

COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Marriott Beachside Hotel

Key West, Florida

May 23-25, 2023

ATTENDEES

Michelle Bachman.....NEFMC

Carolyn Belcher.....SAFMC

Gib Brogan.....Oceana

Merrick Burden.....PFMC

Rick Bellavance.....NEFMC

Susan Boggs.....GMFMC

John Carmichael.....SAFMC

Janet Coit.....NOAA

Marianne Cufone.....

Kiley Dancy.....NOAA

Kelly Denit.....NOAA

Russ Dunn.....NOAA

Diana Evans.....NPFMC

Carlos Farchette.....CFMC

Rachel Feeney.....NEFMC

Tom Frazer.....GMFMC

John Froeschke.....GMFMC

Bob Gill.....GMFMC

Mark Gorelnik.....PFMC

John Gourley.....WPFMC

Marcos Hanke.....CFMC

Lisa Hollensead.....GMFMC

Stephanie Hunt.....NOAA

Adam Issenberg.....NOAA

Simon Kinneen.....NPFMC

Jim Landon.....NOAA

Mike Luisi.....MAFMC

Sarah Malloy.....NOAA

Heather Mann.....MTC, OR

Chris Moore.....MAFMC

Jamal Moss.....NOAA

Emily Muehlstein.....GMFMC

Trish Murphey.....SAFMC

Tom Nies.....NEFMC

Brian Pawlak.....NOAA

Mike Pentony.....NOAA

Brad Pettinger.....PFMC

Clay Porch.....NOAA

Jennifer Quan.....NOAA

Eric Reid.....NEFMC

Ryan Rindone.....GMFMC

1 Miguel Rolon.....CFMC
2 Carrie Simmons.....GMFMC
3 Kitty Simonds.....WPFMC
4 Lee Starling.....Key West, FL
5 Andy Strelcheck.....NOAA
6 Diana Stram.....NPFMC
7 Greg Stunz.....GMFMC
8 C.J. Sweetman.....GMFMC
9 Will Sword.....WPFMC
10 Wes Townsend.....MAFMC
11 Bill Tweit.....NPFMC
12 Cisco Werner.....NOAA
13 Dave Whaley.....Washington, D.C.
14 Dave Witherell.....NPFMC
15 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL
16
17 - - -
18

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1
2
3 [Table of Motions.....4](#)
4
5 [Welcome and Introductions.....7](#)
6 [Adoption of Agenda.....10](#)
7
8 [NOAA Fisheries Update and FY 23/24 Priorities.....11](#)
9 [National Equity and Environmental Justice.....20](#)
10 [Data Confidentiality Rule.....29](#)
11 [WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.....31](#)
12 [National Standards 4, 8, and 9.....33](#)
13
14 [NOAA Fisheries Science Updates.....41](#)
15
16 [Revised Draft: National Recreational Saltwater Policy.....58](#)
17
18 [Budget and 2024 Outlook.....66](#)
19
20 [Update on the Inflation Reduction Act.....81](#)
21
22 [Gulf Council Highlights.....88](#)
23
24 [Climate Change and Fisheries.....100](#)
25 [East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Summit.....100](#)
26 [Overview Presentation on Ocean Climate Action Plan.....105](#)
27 [Fisheries Climate Governance Policy.....106](#)
28
29 [Update on Anti-Harassment Policies and Training Opportunities....123](#)
30
31 [Public Comment.....132](#)
32
33 [Communications Subcommittee Report.....141](#)
34 [Update to the Regional Councils Websites.....152](#)
35
36 [International Fisheries Issues.....159](#)
37 [United Nations Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National](#)
38 [Jurisdiction.....159](#)
39 [Committee on Fisheries \(COFI\) Summary Overview.....160](#)
40
41 [7th Scientific Coordination Subcommittee Report162](#)
42 [Overview and Proposed Themes for SCS8 Meeting.....187](#)
43
44 [America the Beautiful Initiative.....193](#)
45 [CCC Working Group Final Report on ABM and ABM Dashboard.....193](#)
46 [Fisheries Update on Interagency Effort.....206](#)
47
48 [National Standard 1 - Technical Guidance Status.....214](#)

1
2 Discussion of Establishing Fishing Regulations in Sanctuaries....221
3
4 Legislative Outlook.....232
5
6 Announcements and Recognitions.....244
7
8 Public Comment.....250
9
10 Integration of the Endangered Species Act.....254
11
12 Marine Resource Education Program.....258
13
14 CCC Workgroups/Subcommittees.....275
15 Habitat Workgroup.....275
16 Council Member Ongoing Development Member Training.....280
17
18 2024 CCC Meetings.....289
19
20 Other Business and Wrap-Up.....289
21
22 Adjournment.....291
23
24
25

- - -

TABLE OF MOTIONS

1
2
3 [PAGE 40](#): Motion that the CCC recommends that NMFS extend the
4 comment deadline on the ANPR for National Standard 4, 8, and 9
5 Guidelines to October 15. [The motion carried on page 41.](#)
6

7 [PAGE 158](#): Motion that the CCC supports the modifications to the
8 U.S. regional councils' website and continued updates and
9 maintenance. [The motion carried on page 159.](#)

10
11 [PAGE 185](#): Motion to form a new CCC climate workgroup to develop
12 a common understanding and voice among the councils on current
13 capacity, future needs, and fishery management designs that can
14 respond to climate change, while assisting the regional councils
15 in coordinating with NOAA on a response to the Ocean Climate
16 Action Plan. [The motion carried on page 187.](#)
17

18 [PAGE 190](#): Motion that the CCC approves the proposed theme for
19 SCS-8: "Applying ABC Control Rules in a Changing Environment."
20 The SCS is also asked to recommend how workshop conclusions can
21 be shared with the CCC and the councils in a manner that
22 encourages the use of workshop results. This recommendation
23 should be delivered to the CCC at the fall CCC meeting. [The](#)
24 [motion carried on page 191.](#)
25

26 [PAGE 191](#): Motion that the CCC TOR for the Scientific
27 Coordination Subcommittee is modified to read: The SCS will
28 consist of the chairs from each of the Regional Council
29 Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSCs), or their
30 respective proxies. The SCS can invite participation by up to
31 three additional NMFS scientists when planning SCS workshops.
32 [The motion carried on page 192.](#)
33

34 [PAGE 205](#): Motion that the CCC accepts the report of the ABM
35 Working Group and approves development of an interactive webmap
36 application. [The motion carried on page 206.](#)
37

38 [PAGE 229](#): Motion that the CCC submit a letter to the Office of
39 National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Marine Fisheries
40 Service that acknowledges a shared responsibility to conserve
41 and sustainably manage the nation's living marine resources.
42 Accordingly, there should be a reasonable process that allows
43 both the council and sanctuary to carry out their missions and
44 achieve their objectives with minimum conflict. This letter
45 should encompass the following major points: The missions of
46 sanctuaries and the councils are not identical, but both have
47 the common goal of supporting healthy, diverse and abundant
48 living marine resources. Fishing and sanctuaries are not

1 mutually exclusive and can be compatible when the goals and
2 objectives do not disqualify fishing at the outset. The
3 councils and sanctuaries are partners in marine conservation.
4 Councils have a robust, public, stakeholder driven regulatory
5 process that can complement the Sanctuary process. To the
6 extent fishery activities need to be addressed and to avoid
7 conflict or discord, sanctuaries should work constructively with
8 the councils to support and utilize the existing management
9 process. If Sanctuaries believe that a council is not
10 adequately conserving resources in an established/proposed
11 sanctuary, sanctuaries should bring information and rationale to
12 the councils so that the councils can act accordingly. The
13 process for determining fishing regulations in sanctuary waters
14 should be clarified for each region. In some regions, councils
15 are consulted by sanctuaries and there is integration of
16 sanctuary staff into council processes. In other regions, this
17 is not the case, and a misalignment of sanctuary and council
18 efforts often occurs. [The motion carried on page 230.](#)

19
20 [PAGE 243](#): Motion that the CCC appoints Dr. Carrie Simmons as
21 chair of the Legislative Work Group. [The motion carried on page](#)
22 [243.](#)

23
24 [PAGE 287](#): Motion that the CCC agrees to hold the second Council
25 Member Ongoing Development (CMOD) session in 2025, hosted by the
26 North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The NPFMC will
27 provide a report at the October CCC meeting on a theme,
28 estimated costs (including a proposal for sharing of costs
29 between NMFS and the council), and other logistics. [The motion](#)
30 [carried on page 287.](#)

31
32 [PAGE 288](#): Motion that the CCC directs the communications group
33 to plan an in-person meeting for 2024 and seek approval from the
34 CCC in October of the proposed discussion items. [The motion](#)
35 [carried on page 288.](#)

36
37 - - -
38

1 The Council Coordination Committee convened at the Marriott
2 Beachside Hotel in Key West, Florida on Tuesday morning, May 23,
3 2023, and was called to order by Gulf of Mexico Fishery
4 Management Council Chairman Greg Stunz.

5
6 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

7
8 **CHAIRMAN GREG STUNZ:** Good morning, everyone. We'll get
9 started. Welcome to Key West. Before we get too far into the
10 agenda, there's just a few business and admin things that we
11 need to take care of, and then Janet will kick us off with our
12 first real agenda items, but, before we get going too far, I do
13 need to read a statement, and we need to approve the agenda and
14 discuss the minutes. With that, I will start.

15
16 I am Dr. Greg Stunz, Chair of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
17 Management Council and the 2023 Chair of the Council
18 Coordinating Committee, and I am pleased to call to order this
19 meeting of the CCC. This meeting is open to the public, and
20 copies of the meeting agenda and other documents used are
21 available under the Regional Fishery Management Council website,
22 www.fisheriescouncils.org, and the NOAA Fisheries website.
23 After the presentations, the floor will be open to CCC members
24 for questions and clarification. When all presentations are
25 completed, followed by CCC discussion, action is appropriate.

26
27 Public input is a vital part of the Council Coordination
28 Committee process, and we will welcome public comment from in-
29 person and virtual attendees. Persons wishing to give public
30 comment in the meeting room must sign-up at the kiosk prior to
31 the last registered speaker completing public comment. Persons
32 wishing to give comment virtually must sign-up on the Regional
33 Management Council website at www.fisheriescouncils.org.
34 Members of the public will be provided an opportunity to provide
35 the CCC with their comments at the end of the agenda each day on
36 Tuesday, May 23, and Wednesday, May 24. Public comment may end
37 before the published agenda time if all registered in-person and
38 virtual participants have completed their comment.

39
40 In-person participants, please remember to speak directly into
41 your microphone, so that all can hear you in the room and
42 online. Lastly, I will ask that all CCC members turn off their
43 sound and ringers on their cellphones and mute your connection
44 on other devices while the CCC meeting is in session.

45
46 In a moment, I would like to have the CCC members introduce
47 themselves, starting on my right, since I guess that's where
48 most of our Gulf Council members are, and I will start, and I

1 will also recognize, as your host, some of the Gulf Council
2 members in the back of the room at the end, and so I'll start.
3 I'm Greg Stunz, Chair of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
4 Council.
5
6 **DR. CARRIE SIMMONS:** Carrie Simmons, Executive Director, Gulf
7 Council.
8
9 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Tom Frazer, Vice Chair, Gulf Council.
10
11 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Andy Strelcheck, NOAA Fisheries Southeast
12 Regional Office, Regional Administrator.
13
14 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Clay Porch, Southeast Fisheries Science Center
15 Director.
16
17 **DR. CAROLYN BELCHER:** Carolyn Belcher, Chair, South Atlantic
18 Council.
19
20 **MR. JOHN CARMICHAEL:** John Carmichael, Executive Director, South
21 Atlantic Council.
22
23 **MS. TRISH MURPHEY:** Trish Murphey, Vice Chair, South Atlantic
24 Council.
25
26 **MR. MIKE PENTONY:** Mike Pentony, NOAA Fisheries, Regional
27 Administrator, Greater Atlantic Regional Office.
28
29 **MR. ERIC REID:** Eric Reid, Chair from New England. Thank you.
30
31 **MR. TOM NIES:** Tom Nies, Executive Director for New England, for
32 about sixty-eight days.
33
34 **MR. RICK BELLAVANCE:** Rick Bellavance, Vice Chairman of the New
35 England Fishery Management Council.
36
37 **MR. MIKE LUISI:** Good morning. Mike Luisi, Chair of the Mid-
38 Atlantic Council.
39
40 **MR. CHRIS MOORE:** Chris Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic
41 Council.
42
43 **MR. WES TOWNSEND:** Wes Townsend, Vice Chair, Mid-Atlantic
44 Fishery Management Council.
45
46 **MR. JOHN GOURLEY:** John Gourley, Chair, Western Pacific.
47
48 **MS. KITTY SIMONDS:** Kitty Simonds, Executive Director of the

1 Western Pacific Council.
2
3 **MR. WILL SWORD:** Will Sword, Vice Chair, American Samoa, Western
4 Pacific Council.
5
6 **MS. SARAH MALLOY:** Sarah Malloy, Acting Regional Administrator,
7 Pacific Islands Regional Office.
8
9 **MS. JENNIFER QUAN:** Good morning. Jennifer, and you can call me
10 Jen, Quan, West Coast Regional Administrator.
11
12 **MR. MARC GORELNIK:** Good morning. Mark Gorelnik, Chair of the
13 Pacific Council.
14
15 **MR. MERRICK BURDEN:** Good morning. Merrick Burden, Executive
16 Director of the Pacific Council.
17
18 **MR. BRAD PETTINGER:** Good morning. Brad Pettinger, Vice Chair
19 of the Pacific Council.
20
21 **MR. JAMAL MOSS:** Good morning. Jamal Moss, NOAA Fisheries,
22 Alaska, Deputy Regional Administrator.
23
24 **MR. BILL TWEIT:** Bill Tweit, Vice Chair, North Pacific Council.
25
26 **MR. DAVE WITHERELL:** Dave Witherell, Executive Director, North
27 Pacific.
28
29 **MR. SIMON KINNEEN:** Simon Kinneen, Chair of the North Pacific
30 Council.
31
32 **MR. CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Carlos Farchette, Vice Chair, Caribbean
33 Council.
34
35 **MR. MIGUEL ROLON:** Miguel Rolon, Executive Director, Caribbean
36 Council.
37
38 **MR. MARCOS HANKE:** Marcos Hanke, Chair, Caribbean Council. Good
39 morning, everyone.
40
41 **MR. ADAM ISSENBERG:** Hello. Adam Issenberg with NOAA's Office
42 of General Counsel.
43
44 **MS. STEPHANIE HUNT:** Stephanie Hunt, NOAA Fisheries, Office of
45 Sustainable Fisheries.
46
47 **MR. BRIAN PAWLAK:** Good morning. Brian Pawlak, Chief Financial
48 Officer for NOAA Fisheries.

1
2 **MS. KELLY DENIT:** Good morning. Kelly Denit, Director for the
3 Office of Sustainable Fisheries.
4

5 **MR. JIM LANDON:** Good morning. Jim Landon, NOAA Fisheries,
6 Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations and
7 Director of the Office of Law Enforcement.
8

9 **DR. CISCO WERNER:** Good morning. Cisco Werner, Chief Science
10 Advisor, NOAA Fisheries.
11

12 **MS. JANET COIT:** Good morning. It's great to be here. Janet
13 Coit, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, everyone. I just want
16 to also introduce three members of the Gulf Council who are also
17 here as part of your host, and I would like to recognize them in
18 the back, and if you would just raise your hand. Bob Gill.
19 Thank you, Bob. Susan Boggs. C.J. Sweetman.
20

21 All right. Well, with those introductions, that brings us to
22 the agenda. The first item of business -- Everyone has been
23 through the minutes and approved those, and so my understanding
24 is that we don't need a motion for the last minutes, that those
25 minutes are approved, and the first item of business will be the
26 Adoption of the Agenda. There has been a few minor changes, to
27 accommodate a few things, and Dr. Simmons is going to talk us
28 through that.
29

30 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

31

32 **DR. SIMMONS:** Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so we
33 have a couple of changes to Wednesday's agenda. We are going to
34 move the Communications Subcommittee Report up as the first item
35 on Wednesday morning, and get the updates to the regional
36 councils' website, and that will be followed by the
37 International Fisheries Issues, and then we'll follow the agenda
38 down with the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee Report.
39

40 Then, after lunch, we're going to tackle the America the
41 Beautiful Initiative, and that will accommodate, I think, Mr.
42 Rausch's schedule, and he'll be here by then, followed by the
43 National Standard 1 Technical Guidance Status. We are going to
44 have a short discussion of establishing fishing regulations in
45 the sanctuaries, and Mr. John Armor unfortunately was not able
46 to attend in-person and so that presentation has been moved to
47 the October CCC meeting. We have some announcements and
48 recognitions, some outgoing council members and recognizing an

1 outgoing executive director, followed by public comment. Mr.
2 Chair.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Carrie, and so I would draw -
5 - Well, I guess, first, we need -- Are there any other comments
6 or edits or suggestions regarding the agenda? Seeing none,
7 would anyone like to make a motion to approve the agenda?

8
9 **MR. GORELNIK:** I move that the CCC approve the agenda.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Do we have a second for that? Second by Chris
12 Moore. Any opposition to that motion? Seeing none, we'll
13 consider the agenda approved. Okay. Well, that takes care of
14 our business, and I would direct your attention to Tab 2, where
15 our first item of business -- Janet will take us through a NOAA
16 Fisheries Update and Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 priorities, and
17 so, Janet, whenever you're ready.

18
19 **NOAA FISHERIES UPDATE AND FY 23/24 PRIORITIES**

20
21 **MS. COIT:** Thank you. Thank you, Greg, and hello again,
22 everyone. This is a terrific agenda, and a really valuable
23 opportunity to be together here at the CCC meeting. I want to
24 start with just a few thank you, and thank you, Dr. Greg Stunz,
25 for chairing this meeting and for chairing the council, just in
26 advance of his term expiring, and thanks to Dr. Tom Frazer for
27 stepping in as Vice Chair, and thank you to Carrie, and the
28 entire staff of the Gulf Council, who did so much work to put on
29 this meeting, with fifty to sixty people in the room, and more
30 online, and a rich agenda and a gracious welcome, and so thank
31 you very much.

32
33 I wanted to also, and I know we'll do more later, but just
34 acknowledge that, as well as Greg, that a number of folks are
35 coming to the end of their time on their councils, and I was
36 able to just -- I am trying to attend each of the council
37 meetings, and it's taking me longer than I had hoped, because of
38 COVID and other issues, but I was fortunate to go to the most
39 recent Caribbean Council meeting, and I spent time with Marcos
40 Hanke and the rest of them, and Marcos is at the end of his
41 time, having served two nine-year stints on the Caribbean
42 Council.

43
44 Just down the row is Simon Kinneen, who is also ending his three
45 consecutive terms, and John Gourley also, the Vice Chair of the
46 Western Pacific Council, also ending his three consecutive
47 terms, and I just want to thank you all for incredible public
48 service and the contributions, and I'm really interested in your

1 observations, on the way out the door, for what you've learned
2 and what we might benefit from in your long service on the
3 councils. You all deal with very difficult issues, and the
4 contributions you've made to this country, and to our fisheries,
5 are legion, and I just want to acknowledge how grateful we are.

6
7 Then it's Tom Nies' last CCC meeting, and I understand that he
8 has been serving the council, the New England Council, for over
9 twenty-five years, the last decade, or more, in the role of
10 Executive Director, and, Tom, I can't say enough, in terms of
11 the -- Maybe you will write a book, but thank you for your
12 incredible service, and we wish you well.

13
14 Just a few comments on the agenda, and I just wanted to note
15 that -- Also, I wanted to say that Sam Rauch is testifying today
16 in front of the House Natural Resources Committee, and they are
17 having a budget hearing on NOAA, and certainly that committee
18 has an outsized interest in the fisheries part of NOAA, compared
19 to the rest of the NOAA line offices, and so Sam has stayed in
20 Washington, D.C., where he is testifying, and he'll be flying
21 down tomorrow, and it was a command performance, and he was
22 sorry to miss this meeting, and he probably -- I'm sure he would
23 rather be sitting here, but it will be interesting to hear about
24 the questions that were raised, and we really appreciate him
25 taking that assignment and testifying today.

26
27 Then the other folks from NOAA have introduced themselves, and
28 I'm so pleased to be here with them, which brings me to
29 Stephanie Hunt. She is giving an update today on the harassment
30 prevention policies and training, and I just wanted to really
31 applaud the councils for adopting these policies and making this
32 a priority. It was really great to see that you took that on,
33 and the efforts are really important, I think, for creating a
34 safe and welcoming environment, and so thank you, and thanks,
35 Stephanie for highlighting that today.

36
37 Then I also wanted to thank all of you, and particularly note
38 the East Coast Scenario Planning Project, for the work that
39 you've done with climate change. Your input into the Regional
40 Climate Action Plans, and helping us define and lead the way
41 towards what climate-ready fisheries means is critical.

42
43 Climate change is a framework in which this administration is
44 looking, you know, across infrastructure investments and social
45 equity. Obviously, it's affecting our fisheries, affecting our
46 communities, and you see the changes in the ecosystems, and
47 we're building our scientific capacity to better understand
48 those changes, but understanding is just half of it, and we then

1 have to make decisions and manage to address the changes.

2
3 I was able, on the plane, to read most of the report-out and the
4 action plan for the East Coast Scenario Planning, and I know
5 we're going to spend some time on that at this meeting, and I
6 think it's a really fantastic body of work, and I'm really
7 looking forward to that. It will be a focus, a continued focus,
8 for this administration and for me, going forward.

9
10 I wanted to welcome Jen Quan, and so please, if you haven't
11 already, introduce yourself to Jen. We're so thrilled that
12 she's here leading the West Coast Region. She comes to us, most
13 recently, from the Senate Commerce Committee, and she has deep
14 expertise in fisheries. She has worked for NOAA before, and she
15 was a very successful and inspiring manager at NOAA. She's
16 worked for the State of Washington, and she understands tribal
17 issues, Pacific salmon issues, and we're very fortunate to have
18 here leading the West Coast Region, and so welcome, Jen.

19
20 I also wanted to note, and I think she's coming to some of your
21 council meetings, that I have hired Katie Westfall, a new member
22 of the team, to focus on offshore wind, and it was a very
23 consuming issue for me, and it will continue to be a consuming
24 issue, but we felt that we needed more firepower to really
25 address some of the policy challenges around offshore wind, and
26 Katie -- Again, she's not here today, but, if you are -- If
27 offshore wind is on your mind, which I certainly know it is on
28 the Atlantic coast, and increasingly the Gulf and the Pacific,
29 she's a great resource, working out of Headquarters office.

30
31 That brings me to offshore wind, and it's something that you had
32 asked that I address, and, as part of the present climate
33 agenda, expansion and acceleration of our nation's offshore wind
34 industry in the U.S. is a pillar of that agenda, and it impacts
35 greatly the work that we do, and so I wanted to give a bit of a
36 summary and talk about some of our focal areas there.

37
38 The President's Executive Order talks about deploying offshore
39 wind, while protecting biodiversity and promoting ocean co-use.
40 Sometimes that portion of the statement seems to get left off,
41 and I think the job that I have, and that you have, is looking
42 at sustaining ocean co-use and promoting biodiversity, while we
43 look to responsibly site and regulate the offshore wind
44 industry.

45
46 We've been dealing with it for longer than anyone else off the
47 coast of southern New England, and there's two approved
48 projects, and NOAA learned a lot, and Mike Pentony and GARFO

1 were at the center of that, in terms of reviewing those projects
2 under our statutes and meeting the requirements under the law.
3 All of those projects, to-date, are some version of monopile,
4 and floating offshore wind is coming to deeper waters, and it
5 poses new questions, and new scientific uncertainty, beyond what
6 we're already confronting with the projects on the Atlantic.

7
8 Building our capacity to review, on the front end, the siting
9 and the marine spatial planning, which I want to commend Clay
10 Porch for the work that the Southeast Science Center has done in
11 the Gulf on marine spatial planning. That, I think, is the best
12 example we have, to-date in America, in terms of looking at
13 avoiding conflicts upfront and collecting data so that you can
14 site the projects in the best way possible.

15
16 We're looking to build capacity on the frontend, in terms of
17 marine spatial planning and siting, but, for those many projects
18 that are already in the shoot, so to speak, we're working very
19 hard to review them for compliance with the Endangered Species
20 Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Magnuson-Stevens Act,
21 that they follow the appropriate NEPA process, and that has been
22 extremely consuming.

23
24 We're currently engaged in ten additional offshore wind
25 projects, and we're a cooperating agency with BOEM, who, as you
26 know, is the action agency, and we also, of course, have
27 responsibility under the statute, and so things like the NEPA
28 EIS and the record of decision incorporate all of the mitigation
29 measures and the conditions that we put on those permits.

30
31 Our budget requests have been going up each year, because we
32 need more staff capacity, and we also need more funding for
33 survey mitigation, and that's a very active effort out of the
34 Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The impacts to our long-
35 standing surveys are of great concern to NOAA, and we have a
36 mitigation strategy, but, even on the Atlantic coast, it's
37 hundreds of millions of dollars, and they need to do the
38 research and calibrate those surveys, and so that's a key area
39 of focus.

40
41 We have a North Atlantic right whale strategy on the Atlantic
42 coast that we've done together with BOEM, again led out of our
43 Northeast Fisheries Science Center, with a lot of input from our
44 Office of Protected Resources, and that's another effort to
45 identify, avoid, minimize, and mitigate strategies around
46 impacts to endangered North Atlantic right whales, which is the
47 species of greatest concern when it comes to siting of offshore
48 wind on the Atlantic coast.

1
2 We are -- BOEM has in mind -- They've held eleven offshore wind
3 lease sales and issued twenty-seven active commercial wind
4 leases, and they plan to complete the environmental review
5 process for sixteen more offshore wind projects by 2025, and so
6 just the workload of keeping up, let alone the scientific issues
7 and the challenges associated with these large infrastructure
8 projects, are very consuming.

9
10 People have asked me, and is that taking away from other work,
11 and, yes, we've had to divert resources in order to handle the
12 permitting and the regulatory aspects of these projects. We're
13 looking for resources from an entity called the Federal
14 Permitting Interagency Council, and I think I got that slightly
15 wrong, and we have hopes of getting additional resources, and
16 we've also had support from the President, and from Congress, to
17 keep increasing our resources, but, as we look to do this
18 responsibly, and navigate this course, one of the issues that
19 we've been discussing recently with the White House is, again,
20 what are the roles of the councils.

21
22 We've had presentations from BOEM, and you have weighed-in, but
23 there isn't a specific role carved out under the law, and so, as
24 with a lot of things, we have a lot of transparency and
25 experience around fisheries management, but are still looking to
26 have a clearer role, with more transparency, around offshore
27 wind. The fisheries compensation issues are very difficult
28 issues that have largely been led by the states, through their
29 authorities, and BOEM has some guidance out now, in a draft
30 form, but those are issues too that, as a policy challenge, need
31 considerable attention, and it's something that we're focused
32 on.

33
34 As offshore wind is spread to other coasts, and we talked
35 recently about it coming to the Caribbean, I think there's been
36 a bigger head of steam, or set of interested entities, and so,
37 while we're working to do our best on the projects that are
38 going forward, I think there's a lot of opportunity still to
39 improve the policies around offshore wind, and it's something
40 that I would love to discuss further with this group and that
41 we're working really hard on.

42
43 Having said that, the climate change impacts to our ecosystems
44 and the ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to
45 scale-up renewables is an imperative, and offshore wind, and its
46 challenges and our opportunities around siting, and around
47 regulations, are something we need to keep confronting head-on.
48 Again, I want to commend Mike Pentony, because he probably has

1 more experience than anyone in the room, in terms of the reviews
2 and the regulatory responsibilities for those projects, and so
3 that's a huge focus for me and for the leadership team.

4
5 When we hear from Dave Whaley, perhaps he will have some
6 comments about interest on the hill, because not only is there
7 interest around so-called permitting reform, and that's
8 something we're hearing a lot about during the conversations
9 about the debt ceiling, but there also is interest around these
10 other issues that I mentioned, in terms of supporting fisheries
11 and reducing impacts on protected species.

12
13 Speaking of protected species, and I'm going to switch gears
14 here and just mention that this year marks the fiftieth
15 anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, and that, as you
16 know, passed overwhelmingly, with bipartisan support, in 1973.
17 It isn't probably quite as popular today, but it is one of the
18 foundational laws that has enabled us to work to prevent
19 extinction successfully, largely, and is imperative that you are
20 very familiar with, as you deal with the intersection of ESA and
21 MSA, which we're going to discuss later, and as you deal with
22 the challenges around endangered species and fisheries,

23
24 May 19 was Endangered Species Day, and we've been doing a lot to
25 raise awareness about monk seals and right whales and corals and
26 all of the species under our responsibility, and I want to
27 commend the work that the councils have done around reducing
28 impacts on endangered species from fisheries and mention that --
29 I won't list the species in every region, but you're all dealing
30 with these issues.

31
32 Pacific salmon challenges are particularly at the forefront of
33 our minds, given the number of listed species and the impact on
34 fisheries, and it's something that Congress is also very
35 interested in, and so it's a big focus for us. I think the
36 fiftieth anniversary gives us an opportunity to educate folks,
37 to celebrate our successes, and to continue to collaborate with
38 the councils towards having the world in which we have
39 sustainable fisheries and we're also doing our absolute best to
40 protect and recover listed species.

41
42 There's more to come on that, and the actual fiftieth
43 anniversary isn't until December 28, but, together with the U.S.
44 Fish and Wildlife Service, we have a number of things planned
45 along the year.

46
47 The bipartisan infrastructure law and the impending
48 announcements on the Inflation Reduction Act are some of the

1 areas where we've been able to invest greatly in conservation
2 and restoration and restoring fish passage, and, among the
3 challenges that we have in our respective roles, it's been
4 really exciting to be at the helm during a time when we have
5 additional resources, hundreds of millions in some programs, you
6 know totaling several billion dollars at NOAA, to put towards
7 habitat conservation.

8
9 That is something that Carrie Robinson leads, but your states,
10 the tribes, the partners that you work with, have been very
11 successful, and we've had over a hundred grants issued to-date,
12 really significant projects in watersheds. Because of the size
13 of the funding amounts, we've been able to help partners do
14 projects that they have contemplated for decades, and we have
15 more to come, and so we finished our first round of
16 announcements just last month, and we announced what's called
17 The Transformational Habitat and the Capacity-Building Grants.

18
19 We had thirty-five new projects that addressed underserved
20 communities, and lots of new applicants, and so we have not only
21 the great watersheds that we're working to restore and protect,
22 but also some really heartening projects in urban areas, where
23 they're looking at the impacts of sea level rise and flooding as
24 well as habitat.

25
26 We expect -- We have bumped up those funding amounts, with some
27 of the funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, and Brian is
28 giving a budget presentation later, and there really isn't too
29 much we can say yet about our big intentions for using the
30 Inflation Reduction Act funding, except to say that we hope to
31 line it up with our critical mission priorities and that we have
32 a plan that is under review right now, but it's exciting to
33 contemplate additional resources to focus on science,
34 management, habitat restoration, and there's more to come soon,
35 in terms of IRA. We recognize that you all are also buffeted
36 with additional needs, particularly in addressing ecosystem
37 changes related to climate change, and so we want to be helpful.

38
39 The equity and environmental justice strategy, which some of our
40 IRA funding -- It impacts some of all of our investments across
41 this administration, and, you know, we're looking to do a better
42 job in the areas that have been underinvested in in the past, or
43 have borne more than their share of the burden of pollution, and
44 we have an EEJ strategy that was released yesterday, that Sam
45 led, and I believe Kelly is going to speak to right after I
46 finish my remarks, and we're very excited about the strategy.

47
48 I would say it's the beginning of a new phase, in terms of

1 working with all of you and working across our programs, to see
2 how we can improve access and improve our performance in
3 communities that maybe have not benefitted as much from either
4 the fisheries or funding, and I just want to commend the work
5 that went into that and say, again, that it's not like the work
6 is done. The work is just beginning.

7
8 Our National Seafood Strategy is going to be released before too
9 long, hopefully this summer, and that's, for me, a really
10 important effort that allows us to talk about all the myriad
11 benefits of seafood and to educate the public and support the
12 commercial sector, support infrastructure, look to issues that
13 are uniquely in our scope, in terms of sustainability, and look
14 a little bit beyond our scope, into some of the trade issues,
15 and it's not just a repackaging of what we're doing.

16
17 However, it does give us a platform from which to talk about the
18 work that you're doing and how science-based and rigorous the
19 management decisions are that give us confidence that we have
20 well-managed fisheries and that the American public can have
21 confidence in our seafood being delicious and healthy and well-
22 managed to protect the ecosystems, and so there's a lot we want
23 to do to just promote seafood, and it's benefits, and then look
24 to the various ways that we, with our management and with our
25 funding, can support the seafood sector in America.

26
27 When we did the roundtables and got a lot of feedback, it was
28 striking how the concerns across industry are very similar
29 region-to-region, even while your fisheries are very, very
30 different, about aging of the workforce, old infrastructure,
31 concerns about climate change and shifting stocks, and what is
32 that going to mean, and so we're hoping that the seafood
33 strategy, which we've talked a lot about at some of the seafood
34 expos, like SENA in Boston, gives us an opportunity to have a
35 really positive story that we can work with you on.

36
37 As I wrap-up, I wanted to again note that I have been working to
38 get to each of the council meetings, and there's nothing that I
39 enjoy more than meeting people where they live and learning from
40 all of you about the different challenges that you face. I am
41 headed to American Samoa for the Western Pacific meeting in
42 June, and I think I've worked out a time to go to the South
43 Atlantic, later this year, and my first meeting that I attended
44 was New England, but I attended virtually, and so I've got to
45 also get back there.

46
47 I will close by saying that it's important to me, and to all of
48 us, to not be sitting in Silver Spring, but to get out and see

1 what you're grappling with, and I have tremendous respect for
2 the work that you do and for the way that the Magnuson-Stevens
3 Act sets us up to collaborate and bring many voices to the table
4 in making well-thought-out decisions, based on science, at a
5 time when the challenges are quite great, but I feel optimistic
6 that, as I look around this table, with the work that we're able
7 to do together, and I'm eager to, you know, kind of pull the lid
8 off and talk more about it to everywhere I go, about how proud I
9 am of the seafood sector and the science and the collaboration
10 that we are all part of around this table, and so thank you,
11 all, and I'm very interested to hear the dialogue throughout
12 this meeting, and also some of the side conversations that also
13 give us the chance to get to know each other better. Thank you,
14 Greg.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Janet, and I'm sure there will be
17 questions for you, and I will go ahead and open up the floor for
18 questions. Bill.

19
20 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Janet, for a really
21 good walk-through on a lot of complex issues. I am still -- I
22 kind of forgot, and I couldn't really see it in the EEJ
23 presentation very well, but are you thinking that the agency
24 will, sometime in the near future, have the ability to take a
25 look at underserved communities from the seafood consumer
26 perspective?

27
28 We've certainly heard a lot in the media, generally, about
29 disparities between communities across the nation, in terms of
30 the -- Both the quality of food that's available to stores and
31 as well as cost of food that's available, and I'm wondering if
32 there is any ability to track that just from a seafood
33 perspective, and where U.S. seafood ends up, particularly,
34 again, looking at it from the standpoint of affordable, quality,
35 sustainably harvested?

36
37 **MS. COIT:** Thank you, Bill. I feel like the intersection of our
38 National Seafood Strategy and the EEJ strategy is the place for
39 that to live. Again, the seafood strategy gives us an
40 opportunity just to talk about food and the importance of
41 seafood as a source of protein.

42
43 I went to a dinner in the Caribbean where underutilized species
44 were promoted, working with some of the chefs that are quite
45 well known, and I know a number of you in the states have worked
46 on underutilized species, but, you know, when we look at the
47 industry, or other ways of getting healthy protein to kids and
48 families, I'm interested, as part of the nexus between a seafood

1 strategy, looking at the importance of sustainable seafood, and
2 the EEJ strategy, looking at how to promote health and wellbeing
3 in disadvantaged communities, and I think that's an exciting
4 place for us to focus.

5
6 Also, I didn't mention the growth of aquaculture, but that is
7 part of our seafood strategy, and it has some potential in some
8 areas, also. In some areas, it's some of the most expensive
9 seafood, but, with mussels and other species, there might be an
10 opportunity there, too.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any other questions? All right. Well, thank
13 you, Janet, for that thorough summary, and I'm sure that you
14 will be around for some time, if there's other questions and
15 that kind of thing as well. All right. Well, with that, we'll
16 move on to the next agenda item, and that is Kelly Denit is up
17 to talk about NOAA's Equity and Environmental Justice. Kelly,
18 are you ready?

19
20 **NATIONAL EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

21
22 **MS. DENIT:** Thank you, Chair, and so imagine me with slightly
23 less hair, and perhaps maybe a little bit grumpier expression on
24 my face, presenting on behalf of Sam, who, as Janet mentioned,
25 was a champion of our equity and environmental justice, EEJ,
26 strategy, and he has led this multiyear effort.

27
28 First of all, thank you all for your feedback and input as part
29 of the strategy. As you know, this was a multiyear effort, with
30 an iterative process to get as much feedback as we could to
31 inform it, and we are super psyched that it is out, as of
32 yesterday, and hopefully you've all had a chance to at least
33 skim through it, and we are readily recognizing that not all
34 communities have had equal access to NOAA Fisheries' services.
35 This strategy is going to guide us as we work to engage with
36 underserved communities, moving forward.

37
38 There are three main goals in this strategy, and the first is
39 centered on identifying underserved communities, providing
40 equitable treatment, and meaningful involvement of those
41 communities, and this is really at the heart of the strategy,
42 and I think, in part, it reflects at least I know some of the
43 feedback that I've heard from the council EDs, in particular on
44 identifying who are the underserved communities in your
45 respective areas.

46
47 The second goal is focused on providing equitable services, and
48 the third is prioritizing EEJ in our mission work with

1 demonstrable progress, and so this is really focused on that
2 which gets measured gets managed and making sure that we're
3 including metrics and focusing on outcomes as part of this
4 strategy.

5
6 We have identified six core areas, and I am going to focus at
7 the center to start, which is that empowering environment, and
8 this is the foundation, from our perspective, on the long-term
9 institutionalization of EEJ, and it involves our leadership
10 support as well as building our workforce, in particular
11 improving diversity within our workforce, creating that
12 environment where folks are able to participate and bring their
13 full perspective to the conversation.

14
15 Moving up to twelve o'clock on the clock there, as we go around
16 the graphic, is the policy and plans, and so, in this area, we
17 want to focus on removing the structural barriers to equity that
18 may have perpetuated inequality over time, whether that's
19 through access to resources or our regulatory burden. We also
20 want to focus on research and monitoring, and this is really
21 focused in on diversifying how we're collecting our information
22 and taking advantage of maybe some knowledge sources that we
23 have not previously used and use that inform both our decision-
24 making and better inform our assessment of the impacts of our
25 decision-making.

26
27 Outreach and engagement, this is focused on our relationship
28 building and creating pathways for communication, both to
29 underserved communities as well as from underserved communities.
30 Benefits is looking at how we ensure that our benefits for
31 fisheries, as well as financial benefits, are equitably
32 distributed, and, ultimately, inclusive governance, supporting
33 the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in our
34 decision-making process, which is a critical role that you all
35 play as part of our fishery management system, and we'll talk a
36 little bit more as we get into some of the detailed public
37 feedback that we received.

38
39 I am going to take a couple of slides to just talk you through
40 some of the feedback that we heard. There's a lot of focus on
41 taking more of a bottom-up approach to our management, and
42 better aligning our work with the needs of underserved
43 communities, and there was a significant focus on co-management
44 and cooperative research types of activities, to better engage
45 underserved communities in the whole continuum of our
46 management.

47
48 We need to identify and engage with groups that have not

1 historically been included, and this is a component of --
2 Really, a lot of the feedback was focused on including humans as
3 part of the management considerations, and so getting a better
4 handle on actually characterizing our fishing communities, and
5 who is in them, and then, also, looking at the multifaceted
6 benefits that people get from fishing and recognizing that
7 economic components are only one aspect of that and that there
8 are cultural and other components that we need to be better at
9 taking into account.

10
11 There was also a request that we promote equity in our
12 distribution and access to fishing and aquaculture and that we
13 take equity into account as we're thinking about our management
14 with respect to protected resources.

15
16 A lot of comments related to the autonomy of territorial and
17 tribal governments and the special role that the tribes have
18 with respect to the federal government, and, also, an emphasis
19 around our diversity, and are we reflecting, we the NOAA
20 Fisheries Service reflecting, the communities that we serve, and
21 so suggestions for us to increase diversity on our workforce, as
22 well as in the council process and our other advisory bodies
23 that provide input to NOAA Fisheries as part of our decision-
24 making.

25
26 As I mentioned on the previous slide, a number of comments
27 around making sure that emphasis is on our outcomes and not just
28 number of meetings that we hold or number of workshops that we
29 conduct, but how do we actually move the needle to achieve some
30 of the outcomes that we identify as part of the strategy.

31
32 Then there was also quite a feedback that was a little bit more
33 implementation focused, as opposed to strategy, and so we've
34 tried to capture them here. There was a focus on making sure
35 that we're communicating early and often with our stakeholders,
36 and, when I get to another couple of slides, in another couple
37 of slides, I'll talk a little bit about our engagement over this
38 upcoming summer. We have taken that to heart.

39
40 We also heard a number of comments about engaging with you all,
41 other agencies, making sure that we are engaging with
42 underserved communities, but not in such a way that, all of a
43 sudden, they go from no conversations with us to 100
44 conversations with us, but it's all different parts of us coming
45 at folks, and that can create its own set of challenges, and so
46 trying to make sure that we find that right balance.

47
48 Then, also, making sure that we support the capacity for EEJ

1 work, and so an emphasis on having people in the locations where
2 folks are, making sure that we are doing better about language
3 skills, cultural understanding for those communities that we're
4 engaging with, and further emphasis on researching the social
5 impacts of management decisions on peoples and communities.

6
7 For more information, it is on our website, and I apologize that
8 I didn't actually put the link here in the slide, but the final
9 strategy is available in English on our website right now, and
10 it will also be published in Spanish, and that will be coming
11 soon, and then we will have the executive summary available in
12 ten-plus additional languages here in the near-term as well.

13
14 I have two more slides, and this is really just laying out our
15 timeline. As I mentioned, this has been a multiyear process,
16 and it started with a national EEJ working group that we formed,
17 and up to where we are now on the far-right, which is the
18 rollout of the final strategy, and now we're moving into
19 engagement, with the goal of having EEJ implementation plans
20 finalized by the end of this year. There will be a focus, this
21 summer, on engaging across our diverse communities by the
22 regional offices.

23
24 Here is what is happening next. Each regional office, and the
25 Headquarters office, has been asked to create an engagement
26 plan, and so start thinking about who are the critical
27 underserved communities in their area that they need to engage
28 with, conduct that engagement over the course of the summer, and
29 use the input from that engagement, ultimately, to develop the
30 implementation plans, which, as I mentioned, are intended to be
31 done by the end of this calendar year.

32
33 Again, my thanks to Sam and all of our folks who led this
34 effort, and I'm just the face of it for this morning, and so I
35 would be happy to answer any questions, Chair.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kelly. Yes, go ahead, if there's
38 any questions. Merrick.

39
40 **MR. BURDEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Kelly, for
41 that excellent presentation. In a few slides before this, you
42 had a list of comments that you were receiving, one of which, at
43 the bottom, focused on -- It says to monitor outcomes and not
44 inputs, and so my question is on the outcomes, and what are
45 those outcomes that you would plan to monitor for and track?
46 Then a related question would be do you have any thoughts about
47 how to integrate those with the National Standards that
48 currently guide our processes and work?

1
2 **MS. DENIT:** Thanks, Merrick. I think the overarching goals that
3 I touched on highlight some concepts that are intended to be
4 guiding the outcomes, but, ultimately, the outcomes are going to
5 be identified as part of the implementation plans that each of
6 the regions are developing, and this is my understanding of the
7 process, and so let me put that caveat there.

8
9 Those will be identified as part of that upcoming engagement,
10 which will happen over the summer, to then guide where we need
11 to focus our efforts and what those outcomes are that we're
12 trying to achieve.

13
14 With respect to the National Standards, obviously, we'll be
15 talking about that here in just a second, and we have our
16 advanced notice of proposed rulemaking out, and, as we've
17 highlighted in the ANPR, thoughts around EEJ are one of the main
18 components that we are thinking about with respect to the
19 National Standard Guidelines, all three that are included, and
20 so, to the extent that there are thoughts and input with respect
21 to how underserved communities could be better served, with
22 respect to changes to the National Standard Guidelines, that's
23 what we're going to be seeking to hear back from folks over the
24 course of the ANPR comment period. Hopefully that answered your
25 question.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Tom.

28
29 **MR. NIES:** Thank you. I would just like to follow-up on one of
30 Merrick's questions about that very bullet on outcomes and not
31 inputs, and I guess I struggle, when I looked at the metrics in
32 the document, which talk about number of meetings held, number
33 of people trained, number of this, and how those are measuring
34 outcomes rather than inputs.

35
36 You know, when you look at many of the metrics, the things that
37 are identified in here, it seems like they're all measuring
38 inputs, to me, and not outcomes, and so it seems odd, to me, and
39 I think Merrick's question is exactly on point, and what are the
40 outcomes that we're looking for here, but my question relates to
41 the engagement process.

42
43 I guess I'm a little curious whether the engagement plan that is
44 supposed to be developed this year includes the first step of
45 identifying who the underserved communities are in our regions,
46 because I know, in some regions, that may be easy to do, and, in
47 others, it may be more difficult, and, speaking in New England,
48 I'm not sure that we have a clear understanding of who the

1 underserved communities are that we need to target, and so is
2 that the first step of the engagement plan or not, to identify
3 those communities?
4

5 **MS. DENIT:** I haven't read everyone's engagement plans, and I
6 would imagine that, yes, there would be a component of
7 identifying who those underserved communities are, and I think
8 it's also important to recognize that this is going to be an
9 iterative process, and we are not expecting that we are going to
10 know exactly who all of our underserved communities are
11 immediately by the end of this year.
12

13 The idea is to start the engagement now, so that we can, over
14 time, identify all of the communities that potentially are
15 underserved, that we don't know who they are right now, but I
16 saw that Janet might have more to add there.
17

18 **MS. COIT:** Yes, and I wanted to just add that something that we
19 did with the BIL funds, in our underserved community grants, was
20 ask folks to self-identify, and I think there will be a
21 combination of that, and it was very powerful, because it's not
22 about a census track, or some measure that the federal
23 government is telling you, that you're identified as this, and
24 it was come forward and tell us why you feel you meet this
25 category, and so I think the engagement is kind of tricky,
26 because it's not just let us smart people in the room identify
27 who is an underserved community, but it's really seeking to find
28 ways of connecting with people, so that folks can come forward.
29

30 I can think, in Rhode Island, of the Hmong community, or
31 communities that depend a lot on fisheries, but might not know
32 how to access decision-making processes, and so, you know,
33 there's a number of -- There is different kinds of ways to
34 approach this, and I think they will be very regionally
35 specific, but I just wanted to emphasize that part of that is
36 organic, with people coming forward, if we can reach them.
37

38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, did you have a follow-up to that?
39

40 **MR. NIES:** No, but thank you.
41

42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Next on the list I had Chris.
43

44 **MR. MOORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had the same, or a similar,
45 question to Tom, and so thanks for the answer, and thanks,
46 Kelly, for the presentation, but, yes, I'm very curious as to
47 how and who these underserved communities are in the Mid-
48 Atlantic, and so any clarification on that, as we move forward,

1 would certainly be helpful. Thank you.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Bill.

4
5 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Kelly, it's sort of a follow-up
6 to my initial question to Janet about -- She talked a little bit
7 about the intersection between the National Seafood Strategy and
8 this, and so whose responsibility is it then to write an
9 engagement plan for all the non-coastal states? I didn't hear
10 that, but you talked about how there is -- So my question to
11 Janet, and in her answer, it was that there is clearly
12 underserved communities in the middle of the continent too, away
13 from the coast, and how are they going to be engaged in this?

14
15 **MS. DENIT:** So I don't know. I would say, again, we're not
16 going to have everything right now at the start, and so the
17 point that you raised about seafood consumers I think is one for
18 us to think some more about, and, whether that's a component of,
19 for example, a Headquarters Office engagement, as we think about
20 equity and environmental justice, compared to the regional
21 offices, that might be more focused on the coastal states that
22 are in their respective region, and I think that would be, at
23 least in my head, the first thing that comes to mind, Bill, for
24 how we would capture those communities in the interior of the
25 country, but I welcome an assist from anyone else who has ideas,
26 or thoughts, about how we might get to that.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bill, a follow-up?

29
30 **MR. TWEIT:** I guess just sort of a follow-up comment, and it's
31 certainly no solution, but, at least from my perspective, as a
32 council member, understanding where that seafood that's produced
33 out of our area ends up, how much of it ends up sort of helping
34 address the needs of underserved communities, is going to be
35 fairly important information, in terms of -- This is going to be
36 a balancing act, like everything else we do, and the loudest
37 voices are always the closest voices in our council process, and
38 thinking about the balancing act then between what we produce
39 that's needed by fishery communities locally, either as revenue,
40 economic benefits, or as actually meeting consumers' needs
41 there, versus what's being needed elsewhere in the country,
42 particularly in the interior, ultimately seems, to me, to be an
43 important part of really making sure that we're fully addressing
44 EEJ and not just looking at specific geographic slides of EEJ.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Bill. Go ahead, John.

47
48 **MR. GOURLEY:** Thank you, Chairman. This is great, and I love

1 the noble goals. I think we've got a really long way to go in
2 the Western Pacific. We have a lot of issues with EEJ issues,
3 and I believe we were even the most responsive region, when it
4 came to giving you our concerns.

5
6 I don't think there's any problem in identifying American Samoa,
7 Guam, and CNMI as being underserved communities. To a certain
8 degree, I believe that Hawaii would also fall into that
9 category, but what's interesting in the Western Pacific is that
10 we are politically neutered, and I believe that Puerto Rico is
11 in the same boat, is that we do not have a voting member in
12 Congress, and we do not have any representative in the Senate,
13 and we do not vote for President, although that probably doesn't
14 mean much, and so we're stepped on, and we are not treated with
15 any type of respect by the rest of the country that have
16 politicians that represent their interests.

17
18 I will give an example, and I know that we sound like a broken
19 record with sanctuaries, but they come out, and they parachute
20 in, and they give us an explanation on sanctuaries for twenty
21 minutes, and they cut the questions and answers off, so that we
22 can give comments, and, well, how the hell are the comments
23 going to be any good when the community, the affected community,
24 doesn't understand what's going on, and then they go out.

25
26 There is no coordination, and they engage with more diverse
27 groups, respecting the autonomy of territories, and that doesn't
28 happen out here in the Western Pacific, and, quite honestly, my
29 personal opinion is that ONMS is out of control, and it affects
30 us, as a fishing group, because ONMS -- I shouldn't say ONMS,
31 but sitting presidents, of both political parties, have already
32 knocked out over 50 percent of U.S. waters in the Western
33 Pacific for our commercial fishing.

34
35 Now ONMS is coming behind and turning everything that are
36 monuments into sanctuaries, but wouldn't you think that 50
37 percent of our waters being closed to fisheries is enough? No.
38 Let's expand the boundaries of the monuments and call them
39 sanctuaries, and they infer to let's close the fisheries.

40
41 We may not -- You know, ONMS may basically make our jobs in the
42 Western Pacific Council obsolete, and we won't have any waters
43 for anything to actually manage, and, NMFS, what are we going to
44 manage, if everything is a sanctuary? I am going to stop there,
45 but this EEJ needs to be focused on -- I don't mean to
46 prioritize the Western Pacific with the other guys here, but
47 we've got some very serious problems in the way we've been
48 treated, and I will end with one thing, and it's sanctuary-

1 related.

2

3 It's that the Governor of the CNMI, when he was newly elected,
4 sent a letter to ONMS expressing concerns about why the Mariana
5 Sanctuary has not been taken off the inventory list, one year
6 after the deadline for the public comment period, and what's
7 going on? We don't even get the courtesy of a response.

8

9 You know, I really hope that NMFS can support the Western
10 Pacific in keeping our waters open for commercial fishing.
11 You've got 50 percent already, and that's enough, and so I'm
12 going to stop there, but thank you.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John, and we probably should move on
15 a little bit, unless there's more comments. Go ahead.

16

17 **MR. SWORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I represent an underserved
18 fishing community in American Samoa, and I know that, following
19 up on Merrick's question, is how do you measure outcomes, and
20 that's really, really important. Basically, it says are we
21 going to walk the talk, and do our actions speak louder than
22 words, and not just words on paper, and I want to thank Kelly,
23 first of all, for actually putting this together, because it's
24 really important.

25

26 I know that feedback from our territory has been extensive, and
27 from our outreach and from the Western, but we look at equity,
28 and do we walk the talk? For NOAA, NMFS cuts the quotas and our
29 fishing days on the high seas, and the sanctuaries close off the
30 domestic waters to fishing, and, since 2004, we've had forty-
31 four purse seiners fishing, representing the U.S., and this is a
32 U.S. fleet in the Pacific. Now we're down to eleven.

33

34 We had two canneries, and now we're down to one. They employ --
35 They had 5,000 workers, and now we're down to 2,800, and 60
36 percent of all people in American Samoa are under the U.S.
37 poverty level. If there is a definition for underserved, this
38 is it. That's really, really important.

39

40 When you close off waters, especially the -- Our fishing boats
41 go to them, because the purse seiners represent 85 percent of
42 the fish that we pack in our canneries, and most of the
43 contracts there go to the U.S. military for food, and the
44 canneries bring in the boats that supply the dry dock with
45 business, and so we keep it open. If anything happens with
46 China, for instance, with the military, we need all that
47 infrastructure.

48

1 By closing off these fisheries, we're actually, in many ways,
2 shooting ourselves, but the key is equity. How do you serve
3 this underserved fishing community? By closing it off?
4 Actually, it's kind of like ironic, or hypocritical, for both
5 branches of NOAA to -- It's kind of like an attack from both
6 ends, to the point where you just annihilate fishing in our
7 area, and actually annihilate our -- The one cannery that we
8 have represents about 80 percent of our economy. You know,
9 there is no comeback, once it's closed and it's out of business.

10
11 I want to say, again, for EEJ, walk the talk, and how do you
12 measure it? Well, we should be measuring before we make
13 decisions, and we should know what it is, what it represents,
14 and so, to me, I think that it's very important to think of the
15 outcomes, and, when you talk about representation, the Pacific
16 Remote Island Coalition -- American Samoa used to depend on
17 Senator Inouye, in the old days, to represent us, because John
18 just mentioned that we don't have any real voting in Congress,
19 and so -- But, in this case, we have some fanatics there,
20 basically, in our view from American Samoa, that are dictating
21 how things are run, and they don't belong to Hawaii. They
22 belong to the U.S. states and territories, and we should
23 remember that when we make these decisions. Those are my two
24 bits that I wanted to throw on the floor, but thank you very
25 much, Mr. Chairman.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Will, and we probably should
28 move on. Just as a reminder, tomorrow afternoon, we'll have a
29 little bit more discussion on this, as well as it will be a
30 major agenda focal area at our October meeting as well, and so I
31 don't see any other hands. Thank you, Kelly, and I believe
32 you're up next again, for the next -- Just to remind everyone on
33 our schedule here, we have just a little over ten minutes,
34 Kelly, for this next agenda item, and we probably could go a
35 little more if we need to, but that's where National Standards
36 4, 8, and 9, as well as some data confidentiality discussion --
37 So no pressure there.

38
39 **DATA CONFIDENTIALITY RULE**
40

41 **MS. DENIT:** I think it's safe to say we're going to have a late
42 break. If it would be okay, Chair, since there's such disparate
43 topics that I'm covering, I was going to kind of take questions
44 as I go, and would that be acceptable for you?

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, that would be fine.

47
48 **MS. DENIT:** Okay. Great. So, let's talk about a few meaty

1 talks, or continue talking about meaty topics, and so first up
2 is the Magnuson-Stevens Act data confidentiality, and we talked
3 about this briefly at our last meeting, where we indicated that
4 we were moving forward with the rulemaking, and that continues
5 to be the case. Our plan is to get that out this summer, and
6 the issues that we're going to address in the rulemaking I will
7 step through here in a second, and I want to start by
8 highlighting, as we talked about last time, and we are breaking
9 confidentiality into a couple of different components, and so
10 there are going to be key aspects that will be addressed in the
11 proposed rule, and then there will be several that will be
12 addressed after the rule is finalized.

13
14 Starting with the issues in the rulemaking, you see them here on
15 the bulleted list, and we're going to clarify how
16 confidentiality applies with respect to catch share programs,
17 and there's a specific exemption, or an exception, in Magnuson
18 for limited-access privilege programs, and so put a little bit
19 more clarity around what exactly is a determination and,
20 therefore, what information can be released in those certain
21 instances.

22
23 We also want to better define the submitter of the data, and so
24 being really clear about who is responsible for reporting data
25 to NMFS, and there is also the opportunity for some written
26 authorization exception, and so applying a process for the
27 submitter to release confidential data, and so this is largely
28 for fishermen who might want to release information, and being
29 clear about what they can release and how they would go about
30 doing that, and we're also going to touch on how we're going to
31 manage data that's voluntarily submitted to NMFS, and so this is
32 largely data that we get that is submitted via different
33 research projects and what confidentiality applies, or does not,
34 in those instances.

35
36 Then, also, it's talking about confidentiality with respect to
37 third parties. With the advantaged implementation of electronic
38 monitoring and other uses of third parties for data, how does
39 that all work, and how does confidentiality apply there?

40
41 As I mentioned, there will be issues that will be addressed via
42 policy or more technical guidance that will come after the
43 rulemaking, and so this lists things like replacing our existing
44 administrative order that deals with confidentiality, thinking
45 about our procedures for releasing information in aggregate or
46 summary form, and so that's to tackle the kind of rule of three
47 that everybody colloquially talks about.

48

1 We also want to streamline the access to confidential
2 information by councils, commissions, states, all of our
3 partners, so that we can hopefully make that system much more
4 effective, and then, also, streamlining the process for how
5 current vessel permit holders can request and access fisheries
6 data and other information. With that, Chair, I would be happy
7 to take questions on the confidentiality component, if there are
8 any.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kelly. Any questions regarding data
11 confidentiality? Tom.

12
13 **MR. NIES:** I've got to get all these questions in, and I guess
14 one of my concerns is on the procedures for releasing
15 information in aggregate or summary form and how that relates
16 with EEJ ideas in particular, but also just in management
17 decisions.

18
19 Some of the -- Without giving any detail, or without getting
20 into a lot of detail, how are we able to provide information to
21 the council and the public, which is going to support some of
22 the decisions that we need to make, for smaller communities in
23 particular, when we run into these data confidentiality rules,
24 and, when you're working on these data confidentiality rules, is
25 there any thought to how current, or how hold, the data are, in
26 order to perhaps simplify the aggregation?

27
28 I mean, just a simple example. If I know where a fishing boat
29 is fishing right now, that's giving away a business secret,
30 perhaps, but, if I talk about where some fishing boat fished
31 three years ago, I'm not sure there's the same concern, but is
32 the proposed rule going to make it easier for us to use
33 information like that, or are we still going to be hindered at
34 getting down at the granular scale that we often get asked for
35 when evaluating the impacts of our regulations?

36
37 **MS. DENIT:** Thanks, Tom, and your point is well taken, and I
38 will certainly provide that back to the group, but I don't think
39 we're going to get into that level of detail in the proposed
40 rulemaking, and that will be in the follow-on guidance that will
41 come, but I appreciate that point, for sure.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Seeing no other questions, Kelly, if you
44 want to go ahead and proceed to the next items.

45
46 **WTO AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES**

47
48 **MS. DENIT:** Yes, sir. Very quickly, I just wanted to touch on

1 the World Trade Organization agreement on fisheries subsidies,
2 and so this falls under the concepts around our seafood strategy
3 and leveling the playing field.

4
5 Essentially, last year, the WTO reached an agreement to prohibit
6 subsidies, in specific instances, specifically if they are
7 supporting IUU fishing, fishing on overfished stocks, or on the
8 unregulated high seas, and so this is a really important
9 development, as we think about many other nations and the level
10 of subsidies that they provide to their fishing fleets.

11
12 The United States adhered to the agreement in April of this
13 year, and, at this time, there is, I think, about five or six
14 countries who have adhered to the agreement, and we need a
15 three-quarters majority before the agreement comes into effect,
16 and so coming into effect is still several years away.
17 Nevertheless, it's an important step forward in addressing this
18 key issue of subsidies.

19
20 We do not expect any significant impacts on any of our NOAA
21 programs from the subsidy agreement, but, as I mentioned,
22 hopefully this will help in the leveling-the-playing-field kind
23 of realm of our seafood strategy, as we think about potential
24 ratcheting back of subsidies that other countries are providing
25 to their fishing fleets. Are there questions?

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I am not seeing any, Kelly. Go ahead.

28
29 **MS. DENIT:** John. Sorry.

30
31 **MR. GOURLEY:** I'm just curious, and this is a short question.
32 When the U.S. pays for use for our tuna fishermen, for the purse
33 seine to pay access fees, isn't that a subsidy?

34
35 **MS. DENIT:** So I don't -- Are you talking about the South
36 Pacific Tuna Treaty?

37
38 **MR. GOURLEY:** I'm sorry?

39
40 **MS. DENIT:** Are you talking about the South Pacific Tuna Treaty?

41
42 **MR. GOURLEY:** Yes. The government pays access fees for our tuna
43 fishermen, and wouldn't that be considered a subsidy?

44
45 **MS. DENIT:** For the purposes, as I have understood it, for the
46 WTO agreement, that is not covered by the WTO.

47
48 **MR. GOURLEY:** Okay, because I understand that the last price

1 increase that we pay for access is up to \$60 million a year, and
2 so that's a sizable amount of money to support our fishing
3 fleet, and so I'm just curious.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kelly, go ahead. I'm not seeing any other
6 questions.

7
8 **NATIONAL STANDARDS 4, 8, AND 9 (ADVANCED NOTICE OF PROPOSED**
9 **RULEMAKING)**

10
11 **MS. DENIT:** Okay. Great. Now we'll move into the advanced
12 notice of proposed rulemaking, the ANPR, on the National
13 Standards, which we were just talking about. Here, we're
14 seeking input on whether in fact we should update these three
15 guidelines, whether it's all three or one or two, and we are
16 truly wide open in seeking input.

17
18 Just as a quick reminder, the three National Standards are
19 National Standard 4, which is focused on allocations and has the
20 language around fair and equitable, promote conservation, and
21 not result in excessive shares, and I'm highlighting these just
22 because it will help bring up some of the next slides. National
23 Standard 8 is focused on considering the impacts to communities,
24 in particular providing for sustained participation and
25 minimizing adverse impacts, and then, of course, National
26 Standard 9 is minimizing bycatch and bycatch mortality, to the
27 extent practicable.

28
29 We framed an ANPR, which I'm sure that all of you have read, for
30 these three National Standards, through two different lenses,
31 and one was climate change. As we all know, oceans are
32 changing, and that's impacting our fish stocks, both where they
33 are and productivity and abundance, and that has follow-on
34 effects, in terms of social and economic and other impacts to
35 fisheries and fishing communities.

36
37 Then we also highlighted the topic we just were talking about
38 earlier this morning, in terms of equity and environmental
39 justice, and, Merrick, you teed this up with your question, in
40 terms of how EEJ plays into these three National Standards in
41 particular. I am going to step through each of the National
42 Standards with those two lenses, and then I'm looking forward to
43 a robust conversation.

44
45 On National Standard 4, with respect to allocation, we are
46 seeking specific input on how to balance approaches to balancing
47 access for historical users, marginalized individuals who may
48 have had inequitable access, or have been excluded historically,

1 and new users.

2
3 As we think about stocks shifting, both in distribution and
4 potentially in productivity, that's going to have implications,
5 as you all know, and are dealing with already, and so we have
6 asked for input on thinking about how we are developing our
7 allocations, moving forward, and what does that look like across
8 these three different groups.

9
10 We are also seeking input on whether revisions are needed to
11 reinforce the NMFS Allocation Policy, and you all are familiar,
12 and that is the one that required development of triggers by
13 each of the councils that determine when you will review
14 allocations, and so we're seeking some input there.

15
16 Also, we're seeking thoughts on the types of documentation or
17 analyses or alternative approaches that could be considered as
18 part of allocation determinations, and so what does it mean by
19 alternative approaches, and it could be thinking about spatial
20 allocations, looking at mixes of historic use or some sort of
21 dynamic allocation schemes, any sort of input with respect to
22 those different kinds of approaches that could be taken, again
23 with that lens of climate and how things might be -- Things
24 meaning our fish stocks might be moving or shifting.

25
26 With respect to NS 8, we are seeking thoughts on if and how we
27 might update the guidelines to improve the ability of
28 communities to adapt to these changing conditions, and so,
29 again, circling back to that sustained participation, and how do
30 we capture that at a time when things might be moving?

31
32 With respect to National Standard 9, much like our fish stocks
33 are moving, we also have protected resources that are moving,
34 and how can we better account for those changing distributions,
35 both of our targeted stocks and bycatch and protected resources,
36 as we're moving forward?

37
38 With respect to National Standard 4 and EEJ, similar to some of
39 the ideas that we highlighted with respect to climate, we're
40 seeking thoughts on how do we approach better considering
41 underserved, or underrepresented, communities, previously
42 excluded entrants, and new entrants who might be coming in,
43 again, as stocks change, or communities change, and how do we
44 better take all of those factors into account when we are
45 thinking about our allocation guidelines?

46
47 Again, we are seeking input on the types of documentation and
48 analyses that could help ensure that our allocations are as fair

1 and equitable as possible, and we know that allocation decisions
2 are very difficult, and often controversial, especially given
3 the history and tradition and the financial investment that
4 fishermen have in the current fishery, and so we're asking input
5 on the need to think about this with respect to future
6 allocations, existing allocations, or both.

7
8 I've got three slides to step through here with respect to
9 National Standard 8 and EEJ, because, as I noted in the
10 description, and you all know very well, National Standard 8 has
11 a lot of different facets to it that intersect with EEJ, and so,
12 specifically, we're seeking input on the definition of fishing
13 communities within the guidelines, and, in particular, the
14 concept that fishing community not be place-based, and so we do
15 have that in the current guidelines, and so the question is, is
16 that appropriate, continue to be appropriate, at this time or
17 not, and so we're seeking -- It specifically references residing
18 in a specific location, and so we're seeking feedback on that
19 component.

20
21 The other facet of fishing community is the concept of
22 dependence and engagement, both of which are used in Magnuson,
23 and the current guidelines put an emphasis on dependence of the
24 fishing community, and so the question we've asked is, is that
25 still appropriate, and should engagement be considered in a
26 different way than dependence, and how -- If or how we could
27 shift that focus as part of updating that description of a
28 fishing community.

29
30 Continuing on, beyond fishing community, we also have the
31 language around "sustained participation", and so we're seeking
32 thoughts on how to appropriately balance those requirements as
33 we are considering underserved and underrepresented communities,
34 previously-excluded entrants, new entrants, and/or communities
35 with high levels of social or climate vulnerabilities, which may
36 or may not be some of the underserved communities that are
37 already represented.

38
39 With respect to National Standard 9, we're seeing specific input
40 on how to modify, if and how to modify, the guidelines to
41 minimize bycatch in a manner that is equitable across different
42 fisheries and gear types. We all know that the conflict between
43 fisheries and gears is common, and, in particular, when there's
44 overlap in geographic areas fished or the species that are
45 caught.

46
47 Relevant to NS 9, as you all very well know, is the situation
48 where bycatch in one fishery has negative impacts on another

1 fishery, usually by restricting the catch on a shared stock, and
2 that issue can be further complicated when one or more fisheries
3 are important to underserved communities, and so, again, we're
4 trying to seek input on if these guidelines should be changed,
5 and how do we balance that interest between bycatch and target
6 fisheries that is equitable across fisheries, gear types, et
7 cetera?

8
9 Other challenges mentioned in the ANPR are different ideas
10 around the option for minimizing bycatch under the National
11 Standard 9 practicability standard, and so seeking thoughts on
12 how we might differently describe practicability, if at all, and
13 we have asserted, in the ANPR, that we think that the current
14 guidelines do appropriately balance the various complexities of
15 our federal fisheries management process.

16
17 We've also included some ideas around the revisions that would
18 incentivize reducing waste. As we all know, we have some
19 regulatory discards that can lead to waste, and so are there
20 ways that we could be better incentivizing our system to try and
21 help reduce some of that waste?

22
23 My last slide is our timeline, and so, as you know, the ANPR
24 published last week, and we're here this week to speak with all
25 of you, and we are on your council agendas sometime between now
26 and August to give a presentation to your respective councils on
27 the ANPR, and we're also going to try webinars, and one national
28 webinar here in the next couple of months, and the public
29 comment period closes in mid-September, which then tees us up
30 that, if warranted, we would begin any proposed rulemaking later
31 this fall, and so, with that, Chair, I'm happy to take
32 questions.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kelly. Any questions? Bill.

35
36 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have several, but I don't want
37 to be the only one sort of peppering questions, and so I will
38 just lead off with one and hold. It sounds like the agency went
39 through sort of a really preliminary process of using climate
40 change and an EEJ lens to look at all ten National Standards and
41 decided that these three were the ones most in need of attention
42 at this point, based on that, and do I understand that
43 correctly, or was there some other process for deciding why
44 these three at this time?

45
46 **MS. DENIT:** Thanks, Bill. Actually, the focus on these three
47 was more driven by the fact that they have not been reviewed in
48 fifteen years, combined with the focus on climate issues and

1 EEJ.

2

3 **MR. TWEIT:** So, just as a follow-up to that, there could be that
4 the agency will want to review, after looking at them through
5 these two lenses?

6

7 **MS. DENIT:** I think, overall, we would like to get a better
8 cadence on reviewing our National Standard Guidelines, but, what
9 the timing of that looks like, I don't have that in my mind at
10 this point, and Sam and I have not discussed that, and so I
11 don't anticipate that, following this ANPR, and any rulemaking
12 that may or may not happen after that, that there will be
13 immediately be another review of other National Standards.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Are there other questions? Eric.

16

17 **MR. REID:** I couldn't decide whether to wait until they come to
18 my council to talk about it, but it's just about the guidelines
19 themselves. I mean, you're asking us for input, which is fine,
20 but, you know, in my mind, it's having a stricter set of
21 guidance of what they actually mean, and, you know,
22 hypothetically, I might read National Standard 4 or 8 or 9 or 10
23 or 1 and have an interpretation as X, and, hypothetically, my
24 friend, Mr. Pentony, from GARFO, may have a different
25 interpretation of those rules, and so how do you reconcile that
26 without much clearer guidance than we have now? I don't know
27 whether that opportunity exists, but, hypothetically speaking,
28 it could happen very quickly, and so that's my question, is how
29 do I get stricter guidance, so I don't run afoul of somebody
30 else's interpretation? Thank you.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kelly.

33

34 **MS. DENIT:** Sure. Well, I think we're seeking input on whether
35 we do need to provide further clarity with respect to these
36 National Standards around the interpretation and how they're
37 being applied. We work very hard, across all of the regions,
38 and in particular through my office, to try to be as consistent
39 as we possibly can in how we're applying the National Standards,
40 recognizing that all of you have your fisheries that are
41 beautiful, wonderful snowflakes, and sometimes might need to
42 think about things in slightly different ways, and so I think we
43 are always striving to find the right balance between where we
44 need to be nationally consistent and where we can have some
45 regional flexibility, and these guidelines are no different in
46 that way, and so that's part of what the feedback, via the ANPR,
47 will help us with, and maybe the current guidelines are the
48 appropriate balance and provide the right latitude, and, if you

1 are seeking stricter guidance, or more directed guidance, that
2 would be feedback to have as part of the ANPR.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Well, I'm not seeing any other
5 questions. Bill.

6
7 **MR. TWEIT:** A question about the timeline, and, right now, the
8 current timeline really only allows us, the North Pacific
9 Council, to discuss this at our next meeting, which is just in
10 two weeks, and is there some consideration to give councils a
11 little bit longer time, more than -- I imagine that we're not
12 the only one in that situation, and can we look for at least a
13 timeline that accommodates two meetings?

14
15 The reason that I'm asking is I think there's a lot of
16 flashpoints in this, a lot, and I think it's not going to be a
17 simple matter for councils, and, at least in my council, this is
18 going to ignite several of those flashpoints, and so the process
19 of coming up with comments, as a council, and recognizing this
20 is just advanced notice, but, still, for us, it's just coming up
21 with comments on that in a single meeting cycle, and, to me,
22 that seems extremely difficult.

23
24 Two meetings is not going to be a lot easier, but it will
25 certainly give us some time to sort of take some input and be
26 reflective of that input and then provide some more measured
27 comments at a subsequent meeting.

28
29 **MS. DENIT:** Thanks, Bill. I appreciate that you all are usually
30 interested in having the opportunity to have two council
31 meetings to discuss the topics that we bring to you, and, in
32 this case, we're limiting you to one. We want to stick to this
33 timeline as much as we possibly can, and so we tried to leave
34 the comment period open for as long as we could, in order to
35 make sure that we at least got to every council once, and we
36 certainly understand that it's very complicated topic, and, in
37 all likelihood, again, if we do move forward with any sort of
38 rulemaking process, there will be continued opportunities to
39 engage with the councils, to further flesh out comments and
40 input that you all might have.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Kitty and then Chris.

