
E STAFF TASKING

DIANA EVANS, OCTOBER 2023



COMPONENTS OF AGENDA ITEM

1. Staff tasking memo, looking ahead to December (normal)
2. Any AP comments on IRA funding priorities for Council consideration
3. Programmatic EIS update
4. Ecosystem Committee report
 - PEIS, Area-based mgmt.



STAFF TASKING MEMO: COMMITTEES / UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Meetings currently anticipated:
 - **Charter Halibut Management Committee** – Oct 20, 2023, virtual; Dec 2023
 - **BS FEP Climate Change Taskforce** – Nov 1-2, 2023; Seattle/virtual
 - **Joint Groundfish Plan Teams** – Nov 13-17, 2023; Seattle/virtual
 - **PNCIAC** – Nov 28, 2023; virtual
 - **BSAI Crab Plan Team** – Jan 8-12, 2024; Anchorage/virtual

- Research priorities Plan Team meetings:
 - **Social Science Planning Team** –Nov 3, 2023; virtual
 - **Scallop Plan Team** – Dec 14, 2023; virtual
 - **BSAI Crab Plan Team** –Dec 1, 2023 (prep); final Jan 10, 2024
 - **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team** – Jan 9, 2024; virtual
 - **SSC Subgroup for Research Priorities** – Jan 11, 2024; virtual
 - **Joint Groundfish Plan Teams** – Jan 17, 2024; virtual



TASKING AND SCHEDULING

- Normal tasking documents posted
 - Action memo
 - 3 meeting-outlook
 - Council staff - who does what
 - Groundfish workplan
 - Preliminary December and February agendas



DECEMBER 2023 MEETING

- *Preliminary* Dec and Feb 2024 schedules posted under Council's E Staff Tasking agenda – subject to change
- **Dec: AP scheduled for Tuesday through Fri**
 - Groundfish harvest specifications & charter halibut measures
 - Several potential final actions
 - *Crab facility use caps, crab C shares, EFH amendments, Crab FMP housekeeping*
 - *GOA tanner crab discussion paper*
 - *(T) Programmatic EIS alternatives*
 - *(T) IRA funding proposal*



OPPORTUNITY FOR AP TO RECOMMEND DIRECTION TO COUNCIL RE IRA FUNDING

- Questions from staff paper:
 - **What are initial objectives, issue areas, or projects that the Council is interested to pursue under the goal of developing and advancing climate ready Federal fisheries in the North Pacific?**
 - **Does the Council have feedback on the process for developing IRA funding proposals, and ongoing management of work under the grant which may affect a proposal?**



PROGRAMMATIC EIS (1/2)

- June 2023: Council recommended NMFS initiate development of PEIS
 - Intent: evaluate and consider changes to the management policy and objectives of BSAI and GOA Federal fisheries, in light of changing environmental conditions
- Council asked staff to begin with the NEPA scoping process / Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS
- NEW CIRCUMSTANCES: changes to NEPA mean that the NOI would start a 2-year clock to complete and implement an EIS
- Staff concern about binding the Council and NMFS to this schedule, given undefined alternatives and other Council high-priority items



PROGRAMMATIC EIS (1/2)

- Staff asking for further direction from Council
- Options:
 - Proceed with NOI, commit to very ambitious timeline noting this will become one of Council's highest priorities for next two years
 - First conduct more public scoping through Council process, to refine alternatives
- Council may also want to consider opportunities for completing PEIS in conjunction with other IRA funding projects – similar goals
- Ecosystem Committee discussed at September 27th meeting



ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORT OCTOBER 2023



Nicole Watson, Ph.D., NPFMC Staff
nicole.watson@noaa.gov



October 2023

28 SEP 2023: ECO VIRTUAL MEETING (1/3)

- eAgenda, Committee report
- Agenda items: Changes to NEPA procedures, Inflation Reduction Act Funding, Programmatic EIS, Marine Conservation Areas
- Majority of discussion focused on the Programmatic EIS, Committee recommendations from May 2023 and the Council motion from June 2023, and ways to move forward



October 2023



COMMITTEE REPORT: MOTION (2/3)

- The Ecosystem Committee received an update on the statutory and regulatory changes on NEPA processes.
- The Committee understands the constraints these changes will put on Council processes but recommends the Council look at funding sources available and move forward with the publication of the Notice of Intent for the Programmatic EIS.
- The Committee reiterates the points made in previous recommendations from the May Ecosystem Committee meeting and expresses concerns between the changes that were made at the June Council meeting and requests the Council reconsider those changes in order to realign them with the original recommendations.



There was no opposition to the motion.

October 2023



PEIS ECO: TIMELINE (3/3)



October 2023



QUESTIONS?

*Council analytical staff experts also
available for questions*

*Feedback always appreciated. Email me or
npfmc.admin@noaa.gov*

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DIANA.EVANS@NOAA.GOV

