



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

February 14, 2025

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, select activities that have occurred since the last meeting, and other updates not announced elsewhere that may warrant summarization.

Council Roster

- There have been no changes to the Council roster as of the date of this report

Informational Items

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

- Informational Report 1: Marine Recreational Information Program Report on State Partnerships
- Informational Report 2: Pacific Coast Groundfish Trawl Rationalization Program 2025 Cost Recovery Annual Report

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. Following this March meeting, we will return to the Council's process for identifying alternates as outlined in our Council Operating Procedures. Last year, we allowed for alternates to fill in for vacant positions and allowed for some late identification of alternates when appointees could not attend.

Advisory Body	Member	Seat	Alternate
STT	Stephanie Thurner	Tribal	Henry Hua
GAP	Dan Platt	Open Access South of Cape Mendocino	Dan Yoakum
GAP	Vacant	Trawl At-Large	Chris Cooper
GAP	Vacant	Tribal	Steve Joner
HC	Vacant	PSFMC	Stan Allen
EWG	Jessica Watson	ODFW Seat	Gway Kirchner
HMSMT	Jessica Watson	ODFW Seat	Joel Prickett
EAS	Vacant	At-Large	Alan Lovewell
GAP	Vacant	OR Rec	Andy Martin
EAS	Vacant	Oregon	Scott McMullen

Changes to Personnel

Dr. Kit Dahl retired from the Council in early January. I have been making headway in backfilling this Staff Officer position and have had the benefit of many outstanding applicants. Due to recent events, I have elected to pause the hiring process until greater clarity is attained regarding our fiscal outlook. My hope is that this clarity is reached on or before the end of the continuing resolution (March 14th). In response to Dr. Dahl's retirement, we have asked Mr. Kerry Griffin to take up staffing the Council's highly migratory species work, while Ms. Gilly Lyons has picked up ecosystem matters.

New Presidential Administration

The new Administration has issued several Executive Orders (EOs). Outside the language contained within the EOs, limited guidance has been provided regarding the implication of these orders for the Council. We have been taking steps to interpret these orders and to implement them to the extent practical and to the extent that is within the authority of the Chair and the Executive Director. Some of the Administration's early actions triggered a brief financial freeze which has led to some continuing fiscal uncertainty that I hope is clarified by the time of our Council meeting. Some of our actions have led to internal changes to our operations, while other changes have been more outward facing. On balance, our operations and day-to-day work have been mostly unaffected.

Select Activities of Staff and Council Representatives

- Immediately after the November meeting, I joined the other Executive Directors for a meeting hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss administrative matters and organizational management. This meeting is held every two years. We will hold another meeting in mid-February to discuss cross-collaborative efforts of the Councils and planning for the May Council Coordination Committee meeting.
- The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) occurred from November 28th to December 3rd. Several individuals from the west coast attended, including the PFMC Commissioner to the WCPFC, Ms. Christa Svensson.
- Council staff held an annual work planning session from January 6th through January 8th. We used this time to discuss our workplans for the year, refine our processes and organization, and ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and operations.
- The Joint Working Group (JWG) of the WCPFC and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) occurred February 5th through February 7th. Mr. Kerry Griffin, Mr. Alan Sarich, and Mr. Mike Conroy participated on behalf of the Council.
- Prior to our March meeting, the west coast steering committee for the Marine Resource Education Program will have met. Several former Council members, current Council members, Council advisors, and I comprise that committee. The purpose of the meeting is to review last year's activities, with an eye to continued improvements, and to plan for 2025.

Funding Update

All three grants recently submitted by the Council to NOAA have been approved as proposed. Most recently these include the No Cost Extension and our next four-year operational grant. Access to these funds were briefly frozen in January. At this time, we have access to these three funding sources.

General Information

The declared COVID health emergency is over; however, we are continuing to provide illness 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJB', is written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Merrick J. Burden
Executive Director

MJB:acl