43
44 **MS. SIMONDS:** Okay. Well, thanks, Kelly. Obviously, our
45 council is going to have a lot of comments, and we are
46 discussing these standards at our June meeting, which is the
47 last week in June, in American Samoa, and Ms. Janet will be
48 there to hear everything, and she will love it. Really.

1
2 I just have a couple of comments, and one is about, you know,
3 bycatch, and, for us, you know, we're always looking to have
4 Headquarters regionally distribute funds, in terms of that
5 program, because protected species bycatch is our largest issue,
6 and it has been for thirty years, and we did talk to the BREP
7 team about timing. When they make announcements, that, for us,
8 our fishermen are out fishing in December, when the notice comes
9 out, and, you know, we have to have our sashimi fish at
10 Christmas and New Year's.

11
12 We did ask them to look at the timing, because then the deadline
13 is early January for us, and, anyway, because we want to get
14 more fishermen involved in submitting proposals to help with our
15 bycatch, and so that's one thing, and the other is that
16 revisions to guidelines incentivize reducing waste. Well, we,
17 in the region, eat everything that we catch except for the
18 lancet fish, and so we don't have a problem with that, but we
19 will have a lot to discuss, in terms of the other parts of the
20 guidelines.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Did you have a comment to that?

23
24 **MS. DENIT:** Yes, just brief, and thank you for that feedback,
25 Kitty, with respect to the BREP grant. That's really helpful to
26 have, and I appreciate that.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Chris.

29
30 **MR. MOORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We strongly support Bill's
31 request, and we agree with his comments regarding the extension
32 of the comment period. We could use some additional time. You
33 know, in talking to the other councils, I think a date in
34 October would be more appropriate, given the complicated issues
35 here, and certainly I understand your position, Kelly, or the
36 agency's position, in getting this thing wrapped up sooner
37 rather than later, but, if we could have some additional time, I
38 think you would get a better product. Thanks.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Chris. Tom.

41
42 **MR. NIES:** I will jump on that bandwagon. We wanted to talk
43 about this with our SSC, and we don't have any SSC meetings
44 scheduled before our council meeting in June, and so we can't
45 get input from our SSC, which might inform our council
46 discussion and our letter. This is such a big issue that I
47 don't think our council is going to want to just let the staff
48 prepare a reply in the middle of the summer, without it really

1 being approved and vetted by the council.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kelly, speaking for the Gulf Council here, and
4 not the chair, that would be a similar situation for us as well,
5 and National Standard 4 is really going to come into play for
6 us, and we're having a lot of pretty serious allocation
7 discussions, and so a little time, from our region, would
8 probably be appreciated as well.

9
10 Well, I'm not seeing any hands up now, and we're a little bit
11 behind on the break, and I was going to say if maybe we just
12 take a short ten-minute break, and I'm sorry about that, but if
13 we could meet back here let's say at 10:45, promptly, we can
14 move on and catch up in our agenda. We'll start back, and,
15 Cisco, you'll be up with a fisheries update.

16
17 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, everyone. Let's begin. Apparently we
20 need a little more than a ten-minute break, and that's fine,
21 but, as we're getting started here, we need to back up just a
22 minute, to finish up the last bit of the discussion. I will
23 wait here for just a second, so everybody can find their seat.

24
25 My understanding was we had left that topic before, and someone
26 wanted to make a motion, and so we're going to go back just a
27 little bit, to take care of that, before we move on to your
28 portion, Cisco, and so if everyone would take their seats, and,
29 Bernie, I believe you all will have a motion in a second here.
30 When you get that, if we want to pull it up.

31
32 For those of you just taking your seat, we had a motion
33 regarding the proposed rule, and it's being pulled up on the
34 screen here, and we'll dispense with that motion and then move
35 on to our next agenda item. Okay. It looks like we're ready.
36 Bernie, you should have that motion, or are you just prepared to
37 make it verbally?

38
39 **MR. KINNEEN:** It should be with Bernie here now, very shortly,
40 and I can make the motion, if you would like me to.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Hang on one second. Did you get it, Bernie?
43 Okay. We have a motion on the floor. Simon, this is your
44 motion, and do you mind reading that into the record, please?

45
46 **MR. KINNEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my apologies for
47 being delayed there. **The motion will be the CCC recommends that**
48 **NMFS extend the comment deadline on the ANPR for National**

1 **Standard 4, 8, and 9 Guidelines to October 2023.**

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Simon. We need a second for that
4 motion. Okay. It's seconded by Chris Moore. Any discussion on
5 this motion?
6

7 **MR. KINNEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I would just reiterate and rely on
8 the discussion that was had around the table already. This is
9 something that it sounds like it's important to many of the
10 councils, and it's really important for us, the opportunity for
11 our council and our public to have a chance to fully discuss
12 these, and there's a lot of nuances, as discussed, and this
13 would be very helpful to us.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. I'm not seeing anyone else
16 wanting to have any more discussion on this motion. **Is there**
17 **any opposition to this motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion**
18 **carries.** Thank you.
19

20 Moving on, our next agenda item is Dr. Cisco Werner is going to
21 provide an update from NOAA Fisheries. Cisco, they will be
22 pulling that presentation up here in just a second.
23

24 **NOAA FISHERIES SCIENCE UPDATES**

25
26 **DR. WERNER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning, everybody.
27 It's good to be here and see everybody. I wanted to provide
28 today some comments on updates on the science enterprise. I
29 think, in the past, we've had a chance to provide updates on the
30 science issues themselves, whether it was related to ecosystems
31 or, you know, how we're getting ready for climate-ready
32 fisheries and windfarms and such.
33

34 Today, I'm going to focus a little bit more on the operational
35 side of things, and it's something that I think was requested by
36 the council, for me to touch upon, and so, if I could have the
37 next slide, I'm going to talk about three things.
38

39 I'm going to talk about the fishery-independent surveys and
40 where we are with that, impacts or where we are also in terms of
41 our monitoring and assessment, the status of these, and then I'm
42 going to talk a little bit about data acquisition and
43 modernization efforts, and there is a thread through these
44 things that I hope will come across and perhaps invite comment,
45 or discussion, and I will start off by -- When I start off my
46 conversations about the fishery-independent surveys, I will
47 start focusing where we are right now and then take a look back
48 in time, in terms of where we are relative to where we were say

1 over the past decade, and then also looking forward, in terms of
2 what we need to do to make sure that we can make the needed
3 advances in data acquisition.

4
5 Bear with me, and the first couple of slides are going to have a
6 few numbers on it, but I'm trying to build something here, in
7 terms of what we present, and so the next slide, if I could,
8 and, recently, we had a meeting with appropriators on the hill,
9 and they were very interested, of course, in where we are in
10 terms of our assessments and surveys, and this slide is a
11 relatively simple slide.

12
13 It's a snapshot of where we are now, or at least this is a
14 report in terms of what we were able to do in the second quarter
15 of FY 23, and so that period between January and March. If you
16 look at the bottom bar chart, on the bottom-right, Quarter 2 is
17 usually our quietest quarter, and it's the one where a lot of
18 the ships are undergoing maintenance, and it's also perhaps
19 biologically somewhat quiet, and so it's a quiet quarter, and
20 you see it just in terms of the numbers, and we only had really
21 seven surveys planned in that January to March period, and we
22 completed five of those within that quarter, and one of them was
23 postponed and completed in the current quarter, in Quarter 3,
24 and so, actually, six of them were completed in that quarter,
25 and one of them was delayed a little bit, to be completed in
26 Quarter 3.

27
28 This is to say this is where we are in this quarter, and things
29 are moving. The two ships there were just to highlight a couple
30 of ships, and a couple of surveys, that we completed. We
31 completed the Gulf of Alaska pollock acoustic trawl on the
32 Dyson, and then, just in terms of contrast, in terms of high
33 latitudes, the other high latitudes in the Antarctic, as part of
34 our work in the Antarctic marine living resources, were we
35 completed some surveys off the western Antarctic peninsula,
36 dealing with krill and other protected species, such as penguins
37 and some of the seals down there, and so it's just a sense of
38 the things that happened this past quarter, in Quarter 2.

39
40 I am going to jump now to the next slide, which talks about the
41 full year, because I focused on a quarter, and now I'm going to
42 take a look at the full year. We have planned, and proposed, in
43 our fleet allocation plan, as we refer to it, eighty-three total
44 surveys. As of right now, we've completed twenty-five, and we
45 have an additional forty-five to go, and underway are nine of
46 those, ex cetera, and you can see the numbers there on the left-
47 hand-most column, and we have some underway, and some are
48 postponed, and we've only had two cancellations so far this

1 year.

2
3 It gives you a sense of, you know, how our cadence is coming up.
4 Quarter 2 is slow, and Quarter 3 is picking up, and, of course,
5 Quarter 4 will be even busier, perhaps, and that also gives you
6 a sense of the fact that we're completing the surveys, and,
7 although we know that there is challenges, and I'm going to jump
8 into those challenges in a second.

9
10 There is a reliance on our surveys, in terms of our fisheries
11 survey vessels, and those are in blue, and those are the ones
12 that are commonly referred to as the white ships, and we also do
13 a fair number of those on chartered vessels, and also in
14 partnership with our academic colleagues, and then we have a
15 host of other surveys that we do in what we refer to as small
16 boats.

17
18 To give you another sense of where we are within this year, and
19 it has been a busy year, and a challenging year, I wanted to go
20 to the next slide, if I could, and provide a context of where we
21 are relative to the last twelve or thirteen years, and so this
22 goes from 2010 to 2022, and, of course, we're in 2023, but, you
23 know, this is completed statistics that we show here.

24
25 If we start all the way in 2022, that's that number that I had
26 before, and had about eighty-plus planned surveys, and you can
27 see that, certainly relative to COVID in 2020, there's a
28 recovery, where we can say we're on the right track. Those
29 years of 2017, 2018, and 2019 were also very difficult, and
30 those were years where a lot of repairs took place on ships, and
31 so there was a dip relative to say the 2010 to 2016 period, but
32 what we can see is that, you know, if you just look at those
33 dashed lines, which I just drew in there arbitrarily to bracket,
34 you know, where we are relative to the work that we do on our
35 white ships, in blue, and our chartered vessels, in orange,
36 we've been pretty much at a steady state, except for that 2017
37 to 2021 period, relative to even earlier in the decade, you
38 know, 2010 and 2011 and so on.

39
40 If you look at the -- What you're going to see now, when we jump
41 to the next slide, is actually we have overlaid our budget for
42 that, and so what you see here is the same bar charts that you
43 had before, the bars that you had before, but overlaid on this
44 is the support we've received in order to complete these
45 surveys, and it's been quite a bit of support, and we're
46 grateful for the support we've received, and you can see that
47 dark line that goes from -- This is the budget out of our
48 fisheries data collections surveys and assessment PPA, as we

1 refer to it.

2

3 We have received, over that time, probably about a \$50 million
4 increase, in terms of where -- You know, to allow us to get to
5 where we are now in 2022-2023, and that's the dark line, but, if
6 you look at the dashed line, that's the adjusted value of the
7 funds, if you will, or of the support, to 2023 dollars, and so,
8 if you look at -- Even though we've received, again, a
9 significant support, an increase in support, over these past say
10 eight or nine years, the effective dollar amount is somewhat
11 stable, and that's consistent with what we've been able to
12 deliver. This is what it has taken for us to be able to
13 maintain this level of activity indicated by the orange and blue
14 bars, relative to say the beginning of the decade.

15

16 This, again, provides context of where we are, and I want to go
17 a little bit into the challenges that I think we probably have
18 had a chance of talking about it, whether it's to the Science
19 Center Directors or Regional Administrators or other
20 conversations that have happened to the councils, and I'm going
21 to jump to the next slide then, which is an assessment, in some
22 ways, of where our challenges are, while, at the same time, we
23 see some signals for recovery, in terms of post-COVID and such.

24

25 I think that -- I think we all know that there is a challenge
26 for the stability of the survey enterprise. I think that, while
27 this year -- I think a lot of effort has gone to make sure that
28 we complete surveys, but there have been delays, and I will talk
29 a little bit about what has resulted, or caused, these delays so
30 far, and we have about eleven delays in FY 23, and this is
31 something that we communicated to the councils, and we also
32 communicated it to the hill, to just know how these delays may
33 be impacting our -- Not just the surveys themselves, but,
34 obviously, the mission, in terms of collecting the data and the
35 impact that that would have on our ability to provide
36 assessments.

37

38 The sub-bullets, and I am going to go through this, and the
39 bullet is the challenge, and the sub-bullet is how do we address
40 the challenge, at least an indication of how we could address
41 the challenge, and so the sub-bullet of the first one is can we
42 accelerate some of the advanced technologies, and can we do
43 things so that we mitigate, if you will, some of the delays, or
44 some of the possible cancellations, et cetera, that might
45 happen, and perhaps evolve to a model that is, you know, still -
46 - You know, it works with our white ships and surveys as needed,
47 but, also, we begin to think about how we evolve our data
48 collection enterprise, so that we minimize the challenges that

1 we're all familiar with.
2
3 The second bullet talks about increased requests and need, and
4 so it's not just an increased request, but also a need for
5 additional assessments, and this increase request could be, you
6 know, because we need to provide more ecosystem-related surveys,
7 assessments, climate-ready considerations in our assessments and
8 such, and so I think our assessment enterprise, if you will --
9 You know, for a number of reasons, it also is asking for more
10 information, for more output, and that's not an unreasonable
11 thing, but how do we do that?
12
13 How do we balance this increased, you know, need for
14 assessments, and some idea might be to revisit some of the
15 guidelines and best practices for how, when, and how many stock
16 assessments we do, and can we revisit stock assessment
17 frequency, and can we work on something that, you know, will
18 also perhaps allow some of the stock assessments to be made more
19 efficient?
20
21 You know, can we, and I will talk about this is a little bit, in
22 terms of the data modernization part of things, and also how
23 perhaps we can, you know, make the operationalization and the
24 interoperability of data and the data availability such that the
25 assessments themselves, you know, can occur in a more efficient
26 way, and so it doesn't mean ratcheting down or rolling back the
27 assessments, but how do we make them more efficient, and, again,
28 this is a conversation to be had, and it's one that we're
29 having, and, you know, it will take a while, as we modernize not
30 just how we collect the data, but, also, how do we make the data
31 itself more accessible?
32
33 Another thing that has come up is some of the processing of some
34 of the samples that, of course, go into the data, into the stock
35 assessments, life history in particular, and these are age and
36 fecundity and other things that are intensive and require work,
37 lab work and others, as well as perhaps developing advanced
38 models, you know, as we begin to be ready to address, you know,
39 the climate-ready stock assessment questions that are coming,
40 things that have to do with changes in distribution or changes
41 in recruitment and so on that are related to factors that we've
42 identified as needing additional inclusion for climate-ready
43 considerations.
44
45 With regard to processing samples and life history, there's
46 quite promising work in terms of how to accelerate some of that
47 analysis of the life history, through advanced technologies, and
48 I think you probably heard, in the past, some discussion of the

1 Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative, the CEFI, in
2 terms of how we make advances on this, which is needed, both in
3 terms of, you know, sort of the hard data that we need on the
4 samples, but, also, as we advance how we analyze these in a
5 climate-ready way.

6
7 The fourth bullet is about, you know, staff are facing increased
8 workload, and some of it has to do with, you know, again, things
9 that I talked about before, and it could be delays in access to
10 data, more work related to how do you analyze this increased
11 amount of data, and, also, you know, as we also face
12 retirements, and perhaps a decrease in staff, there's also a
13 challenge of recruiting them, and so there might be a delay in
14 backfilling some of our staff, which of course then causes some
15 of these increased workloads and can contribute to burnout and
16 such of our folks, and the sub-bullet there is, again, revisiting
17 our data approaches.

18
19 We talked about, earlier, how do we modernize the data and make
20 that more quickly accessible, and more readily accessible, and
21 help with the pace of assessments, and not necessarily slowing
22 them down, but making sure that they're expedited or helped to
23 be made more efficient, and, also, of course, you know, continue
24 to work to fill our positions, which is going to be important to
25 make sure that we have the full staff, if you will.

26
27 This is, you know, the context, in terms of the challenges that
28 we're facing and the things that are in front of us. If I go to
29 the next slide, this is courtesy of our colleagues at OMAO, and
30 it relates to the point that I talked about earlier, about
31 making sure that the surveys go out on time, that there's no
32 delays and such, and I think that, you know, our colleagues at
33 OMAO, the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, provided
34 this as, you know, the challenges that they're facing as they're
35 trying to get the fleet back up, you know, to full throttle, if
36 you will.

37
38 This is a sub-sample of the very, very last slide of this
39 presentation, which is the full set of comments that they sent
40 me, but I just figured that I would sub-sample some of these.

41
42 There is an industry-wide challenge, private and research
43 industry and others, in terms of professional mariner staffing.
44 Currently, OMAO, our office, our line office, is about 70
45 percent there, and so they have a 30 percent vacancy rate, as
46 indicated there, and the attrition and replacement is almost
47 equal, and so they're hiring a lot of people, but, almost at the
48 same time, a lot of people are leaving, and so, basically,

1 they're doing their best to try to increase -- You know, to get
2 past this 30 percent vacancy rate, but it's been quite a
3 challenge, for the reasons that I mentioned, the broader
4 competition and so on, which is the list there of the whys, the
5 oil and gas competition, offshore wind energy, and then there's
6 also just the fact that there's a changing workforce.

7
8 Like we all are balancing and figuring out how our own staff --
9 How we evolve work-life balance and such, and, you know, that's
10 not just something that happens in -- That's something that is
11 also happening in the fleet.

12
13 The fleet workforce is also undergoing this revision, which then
14 has, on the far right, a set of actions that, again, OMAO is
15 taking on, which is, you know, bringing in more crew rotations,
16 you know recruitment and retention bonuses, expanding the
17 ability to communicate from the ships, through VSAT and Starlink
18 and so on and so forth, and so there's a number of actions that
19 OMAO is taking on to try to offset this very real challenge of
20 only perhaps being at 70 percent of the workforce that they
21 would like to be, while, at the same time, trying to address
22 these rotations and leaves and such that are required by the
23 evolving working conditions.

24
25 These two slides are complementary, and the first one is more
26 looking at our side, sort of on the science side, if you will,
27 and this is, obviously, working our partnership with the fleet.

28
29 If we go to the next slide, staying on the topic of the fleet,
30 and this is what are we doing about how we're growing the fleet,
31 or how we're addressing the fleet, or how we're modernizing the
32 fleet, however you want to call it, and so there's a couple of
33 things that I want to talk about here.

34
35 One, underway right now, is what's referred to as the fleet
36 recapitalization plan, and the last time there was a fleet
37 capitalization plan formally completed was 2016, and so it's
38 been roughly seven years since we had one, and a fleet recap
39 plan, as we refer to it, just basically says how many ships do
40 we have in the fleet, what are the issues that we have in the
41 fleet, and what do we need to do, thinking forward, considering
42 everything, considering staffing, considering that the ships
43 need to -- They eventually will sunset, considering new
44 technologies and such, and we're in the midst of this fleet
45 recap plan, the drafting of the fleet recap plan.

46
47 It is a discussion of the existing fleet, and we currently have
48 fifteen ships in the fleet, and there is discussion of the

1 sunsetting of possibly three vessels that are over fifty years
2 old that do fisheries-related work, as well as the bringing on
3 of new ships. The new ships that are underway are the Class A
4 ships, which are the Oceanographer and the Discover, and these
5 are mainly oceanographic ships.

6
7 These are non-trawl-capable ships, the Oceanographer and the
8 Discover, and they're perhaps used more broadly, or more
9 intensively, by other parts of NOAA, but certainly out in the
10 Pacific Islands, and other places, where perhaps trawling is
11 part of it, but there's also many other things to do, and
12 certainly the Oceanographer, which is going to be homeported in
13 Honolulu, will be one that will be available for some of the
14 work out there.

15
16 The other work, the other ships, that are coming onboard are the
17 Class B ships, which are mainly for charting and surveying.
18 There might be some living marine resource ability to do this,
19 which is perhaps deploying some of the advanced technologies,
20 but, really, for as far as the fisheries side modernization of
21 the vessels, if you will, it's these Class C ships.

22
23 We're currently doing what's referred to as an analysis of
24 alternatives, an AOA, which means looking at exactly how do we
25 want to construct these ships. These Class C ships are not like
26 the current Dyson-class vessels, and they're a little bit
27 smaller, and they're a little bit nimbler. They're mid-
28 endurance, and so maybe twenty-plus days, twenty-one or twenty-
29 two days, and they're not the forty days that some of the other
30 vessels are, but a lot of this is by design, in terms of how we
31 want to be more nimble and cover more areas, and perhaps the
32 experience that we've gained with the FSBs, these larger Dyson-
33 class ships, or Class D, as in "Dyson", and it could balance the
34 presence of the Class C and the Class D.

35
36 If there were to be a schedule, the Class A are probably going
37 to be on the water in 2024 and 2025, and I think the Class B are
38 probably going to be on the water closer to 2027. The Class C
39 are in design right now, and they might be available at the end
40 of the decade, and then, speaking of that balance between the
41 Class C, the newer ones, and the Class D, which are the existing
42 ones, these Class D are now scheduled for what is referred to as
43 a midlife repair, and these are pretty significant repairs.

44
45 It means that they will be laid up for anywhere from twelve to
46 eighteen months, and, you know, it's a rather in-depth overhaul
47 of the ships, and there's a schedule, and so each ship --
48 Starting with the Dyson and then moving to the Bigelow and the

1 Pisces and the Shamata in Alaska, they will be in a midlife
2 repair situation, probably between now and 2034 or something
3 like that, and it's probably 2025-2026 to 2034, and so the
4 better part of eight or nine years.

5
6 We're in the middle of developing a roadmap, if you will, of
7 what the impacts of having each one of these ships down for a
8 period of time, and each region will be affected differently.
9 The ability to move things around, the ability to make up, you
10 know, for the loss of a ship will be different, depending on
11 where we are, and, of course, we're also -- As I said earlier, I
12 do want to tie it back to the presence of advanced technologies,
13 and the development of advanced technologies, to see how we can
14 offset that, particularly also perhaps in partnerships with
15 industry and other things that we can do, but this is not an
16 insignificant event that's going to happen, to have one FSB
17 down, for this amount of time, over the next eight years,
18 starting in 2025, and it's something that requires very careful
19 planning, and we're doing that.

20
21 Then, related to all of that is, ultimately, it's about the
22 data, right, and, I mean, it's how do we collect the data, and
23 so this essential data acquisition is really at the core, in
24 terms of how we think, moving forward, and how do we collect the
25 data, whether it's vessels, whether it's advanced technologies,
26 and the point is how do we collect the data so that we don't
27 miss, you know, the work that we need to do.

28
29 I will move to the next slide, which is what are the goals for
30 data acquisition, and the picture on the right is just to kind
31 of say -- The top one is a very nice actually watercolor that
32 was done in the mid-1950s, I believe, or so, and it illustrates
33 perhaps how we thought about doing surveys back then, the
34 acoustic surveys and dragging a net.

35
36 The things at the bottom are all the modern things that we know
37 we can do. I mean, it's not the kinds of things that culturally
38 we can do, and we've had proof of concepts in each one of these
39 cases, that we know that we can begin to think of how to
40 seriously change our data acquisition plan, if you will, or data
41 acquisition enterprise, that really does take advantage of these
42 modern approaches, and so there's two things that we're doing.
43 We're developing that, but we're also considering how do we make
44 our existing surveys more efficient.

45
46 On the traditional platform, one of the things that we're doing
47 is planning, at least on the west coast, the consolidation of
48 what we refer to as the CPS, the coastal pelagic species, and

1 the hake survey, and this is something that's an ongoing
2 conversation, and it's happened a couple of times in the Pacific
3 Fishery Management Council, and it's a continuing conversation,
4 about how do you consolidate these surveys so that, you know, we
5 can have more mobility, if you will, of the vessels that we
6 have, not just because we can do it, but, also, it's part of the
7 solution to that midlife repair challenge that we have in front
8 of us, or the midlife repair schedule that we have in front of
9 us.

10
11 Under the advanced technologies, I think probably everybody is
12 familiar with what we can do with uncrewed systems, and I think
13 that's quite promising, and I think that these are things that
14 could become near operational for some surveys, for some
15 species, and not for everything, you know, in the coming years.
16 The advances in the molecular approaches, the omics, is another
17 one that, again, for species, for some places, this might be
18 operational.

19
20 The evaluation of acoustic systems, whether they're passive or
21 active, and optical systems are -- You know, there's tremendous
22 success stories on optical systems in the Pacific Islands and
23 the Northeast Region and in other places. Remote sensing, for
24 either protected species or others, and the R&D that I mentioned
25 about for the ageing and life history is something that, again,
26 will be a game-changer, in some ways, for some aspects of stock
27 assessment that we do, and, of course, artificial intelligence
28 and machine learning.

29
30 In some ways, this underpins, or is actually part, and it's a
31 thread through all of these advanced technologies, in terms of
32 how we analyze this new set of data that are coming in, and so
33 these are the things that we're thinking about, and how do we do
34 the "and", right, and how do we do the surveys and how do we
35 also do this data modernization, and data collection, in a way
36 that is real and tangible in the years to come.

37
38 I think my last slide is just a summary slide, the next one, the
39 recapping and some closing thoughts, and, that said, fishery-
40 independent surveys, and monitoring efforts, you know, are
41 something that we've had a very challenging time, over the past
42 five or six years, for a number of reasons, and I think that
43 we're on an uptick, if you will, but I think we do need to think
44 about how we can continue improving on that, you know, with
45 addressing the issues that I've brought up on monitoring and
46 assessments, whether it's staffing or science support or
47 whatnot, to make sure they happen.

1 The ways forward, I think, simply, the data acquisition and
2 modernization efforts are going to be key, and we hope to be
3 able to make, and we need to be able to make, this progress in
4 the next three or four years, and it's what we're thinking
5 about, and then the next one, the inclusion of climate-ready
6 considerations, I didn't talk about it today, but we all know
7 it's there. It's part of the additional considerations that we
8 need to do, and it's part of the evolution that we need to
9 consider, going forward. With that, Mr. Chair, I will stop
10 there and open it up, if appropriate.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Werner. Are there any
13 questions? Bill.

14
15 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks very much, Cisco. I
16 was hoping to hear a little bit more about the Climate,
17 Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative, at least from the science
18 perspective, and at what point are you going to be able to give
19 us a sense of what's going to be going on at the fisheries
20 science centers relative to that, and what can we be expecting,
21 and will that be sort of individual briefings to each of the
22 councils, or are you preparing something big, because I'm
23 assuming that there's budget there that's being implemented at
24 this point, and I'm assuming that things are moving forward, and
25 yet, from our perspective, we know really very little about it,
26 and it looks like it could be a pretty important tool.

27
28 **DR. WERNER:** Thank you, Bill, for the question, and, yes, the
29 CEFI is -- I mentioned it a couple of times in here, and, in
30 terms of when we can fully engage, part of it is going to be
31 dependent on the decisions coming up that Janet alluded to with
32 IRA and such.

33
34 We have worked out, in collaboration with our partners in other
35 line offices, the Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, the
36 structure, in terms of what it would mean, and what will it take
37 to begin to do the climate, ecosystem, and fisheries approaches.

38
39 The answer is that this is something intimately connected
40 between, again, OAR, that provides sort of the larger-scale
41 modeling outputs and the projections say over the next three to
42 five years, and the different science centers, where we would --
43 You know, the staff, and the folks that would be engaged in the
44 CEFI, would include, you know, the people who can take on this
45 new information and also then incorporate it into the stock
46 assessments and such that include climate-ready approaches and
47 then, ultimately, be able to translate that into climate-ready
48 fisheries advice, right, and so how do you take this information

1 and then provide information that can be -- That can be ingested
2 and can be actionable information to the councils and others.

3
4 If I had to say -- You know, from the moment that we can
5 announce it going forward, I think this is probably going to be
6 a very active two to three years, you know, to fully engage
7 everybody and really make things run as we would like them to
8 run.

9
10 The North Pacific, of course, through ACLIM and other projects,
11 is perhaps ahead of -- They're out of the gate, and will
12 probably be out of the gate a little bit before the others, and
13 the Northeast is another one, but I think it's all within reach,
14 and I'm hoping that, within the next year, or two or three, the
15 CEFI will be -- That it will be part of -- An active tool in the
16 suite of tools that we need to bring to bear.

17
18 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, and it just -- One of the reasons that I
19 asked is that, as at least one council member -- I have no doubt
20 that it will be useful, but I'm getting pretty confused about
21 the plethora of acronyms, the plethora of initiatives, and I am
22 trying to think about how we're going to be addressing climate
23 change.

24
25 There's a pretty urgent need, from our perspective, to figure
26 out what our roadmap is forward for the next several years, and
27 this seems like a pretty important part of that, but I have no
28 clear sense whatsoever of whether it comes at a cost to some of
29 our existing programs, whether it's truly going to be an add-on,
30 and what it's going deliver and when it's going to deliver
31 things.

32
33 I agree with you that the ACLIM gives me a sense of what it
34 could do, but I, you know, tend to be overly optimistic about,
35 oh, cool, it's going to slice, and it's going to dice, and it's
36 going to clean your kitchen floors, but I have no idea whether
37 it will or not.

38
39 **DR. WERNER:** I will maybe be a little bit bold, and I think it's
40 not a nice to know, and it's a need to know that I think that we
41 need to do. We need to be able to provide different advice,
42 different science, going forward. The discussion is no longer
43 are our systems stationary, but now we've moved to non-
44 stationary, meaning that we're not making decisions about an
45 average, and we're making decisions about something that is
46 constantly changing, whether it's distribution or whether it's
47 condition or whatever, and it requires a different thinking.

48

1 That is something that we -- As I said, it's a must-do, and so
2 we're taking it as something that we have to do, in order to
3 keep up with what everybody is seeing is happening out there,
4 and so, as such, it's the CEFI, the Climate, Ecosystems, and
5 Fisheries Initiative -- It's perhaps one acronym that is, I
6 would say, core to a lot of -- In terms of providing the
7 information, the projections, and the likely things that might
8 happen to a number of other areas, but that's, in some ways, the
9 place that we need to pivot on.

10
11 That Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries is that thing that will
12 give us the ability to think differently, if you will, and to
13 consider the possible outcomes, the scenario planning, the
14 projections that are taking place in other ways, and this will
15 give you that, perhaps a little bit more quantitative, and build
16 in, you know, the levels of certainty or uncertainty that then
17 will, in turn, allow you to make decisions about those levels of
18 certainty or uncertainty.

19
20 **MS. COIT:** Bill, could I add -- First of all, you know, I think
21 you make a great point, and we owe it to get back to the
22 different regional councils more specifically on some of this,
23 but I see it almost in three categories. One is the slide that
24 Cisco showed of like we need to maintain these current surveys,
25 and that is challenging, and we're committed to that.

26
27 Two, we need to use the tools that are available right now, and,
28 when I look at the east coast scenario planning, they're looking
29 at surveys and distributions of stocks that have shifted over
30 time, and you already see things happening, and we have things
31 beyond the white ships that we can use in the short-term.

32
33 Then third are things like CEFI that are going to be predictive,
34 and more useful, going forward, but aren't available
35 immediately, and so I see them that way. I think, again, it's
36 awkward not being able to announce our IRQ plan, but suffice it
37 to say that the current gaps, using new technologies now, and
38 planning for CEFI in the future, is a core part of what we hope
39 to do for that IRA funding, with specific attention to regional
40 needs, and then more to come, and we'll be more specific as soon
41 as we can.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Marc.

44
45 **MR. GORELNIK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Cisco, for
46 the presentation. I sympathize with your difficulties of
47 staffing and getting the equipment online. In the Pacific, one
48 of our larger fisheries segments, which is the non-trawl

1 commercial and recreational groundfish fishery, has effectively
2 no fishery-independent survey, and apparently has never had
3 that, and I'm not sure why that is so, but I guess, as long as
4 things were going along smoothly, no one really cared, but now
5 we presently have significant closures and restrictions, as a
6 consequence of not having really a good, comprehensive dataset,
7 and all we have is fishery-dependent data, and, because of past
8 restrictions, not much of the habitat has been fished, and so
9 we're in desperate need of fishery-independent surveys on the
10 west coast. With the empty staff positions, and other perhaps
11 savings, is there any prospect of actually getting this data gap
12 filled, so that we don't have unnecessary closures on the
13 Pacific coast?

14
15 **DR. WERNER:** Thanks for the question. Quickly, I don't know how
16 to answer that, or I can't give you an answer right now, but I
17 think that's part of rethinking the data collection side, by the
18 number of things that I said, and can we make surveys more
19 efficient, so that people, and perhaps vessels, are available to
20 collect other kinds of data and focus on other types of surveys,
21 and can the modern approaches, or the advanced technologies,
22 give us the ability to sample in places that we otherwise would
23 not have, that maybe are not that people-intensive, that can be
24 done remotely and such, and so I think those are the kind of
25 things that perhaps open up, you know, a set of questions, in
26 terms of there are things that we haven't sampled the way we
27 would have liked to have, that perhaps making surveys efficient
28 and advancing technologies can do that, and so I think it's
29 something to put on the table.

30
31 **MR. GORELNIK:** I will just note the challenge here is that this
32 can't be done with a trawl survey, and it's got to be done with,
33 at least traditionally, hook-and-line. There are charter
34 vessels that would be available do that, and so I do think there
35 are vessels and manpower available to do it, but it's a matter
36 of the Science Center being able to take up that -- To take up
37 that workload.

38
39 **DR. WERNER:** Yes. Great. Thank you.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Marcos.

42
43 **MR. HANKE:** Along the same line of the comments just made, I
44 want to bring to the table my concerns with the scale and
45 frequency and the characteristics of the advanced technologies
46 to the Caribbean. I know that some of them apply, and some of
47 them not, but especially with the frequency that would be
48 available to us to have a meaningful impact on the data

1 collection, the dependent data collection, and that's the first
2 point.

3
4 The second point is that we are already starting to see the
5 missed link, or bridge, between the dependent and independent
6 datasets that, under climate change, is super important to
7 address, and the fishermen -- I cannot take my hat off of a
8 fisherman, but with the fishermen. They're the first ones to
9 see not just along the coast, in the case of the U.S., the shift
10 of the habitat utilization, but we also see the shift
11 vertically, in the case of the islands, going deeper and so on,
12 and probably some guidance, with a structure to create a general
13 dataset in which the industry, charter, fishing charters, the
14 general public, can report in a meaningful way for that signal
15 to get to your hands as quick as possible, because it depends on
16 the council, and it depends on the Science Center and so on, and
17 it is a long way and that we don't have time to lose.

18
19 That's my concern, and I think we can do a better job on
20 engaging the public, engaging the industry, to get those
21 signals. For example, if suddenly we start to have cobia and
22 mahi in Boston, and with such frequency or whatever, and we
23 cannot have a delay on that information, that we are already
24 experiencing the same -- In our case, the grouper is being
25 caught deeper, and the fishermen are catching them deeper,
26 because of whatever reason, and those are my points. Thank you.

27
28 **DR. WERNER:** Thank you for that, Marcos. With regard to the
29 first point, the ability to collect data in habitats and
30 structures such as the Caribbean, where you have the reefs, and
31 those are untrawlable structures, is something that some of the
32 advanced technologies I think are beginning to actually -- Do I
33 want to use the word "operational"? I don't know, but they're
34 getting to the point where we can reliably begin to do them,
35 and, you know, again, the work that happened in the Pacific
36 Islands, and it was actually through cooperative research and
37 such, where we were able to put cameras down and be able to use
38 artificial intelligence, machine learning, to actually analyze
39 it much faster than we otherwise would have.

40
41 I know it's also being looked at, I believe, in the Gulf of
42 Mexico and other places, and it should be imminently at least
43 testable, to see how that would work in the Caribbean, almost in
44 the same way perhaps as it has worked in other places, and so I
45 think this is perhaps the next natural extension, in terms of
46 how do we do surveys and sampling, almost to the point that was
47 made earlier, in areas that we haven't before.

48

1 We might have some capabilities in front of us, or within us,
2 that we can do that can now answer some of the questions, in
3 terms of data collection, that you mentioned.

4
5 Then the other point, I think it's -- Because there are so many
6 things changing in so many places, and, like you said, the
7 changes in distribution, whether it's vertically or
8 latitudinally or such, we can't be everywhere, no matter how
9 many ships we build, and so I think perhaps developing a more
10 systematic way of that cooperation with the fishing industry,
11 with the fishermen, with the citizen science and all of that,
12 should be something that we take on quite seriously, because
13 they're seeing it, probably in some cases, before we do, and
14 there's no reason not to be systematic about how do we include
15 that information.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Werner, and we probably need to
18 move on. We're a little bit behind in the agenda, and I know,
19 Cisco, you'll be here for a while, if there's other questions,
20 and maybe we'll take one or two more, if we can make it quickly
21 here.

22
23 **MR. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cisco, thank you. It's good
24 to see you again. I guess I can summarize it very quickly and
25 say don't forget the basics, and so we've had this conversation
26 before, and we had it last year and the year before, and we
27 continue to struggle, in the Northeast, with the basics, the
28 basics for data, the basics as it relates to stock assessments,
29 and so we think about all the things that you have to think
30 about, and I understand that you're balancing these resources,
31 time and money, and you have all these needs, and don't forget,
32 you know, biological port sampling, and don't forget that we are
33 struggling now, in the Northeast, with stock assessments that
34 basically are delayed, and that could impact our ability to make
35 management decisions, and so just don't forget the basics.

36
37 **DR. WERNER:** Real quick, I totally agree, and that's why this
38 has to be -- We can't jump ahead and leave the legacy ways of
39 doing things -- We have to do them in parallel for a while. How
40 we do that, well, we'll have to figure that out, and I totally
41 agree.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom.

44
45 **MR. NIES:** I will try to be fast, because I think my request is
46 easy. Why the heck does it take so long for us to find out when
47 a survey is delayed or cancelled or whatever? You know, it's
48 gotten to the point where my staff is checking AIS in the

1 morning to find out if a survey has left on time or not, and it
2 takes sometimes weeks after the delay for us to get any
3 explanation of what's going on, and I don't understand that at
4 all.

5
6 I'm about ready to go hire some twenty-one-year-old National
7 Guard member, so I can get the information out of your
8 databases, and so my understanding, as well, is that it's not
9 coming regionally, and that the holdup appears to be somewhere
10 down in Washington, and we would like to know when these things
11 are happening and what the plan is. Thank you.

12
13 **DR. WERNER:** Yes, and it's something that we work on
14 communicating as quickly as we can, and the communication that
15 happens between us and our colleagues at the OMAO, and we need
16 to communicate with you, and we need to communicate with the
17 hill, and sometimes it's like we're almost there, and we're
18 going to fix it, and there's hope that we might actually be able
19 to get out, or juggle the crew so that we can get out, or the
20 fix is going to be there, and, admittedly, perhaps that
21 sometimes delays things more than what we should, but, to us,
22 getting that information out is important, and you need to know
23 where we are, and that transparency is something that is
24 paramount for us to do. If there are delays, it could be
25 because we think we're just going to go out, and then something
26 happens, but there is no -- There is no attempt at not getting
27 the information out.

28
29 **MR. NIES:** Just very briefly, our spring survey was supposed to
30 sail on March 15, and it didn't sail until sometime in May.
31 Between March 15 and April 17, there were three changes in the
32 schedule that we never heard about, and then we finally got a
33 notice on April 17. I don't understand.

34
35 **DR. WERNER:** It's a longer discussion, if we could, and I'm not
36 sure if --

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, I think maybe, Cisco, for that particular
39 issue, you can have a discussion offline maybe.

40
41 **DR. WERNER:** We could, but the request is noted, and it's
42 something that we can take back and say that, you know,
43 irrespective of all of the efforts to try to overcome any one
44 particular thing, even just knowing that something is happening
45 and they're trying to overcome it, it's something that is
46 valuable information, and important information, for you to
47 have, and we can do that and move forward that way.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Seeing no other hands up, and speaking
2 of delays, and delays in our agenda, we're going to make just a
3 minor adjustment here. I don't think we have time to get
4 through the Gulf Council highlights, and we can pick that up a
5 little bit later today, or after lunch, but, Russ, if you're
6 available, I think we have time to discuss the recreational
7 policy, if you don't mind, and I guess you have a presentation
8 with that that we'll pull up here.

9
10 **REVISED DRAFT: NATIONAL SALTWATER RECREATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY**

11
12 **MR. RUSS DUNN:** Thanks. For those of you who I may not have
13 met, which is very few of you, I'm Russ Dunn, and I'm the
14 National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries at NMFS, and
15 I appreciate having a few minutes here to provide an update on
16 where we stand in terms of updating the rec fish policy.

17
18 As you all may recall, we undertook an extensive 150-day comment
19 period, where we met with and discussed our efforts to update,
20 with the councils, the commissions, the state directors, MAFAC,
21 HMS Advisory Committee, and the general public, among others,
22 and we did this -- We accepted comments in-person, online,
23 webinars, email, a specific comment portal, et cetera, and we
24 had, as you can see from the statistics there in the response
25 section, a pretty robust response to our request for inputs on
26 how best to update the national policy.

27
28 Without going into real detail here, the comments that we
29 received over this 150 days really covered a range of topics and
30 issues, from specifics they would like to see, that people
31 wanted to see, in updating the policy, or amending it, to their
32 concerns in general about fisheries or specific fisheries within
33 a given fishery, like requests to increase a bag limit and
34 whatnot, which aren't necessarily appropriate for a full
35 national policy.

36
37 Climate was a big one, everywhere all the time, climate-
38 resilient fisheries and responding to impacts and understanding
39 impacts, et cetera. EEJ, or DEI, the interest here really was
40 on expanding DEI in fisheries themselves, and so the
41 participants, but also in the fishery management process, and it
42 specifically really included a focus, in many places, on
43 bringing in the sort of non-commercial, or sort of sustenance,
44 subsistence, angle, and it depends where you live on what the
45 definition is, et cetera, but going beyond the sport and
46 pleasure aspect, to embrace really those people who are
47 supplementing their protein intake through fishing.

1 Ecosystem and management and habitat conservation, really, for
2 the purposes of this slide, I rolled all the comments on
3 conservation and management into this bullet, and it was
4 everything from better address ecosystem management,
5 sustainability, discards, post-release mortality, things like
6 that, habitat improvements, and so there was a huge range of
7 comments on conservation and on ecosystem issues across the
8 board.

9
10 Regulatory access, most of the comments here really focused on
11 two sides of the same coin, either concerns over the potential
12 loss of anglers that anglers have experienced, or see coming,
13 and interest in expanding access, where it's appropriate.

14
15 Offshore ocean uses, again, this was really mostly about access,
16 either concerns of loss, interest in the potential to expand
17 associated with offshore development, and concern about conflict
18 and how to avoid conflict, in terms of increasing ocean uses.
19 Science and data collection can be boiled down to more, better,
20 faster, across-the-board.

21
22 Accountability and reporting, that really was a recurring theme
23 of greater regulatory accountability and interest in improving
24 reporting, and what was interesting here is it kind of -- It had
25 two primary focal points, and one was there was interest,
26 generally from the commercial and the for-hire commenters, about
27 making sure that individual anglers are accountable, and the
28 individual angling community was very keen to note that they are
29 getting frustrated when anglers stay within the rules, and the
30 system that has established the rules, as established, still
31 allow for an overage of the ACL and being blamed for that. If
32 I, as an angler, stay within my two fish, at the right bag
33 limit, but the system has allowed an overage, don't blame me,
34 and so it was an interesting sort of dialogue there.

35
36 Engagement and education and outreach was really across-the-
37 board. We want more facetime, and we want more social media and
38 electronic engagement, more and faster and better.

39
40 Increasing efficiency was an interesting one, and this came to a
41 focus on both concerns about sustainability over the long term
42 when you look at both increasing effort in combination with
43 increasing efficiency, meaning better electronics, et cetera,
44 and, ultimately, impacts on fisheries satisfaction, such as
45 decreasing fishing season length, right, and, if you've got more
46 people who are fishing more efficiently, who are able to catch
47 that bag, or that ACL, faster, ultimately, what does this mean,
48 down the road, for our satisfaction for a given fishery, if the

1 season keeps getting more and more truncated?

2

3 Then, finally, the policy implementation really focused on
4 provide metrics, provide measures, and feedback on how the
5 agency is doing, in terms of implementation.

6

7 We took all this feedback, and what did we do? Well, we added
8 two new policy goals to the original three, and the original
9 three, you may recall, were essentially maintaining the health
10 of the resources on which recreational fisheries depend. No
11 fish, no fishery, so to speak. Promoting rec fishing for the
12 benefit of the nation and enabling long-term participation
13 through science-based decision-making.

14

15 We added a climate-specific goal that you can see up there in
16 the first bullet, and we added a DEI goal, that you can see in
17 the second bullet, which meshes well with the EEJ policy that
18 Kelly briefed us on this morning. In addition to adding these
19 specific policy goals, we also incorporated language related to
20 climate and DEI throughout the policy itself.

21

22 Other key proposed updates, aside from just those goals, we went
23 through -- There were many recommendations on increasing focus,
24 or reference, to sustainability, and so we realize there are a
25 number of places where we could add verbiage that sort of
26 strengthens the policy's focus on sustainability, and we
27 specifically incorporated references and points regarding
28 offshore development. As we mentioned, depredation is a big one
29 across the country, and not just shark depredation, but marine
30 mammal as well.

31

32 We expanded our references to cooperative and collaborative data
33 collection, because there was a lot of interest in improving not
34 citizen science, but a collaborative, cooperative data
35 collection, as it provides increased confidence and additional
36 data streams to our science process, and we specifically,
37 towards the end of the policy, commit to track, measure, and
38 report-out on implementation.

39

40 Here, what I want to do with this slide is just highlight a
41 couple of the key inputs that we received from you all, from the
42 councils in our discussions, through both the discussions and
43 the formal letters that came in. As you can see, climate, as we
44 already mentioned, and we added that as a goal. DEI, or EEJ,
45 and we added that as a goal.

46

47 Improving data collection is sort of throughout the document,
48 and we reference improving collaborative, cooperative data

1 collection and improving our science and data. Offshore
2 development, we mentioned that we have specific points added
3 relevant to that point. Angler engagement and education, again,
4 we beefed up the document across-the-board, in terms of trying
5 to better engage on science and education, and, ultimately, as
6 we said for the last bullet there, we added a specific phrase at
7 the end, a clause, committing to metrics and reporting out.

8
9 Then what we did was we have that draft, and we were
10 specifically asked if we would reopen the comment period on the
11 draft itself, and so we sent the draft out on May 24 to you all,
12 and we sent it out to the councils and the commissions and
13 MAFAC, and we had an open comment period for five weeks on the
14 draft.

15
16 We got three comments back, two from NGOs and one from a for-
17 hire operator. Basically, the comments that came back said we
18 appreciate your efforts, and we think this was an improvement
19 over the original policy, and they asked for three sort of
20 specific things. One was try to better address specific modes
21 within the rec fishery within the policy. Two was frame bycatch
22 more as a management issue, and responsibility, than an
23 individual angler responsibility, because, in the policy, we
24 talk about tools and practices that anglers can employ, and
25 there was interest in trying to make it more of a management
26 responsibility, and further emphasizing data and science.

27
28 Next steps is we're going to have this similar discussion with
29 MAFAC next week, at the MAFAC meeting, and we will then sit down
30 with any additional comments that you all provide here today and
31 at MAFAC next week, and we'll work to address those issues,
32 those comments, and we will then enter a draft document into the
33 NMFS clearance process and review, in June and July, and we hope
34 to release the final in early September, and then, in October,
35 begin to implement, through implementation plans that the agency
36 is currently working on. I can stop there, and then I have one
37 more slide, if we have any comments, questions, concerns,
38 applause.

39
40 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** I think you guys did a great job on getting the
41 input. It was a long comment period, and it was hands-on, you
42 know, reaching out to people, and I think it really paid off,
43 with the amount of comments you got and the range of issues that
44 were raised, and so I think, really, kudos in that part.

45
46 I think the new goals are appropriate, and it's good to see that
47 getting in there, and I think the focus on angler involvement,
48 in data in particular, is important. To me, that is part of

1 modernizing our approach, making use of technological
2 advancements, you know, applying everything, and I think, when
3 you think of getting anglers involved, it could be a lot of
4 things.

5
6 It could be cooperative research type things, and it could be
7 the study fleet idea, and that's something that we're talking
8 about more in the Southeast, and it could be citizen science. A
9 lot of people take a very broad view of citizen science, and
10 you've got anglers involved in doing this, and giving us
11 information that we can't get efficiently, and that's
12 essentially citizen science.

13
14 I also think that continuing to work with engagement and
15 outreach on MRIP, so that angler are, you know, constantly
16 reminded of how important it is that they take part in that,
17 when they see a sampler, and they give the information, and they
18 give it as reliably and honestly as they can. You know, I think
19 that's just a constant reminder in outreach that folks need, and
20 it's really critical, and so I think you're on the right track
21 here.

22
23 I also wanted to raise a comment about, hopefully, as part of
24 this, you'll continue to do the rec fishing symposiums, and I
25 think those have been great opportunities to get anglers
26 together around the nation. Just a couple of suggestions on
27 that, from my experience of being involved in them.

28
29 In the future, I think it could be helpful to have some
30 dedicated seats available at those for the councils, to name
31 individuals, so you get, you know, really representation of the
32 nature of our fisheries. Being able to bring a couple of
33 advisors, and a couple of council members, and maybe a staff, as
34 part of a core group of that, and then, you know, I also see the
35 value of in sort of the open and let people come that are
36 interested as well, and so maybe kind of splitting the
37 participation up there, to make sure that we are able to get the
38 people in our council who are really involved in the fisheries.

39
40 Then I also think consider maybe some regional workshops as
41 perhaps precursors to the national, because we just never seem
42 to have enough time, at those national ones, to get into all the
43 issues that we face, and, you know, our regional issues are very
44 different, and so maybe that could be a way to figure out what
45 are some relevant topics that all of the regions are sharing
46 that might be really good things to dig into at the national
47 level, and I think most of the councils would be glad to help,
48 you know, support you guys in putting something together like

1 that on a regional basis, maybe in the off years or something,
2 or, if you know, if we do rec fish every three years, it gives
3 us like two years to do the regional.
4

5 **MR. DUNN:** Great. Yes, I appreciate that, and I will say that
6 we are trying to -- We realize that we need to sort of
7 restructure how we do the summit, and it has sort of reached its
8 limits in the current format, if you will, and so we'll be sure
9 to call you as we're planning the next go-round, and so I
10 appreciate it.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Marcos.
13

14 **MR. HANKE:** The round of applause keeps going on, and thank you
15 very much for the efforts, and I really see a few things that
16 strike me. First of all is your ability to put in paper on the
17 way that you present, but it's really going on on all of the
18 activities that I attend and saw, and that's not an easy process
19 sometimes, especially on the part of the diversity of modes and
20 modalities that recreational fisheries takes place, especially
21 for the Caribbean.
22

23 We have multiple habitats and multiple styles of fishing, and we
24 have to recognize that, in order to be effective in our message,
25 and I agree with what John says about the engagement of the
26 fishing community, and it's another example that the industry is
27 requesting to provide a forum, or to provide the information,
28 the data collection and so on, which is linked to the
29 presentation that Cisco just gave to us, and those are my
30 comments. Thank you.
31

32 **MR. DUNN:** Thank you.
33

34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. I'm not seeing any other hands up.
35

36 **MR. DUNN:** If I can, I've got one last slide that I would love
37 to just run through that is directly relevant, and it will take
38 me about forty-five seconds. Our team -- Obviously, we've been
39 heavily focused on the policy and implementation plans, but we
40 have not just been sitting idle on those, and we've been really
41 reaching out and trying to begin to move out on some of what
42 we've heard, and so, in the last short period of time --
43

44 First, I want to say thank you to the Gulf Council, who is not
45 only hosting this meeting, but also was willing to host a rec
46 economic workshop that we just did, that we cohosted with the
47 Office of Science and Technology, in their offices in late
48 April. We had about sixty people from around the country, and

1 more online, to focus specifically on rec econ, and there will
2 be a final report coming out from that soon.

3
4 We have also partnered up with our Northeast and Southwest
5 Fisheries Science Centers on those study fleets. California is
6 looking at some rockfish species, which are undergoing
7 assessment updates, and the Northeast is looking at some of the
8 cod and haddock issues, and those are, you know, cooperative
9 research with the for-hire community.

10
11 We just are working with the Southeast Center, and were able to
12 provide them funding to expand their cooperative tagging
13 program, from just HMS to now it's going to include coastal
14 migratory pelagics, and we teamed up with our habitat office to
15 collaborate in providing grants that directly engage anglers,
16 and you've heard about these programs the last four or five
17 years, and we were able to do it again, and we're going to
18 announce those projects in about a week. Those are grants that
19 go through our NFHAP partners.

20
21 Our release mortality mitigation, we were able to team up with
22 the Caribbean Council and provide them funds to distribute
23 descending devices to both the commercial and the recreational
24 portions of the fleet down there, and they're working on
25 distribution of those devices and materials.

26
27 Up in Alaska, we're working with the region, and we have been
28 able to support them in their efforts to undertake a series of
29 discussions, constituent discussions, on moving forward with the
30 recreational quota entity.

31
32 We've been able to support both the Pacific Islands and the
33 Southeast regions on protected resources outreach, in terms of
34 turtles and sawfish specifically, and then we literally, just
35 this weekend, hosted the first of a few family fishing days,
36 here in the sanctuary, at the Keys, up in Key Largo, with Title
37 I schools, which are schools that have predominantly low-income
38 students, to get them out and experience fishing and understand
39 a little bit about marine conservation efforts.

40
41 We've taken what you've heard, and we have a small team, but
42 we've been able to sort of move forward and start the ball
43 rolling with a lot of this work so far, and I will wrap up
44 there.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Russ. I believe that Janet has a
47 comment. Janet, go ahead.

1 **MS. COIT:** Yes, and I just wanted to add to the applause,
2 Russell. Russ reports directly to me, and he is going to double
3 his commitment, by having Tim Sartwell join him full-time, and
4 not part-time, something that I am supportive of, and I just
5 wanted to -- I think that the process, and the content, of the
6 update of the policy are fantastic, but just also note that Russ
7 is constantly with Kelly and her team, with the regional
8 offices, with me, advocating for more research and attention and
9 engagement on rec fishing issues, and I wanted to make sure that
10 you knew that, because he really is a dynamo, who is making a
11 lot of good things happen at Fisheries.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Janet, and thank you,
14 everyone. That will just about bring us up to our lunchbreak.
15 What we'll do is we'll start up, Ryan, so you know, on the
16 budget and outlook, and we'll start just right after the agenda,
17 and we can pick up the Gulf Council highlights later in the
18 afternoon, before public testimony or something, and so, with
19 that, we'll break for lunch until 1:30, and I will see everyone
20 then.

21
22 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on May 23, 2023.)
23

24 - - -

25
26 May 23, 2023

27
28 TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

29 - - -

30
31
32 The Council Coordination Committee reconvened at the Marriott
33 Beachside Hotel in Key West, Florida on Tuesday afternoon, May
34 23, 2023, and was called to order by Gulf of Mexico Fishery
35 Management Council Chairman Greg Stunz.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I think we're going to go ahead and get
38 started. We're missing a few council representatives, but, in
39 the interest of time, I think we'll get going.

40
41 As I mentioned right before lunch, we made some minor
42 modifications to the agenda, but we're going to pick up with the
43 items that are on the agenda right after lunch, which is the
44 budget discussions and some information on the Inflation
45 Reduction Act that's going to be led by Brian Pawlak, and so,
46 Brian, they will be pulling up your presentation in just a
47 second, and whenever you're ready.

48

BUDGET AND 2024 OUTLOOK

1
2
3 **MR. PAWLAK:** All right. Thank you, Greg. I know many of you
4 have seen me do this presentation before, and we'll hit some of
5 the same kind of high notes that we typically do, but I've
6 already rearranged the presentation a bit, if you're kind of
7 used to the format that we do here, and I'm going to go through
8 council funding first, and kind of outline where we landed on
9 the councils in 2023 and what 2024 is looking like, and then,
10 with kind of the permission of Greg here, we're going to go
11 ahead and pause for a couple of questions just on the council
12 budget piece, and then we'll dive into some of the broader, more
13 macro kind of pictures and issues with the NOAA Fisheries budget
14 and then talk a little bit about the budget supplementals, at
15 least what we can say, and so a little bit of restructuring from
16 the past, when I've done these, but I think, with many familiar
17 faces in the room, you have seen this before.

18
19 I always like to do a quick orientation of where we are in the
20 budget, because it really matters. It makes a big difference of
21 what year you're talking about, and I often get people panicked
22 about, you know, oh no, the budget is disastrous, and I'm like
23 what year are you talking about, and that's not this year, and
24 that's an out-year budget, and so it's always good to frame what
25 year you're in, and, presently, we're halfway through the budget
26 execution of FY 23, and we're working on putting our enacted
27 budget through all the controls and grants and contracting that
28 we need to do.

29
30 As a reminder, we got that enacted budget in December, and it's
31 always a recurring question, even within NOAA Fisheries, and, of
32 course, our constituents, of when does the money flow, and so we
33 got the budget enacted in December, and it was still several
34 months after December when we got apportionment from OMB, and
35 spend plans approved, and so we were several months into the
36 calendar year before we were able even to start executing our
37 funding.

38
39 In FY 24, the current year that we're working on, the
40 President's budget was also delayed about a month from getting
41 out its, and I will do air quotes around "normal timeframe",
42 since we seem to fall under the pattern of pushing way past the
43 typical kind of years past February release. We do have the
44 President's budget out, and the budget request is out in the
45 blue book, and I can give the link, later on, to what the blue
46 book outlines, and the highlights there, but that process is
47 fully underway and being evaluated by Congress, and we expect
48 that, this summer, we'll start seeing House and Senate marks for

1 what they think about 24.

2

3 Also, in FY 25, we're in the budget formulation phase, and we
4 are in kind of initial conversations and discussions with NOAA,
5 what we might think and do about 25. It's still really early in
6 the stages there, but I think, also, as you know, and I've said
7 to you before, once we start talking that out-year planning,
8 that really remains administratively confidential, but is shared
9 here for everyone to have a timeframe and context for our
10 planning cycles and what we're looking at.

11

12 The focus, first, as I said, is on the specific regional council
13 and fisheries commissions funding, and I say both here, because
14 it's our budget line, our PPA, our budget line, and that funding
15 is provided in one PPA, one budget line, and I didn't give you
16 the breakout here, but the FY 23 enacted budget fully funded our
17 request for \$1.4 million in adjustments to base, or ATBs, in the
18 regional council and fisheries commission budget line, and so
19 this provided approximately -- It was just shy of a million
20 dollars increase in the regional councils PPA.

21

22 A budget increase in the regional council line, and it was
23 evenly distributed among the organizations here, and that's good
24 news, and it's good news for us that we are actually seeing
25 ATBs, which we have not, in the past years, seen that as
26 regularly as we have in the last couple of years, and I will
27 dive into that a little bit more as well.

28

29 On the table there, you can kind of see the FY 22 through 24
30 across the top columns there, and so, if you look out to the FY
31 24 President's budget for the regional councils and fisheries
32 commissions budget, we're requesting, again, a \$1.5 million
33 increase in the ATB, and this would come out to, again, a
34 million dollars for the councils, if that is enacted at that
35 level, and so roughly, you know, \$31.8 million in the regional
36 councils sub-PPA, or budget line, that we work with you in
37 distributing the money, you and your communities, to make sure
38 you can do your job.

39

40 Just where we sit on council funding status, I think, in the
41 first quarter, even under the CR, continuing resolution, we
42 didn't quite have a budget yet, and I think we're pretty good at
43 this process now, under CR, in getting significant money to the
44 councils in advance of the final budget, and we did that, at
45 about the 50 to 60 percent range, in the first quarter, and just
46 checking this morning, and I think GMD, and that's our Grants
47 Management Division, at the NOAA level, I think has signed all
48 the council awards, except for maybe one, and so those should be

1 out to everyone in a couple of weeks here, and there should not
2 be much of a delay there.

3
4 They are in full review, and they're being looked at, and
5 they're in process. I don't think they're quite in your hands
6 yet, but I don't see -- It says here end of the month, and
7 that's only a few days away, and I'm optimistic that it's not
8 the end of the month, and it's the first weeks of June that you
9 will have the full suite of funding.

10
11 One thing with the council funding here, and this is the table
12 that we typically present and share with you, and have for a
13 while, and it's typically referred to -- The kind of vernacular
14 is it's the base funding. It's the core set of funding that the
15 council receives, and the council receives this funding, as we
16 talked just two slides back, primarily from the regional
17 councils and fisheries commissions budget line, and you can see
18 the enacted amounts there, or I shouldn't say the enacted
19 amounts, but the spend plan amounts there, and then the spread
20 of how that would look across the different councils.

21
22 The other -- Following the rows down, the second and third row,
23 those budget lines have long been standing allocations to the
24 councils, and they are not within the council programmatic line,
25 and they're in our program lines, so to speak, and those amounts
26 have been steadfast and steady for -- I think we looked at this
27 a little while ago, and it was like ten or fifteen years, and so
28 those amounts still remain, and you will see those in the
29 budget, and the spend plan amounts are outlined there for 2023
30 in the green, the next-to-last row there.

31
32 A couple of questions have come up before the meeting, and folks
33 may remember that we wanted to put forth, and we did actually.
34 In FY 21, we put forth to Congress a merging of these budget
35 lines, and so we would basically settle the base funding within
36 the regional councils' budget line.

37
38 These different pots of funds that have regularly come to you,
39 we put forward a proposal to Congress to really just kind of
40 reset the base, and it wasn't -- It's what we refer to in the
41 budget world as a technical ATB, a technical adjustment, and so
42 it's a zero-sum game, and it was just moving money among lines,
43 and so we thought it -- The council committee here I think
44 agreed, and we thought it would be a more efficient and
45 effective way to communicate, more of a way to ensure your base
46 and make the accounting a little bit easier, and I think we got
47 through the committee, but maybe not everyone fully heard, or
48 maybe we didn't do a good job of communicating, but that

1 proposal was specifically rejected by the House and Senate, by
2 the appropriations staff.

3
4 If the committee wants to revisit that, we have all tools and
5 information to go back and try that again, but we did get
6 specific directive language to not proceed that way, and so it's
7 a different set of appropriators, and we might have a different
8 response, and I don't know, and I will defer to the committee,
9 if they want to discuss it, and it's worth going back and
10 looking at it and trying again, but I think the key message here
11 is -- You see where the funding breaks up for your different
12 councils, and we're still in the model of kind of the
13 traditional form of accounting, where we've got base funding
14 coming from a couple of different budget lines as well.

15
16 That's council funding, and I will pause there, Greg, and I'm
17 glad to take questions there. As I said, we tended to bury this
18 in the back and then not have time for questions, and I'm glad
19 to take a couple of questions on council funding before I step
20 into the kind of overview of just where we are generally in
21 Fisheries and what some final funding might be for us.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sure. Thanks, Brian. Any questions? Tom.

24
25 **MR. NIES:** Thank you for the presentation, Brian. Just a quick
26 question. I thought you said that the agency got ATBs across
27 all PPAs, yet our part of the fisheries management programs and
28 services PPA has never received an adjustment, I think, for
29 quite some time, and I'm just curious why that is, and that's a
30 question that we've asked before, that the agency has said they
31 would get back to us on, and I'm not sure that we've ever really
32 gotten an answer on that.

33
34 **MR. PAWLAK:** To clarify, when we get the ATBs, they're generally
35 applied to every line, but not always, based on I think a
36 question you had, Tom, earlier, and congressional direction may
37 reset that, and it may be applied differently, to different
38 budget lines. For these specifically, I would think at this
39 generic high level, yes, we have ATBs in this line that the
40 agency got, and I would not be able to kind of give a strong
41 justification of why these components haven't changed. It's a
42 program decision, at the program level, to maintain these at the
43 historic level.

44
45 I think, to your question, I think one of the advantages of,
46 when we were talking about merging the lines, is the ATB would
47 be applied to the larger base number, once the council was
48 receiving ATBs, and that was one of the things that we talked

1 about back in 2021, when we talked about merging these component
2 lines, and so your issue would effectively kind of go away if
3 they were -- It wouldn't become a program decision as much as if
4 was applied by a congressional application of ATBs.

5
6 **MR. NIES:** Thank you.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kitty.

9
10 **MS. SIMONDS:** Looking at this, and it's the slide before, where
11 it shows FY 2022 to FY 2024, and, if you look at the amounts of
12 money that we would get individually, it hardly pays for one
13 person's salary, and it's ridiculous, frankly, and so I guess
14 what I want to know is, when you folks talk to the hill, is
15 there something that we all should be doing, or you all should
16 be doing, to get a better increase? Really, and, I mean, what
17 questions to you get asked, because this -- As I said -- I mean,
18 I don't know, and do you all agree with me that what we each get
19 individually is hardly enough to hire one person, staffer?

20
21 **MR. PAWLAK:** I think what you're reflecting on is what Cisco
22 reflected on, is our adjustments to base don't necessarily keep
23 up with our labor costs increase and other increases that we're
24 seeing.

25
26 What the hill tends to focus on, and the administration tends to
27 focus on, are what we call program changes, and we get into the
28 specifics of the 2023 and 2024, and the ATBs, the adjustments to
29 base, are typically formulaic and calculated and provided from
30 the department, and they're intended to keep up with inflation,
31 but they don't always do so, and so it's a bit of -- We're
32 caught in the form of ATBs, and, unless we receive priority,
33 administration priority, for program change, meaning a change to
34 the bottom line of the base budget, we're in the formulaic
35 methodology of determining increases.

36
37 **MS. SIMONDS:** So you're saying that it has to come from the top
38 before you can actually bargain for anything on the hill?

39
40 **MR. PAWLAK:** Before we would be asking for an increase in this
41 budget line, outside of ATB, there would have to be an
42 administrative decision, yes, to support council lines at the
43 higher level.

44
45 **MS. SIMONDS:** Okay. Thanks. I think.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom.

48

1 **MR. NIES:** Following-up on that, when the agency puts in program
2 changes, for example for dealing with offshore wind, and that's
3 one that comes to mind, do you increase -- Do you include in
4 there the possibility that that imposes increased
5 responsibilities and costs on us?
6

7 I mean, I basically now, because of offshore wind, have the
8 equivalent of one full-time staff member working on offshore
9 wind issues, and that's a change in my program that I didn't
10 have five years ago, and so, when you put in program requests
11 for, as an example, offshore wind, are you including additional
12 money for the councils that have to deal with offshore wind, and
13 I know the answer to that is no, but question really is why not?
14

15 **MR. PAWLAK:** Good question, and I think you did answer it
16 correctly. Well, I think some of it is what is the funding
17 request for the agency's regulatory requirements, and the
18 pressure and demand on the regulatory requirements is where that
19 is mainly focused. We, obviously, have it at some of the FMC
20 level, and we have programmatic decisions, where the programs
21 can determine, and work with the councils, if there is
22 additional funding needed, but I think, Tom, yes, the focus has
23 been on the fisheries and regulatory needs, or science needs to
24 support the regulations, so far.
25

26 **MR. NIES:** Thank you.
27

28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** David.
29

30 **MR. WITHERELL:** Not a question, Mr. Chairman, but a comment.
31 Brian, just to make you aware of the situation in the North
32 Pacific, our burn rate exceeds our annual funding, currently.
33 Now, fortunately, we have some unspent funds from the COVID
34 years to carry us through, but we're looking towards the future
35 and realize that we're going to have to cut back in a certain
36 way, and so our council is looking at having fewer council
37 meetings, or virtual meetings.
38

39 I am no longer replacing staff, backfilling staff that leave for
40 retirement or other reasons, and so I guess, when inflation is
41 increasing at the rate it is, and, for example, our travel and
42 hotel costs, as well as our salaries and benefits costs,
43 particularly insurance, are increasing from 10 to 20 percent a
44 year, we're not keeping up, and so our plan is just reduce staff
45 and reduce costs for meetings, and I just wanted to let you know
46 that.
47

48 **MR. PAWLAK:** Thank you. I appreciate the comments, and I

1 empathize.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy.

4

5 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I appreciate the comments around the table, and
6 I feel like it's important to share, from an agency perspective,
7 that we're battling the same problems, and there's kind of that
8 general frustration of how do we keep up with increasing
9 workload with less staff, and, if you ask Clay, or any of my
10 regional administrator peers around the table, for the most
11 part, unless it's been a new initiative, we've been cutting
12 back, in terms of the amount of staffing that we've been able to
13 hire in recent years.

14

15 As an example, the Southeast Region has twenty-seven fisheries
16 employees, and we're down from thirty-four employees five years
17 ago, and so the frustration is shared, and I just wanted to kind
18 of let you know that it's resonating with me, but the reality is
19 we're kind of all in the same boat together right now, and we
20 have to figure out how to best address that. Thanks.

21

22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Other questions regarding the council-specific
23 budget? Brian, I'm not seeing any, if you want to proceed now
24 with the main budget.

25

26 **MR. PAWLAK:** Here I will go over FY 23 enacted, and where we sit
27 with FY 24, and I think, to some of the points that Andy is
28 making here, and the question just raised about kind of really
29 decreasing budgets in an increasing cost world, we'll highlight
30 how some of that evolves, or how some of that comes to be.

31

32 First, just the big picture, and this is just meant to be a
33 graphical representation of where our funding landings with the
34 four programmatic areas, the four major programmatic areas
35 within fisheries, and I know, for folks working on a thirty-
36 million-dollar budget line, it might be hard to feel that we
37 have empathy for you, when we have a billion dollars to work
38 with, but, as Andy points out, when you get down to the FMC
39 level, down to program levels, that folks care about, folks are
40 feeling those pressures across-the-board.

41

42 The point here is just to note where we stand, and I think,
43 also, even as we're talking about this, and you saw Cisco's
44 slide of increasing budgets for surveys from Congress, in our
45 budget across-the-board, in the FY 23 enacted budget, every
46 budget line got an increase, and so Congress is working hard to
47 keep our programs afloat, and putting money in for us, and we
48 greatly appreciate that, but understanding those pressures, and

1 we were getting some of the questions from appropriators as
2 well, of why can't you do X, Y, and Z, and you used to do X, Y,
3 and Z, but we also want you to do A, B, and C, and so that is a
4 challenge, and it's one that we can highlight a little bit here,
5 how that comes about or what that looks like in kind of the
6 fiscal environment.

7
8 Here again, it's just a graphical snapshot of kind of where we
9 stand, and generally budgets are increasing and kind of the
10 breakout of where the bulk of resources lies, based on the
11 program, but, if you jump to Slide 10, here, this is really a
12 high-level breakdown of our budget increase in FY 23.

13
14 In FY 23, we had a net increase of \$77 million, and so it's
15 question of, well, with that kind of increase, you get asked,
16 well, where it's going, and why can't we do more, and how is
17 that increase -- What does that increase actually look like, and
18 so what the increase looks like here is it's represented by this
19 bar graph here.

20
21 Starting from the bottom and going up is the biggest increases
22 to the smallest increases in the budget, and you can see, at the
23 bottom, what we would have is, in the bold green, I guess, is
24 \$25.8 million in ATBs, or adjustments to base, and these are
25 generally spread across most budget lines, to cover inflationary
26 costs, including a pay raise for federal employees. As I was
27 responding to Tom's question, it doesn't necessarily come in
28 evenly, and it doesn't necessarily come in perfectly, but it's a
29 big deal that we've gotten these I think the last two years, or
30 maybe three, where, kind of three or four years prior, we did
31 not see the ATBs come in.

32
33 The increase to the councils that we were speaking about, and to
34 Kitty's question, this is where the councils' increase comes in.
35 It comes in in the formulaic adjustment to base request that
36 goes in as part of the budget, and so, actually, when folks ask,
37 you know, where do we land, and what does Congress think, we
38 asked for like \$26.2 million in ATBs, and we got \$25.8, and it's
39 pretty close, but even the enacted budget doesn't reflect the
40 amount that we asked for.

41
42 If you move from bottom to top in the bar chart there, you can
43 see that our next big increase was with the North Atlantic right
44 whale and then our requested increases in offshore wind in FY
45 23, at \$13 million, and then kind of narrowing to climate,
46 fisheries, and surveys, and then the box out to the right there
47 is just all the kind of increases that we have in different
48 budget lines.

1
2 One of the questions that I often get, and asked upfront, is,
3 you know, what does congressional direction, congressional
4 language, do to your budget and your ability to operate, and so
5 we have \$77 million in increases here, and the good news for us
6 is -- We were glad for all the funding, and we were glad to put
7 all the money towards the priorities, but not all of these
8 funding levels and priorities were things that we asked for that
9 we saw as a priority in our administration's budget. It
10 definitely becomes a priority for us once Congress puts it in,
11 and the good news is we get to work within our ATBs, but we get
12 a lot of congressional language, like in the box out to the
13 right there, and there is probably some congressional language
14 with every one of those little plus-ups.

