

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Budget Committee (BC or Committee) met on Friday, November 14, 2025, to review the Council's 2025 funding status, Calendar Year (CY) expenditures through year end, and staff proposed CY 2026 provisional budget.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region (WCR) – Sustainable Fisheries Division Budget Update

Mr. Ryan Wulff informed the Committee that Congress had just passed a continuing resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2026 through January 30, after a government shutdown. Exact funding levels for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration are not known at this time.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Merrick Burden provided the Committee with an update on 2025 finances and forecasts for year end. Since the Council adopted its 2025 Operational budget in September, there have been limited changes in the funding outlook since the last Council meeting. Planned expenditures through year end is anticipated to be approximately 99 percent of the adopted budget.

Mr. Burden described the resources that help support the Council process, including state, Tribal, stakeholder, and other Federal resources in addition to Council resources. Committee members considered how these resources have been applied and the degree to which those resources are aligned with the needs of Federal fishery management along the west coast. There is concern that resources could be better aligned to meet the current and upcoming needs related to salmon management.

Mr. Merrick Burden introduced the staff proposed 2026 provisional budget. The rationale for this provisional budget was provided and includes consideration of upcoming Council programming. Based on the outlook for 2026, Council time and resources will be substantially focused on Groundfish followed by salmon, then Highly Migratory/Coastal Pelagic Species, then Ecosystem matters. The budget also contains funding for five in-person meetings. These meetings consist of four-day meetings in June and September, and five-day meetings during other times of the year. The proposed provisional budget also includes continuation of existing staffing levels, continued implementation of Council efficiencies, consideration of contract needs, and continuation of existing stipend payment patterns. The committee was asked to weigh in on contracting needs related to two projects: assisting with trawl follow actions and assisting with stock complex analysis.

The proposed 2026 provisional budget introduced by staff is \$6,051,551, representing an increase of \$125 thousand above the adopted 2025 Operational budget. This increase is largely due to the hybrid meeting in September 2025, vacant staff positions during 2025, and changes in planned contracts due to the Council's no-cost extension and special projects grants.

Budget Committee Discussion on Activities

Mr. Corey Niles was elected by the BC to serve as Vice-Chair for the next year

The Committee discussed the 2026 budget as presented and considered the uncertainties that exist with funding as we move into the start of the year. There was a lot of concern about the status of our funding as the timing is uncertain. Due to the nature of the delayed spending account, leadership is comfortable with planning for the first part of the year, and noted that most contracts would likely not be executed until after funding is known.

The Committee also discussed the need for a spring meeting. If such a meeting proves necessary, the Committee expressed a preference for April.

Budget Committee Recommendations:

- 1. Recommend a CY 2026 provisional Budget of \$6,051,551.**
- 2. Monitor the need for a spring 2026 Budget Committee meeting to consider the funding situation at the start of the year.**

PFMC
11/18/25