



D1 AFA Program Review

June 2025 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Kate Haapala
Other Presenters: Jon McCracken (McCracken & Associates)
Action Required:

1. Receive AFA Program Review report
2. Recommend any changes to document prior to finalization
3. Consider any proposed actions for the AFA Program (under this agenda item or the E Staff Tasking agenda item)

BACKGROUND

The American Fisheries Act (AFA) was passed by Congress in 1998, and its purpose was to tighten U.S. ownership standards for fishing vessels that had been exploited under the Anti-reflagging Act, decapitalize the fishery and provide the fleet the opportunity to conduct their fishery in a more rational manner while protecting non-AFA participants in other fisheries, and enhance stability and efficiency among harvesters and processors.

Section 303A of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) requires the Council and NMFS to review all Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs), including those programs approved prior to the enactment of the reauthorized MSA in 2007. Reviews are intended to evaluate the program's performance in meeting its goals and objectives as outlined in the MSA, including the impact on harvesting and processing sectors, and fishery dependent communities. The MSA also specifies that LAPP reviews should occur no less frequently than once every seven years. The most recent AFA Program Review was finalized in July 2017.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Advisory Panel (AP) and Council reviewed and approved a workplan for this AFA Program Review in February 2024. The document prepared serves as the program review that meets this MSA requirement. It also serves as the Allocation Review required under National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Allocation Policy Directive 01-119 established in 2016 along with two associated Procedural Directives.

Action Required/Next Steps

At this meeting, the Council, the AP, and the public may provide feedback on two items: the Program Review's completeness in evaluating AFA Program impacts, as well as whether the AFA Program continues to meet its original goals. The Council's typical process for Program Reviews is illustrated in the figure below. Unless the Council specifically asks to review the document again, the AFA Program Review will be finalized after incorporating any Council input from this meeting, and the final version of the review will be posted on the [Council website](#).

Secondly, the Council may consider whether to initiate any action based on the review of the report. A program review itself is not an “action document”; however, it provides a unique opportunity to consider the program holistically. Following review of this information and associated public testimony, any changes to the program that may be warranted could be initiated by the Council. This could occur through the initiation of a discussion paper, or if the action is defined enough to articulate a purpose and need statement and set of alternatives, through an analysis. The Council may initiate a proposal for action during this agenda item, during the ‘E Staff Tasking’ agenda item, or at a subsequent meeting.