15
16 How does that impact our budget? The total budget is not -- We
17 don't have a billion dollars just to spend as we will, and we're
18 restricted and have to follow the direction of Congress on that,
19 and some of that is, you know, very specific, down to a million
20 dollars here or a million dollars there, and some of it is very
21 directed, like you must and you shall, and that's the actual
22 kind of appropriations language, and others are you should, or
23 should consider, and we don't necessarily have to follow that,
24 but we tend to want to keep appropriators happy, and we tend to
25 track all of that language and follow that language and
26 direction, the best we can.

27
28 We're getting pressures beyond inflation, and we get the
29 congressional priorities, and congressional direction, for where
30 we have to fund, and so it is the balancing act of where your
31 increases come, what you have directly requested, and the most
32 obvious in this chart is in the orange here, and we requested,
33 as an admin priority, administration priority, funding for
34 offshore wind, and so we requested about twice this amount, I
35 think, in offshore wind, and so we're getting some positive
36 signs in the places that we see as priorities, but we're also
37 getting direction that it impacts us in other ways, but most of
38 the direction that we get, year after year, is not new, and so
39 it's pretty engrained in the system.

40
41 It's planned for, and so it doesn't come as a surprise, and it
42 doesn't necessarily impact other programs, so to speak, because
43 it's been in the system so long that we kind of planned for it,
44 and we have that prepared for, or already modeled out.

45
46 The next slide is just a couple of examples of congressional
47 direction received. Within the enacted appropriation, we,
48 obviously, received a supplemental, and it was somewhat tied to,

1 and linked to, the appropriation, and so, here, we received \$20
2 million for the North Atlantic right whale and \$300 million for
3 a continued fourth year, I think, about \$300 million, and we've
4 been down this road before, for fisheries disaster assistance,
5 and, again, the supplemental funding, and it's not under a
6 specific timeframe to spend, but we're eager to spend
7 particularly the first, on the North Atlantic right whale, as
8 soon as we can.

9
10 The FY 24 President's budget -- If you're looking for a blue
11 book and describing in detail what we are doing, and maybe it's
12 more detail than I will give here, but it's also kind of glossy
13 communications aspect level, and the blue book is out, and you
14 can look at that. Several folks reached out to me asking where
15 the blue book was in February and March, and it was delayed, and
16 so it's part of a communications challenge that we have in the
17 budget, and we were just delayed in Commerce, speaking about the
18 budget, and most other agencies were, but that's out now for
19 your reference.

20
21 What you'll see in that budget is \$1.2 billion, and so basically
22 keeping our funding where we've been, and we've got \$23 million
23 requested above our enacted budget, and, again, the right
24 direction, a positive direction, and, again, you'll see what we
25 find very important, is our inflationary costs are being
26 addressed through this close to \$30 million ask there, and then
27 the program changes, again the specific administration
28 priorities, where we're asking for increases, net to close to
29 \$32 million, and what you might see as terminations, or
30 reductions, eliminations, and just a different way to refer to
31 them, is earmarks, things that Congress gave us that wasn't
32 requested, and community-directed funding I think is the
33 terminology that they use now, and we tend to back those things
34 out, because they're not a priority of the administration's
35 budget request, and it's directed from the hill.

36
37 If we go to Slide 14, and this is just diving into FY 24, and so
38 the priorities, and so where do we fit, and what are the
39 administration's priorities, and how do they communicate about
40 the budget, it's really in these three areas under climate
41 research, which Cisco spoke about.

42
43 Economic development, and this is really where our offshore wind
44 component falls, and environmental justice and equity, which
45 Kelly spoke to this morning, is the bins, buckets, priority
46 areas for the administration, and, when talking to the hill,
47 that's how things tend to be framed.

48

1 If you move on to Slide 15, you will see where we land in some
2 of the specific items here, and so I think, Bill, you were
3 asking how are we doing CEFI, and where does the funding lie
4 there, so this our third year, and FY 24 will be the third year,
5 if you see the top line there, and it's our third year of asking
6 for climate-informed fisheries, or the climate fisheries
7 initiative, and so twice now we've put that budget proposal at
8 \$10 million to Congress, and we have not received full funding
9 for that, or not any in this particular program area, and so you
10 and Cisco were having a discussion back and forth of what are we
11 doing, and how do we do it, and, well, we have to maintain, and
12 as Janet just mentioned at the front here too, we've got to
13 maintain our core surveys.

14
15 We have to maintain our core work, and we've got to keep that
16 pace going before we can do other, and we are, in some places,
17 just barely around the edges, helping to address the climate-
18 ready fisheries initiative, but we really are seeking new
19 funding to be able to do that fully, and so I just flagged that
20 here on this slide, because it's one place that you will see
21 that request back in again for 2024, looking to meet some of the
22 objectives that Cisco was laying out, and it gives a
23 clarification of the problem and mitigation.

24
25 If you look at Slide 16, you will see our offshore wind
26 components, our request, and, again, in 2023, you will how
27 important this is to the administration, the scale of the
28 request here, a \$36 million request, where we ended up with
29 about \$13 million enacted, but it's still a priority for the
30 administration, and we're glad for the increases, but it's not
31 where the administration thinks that we need to be to address
32 offshore wind fully, and, coming in in FY 24, an additional \$32
33 million request there. I think that's all that I will focus on
34 on that slide.

35
36 If you go to the next slide, also, as Kelly was speaking and
37 talking about the equity in workforce initiatives, again, we
38 have requested, I think twice in the budget from the hill,
39 specific initiatives, at the \$7 million range here, to actually
40 work on the things that Kelly was going over this morning, and
41 be able to implement our EEJ policies and program. Again, it's
42 not direction from the hill yet, and they thought that -- The
43 feedback was these are good things to do, and kind of work
44 within your base to do these, and so you could be working on
45 these things, but, to work on these things to the full extent we
46 want, again, is a shifting of resources that we don't quite
47 have.

48

1 There are four different breakouts there of the different things
2 we do there, but we're asking for \$9 million in the President's
3 budget to help with us with that, and, if we go to the next,
4 this is supplemental funding.

5
6 We'll be able to talk a little bit about this at a high level,
7 and maybe somewhat get into Kelly's next topic, but Janet
8 mentioned a bit of what we can talk about, and we'll talk about
9 BIL funding some, but IRA funding spend plans are still making
10 their way through the system, and I won't be able to get into
11 detail there, but, as a reminder, and I'm not sure if we got to
12 this last time we talked, or we shared this before, but, in the
13 Inflation Reduction Act, what we can talk about is NOAA.

14
15 There is \$3.3 billion across NOAA that is still working its way
16 through the system, but the different components that we can
17 speak is we expect to see \$20 million in consultations and
18 permitting for NOAA, and that's really to work on our accurate
19 and timely reviews and planning and permitting and the approval
20 processes for other federal activity, and that will be a
21 welcomed plus for our regulatory side.

22
23 We've got a significant plus, again across NOAA, and this isn't
24 necessarily just NOAA Fisheries, for new facilities, for
25 fisheries labs and marine operations, and I expect that there
26 will be some support for piers in here, and I don't think it's a
27 secret that a big focus here, or the number-one priority within
28 NOAA, also is working on the Northwest Fisheries Science Center
29 replacement, which is presently at Montlake, and I think that's
30 the building that's in the picture there, and the place that we
31 still --

32
33 That we have to be a little more discreet on is the biggest,
34 and, of course, what most folks are probably interested, is we
35 have \$2.6 billion across NOAA for coastal climate preparedness,
36 to address tribal issues, a lot of probably habitat restoration
37 and coastal planning work planned here, but, also, thankfully,
38 for Fisheries, we have specific language in the supplemental
39 bill that asks us to directly pay attention to marine and
40 fisheries stock assessments.

41
42 The next slide just highlights that, within the BIL funding, or
43 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, that, similarly, we received
44 increases there that we're already executing. The Pacific
45 Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, for those that follow the fund,
46 that are on the west coast, we approximately received \$65
47 million, in an annual appropriation, added to that fund, and BIL
48 was about \$34 million to go out to PCSRF.

1
2 Also, under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, there's a huge
3 focus on habitat restoration, and habitat restoration in a
4 couple of buckets, including fish passage, specifically fish
5 tribal passage, and just habitat restoration, and that's meant
6 to be large-scale projects that are kind of transformational in
7 their design and implementation, and this is really just kind of
8 a celebratory slide of the awards announced and where they are
9 across the country, covering lots of different activity, and I'm
10 just sharing this with you, and this, I think, is from our
11 public announcement of a couple of weeks ago.

12
13 That last slide is for questions, and I know it's a lot to throw
14 out in one place there, and hopefully we didn't go over too
15 long, Greg.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Brian. We'll open the floor to
18 questions.

19
20 **MS. COIT:** Brian, I just want to note the obvious, which is the
21 debt ceiling discussions, and a lot of the spending issues -- I
22 read this morning about a proposal where the FY 24 budgets would
23 be flat, and, if they're flat, any increase requires a decrease
24 of the same amount, and so, needless to say -- First, I will
25 just say that, since I've been here, for all of almost two
26 years, the budget process has never been consistent, and
27 probably you veterans can tell me that's also true, but, going
28 forward, there's so much up in the air, which leaves us more
29 uncertain than some other years, about what an FY 24 budget
30 might look like, as compared to the President's budget that was
31 submitted.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Janet. Tom.

34
35 **MR. NIES:** I apologize, because I meant to ask this during the
36 council discussion, but are there plans to change the grant
37 process for the councils to a different period?

38
39 **MR. PAWLAK:** Thanks, Tom, for asking the question, and so, as of
40 this morning, I was not aware of any, but I've been getting some
41 hallway conversation, and I think, from what I've just learned
42 this morning on that, is our NOAA Grants Management Division,
43 for us in the Department of Commerce, and obviously above us,
44 and I don't know if it falls within the regulations, or their
45 policy, but they have a pretty -- Following back to more strict
46 adherence to what their policy is, it's that grants should not
47 extend -- Any grant award should not extend past five years.

48

1 It's not just being applied to the councils here, and I guess
2 they're looking at that policy with a little more scrutiny, and
3 wanting to make sure that policy is implemented, and so what
4 I've kind of learned, and thanks to Beth, and others, who just
5 this morning were sharing where some of the feedback was coming
6 from, and I guess the training that the Grants Management
7 Division has been sending out, and pushing out, has been kind of
8 reiterating that policy and approach, that they want to move
9 toward that do not extend past five years. Again, it's not just
10 for councils, but for everyone.

11
12 We have awards, and, again, not just in reference to the
13 councils, where we commonly add a no-cost year past the five
14 years, and that's been causing more scrutiny at the NOAA level.
15 The one year past, I'm not sure what the ultimate concern is
16 there, but it's their policy, but we also have some grants that
17 we have extended for five, six, seven, eight years, which I get
18 the concern and nervousness about that, and so I think that the
19 model that the department and NOAA is asking us to take is to
20 move to a four-plus-one, and so I think, with the councils, I
21 think we're eighteen months away, and I think your awards are
22 over at the end of 2024, and so I think, in planning for the new
23 awards, it will be just spreading out your spend plan where
24 there won't need to be an extension past the five years, but the
25 spend planning is done within a five-year period, meaning you
26 plan for four years, and, if there's an issue, you can carry it
27 over one.

28
29 There's a lot of technical detail there, as far as the grants
30 people and the administrative level, and I'm glad to hear
31 concerns about it, and we can feed those concerns back to our
32 fisheries grants for the council, that Dan Namur runs, but it
33 will not -- There's no reason to indicate that it will result in
34 a decrease in funding. I don't think it's hugely more
35 administratively burdensome than what we do now, but it's
36 changing the timing of the awards and planning for them. Tom.

37
38 **MR. NIES:** If I might ask a follow-up, I think one of our
39 concerns is going to be how that is implemented. It's going to
40 make a big difference to us if, suddenly, in December, you tell
41 us that 2024 is our extended year, and not year-five of our
42 grant period, with a possible extension to year-six. We would
43 need to know that very soon.

44
45 **MR. PAWLAK:** Yes, and I don't think it applies to this current
46 period. I think it will be for new, and so, yes, I can
47 understand the nervousness there, if folks think we're going to
48 start implementing that now. If that is, that will be news to

1 me too, but I think it's when we're starting to negotiate the
2 2025 award, which would be your normal five-year period, I
3 believe, and it would start to be implemented then.

4
5 **MR. NIES:** Thank you.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Carrie.

8
9 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the
10 presentation. I had a question on Slide 9, and I think I've
11 asked this before, and so, when there is additional funding for
12 the budget, for the enacted budget, for the different protected
13 resources, fisheries, science, management, enforcement, habitat
14 conservation, and restoration, how is that divided out amongst
15 the regions, and how is that based on the different priorities
16 in the regions, and can you remind me of that?

17
18 **MR. PAWLAK:** Yes, and it's going to be the classic answer of it
19 depends, and so, if we've requested -- Just for example,
20 offshore wind, right, and we requested funding in the budget for
21 specific activity, a specific dollar amount, and the budget gets
22 pretty detailed.

23
24 If you get beyond the glossy, hey, we want \$34 million in
25 offshore wind, the budget actually gets into detail, and, for
26 example, offshore wind, and we focus on the Northeast and GARFO,
27 it outlines that they need an increase in permitting and
28 consultation in GARFO for this amount, and it even outlines down
29 to FTEs, grants, contracts kind of level. If you get the
30 enacted amount for what you asked, it goes to what you asked
31 for, right, and so it's kind of predetermined and outlined.

32
33 Many of the other increases that we talk about, they're a bit of
34 congressional direction, and, like with all the congressional
35 directions, and I'm just making one up of like we would like to
36 see more, you know, live-bottom oyster work in the Gulf, and,
37 well, okay, does that go to the region, or does that go to the
38 Science Center, but we kind of know, directly, where it's going
39 to go, and that gives us --

40
41 If it's an undefined increase, and like I think we've had some
42 permitting funding like that, we have a protected resources
43 internal group that will usually get together, and we have a
44 science board that will get together, and we have a regulatory
45 board that will get together, and so, if it's an undefined
46 increase, internally, NMFS does planning operations to kind of
47 see the manner in which that's best spread, but most of what we
48 get is either we ask for it, and so it goes to where we planned

1 it, or it's congressionally directed.

2
3 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thanks.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Marc.

6
7 **MR. GORELNIK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've got a quick question
8 on Slide 11, and I think this was \$300 million in fisheries
9 disaster assistance, and that's in Fiscal Year 2023, and is that
10 money spent already, or is that a new appropriation?

11
12 **MR. PAWLAK:** No, that money is not spent already, and that's a
13 new appropriation.

14
15 **MR. GORELNIK:** Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I'm not seeing any other questions.
18 Thank you, Brian, and you can Kelly were on for the Inflation
19 Reduction Act, and you did cover that.

20
21 **MR. PAWLAK:** I think Kelly is going to do a bit more discussion,
22 if she can.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I was just making sure. If you've got
25 more, if there's no other budget questions, then, Kelly, you can
26 go ahead and proceed with that.

27
28 **UPDATE ON THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT**

29
30 **MS. DENIT:** Okay. Great. Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon,
31 everybody, and so, as has been mentioned, we can't talk in
32 detail about the \$2.6 billion under the Inflation Reduction Act,
33 and so I pivoted this conversation to be a bit more of a
34 brainstorming session.

35
36 I want to tee this up by acknowledging that we received the
37 letter that you all sent us last fall with your input and
38 suggestions with respect to the IRA, and you were emphasizing
39 data collection and stock assessments, some of those needs with
40 respect to our scientific enterprise, and so thank you for that
41 input, and that has been incorporated as part of the ongoing
42 deliberations around the IRA.

43
44 I am interested, we are interested, in hearing your thoughts and
45 perspectives specifically on management actions, and so the IRA
46 funds are related to climate, climate-ready fisheries, and so I
47 would like to hear a bit from all of you. In that realm of, as
48 we're seeing shifting stocks, changes in productivity, putting

1 to the side the scientific components that you have already
2 highlighted that you're interested in, and really focusing in on
3 what management actions do you see as the top priority, or
4 priorities, in your council area, and that could -- It's wide
5 open to a spectrum of everything from planning efforts, and we
6 have examples of the Pacific Council has already done some
7 scenario planning, and the east coast has just concluded their
8 scenario planning, to more detailed actual specific management
9 actions that you anticipate your council would be undertaking in
10 the next couple of years, whether that might be revisiting
11 harvest control rules, specific action on a specific stock,
12 given indications that you're seeing from climate change, and so
13 I'm interested in your thoughts there.

14
15 I'm also interested in hearing what existing tools, whether it
16 be the climate vulnerability assessments that have been recently
17 completed in I think every region, as well as ecosystem status
18 reports, and there's a variety of tools that are already being
19 provided, or products that are already being provided, to the
20 councils to inform your fisheries management, in particular in
21 the context of ecosystem-based fisheries management and/or
22 climate, and so I would be really interested to hear which of
23 those do you find to be the most valuable and useful, as part of
24 your deliberations as council-decision-making processes are
25 going on. That's really it, Chair, and I would open it up for
26 thoughts, comments, reactions that anyone has to those two
27 questions.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kelly, with regards to that,
30 and we'll open the floor for any comments, questions,
31 suggestions. Bill.

32
33 **MR. TWEIT:** So our council doesn't have anything formal on this,
34 and I know we've sort of kicked this around, but I don't think
35 I've heard any clear sort of answers yet, but that's, in part,
36 because -- Well, two things. One is, a little bit later at this
37 meeting, we're going through the SCS 7 findings, which I think,
38 at least as one council member, I think speak pretty clearly to
39 exactly this question, what the SCS 7 recommendations are, but
40 we haven't talked about that around this table yet either, and
41 those are only fairly recently out.

42
43 Also, we've got several processes underway that I think are
44 designed to help us, as a council, do a better job, and
45 particularly our climate change taskforce and the work that
46 they're doing, but they're trying to bring it towards a
47 conclusion by early next year that would help us with exactly
48 what sorts of management tools, in particular decision-making

1 tools, in the face of greatly increased uncertainty, but the
2 final thing I'm thinking about is, well, wait, and you've got
3 stuff going on in CEFI that you're not ready to talk about yet,
4 for funding that you can't completely talk about yet, that I
5 thought was coming out of this, and it would be real helpful, to
6 me at least, to know a little bit more about what's in your mind
7 as well.

8
9 I mean, going back to my initial point, I'm at least going to be
10 listening to all of that through the lens of the findings, those
11 three key findings, from the SCS 7.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Kelly.

14
15 **MS. DENIT:** Great. Thanks, Bill. I haven't read the findings
16 from that yet, and so I'm looking forward to that presentation,
17 and I appreciate you pointing us to that. With respect to your
18 second point, I think it's more of a time and a temporal
19 context, in the sense of CEFI, as Brian just talked about, and
20 as Cisco has alluded to, is kind of underway, and we have some
21 regions that are farther along, like with ACLIM and others in
22 the North Pacific, and so, in some cases, when the products from
23 CEFI would be available is going to be in the future, and I'm
24 more focused on the nearer-term, in terms of what kinds of
25 actions might we be able to take, and so it's not that those
26 things are divorced, but it just might be that any management
27 actions that we might take that are informed by a CEFI product
28 might be at a time future, compared to right now, when we might
29 be using other tools that are already being provided. Hopefully
30 that makes sense to answer your question, Bill.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Other questions? Merrick.

33
34 **MR. BURDEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Kelly, for
35 posing these clarifying questions. I don't know if this was
36 intentional, but the questions seem to imply that we know what
37 challenges we need to overcome, and so I think, in many
38 councils, we're not quite even there yet, and so this will be
39 council-specific, and I can contrast, you know, the Pacific
40 Council, where we have this eastern boundary system that
41 oscillates back and forth naturally, and that's going to get
42 more extreme with climate change.

43
44 That's a lot different than what happens on the east coast,
45 where we have the Gulf Stream and stocks are moving, and so I
46 think, if we're going to be thinking about a tool, a tool would
47 help us diagnose what our challenges are, and that would help us
48 identify what actions are the top priorities, but I think we're

1 still thrashing about a bit and trying to get our hands around
2 what we do, because we haven't wrapped our arms around the
3 challenge completely just yet. Hopefully that's a bit of a
4 response to your question.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John.

7

8 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** To echo some of what Merrick said, I'm
9 struggling to try to give you something helpful here, Kelly, and
10 I think we're in a similar boat. We're just trying to
11 understand really what the challenges are and what we're trying
12 to do.

13

14 From the South Atlantic perspective, we're so involved with just
15 dealing with the basics, as we talked about with data, just
16 dealing with stock assessments and overfished stocks and just
17 trying to, you know, handle the basic Magnuson stuff, and it's
18 difficult to extend out into some of these new things and start
19 thinking about how they impact that, though we know that these
20 factors are impacting the stocks, and we know that climate is
21 likely somewhat a cause for a string of less than expected
22 recruitment events that we're seeing in a number of stocks, but
23 we just don't quite seem to have the clear scientific evidence
24 that shows us we can then factor that into the management
25 choices that we're making.

26

27 There's been a lot of debate, on our SSC, about regime change
28 and whether or not it's happen, and when you get, you know, ten
29 years of less than expected recruitment, but you trigger six out
30 of seven regime change criteria, they've been a little hesitant
31 to say, you know, I think it's a regime change, and so we're
32 sort of at that stage now, and we're just grappling with the
33 basics and trying to say, well, are we really at the point of
34 the climate is changing, and our productivity is changing, and
35 this needs to be factored into it?

36

37 Are we at the point of saying, well, I think the productivity of
38 this stock, in the next ten years, is going to be half of what
39 it was in the historic period? That's a hard pill to swallow,
40 you know, for fishermen and managers and everyone alike, to feel
41 like you're just kind of saying, well, you know, gee, that
42 fishery may never be what it was.

43

44 I think any tools that help us better understand those types of
45 things would really be useful, and I know the ecosystem status
46 report that we got, not too long ago, kind of looked into that
47 for some stocks, and it tried to explore some similarities
48 across stocks with poor recruitment, and that seems like an area

1 for us to pursue, and so I think anything we can get along those
2 lines, that go from some of these big-picture, ten-thousand-foot
3 view of what's going on with temperature and current and
4 salinities and all of that could actually start to bring it home
5 a little more.

6
7 How does a council deal with this within the requirements of
8 Magnuson, the science-based fisheries, the SSC giving you
9 recommendations, rebuilding plans, and folding this into stock
10 assessments? That would be helpful.

11
12 There was a -- OPM or somebody did a study of this, you know,
13 the councils' ability to deal with climate, and that was one of
14 the things that came up in our discussions, and they made a
15 statement that, well, you know, if you've got temperature data,
16 why can't you just fold that in, and we started explaining the
17 BSIA criteria in stock assessments and peer reviews and the data
18 quality that's necessary for management under Magnuson. One of
19 the interviewers was like, oh, so you really need like
20 regulatory-ready information if you're going to do this, and it
21 was like, yes, that's kind of the case.

22
23 You can't just say that I think the temperature is to blame for
24 this stock having poor recruitment and just start accounting for
25 it, and we have a higher bar in this system, and I think that's
26 where we need to get, as far as tools. As we start to get these
27 reports, over time, maybe we do start to see patterns emerge
28 that then we can factor into stock assessments and bring it over
29 to the management process, but it's going to take time.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. I am not seeing other hands.
32 Miguel.

33
34 **MR. ROLON:** What John said is better than what I was going to
35 say, but, in our area, one thing that we -- The SSC put together
36 an ecosystem model system that we are working together with
37 different models, and we are trying to identify those climate
38 changes that affect our fisheries, and it's kind of elusive.

39
40 The other question that we have is, okay, once we identify that,
41 what are we going to do then? What management actions can we do
42 that follows the climate changes that we have, and they
43 identified social needs of the sectors, and that's one action
44 that we can take, indirectly, and the other thing that they
45 believe, that we cannot forget, is that we're still missing a
46 lot of information, basic science, because we are very data-
47 poor, and we are the poster boy for data-poor areas in the
48 United States, and we are also trying to see how can we be more,

1 let's say, inventive in the way that we collect the data and the
2 way that we analyze the data, so that can be adopted through the
3 realities that we have.

4
5 In the case of climate change, the scenario that we have with
6 ecosystem, hopefully, by the end of the process this year, we
7 might be able to get some information that can be relayed to
8 you, as to what we need in terms of tools and the question that
9 you have here. Thank you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Miguel.

12
13 **MR. GOURLEY:** Thank you, Chairman. We're pretty much in the
14 same boat as Merrick, John, and Miguel. We need basically data
15 in order to figure out, try to figure out, what's going on,
16 especially with our pelagic fisheries, and I'm not going to
17 repeat everything they said, but our boat, I'm going to assume,
18 is probably a little bit leakier than theirs, because, in some
19 instances, we've got virtually no data in order to make plans.
20 We are working on the action plan, but it's kind of difficult
21 without the data.

22
23 There is a management plan for the Marinas Trench Monument that
24 was supposed to be done fourteen years ago, and it is in draft
25 stage, and it hasn't been finalized yet, but something like that
26 would help us, I believe, in our goals. With that, I'm going to
27 go ahead and stop.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, thank you. Clay.

30
31 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you. Just following-up on some of the
32 comments that have been made, you're right that it's going to be
33 very difficult to predict how the productivity of some of these
34 stocks is going to change with climate change. Some of them, we
35 don't know what the productivity is now, because we don't have
36 the contrast in data, and so, if things change, it will be that
37 much harder.

38
39 Hopefully, the Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative will
40 contribute to our understanding, and someone brought up the
41 example of the ACLIM model, but the reality is, in many places
42 of the country, we're just not in that place, and so we're going
43 to have to think about alternative management strategies that
44 are robust to climate change, and so that's simpler harvest
45 control rules that tend to be keyed on what our best
46 observational information is and come up with a strategy that,
47 even though we don't know exactly how productivity is going to
48 change, we know that pursuing this strategy will tend to get us

1 to that MSY place, wherever that is, and we may never be able to
2 estimate it, but we can identify harvest control rules that will
3 get us roughly in that position.

4
5 I think, for those of you who are in data-poorer regions, that's
6 where the focus needs to be, is what is a robust harvest
7 strategy, in light of climate change?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Porch. Dr. Frazer.

10
11 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, Greg, and so, again, ditto to the data
12 issue. I think Cisco said it pretty well, you know, and we
13 don't live in a stationary world, and it's pretty dynamic, and
14 Clay said that things are going to change, and it's just going
15 to make it that much harder, but the reality is that they've
16 been changing for a while, and I think one of the things, Kelly,
17 that maybe we could think about is what would optimal data
18 collection programs look like that extend across the regional
19 boundaries?

20
21 I think we've been stuck there for a long time, and, you know, I
22 think some money, or investment in time or resources, to look
23 forward, to rethink what these sampling programs look like,
24 would go a really long way.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Tom. Marcos.

27
28 **MR. HANKE:** A very quick comment, because, on my mind, the
29 productivity aspect of the climate change analysis, whatever
30 we'll be able to do in the future, will be related to species
31 dynamics and the availability of it and how much the fish feed
32 on other things during those changes, and we never put an
33 emphasis on that, and I think that's important to highlight,
34 that we need basic analysis on the stomach analysis, and stomach
35 contents, to compare with older studies and so on. Along those
36 lines, I think it's important to be aware that forage fish
37 studies and basic knowledge is extremely important, especially
38 under climate change situations. Thank you.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kitty.

41
42 **MS. SIMONDS:** I just wanted to add that, in 2016, the region,
43 the center, and the council staffs actually developed a regional
44 action plan, and it's just -- Given the conversation around the
45 table, it's taking us a very long time to address our action
46 items, because of everything that you have highlighted, but we
47 do have a plan, and I don't think we're involved in the
48 governance structure part of this, since we're in the middle of

1 the Pacific Ocean.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. I'm not seeing any other hands.
4 Kelly, hopefully that got some information that you needed, and,
5 with that, I think what we'll do is move on, and we're a little
6 bit ahead of where we were scheduled to take a break, and we
7 skipped over, if you all recall this morning -- John and
8 everyone here, kind of a heads-up here from the Gulf Council,
9 but it's been tradition that the hosting council give a short
10 highlight and happenings that are going on.

11
12 That's at Tab 4, Agenda Item Number IV, and I think what we'll
13 do is go ahead and do that, and that should take, hopefully,
14 just short of a half-hour, and then we'll take a break for our
15 afternoon session after that. I don't know, and we had down Dr.
16 Froeschke, Emily, and Ryan, and I don't know which of you had
17 planned to go first. It looks like it's up there, Emily, and go
18 ahead.

19
20 **GULF COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

21
22 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Thank you, and so I'm going to just kick
23 us off, and get us started, and there are three of us that will
24 be sort of adding pieces to this, and so this is just a brief
25 presentation on some of the things that the Gulf Council does
26 that we're pretty proud of and thought that we wanted to share
27 with you.

28
29 There is four things that we want to highlight for you today,
30 and our first one is we have a tool called the Fishermen
31 Feedback tool, which deals with crowdsourcing observations of
32 our fisheries, and we also want to share with you that, in the
33 Gulf region, we had the Great Red Snapper Count, which has been
34 a really interesting exercise in integrating novel science into
35 our management, and we've also had an ecosystem modeling success
36 that we're going to share with you, and then we'll wrap up with
37 a brief summary of a Coral Reef Conservation Program and the
38 products that we have developed as a part of that grant.

39
40 I am going to start by outlining our Fishermen Feedback tool,
41 and so Fishermen Feedback is a tool that we developed to
42 crowdsource qualitative stakeholder observations to enhance the
43 scientific understanding of our fish stocks, and so I'm not sure
44 how this happens in every region, but, in our region, we often
45 ask fishermen observers to play a role in the stock assessment
46 process, and so there will be one or two fishermen that sit in
47 on all of the different stock assessment meetings.

1 We recognized that that was a really valuable role, but it was
2 also sort of hard, because our region is so large, to have one
3 or two fishermen be there to sort of validate the information
4 that the scientists are seeing, and so we thought that, maybe if
5 we tried to crowdsource some of that information, that we could
6 also infuse that into the assessment process, not as an indices
7 of abundance or anything, but just sort of to help the
8 scientists along the way.

9
10 Just to be clear, crowdsourcing here -- I just wanted to give
11 you guys a definition of that, and Merriam-Webster says that
12 it's the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or
13 content by soliciting contributions from a large group of
14 people, and this is especially done in an online community, and
15 so this is a perfect way for us to engage our fishermen.

16
17 Why are we doing this? First, our councils, we exist to
18 encourage local-level knowledge in federal fisheries management,
19 and we have this rich resource of stakeholders who have on-the-
20 water knowledge, and they are engaged in the process. There is
21 a whole lot of anglers out there that aren't engaged in the
22 process as well, and we wanted to tap into that resource.

23
24 Crowdsourcing observations from our stakeholders provides us
25 this opportunity to allow many people to share their individual
26 perspectives at once, and this is different than when we get
27 public comment at a council level, right, and these people don't
28 necessarily have to be involved in the management, but there
29 still is this desire to sort of share an on-the-water
30 perspective. Every fisherman that I know likes to tell stories
31 about what they caught, and so this gives them that opportunity
32 to do that.

33
34 Then it also allows for this participation in the scientific
35 aspect of resource management, and that typically requires
36 considerable involvement. In other words, most fishermen that
37 are involved in the science part of management are deeply
38 involved through cooperative research projects, and there is
39 contracts, and there is, you know, commitments and long-term
40 involvement through those cooperative research projects, and
41 there's also citizen science projects out there, but those also
42 require sort of this barrier to entry.

43
44 Sometimes you have to take a training course, or you have to be
45 more deeply involved in those sorts of efforts as well, and so
46 we decided to crowdsource our observations, hoping that we would
47 get kind of a big bang for our buck .It's a very small
48 commitment from a very large group of people, in order to give

1 us the data that we're looking for.

2

3 We do all realize that our stock assessments can have data gaps
4 and that there is often a lack of real-time data, and I'm sure
5 that most of you guys struggle with this, like we do, that not
6 only are there data gaps in the assessment, but, oftentimes, the
7 terminal year of an assessment will be two or three years behind
8 when we actually get the assessment out.

9

10 This tool is really cool, because it's nimble, and what it can
11 do is check out what's happening between the terminal year of
12 data and, you know, sort of the end of the stock assessment
13 process, and that really helps when the analysts give
14 projections or are asked to sort of look at projections.

15

16 What we do is we use that on-the-water knowledge to groundtruth
17 some of the trends in abundance that they are seeing through the
18 stock assessment process, and sometimes we can explain some
19 anomalies that we're seeing in the data, through the information
20 that we get, and then, again, like I just mentioned, it informs
21 our projections sometimes, when there's sort of an ability to
22 figure out how conservative or generous we want to be in those
23 projections, and getting that immediate on-the-water feedback
24 can really help with that.

25

26 It's sort of a three-part process, and the first thing that we
27 do is we solicit feedback using an online tool, and we actually
28 use a Google form, and it asks three things. It asks for your
29 association with the fishery, and so are you recreational or
30 commercial, and it asks for your observations, and it's a very
31 general form. Just let us know what you're seeing. That was
32 designed because of the Paperwork Reduction Act requirement, and
33 this was sort of a way for us to gather general comment without
34 asking direct questions, and so we kind of phrased it so that it
35 was just like a general what are you seeing, and then we asked
36 them to give us a location of observation, and we do have a grid
37 map that they can select from.

38

39 The next thing that we do is that we analyze it in two ways. We
40 first analyze it manually, and we have two individuals that read
41 all of the comments, and they classify the sentiments, the
42 overall sentiment of the comment as well as the abundance
43 indication, and so the overall sentiment of the comment is, you
44 know, basically, is it positive, negative, neutral, what this
45 person is saying, and then we run it through this filter of does
46 it say something about the abundance of the stock, and is it
47 positive, negative, or neutral.

48

1 The next thing we do is we use automated analysis, using R
2 statistical software, and we have a lexicon library that we've
3 been modifying in order to classify sentiment, and so that
4 automated analysis will also run concurrently with our manual
5 analysis, and then, once we get our results, we generate a
6 report, and I will give you some examples of what the report
7 looks like, and we share it at all different levels.

8
9 We share it with our stock assessment panel, as they're working
10 through the assessment, and we aim to have these tools completed
11 by the time the data workshop starts. We also then share it
12 with our Scientific and Statistical Committee and our relevant
13 advisory panel, when they're getting the results of the stock
14 assessments, and we share it with the council, when they receive
15 the results of the stock assessments, and then we also send a
16 response to all of the folks that had responded to the tool, and
17 we say here's what we gathered from you, and here is what we
18 have done as a result of sort of the stock assessment combined
19 with the information that we got from you.

20
21 Here's just a quick example of the outputs, and I'm going to use
22 red snapper, because, if you guys know anything about the
23 Southeast, it's almost the only fish we manage, and we recently
24 did this, I think, last year, and what you will notice is one of
25 the things that we do is we like to separate our overall
26 sentiments by sector, understanding that the different sectors
27 probably have different perspectives in the fishery.

28
29 On the top bar graph, what you'll see is this is overall
30 sentiment by sector, and each one of the groups is following
31 this trend where the negative sentiment is the highest, followed
32 by neutral, and then by positive sentiment, and that negative
33 sentiment is the orange, and neutral is yellow, and then red is
34 positive.

35
36 What you will see below that is the sentiment related to stock
37 condition, and so what this comment indicates about stock
38 condition is almost completely inverse from the actual overall
39 sentiment of the comment, and so, in other words, people were
40 seeing lots of fish, and each one of those sectors kind of
41 echoed one another, and this doesn't always happen. Sometimes
42 the commercial sector and the recreational sector disagree, but,
43 with this one, you will notice that everybody said that the
44 stock was in good shape, but then everybody's comment was
45 grumpy. They all had a negative sentiment attached to it, and
46 that's kind of an interesting thing that we pulled out of this
47 one.

48

1 Specifically with red snapper, basically, what we were hearing
2 was the stock is so abundant, and your management is so
3 terrible, and so what happened was we were getting a negative
4 sentiment on the overall comment, but a positive indication of
5 what the stock was doing.

6
7 The next thing that we do is we take both of those
8 classifications, our overall sentiment as well as our abundance-
9 related sentiment, and we broke it out through this grid map,
10 and so you can sort of see that there are trends that change
11 over the coast, and what you will notice is this overall
12 sentiment, and, again, this is mostly people expressing
13 displeasure with the management scheme for red snapper, but
14 then, when we look at abundance of red snapper, you will see
15 that, again, there is a lot more positive indicators here, and
16 then you can kind of start to see some trends.

17
18 There's an area, sort of off the north Florida coast, the
19 Alabama coast, where there's a little bit more red, or a little
20 bit more indication that there might be something happening with
21 the stock, and then, down in the Keys, right where we are,
22 you'll see there's that sort of corner one, that maybe red
23 snapper aren't that prevalent here as well.

24
25 Some of the other interesting things that we can see is we can
26 pull out, through both the manual and automated analysis, some
27 of the trends that we're seeing in the responses. For red
28 snapper specifically, and I think I mentioned this, but the
29 majority of our respondents did say that the stock is in good
30 condition, but they also said that it's so prolific that it's
31 difficult to target other species, that it's damaging the
32 ecosystem, and so that's some of that negative sentiment that
33 was coming, despite positive indications of abundance.

34
35 We also heard that respondents indicate that red snapper
36 regulations didn't match the health of the stock, and, again,
37 that's some of that displeasure that was expressed, and that
38 negative sentiment, and, you know, there is just some indication
39 that culling and regulatory discards are an issue.

40
41 Now, there was some respondents from this one that indicated
42 that fishing pressure was too high, and those are the same ones
43 that indicated that there was an issue with the stock, that
44 maybe there was some localized depletion, because of fishing
45 pressure, and you saw the maps where that might be occurring,
46 and then, again, we also heard from a number of respondents here
47 that shark, and to a lesser extent dolphin, depredation was on
48 the rise and that that was becoming a major issue, and then we

1 do have these word clouds and the most popular word that
2 contributed to positive and negative sentiments that are pulled
3 out through our automated analysis.

4
5 That's just kind of an interesting output that we get from those
6 tools, and, now, we've done a number of these efforts already,
7 and this just will show you what stock assessment that it
8 contributed to, and what stock, and we also see the number of
9 respondents.

10
11 As we sort of get down, we're getting more and more respondents
12 as this tool gains popularity, and it's also very based on the
13 species, whether or not, you know, people are interested in the
14 species that we're asking about. We are currently finalizing a
15 report on mutton snapper, and we just finished getting responses
16 for Spanish mackerel, and so we're still rolling with this tool.

17
18 Just to sort of summarize the things that we really like about
19 this tool, it's that it bridges lags in data and our data gaps,
20 and it also identifies some ecosystem indicators, and I
21 mentioned things like depredation being noticed, and when that's
22 noticed over and over again, and the word "shark" shows up in
23 one of the top, you know, responses, then that sort of triggers
24 us to think that maybe there's things going on, and things like
25 red tide come up sometimes, and we can really understand that
26 maybe there are some ecosystem indicators that fishermen are
27 reporting to us when it comes to this sort of -- To the changes
28 in the stock.

29
30 What it has also done is really bolstered recreational
31 engagement. You know, we have a huge recreational population in
32 the Southeast, and that population often does not spend a whole
33 lot of time in the management world, right, and fishing is
34 something that they do as a hobby, and I don't think you do a
35 hobby so that you can come argue politics of fish, right, but
36 this is one of those things that people can do very quickly, and
37 it takes them five minutes to fill out the tool, and we've had
38 incredible response from that sector, and so we get a really
39 good bang for our buck here, and it's a good way to engage that
40 community.

41
42 Moving forward, we continue to complete one of these efforts for
43 each stock assessment, as they come up, and we're working to
44 formalize our standard operating procedures and develop a
45 technical guidance document, so that we can really formalize
46 this process. Right now, we are working with NOAA Fisheries to
47 achieve Paperwork Reduction Act approval, and I think some of
48 you guys are aware that there is a citizen science PRA clearance

1 going through, and we have hopped on that bandwagon, and then
2 we're also hoping, eventually, when we have some free time, to
3 develop and publish a paper on this, because we think that it
4 can be used widely through resource management, in different
5 applications, and we find it to be very useful.

6
7 With that, I'm going to hand it over to Ryan, who is just
8 waiting in my wings, and he is going to take over, and then
9 he'll knock it to John.

10
11 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, and so the next thing I want to
12 talk to you guys about is our review and integration of the
13 Great Red Snapper Count, which was a regional collaborative
14 research project, actually the PI was Dr. Stunz, and its purpose
15 was to estimate absolute abundance of red snapper in the Gulf of
16 Mexico, and the project was conducted between 2018 and 2019, and
17 the end result, after some different iterations and some
18 different analyses, brought us to an estimated 85.6 million age-
19 two-plus red snapper in the Gulf, as of 2019.

20
21 The Gulf Council led this National Standard 2 compliant expert
22 peer review, which included a combination of its SSC members and
23 independent external reviewers, and it operationalized that
24 review into quick integration of best scientific information
25 available for management purposes.

26
27 We had three reviewers come in, and we did this peer review in
28 our office, and it lasted for about three days, and we had
29 independent peer-reviewed reports that came from those
30 reviewers, and the SSC report that was generated, and it was all
31 put together into that holistic package.

32
33 The rigor of the review was applauded by the PIs. As Dr. Stunz
34 will tell you, it was not a breeze, and the upside to it being
35 that we were able to quickly -- By doing the peer review
36 ourselves, we were quick on our feet to be able to investigate
37 whether this new project was consistent with the best scientific
38 information available, and then our SSC was able to turn around
39 and make appropriate catch limit recommendations for the stock
40 to the council that the council has been able to act upon.

41
42 What's next? The Great Red Snapper Count data are currently
43 being considered in the red snapper stock assessment, which is
44 currently ongoing, and the stock assessment process will
45 consider the best ways to apply these data from that project
46 into the broader universe of fishery-independent and dependent
47 data that are considered within the assessment.

48

1 Also, going on in the Gulf right now, we have the colloquially
2 named Great Amberjack Count, which is to serve a similar purpose
3 of investigating absolute abundance of greater amberjack in the
4 Gulf, and the peer review structure for that project we've been
5 told will be similar in style to what we designed for the Great
6 Red Snapper Count, and so it's good to see that that was
7 effective enough to be considered for being repeated.

8
9 The next thing I'm going to talk to you guys about is ecosystem
10 modeling in the Gulf, specifically pertaining to red tide and
11 gag grouper, and so red tide is a dinoflagellate, and it's ever
12 present in the Gulf of Mexico. A Spanish ship back in the 1500s
13 wrote in their logbooks about seeing a reddish-brown mat that
14 stunk to high heaven, and they were then describing red tide,
15 and so it's probably been present in the Gulf, and always will
16 be, and so it's something that we have to contend with, as far
17 as its potential for episodic mortality on our reef fish stocks
18 especially.

19
20 It grows in thick mats, and its blooms can be detected via
21 remote sensing, and, as it dies, the decomposition of the
22 organism draws oxygen out of the water, and it releases
23 brevetoxin, which is toxic to fish and other animals.

24
25 In the Gulf, we've identified several of our species, including
26 gag grouper, that are vulnerable to episodic mortality from red
27 tide, and, by performing these model explorations, we've been
28 able to improve estimates of natural and fishing mortality rate
29 by year by accounting for red tide, and, essentially, it's a 100
30 percent discard fleet, and so the improvements that the Gulf
31 Council has promoted, through its involvement in RESTORE grants
32 and providing support for MARFIN proposals and things like that
33 have been performed, has been for this work.

34
35 For gag, the recent work for gag generated estimates of
36 comparative severity of the 2018 red tide relative to the 2005
37 event, which, insofar as our recent fishery knowledge tells us,
38 was the most severe on record, and we were able to see estimated
39 mortality effects by age by year for the gag stock and determine
40 the fraction of the biomass that was actually vulnerable to
41 mortality.

42
43 This immediately was used for supporting improved catch level
44 projections, and so not only was this red tide modeling used in
45 the stock assessment, but we also tied it in with the
46 projections, with respect to what we thought interim years, that
47 we know are going to have red tide effects -- What those might
48 look like from a mortality standpoint and how that might affect

1 future yields.

2

3 The Gulf Council has continued to support the integration of
4 this ecosystem component into both the science and the stock
5 assessment and its implementation through consideration of
6 projections for use in catch limits, and explicit consideration
7 of an environmental variable like this is novel for our region,
8 and it's something that we're endeavoring to do more of, as we
9 learn more, and it allows for better understanding of these
10 environmental effects, and it does have a direct effect on the
11 short-term yields for the stock, but it also will allow for
12 better conceptualization of fisheries management to these
13 vulnerable stocks, and, in this picture here, you can see just
14 the kind of things that show up on the beach, and that's just
15 what washes up onshore, and there's plenty more that disappears
16 offshore.

17

18 What's next? The Gulf will continue to support similar work for
19 red grouper, and this work -- Actually, we just learned, about a
20 month ago, that it did receive funding, and it will be used in
21 the upcoming red grouper stock assessment, which starts early
22 next year, and consideration of red tide will also be fielded as
23 a fishery ecosystem issue, which is a way of integrating
24 ecosystem issues into the broader goal of ecosystem-based, or
25 ecosystem-informed, fisheries management. John.

26

27 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Just to prove to you all that we do stuff
28 other than red snapper, I have a few slides on a supplementary
29 project, a program supported through the Coral Reef Conservation
30 Program, and this is external to our main council grant, and we
31 have one full-time staff that works on this, and this focuses on
32 identifying status and changes in coral reef habitat and the
33 management implications, and so we look at both the coral as a
34 habitat and as a resource, and then as well as examine some of
35 the associated fisheries species with this.

36

37 We try to improve the scientific understanding of this as well
38 as provide mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and push this
39 out in a wide variety of tools and products that are suitable
40 for technical audiences as well as stakeholders.

41

42 I will just give you some examples of a few different things,
43 and one of the things that we've worked on are these things that
44 we call -- We call them learning modules, but you can call them
45 whatever you like, I suppose, and there's kind of two different
46 veins of thought here.

47

48 Starting with the panels on the right, these are ArcGIS story

1 maps, and what we intended for these is to provide some broad
2 information about species, or ecosystems, or habitats that are
3 maybe not well known to the public, and so stakeholders, to NGOs
4 and other interested people that want information that is
5 digestible for a large audience. Those have been popular, and
6 we've developed quite a number of those, and all of this
7 information is on our website, portal.gulfcouncil.org.

8
9 Some of the other ones have been more targeted to specific
10 management issues, or threats, and we have a few different ones,
11 and these are just some examples, but, for example, we have one
12 on lionfish and the threats that they pose to the ecosystem, and
13 some information of how you can get involved, and we try to make
14 them into something that's interesting, that's short, that is
15 easy to look through, that's engaging, but not overwhelming, and
16 so we've developed some for spiny lobster closed areas, which
17 there are number of these areas throughout the Keys, on both the
18 South Atlantic side and the Gulf side, and these are small areas
19 that are prohibited for spiny lobster traps, in an effort to
20 protect corals that -- The two species of endangered corals.

21
22 This is sort of a long-term project, and, effectively, this is
23 kind of a wait and see, and then we've done other ones on some
24 of these non-climatic stressors of corals, and just try to link
25 connections of ecosystems to onshore and nearshore activities
26 and how this affects coral reefs.

27
28 Some of the other tools that we've developed, both are
29 informational and then have some management application, this
30 panel on the top-right, this Coral 9 Habitat Explorer
31 Application, was developed in conjunction with an amendment to
32 identify and describe additional habitat areas of particular
33 concern to protect deepwater corals in the Gulf of Mexico, and
34 so we developed a dashboard that we presented to the council to
35 help them understand potential management applications and
36 alternatives as we went along.

37
38 As the document went to completion and was implemented, we
39 developed more of a permanent web application that described the
40 habitat areas of particular concern that had been identified
41 previously, and the ones that are new, and it kinds of puts them
42 up on a map, where people can explore those areas, and it
43 provides a nice, digestible resource.

44
45 The bottom-left panel is a dashboard identifying some results of
46 scientific literature about the spatial extent of various coral
47 diseases in the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Keys. This is a
48 growing and widespread problem, and so we tried to provide this

1 as a way to both characterize the magnitude and extent of this
2 issue, and as well as to update it through time, to kind of keep
3 track of it going forward, and it's something that, again, is
4 easy to look at, suitable for wide audiences, but also serves as
5 a technical resource for those that are interested.

6
7 One of the other things that we've done are more of these
8 engagement and outreach surveys, and this online survey is on
9 the top-left panel, and we created a form, and it was solicited
10 widely, sort of akin to the Fishermen Feedback, to get a better
11 understanding of people's perspectives of how they perceive the
12 condition of corals, and coral reefs now, versus some time
13 earlier, in their own personal experience, and so we solicited
14 this and got feedback and tried to develop these into products
15 that we can help people understand things, these broader
16 concepts of like shifting baselines.

17
18 Then we have some other of these resources, where we try to make
19 our data on these geospatial data portals, and so, for the more
20 technical users, and we provide the data that we compiled, that
21 we produced, and we make it available, and it's downloadable.
22 It has metadata, and it's ready to use, and it can be used for a
23 project, and it can be used to support a larger application, and
24 it can be ingested in other web applications, and so it works
25 pretty well.

26
27 Then some of the more technical things, like the white papers on
28 specific issues, we've more taken a deeper dive into specific
29 issues, to help understand the threats, consequences, and
30 potential outcomes of management actions and things, and those
31 white papers and things are also on our website.

32
33 Kind of the last thing we've done is, in order to try to
34 increase awareness to stakeholders, in particular in areas like
35 this where the corals are, these areas, and, as you can walk
36 outside, and there are all kind of people interacting with the
37 resource, is produce some nice, colorful guides of corals and
38 things, to help people be able to identify them, and they're
39 waterproof, and they can take them with them underwater, and
40 it's something that they can learn, and there's a little bit
41 about the biology, and it was intended to be user-friendly, but
42 also to have some useful information to promote conservation and
43 awareness of the resource down here.

44
45 As you can see, there are any number -- There's a wide number of
46 activities that we have engaged in to try to improve the
47 scientific understanding and increase stakeholder engagement and
48 contribute to the potential ways to improve management funded

1 through this coral reef conservation work, and so that's some of
2 the CRCP.

3
4 This is just kind of a takeaway of the three different themes
5 here. Again, this Fishermen Feedback is our citizen science
6 crowdsourcing application, and we kind of highlighted the Great
7 Red Snapper Count and some of the ecosystem modeling and the
8 coral grant, and so, if you have any questions, I'm happy to
9 answer them or punt to one of my colleagues.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, thank you, John, Ryan, and Emily. Are
12 there any questions for the group? Marcos.

13
14 **MR. HANKE:** Emily, the crowdsourcing tool for climate change,
15 because I got the point earlier and the need of connecting with
16 the fishing community, for that basic data first, to know what
17 is going on, and do you think that is a tool that can be used
18 for that, for very basic presence and absence of a species, or
19 asking are you seeing new species, or is there is any change,
20 related to climate change, anything along those lines?

21
22 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I do think that you can probably develop a very
23 similar tool to what we're using, to sort of target what you're
24 looking for. Without -- You know, the thing that hamstring us
25 a little bit is the Paperwork Reduction Act, right, because you
26 can't ask more than ten people the same set of questions, if
27 they're directed questions, and so that sort of kills the
28 purpose, if you're aiming more than ten people, right, and so I
29 think, like I briefly mentioned, when we first designed the
30 tool, we did it to make it fit into that category of open public
31 comment, and so that is a matter of how you frontload the
32 information that you're looking for.

33
34 You know, you can basically write this introductory paragraph
35 that says here's what I want you to tell me, but then, when you
36 actually get to the point where you're asking the question, you
37 have to phrase it as sort of an open-ended question, and so it's
38 not as simple as being able to say, you know, check the box
39 where you see queen snapper, right, because that becomes
40 Paperwork Reduction Act territory.

41
42 You could go through the Paperwork Reduction Act clearance,
43 although that's not exactly a friendly or timely process, but I
44 would be happy, as always, to work with you on figuring out a
45 way that you can customize it for you guys, and we use Google
46 forms, and so it's like super simple, and kind of idiot proof,
47 and I'm happy to help.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Great. Thank you, Emily. Are there other
2 questions? All right. I am not seeing any. Thank you, Gulf
3 team, for those updates. Well, what we'll do now is take a
4 break until 3:15, and, if you all would be back promptly, we'll
5 start with our climate change and fisheries portion of the
6 agenda.

7
8 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
9

10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We're going to go ahead and get started
11 here, if everyone wants to take their seats. The next item on
12 our agenda is we have three presentations that are surrounding
13 climate change and fisheries, and the first one up is East Coast
14 Climate Change Scenario Planning, the summit meeting, and Ms.
15 Kiley Dancy will report-out on that topic. By the way, this is
16 Tab 8, if you're following along.

17
18 **CLIMATE CHANGE AND FISHERIES**
19 **EAST COAST CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO PLANNING SUMMIT MEETING**
20 **PRESENTATION**
21

22 **MS. KILEY DANCY:** Thank you so much. My name is Kiley Dancy,
23 and I'm the Mid-Atlantic Council staff working on this East
24 Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative, and so I have
25 a brief update, which will be the third update provided to the
26 CCC. The first was in May of last year, and there was another
27 update in October of last year.

28
29 Just as a reminder of who is participating in this initiative,
30 it's the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, all three
31 east coast councils, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic and
32 Southeast Regions, and NMFS Headquarters. This initiative was
33 initiated and overseen by the Northeast Region Coordinating
34 Council, or NRCC, consisting of leadership from the Northeast
35 and also, for this initiative, includes the South Atlantic
36 leadership as well.

37
38 Just a quick reminder of the initiative objectives, and this
39 initiative explores how east coast fishery governance and
40 management issues will be affected by climate-driven change in
41 fisheries, particularly focused on the issues of changing stock
42 availability and distributions, and then the second objective is
43 to advance a set of tools and processes to continue to advance
44 flexible and robust fishery management strategies to address
45 climate change.

46
47 This work has been ongoing since 2020, and it has included
48 several phases. We began by establishing objectives, and we

1 conducted a public scoping process in the summer and fall of
2 2021, and we then analyzed many forces driving change in east
3 coast fisheries in greater detail, and, in June of 2022, we held
4 a workshop to construct our scenarios, or stories, about
5 possible future conditions.

6
7 I am going to focus more, in this update, on the activities
8 since the last CCC update, including our applications phase to
9 identify potential actions and areas for potential ongoing
10 monitoring, and so just a quick reminder of the four scenarios
11 that we developed.

12
13 We did end up with four scenarios in a two-by-two matrix, using
14 the axes of uncertainty here that include looking at, on the
15 horizontal side, the predictability of conditions and the
16 ability of science to assess them, and then, on the vertical
17 axis, you have stock productivity and replacement, and, by
18 intersecting those, we ended up four scenarios here, and there
19 are longer narratives available for these on our initiative
20 webpage.

21
22 In the applications phase, we have been using these scenarios as
23 a platform to discuss future fishery governance and management
24 strategies, and so managers has been asking themselves the
25 questions of how would our current systems work if the new
26 scenario conditions were to occur, and what we might need to
27 change to better prepare ourselves for those possibilities, and
28 what should we be advancing now, or avoiding now, to ensure that
29 fisheries are managed effectively in an era of climate change,
30 and so this applications phase has had several parts.

31
32 We had, last fall, several small focus-group-type webinars,
33 consisting of managers from each participating group, to
34 brainstorm and generate ideas, and then we had workshops at each
35 of the November and December full council and commission
36 meetings, to review and generate more ideas. In February of
37 2023, we held a summit meeting, serving as sort of the
38 culmination of this process, and I'll talk more about that in a
39 minute, and I will also talk more about the expanded NRCC
40 meeting two weeks ago to review the outcomes of the summit and
41 discuss next steps.

42
43 Throughout the course of the applications phase, we ended up
44 hearing ideas focused mainly around three themes. For the
45 summit meeting, we then organized the conversations around these
46 three themes, the first being cross-jurisdictional governance,
47 and clearly that's relevant under all future scenarios, and is a
48 focus of this initiative.

1
2 The second theme was managing under increased uncertainty, and
3 this would be particularly relevant in the left-hand-side of the
4 scenario matrix, where conditions are more unpredictable, and
5 there's a harder ability to assess. The third theme was data
6 sources and partnerships, and, although also relevant in all
7 scenarios, it came up a lot on the right side of the scenario
8 matrix, where we might have increased data streams, and we want
9 to think about how to strengthen partnerships for better data
10 collection and use and coordination.

11
12 The summit meeting held in February of 2023 served as sort of
13 the culmination of the application phase, and we're now wrapping
14 up completing of the initiative, and so the summit meeting was
15 held in Arlington, Virginia, and it was attended by about fifty
16 fishery managers, representing all of the participating
17 organizations, and the goal of the summit was to develop a set
18 of potential governance and management actions resulting from
19 this scenario-based exploration of the future.

20
21 The summit participants did come up with a list of potential
22 actions for each of the three discussion themes, and we didn't
23 look for consensus here, but we did identify actions that kind
24 of a majority were coalescing around for each issue, and we also
25 had a prioritization exercise to identify the top issues in each
26 theme.

27
28 Following the summit meeting, the core team for this initiative
29 developed two documents for review by the expanded NRCC to
30 consider at their meeting a couple of weeks ago, and the first
31 is a summit report, which is basically the summit proceedings
32 and the description of the key potential actions that were
33 identified at the summit and the results of the prioritization
34 exercise.

35
36 We also developed what we are now calling a draft potential
37 action menu, which sort of expands on and clarifies some of
38 those issues raised at the summit, because, at the summit, we
39 did not have time to identify possible next steps for each of
40 these actions, and so this second document allowed us to go into
41 a little bit more detail about how we might take on some of
42 those actions, and this document is intended to serve as a menu
43 of options to help participating groups consider their
44 priorities.

45
46 The NRCC met two weeks ago to review the summit outcomes,
47 including those two documents, and then, from the draft action
48 menu, the NRCC categorized that longer list of potential actions

1 into near-term priorities, medium-term priorities, and then
2 actions that we're considering basically to be in the parking
3 lot, and so those are either long-term priorities or things that
4 are not feasible, or not a priority right now, but we want to
5 retain them for future consideration.

6
7 This document reflects the NRCC's perspective, and it hasn't yet
8 been reviewed by the full management bodies. However, it's not
9 the intent that we would have each management body approve the
10 document necessarily, but it would serve as sort of a guiding
11 leadership guidance document to inform the priorities
12 discussions of each management organization. I will note that
13 there's a lot of momentum behind many of these actions, because
14 of the participation of members of each group at the summit, and
15 so we do see some movement, and momentum, toward addressing many
16 of these actions.

17
18 Some of them will be taken on by individual groups, while others
19 would require joint action, or collaboration, or other sort of
20 collective prioritization.

21
22 The NRCC also identified a couple of different general and
23 process recommendations, including forming a leadership-level
24 East Coast Climate Coordination Group, and that would be similar
25 to the role currently being served by the NRCC, but with
26 slightly different representation, and they would meet annually,
27 in conjunction with NRCC meetings, to sort of track progress on
28 addressing these scenario planning outcomes.

29
30 The second group to be formed would be the East Coast Climate
31 Innovation Group, which is more like the current core team,
32 consisting of staff from each group, to regularly sort of review
33 changes and developments in fisheries, and other information, to
34 bring up areas for possible action, or consideration, by the
35 coordination group, and then, finally, the NRCC identified some
36 near-term and long-term communication objectives, including
37 communicating the process outcomes, reengaging previous
38 stakeholder participants, and developing tools and resources to
39 allow other groups to apply this framework.

40
41 I want to quickly highlight some of the identified high priority
42 actions for each discussion theme, starting with cross-
43 jurisdictional governance, but I don't have time to get into the
44 details of each of these, and so, just kind of at a high level,
45 the NRCC identified four high-priority actions for governance,
46 including a big one being figuring out a way to reevaluate each
47 coast council committee structure, use, and decision-making, and
48 that was seen as the way to start addressing some of the

1 representation concerns on the east coast, by making greater use
2 of committees which have more flexible membership and voting
3 possibilities compared to the councils themselves.

4
5 In addition, there were actions to think about reevaluating and
6 revising advisory panel representation, developing joint
7 management agreements to clarify roles and increase efficiency,
8 and to improve coordination across NOAA offices and regions.

9
10 For managing under uncertainty, two near-term priorities were
11 identified, and the first being to think more about
12 consideration of broader ecosystem-level contextual information
13 within the management process, and improve our ways of doing
14 that, such as making better use of state of the ecosystem
15 reports or ecosystem risk assessments or similar information,
16 and the second is to streamline FMP documentation and
17 rulemaking, and this includes several next steps that look at
18 some potential NEPA streamlining as well as places where the MSA
19 and rulemaking processes could potentially be streamlined for
20 council actions.

21
22 Under the third theme, data sources and partnerships, three
23 near-term actions were identified, and the first was to expand
24 the study fleet and include recreational fisheries. The second
25 was to use survey mitigation around offshore wind, including
26 implementation of the survey mitigation strategy ongoing in the
27 Northeast, and, finally, to improve the use of existing data,
28 through collaboration to inform better decision-making.

29
30 For a few of these actions, I just wanted to quickly note that
31 progress is already being made on some of them. There have been
32 some initial discussions in strategizing about options for
33 reevaluating committee representation and use, and then, for
34 managing under uncertainty, there has been a New England Council
35 report comparing council risk policies, as that was one action
36 to consider how climate change might be better considered in our
37 risk policies, and so that's a start on that, and then NOAA
38 Fisheries recently prepared, and plans to share, a tech memo on
39 ecosystem risk assessments.

40
41 For data sources and partnerships, GARFO, and the Northeast
42 Center, received funding for a recreational study fleet pilot
43 project, and so, even though that pilot would take place in the
44 Northeast, they will be working with folks from the South
45 Atlantic, to ensure that the results of the pilot could be
46 applicable in the Southeast Region as well, and that project has
47 been funded for a year. Then the implementation of the NOAA
48 Fisheries and BOEM federal survey mitigation strategy in the

1 Northeast is ongoing.
2
3 Our next steps are finalizing a revised version of that action
4 menu for -- Based on the NRCC's feedback and prioritization, and
5 then the councils and commission are going to review the summit
6 outcomes and take that menu of actions into consideration later
7 in 2023, when setting their priorities for the upcoming year or
8 years, and then, finally, we'll work on forming those new groups
9 and the completion of the communication objectives that I
10 mentioned. That's all I have, and additional documents and
11 information is available on our initiative website, and so I'm
12 happy to take any questions. Thank you.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. We're looking around the
15 room now, to see if there's any questions. I am seeing none.
16 Thank you very much for the presentation.

17
18 **MS. DANCY:** Thank you.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Up next is Fisheries Climate and
21 Governance Policies. Kelly, I believe you're up again for that.

22
23 **MS. DENIT:** Yes. Thank you, Chair. This will be your last
24 episode of the Kelly Denit Show for the CCC meeting, and so --
25 If it would be okay, Chair, I am going to touch on OCAP, the
26 Ocean Climate Action Plan, which I think everyone had asked me
27 to do, and I will do that first, because I suspect we'll have a
28 more meaty discussion about the climate governance, if that
29 would be all right.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and then you'll follow that up with the
32 climate governance and be open to some questions?

33
34 **MS. DENIT:** Yes.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Yes, that sounds fine.

37
38 **OVERVIEW PRESENTATION ON OCEAN CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

39
40 **MS. DENIT:** While they're getting the presentation queued up, I
41 can start going through at least the first couple of slides, and
42 so I am going to touch on the Ocean Climate Action Plan, which
43 is the recent announcement that came out from across the entire
44 federal government, and then I will go into the climate
45 governance policy.

46
47 This is the first ocean climate plan, and it is an all-of-
48 government approach, and it ties heavily into various

1 administration priorities around offshore wind, America the
2 Beautiful, and the scale-up, in general, of nature-based
3 solutions for blue carbon efforts, of restoring and protecting
4 coastal marine environments, as well as advancing environmental
5 justice and engagement with tribes and indigenous peoples, and
6 the link is provided in the presentation for folks.

7
8 It is an aggressive roadmap for ongoing and future ocean climate
9 work across all of government, coalesced around three specific
10 goals that you see there on the slide, and so the first is the
11 concept of creating a carbon-neutral future, and the second is
12 looking at nature-based solutions to mitigate ocean and coastal
13 climate change impacts, and then the third is enhancing
14 community resilience to ocean change, and NOAA and NMFS were all
15 involved in the development of the plan.

16
17 The key NMFS-specific areas within OCAP are the Climate,
18 Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative, which we've already talked
19 about a couple of times, as well as working with all of you and
20 the commissions to incorporate climate-ready approaches to
21 decision-making, and so thinking about how we adapt our
22 fisheries management in the face of a changing climate.

23
24 Areas, or actions, around expanding aquaculture, to help enhance
25 our U.S. resilience in the global seafood market in a changing
26 climate, as well as looking at coastal habitat identification,
27 protection, and restoration, and this gets at some of the BIL
28 funds that we have used and other activities that we have in the
29 pipeline for that habitat restoration protection, as well as
30 looking at coastal fishing community resilience, through
31 adaptation, equity, and investment, and that involves looking at
32 some of the socioeconomic components, as part of that.

33
34 There is also some areas around the zero emission fuels for
35 fleets, and thinking about how that transition happens, again
36 keeping in mind that this is all whole-of-government, and so
37 some of that is related to shipping and other areas, but that as
38 well, and so I will stop there, because that is essentially
39 OCAP, in a nutshell, and then, if there's any questions, I am
40 happy to take those, and then I will launch into the climate
41 governance.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am looking around the room for any
44 questions regarding this component, and, Kelly, I am not seeing
45 any, and so if you want to go ahead and proceed on.

46
47 **FISHERIES CLIMATE AND GOVERNANCE POLICY**

1 **MS. DENIT:** All right. Okay, and so let's dig in on the climate
2 and governance policy. You all will recall that we talked a
3 this at the last couple of CCC meetings, and we were able to
4 provide the draft policy to everyone I think last week, or the
5 week before, and this is focused on our process to look at the
6 Secretary's authority, under Section 304, to determine which
7 council, or councils, should be in charge to prepare various
8 FMPs.

9
10 You all had quite a bit of feedback at our last meeting, and so
11 I wanted to start by kind of highlighting what some of that was,
12 or at least what we heard, and then I will step through the
13 components of the draft governance strategy, or the governance
14 policy, sorry, and then we can launch into any questions.

15
16 One of the things that you highlighted was the need to ensure
17 stability, and you were concerned about having too much flipping
18 and flopping between councils who might be leading, and so we
19 tried to address that in a couple of different ways, most
20 specifically by trying to use multiyear averages, where we are
21 suggesting using metrics to try and mitigate and provide some of
22 that stability.

23
24 You also expressed some concerns about the transitions and how a
25 transition would happen, if one was determined to need to happen
26 between councils, and so we would have a specified phase-in
27 period, and we've talked about some of the planning around that,
28 and we can get into more of the details, and then you emphasize
29 the east coast scenario planning, which I appreciated that Kiley
30 went first, to kind of update all of you where that is, and so
31 we have attempted to incorporate the outcomes of that scenario
32 planning, as best we could, into this draft governance policy.

33
34 There are a few key questions that we need to grapple with as
35 part of this, and, specifically, what constitutes the fish, or
36 the fishery, and what is the geographic scope of the fishery, or
37 fisheries, and you all have very important roles in addressing
38 both of those issues, and so now I'm going to step through the
39 process that we've proposed.

40
41 In general, this gives you an overview of the four steps. The
42 first would be determining whether we need to do a review, and,
43 for most of our federally-managed fisheries, we have already
44 established this, and we have identified who are the leads, and
45 so we're not interested in necessarily making changes
46 automatically, and the purpose is, if there is a need to review,
47 then we would move to Step 2.

1 In Step 2, we would work with the council, or councils, to
2 determine the actual scope of the fishery, and only if we make a
3 determination that the fishery extends beyond the geographic
4 scope of a single council would we then proceed to Step 3, and
5 Step 3 is where we would then lay out the process and
6 consideration for reviewing and designating the council
7 authorities for those fisheries, and then step through what
8 might be outcomes at that point, and, if we do identify that the
9 transition needs to happen, and we move to Step 4, which is the
10 actual transition period, and we note a bunch of considerations
11 for us to take into account as part of that, to ensure that we
12 have an orderly transition.

13
14 For most of our currently-managed fisheries, we already have
15 these initial determinations of geographic scope and the
16 designations of the council authority for preparing the FMPs,
17 and we are not anticipating changing those designations unless
18 there is a change in circumstances, and, when there is a need to
19 review the geographic scope or authority, we will notify the
20 relevant councils and initiate the process that we've laid out
21 in the document.

22
23 For any newly-emerging fisheries that haven't previously been
24 managed under MSA, then we would essentially skip Step 1, and we
25 would be moving right to Step 2, and so we may decide, on our
26 own, to conduct a review of any existing designation if certain
27 criteria indicate shifts in the location of the fishery, and so,
28 in this draft, we have proposed a few indicators to get at that,
29 and we are very interested in your feedback on all of these that
30 we've put out there.

31
32 First is the concept of is there a greater than 15 percent shift
33 in landings revenue or recreational effort, i.e., are we
34 starting to see landings revenue accrue to or effort in another
35 jurisdiction, and this is one of the areas where we have
36 suggested using multiyear averages in order to do this
37 calculation for the metric, to get to the point that you all
38 raised previously around having some stability, and not wanting
39 to be switching, just because there happens to be an outlier
40 year, and we're looking to try and have this happen when we see
41 a sustained shift.

42
43 If we see a documented shift in stock distribution, and then the
44 third that we have put forward for comment is certain council
45 actions, and so this could range from different allocation
46 approaches or changes that councils might be making that might
47 indicate that a fishery, or fisheries, are changing jurisdiction
48 or shifting.

1
2 We may also initiate a review if one of you all request that,
3 which I think was another area that you all had provided comment
4 about, having some opportunity for you to provide -- Or raise
5 the issue to us to then take action.
6

7 Step 2, and now, if we've decided that we actually need to
8 conduct this review, then we need to dig in on determining the
9 geographic scope and the location of the fishery, and so, here,
10 we're laying out some of the roles and key issues to consider,
11 and you all have a lot of discretion, under Magnuson, in
12 describing a fishery, including its geographic scope, and those
13 descriptions are then subject to our approval, and so we're
14 essentially just articulating what already exists, in that
15 regard, and so some of the key issues are the location of the
16 fish and fishing effort, and those would be key components in
17 this step, and then there's a series of additional
18 considerations that we have laid out there that should be taken
19 into account, and those include the location of the species and
20 fishing effort, the management goals, is there a need for
21 conservation and management, the management efficiency,
22 biological considerations, as well as shoreside infrastructure
23 and other components of the fishery itself.
24

25 The draft policy provides up to six months from the notification
26 to the councils for you to recommend the geographic scope, and
27 we were attempting to be responsive, similar to the comments we
28 heard earlier this morning that, in general, six months usually
29 gives you enough time to have had two council meetings to
30 discuss a particular issue and then give us that feedback, while
31 also balancing -- If you add up all of the steps in this
32 governance policy, not having it be a multiyear process, and so
33 trying to balance the opportunity for input from the councils
34 with let's not create an overall process that then takes an
35 extended period of time.
36

37 The outcome from Step 2 is essentially 3, which you all are
38 familiar with, and so Outcome 1 is there is one fishery and one
39 council area of responsibility, and it's straightforward, and
40 that council manages that fishery. There can also be the
41 outcome that there are separate fisheries in multiple council
42 areas and that each council is then responsible for the
43 fisheries in their particular area, or Outcome 3 is there is one
44 fishery that extends into areas of responsibility for more than
45 one council, in which case this is when 304 comes into play, and
46 we may designate council, or councils, and, in the draft policy,
47 then this is what leads us to Step 3, and it's only if we pick
48 Outcome 3 do we then move to Step 3.

1
2 In Step 2, this is when we would actually be making
3 designations, and so we're going to lay out what those
4 designations could be and then talk through what are some of the
5 considerations and presumptions that we would use to guide that
6 decision-making.

7
8 The first would be one council and one FMP. In this case, we
9 would be designating one council to manage a fishery throughout
10 its range, and an example of that is dolphin wahoo, and then we
11 also could have a designation that is multiple councils with one
12 FMP, in which case the Secretary might designate multiple
13 councils and ask for joint management, or designate one as the
14 lead, and then the third is to have multiple councils with
15 multiple FMPs, in which case we would be separating those out to
16 the different councils.

17
18 As part of the process in Step 3, again, we would be consulting
19 with you all, and we are providing six months for us to have
20 those conversations around that designation, and this would be
21 the opportunity when you all would be able to provide that
22 feedback, and, again, we're trying to balance opportunity for
23 you to be able to have some thorough conversations within your
24 respective councils, with not making the overall process really
25 extended, and so there are a number of considerations that we
26 list in the draft policy as part of this process, I think two or
27 three of which tie somewhat directly to the outcomes of the East
28 Coast Scenario Planning, and so a couple of the considerations
29 are thinking about representation and access and participation
30 of stakeholders.

31
32 There's an opportunity for the councils to provide feedback,
33 during this step, about how you have, or are doing, undertaking
34 actions that provide for that representation and engagement with
35 stakeholders who might be in a different council area.

36
37 You can also submit, either jointly or separately, information
38 describing how you would plan to cooperate with other councils,
39 to accommodate the interest of other stakeholders from other
40 regions, or other information that might be relevant as part of
41 this, and other considerations are the location of fishing
42 effort, landings, thinking about existing and future processing,
43 permits, community impacts, including community dependence,
44 adaptability, and there's also thinking about the
45 interrelationships with other managed species, and so there is a
46 range of considerations that are listed out there in the
47 document.

