

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON SPECIAL PROJECTS: PROJECT PLANNING, UPDATES, AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) offers the following comments and recommendations for the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council's) consideration regarding Special Projects.

The GAP believes that development of "If/Then" statements should be a component of other agenda items that are being worked on versus developing a stand-alone "If/Then" process. It seems more appropriate to consider "If/Then" statements as a part of ongoing actions versus trying to identify "If/Then" statements that could fit into a yet-to-be-decided agenda item. This approach is also consistent when considering limited human and financial capacity. If the Council retains development of "If/Then" statements as a stand-alone item, the GAP recommends that this activity should not take priority over previously identified items in the Groundfish Workload and New Management Measures process.

The GAP continues to support the inclusion of indigenous and local knowledge into Council management processes. Insights from both tribal members (indigenous) and on-the-water captains and crew (local) are critical to providing context for fishery behavior to inform Council decision-making.

The GAP appreciates that the "Spex Flex" item is teed up for final action in November, and we appreciate the Council placing a high-priority on this item. The GAP also wishes to thank the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff for the work they have done to meet the November action deadline.

Finally, the GAP recommends the following as a direct reaction to limited human and financial resources as this applies to Special Projects 1, 2 & 3:

- Dedicate the majority of remaining Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds on completing the components of Special Project 1. This project is broadly supported with resources beyond IRA funding.
- Complete the contract with NEI as obligated for Special Project 2.
- Implement all the cost savings measures outlined on page 7 in Supplemental Attachment 5.
- Better understand the intended outcomes and benefits of the Dynamic Ocean Management workshop before spending Council time and resources on it.
- Any workshops exploring indigenous and local knowledge should be virtual only or combined with a Council meeting as an evening event. These events should be facilitated by Council, NMFS, or other agency staff, not an outside facilitator.