

EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE (EEJC) REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA & WORKLOAD PLANNING

The ad-hoc Equity and Environmental Justice Committee (EEJC) held an organizational meeting online on November 5, 2024. At its meeting, the EEJC was made aware of two recent projects from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): (1) the [NOAA Community Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Explorer](#) and (2) [NOAA's Equity Framework](#). The EEJC is appreciative of NOAA's efforts towards addressing equity and environmental justice (EEJ) issues.

- The EEJC supports the work outlined in the Gap Analysis Framework workplan the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted in September ([Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 2](#)) on efforts to engage with and identify communities impacted by the Council process while addressing existing mandates in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and National Standard Guidelines. The EEJC also received an update from Dr. Jim Seger on progress of the Council Operations and Procedures analysis and webpage development. The EEJC appreciates this work, believes it is on the right track, and looks forward to future updates from Council staff. The EEJC discussed the overall high quality and utility of this work as well as how to increase engagement in the Council process, reduce barriers to participation, and ensure equitable distribution of costs and benefits of Federal fishery conservation and management. As such, to increase public understanding of the group's purpose and activities and bring more members of the public and Council process participants to committee meetings and touch-points throughout the Council's agenda, the EEJC requests the group be renamed to the ad-hoc Fishing Community Outreach and Engagement Committee.

The EEJC discussed the proposed ad-hoc National Standard Guidelines 4, 8, and 9 Committee and expressed a desire for there to be open communication between these groups. The EEJC looks forward to hearing updates from this Committee if it is formed.

The EEJC received a presentation on the [National Marine Fisheries Service \(NMFS\) EEJ Regional Plan](#) and looks forward to future discussions as the agency begins its first annual update. The EEJC hopes the funding and personnel necessary to complete this work is secured and coordination with the Council on the Actions outlined in the plan continue. The EEJC discussed how the current plan does not address the historical context of why the proposed Actions are necessary and recommends a future version of the Regional Plan acknowledges this. This is particularly important on the West Coast given the deep history and current engagement with the Tribes.

Regarding future meetings, the EEJC requests that their currently scheduled June 2025 meeting be held online. The online format has allowed for greater participation by the public and reduces conflict with other pre-Council meetings.

The EEJC also requests an online organizational meeting in early 2025 to further discuss Jim Seger's contract work (website and Council Operations and Priorities review), to receive a presentation on the methods behind the development of the EJ Explorer tool, to receive an update on the gap analysis, and to discuss the charges of this group. The EEJC is flexible on when this meeting is scheduled, recognizing both NMFS and Council staff time is limited during this time of year, but hopes to meet once prior to June 2025. The EEJC is also flexible to attend a virtual presentation on the EJ explorer intended for a wider audience, if available, to avoid duplication of efforts.

At the March or April Council meeting, the EEJC requests the Council review the charges of the group and how work on increasing engagement with and representation of underserved communities in the Council process should continue, whether through the continuation of the ad-hoc group or development of a standing Committee. The EEJC further requests the Council consider an explicit scope for the committee's charge, emphasizing expected agenda items, outcomes, and impacted communities of engagement work.

PFMC

11/14/24