48

1 The last part of this slide is focused on some of the
2 presumptions that we have set forth in the policy to lay out for
3 everyone and get all of us on the same page, in terms of the
4 expectations that we have with respect to when we're doing this
5 analysis and going through this decision-making process.

6
7 Again, we heard concerns about not wanting to have frequent
8 transitions of management authority, and so we have suggested,
9 for these indicators as well, that we use multiyear averages to
10 calculate them, and so what we have proposed is, if in fact we
11 see that greater than 75 percent of landings revenue or
12 recreational effort is in another council's jurisdiction, the
13 presumption is that that stock, or that fishery, is going to
14 transition to the other council.

15
16 If we see greater than 40 percent and less than 75 percent
17 revenue or recreational effort, then it would be -- The
18 presumption would be joint management, and then this third
19 bullet -- We would like to have essentially a fishery-
20 independent source, or presumption, as part of this process, and
21 we are keenly interested in input of what might be an
22 appropriate fishery-independent metric that we could use in this
23 part of the process.

24
25 Ultimately, if there is decision to move either from one
26 council's jurisdiction to another or to joint management of some
27 kind, we have provided a description of that transition and what
28 would be the kinds of factors that should be thought about, and
29 planned for, as well as try to provide some clarity on what our
30 expected timelines, with respect to that, are, and so we have
31 put out, in draft, that we would propose a two-year phase-in for
32 a transition, and, in those cases, the existing FMP would remain
33 in place until it's superseded.

34
35 There could be some exceptions. For example, if there was an
36 overfishing determination during a transition, we might have to
37 make some different choices, but the expectation is that, in
38 general, that there would be a two-year phase-in and that the
39 existing FMP would remain in place.

40
41 We also wanted to be clear that, during that two-year transition
42 period, modifications to allocations should not be undertaken by
43 the previous lead council, and then, finally, that last bullet
44 is focused on what are the kinds of areas that everyone should
45 be planning for as we are making these transitions, and so it
46 tries to highlight the issues, many of which are ones that you
47 have highlighted to us, including thinking about permitting and
48 allocation issues, needing to balance the adaptability with the

1 need for stability, the data collection and management, and so
2 you'll see aspects in the draft governance policy that refer to
3 transition of expertise from SSC to SSC, council staff to
4 council staff, and from regional office to regional office
5 and/or from science center to science center, and this would not
6 be solely on the councils, and it would be for NOAA Fisheries as
7 well.

8
9 As I've mentioned a couple of times, we've tried to incorporate
10 the input that we have received from you all in the development
11 of this draft. I have highlighted a few places, in particular
12 the use of the multiyear averages, taking into account the need
13 to transition the council capacity for managing a new fishery
14 that might be moving into your area, and then I also tried to
15 highlight the places where we have taken into account the
16 outcomes of the East Coast Scenario Planning exercise, or
17 effort, I should say, and, in particular, as Kiley just
18 highlighted, some of the efforts that have been identified there
19 in thinking about the use of committees and reviewing advisory
20 panel structures, and both of those are highlighted as
21 considerations in the draft policy, as part of Step 3.

22
23 Here is our general timeline, and this gives you a little bit of
24 going back in time up until now, and we're currently in May of
25 2023, where we've provided you all with the draft proposed
26 policy, and we are seeking your feedback over the course of this
27 summer, and we have set the deadline to get your comments by
28 November 17 of 2023, and that will give us the time to finalize
29 the policy by the summer of 2024, which is the timeline that we
30 told you about at the beginning.

31
32 Obviously, we would appreciate getting comments sooner rather
33 than later, but we completely understand, as we noted earlier
34 today, or as you all noted earlier today, that you would
35 appreciate the opportunity to have a little bit longer to
36 provide us any feedback, and so you can, again, provide those
37 comments by November, and we would plan to update you all in
38 October on the comments that we have received so far, at that
39 point, and so, with that, I am happy to take questions and/or
40 welcome discussion.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Kelly. Any questions?
43 Chris.

44
45 **MR. MOORE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Kelly, for the
46 presentation. I have a questions, but I have a lot of comments,
47 and I will take about, I would say, four or five minutes, and so
48 stay tuned for the final part of this, but I really do

1 appreciate, Kelly, you sending out the policy for review last
2 week. It gave us time to really look at it before the meeting,
3 and deep breaths. I'm not going to make a motion today to this
4 particular policy, but, as I said, we do have a number of
5 comments and concerns regarding the draft.

6
7 In addition to the comments that we're going to provide you with
8 today, we appreciate the opportunity to provide additional
9 specific comments prior to that November 17 deadline.

10
11 The CCC has made comments before on climate change and
12 governance, and I think everyone around the table, or most folks
13 around the table, recognize that, and, Bernie, if you could put
14 that slide up, I would appreciate it, and the CCC will be
15 sending in a letter that will likely reiterate the views that
16 were stated in our CCC consensus position on council management
17 authority. We approved that back in 2021.

18
19 If we could get that up, I can start reading it, but, basically,
20 the consensus statement reads, in part, that a number of fishery
21 management plans already account for overlap between council
22 management areas. For example, the New England Fishery
23 Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management
24 Council manage two fisheries under joint fishery management
25 plans and cooperate on the management of several other fisheries
26 that overlap the geographic areas of both councils. Similar
27 arrangements exist between the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic
28 Councils and the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils.

29
30 It further states that frequent reassignments of management
31 authority could cause disruption in council operations,
32 duplication of effort, Science Center workload bottlenecks, and
33 loss of institutional knowledge among the staff, council, and
34 SSC members and others who have acquired specialized knowledge
35 about the management and biology of the stock, through years of
36 involvement with that particular fishery. While major changes
37 in management regimes can be warranted in certain cases, the CCC
38 believes that less-disruptive methods of adapting to climate
39 change be pursued first.

40
41 As Kiley indicated earlier, the report from the Climate Change
42 and Fisheries Summit is being finalized, and it will be
43 available soon, and we've seen a draft of that, and I appreciate
44 the comments that Janet made earlier this morning about that
45 particular process.

46
47 The NRCC met a couple of weeks ago to consider that report and
48 develop action items for implementation, as Kiley said, and

1 those action items are significant, and we believe that their
2 implementation will be less disruptive and will address many of
3 the issues associated with climate change and fisheries
4 governance on the east coast.

5
6 In regard to the draft policy, I have a few specific comments
7 for today. As I indicated earlier, we plan on sending in more
8 specific comments relative to your questions, Kelly, in our
9 letter later this summer.

10
11 In general, looking at the draft, we think the policy is
12 difficult to follow, and it might benefit from some
13 reorganization. For example, it's not very clear, to us, how
14 and when the governance review, and the subsequent steps, would
15 be initiated and who has what role and responsibility within
16 each one of those steps.

17
18 We also think that, when and if this policy is applied, it
19 should be applied when there is clearly a defined management
20 problem, not just the changing stock distribution or a fishery
21 that crosses multiple jurisdiction, and, in fact, just as the
22 councils have a defined purpose and need when amending an FMP,
23 we think that NMFS should provide a statement of the problem and
24 evidence that a problem exists before initiating the review
25 detailed in the policy.

26
27 We also wonder how this policy would account for fisheries that
28 occur across multiple jurisdictions, and have occurred in that
29 particular arrangement since council management was first
30 initiated, and I ask that because the management unit of most of
31 our species, most of the Mid-Atlantic-Council-managed species,
32 extend outside of the Mid-Atlantic Council area. For example,
33 the management unit for bluefish is Maine through Florida.

34
35 The way that it's written, this draft policy could be used to
36 justify reassignment of management authority for any fishery
37 that crosses jurisdictions, even when the stock hasn't
38 experienced a significant shift in distribution related to
39 climate.

40
41 Another comment is, obviously, careful consideration to the
42 costs and benefits of implementing the policy should be
43 considered. The Mid-Atlantic Council has been involved in joint
44 management issues for over thirty years, and we know that joint
45 management is generally more cumbersome and less efficient. In
46 the face of climate change, wind development, and all the other
47 issues that we're dealing with on the east coast, the exact
48 opposite is where we need to be.

1
2 The draft policy could set the east coast councils up for
3 frequent reassignments of management authority, and this would
4 also be a huge burden for staff, and years' worth of
5 institutional knowledge and experience is not easily
6 transferred. Time and resources dedicated to the transition
7 would be better spent on management actions, conducting
8 stakeholder outreach, or addressing other issues, such as
9 habitat and protected resource issues on the east coast.

10
11 Finally, we should make sure they're not getting out too far
12 ahead of the science, as we think about governance response to
13 climate change. The Mid-Atlantic Council is working on a
14 project with Malin Pinsky from Rutgers to develop models to
15 forecast near-term species distributions on the east coast,
16 near-term being from one to ten years.

17
18 In his preliminary report, Malin makes two very important and
19 relevant statements to keep in mind. One is non-climate
20 factors, like fishing pressure and larval dispersal, influence
21 species distribution. The second point is species distributions
22 are highly variable. They often move north to south, and they
23 are not simply marching up the coast.

24
25 In summary, we have a number of concerns with the draft policy.
26 While we do acknowledge that the 304(f) governance policy may
27 have some application in the future, it could be considered as
28 one of the tools in our toolbox to address climate change and
29 governance issues under the right circumstances. However, it
30 shouldn't be considered the only one. We strongly consider that
31 you consider the results of the Scenario Planning Initiative,
32 and the implementation of those action items, before you proceed
33 with the final draft and any implementation of this policy.
34 Thanks.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Chris, thank you. Any other questions or
37 comments? Dr. Porch.

38
39 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you. I just wanted to bring up the fact that
40 changing distributions not only can trigger changes in council
41 jurisdictions, but it triggers changes in science jurisdictions,
42 and different regions, and different states, collect different
43 types of data, and they use different assessment techniques, and
44 so however this plays out, whenever councils are dealing with
45 it, they're likely going to get different types of advice than
46 they used to get, and I think we have to start thinking about
47 how we respond in light of that.

1 You know, for instance, with other transboundary stocks, the
2 conventional wisdom is that each management jurisdiction would
3 get a similar fraction of the stock that's in their area, so
4 that, at least if you're consistent, in terms of the extraction
5 rate, then the stock as a whole is protected, but what would
6 that actually look like, when you have, you know, say three
7 council jurisdictions involved?

8
9 I think it's going to double down on the need not only to
10 standardize data collection, but to have really good surveys,
11 and we talked about surveys earlier, where you're using a
12 similar approach, or identical approaches, but also covering the
13 full range of the stock, so you can say, as close to real time
14 as possible, where the stock is at any given time. Otherwise, I
15 don't see how we're going to be able to manage this stock in an
16 equitable way. Thank you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. I've got Eric and then you, John.

19
20 **MR. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I would like to agree
21 with Madam Coit, and, this morning, she said that the East Coast
22 Scenario Planning work was a fantastic body of work, and I agree
23 with that, and I would really like to hear a lot more about how
24 that action is going to integrate with this, or perhaps
25 supersede this action.

26
27 The document itself, to me, is confusing, and I will give you an
28 example of that. The footnote on page 1 of that document --
29 Footnote 1 says this policy does not apply to Atlantic highly
30 migratory species. If you look at Slide 14, there's three tunas
31 on the page, and so that was confusing enough, but I have a lot
32 of comments, but I will be brief, and I am generally speaking
33 about page 3, which is Step 1.

34
35 a(ii) is request -- One of the reasons for conducting a review
36 is if a council should request, and I am thinking, with the
37 discussion about funding and workload, you could probably wipe
38 that out, because I can't imagine one council that's going to
39 ask for any more work at this point, and so certainly funding
40 would have to be in place to support whatever is that you want
41 to do under 304(f), and, if that's not part of the equation,
42 then you should just stop right now.

43
44 If you keep going down that page, the phrase "included, but not
45 limited to" is mentioned three or four times, and, to me, that's
46 pretty vague, and it's pretty scary, and I would like to see a
47 lot more detail in this document, going forward. It is
48 interesting, to me, that a criteria that indicates a need for

1 review is to prevent management authority changing, and I
2 thought that was an interesting comment.

3
4 Of course, there is a discussion about changing of fishing
5 effort, and, you know, what about rotational management, which
6 is a key tool in our toolbox, and, you know, there's a Home
7 Depot down the street, and I could probably go get a few more
8 tools if you want, but, to me, that's a consideration that
9 shouldn't be ignored.

10
11 Certainly landings are driven by infrastructure, and, although
12 there is a bullet point in the back of this document that talks
13 about predicting where potential new infrastructure will be
14 built, I don't know if that's ever going to happen. It is
15 expensive. It's very expensive, and you can't find land, and
16 you've got to be close to the coast, and the landings scare me a
17 little bit, but it's -- You know, fishermen have to go where the
18 fish are going to be packed-out and processed, and nobody likes
19 to put fish on trucks anymore.

20
21 Lastly, you know, Footnote 5 says that NOAA acknowledges that
22 there could be additional circumstances, and I would like to
23 know what those are, and certainly Footnote 6 -- It says there
24 is a consideration about addressing state versus federal
25 landings, and that's a permitting issue, and it also -- It might
26 involve the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and
27 they're not mentioned anywhere in this document. I do
28 understand that they are outside of Magnuson, but they are a key
29 partner in what we do on the east coast, and so thank you.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Eric. John.

32
33 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** Thanks, and I appreciate Clay bringing up the
34 point of shifting within NMFS, because, as the council on the
35 far side of the jurisdictional boundary between the Northeast
36 and the Southeast, that's something we experience with any of
37 our assessments that cross the line, and we just had discussions
38 about cobia and how that stock is shifting to the north and the
39 impacts that's having on the things that Clay mentioned, basic
40 data collection.

41
42 A survey done in the Southeast headboat is not really relevant
43 anymore for that stock, if it's moving to the north, and so I
44 think it's an oversight in the document that there is focus on
45 the councils' governance without considering the impacts on the
46 agency, both the regional offices and the science centers and
47 how they'll have to be impacted as jurisdiction changes.

48

1 I mean, I understand, between the Mid-Atlantic and New England,
2 you're still within one science center and one regional office,
3 but, if you shift from the South Atlantic to the Mid-Atlantic,
4 you have now changed your entire NMFS infrastructure that's
5 working on this as well, and that's going to be a challenge, and
6 so I think that needs to be considered.

7
8 We too will probably provide comments, and I think there are
9 some technical things to raise, and like I, for one, don't think
10 a 15 percent change and a three-year average, particularly in
11 the recreational fisheries in the South Atlantic, is at all an
12 indicator of a significant change in a fishery distribution. We
13 could have a change like that just because you get one year of
14 an odd estimate, and that happens to us all the time.

15
16 We get estimates that will be four or five times higher than
17 anything you've seen in the ten years around it, you know, and
18 so I think we've got use great caution in using the recreational
19 data.

20
21 The fishery-dependent data is another challenge, and a point
22 that I've raised before is it's a hard fence between the
23 Northeast and the Southeast in that program, and the surveys are
24 different, and it's a tough challenge to compare the surveys
25 across lines, and so you're not going to be able to say compare
26 movement of black sea bass from the South Atlantic stock into
27 the Mid-Atlantic stock, if our southern stock should decide to
28 go north, because the Mid-Atlantic stock seems to be moving
29 north, and we don't have fishery-independent data to compare the
30 movement, because the methods are completely different, and so
31 that's going to be a pretty significant challenge.

32
33 I don't think that three years is adequate, and I particularly
34 don't think three years that are adjacent is a good moving
35 average. We need to be looking at longer term. If these things
36 are going to be happening, we should be thinking what does a
37 stock look like, and where was it ten or twenty years ago
38 compared to today, and so we're just coming out of, what, a
39 three-year La Nina, and that affects the climate, and so, you
40 know, what I read on that is they used to not last that long,
41 and now it seems like some of these climate-related trends are
42 lasting longer, and so that could easily bias us on a three-year
43 average.

44
45 I think seasonality is a concern, and when are we going to look
46 at these fish, and things like Spanish mackerel are having a
47 great time, in the summers, going north, but does that mean that
48 the whole stock is shifting? I'm not sure.

1
2 I think there should be some consideration of peer review of the
3 outcomes and a clear role for the science and fishery advisors
4 of the councils, and I don't think that giving six months for us
5 to develop a plan is near enough, and I think we need at least a
6 year, or maybe even two years, because I don't think this is the
7 kind of thing that we should be taking lightly, because of all
8 the consequences. As Chris mentioned, we shouldn't be going
9 back and forth on this, and so maybe there should be kind of a
10 sunset. If you do this, you've got to commit to that plan for
11 ten years or more, so that it's not the kind of thing we feel
12 like to just jump into because it seems that there's a change,
13 and we should really be sure that there's a change.

14
15 With those concerns, I think it's good to have some guidance on
16 how we will determine if jurisdictions should change as the
17 stocks change, and that's really important, and it's just
18 incumbent on us, when we do this, to get the details right and
19 make sure we're not setting ourselves up for kind of a seesawing
20 effect, or overlooking some problems, or putting us in a box
21 where we're now, you know, dealing with this and disrupting
22 businesses and constituents and our processes.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. I have Trish and then Mike.

25
26 **MS. MURPHEY:** Thank you. I am new to this group, and so I've
27 been kind of -- I guess I'm coming in in the middle of all this
28 discussion, but I was looking at with fresh eyes, and one of the
29 things that concerned me was the involvement of stakeholders,
30 and I really didn't pick up on that, and I feel like that's
31 going to be a very important piece in discussions of moving
32 around from councils, and I think that stakeholder input is
33 going to be important, and maybe it's just not captured well
34 here, or I'm talking more of an implementation plan, but I think
35 that's going to be an important piece that I think is missing
36 here.

37
38 I agree with John, and I thought this three-year average was
39 awfully short. I mean, at least consider five, but I think, as
40 he said, considering longer terms and comparing to older
41 historical times is probably even better.

42
43 In reading this, though I think it is inferred that you are
44 going to work closely with the councils, I didn't pick that up
45 as well in this policy, and I think maybe that needs to be
46 clarified more, that interaction between the different councils
47 and NMFS on these discussions and determinations.

48

1 Talking about new and expanded fisheries, you know, there's
2 probably not any data to be able to use to discuss whether an
3 expanded fishery, who it goes to or kind of how it moves, and so
4 I think there's probably going to be data gaps there, on
5 especially new fisheries, and I agree with John too that I don't
6 think six months is long enough, and I think, again, a year, or
7 two years, and I think -- I'm thinking the reason it would be
8 elongated would be because of trying to engage your stakeholders
9 to get input and information to make these determinations.

10
11 I guess Tom might have touched on this, and I will just be
12 brief, but budget, and are we going to -- You know, the councils
13 are already hurting for money, and adding additional species --
14 I think John talked about losing institutional knowledge, and I
15 think just the capacity may be difficult, and then I think what
16 Clay and John also said about just sharing the data, and the
17 compatibility of data, across the regional offices. That's
18 really all that I had to say, and thank you for allowing me to
19 speak.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Trish. Mike.

22
23 **MR. LUISI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be -- I'll try to
24 be brief, and I would first say that I certainly agree with the
25 speakers before me in what they've stated regarding this
26 presentation and regarding the climate governance policy, as we
27 read it and are discussing it now.

28
29 I would like to focus on, I guess, two aspects, two things that
30 I feel like this policy needs some comment on at this point, and
31 one of them is confusion, and so it's been stated that the
32 document is confusing, and I'm not going to contest that, or
33 speak to that, but what I would like to say is that I think that
34 this isn't -- The timing of this, along with all of the efforts
35 that have gone into the East Coast Scenario Planning exercise,
36 make this document extremely confusing to the general public and
37 the audience for which we have worked for years now, gathering
38 information, working through the scenarios, going through
39 workshops and webinars and virtual meetings and in-person
40 meetings and discussions at our council and discussions at the
41 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which hasn't been
42 brought up yet, and I'm going to do that here in a second.

43
44 I think the overall confusion to our stakeholders, thinking they
45 were offering thought, offering their advice as to how we, on
46 the east coast, may deal with governance and climate change, and
47 then, at the same time, there was a policy directive being
48 developed by NOAA Fisheries that's going to be guiding those

1 decisions that come from that process, and I think it's very
2 confusing, and I hope that we haven't lost, yet again, the faith
3 of our stakeholders, through this complicated array of documents
4 that can often be pretty difficult to read through and
5 understand completely, and so that's my first point.

6
7 The second point I would like to make is that there are times
8 that I've heard folks say let's just get everyone in the room
9 and we'll figure out how to make it work. Well, it sounds good,
10 but, as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Council, and as the chair
11 of the council for the last seven years, our work with the
12 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on jointly-managed
13 species, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish,
14 has been very successful, in my opinion.

15
16 However, bringing those two bodies together, the Mid-Atlantic
17 Council and the Atlantic States Commission, isn't easy, and it's
18 not a duplicating -- It's not doubling resources and effort, and
19 it's probably tripling and quadrupling resources and effort that
20 go into making sure that the two management bodies, in this
21 case, are working in sync with one another to generate an
22 output, using the best available science and gathering the
23 information for managers within the geographical range of that
24 species that we're discussing, and it takes an enormous amount
25 of time to get those two bodies to get in sync.

26
27 Now, if we're talking about geographical range of a species like
28 bluefish, where we now have the New England Council, the Mid-
29 Atlantic Council, the South Atlantic Council, and the Atlantic
30 States Marine Fisheries Commission, I feel for the person that -
31 - I won't be around by the time that happens, but I feel for the
32 person who is going to have to chair one of those meetings,
33 because the last seven years have been rather tough, trying to
34 herd the cats, as they say, to come to a conclusion that makes
35 sense, is reasonable, and is often a compromise between the
36 different states, the different regions, and the different
37 stakeholders that we engage with.

38
39 Confusion and coordination and resources are the two things that
40 I wanted to focus on, Mr. Chairman, and that will wrap-up my
41 comment. Thank you.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mike. That's all that I had on my
44 list, and is there anyone else that wanted to comment? Janet,
45 go ahead.

46
47 **MS. COIT:** I just -- I don't think praising the East Coast
48 Scenario planning in any way diminishes from the need for us to

1 have a policy like this, and we want your feedback, and we can
2 improve the policy, but I just wanted to read to you from your
3 summit report, on page 3.

4
5 Participants also discussed when and how changes in management
6 authority should be made. Generally, participants thought that
7 triggers should be used to initiate a review of management
8 authority and that trigger immediate change.

9
10 I think what Kelly is presenting actually aligns with a lot of
11 the work that you've done, and definitely feedback on triggers,
12 what would constitute an appropriate trigger, and your report
13 emphasizes crosspollination, better communications, many of the
14 things that came up, but, when I read your work, it's not
15 inconsistent with developing this policy, and I just wanted to
16 make that comment.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Janet. Kelly.

19
20 **MS. DENIT:** Thanks, Chair. Thank you, all, for the feedback,
21 and I appreciate that. Just a couple of comments, to clarify,
22 and I'm not going to go through everything point-by-point, but,
23 first of all, thanks, Eric, for highlighting that boo-boo in the
24 PowerPoint. Sorry that I missed that one in my review.

25
26 With respect to the Footnote 5 that you talked about, that was
27 mostly focused on if we trigger an overfished or overfishing
28 determination, in which case, then, as you all know, we have
29 very specific statutory deadlines, and, therefore, wherever we
30 might be in the process, we might have to adjust and/or stop the
31 process, in order to respond to that.

32
33 To the couple of comments about the timeframe, just to be clear,
34 we were suggesting that a multiyear average be used, but, in the
35 policy, we don't specify that it has to be a recent time period,
36 and you could look at 2005 compared to -- You, know, 2005 to
37 2008 compared to 2023 to 2025, like that, and so those were the
38 two couple of things that I did want to make sure that folks
39 understood, and I appreciate the rest of the comments, and we
40 certainly will take those into account, and we look forward to
41 receiving your future comments, and I apologize, and I did cut
42 myself off one slide short.

43
44 Please, if you have any additional questions or comments, feel
45 free to email myself or Marian McPherson, who is here, if you
46 have additional questions or comments or want to discuss the
47 policy further here over the next couple of days, and please
48 feel free to grab either one of us, and we'll be more than happy

1 to chat. Thanks for all that great feedback.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kelly. I am not seeing any
4 more hands or anyone wanting to discuss more on that, and we'll
5 move forward to our next item on the agenda, and that's Ms.
6 Stephanie Hunt, and she's going to talk to us about
7 antiharassment policies and training, and that will be on Tab 9.
8 Stephanie, it looks like your presentation is up. If you're
9 ready, go ahead.

10
11 **UPDATE ON ANTIHARASSMENT POLICIES AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

12
13 **MS. STEPHANIE HUNT:** Hi, everyone. I'm Stephanie Hunt, and I'm
14 Branch Chief in the Office of Sustainable Fisheries. You can
15 move to the next slide, which outlines what we are talking
16 about. I wanted to give an update on the harassment prevention
17 policies that you all adopted in October, and I wanted to give
18 you a report-out of the harassment training that we launched in
19 November and discuss a more long-term strategy for harassment
20 training.

21
22 You all recall that we developed two model policies for the
23 councils to address allegations of harassment, and we adopted
24 those at the CCC level in October, and you all have been busy
25 adopting them in your individual councils since then, making
26 really good progress, and most of the councils have adopted
27 them, and those who haven't have it on their June agenda to take
28 up.

29
30 Another issue that we've discussed is implementing procedures,
31 and we agreed to develop some sort of a toolkit, some email
32 templates and checklists, to help you implement the policies.
33 We've been working on those. We have a couple ready, and we're
34 adding to that, with a couple more, and we hope to get those to
35 you within a month.

36
37 Now I will move into harassment training, which we launched in
38 November, and it was the first ever launch of harassment
39 training for the councils, and we assigned the training to over
40 450 individuals, council staff, council members, and various
41 advisory body members. I think it was really successful, and 80
42 percent of the participants, from across eight councils,
43 completed the training, and that's over 350 people, and that is
44 the vast majority of council, the vast, vast majority of council
45 staff and members took it, and those that didn't -- There were
46 some state employees that had taken it previously, and then we
47 had a little bit of trouble with some of the advisory body
48 members.

1
2 The average time to complete the training was almost two hours
3 for non-supervisors and three for supervisors, and I mention
4 that because it was a really significant commitment. I will
5 note that I did hear about some technical difficulties, and so I
6 can't say that these numbers are 100 percent accurate, but they
7 give you a pretty good sense.

8
9 The next slide is more details of who was trained, and you can
10 see the results in this table. The last column shows you who
11 was assigned the training, and different councils took different
12 approaches to that, and we encouraged definitely all staff and
13 all council members, but we left it up to the councils, in terms
14 of the advisory body members, whether they assigned it to just
15 leadership or everyone, and we actually didn't have enough spots
16 to actually train all of the advisory body members, and so that
17 led to some of these differing approaches.

18
19 You will see the South Atlantic and Mid did an assignment to
20 their advisory body members, and the Caribbean, I think,
21 assigned it to all of their advisory panel members, and the New
22 England and North Pacific assigned it just to their leadership,
23 and so there was some differences there, and, as I said, we were
24 limited to 500 people, and so we sort of were trying to go
25 through iterations and making sure that we didn't go over.

26
27 The Pacific Council had the highest number of individuals
28 trained, and a lower percentage, because they assigned it to
29 eighty-odd advisory body members, and, similar, the Caribbean
30 assigned it to I think all of their advisory body members. The
31 Gulf and New England Councils had the second and third-highest
32 number of people trained, and the South Atlantic had the highest
33 percentage trained, and a lower N on the total numbers, because
34 the advisory panels weren't on the list.

35
36 The Caribbean and the Western Pacific had the longest time to
37 complete the training, two-plus hours for non-supervisors and
38 four hours for supervisors, and so, again, a huge time
39 commitment, and I think -- I mean, I couldn't believe that 80
40 percent of people completed the training. This is the first
41 time we've done it, and I think we're all really excited about
42 that.

43
44 So what well? This is our perspective, and we would love to
45 hear your perspective, and we got positive feedback on the
46 training content, and this is the same training that we're
47 required to take at NOAA, and I think it's pretty good. People
48 told us it was relevant and applicable to the council context,

1 and the training platform, Everfi, was really quite easy, from
2 our end, from assigning people the training, getting reminders
3 out, and running reports on who has taken it and who hadn't, and
4 so it allowed us to communicate with the executive directors the
5 status of the assignments.

6
7 NOAA paid for this training, and we ended up getting a
8 discounted rate, and so it was only \$10,000, compared to the
9 original quota of \$30,000, and we had a shorter timeframe for
10 people to take the training, and it shut off after less than six
11 months. In terms of other things that I thought went well,
12 different models about how councils tried to ensure compliance,
13 and the Gulf Council, I'm aware, gave stipends for time for
14 people who completed the training, and so they were frequently
15 asking us for the list of who had completed it and who hadn't,
16 so that they could process those, and I think that -- I've had a
17 lot of conversations with a variety of you, and people seem to
18 have really bought into it.

19
20 We were getting a lot of requests to get training reports,
21 asking us how it was going, and I will say that at least one
22 council, that I am aware, has adopted into their SOPPs a
23 requirement to take harassment training, and so that was a good
24 signal.

25
26 In terms of challenges, from our perspective, there wasn't a way
27 to require this training, and there was no concrete consequences
28 for not taking the training, and that was a concern as we were
29 getting ready to launch it. Well, what if they don't take it,
30 and, well, we're going to try it and see what happens, and I
31 think, with an 80 percent completion rate, that maybe didn't end
32 up being that big of a problem, but it's out there for future
33 training efforts, but, as I mentioned, the completion rate was
34 different between councils, and then councils took different
35 approaches to who they assigned the training, and I think that
36 was totally fine in our first year. I think, probably in the
37 future, we want to train more advisory body members.

38
39 We had, through the contract, supplementary training that was
40 available, and there was a training on managing bias, and we
41 offered that sort of halfway through. Nobody took advantage of
42 that.

43
44 In terms of challenges, we had funding last year, and we were
45 able to fund this, and, in the future, we'll need to talk about
46 a funding model, and we don't have funding specifically
47 designated for this. I think kind of a future challenge is it's
48 great to have these policies, and it's great to have training,

1 and those are really first steps, and how do we reinforce the
2 messages from the policies and from the training, and I heard
3 some good examples.

4
5 I think the New England Council mentioned that, every year, sort
6 of the first AP meeting of the year, they go through the --
7 They're planning to go through a slide highlighting the
8 harassment policies, and I think the Pacific Council mentioned
9 that, next to the big slide that they'll have up, they have a
10 big slide highlighting the harassment policy, and so I think
11 those are great examples. There probably are others that you
12 are all doing, but I think that's something we definitely need
13 to keep in mind.

14
15 The next slide -- I am moving now into sort of future training,
16 what do we do from here to make sure that council spaces are
17 safe, respectful, inclusive, or free from harassment, and so
18 I've done some research, and I will present that here, but this
19 would be a joint strategy, and this would be something that you
20 all would need to -- It would be bought into, and it would need
21 to reflect your priorities.

22
23 I will say that many of you will remember that the company we
24 used, Everfi -- After we found them, and decided to use them,
25 they told us that they had been bought out, and we couldn't use
26 them in the future. The good news is that we can use them now,
27 and we have a government contract, and so they are available,
28 and so the options that I have outlined are based on what I know
29 from them, and this slide just -- You know, I think the
30 harassment prevention training is core.

31
32 There is other training that could be beneficial for councils
33 to, again, create safe and respectful council environments, and
34 the first three on this slide are available through Everfi,
35 using the contract that we had, and so the other ones would
36 require a different contract, and then, of course, the target
37 audiences here are the same as who we were targeting this year.

38
39 This is just big picture, trying to wrap our heads around how
40 many people are we talking about, and I needed this information
41 to get some of the quotes, and our council employees and members
42 and state members, and those number are pretty solid. The
43 numbers of advisory body members, APs and SSCs, this is pretty
44 rough, and so we would really need to groundtruth this with you,
45 if we were moving toward that.

46
47 The next slide is a quick, high-level summary of three different
48 options, and then the next slide after that gives you a big more

1 detail, and I will note, here at the bottom, that I think some
2 of you remind me of this whenever I give this types of
3 presentations, that new council members do get this training,
4 during new council member training, and so that is -- That will
5 continue to happen, and I think that's really important.

6
7 In terms of options, and I bounced some of these ideas off of a
8 couple of the executive directors, there would be an option,
9 through Everfi, to enter into a three-year contract for kind of
10 an unlimited number of trainees, up to 2,000, and that would
11 allow us to offer the harassment training say every two years,
12 on a regular cycle, and then during the -- So it would go to
13 everybody in one year, year-one, or year-two, as it was, and
14 then, the next year, we could offer some of the supplementary
15 training, and so that's one option.

16
17 The second option would be to do that same -- Well, to offer the
18 training, or require the training, once every two years, which
19 we would need, and the supplementary training would be
20 available, but only during those years, and I can go into this
21 in the next slide, and it will be more clear, and then the third
22 option would be to provide it every two years, but to different
23 audiences.

24
25 I'm going to go to the next slide to help explain this a little
26 bit better, and so the first option would be available with a
27 three-year contract, and these numbers are going to expire on
28 May 31, and they will probably go up. If we enter into a
29 contract with this company, we could have, you know, three years
30 of time where we could train everyone on harassment training in
31 say the even years. The next year would be available for
32 supplementary training. If you enter into a three-year
33 contract, you get a bit of a discount.

34
35 The second option would be the same assignments, assign
36 everybody every other year, but there would be no training in
37 the off years, and so that would require us to enter into a
38 contract every two years, versus a three-year contract, and it
39 would be slightly more difficult to administer.

40
41 With this option, we wouldn't have a contract in the odd years,
42 and so we wouldn't be able to offer any training during those
43 odd years, and then the third option would be if we wanted to
44 cap the numbers of trainees at 250, and we would get a
45 discounted rate, and it would be a little bit more difficult to
46 administer, because this would be a three-year contract, but we
47 would be training different people in different years, and so we
48 would potentially train council staff and members in even years,

1 and then advisory body members in odd years, and then, if we
2 wanted to offer the supplementary training, it would have to
3 occur with the same people in the same year that they take the
4 harassment training.

5
6 I think there's some pros and cons to each of these, both in
7 costs and administration challenges, and, in particular -- You
8 know, the first two options give us more flexibility with the
9 numbers, and, the third option, we'll have to be pretty careful
10 about how who we're assigning training to, because we'll be
11 limited to 250 per year.

12
13 I didn't write it on the slide, but I think, you know -- Well,
14 maybe it's the next slide, and so these are potential discussion
15 topics, and I see the time, and we're late in the day, and, you
16 know, I am happy to schedule a call with the executive
17 directors, to get into more details on this, but I think there
18 is a lot to discuss here, and we would love to hear your
19 feedback on the training process, how it went for you, and I
20 gave you my perspective, but I would love to hear your
21 perspective.

22
23 I would love to hear from you about your vision for this type of
24 training in the future, and does it align with what I've
25 outlined, or are we missing anything big? Are there other
26 things that we should be thinking about?

27
28 Obviously, you know, harassment policies and training are the
29 core, and they're the basics, and I'm very happy that we have
30 those underway, but there are lots of other things that we could
31 be thinking about, in terms of council environments and creating
32 inclusive spaces, and then the last thing that I have here --
33 Well, I guess we have this idea of incentivizing the training,
34 and, potentially, there would be some way we could have more
35 concrete consequences for not taking it, but, in the absence of
36 that, are there other ideas? I mentioned the Gulf Council
37 offered stipends, and had a very high completion rate, and so
38 that would be something to think more about, and then the last
39 thing I have here is funding.

40
41 We funded this last year, and we would be open to kind of
42 managing the contract, and we can do that fairly easily, if the
43 councils wanted us to do that, and we would also be open to
44 manage a contract yourselves, individually or as a group, and we
45 -- You know, one model could be that we set up the contract, and
46 the councils are paying for it, and we could take the funding
47 off the top of your grants, and we could use the council funding
48 formula, so that it's more equitable, depending on how big your

1 council is, and we would also be open to a shared-funding model,
2 if that was something that you wanted to explore.

3
4 The next slide, and I don't want to forget the next slide, and I
5 forgot to mention that Sandy Soderstrum, our General Counsel
6 from the department who helped us develop these policies, has
7 taken a new job, and I know many of you have worked with her
8 before, and her replacement is Alexis Anderson, and I think
9 she's on the webinar, if you have any questions for her, but she
10 gave me permission to share her email address, and, if you have
11 any questions that you might have followed-up with Sandy on, go
12 ahead and reach out to Alexis, and that's it, and I have a final
13 slide with a picture on it.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Stephanie. Any
16 questions for Stephanie? Carrie.

17
18 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to tell
19 Stephanie and Adam and the team, and Sandy, thank you for your
20 help with this. We actually modified our council SOPPs, and
21 your options don't quite align, regarding the two years, or how
22 we've set up our requirements for the training.

23
24 We also, because of the limited slots at the time the training
25 was offered through Everfi, were not able to allow our AP
26 members to complete the training, due to that limitation, but we
27 are requiring that in the future, and so what we're looking at
28 is a three-year time period, or at the time of appointment, and
29 so I'm interested in working with you further on ways we could
30 reduce any type of financial burden to make this consistent and
31 applicable for everyone, but I appreciate the help that you've
32 given us so far, and the support, and I think it was well
33 received, for the most part, but all the members, council
34 members and staff, and so thank you.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John.

37
38 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** Thanks, and thanks, Stephanie, for that. I
39 think it was -- I didn't get a whole lot of negative feedback.
40 It was like any sort of training, and you get a little bit, but
41 it did take some effort to get everybody to do it, you know, a
42 number of follow-ups and working with you all, and some of them
43 that people got hung-up in progress, and they struggled to get
44 it, but you expect a fair amount of that.

45
46 I think an annual option is better, because I'm thinking of say
47 staff who come on as new hires. You know, we are a council that
48 has our own training, and we require people -- When we onboard

1 somebody, that's one of the things that they do immediately, is
2 have to take this type of training, and so I think it would be
3 unfortunate if we only had it every other year, and someone
4 could potentially work for you for quite a while before they get
5 any kind of training.

6
7 We didn't extend it to APs, because we have 350 of them, or
8 something, and I'm just not sure how it would be received, and I
9 would be interested in hearing from some of other councils who
10 did ask their AP members to do it, if they did it and how they
11 felt about it and that sort of thing.

12
13 As an alternative, we do have a -- We do orientation for our AP
14 members, and we do some training, and we inform them about the
15 council's policies, and we provide them the code of conduct and
16 the standards, you know, that NMFS has provided, and so we make
17 sure that they're well aware and they're given the information,
18 and they know -- We made a point to share it with all of our
19 advisors, when we recently changed our handbook and adopted the
20 policies and stuff, and so we kind of felt like, from an
21 advisory perspective, that's maybe a better way to go and
22 actually get them to pay attention to those things.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. Tom.

25
26 **MR. NIES:** Generally, it was received very well, and I think
27 that was, in large measure, thanks to the effort that Stephanie
28 put into getting this program going, Stephanie and others at
29 NMFS Headquarters, and I know she wasn't alone.

30
31 We did have our advisory panel chairs take it, but, because of
32 the numbers of advisors that we have, we didn't have all of our
33 advisors take it, and, as Stephanie said, every year, at the
34 start of the year, the first meeting of advisory panels, we go
35 over this stuff.

36
37 I would suggest that it might be easiest to have the EDs get
38 together and have the EDs talk about possible future scheduling
39 and funding options, and I suspect we're not all on the same
40 cycle for when we appoint AP members and things like that, and
41 so John's suggestion for the annual approach might fit better,
42 but that might be a discussion that we could have in more detail
43 on a phone call, rather than here.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Miguel.

46
47 **MR. ROLON:** In our case, I asked the staff to take it, and so
48 they all took it. AP members and other bodies, they were kind

1 of like, do I have to, and I said yes, but there's no way that
2 you can force them to take it, the way that we have now, and so
3 two questions. Would it be possible to have a form that I can
4 use, or any council can use, because I used to do that training
5 myself, with whatever I knew, because I got involved in two
6 cases of harassment, interesting cases, and so those are my
7 questions.

8
9 I believe that we cannot make it obligatory, at this time, to be
10 the way it is now, but, if that is a possibility, that we can
11 have that training to be used by councils, that will help us,
12 because then I can do that every year when we have new people,
13 be it council members or AP members, and, also, we have the
14 issue of the language, and that's something that we can take --
15 If I have a harassment training that I can use, I can translate
16 that, and I have a staff member that could do that. Thank you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Miguel. Merrick.

19
20 **MR. BURDEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Stephanie
21 and everyone else, for the help in pulling all of this together.
22 What I am reflecting on here is -- I think it's captured in the
23 table of the different survey responses that you had shown in
24 your presentation, Stephanie, and I think that captures a lot of
25 my thinking here about how we might move forward with the
26 training.

27
28 If I look at, you know, the Pacific Council, our strategy -- The
29 Pacific Council's strategy was to essentially try to saturate
30 our membership with the training, and so we had our advisory
31 body members take it, and we had staff, and we had council
32 members, and some of the advisory bodies that were sent it have
33 not met for quite some time, and so you see, through that
34 philosophy, a lower completion rate than some of the other
35 councils, and I suspect some of the other councils had a much
36 more deliberate focus.

37
38 One is I'm proud of our council, and everyone took it very
39 seriously, and it led to some really good discussions on the
40 council floor about harassment and things beyond, like the code
41 of conduct that we're working on right now, but, moving forward,
42 as we think about training and what sort of needs we want to
43 address, and what sort of coverage we want to address with
44 future training, I think it might be good, as Tom suggested, for
45 the EDs to have a discussion, which is what's our philosophy for
46 future training, and do we want to try to provide this to
47 everyone in our council process, or is it really a matter of
48 council members and staff, or is it council members, staff, and

1 advisory body chairs, or is it more than that, and, from there,
2 we'll have, I think, a better count of the type of, or the
3 number of, folks that we think need training and what sort of
4 resources might be needed for that.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Merrick. I am not seeing any
7 other hands up. Stephanie, thank then, and, if there's no other
8 questions, then we'll move on to the last portion of our agenda,
9 and that is the public comment. The latest report I have is
10 that we have just three people here, and one person online, and
11 so four total, that want to comment. Bernie, I don't know if
12 you all are ready for that, or you need a minute or two to
13 prepare. While you do all of that, I do have to read in a
14 statement, and so I'll do that, and then we'll see where we are.

15
16 This is the CCC chair statement for public comment. Good
17 afternoon, everyone. Public input is a vital part of the
18 Council Coordination Committee process, and we will welcome
19 public comment from in-person and virtual attendees.

20
21 Anyone joining us virtually that wishes to provide public
22 comment should have already registered online. Virtual
23 participants that are registered to comment should ensure that
24 they are registered for the webinar under the same name they
25 used to register to provide comment. In-person attendees
26 wishing to speak during public comment should sign-in at the
27 registration kiosk located in the back of the meeting room. We
28 accept only one registration per person. Each speaker may be
29 limited to three minutes, based on the total number of public
30 comment registrants and based on the discretion of the chair.

31
32 If you have a cellphone or similar device, we ask that you keep
33 them on silent or vibrating mode during the meeting. Please
34 note that public comment may end before the published agenda
35 item if all registered in-person and virtual participants have
36 completed providing their comments. We're ready to go, Jessica?
37 Thank you. Okay, and so, looking at the list here, the first
38 person is Heather Mann. Heather, please unmute, if you can hear
39 us.

40
41 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

42
43 **MS. HEATHER MANN:** Thanks so much, Mr. Chair and council
44 leadership. My name is Heather Mann, and I work with the
45 Midwater Trawlers Cooperative, and I am based in Oregon. MTC
46 represents thirty-two commercial fishing vessels, and we're
47 homeported from Brookings, Oregon all the way up to Kodiak,
48 Alaska, and we prosecute fisheries off the west coast as well as

1 in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska.

2
3 I am also the leader of the Protect U.S. Fishermen Organization,
4 and it's an informal coalition of more than twenty-five fishing-
5 related organizations on the west coast, and we're hoping to
6 expand to include our east coast and Gulf colleagues, who may
7 also have concerns about offshore wind energy.

8
9 Our coalition includes harvesters, processors, marine
10 scientists, environmentalists, tribes, and the general public,
11 and I was in D.C. a few weeks ago, and I brought two fishermen
12 with me, and we discussed our concerns with the offshore wind
13 process with several people. We met with Ms. Coit, legislators
14 from both houses, both sides of the aisle, both coasts even, and
15 we met with committee staff, and we had our third meeting with
16 the senior White House advisors on climate and clean energy.

17
18 This followed a forty-five-minute completely unsatisfying
19 meeting the previous week with the new Director of BOEM, Liz
20 Klein, and it was clear, at that time, that a presidential time
21 table and the desires of developers, multinational corporations,
22 are the driving force behind offshore wind, and the federal
23 government is handing out tens of billions of dollars in tax
24 credits, while simultaneously directly harming fishermen, small
25 businesses, coastal communities that are being forced, against
26 our will, to bear the environmental and economic costs of the
27 rapid industrialization of our ocean.

28
29 I am coming to you today because, without a major change in this
30 process, managing federal fisheries might become a moot point.
31 Current ocean users, food providers, harvesters of sustainable
32 seafood, which is the lowest carbon footprint protein out there,
33 we're at risk of extinction. It's not just marine mammals and
34 other endangered species.

35
36 A lot of you know me, or you know me from over the years, and
37 you know that I'm passionate, but I'm generally not overly
38 dramatic. In twenty-five-plus years of federal fisheries
39 management experience, I have never seen anything like what BOEM
40 is able to get away with, and it's done under the guise of
41 saving the planet.

42
43 You know, we're not opposed to offshore wind, but we are against
44 creating an environmental and economic disaster while we're
45 trying to address the climate crisis, and so we need the CCC to
46 consider sending a strong message to NMFS to be more aggressive
47 and more involved.

1 For example, why didn't NMFS request the \$62 million for survey
2 mitigation, versus \$14 million? NMFS scientists are the ones
3 who identified the thirty-one surveys that will be impacted by
4 offshore wind, and they were the ones that said we need \$2
5 million per year, per survey, to start mitigating those impacts
6 now, and we need the before and after data, and so we need NMFS
7 to also step up and be aggressive, but, most importantly, and
8 finally, we need BOEM to actually listen to the advice and
9 concerns voiced by NMFS and the regional councils.

10
11 You guys are the experts, and NMFS is the experts, and it's not
12 for BOEM to just say, oh we agree, or we disagree, or we changed
13 some wording. You know, our nation's fisheries are the best
14 managed in the world, and we need our leaders to stand up and do
15 everything we can to get BOEM to listen. At the end of the day,
16 BOEM has never rejected an offshore wind energy project, never,
17 regardless of the negative impacts to the environment, marine
18 mammals, birds, fishermen, biological diversity, and to coastal
19 economies, and so we really, really need something to be done.

20
21 If you haven't experienced any of this year, I would invite you
22 to read the final EIS from Ocean Wind 1, which was released
23 yesterday, and it's chilling. Their own document shows the
24 negative impacts that are going to happen, and they're just
25 pushing forward, and so I'm happy to answer questions, and not
26 take up any more of your time, and I'm happy to work with the
27 CCC and anybody who wants to send a stronger message, and
28 there's a whole army of people standing by to help. Thanks so
29 much for the time.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Ms. Mann. Not seeing any
32 questions, we'll move on to the next, and I believe it is in-
33 person, and that is Lee Starling.

34
35 **MR. LEE STARLING:** Thank you. My name is Lee Starling, and I'm
36 a commercial fisherman. I've been fishing in Key West for
37 forty-five years. You stand in the room of doom, and nothing
38 good has ever come out of this room, and thirty-two years ago
39 and the marine sanctuary -- Billy Causey walked in here and told
40 us what was going to happen. He used a word called
41 "exponential". I had to go home and look it up. It means ever-
42 expanding. It never stops.

43
44 You guys always come to us and you say we have the final
45 solution, and this is going to fix the problem, and what it does
46 is it creates more problems. The IFQ program is a perfect
47 example of that. Five years ago, I quit using IFQs. Why?
48 Because my fish markets went and bought IFQ fish, because you

1 made it too complicated, the whole system.

2
3 Also, we did not get to have input on whether or not we were
4 going to be part of that system and have VMS on our boat. We
5 had a storm coming before that meeting, and so they cancelled
6 that meeting, and, when they came back, they told us that you're
7 getting a VMS, whether you like it or not, and that's not fair.
8 We're not the longline industry, and we're not going out and
9 getting 20,000 pounds of fish.

10
11 Other things too, and I look around this room, and I see people
12 that I have seen for years, and I see people back here that I
13 thought were retired, and they have the same toolchest, and that
14 toolchest has got one tool in it, a hammer, and they don't have
15 a nail puller. They don't have any tools to go in and say, you
16 know what, we made a mistake, and let's try and rectify this.
17 Let's try and make common sense out of it.

18
19 Who would have ever thought that killing gag grouper while they
20 were spawning was a good idea, but, no, you guys had it in a
21 logarithm, and you had a little mathematical formula, and they
22 said let's go make these guys up in Madeira Beach rich, and what
23 happened? Down here in Monroe County -- Whenever you see the
24 rules for Monroe County, there's an asterisk beside it, and the
25 asterisk means whichever rules are more prohibitive.

26
27 That means that whatever rules are more prohibitive, we get it.
28 We get it, and I don't really feel like that my Gulf reef fish
29 permit has that much value, because my rules are different than
30 the rules of some guy that is twenty miles up. When you cross
31 the county line, all of a sudden, now you can shoot all the
32 hogfish you want that are fourteen inches, but, no, down here, I
33 only get twenty-five pounds.

34
35 You know there was only seven harvesters of hogfish that were --
36 That you guys even looked at, because everybody else's landings
37 were so low, and I was one of those seven people, and that was
38 discriminatory against me. Seven people aren't going to make a
39 big difference in the overall poundage. They're not. The rules
40 should have stayed the same, fourteen inches to the fork, which
41 is exactly what a seafood market wants. A seafood market wants
42 a fourteen-inch fish, because of portion control.

43
44 When they fillet that fish, they get a seven-ounce fillet off of
45 it, and that's what they want to put on a plate, and so I want
46 my demarcation line moved back to the northwest channel, as it
47 should be, and not twenty miles up in the Gulf, where I don't
48 know what the hell the bottom is like up there. I don't.

1
2 I am sixty-five years old, and I'm too damn old to go up twenty
3 miles and start looking for bottom. Okay. I am going to stick
4 to my notes, because I kind of tend to get -- Sometimes I say
5 what's on my mind, and it ain't exactly polite, but it's the
6 same people, a lot of times, with the same bad ideas, and you
7 never replace them, and no one is ever accountable for them.

8
9 Whose idea was it to move the demarcation line? I know who that
10 person is, and he's sitting right behind me, but he is
11 accountable? He goes, no, I'm not accountable. When I
12 suggested it to this organization, and this organization ran
13 with it, and this organization said so, and everybody points the
14 finger at each other and says, oh, they made that rule, but you
15 lobbied for it, and you legislated it, and so I ended up getting
16 it, but no one come back and says, oh, you know what, you
17 screwed up.

18
19 The asterisk is ridiculous. Come on. I've Gulf rules, and I've
20 got sanctuary rules, and I've got Southeast Atlantic rules, and
21 it's too much. I am the only person in this damn room that --
22 Why? Because I'm one of the only fisherman, but I look around
23 here, and I see huge levels of bureaucracy, and I am not
24 offended by that. Everybody has a place in society of their
25 job, and I accept that, but you don't fish. You're not out
26 there, you know. You're not out there, and you're allowing
27 things to happen, like power chumming, that is creating a huge
28 disproportionate balance in catch, harvest, and what's
29 happening.

30
31 You know, we've got a huge chub problem here. We've got a huge
32 shark problem here, that we never had before, because of
33 techniques that are being used to fish. Okay. I will wrap this
34 up.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Yes, Mr. Starling. Please, if you don't
37 mind wrapping it up here pretty quick.

38
39 **MR. STARLING:** Yes, sir. I'm trying to do that right now. You
40 guys need to step back a little bit, and you need to reassess
41 some of these programs and say why did they fail, and why are
42 you taking 80 percent of gag grouper away? Why? Because you
43 killed fish -- You allowed them to kill fish while they were
44 spawning, and we need to go back to commonsense rules.

45
46 You know, over the past years, I've had a lot of social
47 biologists -- They come and they talk to you, and they say,
48 well, what's going on, and you know they talk about crew

1 recruitment and things like that and stuff, and, you know, this
2 morning, you guys were talking about equity and diversity and
3 stuff like that, and, quite frankly, nobody wants to be a damn
4 fisherman anymore. It seems attractive, but it's not. The job
5 sucks, most of the time.

6
7 You know, yes, there's 10 percent of the time when I'm really
8 happy, but there's 90 percent of the time that it can be a
9 struggle, and part of the big problem is that, as a commercial
10 fisherman, with that damn VMS, which I take offense to, and the
11 new one that I just bought cost me \$3,000, and I will get a
12 reimbursement on part of it, but you guys keep putting -- The
13 Southeast Atlantic keeps putting so many charter boat licenses
14 out there that I can't compete against them. I've got a charter
15 boat guy, and he comes out here three times a day.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Starling, we'll need to let you wrap it up
18 here pretty quick. There are others that need to testify as
19 well.

20
21 **MR. STARLING:** You need to stop, and you need to look at how
22 much effort you're creating by continuing to hand out charter
23 boat licenses. You need to control them. You did that in the
24 Gulf, but you haven't don't it in the South Atlantic, and if you
25 don't think that these guys without VMS aren't fishing the other
26 side too, you're wrong. It's almost physically impossible to
27 moderate law enforcement, and it's like the mutton snapper
28 spawn.

29
30 You know, you said Riley's was the solution, and you took
31 Riley's, okay, and then you said we're going to reduce the
32 amount of catch you have, and we're going to reduce fish, but,
33 at the same time, you increased the --

34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Starling, we need to continue to move on
36 with the public session.

37
38 **MR. STARLING:** Thank you. You all take care. I didn't even
39 cuss this time.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Up next is Marianne Cufone.

42
43 **MS. MARIANNE CUFONE:** My name is Marianne Cufone, and I am here
44 on behalf of Recirculating Farms, and we're a national non-
45 profit organization that promotes equity in local food systems,
46 and I'm also here to talk about one of our projects, the Don't
47 Cage our Oceans Coalition. It's a group of businesses and
48 organizations that are working collaboratively to stop offshore

1 finfish aquaculture.

2
3 I hail from Marathon these days, and so, since you all were
4 close to my backyard, I wanted to stop by and just raise some
5 concerns about offshore finfish aquaculture. I know there are
6 various councils and National Marine Fisheries Service that are
7 still allocating resources to offshore finfish aquaculture, and
8 it concerns me and a lot of the people that we work with.

9
10 We just recently got back a summary of the aquaculture
11 opportunity areas, and 80 percent of the comments that were
12 submitted were negative, and, also, NMFS recently hired a
13 sociologist to go out and go to the different regions to collect
14 comments and thoughts on offshore aquaculture, with respect to
15 the aquaculture opportunity areas, and so I really -- I just
16 wanted to mention that there are a lot of people that are very
17 concerned about this, and there have been actual areas that have
18 been designated throughout the Gulf region, off of Florida, off
19 of Louisiana, off of Texas, and we think offshore finfish
20 aquaculture is unnecessary, large unwanted, except by those who
21 are interested in the industry, and legally problematic.

22
23 I just wanted to remind all of you that the 5th Circuit Court of
24 Appeals said the National Marine Fisheries Service doesn't have
25 jurisdiction, under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, to permit offshore
26 finfish aquaculture, and I'm just here today to ask the
27 different councils if perhaps you would consider a joint
28 statement on your position on offshore finfish aquaculture.
29 Different councils have done different things, and it would be
30 nice to have some kind of coordinated position, and so thanks
31 very much.

32
33 I also just wanted to say, before I leave, that I was
34 disappointed to see a number of people leave before public
35 comment, especially National Marine Fisheries Service, and so
36 thanks very much.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Ms. Cufone. Up next will be Bob
39 Zales.

40
41 **MR. BOB ZALES, II:** Bob Zales, II, here representing -- I'm
42 President of the National Association of Charter Boat Operators,
43 and I'm also the Fishery Management Consultant for the Southern
44 Offshore Fishing Association, which is the Gulf grouper
45 commercial fishery, and I'm President of our local association,
46 the Panama City Boatmen.

47
48 Several people at this table have known me for a long time. For

1 those that don't, my family has been in the charter and
2 commercial fishing business in Panama City since 1965. I am
3 still operating today, and I just ran a trip on Sunday.

4
5 The issues that I have, most of you all have heard already, and
6 one of them I will talk about marine mammal predation and shark
7 predation. We have been complaining about this problem, in the
8 Gulf and other places throughout this country, for quite a
9 while, and the problem is still there. It hasn't been addressed
10 properly, and we're still having issues with sharks eating fish
11 that we have after we take customers fishing.

12
13 When you spend \$3,000 to go fishing on a boat and the sharks get
14 out there, and they'll take a hundred pounds of your fish, and
15 the dolphins will get out there, and they will take another
16 hundred pounds of your fish, and customers are not going to
17 continue to come back to fish.

18
19 The trip that I had on Sunday, I had nine ladies on the boat,
20 and one of them said that we would like to see some dolphins,
21 and I said, that ain't going to be a problem, and I said you're
22 going to get to legally feed them, because we're going to be out
23 there Spanish mackerel fishing, and that's what they do. I had
24 one dolphin follow me through the entire bay of St. Andrew Bay
25 in Panama City, eating ladyfish, blue runners, and Spanish
26 mackerel. You can't get away from them, and it's a problem that
27 is not just located where we are.

28
29 Marine mammals all over the country have this problem, and it
30 needs to be addressed, because it's a safety issue, not only for
31 the animals, but for the people fishing. They jerk rods out of
32 people's hands, and they scare kids when they're out there,
33 because you've got a kid bringing a fish up over the rail, and
34 the dolphin jumps up right there in front of them, and they've
35 got a problem with that.

36
37 Another problem we've got in the Gulf, and I know Ms. Coit
38 understand this too well, is the balance on the councils, and
39 you can address that problem in the Gulf in the next couple of
40 weeks, when you make appointments. We have two commercial
41 representatives, one in Alabama and one in Florida, that are
42 currently up to be appointed, and we need to address that
43 problem. The Gulf Council has one commercial person sitting
44 there, this man right there, and he's all by himself, and it's
45 clearly out of balance and affecting what we do.

46
47 Another issue is disaster funding, and the recent Hurricane Ian
48 funding, and part the problem was with the State of Florida and

1 how they tried to submit the information to get the approval,
2 and things were kind of messed up there, but the big problem
3 remains with the Fisheries Service.

4
5 Over the years that we have dealing with disasters, whether
6 they're manmade or natural, whatever it is, and they're going to
7 continue to come. Hurricanes are going to be coming every year,
8 and manmade disasters are going to happen every year.

9
10 Hurricane Michael hit Panama City, Florida in October of 2018,
11 and I got disaster funding last summer, three-and-a-half years
12 later, and I actually got another check last week. For some
13 reason or another, they held back 23 percent of my total money,
14 which I assume they did for everybody else. Why, I'm still
15 trying to figure out why, but the problem here is, three-and-a-
16 half years later, I was still in business, and I didn't need the
17 funding.

18
19 It was nice, because I used it for a vacation, but, when you
20 have a disaster, like people down here in the Keys, with their
21 lobster traps, stone crab traps, and up in southwest Florida,
22 these people have no money. They're not getting paid for
23 anything, and we're now, since September, when this storm hit,
24 and there's nothing helping these people.

25
26 A lot of those people will leave, and the commercial fishery,
27 the charter fishery, the private recreational fisheries are very
28 important to this country. Working waterfronts are the mainstay
29 of this country. When this country was founded, they were
30 founded by working waterfronts. When people came here, they
31 landed on the coast. We're losing working waterfront in the
32 Fort Myers and southwest Florida area.

33
34 We need disaster help. The disaster program, the way it's done,
35 has got to be fixed. The Department of Agriculture has a pretty
36 good system for their farmers, and maybe you all can mirror
37 that, but something needs to be done, so that money can get in
38 the hands of people that need it, and so, other than that --
39 That will my rant for the day.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain Zales.

42
43 **MR. ZALES:** Thank you.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Well, I'm not seeing anyone on our
46 list for public comment, and so that will bring us to the close
47 of our agenda today. We will pick up again -- Well, I guess I
48 should remind everyone about the social tonight here at the

1 hotel, and it's out here behind the pool, near the beach, and
2 that will be from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. We'll kick-off tomorrow
3 morning at 9:00 a.m. with the America the Beautiful Initiative,
4 and so I will see everyone in the morning.

5
6 **DR. SIMMONS:** We switched it, and that's in the afternoon now.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I'm sorry. We did switch that. We will kick-
9 off with the Communications Subcommittee Report. Thank you for
10 that.

11
12 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on May 23, 2023.)

13
14 - - -

15
16 May 24, 2023

17
18 WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

19
20 - - -

21
22 The Council Coordination Committee reconvened at the Marriott
23 Beachside Hotel in Key West, Florida on Wednesday morning, May
24 24, 2023, and was called to order by Gulf of Mexico Fishery
25 Management Council Chairman Greg Stunz.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Good morning, everyone. We'll go ahead and get
28 started. A few things and, first, welcome back. If you weren't
29 here yesterday, or maybe you were online and not following
30 along, we're changing up things just slightly with the agenda,
31 to accommodate some travel schedules and things, and so we're
32 going to start this morning with the Communications Subcommittee
33 Report, and the original America the Beautiful Initiative was
34 scheduled for that time, and we're going to move that to shortly
35 after lunch, where the communication sections was.

36
37 Otherwise, we'll kind of stick to the agenda. I am just looking
38 around the room, to see if there's any comments or anything
39 before we get going, and I'm not seeing anything, and so, with
40 that, Emily, if you're ready with the Communications
41 Subcommittee, we'll pull that up, and that's going to be on Tab
42 15, and whenever you're ready, Emily.

43
44 **COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

45
46 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Good morning, everybody. I like this
47 timeslot. I feel like everybody is awake and caffeinated.
48 Today, I'm going to present to you sort of a brief summary, as

1 brief as I could make it from a bunch of communications folks,
2 of a subgroup meeting we had of the communications folks in all
3 the councils, and this was held February 15 through 17 of this
4 year in Clearwater, Florida.

5
6 Just to sort of jog your memory, this body, the CCC, tasked us,
7 in October of 2022, with going over sort of four things during
8 this meeting: looking at different communication tools,
9 technologies, and approaches that each of the councils look at
10 and sort of contrasting those things; engaging the public on
11 complex management actions; our advisory panel engagement and
12 recruitment processes; and communicating successes and
13 challenges of the councils and the CCC itself.

14
15 What I will do is just sort of quickly walk you through what we
16 talked about, sort of technically, and give you some of the
17 highlights, but one of the things that I wanted to stop and just
18 acknowledge first was that we all wanted to express incredible
19 gratitude for you guys letting us have this opportunity to meet.

20
21 I think, as the communications folks for the councils, you know,
22 we are often put in front of the public, which is not always a
23 rosy situation, and we are not always received incredibly well,
24 and our roles sort of seem insular every once in a while, right,
25 and it was just so nice, on almost like an emotional level, to
26 be able to meet with the different people who are responsible
27 for that, across the country, and have comrades that deal with
28 the some challenges that we do, and so, beyond sort of the
29 things that I am going to go over, the more technical things
30 that we got into and the learning, I just wanted to let you know
31 that there was this amazing emotional camaraderie and connection
32 that really filled everybody's buckets, and we were all very,
33 very appreciative of the opportunity to meet. So that's the
34 warm, fuzzy part, and that's partially why we're communications
35 people, I think.

36
37 I'm going to start with, you know, we sort of broke it down into
38 a number of different things, and I will start with public
39 comment, and one of the things that we did ahead of the meeting
40 was we all filled out a pretty long survey about how each
41 council does certain things, and so what we learned here was
42 that all of the councils do allow in-person and virtual public
43 comment during council meetings, AP meetings, SSC meetings, and
44 public hearings.

45
46 Now, there is a star there, and that is because the Pacific
47 Council specifically I don't think allows public testimony at
48 SSC meeting, and that was sort of a change. That might be --

1 Okay. It looks like I'm getting a no, and so maybe that is not
2 communicated properly, but it sounds like we all have kind of
3 adapted to this COVID world, to allow hybrid public comment to
4 happen at all levels of our council process, and I think that's
5 pretty neat.

6
7 All of the councils also do add the written comments to council
8 briefing materials, but what we realized is that it wasn't
9 ubiquitous across all councils that a staff member orally
10 presents a summary of comments before final action is taken.
11 That's one thing I know that the Gulf Council does, and we make
12 sure that what we do there is put the comment summary on the
13 record, so that the fishermen that are listening, or the
14 stakeholders that are listening, understand and actually see
15 that moment when the council is considering the comments that
16 were given to them.

17
18 Next, we spoke about social media, and this one was a little bit
19 more controversial, I think, and not all of the councils shared
20 the same perspectives, or the same approaches, and so one of the
21 things that we did, and you'll see this chart will show you the
22 social media platforms that each one of the councils, or that
23 all the councils, engage in, and Facebook and YouTube were the
24 two most popular social media platforms that were used.

25
26 We did sort of determine, as a group, that Facebook reaches
27 council audiences most effectively, and it does that for two
28 reasons. First, the user demographics of Facebook align with
29 the typical demographics of council audiences, and, cough,
30 cough, and it's typically an older audience that's on Facebook,
31 sort of an older adult productive audience, and things like
32 Instagram, and some of the other platforms, have much younger
33 audiences than Facebook, and it just seems to reach our
34 demographic the best.

35
36 The Facebook app also allows content managers to add weblinks to
37 posts, and that's really important. There's also no character
38 limits, and, if you guys know anything about the council
39 process, it's complicated, and it's hard to summarize the
40 council actions in a tweet, and so being able to add a link and
41 being able to sort of take some liberties with the length of
42 your post really also bolsters why Facebook is the appropriate
43 platform, if you were to choose just one.

44
45 Instagram, which is sort of the sister app to Facebook, doesn't
46 allow for direct links in the posts, and it doesn't effectively
47 drive users to council content, but it's pretty, and it a way to
48 get awareness out there.

1
2 The main discussion that we had here is, if done properly, and
3 that's really important to sort of focus on, and, if done
4 properly, social media can be an effective mechanism for
5 spreading awareness about the council or sharing council news,
6 and I have, in parentheses here, "controlling the narrative".
7 The conversation around this point specifically was there are
8 people on social media that are spreading news about the
9 council.

10
11 Now, the question is whether or not you want it to be you, if
12 you want that news to be coming straight from the horse's mouth,
13 or you want to be allowing different media outlets, maybe
14 individual stakeholders or advocacy groups, to be spreading the
15 message in your place, and so we did talk about that quite a
16 lot. Then, also, social media is an opportunity to encourage
17 participation in the council process.

18
19 Now, I say "if done properly", and I say that with meaning,
20 because you can use social media poorly, and we kind of talked
21 about some of the different councils and their approaches and
22 what's been successful and what hasn't. The Western Pacific
23 actually -- It sounds like they started with a social media
24 contractor that kind of helped them figure out how and where to
25 engage in social media, and now they use a social media
26 scheduling program, and so it's not something that you have to
27 think about on a daily basis, and they can sort of launch things
28 as they come.

29
30 The Caribbean Council estimated that it takes about twenty-five
31 hours a week as a time commitment from a staff member in order
32 to properly run your social media pages. The South Atlantic
33 Council does provide content on their social media pages, but
34 they don't engage in back-and-forth conversations, and so they
35 sort of don't respond to the comments that come out of those
36 forward-facing announcements, and then, us, the Gulf Council, we
37 actually use social media as a primary communication platform.
38 We put a lot of effort and thought into our social media
39 platform, and it is one of our continuously high rates of return
40 on our analytics.

41
42 We'll move on to websites, and, before I sort of get into what
43 we talked about, about the individual council websites, as you
44 will see on the agenda, Mary is going to come speak after I do
45 about the CCC website, and so this is just going to focus on the
46 council-specific ones.

47
48 We talked a lot about our websites and different challenges and

1 who manages the website through the staff, and how many people
2 have access, and we kind of had some conversations about that,
3 but sort of the two major points that we came out with for the
4 website was trying to figure out, first of all, the
5 appropriateness of linking to the NOAA institutional repository,
6 in addition to hosting final council amendments, and most of us,
7 on our website, host our final council amendments.

8
9 Currently, the North Pacific Council is the only council that is
10 linking to that NOAA institutional repository, and not all of
11 the councils sort of supported that approach, and so that was
12 sort of one of the sticking points in the conversation that we
13 had.

14
15 We also talked a lot about accessibility. You know, there is a
16 huge push for 508 compliance, and we discussed the idea that
17 there are these plug-ins that will do a couple of things. They
18 will audit your site, and they will tell you whether it's
19 accessible and tell you what you need to change and make it
20 accessible, but there's also these widgets that will actually
21 allow the user to modify the colors, the fonts, and the contrast
22 on the site, to make it more user-friendly for themselves.

23
24 We also discussed that PDFs should be allowing optical character
25 recognition that would allow text to be searchable and readable
26 by a screen reader. I know that this is really hard, for some
27 of us that have amendments that were like faxed and then scanned
28 and then little written on in hand, and that we still house in
29 that way, and we house our amendments way back in time, but
30 there are ways that we can make sure that that character
31 recognition makes it so that all of our website is searchable,
32 and, also, you can use a text reader, if you needed to access
33 the site.

34
35 Next, we moved on to meeting practices, and one of the things
36 that we found, pretty early on in this discussion, is that our
37 meeting formats and audiences vary. They vary a lot across
38 councils, and it makes it difficult for us to directly compare
39 how each one of them sets things up and how each one of us
40 structures the way things happen.

41
42 The one sort of major thing that we zeroed-in on here is I think
43 all of our councils are still using like a sign-up form in the
44 back of the room during our council meetings, and we ask the
45 audience to sign-in, but all of us sort of questioned whether
46 this is a legal requirement, and this is separate, by the way,
47 from the public comment sign-up, and if it's a legal
48 requirement, or there is a functional requirement for doing

1 this, for having that book in the back of the room and saying,
2 hey, if you're here, sign-up.

3
4 We couldn't figure out, as the communications folks, what we do
5 with those logs, or what those are kept for, and so we just sort
6 of left that open.

7
8 The next thing that some of us learned, and this was the first
9 time that I had heard about this, is that the Magnuson-Stevens
10 Act actually requires the councils to post the meeting notices
11 in places beyond the website, and beyond posting email
12 notification, and you will see this highlighted text that says -
13 - You know, it's basically talking about timely notice of the
14 meeting, and it says "except that email notification and website
15 postings alone are not sufficient", and this came as a huge
16 surprise to a number of us, because a lot of us have transferred
17 completely to the digital world, and we are solely hosting
18 meetings notices through online press releases, through email
19 campaigns, but we learned that some other councils,
20 understanding that this is a requirement of Magnuson, regularly
21 pay for placements in local newspapers, which was honestly kind
22 of a shock to me.

23
24 We had no idea, and so I would say that maybe two of all of the
25 councils are going this, and there might be a couple more than
26 that, but I just wanted to bring you guys' attention that,
27 because we've all transferred so headlong into this digital
28 world, and it looks like maybe Magnuson doesn't want us to do
29 that quite yet.

30
31 The next thing that we did is we spoke about engaging the public
32 in complex management, and so, clearly, council management
33 decisions are never that simple. You know, it takes us 300
34 pages to write a one-action document, and how do you relay that
35 to the average stakeholder?

36
37 What we sort of landed on is that the products produced by each
38 council to communicate during different stages of the management
39 process do vary greatly, and they vary because we have different
40 audiences. I would say that it sounds to me like, in the north,
41 in the east, and also the northwest, you guys have a very large
42 commercial audience, potentially more engaged, potentially, you
43 know, different ways of reaching them. Down in the Southeast,
44 we have an incredibly large recreational audience, and so that
45 makes the products that we produce totally different.

46
47 We also discussed hosting the federal regulations. In the
48 Southeast, both the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council

1 host the regulations using what's called the Fish Rules app, and
2 we've both kind of jumped in headlong, and we developed a
3 commercial app recently, in conjunction with one another, and we
4 host the recreational regulations as well, and now we are both
5 integrating what's called the ATI for Fish Rules, which is sort
6 of the framework of the website for Fish Rules, into our own
7 council website.

8
9 I will tell you that, both in the South Atlantic and the Gulf,
10 hosting federal regulations drives more traffic, and more
11 audience, to our website than anything else. They serve as a
12 complete primary mechanism for driving people to council staff.
13 However, doing this, hosting these federal regulations, requires
14 dedicated staff time, and it is a huge responsibility.

15
16 We do put disclaimers on our regulations and say that they are
17 just a summary, and you have to refer to the codified -- To the
18 CFR, in order to get the real regulations. However, it does --
19 You have to be accurate, if you're going to do it, and so this
20 is, again, just like using social media, but, if you think that
21 this is something you want to do, you have to really, really
22 think about it and be intentional about it.

23
24 The next thing that we did, when we were talking about engaging
25 the public in complex management, was a readability exercise,
26 and so there's this thing called the Flesch-Kincaid scale, and
27 it's actually built into Word. If you guys are interested in
28 looking at it, I can show you offline, and it is based on -- It
29 basically judges your readability score based on your sentence
30 structure, and so whether or not what you are writing is active
31 or passive.

