



D2 Climate Funding

October 2024 Council Meeting

Action Memo

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Action Required:

1. Review Climate Scenarios Workshop report and provide direction to staff on next steps.
2. Review Climate Science – SCS8 Discussion Paper and consider further defining how to meet IRA funding Objective 3: Strengthen the consideration of uncertainty and risk in harvest specifications.

BACKGROUND

The Council has multiple concurrent efforts planned or underway to build climate resilience in the Council process. These include Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding and proposed activities, the June 2024 Climate Scenarios Workshop and resulting report and ideas, and the Programmatic Evaluation, as well as the work of the Climate Change Task Force (CCTF), which will hold its final meeting in November 2024 and provide a final report to the Council in December. This discussion is an initial opportunity for the Council to respond to new information and ideas and consider how to proceed. Additionally, the Council can consider how to link and communicate about these related climate readiness planning efforts in a way that is strategic, efficient, and clear to the public.

Update on IRA Climate Readiness Funding

The Council's IRA funding provides the resources and staff capacity to invest in a focused climate readiness planning effort. The Council submitted a proposal to NMFS and was approved for \$2.5 million in funding. **IRA funds must be spent by the end of 2027.** While the Council is not constrained to planning within this timeline (and some potential items including any regulatory actions would likely extend beyond this timeline), it's important to consider how to leverage this substantial support strategically and impactfully in the next three years.

The Council's IRA funding proposal focuses on three objectives that build on and advance the Council's current work:

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

There are two new discussion items to inform the Council's consideration of next steps, a report from the Council's recent Climate Scenarios Workshop, and a discussion paper focusing on ideas to advance the Council's integration of climate science into fishery management. These two discussion items provide the Council an opportunity to consider next steps and further actions in support of developing further guidance, tools, and/or approaches to improve climate readiness in the Council process.

Climate Scenarios Workshop Report

In June 2024, the Council held two-day Climate Scenarios Workshop with the purpose of generating ideas for short- and long-term management approaches and tools to improve climate resiliency of federally managed fisheries in the North Pacific. The workshop convened over 200 participants in person and virtually to explore four hypothetical future scenarios. No decisions were made at this meeting, and the intent was to generate ideas and not to build consensus or make recommendations. The discussion section of the workshop report is based on detailed meeting notes from all plenary and breakout sessions, and captures the ideas and feedback shared at the workshop as expressed by participants. The report includes ideas relevant to all 3 IRA proposal objectives as well as other climate readiness planning opportunities.

Existing pathways for developing and implementing ideas in the report could include the following.

Programmatic Evaluation: The Programmatic Evaluation initiated by the Council in June 2023 will revisit the management policies, goals, and objectives for all the Council's federally managed fisheries in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. Ideas and concerns identified at the workshop could inform the Council's development and consideration of programmatic alternatives.

IRA funding: IRA funding could be used to implement ideas in this report, and/or new ideas identified by the Council and public that complement or support the three proposal objectives above. The original [work plan](#) for accomplishing these three objectives needs to be updated due to funding delays, and while the IRA funding must be responsive to Council priorities from the proposal, there is some room for adaptation.

Climate workplan: The Council could choose to develop a climate readiness work plan to guide and prioritize their climate-related work over the next several years, likely aligning with the timeline for IRA funding but potentially also extending beyond 2027.

The purpose of presenting the workshop report as a discussion item is to provide the Council, SSC, AP, and public with an initial opportunity to reflect on workshop ideas and themes of discussion. No action is required at this time, and the Council will also have an opportunity to discuss climate readiness planning at the December 2024 meeting after review of the CCTF's final report and recommendations. The Council may, however, choose to provide initial comments and/or direction to staff on timelines or a process for advancing climate-readiness work. Also, the Council could direct staff to begin developing additional resources (e.g., short discussion papers) that could help maintain momentum on the IRA proposal objectives, and help the Council prepare to discuss alternatives for the Programmatic Evaluation when this item is taken up in April 2025. In the Executive Summary of the workshop report, staff provided two suggestions to help the Council and public consider the information in the report and identify next steps:

1. Identify and consider key questions that would help the Council consider the resources and tradeoffs (e.g., in the form of Council agenda time and attention, Council staff time, support from NMFS, the SSC, and/or other advisors and committees) involved in implementing workshop suggestions. Council staff provide some examples of questions that would be helpful to discuss and analyze further. The Council and public may identify additional questions. It may also be helpful for staff to develop a document describing the opportunities, constraints, and timelines of the Council's concurrent climate readiness efforts and how they fit together, to help the Council prioritize activities that could be completed within the IRA funding timeline. **The Council may find this information useful when reviewing the CCTF recommendations in December 2024.**
2. Establish a baseline. Given the timeframe for the Programmatic Evaluation and IRA funding, and the need to use limited resources wisely, staff suggest the Council consider establishing a baseline

to assess the degree to which the Council is or is not making progress toward addressing the needs in this report. This approach could help clarify and communicate to the Council and public where there are existing pathways, tools, and work in progress, and where there may be opportunities for change and improvement. **The Council may find this information helpful for the April 2025 Programmatic Evaluation agenda item.**

Climate Science-SCS8 Discussion Paper

The Council will also review a brief report on the recent 8th national meeting of the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee (SCS8), which took place in August 2024 in Boston, MA, and focused on the topic of “Applying Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rules in a Changing Environment.” The meeting convened SSC members from across all eight council regions to discuss this topic in depth. The full meeting summary is anticipated to be available in early 2025. In the interim, the North Pacific SSC attendees, NMFS AFSC staff, and Dr. Diana Stram convened to summarize their takeaways from the meeting and identify topics for further discussion by the Council and SSC. This summary is most relevant to addressing IRA proposal Objective 3: Strengthen the consideration of uncertainty and risk in harvest specifications.

Under its approved IRA proposal, the Council anticipated that following SCS8, the Council and SSC would prepare for a next SSC workshop to prioritize among potential directions and appropriate timelines for developing and implementing procedures for better accounting of biological, economic, and socioeconomic information throughout the harvest specifications process. While the proposal acknowledges that the timeline of the grant funding is insufficient to analyze, recommend, and implement FMP amendment changes such as to harvest control rules or the tier system, some opportunities to improve accounting for risk in decision-making may be implemented without FMP changes. A future SSC workshop might highlight which of the proposed mechanisms and tools should be pursued in the short-term, while for longer term FMP amendments, the SSC and Council could develop a strategic workplan for systematically approaching such changes.

At this meeting, the Council and SSC have the opportunity to further define how to meet Objective 3 of the IRA proposal. Actions in support of this objective may include choosing to initiate specific projects to address climate resilience, planning for a future SSC workshop to discuss various ideas, or defining a process by which to develop a workplan and priority ideas at a subsequent meeting.