



# **B4 State Department Report on Central Arctic Ocean Fishing Agreement**

February 2019 Council Meeting

## **Action Memo**

Presenters: Jean-Pierre Plé, NMFS Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection  
Candace Nachman, NMFS Office of Policy

### **BACKGROUND**

In December 2017, ten countries [reached an agreement](#) to prevent the start of commercial fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO) for at least 16 years while scientists study the effects of climate change on this area. The presentation will include:

- An overview of the Central Arctic Ocean agreement.
- An update on the CAO scientific effort to date and necessary next steps (i.e., need to develop a data sharing protocol, develop a coordinating mechanism for possible vessels of opportunity to support data collection, etc.).
- A discussion on exploratory fishing, which is likely to be the first substantive CAO measure the signatories will need to address. This follows up on the Council's February 2018 [discussion paper](#) on this topic.