32
33 You know, I think, as a lot of scientists, we're used to using
34 that passive voice, but, in sort of direct communications, that
35 active voice makes things more readable, more easily digestible,
36 and it also looks at the number of words per sentence and the
37 number of syllables that are in those sentences. Based on sort
38 of those two factors, it will spit out a grade level, and it
39 will tell you what reading level you are writing to, and so, as
40 a group, we sort of looked at this scale, and we tried to
41 rewrite the introductory paragraph on the Gulf Council webpage,
42 because I thought it would be sort of a fun exercise for us to
43 play with this.

44
45 We agreed that maybe a seventh-grade reading level would be an
46 appropriate place, you know, an appropriate level, to have on
47 your homepage of your website. I think, when we looked at it,
48 it was something like freshmen year of college age for what it

1 was, and we worked really hard. We probably took forty minutes
2 to do this, and we were just unable to make it happen. We
3 couldn't get it down to a seventh-grade reading level, and I
4 think we got it to somewhere midway in high school.

5
6 What this showed us was that complex fishery management topics
7 might not always be easy to simplify. You know, we try our
8 best, but it's really difficult to teach somebody a fishery's
9 thing without giving them this huge primer in advance, and so,
10 in order to sort of work around this problem, what we all came
11 to was the idea that creating simple materials that have links
12 to more complex materials, for more advanced and involved
13 audiences, might be the most appropriate way to do this, right,
14 and so you can do that seventh-grade level, but it's not going
15 to tell you that much, and so, if you decide to simplify your
16 outreach, you should have a second layer for those folks who are
17 more engaged and do a greater understanding of what the fishery
18 stuff is, in order to sort of appropriately communicate to all
19 levels of your audience.

20
21 Next, we talked about advisory panels. It turns out, and I know
22 you guys discussed this a little bit yesterday, but the majority
23 of our councils do have orientation materials already prepared
24 for their advisory panels.

25
26 Half of the councils require members to undergo fisheries
27 background checks, and so I thought that was interesting, just
28 to make sure that those members do not have fisheries violations
29 before they serve, and we discussed a lot of challenges with
30 recruiting, challenges with meeting attendance and engagement at
31 those meetings.

32
33 We learned that some councils provide daily stipends to their
34 advisory panels, but this is not a very common practice across
35 the councils, and we learned that -- I believe, again, the
36 Pacific Council allows alternate members, and so, if you are an
37 advisory panel member and you can't make it, I think, once or
38 twice in a term, you are allowed to elect somebody to sit to
39 fill that chair, if you're not able to be there.

40
41 There are virtual options from all councils now, and they
42 bolster attendance, but not necessarily engagement, and so more
43 people will show up, but whether or not they're, you know,
44 folding their laundry and actually participating in the AP is,
45 you know, sort of left as a question. Then we also heard that
46 some of the councils do invite the AP chairs to report-out
47 directly to the council during the council meeting.

48

1 Talking about communicating successes and challenges, the first
2 thing is the idea of communicating successes kind of raised some
3 red flags with this group, and it was because we wanted to make
4 sure that we weren't going to alienate audiences. In other
5 words, the council decision is often a success for one group but
6 not to another, and so, you know, we talked about the idea that
7 most council communications, or all council communications, are
8 supposed to focus on the unified voice, and so whatever the
9 council votes is what is then communicated, but the idea of
10 calling them successes sort of made us a little bit nervous,
11 because they're not always seen as successes by our entire
12 audience.

13
14 What we did decide was that individual councils should focus on
15 highlighting opportunities for public engagement, the
16 transparency in the council process, engagement in the
17 management process itself, and some of those ancillary, or
18 innovative, efforts that our council, and council staff, works
19 on, and, you know, I think we presented yesterday on that coral
20 grant, and so talking about some of the good things that we get
21 to do besides just take away fishing rights, and those were
22 things that sort of help engage people in the council process.

23
24 We had a couple of action items here. The first thing we
25 decided is that each council -- These are related to the CCC
26 specifically, because not only did we talk about the individual
27 council successes and challenges, but you guys, as a body, also
28 have successes and challenges, and so, when we discussed the
29 CCC, we thought that it would be appropriate for each council to
30 highlight the fishery council website, by sharing it and their
31 resources, to their own individual council communication
32 network, and so just find a way to drive your own council
33 audience to the fishery council website, because I think that's
34 sort of the next step, right, is you look at your own region,
35 and then you start looking at a national level, and then maybe
36 you get higher, at the D.C. level, but we all supported kind of
37 driving our own council audiences to the CCC stuff.

38
39 We also decided that the host council would develop the press
40 release, with help from other communication counterparts,
41 announcing America the Beautiful, and I think we're going to
42 touch on that this afternoon.

43
44 We realize that, since we're hosting this year, that we are on-
45 deck to do that, and I've already got some help from this group,
46 and then the next thing was we talked about, each year, the host
47 council should be taking the lead on developing those press
48 releases that highlight the CCC positions in the future, and

1 then they should be shared across the individual council
2 communication networks.

3
4 For example, I will highlight the America the Beautiful 30 by
5 30, with help from others, but the understanding is that all of
6 the councils will then share that release to your individual
7 council audiences.

8
9 That conversation sort of led us to talk about these CCC hosting
10 responsibilities, and it turns out that, when you only have to
11 do this every eight years, you kind of scramble, and you're kind
12 of like what we did do eight years ago, and do we have any staff
13 that was still here eight years ago when we did it the last
14 time, and who was the last host, and what did they do, and so
15 what we decided is that we would like to work on developing a
16 guidance document for the host council.

17
18 This document is not going to be prescriptive, and we don't
19 intend it to be like a you must, you must, you must, but it's
20 just sort of a helpful calendar of events, like, hey, in
21 January, maybe you should start thinking about pulling together
22 the agenda for May, and maybe you should have briefing materials
23 by this time, and then also creating a central repository where
24 we're going to have things like the logos, the name tags, just
25 some of those resources that the host council could work on.

26
27 A small subgroup of us, Maria from the North Pacific, Sandra
28 from the Pacific, and myself, have already worked on mocking-up
29 a very quick version of this, and we've created a folder, so
30 that we can kind of dump things in that, that we separate by
31 year and by issue, and my next step, if you guys support this,
32 would be to take this and bring in the AOs, because my
33 understanding is that the Administrative Officers from all the
34 councils had discussed doing this at some point, and I think it
35 would be appropriate to make sure that we pull in travel folks,
36 and all those folks, so that we can kind of have this shared
37 resource, where we can make it so that, every eight years, when
38 you are the host, you're not like just trying to pick up the
39 pieces, that you just have this delivered here's how we can
40 help.

41
42 Then, finally, the subcommittee had such a great time, and we
43 learned so much from one another, that we did want to request
44 that we meet next year, and it turns out that we have a big
45 anniversary coming up. In 2026, which seems like it's a long
46 time away, but it's not, we are celebrating the fiftieth
47 anniversary of the councils, and, presumably, we might want to
48 undertake some sort of effort to celebrate that. That's fifty

1 years, and that's a pretty big milestone.
2
3 We would like to meet again and sort of talk about what we're
4 going to do for that, and we would also like to consider
5 engaging in some sort of professional development as a group,
6 understanding, you know, like I started, we are very insular,
7 and what we do is very unique, and there are all sorts of really
8 neat training opportunities, like the Alan Alda Communicating
9 Science Program, and we would really love the opportunity to get
10 together as the council communicators and engage in a training
11 like that.
12
13 Before I hand it over to Mary, that's the end of my
14 presentation, and I would be happy to, you know, engage in any
15 sort of discussion or answer any questions that you guys have.
16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Emily. Do you all have any
18 questions for our communications teams, for Emily? All right.
19 Well, thank you, Emily, and I am not seeing anything. Carrie.
20
21 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to tell
22 everyone that I participated in this meeting, and I'm really
23 proud of all our staff across the nation that participated in
24 this. Everybody came, and were very engaged, and, even though
25 I've been in deputy meetings, and executive director meetings,
26 where we've exchanged ideas, sitting in there, I still learned
27 some new things from other councils, and so thank you very much.
28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Carrie. David.
30
31 **MR. WITHERELL:** I was just going to echo what Carrie said. I
32 thought the outcomes of this meeting were excellent, and I
33 support them meeting again, either next year or the year after,
34 to begin planning for our fiftieth anniversary.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, David. I am not seeing any more
37 comments. Well then, up next -- John.
38
39 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** I just wanted to echo -- I heard great feedback
40 from our folks on that meeting, and it looks like it was really
41 a good use of time, and I too would support future meetings of
42 the group.
43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Miguel.
45
46 **MR. ROLON:** Emily, do you need approval of the CCC for the idea
47 of having a guidance for the host councils? I am personally
48 interested, because I am hosting next year, and so, if you have

1 that before that time, we would really appreciate it.

2
3 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I would say that that's up you guys. I have to
4 be honest with you that I'm not super familiar with how much I
5 need to wait for your direction in order to do those things, and
6 we've already sort of put something together, but certainly, if
7 you want to like formally support that effort, you know, by all
8 means, and don't hold back.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom.

11
12 **MR. NIES:** Related to Miguel's question, are you seeking
13 approval of a meeting next year? I am just trying to remember
14 how many CCC workgroups are meeting next year. I know we have
15 SCS planned, and I think we've got the Habitat Workgroup
16 planned, don't we, or is that later this year? I'm just trying
17 to keep track here. Does anybody recall? I don't remember what
18 all we've got planned for next year, and not that I am going to
19 be at any of them.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, yes, the Habitat I think is planned, is
22 what I'm hearing, and I think maybe what we could do is
23 brainstorm a little bit and get back maybe when we have a little
24 bit of time, to sort of see what is on the --

25
26 **MR. NIES:** But we should probably give them an answer during the
27 workgroup discussion tomorrow.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes.

30
31 **MR. NIES:** Thanks.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I am not seeing any other hands up, and so,
34 Mary, if you want to talk about the webpage, whenever you're
35 ready, and it looks like your presentation is good to go.

36
37 **UPDATE TO THE REGIONAL COUNCILS' WEBSITE**

38
39 **MS. MARY SABO:** Thank you. Emily did a great job covering the
40 outcomes from our meeting, and I'm going to sort of elaborate on
41 some of the website-related next steps that came out of that
42 meeting.

43
44 Our group kind of came up with a few -- We did sort of an
45 overall review of the website and identified a few things that
46 we could do to make it a little bit easier to use, and also kind
47 of create new functionality for the site, and so some of those
48 things included just basic reviewing the text, streamlining it,

1 making it a little more plain language, adding photos where we
2 can, and we've gotten really good feedback about the joint
3 council meeting calendar that we rolled out last year, and so
4 the group felt that it would be helpful to add that to the
5 homepage, so that people can access it more easily.

6
7 The group agreed on a few changes to the navigation that would
8 reduce redundancy across pages and make it easier for people to
9 find what they're looking for. One of those that you all will
10 probably be interested in is adding a more clear CCC tab on the
11 main navigation, with subpages for your meetings, letters, CMOD,
12 SC, and then other subcommittees and workgroups. Then one kind
13 of new feature that the group thought would be useful is adding
14 a tab to the main navigation for issues, and so those would be
15 sort of topic-based pages that would highlight different issues,
16 or work products, that the subcommittees and working groups are
17 working on.

18
19 Then, finally, the group agreed that the resources tab doesn't
20 really -- It's not the best fit for the site, because the items
21 underneath it would belong better elsewhere, and so I'm going to
22 kind of run through a few changes that we have made, and then
23 also present some proposed pages for the CCC to review and
24 discuss.

25
26 Before launching into any changes, a subgroup of us, which
27 included Emily and then Nick, at the South Atlantic Council, did
28 a short discovery exercise, where we asked a few council
29 staffers, non-comms people, and then executive directors to
30 complete a few tasks, find things on the website, and tell us
31 how many clicks it took to find them. The idea was kind of to
32 get a baseline, so we could compare before and after, and so, I
33 guess, either fortunately or unfortunately, most people were
34 able to find things pretty easily on the current site, before we
35 made any changes, but we did get some good feedback on things
36 that were confusing or difficult to find.

37
38 One thing that was eye-opening for us is that the search bar on
39 the site was pretty non-functional. Unless you put in the exact
40 name of a document or search term, it would often come up with
41 zero results. Some people had difficulty finding CCC letters,
42 and, also, the council meeting calendar is kind of not obvious,
43 if you don't know that it's there, and difficulty finding old
44 CCC meetings, and then we found that some of the FMP links on
45 council webpages were broken.

46
47 I am going to just run through a few pages, which have already
48 been revised, and some of them might look -- Some of them were

1 just rolled out yesterday, and so pages might look a little bit
2 different today, but not -- I tried to make sure that everything
3 would be easily findable still, so it wouldn't be disruptive
4 during the meeting.

5
6 On the homepage, we streamlined the text a lot, and we had two
7 kind of pretty heavy paragraphs, previously, and we cut it down
8 to just a couple of sentences, and then we added the council
9 meeting calendar to the bottom of the page, and so what you're
10 looking at now is kind of the top-half of the page, and, if you
11 scroll down, you'll see the calendar.

12
13 We also revised the footer and added a new fully functional
14 search bar, and so this one is a Google programable search tool,
15 which works pretty much like Google, because we found out,
16 during our discovery exercise, that a lot of people are going to
17 Google to search for stuff on this site, if they don't know
18 where to find it, and we also cut down, or eliminated, most of
19 the -- We had long lists of links in the footer, and so we took
20 those out, so the page is just a little bit cleaner.

21
22 We also created a new about the council page, and so you'll find
23 this on the councils' tab on the website, and this just kind of
24 includes a lot of the content that's in that two-page overview
25 that we created a couple of years ago, and it's kind of a broad
26 overview of what the councils are, and I kind of thought about
27 it as though -- You know, if somebody searched for "regional
28 fishery management councils", this might be something that comes
29 up in the top search results. Lower down on the page, and it's
30 not shown in this screenshot here, we also have links to all the
31 council publications and *The Managing our Nation's Fisheries*
32 conference materials.

33
34 There are no major changes to the existing content of the
35 individual council pages, but we did add a new section for
36 upcoming meetings on those pages, and so that pulls the meetings
37 from the joint council calendar for that specific calendar, and
38 so it shouldn't be any additional workload for staff to maintain
39 this, and it should just automatically populate with anything
40 that's added to the joint calendar, but it allows someone to see
41 just that council's meetings on that page, and we also checked
42 all the FMP links and made sure they were all working correctly.

43
44 This is a new CCC landing page, and you will find it under the
45 Council Coordination Committee tab, and I think it's currently
46 labeled "About the CCC", and this is kind of the landing page
47 for everything CCC related, and it has links to meetings,
48 comment letters, CMOD, SCS, subcommittees and working groups,

1 terms of reference, meeting history, and then we added this
2 nifty little table, which has been handy a few times at the
3 meeting already, because, several times, people have said, oh,
4 when does so-and-so host, and so it gives you kind of an eight-
5 year outlook on meeting host duties.

6
7 This is a new page that will house a list of the current
8 subcommittees and working groups, and so these are just little
9 accordion tabs that contain short descriptions of each group's
10 function and what they do. In some cases, there are related
11 groups, like the CMOD steering committee, and that description
12 contains a link to the CMOD workshop page.

13
14 No major changes to the CCC meeting page, except that we added
15 this drop-down, where you can find a meeting by year, and that's
16 kind of responsive to the feedback that we got that, if you're
17 looking for a meeting from 2011 or 2012, you might not know that
18 you have to keep scrolling down the page, and so that gives you
19 a way to quickly jump to it.

20
21 This is a proposed new section of the site, and it would be kind
22 of added as a new tab on the menu. Because the CCC hasn't
23 approved this concept, or the pages, they're not added to the
24 site navigation yet, and all the pages are listed as draft for
25 CCC review. This kind of came out of the idea that was
26 discussed at the last October meeting that we use the website to
27 do more to promote CCC positions, or issues, or joint work
28 products, and so I'm presenting this kind of as proof-of-
29 concept, to see if this is something that the CCC would like to
30 add to the website and would like us to continue working on.

31
32 Types of content that would be included on these pages are
33 consensus statements, comment letters, subcommittee workgroup
34 reports and work products, and then things like, a couple of
35 years ago, the councils did a series of fact sheets on a few
36 issues, like forage, climate change, and then timelines for FMP
37 development, and so that kind of thing would go on here, and it
38 wouldn't be, you know, any -- We wouldn't want to have long
39 lists of individual council documents or reports on these pages,
40 because that would just be hard to maintain.

41
42 I am just going to do a quick run-through of the five pages that
43 were created for this section, as proof-of-concept, and so MSA
44 reauthorization would go on this page, but we already have that
45 one live, and we've had that for several years, but that would
46 kind of be considered one of the issues.

47
48 Area-based management is one that the CCC has said that they

1 would like to have a dedicated page for, since we've got the
2 report, and then, also, the GIS work that the group has done,
3 and, before I go further, I should mention that, on the meeting
4 page, beneath the link to the presentation, there is a link to
5 the issues landing page, and so, if anybody would like to go and
6 explore the pages on your own, that link is there. This page
7 would contain all the work of the ABM Subcommittee.

8
9 The EEJ page, a similar concept, would mostly focus on the work
10 of the EEJ Working Group, and, again, I tried to think about it,
11 and, if somebody said, "fishery management councils and
12 environmental justice", and searched for that in Google, this
13 might be a page that we would want to come up in search results.

14
15 The third one is forage fish, and so this has just a brief kind
16 of background paragraph and then the CCC consensus position and
17 then any councils that made the forage fact sheets a couple of
18 years ago, and those are linked on there.

19
20 Marine national monuments, I chose this -- This topic was chosen
21 for one of these pages because the CCC has commented so much on
22 this issue, and so we have quite a few letters. There is a
23 resolution, and then, also, a consensus statement on other
24 federal statutes that relates to this, and so it seemed like
25 something that we might want to find a way to compile all of
26 that and put it together, so that it's more easily accessible
27 for someone. I know that I personally have been asked, several
28 times, for links to CCC letters on this issue, and other
29 resources, and so this would be a handy place to be able to
30 direct them.

31
32 Then, finally, we have the climate change page, and so this has
33 the CCC position, links to the two SCS workshops that addressed
34 climate-related issues, and the council fact sheets on climate
35 change, and so next steps would be we would welcome any feedback
36 on the website changes as a whole, specifically the concept of
37 the issues pages, any additional topics that the CCC would like
38 to see developed at this time.

39
40 The Council Communications Group is going to continue to refine
41 and update the site, as needed, and I would encourage anyone to
42 provide comments, feedback, suggestions, at any time. I got the
43 best compliment on the site this week, which is that Tom Nies
44 said that he actually finds it kind of useful, and so I guess I
45 will leave it there, but I would really appreciate any feedback.
46 Thank you.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mary. Maybe we should just stop

1 right there. There are several folks with hands up. Eric, go
2 ahead.

3
4 **MR. REID:** We probably should. Quit while you're ahead, for
5 sure. Anyway, I disagree with Tom, because I think it's
6 extremely useful, and so sorry, Tom, but I'm going to supersede
7 you. I think it's really -- It's a great piece of work, and I
8 commend you, Ms. Sabo, for doing that. I think the calendar is
9 like really the most -- The best thing, because we're all
10 involved in multiple council stuff, and, you know, to try to
11 figure out when you even have a hole in the calendar to do
12 something is really helpful, as opposed to going to everybody's
13 website, which my click count is extremely larger than one to
14 three clicks, and I didn't use a computer until COVID hit, and
15 so it made it a lot easier for me, and I do appreciate it.

16
17 As far as the issues go, the issues pages, I do like the ones
18 that you have chosen as new, and I think those are very useful
19 as well, and so I would support moving forward with the issues,
20 and so I don't know if you need a motion, or a consensus
21 statement, but I'm happy to make that, Mr. Chair.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Well, let's hold that thought for a
24 minute, Eric, and see if there's other comments, and then we can
25 figure out what we need to do. Kitty.

26
27 **MS. SIMONDS:** So I do want to congratulate the ladies for a
28 great job. I don't know if you all recall when Terry Leitzell
29 was the head of fisheries, and I can't remember the year, but
30 one of his messages to the councils was that education and
31 outreach was very, very important to the process, because it is
32 complex, and, you know, people won't understand how complex it
33 is, and all they get is what we're working on and then the final
34 decision, and so all of this work is really very, very
35 important, and so, you know, I support whatever Eric down there
36 said, and so this was in the 1980s, and so that's when we
37 started a newsletter, in the 1980s, and have continued since
38 then.

39
40 Then my other point is you mentioned the fifty-year anniversary
41 next year, and my chairman here is, you know, nudging me here to
42 volunteer to help you with this, because I think I'm the only
43 person that has been here from the beginning, as a staff person,
44 and we have published a forty-year history of the council, which
45 includes a background on what was happening at the time. The
46 last time we met in Puerto Rico, I gave extensive remarks about
47 what was happening then and how the councils evolved, and so
48 that's my contribution to help you folks with the fiftieth

1 anniversary. Thank you.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kitty. John.

4

5 **MR. GOURLEY:** Actually, if we do the fiftieth anniversary even,
6 in the year 2030, Kitty will still be here, and so, you know,
7 that's why she'll -- She'll still be here, and she can take it,
8 and she'll have a historical knowledge, from prehistoric days
9 through the current knowledge. Thank you.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Not seeing any other hands up, Eric was
12 suggesting a -- I mean, I don't, obviously, hear any opposition,
13 or any negative here, but I'm thinking, Eric, maybe just a
14 really brief motion, in fact kind of maybe towards the second
15 bullet there, that we support what's going on and feel free to
16 move forward kind of thing, and I don't know if you would prefer
17 to make that or not.

18

19 **MR. REID:** I am actually happy to make it, but I'm also happy to
20 wait just a second, until they put it on the screen, so I can
21 read it into the record, if you don't mind, Mr. Chair.

22

23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sure. We'll wait here for just a second.

24

25 **MR. REID:** Okay. Thanks. I don't think that I will have to
26 provide any rationale, if I should get a second, Dr. Chair.

27

28 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** If I can just -- So these issue pages, what you
29 all noticed is, as you looked at them, there is a link on the
30 meetings material page that you can look at them. I see where
31 this motion is going, and I'm very happy for that, because Mary
32 has put a lot of work into them, and I think it would be great
33 if we can publish them.

34

35 However, I think we still want to leave those pages open to
36 edits, and so what I would like to make sure is -- You know,
37 hearing the support potentially for this is that we also have an
38 opportunity still for -- If you go on those pages, and you want
39 some of the language tweaked, or you want us to -- Please don't
40 hesitate to give us feedback on what we put up there, even once
41 it's published.

42

43 **MR. REID:** Okay. Well, let's see if this works for you.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Eric, go ahead, if you want to read that into
46 the record for us, please.

47

48 **MR. REID:** Okay. Thank you. **I move that the CCC supports the**

1 modifications to the U.S. Regional Councils website and
2 continued updates and maintenance.

3
4 **MR. LUISI:** Second.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. It was seconded by Mike. Okay. I
7 don't see any discussion on this. Go ahead, Marcos.

8
9 **MR. HANKE:** Did you have a second already?

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We did have a second. Thank you. **Seeing no**
12 **other discussion on this motion, is there any opposition to this**
13 **motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries.** Thank you,
14 Eric.

15
16 All right. If there's no other business that needs to come
17 before the Communications Subcommittee, then we will move on in
18 our agenda. Thank you, ladies, for those presentations. Up
19 next, we'll begin our discussions on our International Fisheries
20 Issues, and the first person up for that is Kitty, to discuss
21 the U.N. Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National
22 Jurisdiction.

23
24 **INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES ISSUES**
25 **UNITED NATIONS MARINE BIODIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL**
26 **JURISDICTION (BBNJ)**

27
28 **MS. SIMONDS:** Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That will be Tab 12.

31
32 **MS. SIMONDS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The fifth and final session
33 concluded in March of this year and established the first ever
34 framework to implement ABMTs or MPAs on the high seas. The
35 ability to create MPAs, however, would be decided by the RFMOs.

36
37 There were two groups of delegations, one made up of developing
38 island states, and we call them SIDS in the Pacific, and
39 developing nations in the global south, and so this group wanted
40 to ensure that they would benefit from activities on the high
41 seas by industrialized states like the U.S., the E.U., Japan,
42 and Korea that want to continue freedom on the high seas.

43
44 The developing states wanted a stake in activities like
45 fisheries and seabed mining, and so there's a lengthy decision-
46 making process, with lots of criteria to implement those areas.
47 A science and technical body, yet to be developed, will review
48 implementation.

1
2 The U.S. supported keeping existing relevant bodies and
3 instruments as the deciding entities. The U.S., and a group of
4 like-minded countries with fishing, shipping, and other
5 interests on the high seas, wanted BBNJ to only recommend ABMT
6 tools. The existing bodies, like the RFMOs, would decide to
7 implement them or not, and so we did not want BBNJ to replace or
8 have authority over RFMOs. There will be a meeting in June to
9 formalize BBNJ.

10
11 There is a growing will to limit fisheries in areas on the high
12 seas where U.S. fisheries now operate, and we agree that there
13 is a need to tackle real threats, like IUU fishing and limit
14 destructive fishing operations, but we also need to make sure
15 that BBNJ does not harm well-managed fisheries like those of the
16 U.S.

17
18 Most U.S. waters in the Western Pacific are closed to fishing.
19 We, therefore, rely mostly on the high seas, and so we asked
20 ourselves like what are our choices on where to fish on the high
21 seas, due to climate change, and, for the U.S. purse seiners,
22 they would probably end up having to buy more days in Pacific
23 Island nations, and, currently, they pay \$13,000 a day to fish
24 in those nations, and, regarding our Hawaiian longline industry,
25 we have no idea what would happen to them, and so our concern
26 always is impacting our underserved territories. Closing or
27 limiting the high seas across could reduce the ability, you
28 know, of our -- Especially in American Samoa, where the largest
29 employer is the territory.

30
31 This is a map of foreign fishing around U.S. zones in our
32 Pacific region, and so I just wanted to leave you with that.
33 Foreign fishing surrounds all of our areas there, including, you
34 know, Hawaii, where -- This is one of those global watch views,
35 and so, obviously, it changes all the time, but you can see that
36 U.S. territories and the State of Hawaii are surrounded by
37 foreign fishing, and so we have huge concerns, and so I thank
38 you very much, Mr. Chair.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kitty. We'll open that up
41 for questions. All right. Seeing none, thank you, Kitty. That
42 will move us into the next section, which was an Update on the
43 Committee on Fisheries, or COFI, and, Carlos, if you're ready
44 for that, they will pull that up.

45
46 **COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES (COFI) SUMMARY OVERVIEW**

47
48 **MR. FARCHETTE:** I don't have a -- First, I want to apologize to

1 all of the councils, because I got there a day-and-a-half late.
2 It seems like Murphy's Law was riding on my shoulders all the
3 way and all the way back, and my first flight out of St. Croix
4 was cancelled, and that just threw everything completely off,
5 but some of the successes of the U.S. were they achieved gear
6 and bait modifications to mitigate impacts on sea turtles
7 proposed by Brazil, Gabon, Egypt, Canada, Turkey, and the E.U.
8 to use circle hooks in shallow-set longlines. This would
9 increase post-release survival.

10
11 Plans were also discussed for future support of impacts from
12 climate change and to build climate-resilient fisheries in the
13 Atlantic Ocean. An agreement was made for a pre-agreed
14 framework to set catch limits and to allow for more effective
15 management of stocks, which includes a TAC for 2023 through 2025
16 of 2,726 metric tons of bluefin for the Western Atlantic. ICCAT
17 agreed to expand existing measures designed to combat IUU.
18 Countries are experiencing similar problems, like everyone else,
19 when it comes to capacity for inspections, and that was really
20 highlighted with COVID, where there were no monitors onboard
21 vessels.

22
23 There also was a little tiff between Senegal and Gambia over an
24 IUU with a vessel not flagged by one of the countries. Current
25 management measures were adopted, including caps for bigeye and
26 yellowfin, and those numbers are in the proposed tracker that
27 was distributed, and what's up on the screen, and, if anyone
28 wants to go through that, after you pass all the "whereas", it
29 makes for a good read for someone who has been to the sessions.

30
31 Countries agreed to develop management evaluations aimed at
32 adopting a TAC for North Atlantic swordfish from 2024 onward.
33 In years of negotiations, resulting in allowing retention of
34 South Atlantic shortfin mako over the next two years. They must
35 retain dead makos, instead of finning and discarding the
36 carcass, and they also agreed with the release of live makos,
37 and, like I mentioned before, the proposed tracker has a lot
38 more extensive information, if anybody wants to take a look at
39 that.

40
41 I've got to say that it's a little difficult to keep up with
42 ICCAT when we only attend a meeting every few years, because you
43 miss a lot of what happens throughout the other years, and my
44 hat is off to the U.S. contingent. They worked long hours after
45 the meetings. After 5:00, we had a meeting again from 6:30 to
46 8:00 to pre-plan and debrief and strategize for the following
47 days, and they were like ten-hour days. In 2024, Egypt is
48 hosting the next ICCAT, and, tentatively, for 2025, Cote

1 d'Ivoire will host the meeting. That's all I have. Thank you.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Carlos. Any questions
4 for Carlos regarding COFI? Miguel.

5
6 **MR. ROLON:** Not a question for Carlos, but, at the last meeting,
7 we decided that the CCC will send somebody to represent us at
8 the FAO meetings, just like this one. If anyone wants to
9 volunteer for next year, or can I just send somebody from the
10 CFMC, because our time for hosting the meetings will be next
11 year, but we are open for anybody who would like to participate.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, thoughts on that?

14
15 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** I know that Jessica McCawley, from Florida, was
16 signed up to go at one point, and she didn't, and she has let me
17 know that, if an opportunity came up, where someone else
18 couldn't go that was obligated to, that she would be interested,
19 and so, Miguel, we could touch base, maybe afterwards, and see.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and you're proposing that, and maybe we
22 can -- I will add that to our list, to just tie up a few loose
23 ends at the end, to see who we can identify, if that works for
24 you, Miguel, and we'll come up with someone to send after that.
25 Okay.

26
27 Well, that -- Since it's, I guess, just about 10:00, and I don't
28 want to start -- The next topic is our Scientific Coordination
29 Subcommittee, and I think there will be a lot of discussion
30 there, and so maybe what we'll do here is take a short break,
31 and then that will leave us the rest of the morning to deal with
32 that, and that will take us to lunch, and so why don't we take a
33 break until 10:15 and then meet back here to take up that
34 section.

35
36 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Next up is the 7th Scientific Coordination
39 Subcommittee Report and the associated presentations, and so
40 this is going to be found on Tab 13, and, as far as the first
41 presentation, Diana is going to be doing that one, and it looks
42 like your presentation is up, and so, Diana, whenever you're
43 ready.

44
45 **7TH SCIENTIFIC COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE (SCS) REPORT**

46
47 **DR. DIANA STRAM:** Thank you. Good morning. I am going to be
48 providing an overview of our SCS7 that we just held in Sitka,

1 Alaska, August 15 to 17. This is the proceedings and where
2 they're available on our website, and they're also, obviously,
3 available on your agenda, as well as now on the combined CCC
4 pages that you just heard about prior to this.

5
6 I want to acknowledge our SCS7 chair, Dr. Anne Hollowed. She
7 did a fantastic job chairing this meeting, as well as working on
8 the proceedings, and she was our long-time NPFMC SSC chair, and
9 has since retired, just to give her credit where it's due.

10
11 Our meeting was organized into three different focus sessions,
12 and the first was how to incorporate ecosystem indicators into
13 the stock assessment process, the second was developing
14 information in support of management of interacting species and
15 consideration of EBFM, and the third one was how to assess and
16 develop fishing level recommendations for species exhibiting
17 distributional changes.

18
19 The way that we organized this meeting was each focus session
20 had one or two keynote speakers, and then we had a range of case
21 studies from around the different regions, under each of the
22 different focus sessions. Following the presentation of the
23 case studies, we then went into breakout sessions. We had a
24 series of trigger questions related to each focus session, and
25 we met in breakout sessions with a moderator and rapporteur,
26 addressed different trigger questions, and then combined those
27 all into a summary and reconvened in plenary session, and we did
28 that for all three of these sessions.

29
30 I would note that, in the proceedings, that you have the full
31 text for the keynote speakers for each section and a much larger
32 summary of the breakout session discussions than I will go into
33 today. The case study abstracts are also included in your
34 proceedings, and then there's a section that I will go over in
35 more detail at the end of this presentation on the overall SCS7
36 recommendations.

37
38 Starting with the first session on the ecosystem indicators and
39 the assessment process, we had a number of different themes that
40 we were addressing, and I will just touch on a couple of them,
41 because there's a lot of material that's in the proceedings
42 themselves, and so the first theme on the criteria and
43 diagnostics that are needed for acceptance of an indicator into
44 an assessment, we talked about a range of different themes
45 across the groups, the process for selection of an ecosystem
46 indicator, considerations for inclusion of an indicator, and
47 some forecasting challenges.

48

1 In general, there are regional frameworks that are including
2 some ecosystem indicators, but there is no national criteria for
3 how to do so, and this is going to be a theme across all of our
4 recommendations. There was strong support for retaining the
5 regional ability to address things regionally, without needing,
6 necessarily, a national criteria.

7
8 With respect to responsiveness and the ability to address
9 environmental anomalies, we had discussions of both -- How you
10 respond is going to depend on both the quality of information as
11 well as the life history of the species. We talked about short-
12 term responses to environmental events right now, things that
13 come up like a marine heat wave immediately that you need to
14 address, without the ability to do this in a large, drawn-out
15 modeling process, and many regions are using buffers to address
16 that, or are looking at qualitative risk assessments, but, in
17 the long-term, people are moving towards looking at MSEs, and,
18 again, I would note that the SCS6 focused on MSEs and looking at
19 long-term and how we model moving forward under these different
20 events.

21
22 The thing that we had a lot of discussion on is how you tease
23 out a short-term from a long-term event, and so a short-term
24 event you might be able to address immediately with those
25 measures, but, looking at a long-term event, when do you make
26 the decision that you are actually in a regime shift, and then
27 you need to move to different biological reference points or how
28 you incorporate those.

29
30 We also had discussions about how moving to these different
31 reference points and the limitations and the management
32 flexibility. Particularly, we discussed National Standard 1
33 Guidelines for rebuilding, and that those rebuilding timeframes
34 might -- The rigidity of it might need to be adjusted, if we
35 have to move to different regimes and to different
36 responsiveness.

37
38 Our second session -- I'm sorry. With respect to adaptivity, if
39 we could just go back for a second, adaptivity in the management
40 framework, and, again, this was us discussing the pros and cons
41 of formalizing that kind of process, the indicator incorporation
42 in management advice. Across different regions, we're using
43 ecological and socioeconomic profiles to assemble qualitative
44 information that could be used, and, also, the ESRs that many
45 regions are producing, and these kinds of information are
46 providing SSCs the ability to consider non-traditional ways of
47 setting reference points, but the key here is that we maintain
48 the transparency and that the SSCs can articulate the

1 transparency of how that information is being used in that kind
2 of qualitative manner.

3
4 Again, there is regional considerations that people wish to
5 retain, and, also, there was a lot expressed, across all of
6 these different sessions, about capacity concerns.

7
8 The next session, Eva Plaganyi was our keynote speaker, and
9 looking at how we incorporate ecosystem information into fishery
10 management advice. She provided an overview, and we discussed
11 an overview of different MSEs, in particular MICE models, which
12 are Models of Intermediate Complexity for Environmental
13 assessment, and how you would use these kinds of models to look
14 at overall ecosystem productivity, and, in terms of ecosystem
15 considerations, predator-prey interactions, in order to kind of
16 model an overall ecosystem productivity to look at the reference
17 points for harvest levels. In general, across all regions,
18 while there is work underway, it's in limited use in adjusting
19 reference points at this point.

20
21 We also discussed how non-target considerations can be
22 incorporated with the harvest control rules. Again, in general,
23 these are not being incorporated into harvest control rules.
24 There are some examples across regions, but, generally, harvest
25 of non-target species are being addressed through spatial-
26 temporal measures, through bycatch caps, and there are some
27 regional examples.

28
29 We have one for stellar sea lion prey species incorporated into
30 our harvest control rules, but, generally, non-target species
31 are being addressed in different manners, and then we looked at
32 management framework and system-level considerations, and so,
33 again, looking at overall ecosystem productivity from the whole
34 ecosystem that you're managing, in terms of harvest levels, and
35 this is where these ecosystem models could help to incorporate,
36 in a data-rich setting, estimating ecosystem productivity, but
37 it's important for the SSCs to communicate with the stakeholders
38 and the regional managers if you are looking at changing your
39 reference points and your harvest control rules based on
40 ecosystem productivity.

41
42 One major theme throughout the entire SCS7 was the need for both
43 transparency and increased engagement and communication, in
44 order to retain and hold onto the stakeholder confidence in the
45 management system.

46
47 Our third session was addressing species with different
48 distributions and how we address this, and we had a lot of

1 discussion about how to address changing fish distributions in
2 stock assessments and the survey implications of that.
3 Generally, there has been limited advances to account for
4 distributional shifts outside and beyond the surveys themselves,
5 in order to account for those uncertainties, and so most of our
6 surveys -- Some have expanded in response to changing
7 distributions, but, in general, they tend to be fixed, when the
8 populations are moving, and there's a mismatch between the
9 survey, the stock assessment, and where the fishermen are
10 fishing, and so we need to begin to address those, with respect
11 to that.

12
13 We discussed, again, the adaptivity of management framework to
14 addressing these changing distributions, because it does affect
15 both the management and the assessment and jurisdictional issues
16 that arise when you are discussing, and you touched on this
17 yesterday, the jurisdictional issues that arise when you have
18 quotas that are established for certain regions, but the fish
19 are moving into different regions. Again, this stressed much of
20 the discussion about increased coordination and communication.

21
22 Before I moving into the overall findings, we have some
23 recommendations for the future SCS meetings and planning. We
24 had the benefit of council member participation, and our Vice
25 Chair, Mr. Bill Tweit, was able to participate in all of the
26 meeting, including the breakout sessions, and that was really
27 helpful, to have that tie-in to council member participation, in
28 terms of those discussions that we were having scientifically,
29 as we had a lot of discussions with management implications, and
30 so it was really great to have that kind of a tie-in and not
31 just have it only be SSC members.

32
33 We, obviously, had a very long lag in planning for SCS7 and then
34 being able to host it, and we were pretty grateful to be able to
35 host it in-person, and I think communication amongst the regions
36 was greatly enhanced by having that in-person communication.

37
38 We still recommend that there be biennial workshops, and we had
39 discussion of whether or not SCS should happen on an annual
40 basis, but, in general, the participants felt that a biennial
41 basis, which is what it has been prior to COVID, obviously, is
42 really still the recommended approach, but that there is really
43 an increased need for off-year communication amongst the SSC
44 members and across the regions, and so that was something that
45 came up in every session, and in general in our recommendations,
46 is to find some way to have additional off-year communication in
47 between the SCS meetings.

48

1 Moving into the key findings then, the first one is that
2 councils need to start preparing now for increasingly-complex
3 management decisions due to climate change. We know that there
4 is profound fishery implications in the next twenty years, and
5 we're already experiencing them now, in many of the regions, and
6 we need pathways to sustain fisheries in this non-stationary
7 environment. We spent a lot of time talking about non-
8 stationary environments and how we address that.

9
10 We have competing use of marine systems, abrupt shifts in
11 distribution and abundance, changes in the ecosystem structure
12 and function, and impacts on sectors and communities, as well as
13 data collection methodologies, and so we need to be finding
14 equitable management pathways, adaptation pathways, and that's
15 challenging, and it is also something that will involve
16 stakeholders and confidence.

17
18 The next is that investment is needed in the development of new
19 data collection and analysis tools that are responsive to
20 changing conditions. Again, looking at adaptation options, but
21 retaining the regional differences and that kind of flexibility,
22 and so we discussed and put forward models with ecosystem
23 linkages that are under development, climate-informed risk
24 assessments, and then performance of management strategy
25 evaluations, and those are longer-term things, and so we have
26 short-term fixes that people are addressing right now, but
27 looking longer term, in terms of this broader modeling, suites
28 of models with different levels of complexity.

29
30 We discussed how data management could be strengthened for
31 regional collaboration, both streamlining as well as moving more
32 towards open-source data, and so open-source data flows that can
33 be exchanged between regions easily, and then all of this really
34 stressed the fact that we're moving towards interdisciplinary
35 research teams, and, in doing so, we really need to increase our
36 student training and bring forward an interdisciplinary student
37 of stock assessment that can work within this field in the
38 future.

39
40 The third one is that councils need to be -- SSCs and councils
41 need to transition towards a more sophisticated toolbox, and so
42 we need to transition from reliance on indicators that are based
43 on observations to looking at informed dynamic simulations of
44 the marine ecosystem that's tuned to observations, and so moving
45 from just the observations to moving into these complex models,
46 and we need to begin scenario planning now to avoid reactive
47 responses.

48

1 This calls upon additional flexibility in the management
2 process, and we tend to be kind of siloed, and as well as the
3 diversification of fishing portfolios to address environmental
4 change, whether it's abrupt or long-term, and so we want to
5 create more opportunities for strategic and creative thinking,
6 at both the national and the regional levels.

7
8 Finally, stakeholder engagement is critical for this adaptive
9 management to be successful, and we spent a lot of time
10 discussing stakeholder engagement. It's going to require
11 engagement from all stakeholders, and not just fishing
12 participants, but managers and other affected individuals and
13 stakeholders, and, as things get more complex, due to the
14 uncertainty in addressing environmental variability, we need to
15 bring up the stakeholders and the scientists for better
16 communication and transparency of this, in order for it to be
17 more clearly communicated and have a more inclusive process.

18
19 Moving forward, a couple of things to consider then, in summary,
20 and so we want to begin to be cataloging our regional efforts in
21 addressing climate change and these non-stationary conditions,
22 and how do we begin scenario planning to avoid reactive
23 responses, and how can we learn from other regions, and that was
24 one real theme across SCS7, is we have a lot that we can learn
25 from other regions, that can either help us improve our own
26 regional toolbox or create more creative environments in moving
27 things forward.

28
29 We need to be cognizant of how best to communicate among the
30 councils and among the SSCs and effective stakeholder
31 communication across all regions, and so two questions for the
32 CCC about the SCS7 is what are the most important messages that
33 the CCC sees from the SCS7 recommendations, and is there a need
34 for a roadmap and a timeline for integrating various aspects of
35 climate change and implementing changes?

36
37 With that, I would like to just thank all of the SSC delegates,
38 our chair, Anne Hollowed, all of the moderators and rapporteurs
39 that we solicited and volunteered from across the regions. It
40 takes a lot to pull this meeting off, and I would also give a
41 huge kudos to the North Pacific Council staff, both admin and
42 analysts, that came and helped organize this meeting, run this
43 meeting, and help in providing with putting the proceedings
44 together in-house, and, with that, I am happy to take questions.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Stram, for that
47 informative -- It sounds like you had a very productive meeting,
48 and, with that, I will go ahead and open it up. Tom.

1
2 **MR. NIES:** Thank you. It sounds like a really good meeting, and
3 I just have one question about one of the comments in there,
4 really early, and it's a little bit in the weeds, but I wanted
5 to highlight it. I forget which slide it's on, but it says the
6 regional fishery management councils need to consider models
7 with ecosystem linkages.

8
9 I guess I'm struggling to understand how we do that. I don't
10 know how it happens in your region, but, in our region, we have
11 very little influence on what models the Science Center selects
12 in order to do assessments and provide environmental advice, and
13 I will use the poster child, and there have been published
14 papers on Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic winter flounder
15 that included, explicitly included, temperature in the models,
16 but, you know, it didn't get entered into our management from
17 the assessment process for years, because it wasn't being used
18 by the Science Center. I don't know -- I guess it's more a
19 question, and do the other councils have more success in
20 influencing what models they're provided with?

21
22 **DR. STRAM:** Thank you for the question. I think -- At least I
23 can speak for my region, but, in general, that conversation at
24 SCS7 was based a lot on the MSEs that are ongoing, and they are
25 ongoing in different regions. Whether they're being
26 incorporated into management, that's kind of a disconnect that
27 at least we find in our region, is that an MSE is occurring, but
28 that is such a long-term process, where are looking at a short
29 term to set harvest levels.

30
31 Looking at these overall ecosystem productivity models that are
32 being developed, we also don't have the ability to say exactly
33 what models we would like to see brought forward from our
34 Science Center. We do have some stock assessment models, one
35 for yellowfin sole, that incorporates temperature and
36 catchability, and so that has gone forward, and we also -- As
37 you heard a little bit yesterday, there is an ongoing ACLIM
38 effort, and that's something looking forward to predicting
39 responses across the ecosystem, with different climate forcing
40 and projections moving forward, and so some of that is ongoing,
41 and I guess we're hopeful that the CEFI effort will also be
42 incorporating that kind of information, moving forward, but I
43 think if that helps, and that's sort of the reason why it was
44 characterized that way.

45
46 One session was organized around what ecosystem models are
47 currently being put forward, but recognizing that, across all
48 the regions, we're not using that information yet, and so what

1 we're trying to highlight is, if there are these models coming
2 forward, how do we incorporate that in our region, in addressing
3 both ecosystem productivity and harvest levels, because there's
4 things that are ongoing, and they're not coming into the
5 management process, and so we're trying to highlight that
6 disconnect and how that can go forward.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, a follow-up?
9

10 **MR. NIES:** I will try to be brief, and I would agree with that
11 disconnect, but our -- My experience has been that it's like
12 pushing a rope, that, you know, we try and encourage that stuff
13 to get used, and, you know, it's entirely up to the assessment
14 scientists and the review panels whether they approve it going
15 forward or not. Thanks.
16

17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. I'm looking around the room, and
18 are there other questions or comments? Cisco, and then, Bill,
19 I've got you next.
20

21 **DR. WERNER:** That was a really good presentation, and maybe
22 addressing some of the points that Tom brought. I think, in
23 particular, the models that you were talking about, in the
24 Northeast, you know, the WHAM model, the Woods Hole assessment
25 model and such, and these models are evolving, in the sense that
26 how they include various components of environment, whether
27 it's, you know, ecosystems directly or proxies of ecosystem,
28 through temperature and such, and I think those are, you know,
29 sort of at the front line, or frontend, of research and research
30 to operation.
31

32 We're trying to, and this is just a brief background on how
33 we're trying to integrate these different advances that are
34 coming out from CEFI, which is perhaps on one end of research,
35 to things like WHAM, which is a little bit more applied, and
36 something that we refer to as the Fishery Integrated Modeling
37 System, FIMS, and it's a place where all of the stock assessment
38 folks come together and try to develop a common trunk, if you
39 will, of the modeling approaches, which might make it then
40 easier, for us in developing the models and the councils
41 reviewing the models, or asking what's in there, to ask
42 questions about that system, as opposed to a number of different
43 ones being proposed at different rates and such.
44

45 I think this is a -- I think you had it in your slides
46 somewhere, but we're sort of at a turning point, in terms of how
47 we include all of these ecosystem considerations, non-
48 stationarity and such, and I think you had a conclusion in there

1 about all of us needing to figure out how do we take these steps
2 together, and I think there's a number of examples that were out
3 there that suggest that we probably do want that roadmap that
4 you pointed to, and how do we develop this roadmap, so that
5 these changes, which are, as I said yesterday, not nice to know,
6 but need to know, in terms of how we move forward, and how do we
7 make sure that they're appropriate for actionable advice, you
8 know, to management, or done jointly, and so, again, I think
9 this is a really excellent presentation and call for us to think
10 jointly about how we move forward. Thank you.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Cisco. Bill.

13

14 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Diana, for both the
15 presentation, but also your work with Dr. Hollowed in putting
16 together the findings. I've been thinking a lot about these
17 four key findings, as well as --- In fact, if you can go back to
18 the, moving forward, things to consider slide, and I had the
19 privilege of participating in this, and I do, just as an aside,
20 want to second that, as folks think about SCS8, ensuring that
21 there's some capacity for a couple of council members to attend
22 and participate.

23

24 It helped me get a head start on thinking about these things,
25 but I found the four key findings to be extremely useful, and
26 I've been sort of applying them fairly broadly as I think about
27 next steps on climate change, and hence my question to Kelly,
28 and still my suggestion, that I think the agency should be using
29 those as a framework for thinking about how to devote the IRA
30 funds to the portion that's going to address climate change, and
31 I think those four key findings provide a lot of guidance.

32

33 They're a real challenge to us as a council, to us as councils
34 collectively, and those are not going to be easy, and even just
35 the relatively simple ones, like increased outreach to
36 stakeholders, and it's not just a little bit more social
37 messaging, and it's learning how to explain some pretty complex
38 things, learning how to distill science, since we're talking a
39 lot more about uncertainty, and terms like "non-stationarity",
40 which is a really major shift for us in how we work, and helping
41 the public understand that our expectation is that the
42 environments that we're managing may no longer fluctuate around
43 an average, but may instead have essentially chaotic
44 fluctuations, and that makes decision-making a lot more
45 difficult.

46

47 Communicating those kinds of things, communicating the
48 vocabulary around uncertainty and risk and all that, is going to

1 take a lot of work, for us as councils, and I think we're going
2 to need the resources. You know, we're already struggling with
3 the resources to do our jobs as we do them now, and none of
4 those key findings make life simpler.

5
6 They all require more resources, and they all essentially move
7 us into a world of greater complexity, and that doesn't mean
8 they're wrong, but it just means they're going to be difficult,
9 I think, and so those always bring me back to some of the
10 suggestions about things to consider.

11
12 At least for me, that's then one of the ideas that I had, that I
13 will be introducing as a motion, is it would really behoove the
14 councils to use CCC as an ongoing forum for exchanging
15 information, exchanging perspectives, but also being able to
16 provide some amount of consensus guidance to the agency on our
17 thoughts about both the needs that we have to address climate
18 change as well as the roadmap that we would like to see adopted
19 for addressing climate change.

20
21 We're not going to be able to do that with the CCC meeting every
22 six months, and that's where workgroups have been really
23 effective for us, and I think workgroups have, in general,
24 definitely increased the value of the CCC, and so it struck me
25 that, at least pioneering the idea of a workgroup on climate
26 change, to make sure that we're effective partners in the Ocean
27 Climate Action Plan, to help us track the development of the
28 CEFI, and I came here with some fairly high hopes to understand
29 the CEFI better, and I'm leaving without that.

30
31 There were eleven slides on climate governance and two on the
32 Ocean Climate Action Plan, and one of the two mentions CEFI, and
33 that's -- If we don't have a group that is sort of focused on
34 that, between now and October, we're going to walk into October
35 without much understanding of how the agency is really proposing
36 -- You know, we'll each have our own little insights, but we
37 won't have the collective ability to track what the agency is
38 really doing over the next six months, and these are really
39 critical months.

40
41 One of the things that didn't get reflected well in the SCS7
42 presentation is just their sense of urgency. From their
43 perspective, every month that goes by where we're not working on
44 preparing for climate change is a month that we're going to
45 regret later, and so I sort of came away with that sense of
46 urgency as well, and I would like to see the CCC respond to the
47 SCS7 findings with an idea of how to do these things more
48 effectively, cataloging our regional efforts, so we understand

1 what each other is trying.

2

3 It may not be applicable in our region, and, in fact, there's a
4 good chance it won't be, but maybe, with some tweaking, it might
5 be, or just at least understanding each other's challenges.

6

7 I would love to have a forum for -- We've heard some about the
8 scenario planning, both on the east coast and the Pacific, and
9 we're going to be engaged in it, and it would be good to have a
10 forum for our staff members to talk back and forth a little bit
11 about scenario planning, the coordination and communication
12 function that right now workgroups might be best at
13 accomplishing for us between meetings. Exchanging ideas on
14 what's working for messaging to our stakeholders, what's not
15 working, and all of those things seem, to me, to sort of cry out
16 for a workgroup.

17

18 Hence, the motion that's coming up, and I've heard some
19 concerns, pretty loud and clear, about we're already stretched
20 to the max, and how can we support another workgroup, and I
21 think those are really valid, and I do think we should think
22 about, if we're going to do that, essentially doing it as a
23 conceptual idea, see how it works for a year, and see how it
24 does, at least for helping us catalog regional efforts and
25 whether or not it's worthwhile, in terms of the information
26 exchange and for coordinating us and keeping us maybe with a
27 common message.

28

29 I would really love to have the October meeting move on from
30 this governance discussion that, frankly, I don't get, and I
31 don't understand why we continue to miss each other on that, but
32 it's clear to me that we're spending a lot of our climate change
33 energy talking about governance and not getting anywhere on it
34 and not talking about some of the thing that, to me, have
35 promise and that we all should be able to agree on, like the
36 CEFI.

37

38 I think we'll be more prepared for that if we put a workgroup to
39 work between now and then, and so that's kind of both my
40 thoughts about the SCS7, which, again, I've got those findings
41 pretty much hanging on my office wall, and I encourage a lot of
42 other folks to do that too, and they were pretty profound, and
43 it was clearly a meeting that was worth having, and now I will
44 shut up.

45

46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Bill. You mentioned the
47 motion, and did you want to -- Is this something that you wanted
48 to bring up after some more discussion or how would you prefer

1 it? Janet has a comment, and so I don't know if --

2

3 **MR. TWEIT:** At your pleasure, Mr. Chairman.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, Janet, I know you had a comment, and is
6 it to this?

7

8 **MS. COIT:** Yes, and I had a comment to that. Do you want to
9 just hold your motion until the end of this discussion, Bill,
10 and I saw that Kelly had a comment, too. First, Diana, this is
11 fantastic. Thank you.

12

13 I also -- I heard from folks after SCS7, a lot of thoughts, and
14 I'm going to spare you all of them and ask you a couple of
15 questions, but who were really -- Like for ten years, I was head
16 of the Rhode Island state programs, and I heard from Conor
17 McManus, and I have heard from Jason McNamee, who was the head
18 of the SSC for many years in the Northeast, about the exact
19 things that you're talking about and about their concern about --
20 -- I appreciate your comments, Bill, and their concern that it's
21 so esoteric and ponderous, and like all these processes, and,
22 yet, we're not really grappling with what the scientists and the
23 SSCs are telling us about the changes and the need to be more
24 nimble.

25

26 It occurs to me that the engagement and the transparency and the
27 complexity cut against expedited action, and I'm wondering, and
28 I have a couple of questions, and, one, I'm wondering if we've
29 ever thought about having like the SCS meeting with the CCC
30 meeting, or back-to-back, because I think that would be -- I
31 would like to hear from them directly, and I think they would
32 appreciate that, and so that was one question.

33

34 Then, secondly, and this kind of gets to some of what Bill was
35 saying, and that people were frustrated with yesterday, and is
36 there a way, in the shorter term, to be more concrete with how
37 the ecosystem changes, and what our scientists are seeing, can
38 manifest in management decisions, because that's what I heard
39 from folks after this meeting, and I think some tangible
40 examples -- I mean, one thing that I think different regions
41 have -- Like snow crab and red crab.

42

43 Can you maybe give some thoughts, in a way that isn't as, you
44 know, academic, about like how you would see this touching down
45 for management decisions, say at the North Pacific Council, if
46 we could be more facile with our listening to the scientists and
47 taking that advice, and then the last part that I will say is
48 there were a lot of conversations yesterday that I was engaged

1 with about the lag between peer-reviewed science and what people
2 are observing and seeing in the water and how you fill that with
3 some sort of interim approach.

4
5 **DR. STRAM:** Thank you for those questions. With respect to the
6 first one, about the SCS meeting with the CCC, I think -- I
7 mean, I personally think that's a great idea, and we didn't talk
8 about that specifically, but that's in line with our discussions
9 of the utility of having council members included in this
10 discussion, instead of it being a somewhat -- Not closed, and
11 it's a public meeting, but it being more of a scientific
12 discussion, and having just a council member participate in the
13 breakout session, where ideas were being tossed around by
14 region, and being able to put -- Sometimes a reality check, and
15 sometimes just a, well, okay, we're not doing that in our
16 region, is really useful.

17
18 With respect to how we can incorporate some of these things now,
19 I think we had a lot of discussions on that, and it's really the
20 short-term versus long-term. I can only speak with experience
21 from our own region, and we do struggle with this.

22
23 We have a lot of excellent ecosystem information, and we get our
24 ESRs every year, and we're moving forward with a climate change
25 taskforce to look at these things, and we get our ESRs presented
26 at the same time as our assessment, so we have an idea of what's
27 going on in the environment, but they're not directly linked,
28 and I think what we're trying to say is we're looking for that
29 linkage to occur, and that's going to occur in a longer term.

30
31 We've tried to, from our region, tried to address those
32 immediate concerns with having these peak meetings, where, in
33 the spring, the environmental scientists are pulled together to
34 say, okay, what are we seeing right now, and how can we bring
35 that forward quicker than waiting for these longer-term
36 evaluations, but I think we're still struggling to make that
37 real connection, where there's an automatic response, and maybe
38 that's not the best way to be looking at it either.

39
40 The way that we have done it, and it seems like other regions
41 had examples of this as well, is a more qualitative risk
42 assessment of what's happening right now, and would you be
43 adjusting harvest levels for what's happening right now, or are
44 you looking at something right now that is indicative of a
45 regime shift, and teasing that apart I think is a real struggle,
46 because you're trying to respond to what you're seeing on the
47 ground, but you don't know if what you're doing is too slow or
48 just an immediate response, when what you need is the longer-

1 term response, and we're in a different regime shift, and we
2 need different biological reference points, and we need to
3 manage the stock differently.

4
5 We've had a ton of discussions, in the North Pacific, about what
6 would we have done differently if we knew what was going to
7 happen with snow crab, and we haven't figure that out yet, but
8 those are the discussions that I think we're all having now, is
9 it's great to say that we want to do this long-term planning for
10 climate change and fisheries management, but would we have done
11 something differently if we had known, a couple of years ago,
12 that snow crab was going to crash, because of environmental
13 conditions, and I don't know, and I think we're all struggling
14 with that. I know that doesn't necessarily get at all of your
15 questions, but that's my thoughts.

16
17 **MS. COIT:** Thank you very much, and I think the more cooperation
18 there can be with council members, and what you're talking
19 about, the better.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Kelly.

22
23 **MS. DENIT:** Thank you. Thank you, Diana. I haven't had a
24 chance to read the actual proceedings, and I was wondering if
25 you could talk a little bit more -- Under Number 3, you had a
26 bullet around consider additional flexibility in the management
27 process and the concept of creating more opportunities for
28 strategic and creative thinking, and so, for those two, could
29 you maybe just give me a little bit more of what you all were
30 driving at as part of those conversations? Thank you.

31
32 **DR. STRAM:** Sure, and thank you for the question. With respect
33 to the additional flexibility in the management process, we had
34 this under a number of our different sessions, and I mentioned
35 earlier that one of the ones that we really talked about was
36 rebuilding timelines, looking at, as we move into different
37 possible regimes, or just the non-stationary and chaotic nature
38 of management, they may not align with some of those guidelines.

39
40 Specifically, we talked a lot about rebuilding stocks and the
41 kind of specific things that you need to do in terms of doing
42 your Tmin and your Tmax for the rebuilding timelines, and so
43 that was one of the things in the additional flexibility.

44
45 We also had some discussions in terms of responding to crises,
46 like for example snow crab, and is there some sort of
47 diversification, or management flexibility, that would allow for
48 more on-the-ground changes in the fishery, rather than just

1 moving to a fishery disaster declaration, and we didn't have a
2 lot of answers there, but those are the kinds of things that we
3 were discussing.

4
5 In terms of opportunities for strategic and creative thinking at
6 the regional and national levels, it's exactly what we're
7 talking about, is how to learn from other regions, and we found,
8 in the breakout sessions as well as in the plenary sessions,
9 while not every region is going to be able to mimic the other
10 region, there's a lot that we can learn by more communication.

11
12 As Mr. Tweit mentioned, we are beginning our climate scenario
13 planning, possibly, for the North Pacific in the next year, and
14 there's a lot we can learn, pros and cons, of how other regions
15 have done that kind of strategic planning and those
16 opportunities, and I think we realized a lot, in the in-person
17 discussions with other regions, that there's a lot going on in
18 other regions that most people don't have time to pay attention
19 to, that we need to, because we don't want to go down a path
20 that another region has already found wasn't productive, or we
21 want to take advantage of some ideas that they've put forward
22 that are productive.

23
24 One of our keynote speakers, Eva Plaganyi, was providing an
25 overall example both of the complexity of ecosystem modeling,
26 but also how they brought stakeholders along, because, as things
27 get more complex, it's harder to understand, and then, all of a
28 sudden, everything is opaque to the stakeholders, and so how do
29 we balance those things, and so being able to reach out and have
30 those conversations, and figure out how it's worked in other
31 regions, even in Australia, for them, is really helpful, and
32 getting examples from other regions on the east coast of how
33 they've dealt with that too was just really helpful, in terms of
34 conversations.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Tom, Clay, and then John.

37
38 **MR. NIES:** I am going to make a couple of comments, and I will
39 take them in order. I think there's a general issue that SCS7
40 brought up that has probably been true for a while, that we
41 haven't really addressed, and that is trying to find a better
42 way to communicate what happens at the SCS meetings, workshops,
43 to the councils, so that it actually gets used.

44
45 I think that's probably true whether we're talking about climate
46 change or any of the other subjects that have gone on and been
47 taken up at these workshops over the past years, and so, just as
48 a teaser, if you will, or however you prefer that, when the SCS8

1 motion comes forward, I'm going to make a recommendation on an
2 idea on how to improve that, which is not tied directly to
3 climate change, but just tied to the idea of these workshops.
4

5 The second thing is I think I can see a need for the CCC to
6 coordinate a little bit, or maybe a lot, on the climate change
7 issue, and I do take exception to the comment that we haven't
8 made any progress on governance, and I think that work,
9 primarily led by Chris Moore in the Mid, but also the other
10 councils on the east coast, is really a dramatic step forward
11 that's going to see some results over the next year or two, and
12 so I'm not going to let that stand unchallenged.
13

14 I think the third thing is that -- I mean, I've got to say that
15 I think the idea of a joint SCS workshop with a CCC meeting
16 could prove to be a logistical nightmare. We have a very
17 difficult time finding three days when we can have CCC meetings
18 in the fall, and, in starting to do the planning for SCS8 next
19 year, the dates that are available for SCS8 don't line up at all
20 with the CCC meetings that are planned, and I -- You know, I'm
21 not going to -- I just think that we would have to think long
22 and hard about whether we want to go that way.
23

24 That's different than saying we're going to plant some --
25 "Plant" is probably not the right word, but plant some council
26 members in the room at SCS meetings, which might be a good idea,
27 but I'm not sure it's a good idea to try and have a joint CCC
28 and SCS meeting. Thank you.
29

30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Clay.
31

32 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you, Chair. I wanted to respond to the point
33 about maybe CEFI maybe not being as clear as one would hope, and
34 I think, in large part, that's because it will look very
35 different in the different regions, and so, for example, with
36 this SCS meeting, you focused pretty heavily, I think, in the
37 discussions, from what I can tell here, on more data-rich
38 environments, where you have a pretty strong signal, and you can
39 correct me if I'm wrong, but that -- The whole idea of using
40 models to integrate across data, rather than using the
41 observations themselves, which makes a lot of sense when the
42 data are there.
43

44 In some regions, we don't even have the data, and so then the
45 emphasis immediately shifts to actually collecting the basic
46 data that we need, and so that's one major difference between
47 some of the regions, and so you mentioned having a more
48 sophisticated toolbox, which I agree with, and you mentioned

1 that that's going to require more resources, and it will require
2 considerably more resources, I agree, and not only collecting
3 some new, different types of data, but bringing different
4 skillsets to the table, and you mentioned the multidisciplinary
5 nature of it.

6
7 That also means that it's harder to review, because you're
8 talking about even more complicated models, integrating more
9 pieces of data, more opportunities for mistakes, and so you will
10 have to bring considerably more resources to the table, and
11 maybe some of it we can address through automation, et cetera,
12 but I would submit to you that, for some regions, having a more
13 sophisticated toolbox might actually be simpler at the end than
14 the council might see. You have simple tools that are vetted by
15 these more complex models, and that's where you mentioned
16 management strategy evaluations and where they would come in.

17
18 In many cases, I think you will have these sophisticated models,
19 and the management advice isn't directly based on them, but we
20 can run simpler harvest controls through that, and other
21 management strategies, and, if they perform fairly well in a
22 simulation environment, as long as you make that as realistic as
23 you can, with all the types of uncertainties you think exist in
24 the system -- If it works well in that environment, the odds are
25 that it will work pretty well in the real world. That's where I
26 will stop and ask if you had much discussion of MSE and the role
27 in developing simpler harvest control rules for the councils.

28
29 **DR. STRAM:** Thank you for the question. We did have those
30 discussions, mostly in the breakout sessions, and we did have a
31 lot of discussion about how, when we're talking about this,
32 we're focusing on data-rich areas, but we know we had a lot of
33 experience and discussions about data-poor areas, and that was
34 part of the coordination and communication.

35
36 There's a recommendation in there for data collection. For us
37 in the North Pacific, that's just maintaining our current, but,
38 for other regions, they need increased data collection, in order
39 to move forward in this volatile environment, and so that was
40 one of the recommendations.

41
42 The open source data availability was also related to that, but
43 the MSEs for other regions, and coordination and collaboration
44 amongst other regions, were also directed at how can we use
45 data-rich areas to help inform less-data-rich areas, and where
46 are those tradeoffs, and the roles of MSE versus the roles of
47 just having to respond to something immediately, with more
48 coarse tools, like a buffer, and not necessarily a sophisticated

1 harvest control rule informed by an MSE that is climate
2 enhanced, but the short-term ability of SSCs to respond to
3 something with a qualitative risk assessment, with a buffering
4 system, but the need for the transparency, to understand why
5 that's occurring, when it's not an automatic thing that's been
6 informed by sophisticated modeling applied to a different
7 region, and I'm not sure if that gets to your question.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. John.

10
11 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** Thanks, and I appreciate this, and I've been
12 really interested in this group, and involved in a few, and I
13 will say this group has evolved in an interesting way, from just
14 opening up communication, in the beginning, and folks getting to
15 know each other, to sharing methods, and dealing with shared
16 challenges, back in the early ABC days and such, to now it's
17 sort of pushing the boundaries of what's there, and I think it's
18 really useful in that regard.

19
20 It's also good for -- As Clay said, there's a completely
21 different status of these cutting-edge techniques and their
22 ability to be applied across the regions, and the SCS is a
23 really good place for getting that established and letting say
24 groups that maybe are just at the data collection stage see
25 where they might want to be headed, and it helps them decide the
26 data they really need.

27
28 I think the group is really useful, in that regard, and it
29 should continue to, you know, push those boundaries, and that's
30 sort of one reason that I don't feel that meeting with us is
31 necessarily a great idea for them.

32
33 I think, as far as getting this kind of stuff, the climate, and
34 the environmental things, into management, it really just comes
35 down to it's got to make its way into the catch recommendations.
36 That's what we as councils primarily do, and we try to turn the
37 screw on fishing mortality, and that's our primary job, and
38 there's lots of tools in there that may turn that screw, but
39 that's really what we're trying to do, and so we may feel that
40 something has an environmental impact on the stock productivity,
41 but, if it's not part of the fishing level recommendations, the
42 council is pretty powerless to respond to it, unless it wants to
43 be more conservative as a result, and that's the only direction
44 we can go with the council just applying its collective
45 judgment.

46
47 Otherwise, you can't exceed the ABC of the SSC, and that's where
48 the climate information and the environmental effects have to

1 get into, and, you know, as Clay said, there's lots of ways to
2 do that, and we have to improve the concept before we can get it
3 to the point that it's robust enough to have people, council
4 members, regional administrators, NOAA GC, feel that there's a
5 strong enough record that that can support fishing level
6 recommendation changes.

7
8 I think it's important, on this Number 3, to point out that
9 "sophisticated" need not necessarily mean complex, and, again,
10 echoing the Southeast situation, with our data challenges, and,
11 in a lot of ways, we're trying to say, well, can we come up with
12 somewhat simpler methods that will let us give more timely
13 information, across more stocks, than the very complex
14 assessments we do now, that's giving us not much information
15 across stocks.

16
17 Then the last point, I think, on the scenario planning, and one
18 thing that I will comment on that is I don't like the evolution
19 of the SCS, and one good outcome of that is setting up a process
20 that all of us on the Atlantic have an idea for a group where we
21 can get together and start talking about these shared issues,
22 where those of us from this corner here in the Southeast can get
23 together with those from the Northeast region, through the NRCC,
24 which, you know, I've been participating with over the last
25 couple years of planning this, to talk about these issues.

26
27 I think that's really the first step. You know, if we're going
28 to get to dealing with the stock changes, and any governance
29 issues, it's got to start with those of us impacted
30 communicating, and, much as the SCS started with that, we need
31 to start with that in this group and see where we go in the
32 future.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, John. Merrick.

35
36 **MR. BURDEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Diana, for
37 that excellent presentation. I guess my question is sort of
38 along the lines of what Clay was asking. In the summary that
39 you provided, if I sort of read between the lines, there's a
40 heavy emphasis on adaptation, and there's a lot of emphasis on
41 models and sort of data-rich environments, and a lot of that
42 implies that, you know, we are in the position of either
43 directing, or quickly responding, and then controlling,
44 different outcomes.

45
46 There's maybe a different way to think about this too, and this
47 gets to my question. If we think about, you know, I guess what
48 we tend to experience on the west coast, of these shocks that

1 happen, what we look for is the stock, or the ecosystem, or a
2 community, to bounce back from that, and that's not necessarily
3 a predictive exercise. Instead, you might think of it as making
4 sure that the attributes of a stock, or attributes of a
5 community, are there, that it can bounce back, and that's
6 something that we do have some control over, but it's not a
7 modeling exercise.

8
9 If you understand that delineation, I would be curious if you
10 all discussed that at all, and whether it's in here and I just
11 didn't see it, or whether that was part of the discussion, and
12 I'm just curious.

13
14 **DR. STRAM:** Thank you, Merrick, for the question. I think we
15 discussed that in some of the breakout sessions, and I would say
16 that it's -- We have discussed that, that overall -- Especially
17 the shock and response part, and, at least from our experience
18 in this last year in the North Pacific, we're finding that our
19 harvest control rules aren't robust to those shocks. They are
20 not robust to a change in recruitment that goes really high all
21 of a sudden, and our harvest control rules aren't addressing it,
22 and, if it's high because of the environment, and there's
23 winners and losers in climate change, and I think what we're
24 trying to recommend is that those sort of -- The robustness of
25 the overall system be evaluated.

26
27 For us in the North Pacific, but in general during the SCS7, we
28 talked about how you delineate between those shocks and a
29 longer-term regime change is one problem, and how you address
30 the short-term shock versus the longer-term regime change is
31 also -- The longer-term regime change is the part that lends
32 itself to like an MSE, and more sophisticated modeling, that
33 might help inform other areas, as to whether or not there's
34 robustness to the system that you're modeling for those changes
35 long-term in the environment.

36
37 How we address those short-term changes is less likely to be a
38 modeling exercise and more likely to be communication and
39 coordination that we might learn from other regions, as to how
40 did you address this marine heat wave and the effects on those
41 stocks, and then, looking forward, if we're seeing the
42 possibility of a marine heat wave, and we already know how it
43 affected perhaps another region, and how you addressed it, we
44 might be able to learn from that, and so those are the kind of
45 conversations that we had.

46
47 We really weren't trying to focus only on the data-rich areas,
48 and we had lots and lots of discussions about data-poor regions,

1 what data you need to collect, what data you need to have
2 available, what considerations you need to bring forward in
3 order to address all of these things, and I don't think we had a
4 whole lot of answers, and we're just pointing out that these are
5 the kind of considerations, going forward, that all the regions
6 need to be thinking about, whether it comes from a modeling
7 exercise or revamping and looking back at your management system
8 in your region, but also being able to learn from how these are
9 affecting other regions, and hopefully that kind of gets to your
10 question.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Merrick. Bill.

13
14 **MR. TWEIT:** A couple of additional comments and then, if you're
15 ready, I can put a motion out there. I wanted to comment a
16 little bit more just on the discussion that I heard at the SCS7
17 about data-rich environments, and one of the realizations that I
18 had, as I was listening to it -- You know, I heard scientists
19 essentially say that non-stationarity means that the data that
20 we've collected in the past may not be very useful for us in the
21 future, and it may not serve as a good sort of reference point
22 for what our future is going to look like, and so, all of a
23 sudden, the data-rich processes become data-poor process,
24 essentially.

25
26 Then sort of the odd irony that if, as a council, you're used to
27 decision-making in a data-poor environment, you may actually be
28 better suited. That council may be better suited than my
29 council, that is very used to making decisions based on fairly
30 extensive analyses of a lot of data and all that, and,
31 essentially, it becomes almost a -- You know, from an ironic
32 standpoint, it becomes a bit of an impediment.

33
34 If you're not comfortable making decisions until you've got
35 solid data, which often characterizes my council, you're
36 actually less adaptive, and I didn't hear the scientists say
37 that, but that's certainly -- As I was sitting there, as a
38 manager, and listening to those discussions, that's the sort of
39 consideration that I was having.

