



D1 Climate Planning

December 2024 Council Meeting

Action Memo

- Council Staff: Katie Latanich, Dr. Diana Stram (CCTF Co-Chair)
- Other Presenters: Dr. Kirstin Holsman (NMFS AFSC, CCTF Co-Chair)
- Action Required:
1. (D1a) Receive update on Inflation Reduction Act funding planning and timeline, including next steps on the Programmatic Evaluation.
 2. (D1b) Review final Climate Change Task Force report and recommendations.
 3. (D1c) Receive NMFS AFSC Climate Science update
 4. Provide guidance to staff on further planning and communication of climate resiliency efforts

BACKGROUND

The Council has multiple concurrent efforts planned and underway to build climate resilience in the Council process. These include Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding and proposed policy and science actions, including the Programmatic Evaluation and work to improve the climate resilience of harvest control rules; the June 2024 Climate Scenarios Workshop and report, and the work-to-date and final report of the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Climate Change Task Force (CCTF). Meanwhile, NMFS AFSC is undertaking work through the Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI) to develop climate-informed tools and information products that can support the Council's climate resilience planning. Staff are working to coordinate and integrate these ideas and information inputs and seek Council guidance on how to proceed.

Following the Council's review of the Climate Scenarios Workshop Report in October 2024, the Council [motion](#) anticipated developing a tracking tool and/or workplan to further plan and communicate the Council's climate resiliency efforts in a comprehensive manner. Staff suggest envisioning two separate though complementary planning timelines:

IRA planning (2024 to 2027): Focuses specifically on the objectives and activities approved by NMFS as part of NPFMC's IRA funding proposal (see IRA update attachment). Any IRA funds must be fully spent by the end of 2027. **Staff suggest envisioning the body of work funded under IRA as a discrete set of activities nested within a more comprehensive work plan.**

Strategic longer-term planning (present to beyond 2027): Consider developing a longer-term work plan, as recommended by the CCTF.

While no action is required for this agenda item, Council guidance on two issues raised in the Council's October 2024 motion will allow staff to continue making progress toward climate-adaptation priorities and IRA funding deliverables.

- 1. Development of a long-term climate resilience workplan:** The final report of the CCTF recommends the Council develop and implement a climate change work plan and outlines three key elements around which a work plan could be structured. Staff are requesting guidance on whether and how the Council wishes staff to proceed with developing such a work plan.
- 2. Materials to support discussion of Programmatic Evaluation alternatives:** The Programmatic Evaluation is envisioned as a cornerstone of the Council's climate resilience planning. The Council is next scheduled to discuss the Programmatic Evaluation in April 2025, at which point the Council could revise and approve alternatives. In October, the Council recognized the utility of the Climate Scenarios Workshop Report to inform the April agenda item. Staff will present ideas for materials to support the Council's April discussion of Programmatic alternatives, for Council feedback.

The Council will receive the following three separate reports that will inform the Council's discussion.

Climate Change Task Force Final Report

The Council's Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF) held its final meeting on Wednesday, November 6, 2024 through Thursday, November 7, 2024. The [agenda](#) included: (a) reflections on the Climate Scenarios Workshop; (b) a recap of workplan, process and outcomes; (c) CCTF recommendations moving forward; (d) and final report drafting and review.

The CCTF's primary recommendation is that the Council develop and implement a climate change workplan to increase resilience in fisheries management by more effectively incorporating climate related information and tools into decision making. The report identifies three key elements, supported by specific recommendations, around which this workplan could be structured:

- Expand existing (and create new, where appropriate) inclusive processes, collaborations, and partnerships that facilitate inclusion of multiple knowledge systems in climate planning
- Consider management tools and options focused on the inclusion of existing and emergent climate information
- Establish a dedicated review group charged with reviewing and packaging climate information entering Council processes

NMFS Climate Science Update

NMFS AFSC staff will introduce a new Climate Science Update document, similar in format to the "Ecosystem Status Report: In Brief" documents provided annually during the December Council meetings. NMFS is seeking feedback on the type and specificity of information the Council and public find to be informative in this report.

As part of this report, NMFS staff will also provide an update on NOAA Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI) potential projects and outputs that could help support the Council's climate readiness planning. This information will highlight current and proposed synergies between CEFI products and Council planning.

IRA Climate Readiness Planning and Programmatic Evaluation Update

The Council's IRA funding proposal identifies three objectives:

- Objective 1: Develop a climate-resilient management policy. (This work is intended to be carried out through the Programmatic Evaluation process).
- Objective 2: Continue work to incorporate local and traditional knowledge. (This work would also be carried out through the Programmatic Evaluation process).
- Objective 3: Strengthen the consideration of uncertainty and risk in harvest specifications.

An updated IRA timeline is provided as an attachment to the eAgenda, and will be presented by staff. In particular, the timeline focuses on the Programmatic Evaluation, which is a foundational component of the Council's IRA proposal and climate resilience planning. A revised management policy, goals, and objectives could strengthen the rationale and provide the analytical basis for implementing future actions to improve climate resilience in the Council process and management programs.

The Council approved a [purpose and need statement including draft alternatives](#) in June 2023. In April 2024, in response to public testimony and input from tribal stakeholders, the Council supported delaying the formal NEPA scoping process (which would begin with NMFS publishing a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS) until after Council initial review of the chum salmon bycatch action scheduled for February 2025.

The Council is scheduled to discuss the Programmatic Evaluation in April 2025. At that meeting, the Council is scheduled to revise alternatives by adding more specificity, which would enable staff to proceed with developing the analysis. Continuing to make timely progress will be essential for completing the Programmatic Evaluation within the IRA funding timeline, as planned.

At this December meeting, Council staff will propose ideas for how to use the June 2024 Climate Scenarios Workshop report and other discussion materials that could support the Council's consideration of Programmatic alternatives.