Executive Director's Summary of the October 2026 Council Coordination Committee Meeting

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) met October 20–21, 2026, in Arlington, Virginia. The meeting was hosted by NOAA Fisheries and chaired by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The following is the Executive Director's (ED) summary of the meeting, including the main agenda items and related outcomes. An official meeting report will be available on the CCC meeting webpage in the future.

NOAA Fisheries Updates and Priorities

NOAA Fisheries provided updates on agency priorities, including implementation of the Executive Order on Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness (EO 14276), the America First Seafood Strategy, and the Executive Order on Restoring American Saltwater Angling and Recreation (EO 14430). NOAA highlighted cooperative research, aquaculture development, recreational fisheries data improvements through the RAPID initiative, and efforts to modernize fisheries science.

The science discussion focused on ways to rebuild capacity and how to modernize NOAA's science enterprise while also maintaining ongoing stock assessments and incorporating Council research and monitoring needs into agency priorities. Regional workshops on recreational data collection are anticipated in early 2027 (often referred to as RAPID workshops).

The USDA also provided an update on its new Seafood Office and a proposed $8 billion Harvest Fuel Relief Program. Fishermen are expected to be eligible for the fuel relief program, although implementation details, eligibility, and data collection requirements are still being developed. The CCC agreed to assist NOAA and USDA in on implementation of this program.

Executive Order 14276 and National Standard Guidelines

NOAA Fisheries provided an update on implementation of EO 14276 and its national and regional priorities. A significant portion of the discussion focused on NOAA's planned review of the National Standard Guidelines. NOAA intends to publish an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) seeking input on all 10 National Standards, but with a particular emphasis on NSG 1 and 2. The timing and process for Council engagement remain under development, with the CCC emphasizing the importance of adequate opportunities for Council input.

In response, the CCC approved a motion directing the Council Executive Directors to develop a paper conveying the Councils' shared perspectives on the existing National Standard Guidelines, including implementation challenges, opportunities, and potential implications of revisions for regional fishery management. This effort will complement, rather than replace, opportunities for each Council to provide its own input to NOAA as part of the ANPR and any proposed revisions to the NSGs.

Council and NOAA Priority Alignment

The Councils discussed efforts to align regional management priorities with available resources and capacity. Common themes included maintaining core science and data collection programs, improving coordination on survey and assessment planning, addressing delays in regulatory implementation, and ensuring Council involvement in national policy initiatives.

Other Agency and Legislative Updates

NOAA provided an overview of proposed changes to its National Environmental Policy Act policies and procedures, including revisions intended to streamline environmental reviews and implement recent statutory changes. The agency anticipates completing the revised guidance and procedures in 2027, with opportunities for Council review and input.

The CCC also received updates on the federal budget, fisheries science and data modernization investments, and the Saltonstall-Kennedy and Promote and Develop programs. The FY 2027 President's Budget request included $33.204 million for the Regional Fishery Management Councils, an increase of approximately $1.9 million over FY 2026 enacted funding. Funding availability remains subject to congressional action.

CCC Actions and Other Business

In addition to the motion on the National Standard Guidelines, the CCC approved a motion to reconstitute its Legislative Working Group. The PFMC's ED was elected as chair and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's's ED was elected as vice-chair. The group will update the Councils' working paper on Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization issues for CCC consideration in May 2027. This paper often serves as a basis for Regional Fishery Management Council testimony on MSA issues.

The next CCC meeting is scheduled for May 11–13, 2027, in Charleston, South Carolina.

PFMC
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