40
41 I think, as you read through the actual proceedings themselves,
42 as Dr. Stram referred to, several of the keynotes, and others,
43 sort of get you thinking a little bit along those lines, and so,
44 again, sometimes we think that it will be so different for
45 different regions going into this, but, actually, I think this
46 may be one case where we're both going to -- Both data-rich and
47 data-poor management systems are going to have a lot to learn
48 from each other about how to move forward, and, again, I found

1 quite a bit of irony in that, but also quite a bit of insight in
2 that.

3
4 I also wanted to really briefly just apologize to Tom, and I
5 think I put what I was trying to say very poorly, and what I was
6 trying to say was I saw little progress in how we're aligning
7 the councils' approach to these governance challenges with the
8 approach that the agency is considering, and it seems like maybe
9 we've moved a little bit closer together, but, at least to my
10 unaccustomed ears, I still heard a lot of differences, and
11 sorry, and I didn't word that very well, and I apologize for
12 that. Mr. Chair, if you're ready, I would be happy to put a
13 motion on the table at this point.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sure, Bill. Let's go ahead and do this. Have
16 you sent it?

17
18 **MR. TWEIT:** Yes, and it's also been -- A version of this has
19 been circulated to the EDs now, for a little over a day, and
20 it's been worked on some, and I really appreciate the feedback
21 we've gotten so far, and I don't think we've necessarily gotten
22 all of it, or all the thoughts reflected, but I'm hopeful that
23 we can have it brought up.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bill, while we're waiting to bring that up --
26 Marcos, you had your hand up, while we're waiting, and was it
27 outside of this motion, or to this motion, and, since we don't
28 have a motion yet, we might want to take your comment here,
29 while we're waiting for them to find it.

30
31 **MR. HANKE:** I was going to make a comment, and sometimes I go to
32 the basics, because I think we get lost in the weeds, getting
33 too complex sometimes, and we lose track of important, concrete
34 requests that Janet addressed to us.

35
36 One of the points that I want to give is that I totally agree
37 with Clay, and I interact with Clay on the Caribbean Council,
38 and we have multiple species, and a lot of challenges of
39 information to manage, and I think we do a very good job, in the
40 Caribbean, with simpler models and simpler approaches, basically
41 managing indices and the incorporation of those.

42
43 There is a professor at the University of Mayaguez that worked
44 with the cluster of information that comes out of selected
45 gears, which is an ecological manifestation of the environment
46 into those gears, and, in my opinion as a fisherman, it's super
47 powerful into climate change situations, because you're going to
48 have that complex talking to you, right, and the variation over

1 time.

2

3 The other thing that for me is very frustrating over time, and,
4 for many years, that's been the -- It's that, once we talked
5 about ecosystem-based management, I didn't hear one single time
6 in this presentation and prior, and I brought up this point
7 before, about the forage species. Those are the first ones that
8 are susceptible to oceanographic changes and to the changes.
9 They are short-living, and they are like the red flags that come
10 up, and we don't do anything about that.

11

12 I think it's super important to highlight the importance of
13 addressing the forage species, and now, with my hat as a
14 fisherman, we identify, when we go out for different species,
15 the drivers, forage species drivers, that we use for bait that
16 make us effective as a fisherman, and that signal, that
17 ecological signal, and that ecological knowledge, about the
18 dynamics is what is going to let us really identify the climate
19 change changes and explain why one thing is happening or not,
20 and we are not addressing that strong enough. We are missing
21 the trend, in my opinion.

22

23 We can talk about productivity, but we cannot talk about
24 productivity without a forage species discussion. We can talk
25 about shifts, but, if we don't reevaluate the interaction with
26 forage species in those shifts, or the new forage that will be
27 available in those shifts, we are losing the trend again, and
28 we're going to be back and back and back, and we will never get
29 to something that is feasible if we don't address forage
30 species.

31

32 I'm sorry to be so passionate about it, but it's just a
33 frustration that I have, that we don't put the money and the
34 effort to study forage species, and that's super important for
35 the Caribbean, but I think that it's even more important for
36 industrial fisheries that happen on the east coast of the U.S.,
37 that those drivers of forage species are even more important
38 than in the Caribbean. Thank you. Thank you for the time.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Marcos, for a good point. Thank
41 you. Bill, back to your motion, and it looks like we have it up
42 there, if you want to make that motion, please, and we can deal
43 with that.

44

45 **MR. TWEIT:** Thank you. I move that we form a new CCC climate
46 workgroup to develop a common understanding and voice among the
47 councils on current capacity, future needs, and fishery
48 management designs that can respond to climate change, while

1 **assisting the councils in coordinating with NOAA on a response**
2 **to the Ocean Climate Action Plan.** With a second, I can describe
3 the proposal in a little bit more detail.
4

5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Bill. We have a second from
6 Chris Moore, and so do you want to comment to that, Bill?
7

8 **MR. TWEIT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Chris. The
9 workgroup that we're proposing, we've suggested some initial
10 tasks that I think -- We've suggested four initial tasks, and
11 one would be to provide an overview to the CCC on capacities,
12 needs, and lessons learned among the councils, both for
13 assessing risks and taking action to adapt to the changing
14 environments. We can do that potentially through a survey, and
15 maybe it would come back to us in October with those proposed
16 survey questions for our approval, before they actually do that.
17

18 The survey would be intended to identify the ways that each
19 council is currently working on climate-resilient -- Developing
20 climate-resilient management frameworks and helping us
21 understand how those efforts could potentially work in synergy,
22 both at the individual council level, but also between councils,
23 and how they are making use of existing capacity to accomplish
24 that and any areas that could potentially be adapted across
25 councils.
26

27 To identify some of the tools for risk assessment and
28 uncertainty that each council is considering and whether or not
29 they've been able to achieve a level of confidence among
30 stakeholders in those, and take a look at it from are we able to
31 communicate that well or do we need some more assistance with
32 plain language explanations for what we're doing.
33

34 Definitely focus on identifying some of the councils' views on
35 the need for data collection, and that's very responsive to one
36 of the key findings, and then just, ultimately, have the ability
37 to have a lessons learned capacity for the CCC.
38

39 The second task would be to provide an opportunity, just an
40 ongoing platform, for information exchange and collaboration
41 across regions, and the third would be to provide assistance to
42 the CCC in our communication with the agency on development of
43 goals, guidance, and operational approaches, and fourth is to
44 work with the CCC Legislative Workgroup to build out our working
45 paper existing policy statement on climate change.
46

47 We're suggesting that membership should be just a staff person
48 from each council, and we might want to consider, in discussion

1 on this, whether we it would be useful to have a council member
2 or two also serve.

3
4 The process would be largely virtual. If there was a sense that
5 an in-person meeting would be useful, as with other workgroups,
6 and I believe we've sort of assigned, or delegated, that
7 decision about in-person meetings to our EDs, but we would
8 primarily rely on virtual meetings, as needed to develop the
9 products in a timely fashion. Workgroup updates would be
10 provided by the workgroup chair and/or staff from the hosting
11 council for that year.

12
13 An initial timeline that we're suggesting for an early set of
14 milestones, and I think the idea would be that next spring we
15 take a look at this and see if this is an effort that we would
16 want to continue, if it's worthwhile, but, at the fall meeting,
17 we would hope to hear from the workgroup, with an outline of
18 survey questions for the report, and potentially even some
19 preliminary responses, and then, over the spring, based on
20 survey responses, work with the Legislative Workgroup on draft
21 language for an expanded policy statement, and then have a
22 fairly robust discussion at the spring meeting in 2024, at the
23 CCC, based on a final report from the workgroup on capacity and
24 scientific support needs.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Bill. Obviously, you've
27 thought about this motion, and fleshed this out, and we can
28 provide this proposal document as part of the background, and,
29 with that, regarding the motion, is there any other discussion
30 related to the motion? Seeing no other discussion, we'll go
31 ahead and bring this to a vote then. **Is there any opposition to
32 the motion? Seeing no opposition, that motion carries.**

33
34 All right. Well, let's see. Moving on, that was regarding the
35 7th SCS, and the next item of business for us was to talk about
36 the -- If everyone is fine moving on from Number 7 and moving on
37 to Number 8 here, it was the proposed themes for the SCS8
38 meeting. I guess, Tom, Rachel Feeney from your staff, is
39 planning to present that, and so if we could pull up that
40 presentation, please.

41
42 **OVERVIEW AND PROPOSED THEMES FOR SCS8 MEETING**

43
44 **MR. NIES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Feeney is coordinating
45 with our SSC chair to do the plans, and she will give a
46 presentation remotely, and she's not here in the room, but she
47 is online and ready to go.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Give us one minute here and let us
2 coordinate that. Rachel, it looks like they have your
3 presentation up on the screen, and so, when you're ready, go
4 ahead.

5
6 **DR. RACHEL FEENEY:** Okay. Great. I've been listening
7 attentively to your discussions this morning, and I think the
8 theme that we're proposing will be a great next step and support
9 the work and carry forward the outcomes of SCS7.

10
11 We met in early May, and I will just cut straight to the chase
12 and present first the theme and then talk through how we got to
13 developing this particular theme proposal, and that is simply
14 applying ABC control rules in a changing environment.

15
16 As you know, it's a core function of your SSCs to recommend
17 catch limits consistent with the Magnuson Act and the control
18 rules that have been established by management plans. However,
19 you know, as we are talking through today, we're contending with
20 varying environmental change, scientific uncertainties, and data
21 limitations. Each council is experiencing them to a varying
22 extent, though there are some cross-cutting concerns, for sure.

23
24 The SCS members have been concerned that it's been quite
25 difficult to reliably and sustainably achieve management goals,
26 like preventing overfishing and rebuilding stocks, through just
27 relying on our existing ABC control rules, which calls for
28 continued dialogue and learning on how to be adaptive, adapting
29 the tools in our toolbox, so to speak, to the changes that we're
30 facing.

31
32 We're proposing to explore and discuss and work through these
33 challenges on how to adapt, given all of the dynamics in climate
34 and productivity and recruitment that our ecosystems are
35 experiencing. We would like to explore the use of alternate
36 reference points, or indicators, or indices, in the absence of
37 analytical assessments.

38
39 We would like to explore the stock status determination criteria
40 and how to consider rebuilding plans for stocks that seem to be
41 facing directional changes in productivity or their distribution
42 throughout the ecosystem, and we had quite a bit of
43 conversation, in the development of this proposal, about how
44 SSCs can better use the social and economic information about
45 fisheries, as well as the expertise that SSCs have within their
46 own bodies, for setting catch recommendations and to have a
47 better understanding of the potential for their recommendations
48 to actually achieve the management goals of the FMP in

1 consideration and how fisheries and communities can be better
2 adapting to the dynamic conditions we're experiencing.

3
4 To come to this theme proposal, we held our first planning
5 meeting, our only planning meeting thus far, in the beginning of
6 May. Prior to that point, we asked all of the SSC SCS members
7 to reach out to their individual SSCs to develop theme ideas,
8 and we put them all on a Google document, so that we could look
9 at them together.

10
11 During this May 1 meeting, we had -- We received, in advance,
12 theme ideas from seven of the SSCs, and then we had seven
13 councils represented at this first meeting of the SCS to plan
14 the workshop. We went through an exercise where we examined all
15 the ideas that came in from across the nation and sorted them
16 and grouped them to find common ground and themes to move
17 forward with, and we reached consensus on this proposed theme.

18
19 We felt like it would be of broad enough interest to all of the
20 councils, and it was an appropriate follow-up on the SCS7
21 outcomes, focused on, you know, adapting to the changing
22 ecosystem, and, you know, particularly that third focus on how
23 to develop fishing level recommendations for species exhibiting
24 distributional changes, that Diana presented to you this
25 morning, and finding pathways for managing in a non-stationary
26 environments. We really hope to develop actionable guidance for
27 how to best support the councils in managing fisheries in our
28 ever-changing system.

29
30 After that discussion at our meeting, we went back and drafted
31 the theme proposal that's in your meeting packet today, and we
32 circulated that, you know, amongst all of the SCS members, and
33 we got good additional feedback from all the SSCs represented on
34 the committee.

35
36 The New England Fishery Management Council is expecting to
37 coordinate and host SCS8, and we are led by the New England SSC
38 Chair, Dr. Lisa Kerr serving as the SCS chair. I will be
39 serving as the staff coordinator for this workshop, and I've
40 already learned a lot from Diana and her careful coordination of
41 SCS7, and we'll be really leaning on some of those
42 recommendations for future SCS meetings that she presented this
43 morning, and we're also supported by the Executive Assistant at
44 the New England Council, Ms. Joan O'Leary.

45
46 Moving ahead, we plan to convene, as the SCS, every four to six
47 weeks, to delve further into developing the goals and objectives
48 of the workshop, the specific sub-themes that we'll discuss, you

1 know, the agenda, keynote speakers, presenters, topics, all the
2 logistics that it takes to pull a workshop of this magnitude
3 off.

4
5 In terms of dates and locations, we're leaning, at this point,
6 to hold the workshop within New England, and we have flagged
7 either the last week of August or the first week of September of
8 2024 to convene the workshop, and I know the executive directors
9 have been discussing dates, and it would be helpful to come to
10 some conclusion on which of those last -- Either the last week
11 in August or the first in September, so that we can move forward
12 with the planning the logistics of the workshop, and I know
13 there was some conversation today about aligning with the CCC
14 meeting, and so maybe you can talk about that further, but I
15 think that's all I had to present, and so I'm just opening it up
16 for questions and potential approval of this theme.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Feeney, and we'll open it
19 up for questions regarding SCS8. All right. Going once. Any
20 comments or suggestions? Tom.

21
22 **MR. NIES:** No comments or suggestions, Mr. Chair, but I have two
23 motions that are related to SCS8, and I am ready to make the
24 first motion, if you're ready to entertain it, which is to
25 approve the theme, if the staff can bring it up on the screen.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Tom, give us just a second to pull that
28 up, so we can all see it.

29
30 **MR. NIES:** I will read it into the record. **The motion is the**
31 **CCC approves the proposed theme for SCS8: "Applying ABC Control**
32 **Rules in a Changing Environment". The SCS is also asked to**
33 **recommend how workshop conclusions can be shared with the CCC**
34 **and councils in a manner that encourages the use of workshop**
35 **results. This recommendation should be delivered to the CCC at**
36 **the fall CCC meeting.**

37
38 The first part of the motion is pretty explanatory, and the
39 second part is an attempt to address some of the recommendations
40 in the SCS7 report to improve the communication of workshop
41 results, and that's why that was added in there, and we would
42 ask the SCS to come back with a recommendation in October of how
43 they plan to do that.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Tom. Let's see if we can get
46 a second on that. Bill is seconding. All right. Any other
47 discussion on the motion? Tom, do you have anything else that
48 you wanted to --

1
2 **MR. NIES:** I have nothing else to add right now.
3

4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am seeing no other discussion on this
5 motion. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none,**
6 **the motion carries.** Go ahead, Tom.
7

8 **MR. NIES:** The second motion is related to the SCS idea, the
9 formation of the SCS, and our terms of reference on our webpage
10 say that the SCS consists of staff from the councils, and I
11 believe the SSC chair, or their proxy, from each meeting, and
12 there is nothing in our terms of reference that say that there
13 are any NOAA Fisheries people that are members of the SCS.
14

15 **The practice, for the last few years however, has been that,**
16 **when planning the workshops, there are at least two or three**
17 **people, or scientists, I should say, from NMFS Headquarters that**
18 **participate in the development of the workshop, and so the**
19 **second motion that I have, which I believe the staff has, is to**
20 **modify the terms of reference so that the SCS is allowed to**
21 **invite participation of up to three NMFS scientists from**
22 **Headquarters while planning the workshop. All it does is**
23 **matches our terms of reference to what we've actually been**
24 **doing.**
25

26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. That sounds good. Bernie, do you all
27 have that?
28

29 **MR. NIES:** I thought she had it, but maybe I forgot to send it
30 to her. Give me a moment. That's it. I will read it into the
31 record. **The motion is the CCC TOR for the Scientific**
32 **Coordination Subcommittee is modified to read, and the change is**
33 **in yellow: The SCS will consist of the chairs from each of the**
34 **regional councils' Scientific and Statistical Committees or**
35 **their respective proxies. The SCS can invite participation by**
36 **up to three additional NMFS scientists when planning SCS**
37 **workshops.**
38

39 I want to explain the language of the second part a bit. The
40 reason I worded it that way, rather than just saying that
41 there's three NMFS scientists on the SCS, is it's possible that,
42 in the future, the councils, the CCC, may ask the SCS to weigh-
43 in on issues that we don't want NMFS' input on, because we want
44 it to be a CCC input, and not necessarily a NOAA Fisheries
45 issue, and so that's why I worded it this way, that the SCS can
46 invite participation for planning the workshops only.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Tom. We need a second for

1 that motion. Chris seconds. Any further rationale for the
2 motion, Tom?

3
4 **MR. NIES:** No.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any discussion on the motion? I am
7 seeing no discussion. **I will ask if there's any opposition to**
8 **this motion. Seeing no opposition to the motion, the motion**
9 **carries.**

10
11 **MR. NIES:** If I might add just one final comment, and it's been
12 the practice, I believe, at all the previous SCS, that the
13 agency provided a significant amount of funding to help host the
14 SCS meetings. We asked, a couple of months ago, whether the
15 agency planned to do that again for this meeting, and I realize
16 that the meeting is a little distance away, and maybe you don't
17 know, but I would just to reiterate that it would help our
18 planning if we knew how much funding the agency was willing to
19 commit to this. Thank you. That ends my report, Mr. Chair, and
20 Dr. Feeney's report.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Tom, and I am not seeing
23 anything else. Is there any other business to bring before this
24 section regarding the Science Coordination Subcommittee? Well,
25 seeing none, that brings us to the end of that portion of our
26 agenda, and we're actually a little bit early for lunch, which
27 is good, and I think what we'll do is give a little more time
28 for maybe an extended lunch, and we'll meet back here, according
29 to the agenda, at 1:30. Then, at that point, hopefully Sam
30 Rauch is available, and we'll take up the America the Beautiful
31 Initiative. See everyone after lunch.

32
33 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on May 24, 2023.)

34
35 - - -

36
37 May 24, 2023

38
39 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

40
41 - - -

42
43 The Council Coordination Committee reconvened at the Marriott
44 Beachside Hotel in Key West, Florida on Wednesday afternoon, May
45 24, 2023, and was called to order by Gulf of Mexico Fishery
46 Management Council Chairman Greg Stunz.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Welcome back from lunch, everyone. We're going

1 to pick up with the America the Beautiful Initiative that we had
2 on our agenda for earlier, and it was scheduled earlier in the
3 day from now, and the first item on that agenda is the CCC
4 Working Group and Final Report on Area-Based Management, and
5 Eric Reid is going to take us through that presentation, and so,
6 Eric, they will pull that up here in a second. All right.
7 Eric, whenever you're ready.

8
9 **AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL INITIATIVE**

10 **CCC WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT ON AREA-BASED MANAGEMENT (ABM)**
11 **AND ABM DASHBOARD**

12
13 **MR. REID:** Thank you, Dr. Chair. I appreciate it, and thank you
14 to you all for another opportunity to address our subcommittee
15 team's work, and this will be to present the team's final draft
16 for your consideration today.

17
18 I'm going to start out with a quick review and an update,
19 especially of our final numbers, and then I'm going to turn it
20 over to Ms. Bachman, from the New England Council, to give you a
21 little tour of our interactive dashboard that we developed, and
22 that was during our GIS work, and then, at the end, I'm going to
23 come back to you and ask you some questions, instead of you
24 asking me questions, and so they will be easy, I promise, and so
25 do the same, and I would appreciate that.

26
27 Let's start with a review of our task, starting with an
28 incredible team. There was one person from each council:
29 Bachman, Coakley, Fitchett, Froeschke, Griffin, Pugliese, Rolon
30 and Rivera, and Witherell, and, of course, our invaluable
31 assistance from our NOAA partners, and those teammates were
32 Sagar, Haverland, and Lennox.

33
34 Just to remind you of our terms of reference that you gave us in
35 the beginning of our task, one is to assist this group in
36 reacting to 30 by 30, and two is to prepare this report on area-
37 based management, by evaluating EEZ fishery area closures
38 relative to the 30 by 30 initiative and its goals, discuss pros
39 and cons of area-based management and objectives and expected
40 benefits of area-based management tools for diversity of
41 ecosystems under our jurisdiction, and, in my opinion, we have
42 met all of those terms of reference in spades.

43
44 Our third task was to prepare a journal article on area-based
45 measures for marine fisheries in the United States, and the team
46 has a working draft in progress, and the plan is an August 2023
47 submittal of the journal article, and we have tentatively
48 identified *The Marine Fisheries Review* as a good landing point

1 for that report.

2
3 We've had a few meetings since our October meeting. If you
4 remember, back then, we requested GIS support from this group,
5 and we did get it, and we much appreciate that, and then you can
6 see we met in January and February, and our final meeting before
7 today was in April, and the team, the full team, has
8 collectively approved this document that's before you today, and
9 I would like to commend the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission,
10 particularly Brett Holycross and his team, on their work. They
11 were a subcontractor, and their ability to digest the data and
12 input from all eight councils was pretty impressive, and their
13 product is really, really useful.

14
15 Our highlights are we identified three conservation area
16 categories that included 648 different areas, in total. They
17 are ecosystem conservation, with currently 56 percent of the EEZ
18 being conserved, year-round fisheries management, with 37
19 percent, and seasonal fishery management, or other actions, that
20 account for 4 percent. The details and the supporting workshops
21 and effectiveness checklists are in Appendix B in your meeting
22 materials, and that's Tab 11(a)(i) and 11(a)(ii), and feel free
23 to read them at your leisure.

24
25 We identified and qualified these conservation areas, and this
26 is by number, by region, and you can see that ecosystem
27 conservation is 531 area, year-round management is sixty-seven,
28 and seasonal fishery closures, or other, are fifty, for a total
29 of 648, and you will note that, throughout this report,
30 including the GIS maps, that the color-coding for each category
31 carries through that entire document, and so it makes it a
32 little bit easier to reference any one of the 648 that you so
33 desire.

34
35 Okay, and so what's the numbers? The big question is always
36 what's the numbers, and percent by council and criteria, the
37 ecosystem conservation is 56 percent of the EEZ. Year-round
38 fisheries management is 37, and seasonal, or other, management
39 is 4 percent, with a total combined area, without overlap, of
40 72.1 percent of our EEZ is conserved in some way under the
41 authority of Magnuson, and that's a pretty impressive number.
42 In the next couple of tables, there are a lot of numbers, and
43 I'll let you digest those as we go along, but you will see how
44 it goes.

45
46 Anyway, year-round by gear, and this is seasonal coverage by
47 gear type, and so what we have is these are the GIS maps that we
48 developed for each council. They are extremely accurate, and

1 extremely detailed, and you can find those in Appendix -- I
2 think it's A, but what I would like to do now is pause for any
3 questions that you may have before I turn it over to Ms. Bachman
4 to walk us through that dashboard tool, and so, Mr. Chair.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Eric. Any questions? Go ahead,
7 Janet.

8
9 **MS. COIT:** Thank you, Eric, and this is such fine work. When
10 you say no overlap in that slide, do you mean that none of these
11 areas overlap, or that that's -- Is that what you mean, or just
12 that that's the percentage that is in its entirety, and there is
13 no double-counting?

14
15 **MR. REID:** There was no double-counting, or triple-counting, and
16 I'll give you a good example. Being that you're from Rhode
17 Island, there's a thing called a monument south of us, and the
18 monument is overlapped by the New England Coral Conservation
19 Zone, and it is also inclusive of the Mid-Atlantic's tilefish
20 GRAs, and there is some monkfish actions in there, but that area
21 itself is only counted once. I mean, I'm happy to go back and
22 count it three or four or five times, if you like, but, in
23 reality, that's why we used the GIS, and that's why we needed
24 the GIS, to make sure that we only counted everything once.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Merrick.

27
28 **MR. BURDEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Eric, for
29 the talk so far. I am thinking about a definitional issue, as
30 it applies to essentially what we're counting as an area under
31 conservation, or some management of some kind, and maybe you
32 already know what I'm getting at, but, if I look at the Pacific
33 coast, for instance, there is a ribbon of water between our
34 deepwater conservation zone and our EFH areas, and the map would
35 imply that that's not managed, or not conserved, and I think
36 it's a definitional issue, because, in that area, all of the
37 fisheries that we have are managed, but it's not a discrete area
38 that we've defined within regulation, and it's just part of our
39 EEZ, and so do you understand what I'm getting at? I think just
40 adding that clarity might be beneficial for the body here.

41
42 **MR. REID:** How about if I give you my answer, and you can tell
43 me whether I understood your question, and how's that? I mean,
44 I do appreciate the question about the definition. You know,
45 our very first task was to come up with our own definition of
46 what a conservation area is, because none existed, and that
47 criteria was, if I remember correctly, an established area with
48 defined boundaries, and the second one was that it was well

1 managed by a body that would be identified, and the third
2 criteria was to enhance ecosystem biodiversity and access,
3 including food production.

4
5 When we did -- When we went through the work tables and the
6 effectiveness sheets, we did take all the areas under each
7 council, and we applied the eight America the Beautiful
8 principles to those areas, and then we had some other criteria,
9 and it's all outlined in Appendix B, which is, I think,
10 11(a)(ii), and, if you want to go in and look at that and see if
11 the area that you're talking about was identified or not, and I
12 honestly -- I am looking at the coast right there, and I'm not
13 sure if I see what you're talking about, but we were very clear
14 that, once we got this document to what we thought was a final
15 form, and we went through every council representative on our
16 group, and we asked if their area was accurate, and everyone
17 agreed, under penalty of my wrath, I suppose, but that was -- We
18 wanted to make sure that everybody, after getting all the GIS
19 work done, and being able to, you know, look at it, and a
20 picture is worth more than a couple thousand pages, or words,
21 and we all signed off on it, including your council. Does that
22 help you?

23
24 **MR. BURDEN:** Yes. Thank you, and I mostly wanted to just raise
25 the definitional issue, so everyone is clear what they're
26 looking at here, and so maybe just one succinct response is the
27 EEZ itself is not treated as an area, and there are defined
28 areas within the EEZ, is what we're focusing on here.

29
30 **MR. REID:** Well, the EEZ itself was defined, because that's
31 always an interesting math problem, but, in order to come up
32 with a percent, and 30 by 30 is a percent, and so we wanted to
33 have a percent, and so we had to calculate the entire EEZ, and
34 then each region was calculated individually, and then the areas
35 within those regions under management were applied for a
36 percent, the simple math of that.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Are there other questions for Eric,
39 before we ask Michelle to come up for the rest of this
40 presentation? All right. Seeing none, Eric, we'll move on, and
41 I know you're going to wrap-up the end of this discussion as
42 well, and Michelle Bachman is going to present the remainder of
43 this.

44
45 **MS. MICHELLE BACHMAN:** Thank you, Dr. Chairman, and thanks to
46 everyone for having me. I'm very pleased to be here. As Eric
47 noted, I'm a staff member at the New England Council, and I was
48 assigned, about a year ago, to work on this subcommittee, with

1 the other members.

2
3 I think you got -- You know, you just got a little bit of an
4 update on our GIS contract, and you heard, I think at your fall
5 meeting, that we were planning to do this work, and I just echo
6 that it was really a pleasure to work with the Pacific Fishery
7 Commission staff on this, and it was really a good
8 collaboration.

9
10 We iterated, through, you know, the first two, and even the
11 third, milestones, over the past months, since September and
12 October, in terms of assembling the list of areas, and I think
13 the subcommittee, and also Brett Holycross, were very thorough
14 in making sure that we weren't missing anything, and we kind of
15 double and triple-checked, a number of times.

16
17 There was definitely, you know, some cleanup that needed to
18 happen, and a big thing that we did, that I think is a strength
19 of this work, is adding descriptive metadata about each of the
20 areas, when they were designated, in what fishery management
21 plan, where you could find links to the regulations, which gears
22 were restricted in each, all of that sort of information that
23 provides a lot of nuance about what the area is and why it's
24 there.

25
26 Many of the data files that we started with had some of that,
27 and we put them all into one, or Brett put them all into one,
28 format, and we wrote the metadata tables, and he added them to
29 the spatial data, and so now we have one clean dataset with all
30 of that information across all eight councils' management areas.

31
32 Then, sort of later in the process, he was able to do all those
33 area calculations that Eric was speaking of, and it's,
34 obviously, important to have good workflows for that, so that
35 we're not double-counting, and we're accounting for overlaps
36 within and across the different categories, and I was pleased
37 that I didn't have to do that work, and that Brett was able to
38 do that for us, and then the final step, that we just completed
39 a few weeks ago, was to finalize and publish the geodatabase,
40 and I can show you, in a couple of slides, where you can get
41 that information, and you can download it.

42
43 It's a little hard to see on this screen, and I think it might
44 be better on your screens, but this is just to give you a sense
45 of we'll have fixed links to both a webmap and a landing page
46 for the spatial data layer, and we link to those in the reports,
47 and we'll link those to the fishery council page, and we can
48 link to those through our individual websites, or whatever

1 channels, and that will take folks right to this webmap and
2 layer pages.

3
4 They each provide a brief description of the dataset, what the
5 intention was, highlight what the council has contributed to the
6 work, and you can either open these datasets directly on your
7 own desktop GIS software, and I'm sure that many folks don't
8 have that, and so you can also do it through a web viewer and
9 interact with the data that way. These two pages end up being
10 really similar in this case, because we're just talking about
11 the one dataset per page, and we, obviously, could use the
12 webmap to add in lots of other different spatial data and view
13 it together, in kind of a curated way.

14
15 This is just a little bit of a zoomed-in view. On the left, it
16 shows you, if you were to click through and look at that ArcGIS
17 Online webmap viewer, what you would see, and you would see the
18 different color-coded areas. On the right, it shows you, from
19 my desktop, what you would see if you were using ArcGIS for
20 desktop, and it also works in QGIS, and I was testing that out
21 earlier this morning, and, basically, you can zoom-in on your
22 region of interest, and then, if you click on individual layers,
23 it will pull up all that metadata, and I believe the links in
24 the metadata are live, and it will take you to places in the
25 Code of Federal Regulations or other places that we thought were
26 important to be able to get to to learn more about the area.

27
28 Then, if you were to download the dataset, you can work with it
29 in your own desktop GIS, or through ArcGIS Online. You can
30 change the symbology or add whatever other data you wanted to
31 show, along with these data, and really customize a presentation
32 of the information, but I think the point is that we have now
33 this kind of clean, comprehensive database of all of these areas
34 across all the regions.

35
36 I think a request to the subcommittee, from the previous
37 meeting, was to develop a recommendation, I think about kind of
38 what to do with these, and so I think, at this point, I will
39 shift over and -- Eric will get into some, I think, final
40 recommendations, but just kind of to make a point about storage
41 of the database, and so we, obviously, worked with the Pacific
42 States Marine Fisheries Commission as our contractor, and they
43 have a geoportal, and it's essentially an online cloud-based
44 storage space, to hold these data. They will host them for us
45 long-term, and they're willing to do that, and then the webmap
46 and the layer link will be a static link that will remain active
47 for us.

48

1 I think that's, you know, the simplest, and the subcommittee
2 agreed that it was the simplest and most direct way to be able
3 to share these data. NOAA Fisheries also has a geoportal, which
4 I'm sure that some of you have used, and may have access to, and
5 we can share the links through their geoportal as well, and so
6 that's kind of a recommendation, and Eric will wrap-up more with
7 recommendations towards the end.

8
9 Then another recommendation that we would like you to provide
10 some input on is whether we want to move in a direction of an
11 interactive web application, something kind of enhanced, as
12 compared to just the basic webmap or the basic layer page, and I
13 think this maybe gets to the point that Mr. Burden was making
14 about kind of the caveats, or the nuances, and the fact that,
15 you know, the whole EEZ is managed in some way, and there is
16 really, I think, a story that we were trying to tell with this
17 whole effort, and with our report, that I think we can pull some
18 highlights out of that narrative and showcase a little better
19 through a more interactive application.

20
21 ArcGIS Online has these applications that are pretty easy to
22 build, as I understand, and it's called Experience Builder, and,
23 basically, it creates a webpage that can be customized however
24 you would like, and I put a few examples in a couple of slides,
25 and there's some links to those, and they can look however we
26 would like them to look, in terms of kind of the style and how
27 many tabs, or graphics, we might have, and they would be based
28 in webmap, but they could have any text that we wanted to see,
29 and they could have some of those gear restriction summaries,
30 whether those are in tables or more graphically, and we could do
31 separate tabs for all the different individual regions.

32
33 We were originally sort of thinking of more of a dashboard
34 concept as being useful, and that was something that Brett was
35 able to develop for us as a working tool for the subcommittee,
36 but, in talking to him at our last subcommittee meeting, it
37 seemed like this ArcGIS Experience Builder is really the way to
38 go, I think, in terms of kind of a more kind of an appropriate
39 way to showcase these data.

40
41 Just to kind of compare the different tools that you can use
42 through ArcGIS Online data sharing, the first would be the
43 webmap, which we showed you the screenshot of. It's really
44 basic, and it doesn't provide a lot of explanatory text, but
45 it's a good place to send people if they want to just view the
46 data and download the data.

47
48 The dashboard, which I will share with you on the next slide, is

1 kind of a flat view on one screen, and it doesn't necessarily
2 have a lot of text there, and I think it's frequently used if
3 you have data that we're updating in real time, and you would
4 want to be able to track, you know, different metrics associated
5 with those data on a screen, and maybe you're responding to an
6 issue, or something live, where you really need that kind of one
7 screen, and then the experience concept, as I was saying, is a
8 little more curated and in-depth. It allows for more text.

9
10 Importantly, it can also -- It will scale automatically the
11 interface to whatever device you're using, and so, whether
12 somebody is using a phone or a tablet or a laptop or anything
13 else, it's going to scale automatically, to be able to
14 accommodate kind of however people are approaching it, and that
15 really lets us kind of, I think, tell the story in the way that
16 we want to present it.

17
18 If you go to the next slide, you can see this dashboard concept,
19 and so it's kind of all on one screen. You know, there's really
20 a lot there, and it works great on a large screen, and it might
21 not work so well on a small screen, but some of these types of
22 graphical information that we have in this dashboard I think
23 could be adapted well to this ArcGIS Online Experience concept,
24 and so we have these figures that are showing you the different
25 area, under different types of conservation categories, the
26 totals, and this is, when you first get into the dashboard, what
27 that nationwide total looks like, and then, if you click
28 through, and I can show you this in a minute, you will get to
29 the individual council regions, and you can investigate
30 individual datasets. Then you will see the summaries change for
31 those individual regions.

32
33 I think something more of a website, with more narrative text,
34 that combines a lot of these elements, is what the subcommittee
35 was thinking might be a good way to go, if you would like to see
36 something like this built out.

37
38 The next couple of slides are just some examples. ArcGIS Online
39 has a whole gallery of these Experience applications that you
40 can kind of look at, and I just pulled a couple that felt
41 somewhat relevant to the work that we do, and you can just -- I
42 think the point of showing these two screenshots is just that
43 they can be very different, and they are individually branded to
44 the organization and what they're trying to show, and they're
45 really based in webmaps, but they have lots of opportunities for
46 popups and different ways to explore the data.

47
48 This one is showing you fishing sites in Alaska, and, if you go

1 to the next slide, it's more about marine spatial planning in
2 Ireland, being able to dig into different sector-based
3 activities. This one is a little less fully built out, but it
4 just kind of gives you a sense that they can be very different,
5 in terms of being able to be configured. I think, before I go
6 to the next slide, I was just going to pop over and show you, a
7 little more interactively, the dashboard, if that works.

8
9 This is just loading up the dashboard that Brett Holycross built
10 for us that we were working with as a kind of self-check tool as
11 we were going through these different regions, and I will jump
12 into New England, just because I'm familiar with our areas, and
13 so it zooms on the New England region. If you go to that
14 portion of the webmap, it highlights which region you're looking
15 at, and then you can really see how the different color-coding
16 for the ecosystem conservation areas, in blue, the year-round
17 fishery management areas in orange, the seasonal or other areas
18 in yellow, and we could, I think, you know, build the
19 application so that you can toggle these different things on and
20 off.

21
22 If you click into an individual area, you go right to there, and
23 this is our Eastern Maine Habitat Management Area that we
24 designated in 2018, and, if you scroll through the pop-up, it
25 will give you lots of different information about which council
26 designated it, what the gear restrictions are, how you can find
27 more information, and so all the other councils are similar, and
28 it will take you to their region. That's kind of this
29 dashboard, and I think we can take a lot of these concepts -- It
30 also has static maps that you can download as graphics.

31
32 Then, just to also show you a layer page and what that looks
33 like, this is just that landing page for the layer, and you can
34 see that here it gives a short description of the layer, and it
35 has links to our report, and then there's this data download
36 link, and so you will download a zipped geodatabase, which you
37 can then load up in your own local GIS software and manipulate
38 how you like.

39
40 You can either open it in your own desktop software, or you can
41 open it in this map viewer, and then it will let you interact
42 with the map, zoom-in on different areas, and kind of explore
43 the metadata for the areas in the same way. Obviously, there's
44 a lot kind of going on with this map, and so it does take a
45 minute to load, but then, when you click on an individual area,
46 you will get all that same metadata, and so I think this is
47 probably, you know, a great simple tool for now, and the link is
48 in the presentation, if you did want to explore the dataset that

1 we have and learn about any of these areas, or share them with
2 others, but that kind of more builds out --
3
4 ArcGIS Online Experience is I think what we would suggest, in
5 terms of if we wanted a product that shared a little bit more,
6 in terms of kind of a narrative description of the work that we
7 did, and that would be a way to go, and so thanks for letting me
8 borrow your computer. I don't know if we want to take any
9 questions about this before we go to your last slide or if you
10 want to present the recommendations.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think maybe let's -- Because this is a very
13 intriguing presentation that you had, and I'm sure there's some
14 questions, and maybe we will take a few questions for you, and
15 then, Eric, if you want to wrap it all up.

16
17 **MS. BACHMAN:** Sure.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any questions? Maybe not. Maybe just stay
20 there for a minute, because I think this will wrap up pretty
21 quickly right here, and so go ahead, Eric, and then if there's
22 any broader questions after that.

23
24 **MR. REID:** Okay. Thank you, and so, as far as our next steps
25 go, we've already taken at least one, and we've presented the
26 final draft for your approval today, hopefully, and that's one
27 of your tasks, is whether to approve it or not, and I already
28 spoke about the way forward for our journal article.

29
30 As part of our task originally for the subcommittee, it was to
31 continue to support this group, in coordination with NOAA
32 Fisheries, on an atlas database and any position statements the
33 CCC would like our help on, and that's our ongoing task, and, of
34 course, today, we have the opportunity to perhaps move ahead
35 with a GIS contractor and the development of this ArcGIS
36 Experience, which is a new and improved version of what we're
37 displaying as a dashboard now, and so that's -- I guess, really,
38 that's it.

39
40 At this point, I would recommend that the Pacific Marine
41 Fisheries Commission continue to host, store, whatever, the GIS
42 data for its use, and they're willing to do that, at least for
43 the foreseeable future, and that would be my recommendation.
44 It's very cost-effective, and they have access to a lot of
45 different outlets for that data.

46
47 I guess my final question would be, if in fact you approve our
48 final draft, what would you like to do with the subcommittee

1 itself? We had a very specific task, and we do have some other
2 things, but whether or not you would like to turn it into a
3 working group, or perhaps keep us on-hand for a little while,
4 and so that's it. That's my ask, and I appreciate the
5 opportunity, and, once again, I would like to thank the team for
6 a really fabulous job. Thank you.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think that's very good work, and so, Eric, it
9 sounds like we've got a couple of items of business that you
10 would like us to address, and so, first, maybe I'll just open
11 that up for any broad discussion or questions or anything.
12 Simon.

13
14 **MR. KINNEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not a question, but I just
15 wanted to express my appreciation for Eric and Michelle's
16 presentation here, and I think it was very eye-opening, and it's
17 great to see all the work that the subcommittee has gotten into
18 and completed, and thank you very much for the work here, and
19 it's a tremendous outcome. When the time is right, I will have
20 a motion that will address at least some of what Eric is getting
21 to, but I will wait and see what other questions and discussion
22 there is first.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Well, I will call you back in just a
25 second for your motion. Is there any other comments or
26 questions? Go ahead, Janet.

27
28 **MS. COIT:** I would also just like to again say that I think this
29 is terrific, and the visual I think is really powerful, the
30 spatial representation of these different management regimes,
31 and so I guess I would throw a question to you, Eric, about like
32 what are some of the ways that you see this -- I think the
33 impetus was America the Beautiful, but I think it probably has
34 value well beyond that, and so have you thought about, you know,
35 the ways that this could be useful?

36
37 **MR. REID:** Well, it's the summation of all the actions that
38 these councils have done over a very long period of time, and
39 it's pretty easy to use, even for me, which is saying something,
40 and, you know, it's extremely accurate, and it's extremely
41 informative. You know, obviously, we did this as -- We were
42 tasked by the CCC, and the report is to the CCC, and maybe the
43 question is to the whole body, but, in reality, you know, there
44 are a lot of issues that we're facing, and, when it comes to
45 identifying areas that we have already protected, and gone
46 through and conserved, I suppose is the right term, and sorry,
47 but in the face of other competing interests, and I think that's
48 a pretty substantial tool to justify any position we may have.

1
2 Of course, this document can be updated with future actions,
3 whether we add on, and we almost never subtract, but it's a tool
4 that can be used for groups outside of fisheries, to see what
5 has happened, and, in particular, the current administration,
6 and so I guess that's -- Does that work for you? Okay. Thank
7 you.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Marcos.

10
11 **MR. HANKE:** A question to Eric. During the discussion of this,
12 was there any attempt to list all the families, or the species,
13 or the groups, that are protected under this, that have
14 benefitted for protection out of these areas that we already are
15 protecting, because we see that on other forums, that they do
16 that, the same idea, right, and I think it's important to
17 highlight whatever is already in place.

18
19 **MR. REID:** Well, I guess it depends on what area you might be
20 talking about, Marcos. There are areas that are protected for
21 biodiversity itself in total, and to go through that list of
22 species -- I mean, sorry, but no. The answer is no, because
23 there is everything from corals to king crab, or something else,
24 and that's an exhaustive list, and we were not prepared, or
25 capable, of doing that, but there are other areas that are
26 specific to certain species, or groups of species, in which case
27 those have been identified, but some of the areas are too vast
28 to even attempt to do what you're doing, but, as you know, there
29 are areas that are designed to protect particular species, for
30 particular reasons, and those are listed in the -- If you look
31 at the worksheets, some of those actions are listed and what
32 their intent for management was.

33
34 **MR. HANKE:** Just a follow-up, and the reason of my question is
35 that, when we talk -- When I hear discussion about 30 by 30,
36 it's a general discussion, and we are talking not with a general
37 approach here, and there is a lot of them that are designed for
38 a reason, and they have a true core purpose to it, more than
39 just a percentage added to it, as a general mentality or
40 something, and that's what bothers me, and that's the reason why
41 I made the question, because I see that we protect a lot, and we
42 protect enough, and there is other tools that can complement
43 what we have, and we don't need to -- That's my opinion, that we
44 don't need to do anything, unless it's super justified, to
45 address the area closures anymore.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. David, do you have your hand up?
48

1 **MR. WITHERELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me. I
2 was just going to mention that your habitat workgroup could
3 probably take the GIS information that this subcommittee
4 provided and be able to at least tell you what species have EFH
5 conservation measures associated with them, and so, in other
6 words, we could tell you say the Level 1, or Level 2, FMP
7 species that have EFH in each particular area, but I think
8 Eric's point was that there's a whole lot more to biodiversity
9 than just the species that are covered under an FMP, that are
10 being conserved in that area, each area.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am not seeing any more hands, and so,
13 Simon, this might be a good time, if you have a motion that you
14 would like to present.

15
16 **MR. KINNEEN:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. **My motion would be**
17 **that the CCC accepts the report of the ABM Working Group and**
18 **approves development of an interactive webmap application.**

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Would someone like to second that
21 motion? It's seconded by Tom. Any discussion? Any more
22 rationale or any discussion on it? Go ahead, Simon, if you have
23 some rationale.

24
25 **MR. KINNEEN:** I didn't really have a whole lot of other
26 rationale than what I spoke to earlier, and I just agree with
27 Eric that it sure seems that the subcommittee met the terms of
28 reference that the CCC put forward, and it sure looks like
29 mission accomplished to me.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes. Good. Okay. Thank you, and, Eric.

32
33 **MR. REID:** Thank you, Dr. Chair, and so, the other day, I did
34 mention that developing the interactive webmap, and we spoke of
35 the ArcGIS, is going to require some funding, but that funding
36 has been secured through the New England Council, and I would
37 like to -- If this goes forward, I would like to thank the
38 council in advance, and they supported the GIS work as well
39 initially too, and so --

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Go ahead.

42
43 **MS. BACHMAN:** Thank you. Just a quick comment. In talking to
44 Brett, we do think that this is an application that could be
45 built maybe in a month's timeframe, depending on other work that
46 they're doing, and I think it would require some amount of
47 interaction with the subcommittee members, just to make sure
48 that we're showcasing and highlighting what each council feels

1 is the best information to put out there, but, really, a lot of
2 the content, I think, is already developed, as part of the
3 report, and so it wouldn't be a lot of writing or generation of
4 new content, and it's just kind of showcasing it in a slightly
5 different way, and just so folks are aware that there would be
6 that kind of additional integration with the subcommittee, to
7 make this happen.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you for that clarification. Not seeing
10 any more hands up, we'll go ahead and dispense with this motion.
11 **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion**
12 **carries.**

13
14 All right. If there is nothing else regarding area-based
15 management, and seeing none here, Sam, we'll move on to your
16 portion of the America the Beautiful Initiative and the
17 fisheries update. Eric.?

18
19 **MR. REID:** Sorry, and I didn't mean to interrupt Mr. Rauch, but
20 can I assume, by consent, that it's okay to have the Pacific
21 Commission store the data?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I'm sorry. That was the other piece of your
24 point that I failed to mention.

25
26 **MR. REID:** Maybe we don't need a motion, and maybe just
27 everybody is okay with that, and we'll move on.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Is there any opposition to that request?
30 Seeing none, it sounds like it's okay, and so thank you. Okay.
31 Now moving on, Sam Rauch, thank you. I know you had some travel
32 issues getting here, and all sorts of things, and so we
33 appreciate you making it down.

34
35 **FISHERIES UPDATE ON INTERAGENCY EFFORT**

36
37 **MR. SAM RAUCH:** Thank you, and it is my pleasure to finally be
38 here. I want to apologize for missing yesterday. It was the
39 first day of a CCC meeting that I have missed in seventeen
40 years. The reason I know that is that, seventeen years ago, it
41 was the first day of the Mid-Atlantic's meeting in Philadelphia,
42 and I had actually driven to Philadelphia to attend that
43 meeting, and, in the middle of the night, I had to leave and
44 drive back to D.C., because my youngest son was born that
45 morning, and I made it back to D.C., and he turned seventeen
46 yesterday, and so that's not why I missed the meeting. I had to
47 testify in front of Capitol Hill, the House Natural Resources
48 Committee, and so I had a command performance, and so that's why

1 I missed the meeting, but I do apologize for that.

2
3 Anyway, it's my pleasure to give the update on the America the
4 Beautiful Initiative, and we've talked several times about that,
5 and it is the underlying initiative that I think influenced the
6 presentation of the excellent work that you were just talking
7 about.

8
9 I was going to provide an update on some of where we are on
10 this, and I'm not going to go over the background of the report,
11 which we've done several times with this group, but, recently,
12 the White House has made a number of announcements, or has taken
13 a number of relevant actions, to America the Beautiful.

14
15 In March, they hosted a White House Conservation and Action
16 Summit. At that summit, they released The Economic Report of
17 the President, which is broader than just this conservation
18 initiative, but the conservation initiative featured prominently
19 in that report, and there was a fact sheet that the White House
20 issued at the same time providing new tools to support leaders
21 at every level of government in managing the effects of climate
22 change and building community resilience.

23
24 It delved into different aspects of the federal adaptation
25 strategy, a number of potential policy initiatives that could be
26 taken advantage of, and you may well want to take a look at
27 that, and, as I said, it's a much broader report than just this
28 issue, but this issue does figure prominently in it.

29
30 In addition, as many of you well know, Congress took action, in
31 the last Congress, to devote almost \$6 billion on Infrastructure
32 and Inflation Reduction Act funds generically to use in boosting
33 natural infrastructure, restoring wildlife habitat, increasing
34 our resilience to climate change and extreme weather, while
35 strengthening the ability to conduct research and better
36 understand the effects of climate change, and so this is a
37 significant investment that goes across many different areas,
38 but it is -- It provides an important source of funding that can
39 be used to advance the goals of the America the Beautiful
40 Initiative.

41
42 Finally, as I know that many of you are aware, the President did
43 direct the Department of Commerce to initiate a process to
44 consider designating all waters around the Pacific Remote
45 Islands as a national marine sanctuary, and I think you're going
46 to talk about that more later, but all of that supported the
47 President's initiatives.

48

1 This is a big-ticket item that we have talked about numerous
2 times, is what exactly is conservation, and what exactly does
3 the President mean by conserving 30 percent of the land and
4 waters by 2030, and the last formal discussion of that occurred
5 in the America the Beautiful report, which was about a year-and-
6 a-half ago, which talked about a conservation continuum, a wide
7 range of actions that can figure in and be accounted for as
8 conservation, going from voluntary agreements with landowners to
9 completely protected marine protected areas, and so there's a
10 wide range, and it still is -- There's sort of been no more
11 formal announcement giving more precision into what actually
12 will count or how that broad notion will be applied.

13
14 We continue to make progress on that, but, as I think I've said
15 several times though, I do not expect, and I still do not
16 expect, that there will be a singular definition. Instead, I
17 think that there will be a list of elements that are the
18 hallmarks for a conservation area, or more of a decision tree
19 that can be applied as you accumulate these areas, as opposed to
20 a single uniform, across-the-board, simple definition, and it's
21 very difficult to come up with one.

22
23 The efforts of the CCC was very helpful in the CEQ's thinking,
24 and we don't have the results of the CEQ's thinking, but we have
25 forwarded the work to-date that you have done, that you are
26 finalizing today, and they are very familiar with the work that
27 the councils have done and the thinking that the councils have
28 put into that, and it's been very helpful as they formulate what
29 conservation does and does not mean, and so we're excited to see
30 that report come to a close, and, although the federal efforts
31 to define conservation are not done, and I don't have a
32 timeline, we will share that with you as soon as we get that.

33
34 We are looking though at the atlas, and I've talked to you about
35 the atlas before, and so, while the definition of "conservation"
36 is a little bit up in the air, the expectation is that we will
37 have an atlas of all the conservation areas, or the potential
38 conservation areas, and that will be the tool that we will use
39 to -- Much like what the CCC just presented, and if you can sort
40 of accumulate nationally all the different kinds of inputs and
41 to look at what counts and what does not count.

42
43 There is a website that DOI, the Department of Interior, is
44 setting up, called conservation.gov, which will include the
45 atlas, when it is done, as well as other information like grant
46 opportunities, upcoming meetings, et cetera, and that website is
47 expected to launch at the end of May. We're getting close to
48 the end of May, and I'm not sure whether they will actually make

1 that, but they are very close to that, and we expect that that
2 will launch and that there will be a beta version of the atlas
3 included in that launch, so that finally you will be able to see
4 some of the ways that the administration is looking at it.

5
6 I don't expect that the beta version will have the functionality
7 to do a calculation of what counts, how close are we to 30
8 percent, what kinds of things account for 30 percent, but it
9 will allow folks to see the atlas platform and show most of the
10 data feeding into it, and we have -- Leading up to that, there
11 is another intergovernmental subcommittee called a Measurement
12 Subcommittee, and that's also the team that was developing the
13 atlas, but they're the ones that are working on how best to
14 determine what counts for 30 percent and to look at the
15 continuum of conservation actions that they laid out in that
16 report from a year-and-a-half ago.

17
18 The GIS database that you just took final action on, we have --
19 Much like Janet said, we thought that that was a very good,
20 credible work, and I think it really does advance the thinking,
21 and it has been very influential, in terms of the White House
22 thinking on that, and we offered to provide a quality check
23 against another independent data source, and so the work of the
24 councils we wanted to check and make sure that all of that was
25 accurate, so that it could seamlessly sort of flow into the
26 atlas, if there was an opportunity to do so, and, when we did
27 that check, we found that the CCC data had very good accuracy.

28
29 There were a couple of issues, which were quite quickly
30 addressed, and so, with the councils permission, we will be
31 using that database as a foundation for submitting areas to the
32 atlas, once that becomes clear what that process is and what the
33 criteria are, if any. We've already been working on some
34 example areas that we hope will go into this initial beta
35 version, but, obviously, it's not all of the areas that the CCC
36 has identified, but our intention, much like I think the
37 councils' intention, is that this is a tool that can feed into
38 that process, while we're still sort of waiting on what the
39 criteria are in that process.

40
41 Just a couple of other related, but slightly different topics,
42 and we've briefed you on this before, and the new Marine and
43 Coastal Area-Based Management FACA Committee, and this was --
44 It's not a direct follow-on to the old MPA FACA Committee, but
45 it is a reconstituted committee. It provides advice to NOAA on
46 science-based approaches to area-based marine protection,
47 conservation and restoration included, but not limited to,
48 actions involving the implementation of the America the

1 Beautiful Initiative.

2

3 Unlike the MPA Committee, which was -- Which we participated in,
4 but it was being led by the National Ocean Service, our sister
5 agency, and this one is co-led by the National Ocean Service and
6 the National Marine Fisheries Service. Kelly is the NMFS lead,
7 or will be the NMFS lead, for the committee, and John Armor,
8 from Sanctuaries, is going to the NOS lead, and Lauren Wenzel,
9 from the MPA Center, is going to be supporting through that
10 process. We're currently processing that package, to get
11 everything set up, and we hope to have the first meeting in the
12 summer or the fall of this year.

13

14 Another FACA committee, or another committee that we wanted to
15 highlight, is the Federal Interagency Committee for Outdoor
16 Recreation, or FICOR, and it also was reestablished recently, on
17 July 20 of last year, and the Commerce Department signed an
18 interagency MOU to be an official part of this committee, and
19 the charter and workplan will be developed within 120 and 180
20 days, respectively, and there is an annual rotating chair, with
21 the Parks Service holding the chairmanship in the first year,
22 the National Parks Service, and the principals are going to meet
23 twice a year, and Russ Dunn is our member on that committee.

24

25 Then there is, in February, a group of NOAA staff and the
26 Aquarium Conservation Partnership Working Group for America the
27 Beautiful, and they held a workshop to develop a two-year
28 workplan of actions that the conservation partnership can take
29 for the goals of America the Beautiful.

30

31 The proposed activities largely centered around the three themes
32 of protected areas, indigenous and historically-excluded
33 communities, and engagement, and so that was an effort that we,
34 working with that partnership, started in February, and that is
35 my update, and I'm happy to take questions and comments.

36

37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Sam. We'll open the
38 floor to questions. John.

39

40 **MR. GOURLEY:** Good morning, Sam.

41

42 **MR. RAUCH:** Good morning, John.

43

44 **MR. GOURLEY:** I wanted to ask about the definition for the 30 by
45 30, and I'm trying to put something in my head about what you
46 said, and so it will probably be a broad-based definition that
47 has several criteria that a specific area would need to meet,
48 and so are you looking at having an acceptable conservation

1 areas that has like three out of five, and is that something
2 you're looking at, or does it have to have like Numbers 2 and 4
3 in every one of them, and then maybe one other criteria, and
4 what's your feeling on that? Where are we going on that?

5
6 **MR. RAUCH:** I feel -- First of all, given that it's not
7 completed yet, and so I do not know what it will be, but my
8 opinion is that it likely will have a list of criteria, but
9 there will be substantial discretion on the part of CEQ and the
10 federal government to decide whether it is or is not
11 conservation, and then, as we go through that process, it will
12 become clear, and we will become more objective, but I do not
13 anticipate that there will be mandatory check that you have to
14 meet 2 and 4 or whatever.

15
16 I think that there will be a list of criteria, and then there
17 will be an assessment of how well an area meets that criteria,
18 but I do not know, and that is one of the things that we
19 continue to work through with the administration.

20
21 **MR. GOURLEY:** Okay. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Next, I have Eric.

24
25 **MR. REID:** Thank you, Dr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Rauch, and
26 so my question is about the original eight principles of America
27 the Beautiful, and so are you saying that those eight principles
28 are the guiding principles, but it might be a Principle 1, with
29 fifteen different subcategories, something like that?

30
31 **MR. RAUCH:** Thank you for the question, and I believe -- I don't
32 know that the principles themselves are going to be the
33 definition, and the definition will need to be -- The criteria
34 will need to be developed such that it serves the principles,
35 but we want to make sure that -- I mean, those principles guide
36 the whole process, and that is why we're doing these, is to try
37 to meet all those different objectives that the President laid
38 out in that report, and so whatever the criteria are, they need
39 to be able to satisfy some of that, but I don't know that
40 there's going to be an area that -- Much like the National
41 Standards, right, and it's hard to satisfy all those criteria at
42 the same time with the same area.

43
44 My view is that there will be some flexibility that you may be
45 principally serving one, and not all eight at the same time, and
46 I cannot conceive of an area that would necessarily serve all
47 eight mandates at the same time, much like it's hard to do that
48 with the standards, also.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom.
3

4 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, Sam, for those updates, and so, in the
5 presentation, you talked about the atlas, and then DOI would
6 probably maintain that, but I would assume that that's going to
7 be a living digital document, right, or resource, and I should
8 have asked this question perhaps in the last presentation, but
9 that would require regular updates, right, and so that means you
10 have to have a continual support stream for the CCC part of it,
11 and so I'm just wondering how -- Who is going to actually be in
12 charge of updating the data and making sure that those updates
13 are provided on a regular basis?
14

15 **MR. RAUCH:** At the moment, and let's just parse out that
16 question, it's a beta version that we expect to be released, and
17 so it's not a final version, and so there clearly is going to be
18 some changes and process to go from the version that gets
19 released, maybe by the end of this month, to a final, workable
20 version.
21

22 The intent is that it be publicly available and useful, and I
23 think the intent is also that it be updated periodically, so
24 it's not a one-time snapshot, and the President has always said
25 that this is a goal, and it is a continuous process, and so I
26 believe that we will be, as the federal government, updating
27 that atlas continuously.
28

29 The physical update for that atlas will be an Interior
30 responsibility, I believe, and that's still to be worked out,
31 but they're hosting it, and so, while we would be contributing,
32 the Fisheries Service would be contributing, to it on a frequent
33 basis, they would be the ones doing the actual update of that
34 website.
35

36 How often they would do that, what our -- You know, is it going
37 to be an annual thing, a monthly thing, you know, every five
38 years, I don't know, and so I don't know how much effort we
39 would have to undertake once the initial document is done, to
40 keep it up, but that is one of the goals, is to keep it up, but
41 I just don't know the schedule or how much work that would be.
42

43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Next is Marcos.
44

45 **MR. HANKE:** I am having a hard time to understand, under a
46 climate change situation, how we're going to create requisites
47 today that is correct for one area, but, in one year, or five
48 years, or ten years, are not correct for that area, and we are

1 just chasing the rabbit and never being precise enough to make
2 sense. That is my question.

3
4 **MR. RAUCH:** Maybe I will just comment on the flexibility, and
5 one of the things that we've talked about, and one of the
6 advantages of using the council process, is that areas that you
7 conserve today may not be the ones that you need to conserve in
8 ten years, because the stock -- You know, one of the things that
9 we're conserving is biodiversity, and those are the fish stocks
10 on which we manage, and those stocks may be moving, and so we
11 may need to be able to adjust that, and so there is some tension
12 in the various communities, or tension -- There is some debate
13 as to how permanent, or flexible, these areas can be.

14
15 Now, I believe that there needs to be some flexibility,
16 particularly to deal with climate change, because there are
17 areas -- You know, those are going to change, and the whole
18 impact of climate change, and so you need to be able to adapt
19 and shift the areas to account for the effects of climate
20 change, and that is one of the things, but there is some debate
21 on that, as to do you lose the requisite degree of permanence
22 status for permanence in management with ephemeral changes.

23
24 If something is protected one year, and then it's a different
25 area the next year, is that really conservation to the area? I
26 don't have an answer to that, but that is something that we're
27 looking at, is how you look at the flexibility to effect climate
28 change and that means for the permanence of these areas.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Kitty.

31
32 **MS. SIMONDS:** Hi, Sam. When the President directed -- Since you
33 mentioned the sanctuary, and this is just a comment, but, when
34 the President directed the Secretary of Commerce to begin the
35 sanctuary process, the announcement alluded that this would help
36 achieve his 30 by 30 goals, and so, I mean, I don't think he
37 should have said that, because that was a total insult to our
38 part of the world, which is mostly closed, and so what I'm
39 saying is that, you know, he should try to achieve it somewhere
40 else, and so were you all a part of putting this together? I am
41 talking about NMFS.

42
43 **MR. RAUCH:** You being the President's directive to start --

44
45 **MS. SIMONDS:** Yes.

46
47 **MR. RAUCH:** We traditionally do not take positions on sanctuary
48 matters, and that is handled by our sister agency, the Ocean

1 Service. Fisheries usually does not take positions on things
2 like that.

3
4 **MS. SIMONDS:** So you all didn't review this announcement that
5 went out about 30 by 30, achieving the 30 by 30 goal by closing
6 our part of the world?

7
8 **MR. RAUCH:** We don't take positions on things like that.

9
10 **MS. SIMONDS:** Just checking.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am looking around the room. Any other
13 hands up? Well, Sam, I'm not seeing any. Thank you for that
14 presentation. We'll move on then to the next item on the
15 agenda, and so our next item will be a virtual presentation by
16 Rick Methot, and this will bring us to National Standard 1 and
17 the Technical Guidance Status, and so we'll give our group a
18 minute to pull up that presentation and get Rick available, and
19 we'll start here in just a second.

20
21 **NATIONAL STANDARD 1 - TECHNICAL GUIDANCE STATUS**

22
23 **DR. RICK METHOT:** Very good. Thank you.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Rick, we have your presentation up. Can you
26 hear us okay?

27
28 **DR. METHOT:** I can hear you fine. Can you hear me fine?

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, we can, and so go ahead when you're ready.

31
32 **DR. METHOT:** Excellent. Well, thanks very much for this
33 opportunity, and I wish I was there with you, but this will be
34 how we'll do it today. I'm here to talk about the federal
35 guidance for estimating status determination reference points
36 and their proxies for the National Standard 1 Guidelines.

37
38 We finally have a document. It's still in draft form, and we've
39 had a substantial amount of reviews internally, and we still
40 have some ongoing, and we feel that's very important for us to
41 get good feedback from the councils and their committees, as you
42 read through it, and I'm glad that some of you have already
43 reached out to me to have a direct conversation about this
44 document, and we hope to get as many of those in as we can, so
45 that you can provide good comments to us by the end of the
46 summer, or early fall, so that we're well prepared to finish
47 this up a few months later.

48

1 I have seen presentations to you in the past, and you've seen
2 many of these slides before, and I will quickly go through them,
3 to leave good time for questions at the end, but, here in this
4 document, we do go over the various approaches for going from
5 our population models to reference points, and there's a lot of
6 details and a lot of diversity there, because the nature of the
7 fish, their habitats, the fisheries, the amount of data that
8 we've been able to develop over time in various regions, it's
9 tremendously variable, and so there is a diversity of approaches
10 that have evolved, and, to some degree, they have evolved in a
11 bit of a stovepipe over the last twenty or thirty years, and so
12 we do not have, you know, a one-size-fits-all that easily can
13 provide the information that we need on reference points.

14
15 We've been moving in that direction, and this document has been
16 an effort to move us further in that direction, but we do have
17 good coverage of our various approaches to use the available
18 data to provide information on reference points.

19
20 We cover multiyear approaches briefly, and we talk a good bit
21 about the overfished and approaching an overfished condition,
22 something that we've not covered much in the past, and we go
23 into the development of an overfished determination from a
24 percent SPR approach, and, basically, if we've measured
25 something like the biological composition, can we use that for
26 an overfished determination, and we spent a good bit of time on
27 reference points and status determination criteria for changing
28 conditions, and how do we deal with the fact that there are
29 shifts in the biology of the animals and other aspects of their
30 productivity, and how do we translate that into reference
31 points, while still having the concept of a reference point in
32 existence?

33
34 Finally, we do touch upon the need for us to increasingly
35 consider the interactions among species as we talk about
36 reference points. It's never been out of consideration, but
37 it's also not been very much invoked as we've developed
38 guidelines and specifications, and so we want to keep moving the
39 bar further towards being able to take into account the
40 interactions among species.

41
42 You know, we've seen this before, just this cartoon of how a
43 population works, how the interaction between catch and the
44 abundance of the population in our fishing mortality rates, and
45 so, the steeper the line, the larger fraction of the population
46 we're catching each year, and so there's a direct relationship
47 there, and where that diagonal line intersects the parabola
48 curve is basically the level that we expect to get, and so

1 there's some level that will give us the maximum, or give us
2 MSY, and fishing harder than that means you're getting less than
3 MSY, and so we are overfishing the stock, and so that would be
4 an overfishing condition, in that, as the stock declines
5 further, and it experiences even higher fishing mortality rates
6 than FMSY, it can be pushed down below the MSST and be
7 determined to be overfished and in need of a rebuilding plan,
8 and so the calculation of these quantities is the core of what
9 we're doing.

10
11 Again, the document spends a good bit of time talking about the
12 relationship between direct estimation of the fishing mortality
13 rate that will provide MSY and various proxies for it. This has
14 been a topic of much research over the last many years, going
15 back into the 1990s, and there were several papers, at that
16 time, that were very important in providing the basis for the
17 proxies that are in place today.

18
19 Basically, we find that the work looking at the performance of
20 populations over time recommends that fishing at a percent SPR
21 in the range of 30 percent to 60 percent, which means we're
22 fishing hard enough to reduce the population to 30 percent of
23 what it would have been if we weren't fishing to 60 percent of
24 what it would have been without fishing.

25
26 We see those ranges out there, and a default to 40 to 45 percent
27 is in many FMPs today, and it is the level that is most
28 supported by scientific research, as it advances, and we also
29 see proxies for BMSY, which is basically what level of
30 recruitment are we seeing and then how can we use that, combined
31 with how hard we are fishing, to make a projection for how large
32 the stock will be if we continued fishing at our -- At what we
33 determine to be our proxy rate. Again, it's clarifying this
34 process of going through these calculations as we can in the
35 document.

36
37 We cover, briefly, the topic of biomass dynamics models, which
38 are more data-limited, yet they are very straightforward to
39 calculate and present essentially that cartoon that I presented
40 earlier of how catch interacts with the population, and that is
41 essentially what a biomass dynamics model is doing, and, again,
42 it's simple, and, in its simplicity, it's hard to tell where it
43 might be getting it wrong, and that's why we increasingly are
44 advocating that we move in the direction of age-structured
45 models that allow us to look at the details of just how the
46 fisheries are interacting with populations, how we end up with a
47 combination of fisheries, some targeting small fish and some
48 targeting large fish, and they have different impacts on the

1 population, and we can only take that into account well with our
2 age-structured models, yet there still is a role, and a need,
3 for biomass dynamics models, in some circumstances.

4
5 Importantly, we spend some time on the data-limited methods,
6 and, here, we see a variety of methods that have evolved,
7 especially since the last reauthorization of the act that
8 required annual catch limits for all stocks, and, in doing so,
9 we've had a strong demand for some method that we could apply in
10 more situations, and some of these involve catch only, and some
11 involve just a trend in abundance, and many of them though
12 involve looking at the biological composition, and, basically,
13 what is the percentage of the population that is young fish
14 versus old fish.

15
16 Can you look at the curve of declining numbers, as you go out to
17 older ages, or larger sizes, and infer, from that declining
18 curve, how much it has declined relative to how much it would
19 have declined if we weren't fishing, or fishing at a lighter
20 level, and that allows us to make inferences about how high a
21 fishing mortality rate the population had been experiencing in
22 order for us to have seen such a composition curve.

23
24 These composition curves, again, are commonly now used in many
25 of our data-limited situations, and the important new aspect
26 that we have in this document is that, even though we've been
27 using these percent SPR kind of methods as a way to gauge how
28 high the fishing mortality rate has been, essentially to be able
29 to make overfishing determinations from that information, and we
30 also see that, because this is fundamentally a measure of the
31 condition of the stock, and not of the fishing rate itself, and
32 because it's fundamentally a measure of the condition of the
33 stock, we see that we can calibrate this to another level and
34 use it to make an overfished determination, in some
35 circumstances.

36
37 All of the data-limited methods are highly susceptible to the
38 degree of assumptions that need to be made. The simpler the
39 model, the more assumptions there are always in it, and we do
40 believe that there is a range of suitable assumptions that can
41 be made so that we can use this kind of information to determine
42 whether or not stocks appear to be experiencing an overfished
43 condition, as well as whether or not it is experiencing
44 overfishing.

45
46 There is a number of additional considerations that we have in
47 here, things that so easily get left aside and not considered as
48 we focus on the core questions, but they're out there, and

1 they're things that really do matter. Things at the top are
2 fleet dynamics, spatial complexity, and they're real, and we
3 need to deal with them in our assessments, and they make it
4 challenging and complicated to translate things into simple
5 reference points.

6
7 We have not spent much time looking at the ramifications of
8 size-selective fishing. Basically, slower-growing fish don't
9 get into the fishery at as young of an age, and so fast-growing
10 fish are getting more fishing mortality rate, and this has
11 consequences. We have not looked much at density dependence and
12 other aspects of life history other than spawner-recruit, and
13 this needs more attention.

14
15 Looking at just the impacts of fishing on spawning biomass, it
16 easily leads us into not looking at the consequences of reducing
17 the breadth of the age composition of a population, and,
18 finally, we have gotten better at measuring the reproductive
19 potential of stocks, by taking into account fecundity of
20 animals, and, rather than just looking at a measure of spawning
21 biomass as the total weight of the females, we can do it in
22 terms of reproductive potential more directly, but that has
23 consequences for how we calibrate our reference points, and we
24 haven't necessarily carried that all the way through in all
25 conditions, and so we have a number of suggestions on where we
26 could be making more progress.

27
28 Importantly, updating reference points for prevailing conditions
29 is something that we need attention to, and it can't be a
30 reference point if it's constantly changing, and so there needs
31 to be, you know, conditions under which it changes, but we also
32 need a sense of, you know, just going with the changing times,
33 and, for many aspects of it, we do already.

34
35 We allow our assessments, and the resultant reference point
36 calculations, to adapt to changing fishing conditions, to adapt
37 to changing biology of the animals, as they grow faster or
38 slower from year to year, and so that is also naturally taken
39 into account, but big shifts in things like recruitment, as
40 shown in this picture, or in the natural mortality rate, or even
41 long-term shifts, long-term trends in growth, are things that,
42 by slowly adapting to them, we don't spend as much effort
43 looking at the consequences of this long-term shift, and so we
44 are including, in this document, a recommendation that we look
45 further.

46
47 We don't have a specific guidance on how to do it yet, and there
48 needs to be more work along these lines, but we want to look

1 into the possibility of blending our approach, that some aspects
2 of reference points do shift with prevailing conditions, and we
3 basically use a trailing average approach to doing that, but
4 other aspects maintain a focus on the long-term trends of the
5 stock and don't necessarily shift over time.

6
7 In particular, when we have a control rule, and we have some
8 biomass level below which we are reducing the fishing mortality
9 rate, we think that is a good thing to maintain, so that, even
10 though the new prevailing conditions indicate that there is some
11 new biology, some new fishing rate that could occur, if the
12 stock also has shown a decline below that inflection point, we
13 maintain that inflection point, and we allow it to be
14 implemented to reduce the fishing mortality rate below that
15 maximum level, because the stock is at a low level, and we'll
16 not shift the bar down so that we keep maintaining a full
17 fishing mortality rate on a declining stock. It needs more
18 work, but it's an idea that is being explored, in some cases,
19 and we think it has merit.

20
21 As I mentioned at the onset, we've not gone very far with taking
22 a multispecies approach to our reference points. There are
23 things that could be done by looking at the whole system at a
24 time, and this is where our ecosystem models are taking us, what
25 they're looking into, and it's a very broad and expansive
26 approach, in order to do that, and there are also things that we
27 can do more directly, and it's really just a natural extension
28 of our current approach, where we can take into account the
29 predation mortality, called M2, so that, as one species changes
30 in abundance, the impact on other species can be directly
31 calculated.

32
33 It does add a level of complexity, but it's increasingly seen as
34 a necessary level of complexity in some circumstances, and so it
35 should never be off the table, but there are a number of cases
36 in which we could move forward with this, and, again, it remains
37 limited, but we do think there is strong merit in moving in this
38 direction.

39
40 Just wrapping up, we've updated the technical guidance for
41 limitation of reference points, status determinations, and we've
42 been working on this for a few years, but then we took a lot
43 more years in order to get started on it, and so we had a lot of
44 catching up to do.

45
46 It addresses some old issues as well as some new issues, and we
47 highlight that, despite the challenges and differences, what
48 we've been doing really has been effective and is looked at

1 worldwide as a very effective system that blends science and
2 management and implementation in a way that does achieve
3 sustainable fisheries, and so we are fine-tuning here as we
4 progress, but we do think that there is progress that can be
5 made. Thank you, and I would be glad to answer any questions
6 you have.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I'm looking around the room. Anything? Seeing
9 none, thank you, Rick. We appreciate the update and that
10 presentation.

