



# NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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## Action Memo

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**Agenda Date**4/7/2014

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Executive Director's Report (including MSA update)

### CCC Meeting and associated issues

The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) had its interim meeting in late February in Washington, D.C. Among the significant items stemming from that meeting is resolution of our FY2014 funding. In summary, after much discussion between Council and NOAA leadership regarding the levy against the Council's line item to subsidize NOAA Fisheries Management and Administration costs, the end result is a levy of 4% and an overall allocation that is nearly \$1 million higher than FY2013 (for all eight Councils combined), but still more than \$1 million lower than our FY2012 funding level which was being sought by the Councils. For our Council specifically, that means an FY2014 operating budget of about \$3.9 million, or about 160k less than FY2013. The end of 2014 marks the end of our current 5-year budget award period, and therefore we will be developing a new Statement of Work and associated budget category allocations later this year for the upcoming Award application for the 5-year period 2015-2019. We will begin work on that process soon and I intend to bring the Council's Finance/Executive Committee into the loop on that budget process.

The annual CCC meeting will be hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Council, May 13-15 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. MSA reauthorization will be a big agenda item for that meeting (and we have a number of CCC workgroups working on various aspects of reauthorization), along with budget and other issues. At that time we may have additional discussion regarding the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) recommendations on Sustainable Seafood Certification. I distributed that document to you in a previous mailing, and it is also attached here. It is currently open for public comment until April 30 - to date neither this Council, nor the CCC overall, have taken a position on these recommendations. Essentially the goal is to establish a framework for a NOAA certification mark or other acknowledgement of the sustainability and origin of domestic fishery products meeting U.S. national standards and regulations. There are differing opinions within the MAFAC membership, as there are among the eight Councils, as to the desirability of such a program overall, and a number of questions concerning the details of such a program and its implications to existing certification programs.

Another item out for public comment (but not on the agenda for the CCC meeting) is NOAA Fisheries proposed revisions to its Policy for the Assessment of Civil Administrative Penalties and Permit Sanctions (attached). I do not have any specific recommendations for comment on this but wanted you and the public to be aware of it - comment deadline is April 28. According to the announcement for comments, proposed changes to the policy include the addition of more detail in the penalty schedules to better describe the most commonly-occurring violations, clearer distinctions among multiple-level violations to ensure consistent application of the policy, revision of the treatment of prior violations, and ensuring consistent application of the policy to recreational fisheries.

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### MSA Update

In February we reviewed our general Council perspectives on MSA reauthorization, primarily based on our positions developed in preparation for the MONF3 conference held in May 2013. We also examined the specific provisions contained in the December 2013 Hastings 'Discussion Draft' bill - *Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act*. I subsequently testified at the February 27 Senate Commerce Subcommittee hearing, Chaired by Senator Begich. Last week I sent a letter to Mr. Hastings which was specifically in response to the various provisions of his Discussion Draft. This letter (attached) closely mirrors my testimony at the Senate hearing, but was augmented to specifically address the provisions of the Hastings Discussion Draft. At this point we are standing by in anticipation of a potential Senate draft bill, and/or revised draft bills from the House side.

On April 24-25, the University of Washington, Bevan Series, will host a conference on MSA reauthorization (agenda attached). Seating is limited for this conference, and registration is full at this point, but interested attendees can register on a stand-by list. Four Council members have indicated their interest in attending, and they are registered - I also have two remaining seats reserved for NPFMC (which I will release if no other Council members wish to attend). Additionally, as you can see from the agenda, Mr. Henderschedt is participating in this conference as a session moderator, and I am participating as a presenter along with Dr. Don McIsaac from the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

### Recent Council staff outreach/communication/extracurricular activities

I want to keep you apprised of some of the many outreach efforts our staff makes on behalf of the Council, and other activities outside of the normal workday.

Diana Evans and Jane DiCosimo attended the joint meeting of the Southeast and Southcentral Regional Advisory Councils (USFWS subsistence RACs) on March 11 and provided a presentation on Council process, policies, and management actions, including Council efforts regarding salmon and halibut bycatch.

Steve MacLean participated in the February 20 meeting of the Qayassiq Walrus Commission, to provide them a summary of the Round Island analysis and respond to questions about the Council process and potential Council action.

Diana Stram, along with Nicole Kimball, presented an overview of Council recent and upcoming actions on Bering Sea salmon bycatch to the 2014 Kuskokwim Area Interagency Fisheries Meeting on April 2, and Diana will also be attending the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) meeting on April 8 in Fairbanks to provide similar information. Dr. Stram also attended the Second Symposium on Fishery Dependent Data in Rome, Italy in March to present a paper on evaluating the efficacy of salmon bycatch measures, and co-authored a second paper (with Dr. Jim Ianelli) on evaluating the impact of the Pollock fishery on western Alaska chinook salmon.

Just following this Council meeting, on April 15, David Witherell and I will host a meeting here in Anchorage with an Environmental Industry Field Study Team from the National Defense University, Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, Washington, D.C. This group of about 18 'students' is comprised of high-ranking military personnel and civilians. As part of their overall Industry Study program, and their tour of Alaska industries related to the environment, they are interested in gaining a great understanding of our

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fisheries resources, management structures, and environmental challenges. USCG and NMFS representatives will also participate in this meeting.

Council members have also been involved in a number of activities recently on behalf of the Council, including Mr. Tweit's participation in the Building Climate Solutions workshop hosted by the National Council for Science and Education in late January, as well as the Climate Change and Governance workshop hosted by the MAFMC in mid-March (in which the Fisheries Forum was also integrally involved); Mr. Dersham's participation in NOAA Fisheries Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit April 1-2; Mr. Field's participation on the Alaska Ocean Observing Systems (AOOS) governance board; and, Mr. Hull's participation as moderator of the ad-hoc EM cooperative research workshops in February and March (to be discussed further under B-2). Mr. Hull also delivered a presentation in early March at the SWAMC annual meeting, and participated as the Council's representative to the 6th session of the Preparatory Conference for the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) in Tokyo in late March.

#### Departing Colleagues

Melanie Brown is leaving the Alaska Region (for warmer climes), and I wanted to recognize her for all of her fantastic work, and instrumental role in many of the key issues before the Council, including Steller sea lions, the Arctic FMP, numerous EFPs, habitat, bycatch, etc. etc. etc. We will sorely miss you Melanie, and hope our paths cross again.

As most of you are aware, Gregg Williams is retiring in May from the IPHC staff where he has worked for 36 years! During that tenure Gregg has been closely involved in the Council process, including membership on our Groundfish Plan Teams, participation on numerous Council Committees involving halibut management issues, contributing to countless Council analyses and discussion papers, and enduring somewhere in the neighborhood of 150 Council meetings (in addition to his own IPHC meetings). Gregg's contributions to the science and management of Pacific halibut, and to other North Pacific fisheries, have been significant for nearly four decades. Gregg will remain a 'Council family member emeritus' and I hope we can look forward to working with Gregg in new capacities following his retirement.

#### Events this week

On Sunday evening, April 13, from 5:30 to 7:00 pm, we will have a 'meet-n-greet' reception to meet with the new NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator Eileen Sobeck. The reception will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> Floor here at the Hilton and is open to all. Ms. Sobeck will also address the Council on Monday morning, April 14.