



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:Cons 14-017

Agenda Date6/2/2014

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Eric Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan - Receive Comments

ESTIMATED TIME:

2 hours

ACTION REQUIRED:

Review comments on Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

BACKGROUND

In February 2014, the Council reviewed a discussion paper on the development of a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), and is now considering whether to prioritize time and resources to develop an FEP for the Bering Sea. Since there have been many recent studies investigating the Bering Sea ecosystem, the Council will decide whether there is value in developing a guidance document that assesses available information about the Bering Sea with respect to the fisheries that the Council manages. The BS FEP would not be a regulatory document, and changes to the management of Bering Sea fisheries would continue to be made through fishery management plan amendments. The FEP could provide an opportunity for the Council to express its management values for Bering Sea fisheries, and develop strategies to respond to emerging ecosystem science. The Council decided to seek public input on what the objectives might be for a Bering Sea FEP, and how the plan could be structured to be of benefit to fishery management decisionmaking.

Specifically, the Council is seeking the following input from stakeholders:

- What should be the objectives of the Bering Sea FEP? What questions should the FEP answer?
- What kind of actions should be considered in the FEP? Should the FEP provide specific or general guidance for fishery management? (for example, strategies to respond to climate change, preserve subsistence fishing and hunting resources, maintain healthy populations of top level predators, etc.)
- Would the FEP provide added value over existing Council documents, and if so, how? (for example, annual SAFE reports, essential fish habitat descriptions, etc.)

Public comment will be accepted during this agenda item in Nome, and also at public hearings tentatively scheduled for August in Anchorage, and September in Seattle.