11
12 **DR. METHOT:** Very good, and I look forward to the opportunity to
13 talk with the individual councils and your SSCs.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. That is going to bring us to
16 about a break, and why don't we take a short break, until about
17 3:15, and then we'll pick up with the rest of the meeting
18 agenda.

19
20 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** If everyone is back, we'll go ahead and get
23 started, and I know it's important to have these sort of hallway
24 discussions and things, and so I allowed a little bit more time
25 on the break, since we're not so pressed today for the agenda
26 and the rest of this afternoon. After public comment, we may
27 try to work in a few things here or there, if we can, just to
28 save a little time tomorrow, for those of you that have flights
29 and that sort of thing.

30
31 Bringing us back on the agenda, the next thing to discuss is the
32 discussion on establishing fishing regulations in sanctuaries,
33 and some of you might have seen that there was some discussion,
34 as we were putting together this agenda, and it turned out that
35 John Armor wasn't able to be here, for a variety of reasons, for
36 the presentation, and so we decided to put some of this
37 discussion and move that to the October meeting, when we could
38 have a more thorough and meaningful discussion, but there was
39 still, I think, some members that were interested in having a
40 little bit of discussion, and so we've reserved a little bit of
41 time for that, and that's the purpose of this agenda item.

42
43 Unless something has happened otherwise, I don't think there is
44 any formal presentations or anything like that, and it was just
45 to kind of open up the floor for discussion, and so, with that,
46 Marc, I see you have your hand up, and would you like to start
47 that off, please?

48

1 **DISCUSSION OF ESTABLISHING FISHING REGULATIONS IN SANCTUARIES**

2
3 **MR. GORELNIK:** Sure. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you
4 for leaving some time on the agenda for this item, and we, in
5 the Pacific Council, work with our west coast national marine
6 sanctuaries, and I think what we all need to acknowledge is that
7 we have shared responsibility with the sanctuaries to
8 sustainably manage the living marine resources in our nation's
9 waters, but there needs to be a reasonable process for these
10 sister organizations to work together to achieve the common
11 goals with minimum conflict.

12
13 We do have this common goal, and our goals are not mutually
14 exclusive, and we're partners, and so the difference is, at the
15 council level, we have a robust public-stakeholder-driven
16 process, and it complements the sanctuary process, but it's the
17 only process we have that allows the public to weigh-in and
18 participate in the rulemaking, and that does not exist on the
19 sanctuary side, or nothing like it does.

20
21 I will tell you what we at the Pacific Council, because there is
22 a new national marine sanctuary that is being brought online,
23 the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and the
24 documents, the proposal for that sanctuary, indicated there
25 would be no proposed fishing regulations, but the sanctuary came
26 to our council and said, what additional fishery regulations do
27 you need to serve the purpose of the sanctuary, and our response
28 was we're not aware of any, but, if you believe that our
29 existing regulations are not adequate, we want to work with you
30 to achieve our common goal, and I will note that, at least in
31 our council, we have a dedicated seat on our Habitat Committee
32 for a representative of the sanctuaries.

33
34 I guess, to sort of recap, I think the process for determining
35 fishery regulations in sanctuary waters needs to be a
36 cooperative effort, towards the same goal, and, if sanctuaries
37 feel that the councils are not doing an adequate job, we're
38 ready and willing to work with them. What we don't want to see
39 happen is for the sanctuaries to go off and impose fishery
40 regulations without the benefit of the process we have at the
41 council.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Marc. Other comments? John and
44 then Kitty, or, Kitty, go ahead.

45
46 **MS. SIMONDS:** I would like to start this off, because, as you
47 know, we actually have three sanctuaries sort of in the works in
48 our part of the world, and so they're ongoing, and decisions are

1 going to be made very soon, and so we're going to do this in
2 three parts, and John is going to be first, to talk about the
3 Marianas Trench, and Will be second, to talk about the
4 President's proposal, and then I will just end up with the
5 expansion of Papahānaumokuākea.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, go ahead.

8
9 **MR. GOURLEY:** Thank you, Chairman. We're on Item XVI, Existing
10 Process for Eliminating Fishing in Sanctuaries, because that's
11 what is happening. We have a war, out in the Western Pacific,
12 and that war is between the federal government and the
13 underserved indigenous communities of the Marinas archipelago,
14 the American Samoa islands, Hawaii, and then the Pacific Remote
15 Islands, which, obviously, doesn't have anybody living on there.

16
17 The island fishing communities are losing this battle. Why?
18 Because the Western Pacific territories are politically
19 neutered. There is no voting member in Congress, and no member
20 at all in the Senate. We don't vote for President, and our
21 population levels are smaller than medium-sized cities in the
22 U.S., and, a lot of times, our people in the islands don't
23 really know how to address Federal Register announcements, how
24 to deal with public hearings, and, most of the time, the public
25 hearings of the federal government on the islands are not
26 tailored to local culture, and a lot of the people in the
27 islands just don't go.

28
29 Unfortunately, NOAA is getting a black eye from these sanctuary
30 guys, and ONMS is not trusted, and it is carried through to all
31 of NOAA, quite honestly.

32
33 The war that's going on right now is two phases. The first
34 phase occurred from 2009 to 2016, with sitting Presidents in
35 creating blue legacies unilaterally, through the Antiquities
36 Act, and they took away our fishing rights in over 50 percent of
37 the U.S. EEZ in the Western Pacific, under the guise of
38 conservation.

39
40 The second assault started around 2020 and is currently in full
41 attack mode, with the conversion of existing monuments into
42 national marine sanctuaries. As Kitty mentioned, we've got
43 three active sanctuary conversions ongoing in the Western
44 Pacific, the Marinas Trench, the Papa, and then the Pacific
45 Remote Islands. Every one of those sanctuaries is no fishing,
46 no fishing, no fishing, and what's going on?

47
48 We've already lost 50 percent, and how much more waters does the

1 federal government, and/or ONMS, want to take away from us?
2 We've got no future in fishing, and the Marinas Trench Monument,
3 according to the nomination package and the map they had in
4 there, wanted to close down 57 percent of the Marinas
5 archipelago to fishing, and the existing PRA that will be taken
6 away will -- They want to close it completely off, and when is
7 enough enough?

8
9 As I said, I think yesterday or the day before, we're going to
10 be out of business as a fishery council, and NMFS is going to be
11 out of business, and so the Marinas Trench, and then when I said
12 -- When I redid the agenda item to Existing Process for
13 Elimination, I cannot believe what is going on with the
14 sanctuaries process.

15
16 I read the website, and I look at the process, and they are not
17 following the process. One of the criteria which ONMS is trying
18 to use in creating sanctuaries, and I don't know if the Pacific
19 and North Pacific can chime-in on that, but one of the most
20 important things is to get grassroots support. It's community
21 comes together, and they create a nomination package, and it's
22 sent to ONMS.

23
24 The Marinas Trench completely cut out of the people of Guam in
25 the nomination package, and that's two-thirds of the population
26 of the Mariana, and then they came in and ONMS said, oh, yes, we
27 want it, and the Pacific Remote Islands is the same problem, and
28 they met with a lot of resistance when they came out to the
29 Marinas.

30
31 You know, they're wondering, the people are wondering, what the
32 hell is going on. ONMS has a public hearing, and they have a
33 question-and-answer, and then they cut it short. They cut the
34 questions and answers short in order to get comments, and, well,
35 what the heck is the comments going to be when the people don't
36 know what's going on?

37
38 Quite honestly, we are really fed up with this, because we're
39 getting sanctuaries forced down our throat. The Marina Trench,
40 we asked for an additional public hearing, which they gave us,
41 but they didn't bother coming out. They didn't bother
42 coordinating with us, and they let the proponents deliver the
43 propaganda, and the last deadline for the second public hearing
44 was April 25 in the year 2022. That was the five-year review,
45 and nothing has been done for over a year. We asked them
46 several times, and they are studying it.

47
48 We read that as they're going to force a sanctuary on us whether

1 we like it or not, and you can go in, and we did. We printed
2 out all the comments on the two public comment periods, and
3 there is overwhelming opposition to this sanctuary.

4
5 There are questions, or, I mean, there are comments that are in
6 support, but they're great, and they're form letters that have a
7 name, no signature, no village, no address, no nothing, and it's
8 just a name. This is how the proponents are trying to support
9 this.

10
11 There's no public outreach, and there's misleading information,
12 and so, basically, the approach currently being used by the
13 federal government in undermining potential future fishing
14 activities is called tyrannical conservation, and we need the
15 support of NMFS to maintain existing MSA management regimes in
16 these proposed sanctuaries where monument boundaries are
17 expanded.

18
19 If you want to put a sanctuary overlaid on a monument, but
20 what's happening in every one of these things is they are
21 expanding the boundaries, and, of course, in the expansion
22 areas, which is currently being managed by the MSA, no fishing,
23 and so I would like to see NMFS be the adult in the room and
24 help ONMS to become a little bit more sensitive to the future
25 needs of the territories, and that's it.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. Will.

28
29 **MR. SWORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some questions on the
30 proposed sanctuary. You know, does economic disaster in
31 American Samoa contribute to America the Beautiful? Does an
32 acronym like EEJ mean equity and environmental justice or
33 economic extinction jargon?

34
35 You know, Abraham Lincoln said, in 1856, that actions speak
36 louder than words, and I'm reminded of another acronym, EELE,
37 economic extinction level event, and that's what we're facing in
38 American Samoa.

39
40 Yesterday, we discussed an evaluation system for how we're doing
41 on EEJ for NOAA's efforts, and I didn't give a grade, and so I
42 want to go through with you in regard to all of this, and let's
43 start with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which states that, and I
44 quote, "Pacific insular areas contain unique historical
45 cultural, legal, political, geographical value, which makes
46 fisheries resources important in sustaining their economic
47 growth."
48

1 This gives National Marine Fisheries a statutory obligation to
2 ensure that vitality of sustainable fisheries that are beholden
3 to the numerous National Standards that reduce negative impacts
4 in their actions. On the other hand, another NOAA office, which
5 is National Marine Sanctuaries, seems pitted against the
6 obligations of National Marine Fisheries, by proposing a
7 sanctuary, a feckless act that could mean the demise of our
8 already sustainable economy, all at the expense of underserved
9 American Samoa.

10
11 If you put this evaluation for NOAA in the context of EEJ, and
12 if you look at this -- I refer to Tab 2b our or handout today,
13 before this CCC meeting, and Number 1 is prioritize and identify
14 equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of underserved
15 communities, and so American Samoa embodies the Number 3
16 fisheries as a priority in the U.S. and territories, if you
17 compare it to all the other fisheries, but it is a very
18 impoverished and underserved fishing community, where 60 percent
19 of our population is under the U.S. poverty level, and that is
20 certainly underserved.

21
22 We're not involved in the effort that John said to start the
23 effort to cut our economic throat, and we're asked to rubber-
24 stamp the closure of a major fishing ground like the PRAs, and
25 this starts the process of dying economically for us. This
26 event will make living conditions much worse for our already
27 poor people, and it will hurt nearby countries. A lot of our
28 workers come from nearby countries, and so where is the equity
29 and environmental justice? You're not serving our community
30 with this sanctuary.

31
32 We provide equitable delivery of services, Number 2, and the
33 Western Pacific already has 53 percent of its EEZ under monument
34 fishing closure, far surpassing the 30 by 30 President Biden
35 initiative, while the rest of the U.S. and territories are far
36 below this number, and why the discrimination? Is it because
37 we're poor Samoans, or different skin color, or underrepresented
38 in political circles? Does our geographic separation, our out-
39 of-sight-out-of-mind, make us expendable for small political
40 trophies?

41
42 Current actions indicate there is still an obvious prejudice
43 here. The Western Pacific carries a disproportionate burden
44 here, and, if you don't see it, we certainly need more homes for
45 the blind in our country. Again, NOAA should fight harder to
46 deliver on its obligation to EEJ and to the Magnuson-Stevens
47 Act. It needs to provide an equitable level of service to our
48 underserved community. It's failing here.

1
2 Number 3, we discussed prioritizing EEJ and our mission and
3 demonstrate progress. I think NOAA is digressing, and not
4 progressing. NMFS, through the WCPFC, has limited the high seas
5 fishing to 558 days to be fished in the EEZ. They cut fishing
6 days and prevented us from privileges entitled to the small
7 island development, like we are, and we are a small island
8 developing state, forcing the U.S.-owned purse seiners, who
9 supply our canneries, to fish in our EEZ waters, and this
10 proposed PRA sanctuary would close off this area as well, and so
11 where do we fish? How do we keep our canneries supplied?

12
13 There is no place to fish economically, and this will result in
14 an economic extinction level for American Samoa, and so why do I
15 think this will happen?

16
17 Well, according to an interview in the Hawaii-based *Civil Beat*,
18 the Pacific Remote Island Coalition, or PRIC, who initiated the
19 request, said, and I quote, "Loss of a cannery is a small price
20 to pay to combat climate change." You tell that to the poor
21 souls that have no jobs. That is not serving the community very
22 well.

23
24 I also want to remind everyone that on May 16, just last week,
25 2023, we had testimony to the House Committee on Natural
26 Resources entitled "Preserving U.S. Interests in the IndoPacific
27 and Examining How U.S. Engagement Counters Chinese Influence in
28 the Region".

29
30 Dr. Peter Watson, President and CEO of the Dwight Group, LLC,
31 summarized this issue best. I'm sure that all can see the irony
32 in the development, and, yes, he's talking about NOAA, saying
33 that we're going to take your 558 high seas fishing days and no
34 longer allow them to be fished in the high seas, but only in the
35 U.S. EEZ, and, oh, by the way, we're closing the remaining
36 waters in the EEZ, and, oh, sorry.

37
38 This is unacceptable. The U.S. Pacific fishing fleets that are
39 operating in and around American Samoa are a strategic asset as
40 well as an important driver of American Samoa's economy, and the
41 bottom line is people who do not live there, and who will not
42 suffer the consequences of their actions, have decided to kill
43 our economy and our culture. Without a thriving economy, we
44 cannot practice our culture, and that's the bottom line.

45
46 This is the definition of going backwards. NOAA is going
47 backwards, and not just meeting EEJ guidelines, but it's also
48 not meeting its obligations to the Magnuson-Stevens Act to

1 protect areas, insular areas, for economic growth, and it's a
2 fail. It's a failure.

3
4 I will go back to where I started. Actions speak louder than
5 words. Otherwise, we will be accused of hypocrisy. I hope and
6 pray to God almighty that NOAA's management team and our
7 government does the right thing in the Western Pacific and
8 protects the underprivileged. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Will. Kitty.

11
12 **MS. SIMONDS:** Okay, and so I am talking about the proposed
13 sanctuary in the monument extension area of Papa, and we just
14 call it "Papa", and it's just too long of a name, and so this is
15 the fifty-two to a hundred miles, and so the council has
16 proposed fishing permits and reporting for non-commercial and
17 indigenous fishing practices, and the council proposed a cost
18 recovery of \$15,000 for fuel, bait, ice, and food, in addition
19 to barter and trade.

20
21 The response from ONMS was that the cost recovery does not meet
22 their goals and objectives, and so the council's final action
23 included cost recovery through the permit and application
24 process, and the monument board, the Office of Hawaiian affairs,
25 the council, and others would review the application, provide
26 their comments to the NMFS Regional Administrator, who would
27 approve or disapprove that part of the application.

28
29 We expect to receive a response to this final action of the
30 council from ONMS anytime now, and so I met with John Armor,
31 actually several times over the last month or two, and Kristina
32 Kekuewa a few weeks ago, and asked them which goal and objective
33 did our cost recovery request not meet. They did not have an
34 answer. They looked at each other, and looked at me, and they
35 would get back to me, and so I'm assuming that, in their
36 response, they will find, or identify, something within those
37 general goals and objectives that will show that we did not meet
38 them.

39
40 Again, to repeat what Will and John have said, our hope is that
41 NMFS supports the council's request, so that the NOAA decision
42 will be in our favor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kitty. We have several
45 people, and I just want to say one thing and recognize -- We all
46 recognize the storm that's going through Guam right now, or
47 actually last night, and hopefully everyone comes out of that
48 safely, and I just wanted to make sure that this team

1 acknowledges that, Kitty, and so, with that, Marcos.

2
3 **MR. HANKE:** Yesterday, when we discussed EEJ, I didn't have time
4 to address it, because I was respectful to the time, and what I
5 am experiencing internally right now is I speak barely English,
6 for the way that I want to express and to be clear, and I don't
7 think that I will be able to, because, if I feel the way that I
8 feel, I cannot imagine what the fishermen in Hawaii and in
9 Puerto Rico sometimes feel when the documents are not in Spanish
10 or in a language that is appropriate for them to talk about it
11 and to be clear.

12
13 The majority of the nation see the islands as an aquarium to go
14 on vacation, and, for us, this is the resource that we depend on
15 and live on, especially the people from Hawaii, and I have
16 experienced that, and they have a very strong connection, Mr.
17 Chairman, with the ocean, and they respect the way it should be,
18 and they're smart enough to take advantage of that and to create
19 systems and tools of management that benefit long-term the best
20 use of the resource in Puerto Rico and in the Pacific Islands.

21
22 None of you guys experience the boundaries that we have, that we
23 don't have the political representation, or the political voice,
24 and, at this moment in time, we have more than ever, but it's
25 not even close to enough, and, for me, it's very funny -- It's
26 very interesting to see that, for some NGOs and people that want
27 to see the aquarium working, beautiful fishes and so on, that
28 are untouched, that, on one side of their mouth, they pursue
29 that, and they communicate really nice, and they have -- If they
30 don't protest, and if they don't look for their rights, and, the
31 moment that they look for their rights and the best use of the
32 resource, they are excluded from the conversation, and they are
33 not important anymore, and we start to get into the underserved
34 discussion again, created by those same people that advocated
35 for rights for the underserved communities.

36
37 I think that we can do a much better job than what we are doing
38 as a nation, and you are taking from a person that, in all my
39 time on the council, I have tried to be a bridge man between
40 different and diverse points, and, like you see, sometimes I am
41 not very specific on my points, because I am trying to juggle in
42 English, but I guarantee you that my intentions are the best,
43 and I consider every single point of every industry, big or
44 small or medium, artisanal and so on, and this is what I expect
45 from this group, and I get from this group, and this is what I
46 expect from the high level of NOAA and National Marine Fisheries
47 Service.

1 I am leaving the council, and I am seeing the same requests from
2 the Pacific Islands, and we are not taking advantage of their
3 capacity of managing their resource and creating tools that are
4 effective for their needs. We are excluding them from that, and
5 that is wrong. Imagine your job, and imagine if a similar
6 situation happened to you guys, and that's not fair. I need to
7 say that, and I can sleep well tonight. Thank you for your
8 time.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Marcos. Marc.

11
12 **MR. GORELNIK:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and, if there is
13 no further discussion, I would like to offer a motion.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Marc. I don't see any other hands
16 up.

17
18 **MR. GORELNIK:** All right. Well, first, I want to acknowledge
19 the comments made by the Western Pacific and the Caribbean
20 Councils, and I think we should all take those to heart. Those
21 are significant issues, but I have a motion that I propose, and
22 I don't know if we're going to get it up on the screen or not,
23 and I think it's been submitted.

24
25 **I move that the CCC submit a letter to the Office of National**
26 **Marine Sanctuaries and the National Marine Fisheries Service**
27 **that acknowledges a shared responsibility to conserve and**
28 **sustainably manage the nation's living marine resources.**
29 **Accordingly, there should be a reasonable process that allows**
30 **both the council and sanctuary to carry out their missions and**
31 **achieve their objectives with minimum conflict. This letter**
32 **should encompass the following major points: the missions of**
33 **sanctuaries and the councils are not identical, but both have**
34 **the common goal of supporting healthy, diverse, and abundant**
35 **living marine resources; fishing and sanctuaries are not**
36 **mutually exclusive and can be compatible when the goals and**
37 **objectives do not disqualify fishing at the outset; the councils**
38 **and sanctuaries are partners in marine conservation, and the**
39 **councils have a robust public stakeholder-driven regulatory**
40 **process that can complement the sanctuary process, and, to the**
41 **extent fishery activities need to be address, and to avoid**
42 **conflict or discord, sanctuaries should work constructively with**
43 **the councils to support and utilize the existing management**
44 **process; if sanctuaries believe that a council is not adequately**
45 **conserving resources in an established or proposed sanctuary,**
46 **sanctuaries should bring information and rationale to the**
47 **councils, so that the councils can act accordingly; the process**
48 **for determining fishing regulations in sanctuary waters should**

1 be clarified for each region, and, in some regions, councils are
2 consulted by sanctuaries, and there is an integration of
3 sanctuary staff into the council process, and, in other regions,
4 this is not the case, and a misalignment of sanctuary and
5 council efforts often occurs. That is my motion.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Marc. We're getting that up on the
8 board there, so everyone can see. Eric, are you seconding that
9 motion? Okay. Give us just a second to get it up on the board,
10 so we can make sure that everybody clearly sees it. If you all
11 hang on for just a second, they're just doing a minor edit here.
12 Okay, Marc, and I know that was a long motion, but does that on
13 the board capture your motion? It's seconded by Eric.
14

15 **MR. GORELNIK:** I believe it does. Thank you.
16

17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any more rationale that you have for
18 that motion, before I open it up for discussion?
19

20 **MR. GORELNIK:** I think we covered it during our earlier
21 discussion.
22

23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any other discussion regarding the
24 motion? Seeing none, we'll call a vote. **Is there any**
25 **opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**
26 Janet, go ahead.
27

28 **MS. COIT:** I just want to thank you all for your comments, and I
29 totally agree, Will, that actions speak louder than words. We
30 also have, you know, statutes and a sister agency, and so it's
31 not just a -- But definitely these are points that we can make,
32 and I can't -- I am not bilingual, and I can't even imagine
33 doing a meeting on emotional, difficult, complicated things not
34 in my -- Not in English, and so I have empathy for you, Marcos,
35 and you are so effective at bridge building.
36

37 I am thrilled also that I'm going to be able to go to American
38 Samoa and see, you know, with my own eyes, and so I think that
39 will make me more effective at communicating on some of these
40 issues, but I just wanted to acknowledge the important points
41 that you made and say that we heard them, and we will work on
42 this.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Janet. Bill, sorry, and I didn't
45 see that your hand was up. Go ahead.
46

47 **MR. TWEIT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I have a question actually
48 for Janet maybe. As I was listening to the Western Pacific

1 representatives and Caribbean representatives talking about
2 this, I was wondering -- I was thinking about the NMFS policy
3 for EEJ and the councils' role in that, and I'm just wondering
4 if -- Do we know, at all, whether the sanctuaries program has a
5 similar policy regarding EEJ, and any sort of similar policy
6 about how it affects -- How councils, in particular, or affected
7 residents of sanctuary areas, will be treated under that?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sam.

10
11 **MR. RAUCH:** The NMFS policy is nested within the Presidential
12 mandates and some very generic strategic guidance from the
13 department. There is no other branch within NOAA that has a
14 similar policy yet, and we are actually giving a presentation to
15 NOAA, and NOAA is looking at us as the leader, and I would
16 expect, in the coming months, that other elements of NOAA will
17 have similar policies, and so, right now, there is not one, but
18 we really are being looked at as the model for things that NOAA
19 could adopt, but they have not adopted anything like it yet.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Sam. Bill, go ahead.

22
23 **MR. TWEIT:** Maybe a follow-up suggestion then, and my
24 understanding is that the sanctuary representatives are
25 anticipating being here in October to discuss some sanctuary-
26 related issues, and it seems to me that maybe conveying an
27 expectation to them that it would be good to get an update on
28 their development of their EEJ, as well as sharing the NMFS EEJ
29 with them, and also sharing some of the comments, so that they
30 come sort of prepped to that, and I don't know, and maybe I'm
31 being a little forward on that, but it seems to me that that
32 might be a constructive element of conversation in October.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bill, that's a great discussion, and I will
35 work with our team here, who will be hosting that meeting and
36 putting together the agenda, and, obviously, today was just to
37 get sort of that discussion started, since we couldn't have the
38 full discussion, and then we certainly, obviously, will continue
39 that in October then.

40
41 Okay. I'm not seeing anyone else's hands up, and, as far as
42 where we are today, we're a little bit ahead of schedule, which
43 is good, and so we have some announcements and recognitions, as
44 well as public comment, but that should not take that long, and
45 so, the interest of maybe moving us ahead a little bit for
46 tomorrow, I think there is one or two items from tomorrow's
47 agenda that we could take up now that might save a little time,
48 and the first one was some legislative updates, and so, if

1 you're available and prepared for that, this might be a good
2 time to take us through that.

3 4 **LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK**

5
6 **MR. DAVE WHALEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For those of you
7 that I haven't met, and I think I've met most everybody, but my
8 name is Dave Whaley, and I'm a consultant for the CCC. I spent
9 more than thirty years on Capitol Hill, working for two
10 different House committees, and I covered fishery and ocean
11 issues for twenty of those years, and I worked on the last two
12 Magnuson reauthorizations, and so just to give you a little
13 background on who I am.

14
15 I always start my presentation with a quick Civics 101, since
16 it's been a long time since we had high school civics, and I've
17 been told that most people don't need to hear that anymore, and
18 so I'm going to go through it real quickly, but the first slide
19 is just who the House of Representatives is. The two key take-
20 aways are the last two provisions, or the last two lines, and
21 the House Natural Resources Committee is the committee in the
22 House that has jurisdictions over all fisheries and the ocean
23 issues. They have jurisdiction over half of NOAA, and I will
24 come back to that in a little bit.

25
26 The second one, because of some of the discussions that we've
27 had this week about the debt limit, I just wanted to point out
28 again that, under the Constitution, all revenue measures have to
29 come from the House, and they cannot start in the Senate, and
30 so, again, we'll come back to that in a little bit, but I just
31 wanted to point that out, real quickly.

32
33 Again, this is the Senate, and I won't go through all of that,
34 but the key take-away is that the key committee for oceans and
35 fisheries issues is the Senate Commerce, Science, and
36 Transportation Committee.

37
38 One real quick note is the House committees and Senate
39 committees do not match up their jurisdictions at all, and so
40 you will notice that the Senate committee, as well as doing
41 Department of Commerce issues, also has the entire Department of
42 Transportation, and the reason I bring that up is, every five
43 years, Congress does an aviation authorization, and whichever
44 committee is involved in that -- It sucks a lot of air out of
45 the room for other issues, and, unfortunately, this year is an
46 aviation issue, and the Senate Commerce Committee will be
47 dealing with that, and so I don't expect a lot of committee
48 hearings or attention to fishery and ocean issues, but that

1 could change.

2

3 For those of you who want a reminder on how Congress works, and
4 does anybody remember Schoolhouse Rock? Well, if you go to the
5 internet and look up "Schoolhouse Rock", and I'm just a bill on
6 Capitol Hill, and it's actually a very good reminder on how the
7 legislative process works, and you'll be singing the little tune
8 for a while.

9

10 Having said that, I'm not going to talk a lot about Civics 101,
11 and I've had a couple of questions, the last couple of times
12 that I've done this, and so, just real quickly, people often
13 don't know the difference between Authorizing and Appropriating
14 Committees.

15

16 Authorizing Committees tell agencies what they can or have to
17 do, and Appropriating Committees then fund the agencies, and so,
18 for instance, the House Natural Resources Committee can tell
19 NOAA that you can build five new fishery research vessels. You
20 then have to go to the appropriators and get money, and so, the
21 last time we authorized fishery research vessels, and I can't
22 remember whether we did three or five, but, the first year, the
23 appropriators gave you enough money for half of one, and so,
24 just to be clear, one tells you what to do and one gives you
25 money to do what you're told to do.

26

27 Authorizing Committees, there are generally three words we use
28 when we're telling an agency what they can or must do, and the
29 Secretary may do something, which means, if they want to, they
30 can, and they don't have to. Since Congress said they should,
31 or may, it kind of indicates they want them to, but they don't
32 have to. If it says the Secretary shall, that means they have
33 to do it. Whether they get new money from the appropriators or
34 not, they have to, and so, if we tell the Secretary that you
35 have to build five new fishery research vessels, and the
36 appropriators don't give them money, they have to find new money
37 or take money from somebody else.

38

39 The third one, which is rarely used, is the Secretary shall,
40 subject to appropriations, which means we want you to do it, but
41 we understand that there are budget limitations. We still want
42 you to do it, and so just a little clarification there for all
43 of you.

44

45 We just finished up the 117th Congress. Each Congress lasts for
46 two years, and we just started, in January, the 118th Congress,
47 and so I'm going to go over a couple of things that happened in
48 the last two years.

1
2 In fisheries management, we talk a lot about trends, and the
3 trends, in the last couple of years, have been towards single-
4 species or single-gear-type legislation. Most of them didn't
5 pass on their own, and so the second trend is, at the very end
6 of the Congress, a whole lot of things got packaged up. There
7 were two bills that were over 4,000 pages long, and included in
8 both of those were a number of fishery and ocean provisions.

9
10 The first one here was the National Defense Authorization Act,
11 the NDAA, and this is considered a must-pass bill. Every year,
12 Congress passes an NDAA bill, without fail, and so, at the end
13 of the Congress, when this bill is going through, everybody
14 tries to get their pet projects on there, and everybody tries to
15 get their bills on there, and so, last year, there were a number
16 of fishery and ocean provisions.

17
18 There's a list here, and you can see shark finning,
19 reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Act, and there
20 was a study on blue economy. There was some language dealing
21 with the regional ocean partnerships, national ocean
22 exploration, and there were a couple of provisions dealing with
23 marine mammals, mostly on research, and there was a provision on
24 ocean soundscape monitoring. There were a couple of small Coast
25 Guard fishing provisions, and there was a little bit of language
26 on red snapper, and, again, this was a 4,000-page bill that
27 included all these things.

28
29 The second one that I'm going to talk about was the Consolidated
30 Appropriations Act. As you know, Congress has a hard time
31 passing appropriation bills, and so they wait until the end of
32 the year, and they package up a whole bunch of them, and they're
33 usually late, and so, last year, when they did that, they
34 included the west coast driftnet ban, the Fishery Resource
35 Disaster Improvement Act, the Alaska Salmon Research Taskforce
36 Act, and there was a provision dealing with North Atlantic right
37 whale protections and a limitation on that protection language.

38
39 We've talked a little bit about this throughout the week, and
40 another one of the big packages was the Inflation Reduction Act.
41 You can see, on the slide, all of these things were -- All of
42 these things that are listed there were authorizations for the
43 Secretary of Commerce to use the money for.

44
45 Of particular interest, there was a specific sentence that
46 talked about marine fishery and marine mammal stock assessments.
47 I think there was an intention there that Congress realizes that
48 there's not been a lot of money for surveys and assessments, and

1 here's an add-on that maybe the agency can use for some
2 supplemental surveys. As we've mentioned several times, there
3 was \$2.6 billion for NOAA, and we're hoping that some of that
4 money can be used for stock assessments.

5
6 Now we're in the 118th Congress. As I mentioned, it just started
7 in January. For those of you that I haven't talked to before,
8 when a Congress ends, any bill that was introduced that has not
9 become law goes away. In order for the new Congress to consider
10 it, it has to be reintroduced, and so it's like, at the end of
11 class, they go up and erase the blackboard, and we start over
12 the next day.

13
14 A couple of changes in the 118th Congress, and I'm sure you all
15 know this, but the Senate has remained in control of the
16 democrats. The House of Representatives flipped though, and so
17 now the House is controlled by the republicans, and why is that
18 important? Whoever is in the majority in the full chamber is in
19 control of all the committees, and that means they get to chair
20 the committee, and that means they get to set the budget, and it
21 means they get more staff, and it means they decide what
22 hearings are held, and it means they decide how many witnesses
23 are given to anybody, and it means that they decide what bills
24 move, and so a change in the House means the republicans are in
25 control, and they have some very different priorities than the
26 last chairman, and so a little bit more on that later.

27
28 The other thing that I wanted to point out is there are really
29 slim margins in both the House and the Senate. You would think
30 that, if they wanted to get things done, they would, because of
31 the tight margins, work well together, but that has not been the
32 case so far, if you read the newspaper. I will leave it at
33 that.

34
35 One other point on the slim margins, and, at one point a couple
36 of months ago, there were three senators in the hospital at one
37 time. Had they all been in the same party, that would have made
38 a real difference in how the Senate could have operated, and so,
39 with these slim margins, there are some weird things going on.

40
41 You may have noticed, on the debt limit, the speaker needed to
42 get that through, and, as I've mentioned, the House has to do
43 all the revenue measures, and so it was up to the speaker to get
44 that through the House, and he could not lose five people from
45 his own party in getting that through, and so you may have
46 noticed that, as the discussions were going on about what was
47 going to be in the House bill, they kept adding things to get
48 somebody else to vote yes. They ended up losing four

1 republicans, and, had they lost one more, it wouldn't have
2 passed the House, and so those slim margins make a difference on
3 some of the big things.

4
5 I worked for the House of Representatives, and so I'm going to
6 start telling you about the House first. As I mentioned, the
7 House Natural Resources Committee is the committee of
8 jurisdiction for all fishery and ocean issues, and they renamed
9 the subcommittee this year, and it's a little bit different.
10 It's now the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries. It
11 used to be the Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee.
12 There's a little difference, a little different priorities.

13
14 The new chairman is Bruce Westerman from Arkansas. For those of
15 you who don't know, that's not a coastal state, and the ranking
16 democrat is Congressman Grijalva from Arizona, again not a
17 coastal state, and these two were ranking and chair last time,
18 and they just flipped seats, and so they've been around for a
19 while, and they understand the issues, and they're familiar to
20 the regulator community. The subcommittee chair is Congressman
21 Bentz from Oregon, a coastal state. Yay. The subcommittee
22 ranking member is Jared Huffman from California. Yay, another
23 coastal person.

24
25 The House Natural Resources Committee has a very broad
26 jurisdiction. They have all the wet side of NOAA, and they have
27 almost all the Department of Interior, and they have all western
28 water issues, and they have all Native American issues, and they
29 have all insular affairs issues. They have mining, oil and gas,
30 and some forestry issues, and so, as you can see, they've got a
31 big pie, and, unfortunately, fisheries is not a big part of that
32 pie.

33
34 As I mentioned, control and jurisdiction over NOAA is split
35 between two House committees, and the House Natural Resources
36 Committee has jurisdiction over the wet side, and the House
37 Science Committee, Science, Space, and Technology Committee, has
38 jurisdiction over the dry side, and the reason I bring that up I
39 will get to in one of the last slides.

40
41 The reason I put this slide up there is any of the names that
42 are in red are not coastal members. Anybody in blue is a
43 coastal member, and it's a little hard to see, but you can see
44 that there's a lot of red on there, and the reason is because
45 the House Natural Resources Committee has such a wide
46 jurisdiction, especially over western issues, that there are a
47 lot of western members who are on the committee who have varying
48 degrees of interest in NOAA.

1
2 There are eight coastal members on the republican side, and
3 there are ten on the democrat side. You may notice, on the full
4 committee list, there are two vacancies on the democrat side,
5 and we don't know when those will be filled. There's a limit on
6 how many committees members can serve on, and so sometimes we
7 have to wait and see if somebody will get a waiver to sit on the
8 committee.

9
10 You will notice, on the subcommittee, it's a little bit better,
11 and there's a little bit more blue, and that's a good thing. We
12 have more coastal members. Fifteen of the twenty-seven members
13 are coastal members, and so that's a good thing.

14
15 Just to clarify, and a couple of people were looking at this the
16 other day, and there's some what I will call judgmental language
17 on the next couple of slides, and these are not my words. This
18 is taken directly from the oversight plan for the 118th Congress
19 of the Natural Resources Committee, and so you'll see that they
20 want to do a budget and spending review, and that happened
21 yesterday, and that's where Sam was.

22
23 It wasn't just on NOAA, and, in fact, NOAA was a rather small
24 part of the hearing, and it was dealing with the Bureau of
25 Reclamation's budget, Fish and Wildlife Service budget, NOAA's
26 budget, and the budget of the Power and Marketing
27 Administrations, and so a good bit of focus on west coast and
28 California water issues.

29
30 Let me also say these are taken in order from the oversight
31 plan, and I don't know if it means that is the priority list,
32 but this is the way they appear in the oversight plan, and so
33 you'll see that Endangered Species Act oversight is next, and
34 they have on here Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and
35 Management Act, and I've been told this is oversight only and
36 that there is very little interest in doing a reauthorization
37 act this year or next year.

38
39 Having said that, I've heard at least two members on the
40 democrat side who are interested in introducing legislation. I
41 have not seen any yet, but there are at least a couple of people
42 interested in introducing bills.

43
44 We just talked about America the Beautiful, and there is a plan
45 to do oversight over the 30 by 30 initiative, and I suspect,
46 looking at the language, where it talks about the Biden
47 administration's arbitrary 30 by 30 goals, that this is not
48 going to be a hearing where they're supportive of the

1 initiative, and that's just a guess. We can't go an entire
2 Congress without talking about red snapper, and so the committee
3 will be talking about red snapper again.

4
5 An interesting issue that may come up under this page is
6 protecting salmon from sealions and how do you deal with two
7 protected critters that are eating each other, and, obviously,
8 that's a very parochial issue for the west coast, but it's
9 something that has some bearing potentially in other areas,
10 maybe down here in the Gulf, where I know there's a lot of
11 porpoise predation on things, and I don't know if they're eating
12 endangered species or not.

13
14 The next one is an issue that we've talked about a good bit,
15 offshore wind, and there was a -- I am using air quotes here,
16 but a congressional hearing in New Jersey on offshore wind, and
17 it was not a congressionally or committee-sanctioned hearing,
18 but they ran it as if it were a committee hearing, and I thought
19 it was pretty well done, and they had some really interesting
20 testimony, but, because it was not an official congressional
21 hearing, they've now asked the Resources Committee to do an
22 official hearing, and so we may see that coming before long.

23
24 There are a couple of members on the committee who are
25 interested in aquaculture, including the chairman, who is from
26 Arkansas, and I suspect that they will be looking more at
27 onshore aquaculture than offshore, but offshore may come up.

28
29 Public access and management within the National Wildlife Refuge
30 System, obviously, that's not a NOAA issue, but the reason I put
31 that on here, or left it on here, was, when I was still on the
32 hill, we did a review of all of the wildlife refuges that Fish
33 and Wildlife Service manages, and I think commercial fishing was
34 only allowed in one, and so a very different mindset of how to
35 manage activities within the wildlife refuges and within
36 sanctuaries.

37
38 MMPA, obviously, is another issue that may come up, and it was
39 listed in the oversight plan, and I'm assuming there are some
40 members who have issues with that. I don't know if it will come
41 up under this one, but there's a lot of talk about speed
42 restrictions, because of whales, and it came up, Sam, twice
43 yesterday, I believe.

44
45 **MS. COIT:** There is a hearing likely in early June on that
46 topic.

47
48 **MR. WHALEY:** I'm sorry?

1
2 **MS. COIT:** There's a hearing likely on June 6 on that topic.
3

4 **MR. WHALEY:** Interesting. Thank you. You bring up an
5 interesting point of sometimes I send out notes the day before
6 there's a hearing. Unless somebody is asked to be a witness,
7 they often don't release information about hearings until forty-
8 eight hours before the hearing takes place. At least the
9 committee rules under the House Natural Resources only require
10 forty-eight hours' notice, and so, if you're a witness, they
11 give you a little more time. If you're not a witness, you may
12 not know until two days before, and so, if I'm giving you not
13 much notice on some of these hearings, I apologize.
14

15 I noted earlier that all revenue measures have to originate in
16 the House, and that includes the debt limit bill that we've
17 talked about a lot, and it also includes annual appropriation
18 bills. This is the House Appropriations Committee sub-committee
19 that deals with NOAA issues, and you will notice there is one
20 coastal member, and that's it, and so there are other members
21 from coastal states, but there's only one who comes from a
22 coastal district, and that's not helpful.
23

24 Generally, both the House and the Senate Appropriations
25 Committee do a hearing, big-picture hearing, on Department of
26 Commerce. The House Appropriations Committee has done theirs,
27 and it was on April 18. They have not scheduled one on NOAA
28 that I have seen yet, but generally they do.
29

30 Let's go to the Senate. Let's go across the Capitol. The
31 Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, as I
32 mentioned, is the committee that has jurisdiction over ocean and
33 fisheries issues, and, again, as I noted earlier, the
34 jurisdiction does not match up with the House Natural Resources
35 Committee, and it's unfortunate, but that's just the way it is.
36

37 As I mentioned, the democrats have stayed in control, and so the
38 chair, Maria Cantwell from Washington, remains as chair. There
39 is a new ranking member though, and it's Senator Ted Cruz from
40 Texas, and so he's new in that position. The subcommittee that
41 has jurisdiction is the Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries,
42 Climate Change, and Manufacturing. It's a very odd combination.
43 The chair is Senator Baldwin from Wisconsin, and the ranking
44 member is Senator Sullivan from Alaska, and so, if you consider
45 the Great Lakes to be coastal, we do have two coastal members in
46 charge of the subcommittee then.
47

48 Again, this is color-coded, and you will notice a lot of red on

1 this one as well. This committee used to be more coastal
2 dominated over the years, and it has become more inland members,
3 and the days of Senator Inouye and Senator Stevens are gone.

4
5 One interesting thing to note in the Senate that's a little
6 different from the House is senators can serve both on the
7 Authorizing and Appropriating Committee, and so, in theory, they
8 could create a program in the morning and in the afternoon go
9 over the earlier committee and fund it. That doesn't happen
10 much anymore, but it used to happen quite a bit, but, in the
11 House, there cannot be an overlap. You cannot serve on both an
12 Authorizing and an Appropriation Committee. A total of nine
13 members are coastal, and that's not great, but it's a little bit
14 better than the House. This is the subcommittee that has
15 jurisdiction, and six of eleven are from coastal states, and
16 it's a little bit better, but not great.

17
18 This is the Senate Appropriations Committee, and this is a lot
19 better than the House. We've got eleven of seventeen that are
20 coastal members, and so this is a little bit better, but, again,
21 revenue measures have to start in the House, and so the House
22 gets first shot at the appropriations, and the Senate usually
23 reacts to that, and so we're in good shape when the Senate is
24 reacting, as far as coastal members, but not great in the House.

25
26 I mentioned the Appropriating Committees normally do a big-
27 picture hearing on Commerce and then do a NOAA hearing. The
28 Senate Commerce Committee has done a hearing on the Commerce
29 budget, and it was on April 26.

30
31 Just talking to people on the hill, here's a list of other
32 issues that I've heard people are interested in doing hearings
33 on. This is in no particular order, and this is not in an order
34 of what I think is going to be a priority for the committee, but
35 these are just some of the issues that have come up.

36
37 Climate change, obviously, is a continuing issue for a lot of
38 members, and the blue economy -- You may remember that, under
39 the last administration, there was a small group that was put
40 together to look at new economy and blue economy. They put out
41 a report, and the new administration came in, and apparently
42 blue economy is still a priority, and so, putting aside party
43 differences, there is still an interest in talking about the
44 blue economy.

45
46 It's a little unclear how fisheries fits into the blue economy,
47 and it's been around for a long time, and a lot of what is being
48 discussed is new blue economy, what are new uses of the ocean,

1 and so that's one thing to keep an eye on, is how do we continue
2 to talk to people about how important commercial fisheries are
3 to the blue economy that we have now.

4
5 Offshore wind, obviously, is a big issue, and whale mitigation
6 speed restrictions is going to be a big issue, and I don't know
7 if the Senate has anything scheduled on this, but I know the
8 House, as we've talked about, is very interested. There are
9 going to be a lot of regional fisheries that come up, and the
10 three that I've listed are primarily I've heard about from House
11 committee members, and California salmon, red snapper, and North
12 Pacific salmon. Those are issues that may come up in the near
13 future.

14
15 I've been told that the House Natural Resources Committee is
16 very interested in doing a hearing on sanctuaries, MPAs, and
17 monuments. I don't have a schedule yet, but I've heard soon,
18 and so keep that in mind. Aquaculture, as I mentioned, might be
19 an issue for the chairman, but probably onshore rather than
20 offshore, and we've talked a little bit about the debt limit.

21
22 I meant to ask Brian before he left, and there's been some
23 question about what happens if we don't get an agreement on the
24 debt limit, whether the agencies and councils continue to pay
25 their bills or not, and it's different from a government
26 shutdown. Sam, I don't know if you know. I don't know, but, at
27 this point, the House has passed a debt limit ceiling, a bill to
28 lift the debt limit ceiling, and there was -- There are some
29 provisions about doing recessions on some already appropriated
30 programs, and the IRA money was on that list, but it only listed
31 specific sections of the IRA, and I don't think the NOAA
32 provisions were a part of that, but they are looking at other
33 obligated funds, and so, NOAA, spend your money quick.

34
35 We are told that the drop-dead date for an agreement is June 1,
36 and so we have about a week. I know that negotiations are
37 continuing, and I don't know how close they are to an agreement,
38 but I think there's hope, from both sides of the negotiating
39 table, to get something done.

40
41 The last one I'm going to note on this one is CHOW, and this is
42 the Capitol Hill Oceans Week, and it's a conference that is
43 sponsored by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and, this
44 year, it's going to be June 6 through 8, and the topic of it is
45 the connection between ocean and climate change, and so most of
46 the speakers are going to be talking about that issue.

47
48 It gets a fair amount of play on Capitol Hill, and so it's going

1 to be virtual, and you may want to pay attention to it, just to
2 give you a flavor of what people are saying to the hill on the
3 issue of climate change and oceans.

4
5 I've saved the best for last. There's been a lot of talk
6 already this year about making NOAA an independent agency, or
7 doing a NOAA organic act, or taking pieces away from NOAA, and I
8 will go through a couple of these.

9
10 On April 11, the House Natural Resources Committee did a hearing
11 primarily on California water issues, but one of the bills that
12 was part of the topic of the hearing was the Federally
13 Integrated Species Habitat Act, or FISH Act. Included in that
14 act would be a transfer of all anadromous and catadromous
15 species from NOAA to Fish and Wildlife Service.

16
17 To give you my own view on that, it's interesting that, several
18 times, they've had hearings on this issue, and, generally,
19 they've had -- When they've had the hearing on the issue, they
20 have also had a hearing on bills about how much they hate the
21 Fish and Wildlife Service's management of grizzly bears or
22 wolves or prairie chickens, and then let's transfer fish to
23 them, and so there's a little bit of inconsistency.

24
25 I mentioned that committee jurisdictions don't match up, and
26 Fish and Wildlife Service, on the Senate side, is under the
27 Environment and Public Works, EPW, and not the Senate Commerce
28 Committee, and so it's a proposal that, if the Natural Resources
29 Committee were to follow through on it, it would not go to the
30 Senate Commerce Committee.

31
32 On April 18, just a week after that hearing, the House Science,
33 Space, and Technology Committee had a hearing on a discussion
34 draft to create an independent agency for NOAA, to take it out
35 of the Department of Commerce and make it an independent agency.
36 One provision within that bill would be a study by the National
37 Academy of Public Administrators to transfer all or part of ESA
38 and MMPA functions from NOAA and transfer them to the Department
39 of Interior, presumably also the Fish and Wildlife Service.

40
41 This is just a study, and it's not even an introduced bill yet,
42 and it's only a draft, but there are some who think that the
43 chairman of this committee is retiring, and he's looking for a
44 legacy issue, and that he wants to create an independent agency
45 for NOAA as his legacy.

46
47 As I mentioned earlier on in today's discussion, the House
48 Science Committee and the House Natural Resources split

1 jurisdiction over NOAA, and so, if NOAA were to be made an
2 independent agency, both committee would have to agree. At this
3 point, the House Natural Resources has absolutely no interest in
4 going through with that.

5
6 Having said that, the Senate Commerce Committee -- There is
7 apparently a great interest, at least at the chairman's level,
8 of doing a NOAA Organic Act, and so discussions on how to create
9 a NOAA Organic Act, and/or make it an independent agency, are
10 going to be discussions that we may be having, and so I just
11 wanted to raise that.

12
13 With that, I will answer any questions, but let me throw out one
14 more thing that I have heard. Every time that I'm on the hill,
15 or talk to somebody on the hill, they tell me they can't find
16 staff, and so, if anybody knows any young, eager person who is
17 willing to work long hours for low pay, there are opportunities,
18 and so thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dave, thank you for that thorough
21 summary. I will open up the floor for questions for Dave. No
22 questions? Seeing none, all right. Thank you, Dave.

23
24 **MR. WHALEY:** Thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom.

27
28 **MR. NIES:** Mr. Chair, with your permission, I would like to
29 offer a motion to nominate a person to be the chair of the
30 Legislative Workgroup.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Tom.

33
34 **MR. NIES:** All right. **The motion is I would like the CCC to**
35 **accept Dr. Carrie Simmons as chair of the Legislative Workgroup.**

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Chris seconds that. I think we need to put
38 that motion on the board. Tom, just to verify, and if you would
39 please look at your motion on the board.

40
41 **MR. NIES:** **Yes, that is my motion, that the CCC appoints Dr.**
42 **Carrie Simmons as chair of the Legislative Workgroup.**

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, and we had a second by
45 Chris. **Any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, congrats,**
46 **Carrie.**

47
48 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you.

1
2 **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS**
3

4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. A few other just small items of business
5 here, and then we'll proceed with public comment in a minute,
6 and we just have some announcements and recognitions. We'll
7 start off first with recognizing some folks leaving their
8 council positions from the North Pacific, and that is Simon
9 Kinneen. Thank you. Thank you for your service, Simon. Dave,
10 would you like to say something, or Bill? Go ahead.
11

12 **MR. TWEIT:** I can say something, and I'm a little further away
13 from Simon than David is. I think, certainly at the North
14 Pacific, but I think also the CCC is really going to miss Simon.
15 He has got just a very steady hand on the tiller, and he's had a
16 really clear vision of where he wanted the council to go over
17 time, during his entire tenure, but really laying the foundation
18 for going into the future as well.
19

20 He's representing really, at least in my view, the changing
21 structure of the North Pacific Council fisheries, and Simon is
22 really representative of the capabilities and the vision of, in
23 particular, the native corporations, the CDQ groups, that are
24 succeeding probably beyond anything that Congress ever really
25 envisioned, but certainly Congress would have been thrilled, or
26 the original designers of the programs would have been thrilled,
27 to see it working this well, and the energy, the creativity that
28 they're bringing into the process, and Simon has really sort of
29 encapsulated it.
30

31 It's been a real pleasure for me, as Vice Chair, to be working
32 with Simon, and we're going to miss him a lot, but definitely
33 know that the CEQ group needs him back, needs his full attention
34 back, and Simon probably needs his life back, and so he deserves
35 it, but you're a good friend and a really great chair.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you for those comments, Bill, and, Simon,
38 thank you for your service. (Applause) Up next, from the
39 Caribbean, finishing out his term, is Marcos, and so, Marcos,
40 thank you for your service. Miguel.
41

42 **MR. ROLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and just to say a few words
43 about Marcos, and I met Marcos a long time ago, when this
44 Brazilian fellow came to our meeting, and we didn't know what to
45 do about him, and his father is from Brazil, and his mother is
46 from Puerto Rico, and one day this crazy young guy took a plane
47 from Brazil and landed in Puerto Rico.
48

1 He became a marine biologist and a fisherman, and he has been in
2 the charter boat business for more than thirty-three years, and,
3 for some reason, he kept wanting to be part of the council, and
4 so he has served for six terms, and, for those of you who are
5 thinking about the math, that's eighteen years, and he still
6 wants to be part of the council.

7
8 I consider Marcos a good friend, and I met his family a long
9 time ago, and he has two daughters, an excellent family, and one
10 of them wanted to be a ballerina, like her sister, and a chef
11 and a fisherman, like her father, and so that gives you an idea
12 of how he is appreciated in his family and the friends that he
13 has, and so, Marcos, I am really glad that you have spent all
14 these years with us, and hopefully you will be in touch with the
15 council, and certainly your contribution on the CCC has been
16 outstanding, especially the last emotional one that you made
17 today, because it's very difficult to translate in words what
18 you feel about things that happen.

19
20 Everybody around this table is involved, but the whole
21 conglomerate of people who manage fisheries is sometimes very
22 difficult to realize that, every time that we take a decision,
23 we hurt people, sometimes, and so, Marcos, thank you very much
24 for your years of serving as a council member and your
25 chairmanship and participating on the CCC. Thank you, Mr.
26 Chairman.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Marcos, thank you. (Applause). All right.
29 Moving over to the Western Pacific, John, that brings us to you,
30 ending your term, and thank you very much for your service, and
31 so, Will, go ahead.

32
33 **MR. SWORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, I will tell you that
34 John -- He lives 8,000 miles from me in the CNMI, and he's a
35 brother from another mama, but, on the other hand, he was born
36 8,000 miles in the other direction, and he was born in Virginia,
37 and he trained at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond
38 and at Texas A&M in Corpus Christi.

39
40 He could have been on one of you all's councils on the east
41 coast, with his knowledge and his drawl, but, when asked to sing
42 country songs, he would rather change his drawl, and John is a
43 long-time resident of CNMI and is a NEPA specialist in marine
44 and terrestrial subjects, but, when asked about tuna species
45 gender, he says, in this day and age, who cares, at long as it
46 tastes good?

47
48 Mr. Gourley is also a visionary that married a Chinese lady and

1 bought a house in China, knowing that the Chinese are going to
2 take over the world, after stealing the fish in our sanctuaries.

3
4 John, for nine years, has always brought energy, levity, humor,
5 and mostly passion to heavy topics and discussion in our
6 council, and I want to thank you, John, very much, and we'll
7 miss you, and we wish you well. Lelei faiva, as we say in
8 Samoa, and the translation means "good fishing". Thank you,
9 John. (Applause)

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, John. Well, up next is me,
12 and so I'm ending my term in the Gulf Council, and so it's been
13 a fun ride. Tom.

14
15 **DR. FRAZER:** It has been a fun ride, and so, I mean, Greg has
16 been a fixture on the council since 2014. About two weeks from
17 now, he will be at his last council meeting, but Greg has really
18 contributed in a very substantial way to many of the successes
19 realized by the council, and he certainly will be missed, not
20 just by me, but by all the council members.

21
22 During his tenure on the council, Greg served as chair of the
23 Data Collection, Artificial Reef, Migratory Species, Red Drum,
24 Sustainable Fisheries, and Outreach and Education Committees.
25 That's a lot. Thank you for your service there, and, as
26 everybody recognizes now, most recently, he has served as Vice
27 Chair and Chair, and so, during the day, he's got a regular job,
28 just like many of us, right, and he serves as the Senior
29 Executive Director of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of
30 Mexico Studies at Texas A&M, and he somehow manages to maintain
31 a very active and highly regarded research program.

32
33 Greg's ecologically-oriented research program is quite broad,
34 but he and his colleagues have placed a notable emphasis on
35 sportfish, and it has certainly served him well in his role of
36 the council, and so I think, as many of the folks know in this
37 room, Greg was a principal investigator for the Great Red
38 Snapper Count, and that was a huge, multidisciplinary,
39 collaborative effort, and kudos to you for getting that done.
40 Additionally, I would like to say that the Gulf recognizes your
41 many contributions, and we're going to miss you a lot.
42 (Applause)

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That concludes our outgoing council members,
45 and next is executive directors, and that's Tom Nies, for all of
46 his years of service in the New England Council, and so, Tom, we
47 appreciate that, and so I think Carrie is going to say a few
48 words.

1
2 **DR. SIMMONS:** All right, and so I have a few things to say about
3 Tom, and I will let the others fill in the gaps. Contributions
4 that Tom has made, Tom Nies, to fisheries span multiple decades
5 and multiple agencies. Tom graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard
6 Academy in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics.
7 Exciting stuff. He also holds a Master's in Business
8 Administration and Leadership from Franklin Pierce University.

9
10 He spent twenty-one years with the U.S. Coast Guard, focusing on
11 at-sea law enforcement. There, he logged over ten years of at-
12 sea duty, including ship duty in Alaska, and that culminated
13 with an appointment as a commanding officer of the Boston U.S.
14 Coast Guard Cutter Spenser. That was in Boston, Massachusetts.

15
16 His land-based assignments at the Coast Guard included a stint
17 at the Fisheries Law Enforcement Branch at the Coast Guard
18 Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and he later served as the
19 Admiral's Representative for the first Coast Guard District Law
20 Enforcement Division at the New England Council, and he attended
21 the New England Council meetings.

22
23 Tom has worked for the New England Council since 1997, and they
24 picked him up from there, and he has served as the Executive
25 Director since 2013. Prior to taking the helm, he served as an
26 analyst on the council, the New England Council, and one of
27 Tom's chief accomplishments in the Northeast for fisheries
28 management includes managing the multiyear transition to the
29 sector catch share program in the New England groundfish
30 fishery. Tom has worked tirelessly to improve staff operations,
31 get needed scientific support, and effective implementation of
32 council management actions.

33
34 Tom has been an active and effective member of the CCC. He has
35 served as the chair and vice chair of the Legislative Committee,
36 which now he has tasked me with, and he also served on the CMOD
37 Steering Committee, and he has provided assistance to the CCC
38 Area-Based Management Subcommittee, and so now on to the good
39 stuff.

40
41 Tom enjoys sailing, playing the guitar, and spending time with
42 his grandchildren, which we hope he can spend more time doing in
43 the coming years, during his retirement, and so it's going to be
44 difficult to replace Tom on the New England Council, to fill his
45 shoes, and so I know that's going to be difficult for you all.

46
47 We'll miss his direct, simple, and straightforward approach to
48 fisheries issues at this table, and that no-nonsense, dry sense

1 of humor as well, not to mention your candid ability to
2 challenge the agency on various fishery issues and activities,
3 and so we appreciate that.
4

5 To demonstrate Tom Nies' readiness to relax and start his
6 retirement, I have captured a photograph from the first evening
7 of this meeting, and so now you can put that up, Bernie, and so
8 we honor and congratulate Tom Nies on his career achievements,
9 and so thank you.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Eric.

12

13 **MR. REID:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons, and thank you, Dr. Chair, and
14 I don't have anything prepared, and thank god you picked up that
15 detail, but I suppose, you know, what could be said about Tom is
16 he did a pretty good job, and it wasn't bad, but the reality of
17 it is that he's been a fantastic person to me, and to the staff
18 and other council members, and he's a little cranky sometimes,
19 but he challenges me to be better than I was five minutes ago,
20 and that's a 24/7 progress, and so, you know, what I said --
21 When we heard about Tom leaving, I said he has more respect than
22 anybody I've ever met, from Gloucester to Guam, and that's what
23 I meant, and so I will leave it to the rest of you, who might
24 know Tom better than me, but he's going to be hard to replace.
25 Big shoes. Snowshoes. Big shoes, and so thanks a lot, Tom, and
26 good luck to you. (Applause)

27

28 **MR. WITHERELL:** The North Pacific Council has a couple of gifts
29 for retiring Executive Director Tom Nies, as well as we've heard
30 a rumor that Ms. Kitty Simonds is also going to retire, and so
31 that's the rumor, and we have a couple of gifts, and I'm going
32 to start with Kitty, if that's okay.

33

34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Do you want to come up here, Dave?

35

36 **MR. WITHERELL:** No, and I'm fine here, but thanks. The first
37 is, in September of 2021, Kitty told me that this CCC meeting,
38 in 2021, in October, was going to be her last CCC meeting.
39 Well, I panicked, and I quickly ordered up a CCC plaque of
40 recognition for Kitty, and it says, "October 2021". Now, I was
41 very gullible, and I'm still gullible to think that she might
42 retire now, and so, Kitty, when you finally retire, you can take
43 this plaque, and you can put a little duct tape over the date
44 and write in whatever date, whether it's 2030, as Mr. Gourley
45 said, but you're welcome to do that, and congratulations.

46

47 I have one more thing, and we all know how much you like to put
48 pressure on the National Marine Fisheries Service, and I think

1 that's something that you're going to miss. I call it pressure,
2 but I think there might be some other terms for that, and so
3 what we have is a special clamp for you, so that you can
4 continue to put pressure on NMFS in your retirement, or put the
5 screws to NMFS, whatever you think, and so you're welcome,
6 Kitty.

7
8 For Tom, we have a gift just to remind you of how important
9 fisheries have been in New England, in the history of New
10 England, and just a little history lesson. As you know,
11 Gloucester was probably the biggest seaport in the United States
12 for fisheries in the late 1800s, and, with the connection of the
13 railroads in the mid-1800s, it took a very mammoth foresight by
14 a man named Frankie Davis, and he realized that he could sell,
15 by U.S. Mail, salted fish, that was harvested in Gloucester at
16 the time, anywhere in the country by U.S. Mail.

17
18 One way they would package it would be in boxes, and this is a
19 box from that time period that would be five pounds of salted
20 cod that would be shipped to your house, and, at that time, in
21 the 1800s, it would have been about a dollar, and I found,
22 online, an order blank for Frankie Davis salted fish from 1920,
23 and the company was still open, and it was \$2.00, and, if you
24 think about inflation, that's worth about \$40.00 now, which
25 seems about right for a pound of codfish salted, but, when
26 somebody would order this, of course, there would be some
27 instructions, a little piece of paper with instructions, on how
28 to, you know, soak your fish and how to use in some recipes.

29
30 I looked, and there are very few examples, if any, of that type
31 of paperwork left, but I did discover that there's a printing
32 plate from that time that has all of that information that would
33 be used to make prints of those recipes, and so I didn't -- I
34 couldn't locate, in Anchorage, Alaska, a printing press that was
35 made at that point to make a printout, but you can hold this up
36 to a mirror and find the recipes and try to make them, and
37 there's some interesting ones, like codfish cakes and cod balls
38 and some other things, and you might want to try them yourself,
39 if you get your hands on some salt cod, or decide to make it
40 yourself.

41
42 If you find no use for these, you can donate them to the Cape
43 Ann Museum, and I'm sure they would be happy to have them, and
44 so thank you for your service, Tom, and we appreciate it.
45 You've been a great friend of mine for the last ten years.
46 (Applause)

47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, if you wouldn't mind coming up here for a

1 second, we have a few more things that we wanted to give you.
2 Okay. Thank you, everyone, and congratulations, and thanks for
3 the service to all of you. We really appreciate that.

4
5 Next, we have just one short item of business, and that's Public
6 Comment. At my last notification, we had two people that would
7 like to provide public comment this afternoon, and I read our
8 public comment statement into the record yesterday, and so we
9 don't need to do that again, and I would just remind everyone
10 that each speaker is limited to three minutes, and we will
11 proceed with that, and then that should wrap us up for the day,
12 and so it looks like we're ready, and our first public comment
13 is from Gib Brogan.

14
15 **PUBLIC COMMENT**
16

17 **MR. GIB BROGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gib Brogan, and I'm a
18 Campaign Director at Oceana. First off, let me thank you for
19 providing an opportunity for public comment. I have been to a
20 number of CCC meetings, and this has been, by far, the most
21 inclusive of the public and interested parties, and so having
22 this opportunity to talk -- We very much appreciate it.

23
24 The reason I'm here today is actually a very good tie-in, after
25 the retirements and the term-off with the council members, and,
26 at lunchtime, we distributed a packet to all of you that we
27 looked at the turnover on the councils, and, after twenty years
28 in front of the councils across the country, myself, and my
29 Oceana colleagues, looked at things that the councils have done
30 right.

31
32 Most of the time, Oceana is here talking to the councils, in
33 front of a lot of your councils, telling you what you're doing
34 wrong, and we do that very well, but, this time around, we
35 wanted to highlight some things that the councils have done
36 right and use those as examples, because, as we see retirements,
37 and see the council members term-off, a lot of the things, a lot
38 of the tools, get lost, and that institutional knowledge is not
39 there, and it's really interesting, and we appreciate what the
40 CCC is doing, as far as council member education to pass these
41 things on, how to make the councils better, so we don't have
42 that drain on those resources.

43
44 We put these together from around the country on habitat and
45 bycatch successes, things that have happened on the Pacific, the
46 North Pacific, New England, Mid-Atlantic as examples of what
47 other councils can do, and we encourage the council, or the CCC,
48 to continue the sharing of information.

1
2 There are a lot of tools that are out there that have been used,
3 and it might have been fifteen years ago, but we want those to
4 stay in play, because they're still useful, and we encourage the
5 councils to keep up with the council education, sharing these
6 ideas, and, during the comments about Tom Nies, I am not looking
7 forward to the New England Council without Tom as the firm hand
8 on the tiller, telling the council, giving the council, ideas on
9 how to solve problems, but a lot of what the council does is
10 solving problems, and knowing what tools are out there is an
11 important thing, and so we wanted to get these out there, share
12 them with the councils, and we're going to send them to all of
13 your members, as things that they can think about when tackling
14 habitat and bycatch problems, but we appreciate the time, and,
15 again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. Thanks.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Brogan. Up next we have Bob
18 Zales.

19
20 **MR. ZALES:** Bob Zales, II. Thank you all again for the public
21 testimony. A couple of things, real quick. Number one, when it
22 comes to sanctuaries and fishery management, we're not going to
23 be able to support that. We contend that Congress gave
24 authority to manage fish to the Fisheries Service and the
25 councils, and fishing is confusing enough already, when you've
26 got state regulations, and you have federal regulations, and you
27 have got HMS regulations, and you've got bag limits and seasons
28 and size limits, quotas, the whole bit, and it's difficult to
29 do, and you add another entity of sanctuaries, and you've got
30 another set of regulations that you've got to try to play with
31 and understand, and it's difficult to do.

32
33 When it comes to HMS, and this is big bee in my bonnet, and the
34 council has heard this, the Gulf Council has heard this, from us
35 for a while now, and, fortunately, at the last council meeting,
36 they passed a motion to hopefully address this, and this is
37 permitting for the private recreational fleet. I don't know so
38 much on the west coast, but I can tell you, on the Gulf, and on
39 the east coast, every vessel that fishes in the EEZ, with the
40 exception of private rec, must have a permit. Every vessel that
41 fishes for HMS, including private rec, must have an HMS permit.

42
43 When it comes to all the data, and all the issues, with discards
44 and discard mortality, we have a completely unaccountable
45 sector, on the private rec side, that can go do whatever they
46 want, whenever they want, however many they want, and the whole
47 bit, and we need to get this addressed, because the rest of us
48 are accountable. They know pretty much how many commercial

1 people are there, how many for-hire and charters are there, and
2 they know what we do and when we do it and how we do it.

3
4 We're reporting what we do, and it's come to the point now that,
5 when it comes to the private rec sector, they need to be held
6 accountable, and we need to know how many of them are fishing in
7 the EEZ. If you don't want to fish in the EEZ, don't get a
8 permit, but, if you want to fish out there, do like everybody
9 else and get a permit.

10
11 The 30 by 30 thing that's been going on now, I was one of the
12 original appointees to the MPA FACA, back in 2000, and, in that
13 position, and that thing, and it was most diverse group of
14 people that ever sat together around a table, and, I mean, you
15 had everybody there, and I was the one true dumbass there,
16 because I didn't have a PhD or a college education, and
17 everybody else was way up.

18
19 I learned a whole lot from that process, and the key thing that
20 we all did is we all worked together, and we came to a
21 consensus, and we passed the first information about the MPAs,
22 on how to identify them and where they were and how they worked
23 and the whole bit. MPAs, and closed areas, probably can work in
24 some cases, but I'm going to give you an example for the Gulf of
25 Mexico, where we are.

26
27 Some of you all know, and some of you don't, but gag grouper has
28 been now listed as overfished and undergoing overfishing, and
29 the last stock assessment for that fishery, here recently,
30 indicated that that fishery has been overfished and undergoing
31 overfishing for the past thirty years. In 2014, the Fisheries
32 Service did a worldwide notification that the MSA worked,
33 because the gag grouper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico was
34 completely rebuilt, and not just past overfishing and undergoing
35 overfishing, but it was completely rebuilt.

36
37 Something has happened, in that period of time, where we've got
38 a problem with that fishery, and the reason why I say that is
39 because, in 2000, Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps were
40 created, and we've had the forty-fathom break that's been set up
41 as closed seasonally, and we've had several other areas shut
42 down, all for the purpose of enhancing the gag grouper stock.

43
44 Apparently it hasn't worked, and so what has happened, why it
45 hasn't worked, we don't know, but, if you set an area aside and
46 protect it, and you've got a goal and objectives for it to do,
47 if it ain't doing it, the only thing you're doing is restricting
48 access and opportunity to fishermen, and so those things need to

1 be considered in what you all do, and so thank you very much.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain Zales. Well, that will
4 bring us to a conclusion for today, with public testimony, and
5 we have a quick announcement, before everybody breaks, and we'll
6 pick up again in the morning, at 9:00. Since we finished the
7 legislative briefing from Mr. Whaley, we'll start with the
8 Endangered Species Act discussion.

9
10 For those of you that are going to be attending the sunset
11 cruise this evening, you need to be at the dock by 6:00, at
12 least, promptly at 6:30, and meet at 5:30 in the lobby, if
13 you're interested, and we've arranged for taxi rides over there,
14 and I think there's a small charge for that, and so that's -- If
15 you're interested in that, Kathy, with the Gulf Council, has
16 sent around an email with all those pertinent details, and so
17 you might want to look at that before you leave. With that,
18 unless there is anything else from anyone, we'll adjourn for
19 today and pick up at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow. All right. Thanks,
20 everyone.

21
22 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on May 24, 2023.)

23
24 - - -

25
26 May 25, 2023

27
28 THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

29
30 - - -

31
32 The Council Coordination Committee reconvened at the Marriott
33 Beachside Hotel in Key West, Florida on Thursday morning, May
34 25, 2023, and was called to order by Gulf of Mexico Fishery
35 Management Council Chairman Greg Stunz.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We'll go ahead and get going, and welcome to
38 the last day of the CCC meeting. We are starting on time today,
39 promptly, for people's travel and air flights and all that kind
40 of thing. Yesterday, we completed the legislative outlook, with
41 Dave Whaley, and so we'll start with our second agenda item,
42 which is Integration of the Endangered Species, and first up for
43 this is Kitty is going to give a report on the CCC working
44 group. Before we do that, Kitty, John wanted to mention
45 something, real quick, before we get started.

46
47 **MR. GOURLEY:** Good morning, and thank you, Chairman. I just
48 wanted to let you all know that the video that was shown before

1 the meeting started was taken yesterday in Pago Pago, American
2 Samoa, and it was the opposition to the proposed Pacific Remote
3 Islands Sanctuary that would take over and take away the fishing
4 rights of territorial fishermen along in those island areas, and
5 it was twenty-five minutes of the video, and so I wanted to let
6 you know what it was and why it was shown, because this follows
7 the conversation and discussion that we had yesterday, leading
8 to a motion about the outcry, the public outcry, against the
9 movement of sanctuaries that close down fishing areas going on
10 in the Western Pacific. Thank you, Chairman.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. Carrie.

13
14 **DR. SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so the video, I believe,
15 is about twenty-five minutes, and so staff is going to send
16 around a link, so folks can watch it on their own, if they would
17 like, and so thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Carrie. With that, we'll start with
20 Kitty.

21
22 **INTEGRATION OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT - MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT**

23
24 **MS. SIMMONS:** Thank you. In May of 2022, the CCC formed a
25 working group to consider potential changes to the ESA policy
26 directive addressing issues that you all identified through the
27 May 2021 and January 2022 meetings. The working group consists
28 of one staff member from each council, and you can see their
29 names there.

30
31 The group developed a redline version of the ESA policy
32 directive, which you reviewed at our October meeting last year,
33 and so what we heard at that meeting was that NMFS didn't plan
34 to reopen the policy directive changes until the complete
35 region-specific discussions started that they were planning, and
36 so, in response, the CCC recommended that NMFS review the
37 redline version and implement the changes drafted by the working
38 group as soon as possible, prior to the regional coordination
39 effort, and, in a letter communicating our recommendations to
40 Sam, the EDs requested a meeting with NMFS to discuss the
41 redline changes, once NMFS completed its detailed review.

42
43 We met with NMFS staff in February of this year, and Sam, again,
44 reiterated that they won't be changing the policy directive
45 until the regional discussions are completed, and he provided a
46 schedule for those meetings, and some have happened before the
47 CCC meeting, and the rest after, and Sam did indicate that NMFS
48 plans to bring the changes to the October CCC meeting this

1 year.

2

3 Since the last meeting, the working group coordinated the joint
4 response to the ESA questionnaire, in prep for the regional
5 meetings, through which the CCC's recommendations and redline
6 changes were again highlighted.

7

8 Four of the councils have had their regional meetings, with the
9 remaining meetings scheduled through August, and the group
10 reconvened on May 15 to review the meeting highlights to-date
11 and to discuss overall takeaways for CCC's consideration. The
12 group compiled key highlights from each regional meeting, and
13 that report is included in your briefing material.

14

15 The group remains focused on the importance of addressing
16 changes to the policy directive, as outlined in the redline
17 recommendations that you all had last October. However, they do
18 recognize that regional meetings can help to kickstart early
19 regional coordination and regular communication, as needed, and
20 so we noted that scheduling of these meetings have spanned over
21 a six-month period, and they believe that they have been largely
22 duplicative with material that was covered in the 2022 working
23 group report and in NMFS' questionnaire.

