Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 24, 2025

TO: Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Salmon Technical Team, Model Evaluation Workgroup, and Interested Persons

FROM: Angela Forristall, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: November 2025 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the Advisory Bodies will meet in person and online for the November meeting November 13-19, 2025 at the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa 3050 Bristol Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. The Salmon Technical Team (STT) and the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) will meet in person. The STT will meet on November 14 and 15 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, or when business concludes. The SAS will meet on November 14 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, and November 15 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, or when business concludes. All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled each day.

The Council will consider several important salmon agenda items and related matters of interest at this meeting. Other topics of interest on the Council agenda include Pacific halibut, groundfish, cross fishery management plan topics, and administrative matters.

The briefing book materials attached to this memorandum provide detailed information for these items on the Council's November 2025 agenda. The following agenda items summarized below may be of particular interest to the STT and SAS. Participants are encouraged to obtain additional briefing book materials via our website.

Salmon Management

G.1 National Marine Fisheries Service Report

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will provide a briefing to the Council on salmon-related topics, which could include any updates to Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing determinations or ESA petitions.

G.2 Final 2026 Preseason Management Schedule

Under this agenda item, the Council will review a proposed schedule and process for developing the 2026 ocean salmon fisheries management measures and the location and date of three salmon hearings to take place in March 2026.

The SAS should submit a report outlining their feedback on proposed hearing locations and dates.

G.3 Final Methodology Review Results

The 2025 Salmon Methodology Review joint meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committee Salmon Subcommittee (SSC-SC) and STT occurred on October 9, 2025. Two topics were reviewed: (1) The Oregon Production Index Hatchery forecast methodology, including the index exponential-decay-weighting approach adopted for use in 2025 and (2) Changes to the Oregon Coast Natural coho marine survival index. **The STT should provide a report** outlining their recommendations on the two topics.

G.4 Sacramento River Fall Chinook Fishery Management Plan Amendment – Workgroup Report, Initial Scoping

Under this agenda item, the Council will receive an update from the Sacramento River fall Chinook Workgroup (SRWG) and a summary of two attachments developed by Council staff. Attachment 1 summarizes SRWG reports, SSC, STT, and SAS input, and Council guidance to date regarding updates to the SRFC management framework and lists the expertise needed to develop and analyze management alternatives. Attachment 1 also identifies key questions the Council should be prepared to address at this meeting that will assist in future planning and the development of an fishery management plan (FMP) amendment scoping document. Attachment 2 outlines a tentative timeline for developing the FMP amendment.

The SAS may provide comments on opportunities for public engagement and the proposed timeline outlined in the staff report. The SAS could also note specific considerations or issues the Council should be aware of early in the scoping phase of the FMP amendment beyond what has been included in previous SAS statements, if applicable.

The STT may provide comments on the current direction of work to update the reference points, conservation objective, and harvest control rule, based on the Council's guidance to date, as outlined in the staff report. They may also describe any potential implementation challenges (such as with forecast and harvest models) that would need to be addressed, if applicable.

G.5 Klamath River Fall Chinook Workgroup Progress Report

The Klamath River Fall Chinook Workgroup (KRWG) will provide the Council with an update on the development of interim alternative management strategies for Klamath River fall Chinook, in response to the Council's November 2024 guidance. The Council will discuss the development of interim management approaches developed to date and may discuss what approach to potentially be used when setting the 2026 ocean salmon fisheries. In September 2025, the Council also indicated a desire to discuss the KRWG's charges at this meeting and capacity for continued work.

The SAS and STT may provide input on the KRWG report, including comments on the conservation benefits and potential harvest or implementation impacts of the interim management approaches currently under consideration.

Pacific Halibut Management

H.1 2026 Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations – Final

Under this agenda item, the Council is expected to adopt proposed changes to the 2026 Commercial and Recreational Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and annual regulations.

In September 2025, the Council adopted, for public review, proposed minor modifications to sport fisheries in Washington, Oregon, and California and a status quo season structure for the DC halibut fishery. The specific options adopted for public review are described in the September 2025 Decision Summary Document.

The SAS should review the options and provide comments as appropriate.

Groundfish Management

F.4 Exempted Fishing Permits

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to consider groundfish exempted fishing permit (EFP) proposals and review their preliminary yield set-aside requests, as applicable, and potentially adopt the proposal for public review. Under this agenda item, the Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative has submitted an EFP application for at-sea processing of Pacific whiting between 40° 10' North latitude and 42° North latitude (Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1).

Council Operating Procedure 19 outlines a typical two-Council meeting process for EFP proposals where applications are first considered at the November meeting and final consideration is given at the June meeting. However, the Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative is requesting the EFP be issued as soon as possible so that fishing under the exemption could begin at the start of the 2026 primary whiting fishery on May 15.

The SAS and STT will receive a joint briefing on the EFP application from Aja Szumylo (Pacific Whiting Conservation, Executive Director) and Sarah Nayani (Arctic Storm Management Group, Director of Compliance and West Coast Operations).

The SAS should provide comments on any concerns related to potential impacts the proposed activities may have on salmon stocks, particularly Klamath River fall Chinook, if applicable. The SAS may also comment on the requested expedited review process and whether the SAS would benefit from an additional opportunity to provide input on the application in March or April, prior to the May 15 start of the primary whiting fishery and when, if issued, activity under this EFP would begin.

The STT should discuss how salmon catch in the groundfish fishery is accounted for in the salmon forecast and harvest models and Klamath River fall Chinook rebuilding plan as it relates to the proposed activities under the EFP.

Cross Fishery Management Plan

D.3 Marine Planning – Aquaculture Opportunity Areas

The Council's Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online October 31, 2025, primarily to consider the recently issued Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the establishment of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (AOAs) in the Southern California Bight (SCB). There are 10 defined geographic areas that have been evaluated to determine their potential suitability for commercial aquaculture. Maps, shapefiles, and additional information can be found on the Southern California AOA webpage. No applications for commercial development have been publicly issued at the time of the advanced Briefing Book, although a notice of intent to develop commercial scale kelp

aquaculture at site N2-D in Federal waters off Ventura was submitted at the end of 2024. Advisory Bodies should generally discuss and consider potential impacts to commercial and recreational fishing, habitat and ecosystems, navigation and transit, and other impacts (positive or negative) as appropriate. Although there is no comment period open currently, the MPC will be prepared to work with the Habitat Committee on developing comments for Council consideration, should a public notice of commercial development be issued.

The SAS will receive an update on the discussions that took place at the MPC meeting.

D.4 Council Operations and Priorities

At this meeting, the Council will receive an update on the progress to date implementing the Council recommendations to improve Council operations (Supplemental Attachment 1). These recommendations are intended to address the Council's ongoing budget constraints, staff and advisor workload concerns, and the need to address these challenges while maintaining and enhancing the Council's decision-making process. Advisory Subpanels will be given a set of discussion questions to facilitate their response.

Administrative

C.6 Future Council Meeting Agenda & Workload Planning

The SAS and STT may submit reports relating to future meeting schedules and workload planning as appropriate.

Please take the necessary time needed to review and familiarize yourself with briefing materials thoroughly before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council's salmon management process.

ARF:ael

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.3 – Council Agenda
2. Agenda Item C – Administrative Matters
3. Agenda Item D – Cross Fishery Management Plan
4. Agenda Item F – Groundfish Management
5. Agenda Item G – Salmon Management
6. Agenda Item H – Pacific Halibut Management
7. Informational Reports
8. Proposed SAS Agenda
9. Proposed STT Agenda
10. Hotel information and Council Roster

PFMC
10/22/25