

## **D2 PSEIS Workplan**

The AP recommends the Council initiate the North Pacific Programmatic EIS and develop a purpose and need statement, which would include a range of alternatives brought forward by the Ecosystem Committee, with potential action taken at the April or June 2023 Council meetings. The Council and its bodies, including NMFS, should robustly and meaningfully engage Alaska Native Tribes throughout the entirety of the process associated with this, including through outreach, two-way engagement, and Tribal Consultation.

*Motion passed 17/0*

### *Rationale in Favor of Motion:*

- The AP noted the importance that policy decisions continue to be adaptive to all changes in GOA and BSAI ecosystems.
- AP members thought that given the rate of climate change in the North Pacific, maintaining status quo under the current PSEIS, or relying on another SIR may be insufficient to guide managers. A new PEIS is needed to comply with NEPA, involve the communities most impacted by climate change and species declines, and to create a new climate resilient fisheries framework to guide Council decisions.
- Tribes are at the forefront of climate change and are experiencing a plethora of ecosystem/subsistence species changes (e.g., declines in salmon and northern fur seals, drops in seabird and marine mammal abundance, loss of sea ice affecting subsistence fishing activities and prey species, etc.); and, as stakeholders with government-to-government relationships with NMFS, should be meaningfully and robustly included in any formal and informal scoping processes that the Council/NMFS take to develop this PEIS.
- AP members noted that initiating a new Programmatic EIS may be necessary to (a) build upon the inertia of the Ecosystem Committee; (b) begin a multi-year process to start a NEPA analysis; and (c) build a new framework that accounts for and proactively responds to dramatic climate/environmental change observed in the North Pacific.
- AP members noted that a PSEIS is expected to be a long and complicated process, and if initiated, may reduce the Council's capacity to be adaptive to rapid ecosystem change, consider the EFH motion (passed during this meeting), and address other actions such as the annual TAC setting process. However, this does not reduce the long-term value that initiating the PSEIS has for management adjustments.
- AP members noted the need for the Council and staff to retain capacity for near-term reactive actions such as Area 4 vessel-use caps and EAI GKC facility-use caps, and are concerned about how the PSEIS may affect movement on these issues. Another example is small sablefish release, which is a request based on fishery response to observed rapid changes in the ecosystem. Further, AP members noted that the Council should retain the capacity to accomplish small FMP amendments that make a big difference to individual businesses and community members.