24

25 The group did not see a strong connection between discussions at
26 the regional meetings and the specific changes to the policy
27 directive that we continue to support, and so, in February, the
28 agency committed to bringing back draft policy directive changes
29 to our October meeting.

30

31 As these were not discussed at the regional meetings, the group
32 indicated that it would be helpful for NMFS to provide any
33 specific changes, with sufficient time for the CCC ESA Working
34 Group to review, before the October CCC meeting.

35

36 In your briefing material, there is a report of the CCC working
37 group and the four regional meetings, and there are some
38 highlights in there, and so the report shows that the councils,
39 and the regions, in their meetings, have said that things have
40 generally worked well and that -- There is agreement on the
41 process and what were the successes and that the process works
42 well when terms and conditions and reasonable and prudent
43 measures require PRD, SFD, and councils to coordinate the
44 feasibility of these measures for future implementation.

45

46 The Pacific Council said that framework actions are important,
47 because it's difficult and time consuming, most of the time, to
48 deal with ESA bi-ops and the like, and so they said that their

1 next steps with the region weren't clear at that time.

2
3 The Gulf Council said that they agreed that the working
4 relationship is effective, and active communication is underway
5 to ensure coordination to resolve differences and/or
6 misunderstandings in the process, and, at some of the meetings,
7 the councils talked about perhaps including some of these, or
8 some language, in their ROAs, because each of the councils and
9 the regions deal different with their ROAs, and, again, it was
10 like early coordination, and, for the Gulf, they have, which is
11 interesting, an interdisciplinary planning team that is made up
12 of council staff, regional staff, General Council, and Science
13 Center staff, and so I thought that was helpful.

14
15 Then the South Atlantic Council said the working relationship is
16 beneficial, and they felt that it was important to update the
17 document to reflect current council practices, and they were
18 going to be meeting on a regular basis, and they have decided to
19 meet monthly, together with the regions, the PR staff, and the
20 council staff, and they suggested that council members be
21 trained on protected species, which I think there is a section
22 in the annual training including the consultations, and so MMPA
23 and, of course, the integration agreement.

24
25 Then, for the North Pacific, they said that their current
26 working relationship is effective, and active communication is
27 underway to ensure early coordination and to resolve
28 differences.

29
30 They haven't had a major bi-op since 2016, and their ROA
31 contains general principles of NMFS and council roles having to
32 do with protected species, and, again, they talked about the
33 region and the center and the councils to be proactive, with
34 early coordination, and setting expectations and timeline were
35 important dialogue, and so the relationship is positive, and the
36 staff will continue to support the CCC's working group changes
37 to the national guidance in the policy directive, because they
38 believe that these changes that we have proposed would result in
39 practical outcomes in their region and provide appropriate
40 guidance. That is my report, Mr. Chairman, and if you would
41 like to hear from Sam, and I will leave you with that.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kitty. Yes, I think that's a good
44 recommendation, and, Sam, you were scheduled for a brief update
45 too, and so maybe if you did that, and then we could open the
46 floor for questions, after we have all the information.

47
48 **MR. RAUCH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my update largely

1 mirrors what Kitty presented, and I think she accurately
2 presented the state of play here, in terms of the schedule. We
3 have seen the policy directive recommendations that you all gave
4 us, and many of those we agree with, and some of them are going
5 to be more problematic to work through, and it is not clear to
6 me that all of the -- I am very pleased to hear that, in many
7 regions, the process is working well.

8
9 I know that there are some areas where there are still some
10 difficulties, and it's not clear to me that those policy changes
11 address those difficulties, and that's one of the reasons that
12 we wanted to have these one-on-one discussions, because the
13 issues may be different than what the policy addresses, but we
14 have committed to coming back, at the fall meeting, with a
15 revised policy that accepts what we can accept and provides a
16 rationale for other things and maybe have some other ideas in
17 there than what the CCC has proposed.

18
19 We will try to get it to you as early as possible, and I cannot
20 commit at this time, because I've not talked to the working
21 group about whether we could do it ahead of time, but I
22 understand the value that we could do that.

23
24 We have had about half, a little over half, of our regional
25 meetings, or regional council meetings, and we have one more
26 scheduled for June 6, I believe, and then a couple more that
27 still need to be scheduled, and so we're trying to get through
28 those, and it does help us get a perspective as to what it's
29 doing, how relations are going, and it allows our national team
30 to look across the council-region pairs and to provide some
31 recommendations, or at least understand where there are
32 differences, and are these significant or not, and maybe there
33 are some things that are going on in one area that we could
34 share with another area that might resolve a problem without a
35 need for a policy change.

36
37 We think that this is a good process to go through, and we're
38 not done yet, but all of that is going to lead into what is
39 changes in the policy directive, but we were also trying to
40 commit to, policy directive or not, to generally improve the
41 relationship and to clarify things that are causing difficulties
42 because of uncertainty, and so we're trying to do all that, and
43 we do expect to come back in the fall with a policy directive,
44 with changes to that directive, and to begin discussions, and
45 those will be draft changes, and so this will not be final, but
46 to indicate draft changes for your consideration, where we've
47 taken your suggestions, where we've altered them or not, and to
48 begin that process, and so that's my report, and I'm happy to

1 take questions.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Sam. Okay. With that, we'll open
4 up the floor for comments or questions for either Kitty or Sam.
5 Kitty.

6

7 **MS. SIMONDS:** Since no one is making a comment, I think all is
8 well. However, Sam, I simply can't leave until we complete
9 this, and so you're going to see me around --

10

11 **MR. RAUCH:** I will complete it tomorrow. It will be on your
12 desk in the morning.

13

14 **MS. SIMONDS:** This is my baby, remember.

15

16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Not seeing any other hands up, I think
17 we'll go ahead and move on then in the agenda, and that brings
18 us to the Marine Resource Education Program, and Ms. O'Brien has
19 a presentation for that. Lauren, it looks like they have your
20 presentation up, and go ahead when you're ready.

21

22 **MARINE RESOURCE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

23

24 **MS. LAUREN O'BRIEN:** Thank you. Good morning, everybody. My
25 name is Lauren O'Brien, and I know many of you in the room, and
26 I'm meeting a few of you this week for the first time in-person,
27 and it's really lovely to be here. I know that this program has
28 been talked about at the CCC before, and so it might be new to
29 some of you, familiar to many of you, or a refresher to many of
30 you as well.

31

32 Just to introduce a little bit about who I am and why I'm here
33 for MREP, I actually attended the program before working for the
34 program, back in 2018, and I was really enamored by the impact
35 that I witnessed around the room and how it brought people
36 together, and it really empowered, for lack of a better term,
37 and you're going to hear that word a lot, but it truly empowered
38 folks at the table to feel like they could then go and engage in
39 the system that is really complex and downright frustrating for
40 a lot of folks who are meant, legally, to be engaged in the
41 program, or in the process, and so I was enamored, and I stepped
42 in, and I have been a part of this program for five years, but
43 the program has been around for a heck of a lot longer, due in
44 large part to many of you sitting around the table and others
45 who aren't here today.

46

47 The Marine Resource Education Program is by and for fishermen
48 from the get-go, and so who better to introduce the program than

1 a number of fishermen, and so this is a video that we put
2 together in the west coast region to demonstrate why this
3 program exists and a bit about the impact that it has on that
4 region, and so, while you will see some folks from the west
5 coast region, from the Pacific Council region, we feel it really
6 demonstrates the ethos of what the program brings to all of the
7 other regions that we operate in.

8
9 (Whereupon, a video was presented.)

10
11 **MS. O'BRIEN:** So you heard some voices from the west coast of
12 folks who had participated in the program and the frustrations
13 that they had coming into it, and this is largely the reason why
14 it was started back in 2001, and so it's been around for a
15 couple of decades now, and it was started by Mary Beth Tooley
16 and John Williamson, and a little fun fact is my parents names'
17 are Mary Beth and John, and so I find it kind of ironic that the
18 program that I manage now was started by a Mary Beth and a John,
19 and different people, but the same names.

20
21 The frustration was the same, and they came together, and they
22 talked with a lot of different fishermen and stakeholders in the
23 region, and also with some key partners at the council and at
24 the Regional Office and the Science Center to figure out a
25 curricula, to bring fishermen in the door, in this session, or
26 series of sessions, at the time, to educate them and empower
27 them on how they can use their voice to engage with the laws,
28 engage with the data, understand what the numbers actually mean.

29
30 I put here the history of MREP, and this is a very high level of
31 how it's evolved to where it is today, and not to get into the
32 weeds in the history, but just to share with you some of the
33 steps along the way that have brought it to be this national
34 program, as opposed to a regional program. Though I sit at the
35 Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Maine, and I am a white
36 woman from Maine coming to these other regions, and I can't
37 pretend to, or imagine that I ever will, truly understand what
38 it means to sit in the shoes that many of you do, and the people
39 that you represent do, and so we developed this steering
40 committee concept, which has been really pivotal in enabling us
41 to mold this program to serve the needs of the region.

42
43 It first started in 2012 in the Southeast, when we first
44 expanded into another region, and it has proved really valuable
45 for us, and I kind of joke sometimes that I have one boss in
46 Maine, at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, but I have a
47 hundred or more bosses around the country, and they're all
48 fishermen, and that's truly how we operate, myself and my team.

1
2 We have shifted the model a bit here and there. In Puerto Rico,
3 we have a Spanish-only workshop, recognizing that the Puerto
4 Ricans speak Spanish, and so we bring in presenters who speak
5 Spanish and who from Puerto Rico to serve the needs of that
6 region as well, and, this past year, we delivered the first
7 workshop in the North Pacific and added some new critical
8 elements to address the diversity and the needs that are
9 demanded in that region for those stakeholders in the process.

10
11 I did want to paint a little picture of what the steering
12 committee is, just because this leadership capacity is really
13 valuable, and we'll talk a little bit more later about the
14 impacts of this and the audience that the program serves in each
15 of the regions, but the steering committee really helps to
16 define the curricula, and so the topics as well as defining who
17 those participants ought to be at the workshops, and, you know,
18 every year we come together, and we meet to refine the topics,
19 to make sure that it is regionally relevant and is timely for
20 the participants, specifically to get engaged in this federal
21 fisheries management process.

22
23 Also, the steering committees are about fifteen to twenty-four,
24 in some cases, people, and the regions are much larger than
25 that, but the number of different communities that exist within
26 a given council region, and a given MRIP region, in some cases a
27 couple of council regions, is far greater than that, and so I do
28 rely on my steering committees, as well as additional advisors
29 who can support me, you know, periodically making phone calls,
30 to try and do our best to meet the diversity and representation
31 of the given region.

32
33 Here, it's kind of hard to see, but this is a breakdown of what
34 that steering committee looks like, and, like I said, we meet
35 once a year for an in-person one-day, or sometimes two-day,
36 meeting, to discuss the different issues, to discuss the
37 curricula, refine that, talk about outreach strategy, talk about
38 who ought to be at the workshops and how to -- How to make it a
39 valuable program for them and not just how to reach them and to
40 get them to apply, but how to make sure that the topics that we
41 have on the table are of value to them.

42
43 Then we have a planning team, which is a smaller group, a little
44 bit more nimble, that meets periodically, about once a month
45 leading up to the workshops, to continue to refine those
46 curricula, and so I just really want to emphasize how
47 collaborative this process is and how it is not driven by me,
48 and it is not driven by NOAA or the council, and it is driven by

1 a group of industry stakeholders, with partnership from myself
2 and from NOAA and the council.

3
4 Then a reason, or a role, that we play, and so I, again, sit at
5 the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and we are a non-profit,
6 and we get funding from the federal government to run this
7 program, and they partner with us, but we really do support the
8 program by and for the industry, and we take a lot of pride in
9 our role as this neutral convener of leaders, and so getting all
10 of that input and then distilling it down to the core objective
11 aspects of fisheries management to present in a curricula.

12
13 I take a lot of pride in that, and my staff takes a lot of pride
14 in that, and it is something that we've been doing now since
15 2003, and so we feel like we've got a decent grasp on it, but we
16 always welcome feedback on how we can do it better, both at a
17 national level and within a given region.

18
19 The group of people that you see up here -- This is our national
20 steering committee, a group that came together first virtually
21 in 2020, and then for the first time in-person in 2022, and, in
22 recognizing the growth of the program, and recognizing that
23 staff turnover might happen, and there was a push to create a
24 little bit more durability, to make sure that this program
25 remains by and for industry, and also enable cross-pollination
26 of ideas across the regions, to meet the needs of fishermen, who
27 often, you know, have very different issues, but have similar
28 issues, and can find value in how things are being done in
29 another area and part of the country,

30
31 Like I mentioned, the program is by and for fishermen, and it
32 has been historically, and we have also opened the doors to some
33 other stakeholders and other associated industry members, and we
34 really strive to bring a diversity of participants to every
35 meeting, to enable discussion not just from presenter to
36 participants, but among the whole cohort, to build relationships
37 and enable more collaborative stewardship of the resource beyond
38 the workshop itself, and, when I say "diverse", diversity could
39 mean a variety of things.

40
41 We have looked at gear types, sectors, and age is not listed on
42 there, but experience level, and what it looks like is different
43 in each region, just by nature of the different communities and
44 cultures that exist within a region, and so, while I put these
45 different categories up here of diversity, this is, again, and I
46 will continue to reiterate this, something that is decided upon
47 by the region and by the steering committee leaders, and so
48 talking to them to make sure that they are helping us determine

1 who the key informants, the leaders of those communities, are,
2 so that we have this ripple effect, where we are bringing in
3 thirty or thirty-five or forty participants for a workshop, and
4 then they can go back to their communities and share the
5 information that they have learned, and it's not just a small
6 cohort, but it has a larger effect.

7
8 I've been talking a lot about the impact and the collaborative
9 process, but we do have some really core pillars that are true
10 across all the regions, while it is molded to the regional
11 needs, and so it is a neutral and objective education on the
12 federal fisheries management process and the science that goes
13 into that process.

14
15 We put together a curricula that provides knowledge and tools
16 and also enables opportunities for building connections with
17 people that you might go to later to ask more questions, to dive
18 in deeper, or to collaborate on a project with, with the
19 ultimate goal of empowering these participants, these fisheries
20 stakeholders, to use their voice effectively, kind of addressing
21 that frustration that you heard at the beginning there that many
22 people often feel.

23
24 The fisheries science component, really, at its core, it's how a
25 stock assessment works and what the numbers that come out of
26 those stock assessments mean, and we dive into uncertainty,
27 oceanography, data collection, a lot of different topics, and I
28 could have expanded on this, and some of the regions have
29 additional topics, and some of them cut out some of these
30 topics, or shorten those discussions, and so it absolutely
31 malleable, and I know that the science is largely the same, but
32 there are different things, and different elements, that each
33 region is focusing on at a given moment.

34
35 Then, on the management side, we go into a lot of the laws, and
36 at the core is this fisheries management council process, and we
37 talk about negotiation, and so that's one of the tools in the
38 toolbox that we provide for participants, and one of the more
39 fun aspects of this workshop, and I should have said of the
40 science workshop, is we do hands-on activities and site visits,
41 and we do a mock council exercise at the management workshop,
42 where folks are able to actually sit in the seat and play out
43 the role of being on a council.

44
45 The impact, and so we put all of this together into the regions,
46 and what does it actually do, and we, as a national steering
47 committee, talked for a bit about how we might represent the
48 impact of MREP, and it's a difficult thing to do, because so

1 much of it is in feel of the workshop, and it is in the mood
2 shift and the likelihood of engagement, but that's a hard thing
3 to track.

4
5 We did get funding to do an impact analysis project, a study
6 across all of the regions, to assess what the actual impact has
7 been in building trust and in building engagement, and so that
8 is ongoing right now, and we don't have results of that, but
9 hopefully I can give that to you all in the next year or so, but
10 I wanted to share some of the quotes.

11
12 These are quotes that came from the evaluations that we provide
13 participants at the end of the workshops, and it really
14 demonstrates, I think, a little bit of the feel that you get,
15 and, in a few minutes, I want to open the floor up to you,
16 because many of you have been at the workshops, and to offer
17 your perspectives, because, again, a white woman from Maine over
18 here, and I can't speak on behalf of everybody, and I would love
19 to hear your perspectives.

20
21 I am just going to skip ahead, actually, and this is all
22 familiar to you, but one of the impact metrics that we have
23 tracked is the number of council, or the percentage of council,
24 members who have attended MREP over the years, and so, since
25 we've been tracking this in 2015, it has increased, and you will
26 see a dip, and we attribute that to the pandemic, because we
27 were not able to deliver workshops, but we hope that this
28 demonstrates that there's a growing effectiveness of
29 conversation happening at the council tables around the country,
30 and we would like to support enabling that. However, like I
31 said, a lot of the impact is really the emotional and the
32 relational growth that happens at these workshops.

33
34 One of the more -- For those of you more statistically-minded,
35 and who like hard numbers to track impact, we do measure the
36 willingness and likelihood to engage in the council process,
37 based on evaluations, and so this is what folks filled out for
38 how involved they were before attending MRIP and how prepared
39 they felt before attending MRIP, and you will see that there is
40 a diversity of experience level and preparedness.

41
42 We do try to, like I said earlier, bring in that diversity of
43 experience and preparedness, and I think the interesting thing
44 is that, regardless, folks left the workshop feeling more
45 prepared and more likely, and so those who were already engaged
46 wanted to engage further, and those who felt prepared already
47 realized that there were some things that they did not know, and
48 they felt more prepared to engage at a higher level moving out

1 of the workshops.

2
3 One other thing, going back to this slide here, is this variety
4 in experience level enables an organic mentor-mentee
5 relationship opportunity, and so folks -- You know, we have a
6 lot of social hours, and folks get to know each other beyond
7 just sitting and learning from PowerPoint presentations, and
8 they build often what they declare to be life-long relationships
9 from these workshops, and it enables that mentor-mentee capacity
10 for, you know, the graying of the fleets, for transition into an
11 effective role in fisheries council management.

12
13 Workshops are held once a year in each region, and they are
14 free, and so, with our funding, we're able to pay for travel,
15 for hotel costs, for food during the workshop, and it's really
16 an attempt to reduce the barriers to access, so that this can be
17 an equitable opportunity for those who have historically not
18 been participating in the council as much to have that leg up
19 and have an effective seat at the table.

20
21 This is our lineup for next year, and I have talked to a handful
22 of you who were wondering the dates, and there are some
23 tentative dates on there, to be decided by our steering
24 committee in the respective region, and we do also, again
25 circling back to that collaborative development, decide the
26 dates based on when the fishing industry is going to be
27 available, most likely, as well as when the key presenters will
28 be available, so that they can come and participate, but I
29 wanted to give you all that tentative lineup.

30
31 Then this is my contact information, along with the rest of my
32 team, so you can reach out whenever you would like, but I did
33 want to go back to some of these quotes here and open up the
34 floor to those of you who have really been the ones leading the
35 program. I get to stand up here and be the face, but I would
36 love to hear from you, for what you see this program as in your
37 respective regions, if that's all right.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Lauren. I guess we'll
40 go ahead and open it up for questions. First up is Marcos.

41
42 **MR. HANKE:** It's a comment, and it's not a question. I want to
43 testify and to highlight the importance of MREP for my council,
44 and, as the chairman, I have been receiving way more calls on
45 the engagement side of things, more than the complaining part of
46 the things, which is very important, because everybody is moving
47 forward to look for connections and to solve the problem, more
48 than just criticizing, and this is part of the calls that I am

1 receiving that come after MREP, and I think that's super
2 important to highlight.

3
4 It's the only educational program that I participate in where
5 all the sectors, including scientists, are present, and they
6 have to share the same room, face-to-face, one-to-one, and that
7 is super powerful, because those bridges don't go away.

8
9 They stay there forever, right, and that's very important, and I
10 think, based on what I spoke on yesterday, MREP has an effect on
11 presenting EEJ, in some situations, because, by example, they do
12 everything they can to be a body where everybody participates,
13 and it's very inclusive, and it's respecting the languages and
14 respecting where the people are coming from and so on, and it's
15 very sensitive to it, and that's super important, and it creates
16 an atmosphere that I have never experienced in any other
17 educational program.

18
19 It really goes beyond an educational program, and it creates
20 like a sense of family into MREP activities. It's a respectful,
21 constructive environment, and I want to highlight some things
22 that -- The pertinence of MREP for the rest of the nation, the
23 way I see it.

24
25 For example, we have two islands in Puerto Rico, and think about
26 the community that you guys don't have access to it, but they
27 have communities that culturally are attached to fisheries that
28 don't have access to a good education about how to engage and so
29 on into the council process.

30
31 For example, Avielle is a young fisherman from Vieques that has
32 a dream that he is doing on his own, creating a school for young
33 fishermen where the high school is in Vieques, which is an
34 island close by to Puerto Rico, and now he is coordinating with
35 Culebra, and he made a presentation to the council, and he will
36 be attending the MREP, and I have had multiple calls from this
37 guy already of how excited he is to be on that program, and for
38 sure the tools that he is going to receive in MREP is going to
39 capacitate him to do a better job on his dream, in terms of how
40 he perceives the future of the fishery in Vieques.

41
42 I am involved on how to engage and participate with the council,
43 in that presentation, and the numbers are that I receive way
44 many more calls now from everybody that didn't know before, from
45 different sectors, and those bridges are already established,
46 and I think that's super important.

47
48 The descending devices amendment that we are discussing now in

1 the Caribbean Council grew up from the MREP discussions, on the
2 sideline conversations, and that's very important too, and,
3 also, the great amount of sustainable, effective, best practices
4 on how to utilize the gears, how to dispose of gears, how to be
5 a responsible fisherman, and that happens on the sidebars, and
6 that's super powerful, and it's hard to measure, but I wanted to
7 testify of that. Thank you.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Marcos. Up next, I have Rick and
10 then John and then Tom.

11
12 **MR. BELLAVANCE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks, Lauren, for
13 your presentation. Really nice job. I would just like to take
14 a second to just kind of give my perspective on the program, and
15 I attended MRIP around 2005, and I was blown away by how much I
16 really didn't know about any of this.

17
18 Prior to that, I think I attended one state meeting in Rhode
19 Island, and that more of an act of civil disobedience, and I was
20 outraged with all my fellow fishermen, and, after going through
21 MREP, I learned about the commissions and the council process,
22 an agency called NMFS, and it was all new to me, and it inspired
23 me to continue along, and I have ultimately ended up becoming a
24 steering committee member, at the regional level and national
25 level, and I have facilitated many of the programs over the
26 years, and it was so helpful in kickstarting my desire to learn
27 more and contribute to the process, and now sitting around here
28 with all you smart folks, and it's kind of intimidating to me a
29 little bit, but it's an awesome honor to be here.

30
31 I attribute a lot of that to the foundation that I took away
32 from the first time that I attended MRIP, and, as I sit on this
33 table, and at the council meetings in New England, it's very
34 clear the folks in industry that have attended the program and
35 how they contribute to the process, when compared to some who
36 haven't had that opportunity yet.

37
38 I think the industry folks have a tremendous amount of knowledge
39 and experiences, but they sometimes get a little wound around
40 the axle, or intimidated by the language and the terms and the
41 process that we have, and so the MREP program gives them that
42 foundation to be able to take those on-the-water experiences and
43 deliver them in a way that fits into our process here better,
44 and I think that's invaluable, to me on this side of the table
45 now, but also as an industry person, and just hats off to Lauren
46 and her team for the amount of effort they put into really
47 trying to keep up with the times and modify the program to be
48 relevant, and I just can't speak more highly about it, and I

1 really appreciate the ability to be part of it. Thanks.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Rick. John.

4

5 **MR. CARMICHAEL:** Thanks, and, Lauren, thanks for a great
6 presentation. I've been involved in the MREP in the Southeast
7 since the very beginning, and it's really been a great program.
8 Part of it is the leadership and energy that has come from
9 Lauren, and Alexa before her, and a real commitment to the idea
10 of by fishermen for fishermen.

11

12 You know, it also comes together with the steering committees
13 that plan every workshop, and it's fishermen putting in their
14 time to make it happen, finding other fishermen to come when
15 they can, but it's also the agency and the council, and so it's
16 the support of all of our organizations sitting around this
17 table that are the other part that is key to the success, and
18 the last part is just the fishermen, those are committing their
19 time and being moderators, and that's really always, to me, a
20 key thing, is fishermen that are running the meetings.

21

22 We're there as presenters, or speakers or whatever, but it's
23 clear that it's a fishermen's meeting, and we have many folks
24 that would echo what Rick was saying about getting involved
25 through this, and learning about the program, and then being a
26 council member, which is outstanding, and it's also proven, for
27 us, to be a great recruiting opportunity for APs.

28

29 You get to talk with people, and you have meals with them. If
30 someone is interested from your region, you can give them that
31 one-on-one and really encourage them to take what they're
32 learning and go and become an AP, and I think we all struggle
33 with finding good AP members who are committed to the process
34 and willing to learn and come and participate in this really
35 challenging job, and so I think that's a really excellent part.

36

37 I've seen that our AP discussions have gotten better as a result
38 of the education of MREP over a decade. You know, they know how
39 to look into an assessment, and they know the things to ask
40 about, and they're much more savvy than they were twenty years
41 ago, and, you know, I enjoy going, and I always learn something,
42 and it doesn't matter.

43

44 Every time you sit with different fishermen, you learn something
45 more about, you know, our complex fisheries and how they
46 operate, and so I encourage everyone. If you haven't been to
47 one, go to one, and get to see it. When it's in your region, do
48 everything you can to support it, and, you know, these guys that

1 run it from GMRI, they do an incredible amount of work behind
2 the scenes to make everything go seamlessly, but it is a huge
3 effort that they put on, and it looks great to all the people in
4 the room.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, John. Great point on the AP impacts as
7 well, and we're seeing the same thing in the Gulf. Next up is
8 Tom.

9
10 **MR. NIES:** I am going to try to start with just a short anecdote
11 about a recent MREP that we had that I think highlights the
12 opportunity it gives for fishermen to interact with the people
13 that manage them and that provide the science for them, and we
14 had an MREP up in Baltimore recently, and, during the break, I'm
15 wandering around, and I think, oh my gosh, that fisherman is
16 assaulting the Deputy Director of the Science Center, and that's
17 not what was happening.

18
19 He was providing her self-defense training, okay, and that has
20 nothing to do with fishing, but, you know, it just shows that
21 this is one of the rare opportunities where scientists meet with
22 fishermen and they deal with each other as people, and I don't
23 think that the value of that can be underestimated at all,
24 because that typically doesn't happen on a routine basis in our
25 region, but I would like to throw two softball questions to
26 Lauren, or at least I think they're softballs, because I think
27 you know the answers, but, the last time I recall that we had an
28 MREP presentation was in this room eight years ago, and some of
29 the people were still here, and Bob Gill was one of the
30 presenters.

31
32 There were some questions asked by the CCC about funding sources
33 for MREP, and so I've got two sort of -- Or maybe three sort of
34 related questions, and one is how is MREP funding, and how is
35 the outlook for funding of MREP right now, and then, related to
36 that, because I think this is always a concern, when you talk
37 about funding sources, but who decides the content of your MREP
38 programs?

39
40 **MS. O'BRIEN:** Thanks, Tom, and thanks for that anecdote. That's
41 always a fun one to revisit. MREP is funded, currently, by
42 NOAA. Right now, it's coming through the regions, but from
43 Headquarters predominantly, and we also have some funding from
44 the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for our core salary
45 support, and so the bulk of it from NOAA, some from the
46 Sanctuary Foundation.

47
48 Then the second question, or I guess on that first question as

1 well, it has been funded by a variety of sources over the years,
2 including the councils, and the councils have provided a lot of
3 in-kind support, and we pay for, like I mentioned, all of our
4 participant travel and accommodations and food, and we cannot
5 pay for any federal employee to come, and so the councils are
6 funding the dollars for their staff to travel and to spend time
7 at the workshops.

8
9 The curriculum though is absolutely not decided by the agency or
10 by the Sanctuary Foundation. Like I mentioned earlier, we take
11 a lot of pride in our role as the neutral convener, and we
12 really believe thoroughly in the message that this is by
13 fishermen for fishermen, and so we are -- I have sometimes
14 challenging conversations with folks at the agency, at the
15 Sanctuary Foundation, to really emphasize that, but, by and
16 large, there is a significant amount of support that I have felt
17 from the agency and from the folks who are on our steering
18 committee as partners to the program, at the agency and council
19 level, who are there because they value -- I mean, I say "they",
20 and it's many of you sitting around this table, but value the by
21 fishermen for fishermen ethos that this program exists.

22
23 I hope that those of you who are a part of our regional steering
24 committees can vouch for me on that, and I feel the importance
25 of that, that I'm not here the only one sending that message,
26 but the industry members at the table can emphasize that and
27 back that up.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Up next is Trish.

30
31 **MS. MURPHEY:** Great presentation, and I think that I talked to
32 you earlier, giving you feedback from our fishermen in North
33 Carolina who had attended, and they just loved it, and raved
34 about it, and they were so excited about it, and I just kind of
35 want to share the trickle-down effect, and this is more regional
36 federal fisheries, but this concept has trickled down to our
37 state fisheries in North Carolina, and our North Carolina Sea
38 Grant has actually modeled something similar to this to help
39 engage and educate our fishermen who are involved in state
40 fisheries and how to engage with our Division of Marine
41 Fisheries. That program is actually very popular too, and so I
42 just kind of wanted to share that, that there is a trickle-down,
43 and it's helping in our state fisheries as well. Thanks.

44
45 **MS. O'BRIEN:** Can I comment on that, really quick?

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sure. Go ahead.

1 **MS. O'BRIEN:** I just -- Thank you for sharing that anecdote, and
2 I think that, you know, when I was talking about, and am talking
3 about, the impact of MREP, that example demonstrates how
4 difficult it is to really capture what this program does. You
5 know, we have some metrics that we can track, and we have the
6 evaluations, and we're trying to do this impact analysis, to
7 really capture what happens five or ten years out from attending
8 the program, but anecdotes like that are gold, and it's
9 impossible to keep track of where everybody goes and what they
10 do with this information, and so thank you for sharing that.

11
12 Then I also realized that I failed to answer Tom's question last
13 question about the prospect of funding for the program, and I
14 have received a lot of confidence that this program will be
15 funded by NOAA for the next five years after this fiscal year,
16 for all of the regions, including hopefully the Pacific Islands
17 region, if there is interest and need from the region, and so
18 that discussion about scoping in the Pacific Islands is another
19 one entirely, because this is by and for fishermen, and it's
20 dependent on whether the fishermen out there want it and feel
21 that there's a need for it, and so that's a question I have to
22 those folks, but we have received confidence, or I have
23 confidence, in our funding source from the agency to deliver a
24 program at the current level that it is.

25
26 That said, there's a lot of ideas that percolate from each of
27 the regions for programming and for additional national
28 programming around different concepts, such as offshore
29 aquaculture, offshore wind, things like that, and we don't
30 currently have the funds to do that, and that would likely
31 require additional staff capacity, and so it kind of depends on
32 what you all want out of the program. If we are to expand and
33 continue to add on regions, to add on different topical
34 workshops, then we would need additional funds.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Miguel.

37
38 **MR. ROLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I agree with every
39 positive comment around the table, and I learned about MREP from
40 Tony Iarocci, and Tony Iarocci is a fisherman in the Keys, and
41 he's well known by many people in some of the councils here, and
42 he said, Miguel, it's a program in the New England area, and
43 fishermen talking to fishermen, and are you interested, and I
44 said, yes, and so, since that time, our council has been
45 involved with MREP.

46
47 Not a comment, but Jocelyn wrote me a note that, if you need
48 anything else from the council to continue the program in the

1 U.S. Caribbean, let me know, and the next one is St. Croix, and
2 feel free to call on us for anything that you might need to
3 continue and improve the MREP program, and thank you very much
4 for your presentation.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Miguel. Bill.

7
8 **MR. TWEIT:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Lauren, for your
9 presentation and for your work. I had the privilege of being on
10 the advisory group that helped get the first one up off the
11 ground, and I was happy to report that it flew very successfully
12 in Juno just a couple of months ago.

13
14 From my -- The reason that I've been interested in having MREP
15 come to Alaska is I'm very grateful that the program did get the
16 resources to expand up into the North Pacific, which will be a
17 little more expensive, and we struggled with that, but the
18 reason that I was pretty excited was that I was very hopeful
19 that it could be a key element in our attempts, as a council, to
20 really implement EEJ, in particular.

21
22 It has always seemed to me, and we've heard a lot from many
23 people from Alaska, particularly the native people from Alaska,
24 that the way we do business is very -- It causes a barrier to
25 their effective participation, and we're looking in the mirror
26 and trying to figure out, okay, what can we do as a council, but
27 an equal part of the equation is what can be done to help them
28 with the skills to operate, and, even if we do make some
29 changes, we're not going to be a village council in western
30 Alaska. That's just not going to happen.

31
32 Finding a way to bridge between these two very different
33 cultures I think involves some movement on both sides, and MREP,
34 I hoped, would be a very valuable key to allowing them to
35 acquire some skills to help make them feel more comfortable, as
36 well as, and I think equally importantly -- In coming to an MREP
37 session, and several of you have spoken to this, the ability to
38 interact directly with council members in a much less formal
39 environment.

40
41 The next time they see me, and I'm behind the table with a tie
42 on, and acting all stiff and proper, and they know that's just a
43 facade, right, and they can always grab me in the hallway and
44 chew on my ear, and those -- The combination of elements, I was
45 really hopeful that MREP would provide that, and a fair number
46 of other folks on the committee, the advisory committee, felt
47 the same way, and so we threw that as a real challenge to the
48 MREP folks.

1
2 We said, great, and we think you can play a really valuable role
3 here, but we're going to ask you to sort of step out of your
4 comfort zone a bit and help us think about how you incorporate
5 indigenous peoples, who aren't necessarily participants in
6 federal fisheries, but who see themselves as being very affected
7 by the impacts of those federal fisheries and who see themselves
8 as being sort of excluded from the federal fishery management
9 process.

10
11 To their credit, the MREP folks said, okay, yes, you're right,
12 and this is different, and this is something more than we've had
13 to grapple with elsewhere, but we worked at developing a program
14 that we thought would do that, and our initial results I think
15 were positive. I think there is still room to develop, and room
16 to grow there, but I am really hopeful that we have found a
17 really, I think, essential ingredient in our being able to
18 successfully make our council the kind of place that we want to,
19 as we look at it through an EEJ lens.

20
21 I am really excited about it, and I also really appreciate our
22 council, and I think other councils, for their willingness to
23 donate staff to the effort and to strongly support council
24 members, active council members, in attending, because there is
25 just -- There is a ton of value in that breaking down the
26 formality barriers of the typical council meeting and giving
27 folks -- And you emphasized that, Lauren, and you and your staff
28 really talk about that a lot, and you really encourage the
29 participants to take advantage of that, and I think that went
30 really well, also.

31
32 I am really excited about the future for it in the North
33 Pacific, and I'm glad that the resources you got gave you the
34 confidence to expand there and to give us a sense that, as long
35 as we want it, you can be there for at least five years, and I
36 think that could be really useful.

37
38 Just in closing, several folks have also mentioned the issue of
39 new entrants, and that's a challenge for us as well, and, again,
40 I think it can be an essential tool in us addressing the
41 challenge of new entrants into the fishery and into the process.
42 Thanks.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kitty.

45
46 **MS. SIMONDS:** Thank you, Lauren, and this will be a great
47 addition to the work that we all in the region have done all
48 these years, and we've had a series of marine spatial planning

1 workshops, bringing in people from our entire region, and so
2 we're beginning the process, and, as you said, the regions are
3 going to be working on this, and so the point of contact for the
4 region also was a staff person for me for eight years, and the
5 point of contact for the center also worked for me for eleven
6 years, and so it's nice, because they are local people, and so
7 we are probably going to be having our first meeting in a couple
8 of weeks, but we have fisheries forums in each of the islands,
9 and, you know, because we're islanders, we're foodies, and so
10 the council members always contribute, whenever we meet with
11 everybody, but, because of COVID, you know, we haven't traveled
12 as much, and so this is a wonderful addition, and we look
13 forward to working on this.

14
15 You know, we do speak Samoan when we go to Samoa, and our
16 regulations, from the very beginning, when we had all the
17 Vietnamese people coming to Hawaii to fish, and everything that
18 we did was in Vietnamese, and then Korean, and so we're used to
19 working with all the different cultures in our part of the
20 world, and so this will be great, especially using NOAA's money,
21 and I think that's perfect.

22
23 **MS. O'BRIEN:** Can I comment to Kitty, really quickly?

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes.

26
27 **MS. O'BRIEN:** I just wanted to say thank you, and I'm really
28 excited to learn, and I think Bill spoke to how there's been a
29 lot of learning in the North Pacific, for us to establish a
30 program there has potential to continue to support all of the
31 different needs of the region, and I am excited to learn and
32 support the different needs of the Pacific Island region as
33 well.

34
35 The different cultures, and the different languages that are
36 spoken, brings up an interesting point, kind of responding to
37 Tom's question earlier about funding, and I think, you know, in
38 the next year, our hope is to do some scoping out in the Pacific
39 Islands region, and, based on the desires of the region, and the
40 cultural dynamics and nuanced differences, and how we can meet
41 the demands and the needs of that region, we might be needing
42 additional funding beyond what we currently have in our scope
43 right now.

44
45 **MR. SIMONDS:** Because travel is expensive, but we all have staff
46 in each of the areas, and I wanted to comment on Bill, and,
47 Bill, we never wear coats and ties to any meeting that we have,
48 and so I just wanted you to know that.

1
2 The other thing, and I thought it was interesting when you said
3 they have these mock council meetings, and I think, for us, it
4 would be great if you used a real issue, an ongoing issue, and
5 we have one that's been ongoing for thirty years, and it's all
6 about how to collect data with the different cultures, and you
7 just simply can't do it all the same way, and so that's always
8 been a big issue for us, especially when it comes to stock
9 assessments, and so I think, for us, we would want you to take
10 up a real issue in this mock council meeting that you have.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Brad.

13
14 **MR. PETTINGER:** I've been involved in the MREP program since its
15 inception on the west coast, in 2016 or 2017, I believe, and it
16 really does pull back the curtain on what goes on behind the
17 scenes, because, when I was coming into fisheries, the council
18 process, I was working on a trawler, and I was not really
19 understanding how the system worked, and you see people come in
20 that basically are overwhelmed, because it can be pretty
21 stifling in front of the council. Everybody is in their ties,
22 and that's fine, but I thought the council did a really good
23 job, as far as the material available to folks, and I didn't
24 really see, at first, where the MREP class and the extent to
25 which it improves the understand about how regs work.

26
27 I think that the buy-in from National Marine Fisheries Service,
28 the council, and the states has been outstanding, as far as they
29 see the value of it, and you put a couple of staffers in a week-
30 long meeting, and that's quite a bit of a commitment, and it's
31 multiple times a year, and we've had a really good run, really
32 good news on stock assessments, for the last six, seven, eight,
33 ten years, until about two years ago, and so MREP really isn't
34 all yay, yay, yay, and everything is going great, and then we an
35 assessment that kind of went in the tank, and so one of the
36 stock assessment authors was really hesitant to come and talk,
37 because she was really worried about the blowback that she was
38 going to get, and she's a fantastic stock assessment person.

39
40 An assessment is only as good as the information plugged into
41 it, and so we told her that you really need to come, because
42 people need to understand why things came out the way that they
43 did, because understanding the issue is very, very powerful, and
44 so the meeting was in southern California, where these fish are
45 at, and most of them are south, and you could really see the
46 difference, when people got it, why the results came out the way
47 they did, and that's a very powerful thing, knowledge about why
48 things are happening.

1
2 It really allows people to take ownership of their fishery,
3 because now they know what needs -- The data gaps, what they are
4 and how to fill them, and so it's really, on the west coast, to
5 see the Santa Barbara fishermen down there really take charge
6 and go out and get the information, as much as they could within
7 a year, prior to when the lower limits would kick in, was really
8 amazing, and so I think that it would be -- Without the MREP
9 program, I think we wouldn't have a new assessment coming in
10 this year, and this could very well correct the situation
11 they're in, and so I just can't say enough about it.

12
13 I mean, Lauren and her gang are just the best, the very best, of
14 people, and their enthusiasm is infectious, their commitment to
15 it, and I'm just really happy that NMFS is supporting it to the
16 extent they are, and I plan to be involved with this for a long
17 time, and there's so much value to it, and so just thank you,
18 Lauren, for presenting, and it's great to see you again.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Well, that was some great
21 discussion, and it's nice to be talking about a winning program
22 for a change, and so that's always good. I think what we'll do,
23 since we're kind of moving on, and thank you, Lauren, and I
24 think that's all the questions there, is we were scheduled to
25 take a break at 10:30, and we might just do that now, since
26 we're going to shift gears a little bit to talk about the CCC
27 workgroups and other subcommittees, and so why don't we take a
28 break until 10:15, and then we'll meet back and take up our last
29 few agenda items, and so I'll see everyone in about fifteen
30 minutes.

31
32 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
33

34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll go ahead and get started here with
35 the next item in the agenda, and that is the CCC workgroups and
36 subcommittees. Lisa, hold on just a second, and we'll wait for
37 the last few folks to find their seats here. In the interest of
38 time, and we're missing a few, and we need to get started, so
39 that people can catch their flights and that kind of thing. Up
40 next, Dr. Lisa Hollensead is going to talk about the Habitat
41 Workgroup. Lisa, I see your presentation is up, and, whenever
42 you're ready, go ahead.

43
44 **CCC WORKGROUPS/SUBCOMMITTEES**
45 **HABITAT WORKGROUP**
46

47 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am currently the
48 chair of the Habitat Workgroup, and I appreciate the opportunity

1 to give you all an update on what our progress has been so far
2 this year and what we plan for the rest of the year.

3
4 A little presentation overview, and I'm going to give you some
5 background on the makeup of the Habitat Working Group as well as
6 highlight some recent accomplishments. I will also provide you
7 an update on the Wind Subgroup, speak to a little bit of our
8 recent deep dive presentations and give you a little definition
9 of what I mean by "deep dive" as well as talk about the workshop
10 planning subgroup.

11
12 It was touched on yesterday that the group is planning to meet
13 in-person, and so I will give a progress update as to how that's
14 going, as well as solicit a little bit of feedback from the
15 group in terms of what you would like to see, some of the
16 outcomes of that meeting, or any deliverables, and so just keep
17 that in the back of your mind as I go through the presentation.

18
19 What is the composition of the workgroup? It's staff from all
20 eight councils, and the chairmanship rotates with the CCC, and
21 so I think I've got 220 more days left, and it's representatives
22 from all five NMFS Regional Offices as well, and we also have
23 representation from NMFS HQ, including the Offices of Habitat
24 Conservation and Science & Technology, and so this group is a
25 well-rounded group, sort of a library of experts, if you will,
26 and we meet to share habitat, management, and science issues
27 across all the regions.

28
29 This also creates an opportunity for us to brainstorm and do any
30 problem solving, get a little shared experience of what the
31 various regions are doing, or certain things at the national
32 level, and so it's a great resource for not only seasoned but
33 new staff, as they come along as well.

34
35 The group formed in 2014, and we meet three to five times per
36 year online, and those meetings generally go about an hour or
37 two, and they consist of updates from what regions are working
38 on, sort of highlights any continued learning possibilities that
39 folks might be interested in, and then we go in -- Starting last
40 year, we started doing these deeper dives, these regional talks,
41 and we have continued that on this year, and so I will sort of
42 highlight what we've done this year, and the group has also met
43 twice in-person so far.

44
45 Here's just a list of some of the accomplishments that have been
46 done in the past contemporary history here. The EFH Summit,
47 that report was made available in 2016, as well as some guidance
48 reports on habitat areas of particular concern, and those

1 reports are linked here.

2
3 The last time we met in-person was for our EFH consultation and
4 regional innovations workshop in Portland in 2019, and we also
5 developed a report from that that's available, and we tried to
6 continue to improve our engagement with our Fishery Science
7 Centers, recognizing that their technical expertise is important
8 in considering habitat management throughout the regions and the
9 nation.

10
11 Another accomplishment that some of you may recall is that group
12 helped draft a letter for the CCC to report to its partners,
13 specifically discussing the EFH consultation process, the
14 council's role in it, the Regional Offices role in it, and what
15 I mean by partner agencies, I'm just talking about this letter
16 went out to BOEM, to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the
17 Department of Transportation, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S.
18 Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Navy, and so to
19 give those folks some ideas of what their EFH consultations
20 should look like as they begin to develop projects and things in
21 and around the nation.

22
23 Some current focus here brings us up to today, and I'm going to
24 give a little update on the Wind Subgroup, and so the Wind
25 Subgroup has been meeting for about two years, and these are
26 short monthly calls to share some insights and best practices
27 for contributing to wind energy planning and reviewing and
28 engaging with BOEM.

29
30 Not all regions are involved, and, right now, the regions that
31 are engaging in this are the Northeast, the Mid-Atlantic, the
32 South Atlantic, and the Pacific, along with staff from GARFO and
33 staff from the West Coast Regional Office. Right now, the focus
34 of that subgroup has been on east-west collaborations, sharing
35 some lessons learned, and some examples of those are in the
36 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. They shared their offshore wind
37 policies with the Pacific, to inform their offshore development
38 guidance document.

39
40 So far, it has been easier to prepare West Coast versus Greater
41 Atlantic comments to BOEM, but it has been useful to brainstorm
42 ideas for the letters, for example the fisheries mitigation
43 guidance, which was brought for public comment last summer, and
44 so those are some of the things that that group has been engaged
45 in recently.

46
47 I mentioned these deeper dive talks, and, like I said, we
48 started that last year, and we have decided to continue on this

1 year. We've got a lot of good feedback from the group, and
2 these are, a lot of times, educational and informational.
3 Sometimes it's a region coming back with, hey, we're starting to
4 develop our designations for EFH, and we're having some trouble
5 with this, or with some of our species that are data-limited,
6 and how are you all handling that, and there's a lot of, hey,
7 we've got the same problem, too.

8
9 We've got an interesting range of topics, and we've got
10 everything from, you know, climate-change-induced estuarine
11 habitat transition on penaeid shrimp was one of the talks that
12 we had, from folks out at the Galveston Lab in Texas. At our
13 May meeting, we had a representative from Atlantic HMS present
14 on their EFH descriptions and updates from their five-year
15 review, and so a lot of the regions are going through those, as
16 well as HMS, and so we got to hear what they're planning.

17
18 Then, for July, on the docket, we've got some more, you know,
19 broader national considerations of procedure on addressing
20 climate change and NMFS EFH consultations, and so quite a few
21 different topics that we dive deeper into, and just keep those
22 in mind as I begin talking about what we want to do for our
23 upcoming workshop, and so these are some of the things that
24 we've talked about to-date, so far, and what we plan on doing in
25 July.

26
27 Again, mentioning this workshop that we plan on having here in-
28 person fairly soon, and the CCC approved an in-person habitat
29 workshop at its May 2022 meeting, and the workshop goal is
30 outlined there, and a draft of that workshop objectives and
31 deliverables is available in their meeting materials.

32
33 The idea that the group had was to take those deeper-dive talks
34 that we had and sort of frontload the workshop with that, the
35 idea that we would sort of have these umbrella terms, or these
36 umbrella topics, with climate change being one of the focuses,
37 but how that would affect our habitat management, and how does
38 that affect our EFH consultations, or planning in the future,
39 and what about species that, you know, the distribution has
40 changed, and what does that mean for our designations of
41 habitat, and EFH specifically, and, you know, should things be
42 streamlined, those kinds of questions.

43
44 Right now, we're beginning to flesh those ideas out, through our
45 deeper dive talks, the idea of becoming -- That people would be
46 ready for the workshop, because we've done much of the work
47 during the year, in prepping everybody for these background
48 materials and things like that as we go on, and so building some

1 context for the workshop in that way.

2
3 Tentatively, it is scheduled for January 17 and 18 of 2024, and
4 this is a little unconventional, and we usually would have it,
5 in you know, the same calendar year as we're planning it, and so
6 I will be sure to work with my counterpart at the Caribbean
7 Council, Graciela, to make sure she stays informed, so that,
8 when she becomes chair, she can get across the finish line
9 there, and so I'll make sure that I keep her in the loop.

10
11 Right now, we're looking to have the meeting somewhere in
12 southern California. Just last week, I got -- This is hot off
13 the presses, and it looks like it will be La Jolla, was the
14 determination of the group for that, and some of the logistics
15 are falling together better there, and so that sounds like where
16 that will be, but, again, as we begin developing what we would
17 like to see in the workshop, this is a nice opportunity, at this
18 May meeting here, to get some feedback from the CCC, in terms of
19 what this group would like to see us do, you know, in terms of
20 what topics they may want us to bring up, and any deliverables
21 that you would like us to report back.

22
23 We're certainly happy to do so at this time, and I don't want to
24 put you all on the spot, if we don't have anything necessarily
25 just now, and feel free to reach out to your representative on
26 the workgroup, or, if not, feel free to reach out to me as well,
27 and I will make sure to report that back to the group. Our next
28 meeting -- We had a meeting two weeks ago, but our next meeting
29 is July 19, and so I will be sure to report back what is said
30 here and get feedback from the group as we begin developing
31 that, and so with that, Mr. Chair, I will take any questions.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Lisa. I will go ahead and
34 open the floor up. All right. Well, thank you, Lisa. I am not
35 seeing anything, and we'll go ahead and move on then. All
36 right. Well, our next item of business is the Council Member
37 Ongoing Development and Member Training, and Ms. Diana Evans is
38 going to present for that. It looks like they've got your
39 presentation, and whenever you're ready, Diana.

40
41 **COUNCIL MEMBER ONGOING DEVELOPMENT (CMOD) MEMBER TRAINING**

42
43 **MS. DIANA EVANS:** Thank you. Good morning, members of the CCC.
44 I am here to present the steering committee report for the
45 Council Member Ongoing Development. For those of you -- I think
46 probably all of the people in this room do recall our
47 conversations about creating a council member ongoing
48 development program, and it's a new initiative of the CCC, and

1 it was largely initiated in response to the end of the Fisheries
2 Forum, recognizing the value in cross-regional exchange amongst
3 council members, and amongst staff, who are in the council
4 process.

5
6 There is not a lot of opportunities for that cross-regional
7 exchange for council members, other than through new member
8 training, which happens in your first year as a council member,
9 and then the CCC group, which is, obviously, a great opportunity
10 for vice chairs and chairs, but trying to fill that gap for
11 other council members who might benefit from that opportunity to
12 learn from other regions and learn from other people doing the
13 same job, which is a fairly unique one.

14
15 The initiative was to set up this Council Member Ongoing
16 Development program, and we had a lot of conversations at the
17 CCC about how structure that, focusing on policy-neutral
18 meetings that do not result in decisions or recommendations, and
19 it's a closed session training, in effect, and so that's the
20 parameters under which it was done.

21
22 I'm going to report on two things today, and the first is an
23 overview of the first meeting of CMOD that happened in November
24 of 2022, and then I will talk, for the last couple of slides,
25 about our steering committee recommendations that followed the
26 first meeting.

27
28 I realize the text here is a little small, and I'm not going to
29 walk through all of the details on each of these slides relating
30 to the development of the first meeting, or the outcomes of the
31 first meeting, but I wanted to at least highlight for you some
32 of the big-picture discussions, and there are two attachments on
33 your agenda, and one of them is the final meeting summary, and
34 the other is the steering committee report, and so all of this
35 detail is in the final meeting summary that I am walking through
36 in the next few slides here.

37
38 The intent of the meeting was to focus on looking at the
39 question of new approaches to EBFM, ecosystem-based fishery
40 management, and ecosystem approaches to fishery management
41 across the regional fishery management councils, looking at
42 different regional approaches, different scientific inputs, and
43 onramps to the council process and some of the challenges and
44 opportunities with building capacity in the council process to
45 work with EBFM tools.

46
47 We had participation, broad participation, from all the councils
48 and from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the meeting

1 was facilitated by Kim Gordon and Katie Latanich, as contracted
2 facilitators. They are the ones who prepared the final meeting
3 summary that we have posted.

4
5 The final meeting summary, as I said, focuses on some of the
6 lessons and the discussion items that came out of the two days
7 of meetings that we had in Denver, and the meeting took place in
8 Denver in November, falling across several themes, and so,
9 specifically, it was related to EBFM and EAFM, and the
10 discussion items that -- The main outcomes that are highlighted
11 are ones that relate to building capacity in the council
12 process, and a lot of these bullets are -- There's a couple of
13 slides of bullets, and you can go on to the second one in just a
14 moment, but they really focus on communications-related issues
15 and how can we do a better job with dialogue, with preparing
16 council members for understanding the inputs, the scientific
17 inputs, that are coming out through EBFM tools that are being
18 developed by our scientists.

19
20 It's interesting, and I looked over this presentation again
21 yesterday, thinking about our conversation on SCS7, and I think
22 there might be quite a lot of the bullets here that might be
23 useful to share with the planning group for SCS8, because it
24 covers a lot of the same themes of dialogue and how do we do a
25 better job of communicating the connection between what's
26 happening in the science world and what's happening in the
27 council management process, particularly at the council table.

28
29 Some of the recommendations, or the discussion points, focused
30 on the benefits of developing a shared vocabulary, a baseline of
31 knowledge, making time and space on the agenda to talk about
32 ecosystem issues, and an example of this is that I think, in all
33 of our agendas, we tend to focus -- The council priorities focus
34 first on what is the immediate crisis and immediate priority,
35 the immediate action item, and some of these ecosystem products
36 are of a longer-term, and so they tend to happen more at the end
37 of the agenda, when council members are perhaps a little bit
38 more mentally tired and have had a little bit less time to
39 prepare for those agenda items, maybe because of the complexity,
40 and the need to ask curious questions and create dialogue and
41 dedicating time and agenda space, to allow that to happen in the
42 best possible opportunity, is one of the examples, or discussion
43 items, that came out.

44
45 On the right-hand side of all these pages, you will see some
46 selected slides from the various different presentations that
47 were received at the CMOD meeting.

1 I will move us over to the next page here, just highlighting a
2 couple of these bullets as we go through, but one of the things
3 that was really valuable was there presentations from all eight
4 council regions, and there were really lessons learned, or
5 lessons that are useful to other councils, from all of those
6 eight regions, and so I think that was a really positive
7 experience for all the members, and a take-home message for all
8 the members, that we can all really learn from each other, and
9 we're all at very different stages, and we're all dealing with
10 different issues, dramatically different issues, in some cases,
11 but, yet, there is still opportunities for us to learn from each
12 other.

13
14 The other thing, just highlighting maybe the third bullet here,
15 looking at crisis situations, is we do, as I say, focus on the
16 most immediate problem, but sometimes, when we have those crisis
17 situations, they are also a really good opportunity to ask
18 questions, to create connections, for scientists and managers to
19 have that improved dialogue, and to build those relationships
20 that then can last beyond the crisis situation and help as we
21 develop the tools moving forward, and so also good
22 opportunities.

23
24 The other discussion item that I wanted to highlight on this
25 slide is the bottom one, and, while we had a lot of
26 conversations, and heard a lot of examples, across the different
27 regions of tools that different regions are working on, whether
28 that be, you know, scenario planning, ecosystem status reports,
29 various -- A variety of tools, but there was definitely some
30 concern expressed during the meeting about how do we move
31 forward with supporting that work within existing resources,
32 whether that be funding or staff resources, and workload
33 concerns about getting to all of the different ideas and looking
34 to learn from each other and apply others' tools in our region.

35
36 The second theme that is highlighted in the final report, and
37 was supported by the various presentations across the regions,
38 was looking at ecosystem status reports and the opportunities
39 for how they are used in different areas, and one example is
40 looking at the North Pacific. For example, in our region, the
41 ecosystem status report is largely prepared for the audience,
42 the primary audience, of the SSC, because it is used as part of
43 the ABC setting process and to provide additional context for
44 the SSC.

45
46 That doesn't mean that it's not also presented or used in our
47 advisory panel and council, but that's its primary focus, and I
48 think it's a very different situation in the Mid-Atlantic, where

1 their state of the ecosystem report is much more focused on
2 council members and what council members are looking for and
3 what kind of information they are trying to identify, and it
4 really comes down to the conclusion that you can see on the
5 slide, that the dialogue between council members and NMFS
6 scientists -- The more that that dialogue and conversation can
7 happen, the better products that you are likely to get, as
8 council members.

9
10 When councils can work together, they can ask questions and use
11 those ecosystem disruptions, or crisis events, to identify what
12 information the council would have liked for the next time that
13 that occurs, and what could we have done better, looking in
14 hindsight, so that we're better prepared for the future, and how
15 can ecosystem status reports be the vehicle for that.

16
17 Then the final primary section of the EBFM part of the agenda
18 was conversations that supported the idea of building
19 stakeholder capacity and supporting engagement in the council
20 process, and the stakeholder input -- We recognize that that's
21 an incredibly important part of the council process, as
22 stakeholders provide input, and council members provide input,
23 as to what are the key questions that we should be looking at,
24 how can we translate those into implementation strategies, and
25 providing the basis for building relationships, ongoing
26 relationships, between management and science participants in
27 the process, so that we can have -- When we have these
28 disruptions, when we have situations where we start to use, or
29 want to use, more complex or different tools, and not
30 necessarily more complex, but we have that basis of trust and
31 relationship to work through an understanding of how they can
32 best serve to solve the problem, whatever problem the council is
33 dealing with.

34
35 A couple of different ideas here about different types of
36 engagement, and particularly with connecting stakeholders to
37 education and training, and we had a couple of great
38 presentations from the Caribbean Council and the South Atlantic
39 Council on the participatory workshops that those councils are
40 engaging in, and we've heard, at this meeting, about the east
41 coast scenario planning as well, and we talked about that.

42
43 Switching gears a little bit, the final element of the CMOD, the
44 first CMOD, meeting was we would love to investigate a theme
45 topic, which in this case was EBFM and EAFM approaches, but also
46 to have a skills component for council members to learn a skill,
47 and, in its first meeting, the one that was selected was how to
48 make effective motions, and so there was an afternoon session,

1 or part of an afternoon session, devoted to this question.

2
3 We met in two groups, and council members shared their
4 perspectives on what are the key tools for making effective
5 motions, the attributes of a successful motion, acknowledging
6 some of the regional differences, and then maybe some tips.

7
8 We talked at the meeting, and you will see in the steering
9 committee section of this report, that there is a suggestion to
10 turn the couple of pages that are in the summary report, but
11 just the brief highlights here, into a flyer that could be
12 shared both at new council member training and with the council
13 members, to make sure that this information is carried on and
14 has a broader distribution.

15
16 If that's something that the CCC supports, I think the CCCG, the
17 Cross-Council Communications Group, would be prepared to do
18 that, and we've had some initial conversations, but we wanted to
19 get some buy-in from the CCC before that moved forward.

20
21 Switching gears, the CMOD steering committee is made up of a
22 staff member, or a council member, from each region, and this is
23 the group that worked together to put together the proposal on
24 Council Member Ongoing Development and developing the structure
25 and the framework, and so, after this first meeting, and also to
26 propose a theme for the CCC to approve, but, after this first
27 meeting, we met in March, and we received the final summary
28 report, and that was prepared by the contractors, Kim Gordon and
29 Katie Latanich. They came to the meeting and spoke both about
30 the participant feedback that they had received as well as their
31 own personal reflections on how running, facilitating, the CMOD
32 meeting went. Then we also heard a report from the New England
33 Council, who hosted this CMOD training.

34
35 Based on our discussions, and the metrics that we were looking
36 at, we would say that this first CMOD meeting was successful,
37 and it met the CCC's goals, and the participant feedback was
38 positive, and hopefully you will all have heard that from, or
39 heard feedback at least, from members in your regions that
40 participated and what they got out of the meeting.

41
42 It also came up within budget, which was obviously a concern,
43 and is always a concern, and, just highlighting those last
44 couple of bullets there, those are issues that the CCC had
45 concerns about when we presented this proposal, and we had some
46 discussions about the size of the meeting, how many people makes
47 for an effective training, and, in the end, we were proposing
48 for a meeting of about fifty people, and so four persons from

1 each council, the idea being potentially three council members
2 and one staff person, ten persons from National Marine Fisheries
3 Service, and then some invited presenters, and I think we ended
4 up with about forty-four people at the meeting, and we had a
5 couple of last-minute attritions, for various reasons.

6
7 Most councils found members that were interested to attend, and
8 I put that in because I think particularly some -- We ran a
9 little bit of the gamut, and some councils found that there were
10 lots of people who wanted to come, and they had to winnow down,
11 and others maybe had to work a little harder to convince people
12 to go to another meeting.

13
14 In general, the meeting was useful, and our steering committee
15 discussed where to go from here, and other opportunities, and
16 there's a lot of good information in the feedback, from the
17 facilitators and from the participants, about how we can tweak
18 around the edges and make the next program -- Improve the next
19 program, to be targeted a little bit more. If we get direction
20 from the CCC to do that, then our steering committee can dig in
21 and just provide those suggestions for the next CMOD meeting.

22
23 One of the items that we talked about particularly is the
24 primary value of the CMOD meeting is certainly to have people in
25 the room and experiencing the conversations and talking with
26 their colleagues there, and how do we extend that -- Is there a
27 way to promote, other than just kind of word-of-mouth, and
28 council members sharing that information back, but to promote
29 taking some of these ideas and actually having them as practical
30 applications in our different councils, and so we talked a
31 little bit about ways to foster that, particularly looking
32 forward to -- Looking ahead to if we have another meeting.

33
34 The idea being that we were trying to identify council members,
35 particularly about EBFM, who might come back to their regions
36 and be champions for EBFM, because they understand that much
37 more, and they've had a little bit more training and experience,
38 as those conversations and topics get discussed at their own
39 regional council.

40
41 The final slide here provides our recommendations to the CMOD
42 from the steering committee, recommending to continue the CMOD
43 program and to at least look to host another program, and we
44 were suggesting, in terms of timing, that it might make sense to
45 alternate with the SCS meetings, which are also hosted by
46 councils every other year, in the year that is not an SCS
47 meeting to hold a CMOD meeting, a Council Member Development
48 Meeting, which I think would, if you were to target that, would

1 put the next CMOD meeting targeting for 2025.
2
3 One caution that we did note, and we did talk a little bit about
4 the finances associated with a meeting, and, given all the
5 conversations that I know are happening at all the regional
6 councils anyway, and anticipating that costs will increase in
7 the future, we benefitted some in terms of funding, from locked-
8 in rates pre-COVID, because this meeting was supposed to happen
9 during COVID, and it got delayed once, but likely hotel
10 negotiations -- We'll continue to see the cost increases that
11 we're finding at our council meetings, and also that the scoping
12 time for facilitators, which is what really led to a very
13 prepared and effective meeting, by having the facilitators reach
14 out to all the participants in advance, both to scope out what
15 aspects of the topic would be useful and then also how to
16 prepare individuals, if they were planning to give
17 presentations, for example, and so maybe thinking about that
18 budget a little bit more closely in the next go-round.
19
20 There might be -- The highlight from the steering committee was
21 that, if we are to continue this program, continuing the current
22 funding model, where NMFS pays half of the cost estimate, and
23 councils divide the other half of the cost estimate among the
24 eight councils, and each council is responsible for paying
25 travel for their own members.
26
27 With that, as I said, if you do agree that we should be moving
28 forward with this program, then the steering committee would
29 propose to meet between now and October and come back to you
30 with recommendations on a theme topic and any improvements that
31 we want to make, or are contracted, and then move forward, and
32 so with that, that's the information that I wanted to share, and
33 just note that Tom Nies, as the host council, might have other
34 thoughts, and I know there's others, a couple of the council
35 members who attended this meeting, who might also want to share.
36 Thank you.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Diana. Any questions or comments?
39 All right. Thank you, Diana. I'm not seeing anything. Tom.
40
41 **MR. NIES:** Mr. Chair, I don't have any comments, but I do have a
42 motion that I would like to offer on this.
43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Please do.
45
46 **MR. NIES:** If there are no comments from anybody else.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I am not seeing any, Tom, and so go ahead with

1 your motion, and they will pull that up here in just a minute.

2
3 **MR. NIES:** Thank you. I would like to offer the following
4 motion that the CCC agrees to hold the second Council Member
5 Ongoing Development session in 2025, hosted by the North Pacific
6 Fishery Management Council. The NPFMC will provide a report at
7 the October CCC meeting on a theme, estimated costs, including a
8 proposal for sharing of costs between the National Marine
9 Fisheries Service and councils and other logistics.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Tom. We'll need a second for that
12 motion. It's been seconded. Any further rationale, Tom?

13
14 **MR. NIES:** The feedback we got from the first meeting was very
15 successful, and I think it's well worth continuing this process.
16 The participants thoroughly enjoined it, and they also learned a
17 lot, I think, and I think all of us have heard from those who
18 went to the meeting, and I think it's important to continue this
19 program, going forward, and that's really all the rationale I've
20 got.

21
22 I do think it's important to note that all of us know that costs
23 have increased, and we got lucky this time, because the hotel we
24 -- We actually booked the hotel, I think, just before COVID, if
25 I remember correctly, and they allowed us to transfer things
26 forward, and so the costs were manageable, but we're all finding
27 out that the costs have increased, and so I think it's going to
28 be important to take a good look at the costs and how much
29 support the agency is willing to provide, to try and make sure
30 it is affordable as we go forward. Thank you.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any further discussion on the motion?
33 All right. We'll take a vote on the motion. **Is there any**
34 **opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**
35 All right. Is there any other business that needs to come
36 before the CCC Workgroups and Subcommittees? Miguel.

37
38 **MR. ROLON:** I don't know whether we are supposed to answer the
39 question posed by the Communication Committee yesterday to first
40 see if we all agree to have them prepare guidelines for the host
41 council for future meetings, and, second, whether we agree or
42 not to have another meeting in-person in 2024, so they can start
43 planning for the fiftieth anniversary of the councils.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Did you have a comment to that, Tom? Go ahead.

46
47 **MR. NIES:** I am going to surprise David here, and I'm willing to
48 make a motion to that effect, unless we want to have more

1 discussion first. I would point out that we do have a lot going
2 on in 2024, and we've got a Habitat Working Group meeting
3 planned for early in the year, and we're talking about having
4 the SCS8 meeting, probably the week of August 26, which I will
5 try and confirm with all the EDs, and so that's going on as
6 well, but, you know, if councils want to have any sort of
7 communications group working on the fiftieth anniversary of the
8 MSA, I think, the sooner they start, the better.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Well, I'm not seeing more discussion,
11 Tom, and so did you want to go ahead and make the motion?
12

13 **MR. NIES:** Sure. **Motion that the CCC directs the Communications**
14 **Group to plan an in-person meeting for 2024 and to seek approval**
15 **of the discussions at the October CCC meeting, or approval of**
16 **the theme at the October CCC meeting.**
17

18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, they're putting that up on the board, and
19 you might have to repeat that last part, after "2024".
20

21 **MR. NIES:** I will talk slower this time. **The CCC directs the**
22 **Communications Group to plan an in-person meeting for 2024 and**
23 **seek approval from the CCC in October of the proposed discussion**
24 **items.**
25

26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, they've got the motion on the board, and
27 is that your motion?
28

29 **MR. NIES:** Yes.
30

31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We need a second for this motion.
32

33 **MR. TWEIT:** Second.
34

35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bill seconds the motion. Okay. Any further
36 discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition**
37 **to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** All right.
38 Bill, go ahead.
39

40 **MR. TWEIT:** While we're on the subject of the Communications
41 Group, I heard, in the presentation from the CMOD steering
42 committee, a recommendation that the summary sort of one-pager
43 on making effective motions be transmitted to the Communications
44 Group, to be turned into training material for new council
45 members, and I thought it would be worthwhile just to have a
46 head-nod around the table on that idea, and just add that to the
47 Communication Group's agenda.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, and I think, Bill, that's a good idea, and
2 I'm seeing a lot of yes nods for that, and so we'll go ahead and
3 move forward with that. I am not seeing any other hands up, and
4 so that will conclude the business for the CCC Workgroups and
5 Subcommittees, and, moving on to the last two short items in our
6 agenda, Miguel has some discussion on the 2024 CCC meetings.

7
8 **2024 CCC MEETINGS**
9

10 **MR. ROLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I already feel intimidated
11 by following the Gulf Council's coordination of this meeting,
12 and I believe that Carrie and the staff have done an excellent
13 job with this coordination. (Applause)

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Miguel, and I can assure you that it
16 was all the staff.

17
18 **MR. ROLON:** I hope that we can follow that, and the meeting will
19 be the week of May 20, as you know, and it will be in San Juan,
20 Puerto Rico, and we will send all the information to all of you
21 in due time. The second meeting, the one in October, we
22 coordinated having it the week of the 16th and 17th, those two
23 days, and we tried to also be mindful about the meetings that
24 the North Pacific Council will have the week before and the
25 traveling logistics, and so those are the meeting dates for the
26 CCC in 2024, and the place will be San Juan, Puerto Rico, and
27 then, as you know, the council also will be coordinating the
28 habitat meeting in 2024, the one in California, and Graciela
29 just learned that she is the chair of the Habitat Committee next
30 year, and so she has started working already on the logistics,
31 and she will coordinate with Lisa and others. Thank you, Mr.
32 Chairman.

33
34 **OTHER BUSINESS AND WRAP-UP**
35

36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Miguel. Anything else on the CCC
37 meetings? All right. Seeing none, then that brings us to the
38 Other Business and Wrap-Up. There was one item, and, Miguel, I
39 believe that you and John were talking some about potentially
40 the FAO fisheries meeting representation, and I don't know if
41 you all had that discussion, or is there anything that you would
42 like to share regarding that?

43
44 **MR. ROLON:** Yes, and usually there are two meetings of the FAO,
45 and we switch it with the Gulf Council, and so we send one
46 person each year, and the next year will be another one, and we
47 have COFI, which is the regular meeting, and they also have the
48 FAO general meeting, and so I believe that, so far, John and I

1 talked about the person that wanted to go, and she is prepared,
2 and Carrie and I can talk about the FAO, and so the three of us
3 will coordinate it, to make sure that we send the appropriate
4 person to represent the group at these two meetings.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Sounds good, Miguel. I think
7 Carrie has a few loose-end items to tie up, and a few quick
8 slides as well, and is there any other business that needs to
9 come before this committee? Seeing none, Carrie, go ahead.

10
11 **DR. SIMMONS:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so we have
12 some wrap-up slides, and, Bernie, if you could just put those up
13 there, and I don't think the very last motion is in the wrap-up
14 slides, and so, just to remind everybody what we've accomplished
15 by agenda item, if we could pull that up.

16
17 I am not going to read the motions back into the record, but
18 just to remind everybody what we did for each agenda item. We
19 had a motion to --

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Janet has a comment, while we're pulling this
22 up.

23
24 **MS. COIT:** Just in case, and I don't know how long this last
25 part is going to go, and so, in case I have to sneak out to get
26 to the airport, I just wanted to also say I think this has been
27 a fantastic meeting, and I have enjoyed the discussion and the
28 substance in the agenda, as well as the opportunity to get to
29 know people better, and, again, to all of you who are retiring
30 off, I just want to thank you for your incredible contributions
31 and public service, and so great meeting, and thank you, and, if
32 I have to leave, I apologize for just taking off.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Janet. Are you ready now, Carrie?
35 Okay. Go ahead.

36
37 **DR. SIMMONS:** Yes, and thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for
38 everyone who provided the presentations and materials on time,
39 and I think that made us have a very successful meeting, and so
40 I appreciate all the staff support, with Morgan and team as
41 well, and so that's the right one. Thank you.

42
43 All right, and so we had a motion on fisheries updates and
44 priorities, and we had several motions on Wednesday, one in the
45 Communications Subcommittee report, and we have another one that
46 was just passed, and we had a motion under the 7th SCS report, a
47 motion under the 8th SCS meeting, and, actually, we had two.

1 The second motion, for the 8th SCS meeting, and we had a motion
2 for America the Beautiful, a motion for the process for
3 sanctuaries, as well as some information that we're going to
4 convey to the sanctuary headquarters folks regarding EEJ
5 efforts.

6
7 Then we had a motion on the legislative outlook and a motion for
8 the working groups and subcommittees, and the last motion that
9 was just passed for the communications next meeting didn't make
10 it into the PowerPoint, but, again, thank you all for providing
11 your presentations and materials and all the logistics, for the
12 folks that were involved, and I will remind everybody that we'll
13 have a summary report will be available next week sometime, and
14 then we'll have the verbatim minutes, and we'll pass those
15 around for everyone to look at and have some time to approve,
16 and so, again, thank you all very much.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Is there any other business that needs
19 to come before this group? Tom.

20
21 **MR. NIES:** If I might, since this is my last meeting, I would
22 just like to make one comment that I didn't make yesterday, or a
23 couple of comments that I didn't make yesterday, but I just
24 wanted to let everybody know that I have enjoyed working with
25 the CCC for the last ten years.

26
27 I consider it one of the highlights of being on the council
28 since 1997, and I really think the opportunity work with the
29 councils, and with NOAA leadership, on some of the national
30 issues generally proves to be pretty useful, to quote Mary Sabo,
31 and I find it very rewarding. I would also like to particularly
32 thank all my fellow executive directors, who taught me a heck of
33 a lot, either patiently or not, but with all of my questions,
34 and so thank you very much, and good luck going forward.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Tom. (Applause) Well, I am not
37 seeing any other business, and everyone have safe travels, and
38 enjoy Memorial Day, and we'll consider the meeting adjourned.

39
40 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on May 25, 2023.)

41
42 - - -