



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Pete Hassemer, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

August 29, 2025

RE: A.5 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

- In June, Mr. David Hogan announced his retirement from the U.S. State Department. The Council was recently notified that Mr. Colin Brinkman will serve on the Council as the U.S. State Department representative. In addition, as part of the transition of duties stemming from Mr. Hogan's retirement, Ms. Rachel Ryan will be the point of contact for the Pacific Albacore Treaty.
- Rear Admiral Arex Avanni (United States Coast Guard) is the new Agency Principal, replacing Rear Admiral Charles Fosse. Additionally, Commander Scott McGrew has replaced Commander Brett Ettinger as the USCG's first designee.
- Mr. Marc Gorelnik's tenure on the Council came to a close in August. Ms. Jaime Diamond's appointment to the Council began thereafter and Ms. Diamond now occupies the At-Large position previously held by Mr. Gorelnik.

Informational Items

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

- Informational Report 1: Process for updating Sacramento River fall chinook reference points, conservation objective, and harvest control rule
- Informational Report 2: Restoring America's Seafood Competitiveness – call for public input on Executive Order 14276

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.

Advisory Body	Member	Seat	Alternate
SSC	Tim Copeland	IDFG Seat	Carly Somerset
CPSMT	Vacant	ODFW Seat	Sheryl Flores
HC	Laura Brown	WDFW Seat	Michael Garrity

Administration Activities that affect the PPMC

The Council has received official notification that all of our anticipated funding will be received this year. While the fiscal uncertainty that has arisen from funding delays has caused several headaches and changes in plans this year, I'm grateful that our funding has come through. With this additional funding the Council should be in a relatively stable financial condition.

As a result of Administration scrutiny regarding certain Regional Fishery Management Council fiscal practices, we will be making some changes to the way in which we manage various expenses. In addition, the PPMC (and several other Councils) is being instructed to update certain fiscal and travel policies in order to be brought into greater alignment with Federal requirements. NOAA is providing policy language to us, and as such, I do not anticipate these changes will necessitate consideration and deliberation by the full Council. I will work with Council leadership if necessary to make these updates. The most immediate change you will see is how we account for and expense the Chair's reception. If you travel to Council meetings on Council funds and you are in person during the Chair's reception, a meal is being provided to you as part of the Chair's reception, and we will withhold a portion of your daily meal allowance accordingly. If you do not travel to Council meetings on Council funds, you will be asked to submit payment if you wish to consume food at the reception.

We were recently informed of a change in requirements regarding the filing of Federal Register notices. These changes will require us to begin the process of filing meeting notices 40 days in advance of any meeting, whereas in the past we had a 23-day requirement. This will require more advance planning on our part and may compromise our ability to react quickly to issues that arise. There is some expectation among the Council Executive Directors that exceptions to this new timing will be made from time to time, but this is not certain.

Update Regarding Council/NMFS Prioritization Discussions

As of the date of drafting this report, Council leadership and NMFS west coast leadership have met once in-person and once briefly online to discuss capacity constraints and the needs of west coast fishery management. By the time the September meeting begins, we will have met once more to continue these conversations. These meetings have been motivated by recent staffing losses at NOAA and the ongoing effects of inflation on both Council and NOAA resources.

The focus of our first in-person meeting was on identifying where constraints exist in terms of personnel, equipment, fiscal and other resources needed to carry out the functions of west coast fishery science and management. On the Council side, we spent time outlining changes to Council membership, staff, and advisory groups, the vacancies that exist across these categories, and how they have affected – and are likely to affect – Council capabilities in the future.

At the end of our first meeting, we identified several possible scenarios that may affect resource demands and capacity. These scenarios are motivated by the outcomes from the committee-of-the-whole process plus possible outcomes from several Council agenda items (such as stock definitions for sardines and groundfish, possible trawl rationalization actions, and others). The purpose of these scenarios is to understand whether and how possible changes to Council managed fisheries will affect the demands placed on NOAA and the Council. We have two additional meetings scheduled, after which I anticipate a report being made available to the Council.

In addition to the efforts within the Region (between Council leadership and NMFS west coast offices), there had been plans for the Council Executive Directors to work with NMFS leadership in Silver Spring to discuss National level capacity, resource limitations, and corresponding prioritization. No discussions at the National level between Councils and NMFS have occurred at this time.

Salmon EFH Call for Information

By the time the September meeting begins, we will have posted a call-for-information regarding salmon essential fish habitat. This notice will be available on the Council website, with corresponding instructions about how to submit relevant information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'MJB', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Merrick J. Burden
Executive Director

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