared with the CCC regarding ways to incorporate flexibility into status determination criteria. On the former matter, the new ESA/MSA policy is an issue that staff from several Councils worked closely with NMFS on in the recent past. The collaboration was a constructive one and the final policy reflects the results of that collaboration. On the matter of flexible status determination criteria, NMFS had assembled a paper that looked at fishery management plans (FMPs) throughout the country and provided several examples of ways in which flexibility over status determinations had been built into FMPs. This paper may have relevance to the Council's work on Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) projects, the specification of conservation objectives within our salmon FMP, and other matters. A copy of this report is included as an Informational Report within the November briefing book.

Budget

Current budgets and future budget outlook was discussed at the meeting. NMFS leadership indicated that the Councils should plan on relatively flat budgets for the foreseeable future. When examining inflation adjusted budgets for the Councils, revenue has been declining for several years. While the budget outlook does not look bright, it appears that Council funding will increase slightly in 2025. Also discussed as part of this matter was closer collaboration by Councils and NMFS in terms of priorities and use of resources. In the coming weeks, the Council EDs and NMFS leadership will be working on a joint paper that will attempt to outline ways in which we may be able to attain closer alignment on priorities as well as share resources.

Science

Two agenda items covered scientific matters, including an update on key NOAA science efforts and a summary of the recent Scientific Coordination Subcommittee (SCS) meeting. The NOAA science update covered several matters of interest including fishery independent surveys, climate ready fisheries, an integrated modeling system, and fishing effort surveys. Both topics were largely informative and neither led to any action on the part of the CCC. Presentations for both agenda items may be of interest and are available on the CCC meeting page.

Seafood Strategy

The CCC was presented with an update on the seafood strategy. Included are several pilot initiatives that are covering several different aspects of seafood production and value. The agenda item led to some discussion about improving the health of the US seafood industry, competition of

US seafood in international markets, and enhancing the value of domestic seafood production. Discussion also involved connecting the strategy to the work of the Fishery Management Councils and how best to do so. Little resolution was reached on this latter question and this will likely be a topic of ongoing discussion.

Inflation Reduction Act

An update and status on the Council's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) projects was provided. At this time nearly all available funds have been dedicated to Council projects. Some information was provided concerning the thematic overlap of different IRA projects across Councils and this led to some discussion regarding potential synergies and potential for Councils to work together.

Other Matters of Potential Interest

- The CCC EEJ subcommittee presented the CCC with a proposal for a workshop in the summer of 2025, but no action was taken at that time. The Council EDs plan to meet in January to discuss this proposal, among other matters, after which the pathway forward for this potential workshop should be made clearer.
- The CCC Communications subcommittee has been discussing a potential effort surrounding the 50th anniversary of the Magnuson Stevens Act. A proposal to fund the development of a film was brought forward to the CCC, but no action was taken at that time.
- The CCC discussed continued implementation of the anti-harassment policies, as well as the development of the next training vehicle for Council process participants. Staff from several Councils are continuing to collaborate with NMFS and General Counsel regarding these efforts.