

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

On June 12 the Legislative Committee met to review pending legislation and other related matters of interest. Mr. Dave Whaley (contractor to the Council Coordination Committee) provided a presentation, highlighting relevant House and Senate Committee composition, bills of interest that passed last Congress (such as the FISHES Act related to the fishery disaster declaration process), and several bills of potential interest circulating in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. Mr. Whaley also summarized related budget and appropriation bills, etc, which relate to NOAA and Councils.

The committee expressed interest in better understanding the Administration's initiative to consolidate ESA/MMPA processes under the Department of Interior. The understanding of the committee is that a change to the Endangered Species Act would be necessary to consolidate ESA activities under DOI, while an Executive Order may suffice for consolidating the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The committee believes that movement of ESA and MMPA matters away from NOAA and into DOI could have large implications for fisheries stemming from the existing lack of expertise concerning fisheries management within DOI. The committee also discussed the prospect of NOAA moving to DOI as well as the NOAA Organic Act, which would make NOAA its own department. Committee members do not view these potential movements as likely.

On June 4 the House Natural Resource Subcommittee held a hearing on Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness. The CCC chair provided remarks on behalf of the US fishery management councils. Of interest was the lack of participation in the hearing by NOAA. The hearing was well attended by House members, resulted in a fair amount of discussion around stock assessments, surveys, data collection, as well as discussion about trade issues. Otherwise the hearing was largely uneventful.

Just prior to the committee meeting several bills were reintroduced. This includes Congressman Huffman's bill regarding Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) reauthorization (HR3718). This bill has an accompanying section-by-section summary. The committee understands that it is not likely that Congress will move the bill forward, but it does sound possible that the Senate could move their own MSA reauthorization bill.

Finally, the committee discussed the President's EO on seafood. In response to that EO NMFS was tasked with developing a list of the most heavily regulated fisheries in the U.S. The committee understands that this task has concluded, however as of the date of the

committee meeting, Councils had not been made aware of the list and which fisheries are on it. The committee expressed strong interest in receiving this list.

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