



# NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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## Action Memo

**File Number:**Cons 14-022

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**Agenda Date**10/6/2014

**Agenda Number:**D4

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**John Henderschedt, Acting Chairman**  
**Chris Oliver, Executive Director**

**SUBJECT:**

Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan - Update/Review Objectives

**ESTIMATED TIME:**

2 hours

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

Review public comments on the BS Fishery Ecosystem Plan, and consider objectives

**BACKGROUND**

In February 2014, the Council reviewed a discussion paper on the development of a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), and decided to seek public input on what the objectives might be for a Bering Sea FEP, and how the plan could be structured to be of benefit to fishery management decisionmaking. At this meeting, the Council will consider whether to prioritize time and resources to develop an FEP for the Bering Sea. Public comment hearings were held during the Council agenda item in Nome, at a hearing in Seattle on September 15<sup>th</sup>, and at an evening session during the Anchorage Council meeting (October 9<sup>th</sup>).

The Council requested the following input from stakeholders:

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

A synthesis of public comments from each venue is included with the materials for this agenda item. Additionally, the Council's Ecosystem Committee met on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to provide recommendations on the BS FEP (see minutes under agenda D3). The Committee noted the public comment themes have been similar at both of the hearings held before the Committee's meeting, including broad support for continuing with development of a BS FEP. The Committee suggests that the FEP can be a tool that provides comprehensive integrated information to assist the Council in decisionmaking, to help them to realize the Ecosystem Vision Statement, and to avoid catastrophes and conflicts. The Committee recommended specific primary and secondary objectives for the BS FEP in their minutes. If the Council decides to continue development of the FEP, the Committee will explore further how the Council's FEP would interact with AFSC ecosystem modeling efforts, and what the appropriate format for the FEP should be, to be most useful.