



## NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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### Executive/Finance Committee Meeting Summary March 27, 2025

The Executive/Finance Committee met in Executive Session on March 27. The agenda included conducting the performance evaluation for the Executive Director, and a review of Council finances.

**Finance Report** - The Finance Committee reviewed the status of Council finances and provided direction to the Executive Director. A summary is provided here.

We have 3 open grants at this time, and these funds can't be intermingled or spent on activities not specified in the grant:

1. The No-cost Extension provides for using unspent monies from our previous operating grant (2020-2024). These funds can only be used in 2025 on projects as specified in the 2020-24 grant proposal. The money is fully committed to fund analytical contracts (program reviews and analytical assistance).
2. The IRA Grant is the \$2.5 million funding for 2024-2027 and is specifically being used to "Develop and implement a climate-resilient management policy, local knowledge and traditional knowledge (LKTK) onramps, and harvest specifications tools that are adaptive to environmental risk." We have been spending these funds as planned, but there is concern about the future status of the grant funding, even though it has been fully obligated.
3. The Council is in its first year of its 4-year Operating Grant (2025-2028). We have received about 46% of the 2025 funding to date and given some potential for a delay (or withholding) of those funds, we have been very frugal with our spending this year. The allocation for the remainder of 2025 and remaining years is uncertain, and there is some possibility for a reduction in funding.

The Committee discussed contingency planning scenarios, should there be a reduction in funding, and provided initial direction on several different aspects including meeting schedule and locations. Major Committee recommendations are summarized below:

- The Council has previously discussed dropping February meetings, but we have kept the dates on the books just in case we needed to hold a meeting to address an issue in a timely manner (e.g., special meeting on chum salmon bycatch). **The Committee recommends that February Council meetings be dropped from all further scheduling.** The February meetings typically had light agendas due to the limited analytical time between the Council's winter meetings, and the savings from dropping it are substantial.
- The Committee discussed a staff proposal for a 1-on, 1-off virtual/in-person meeting cycle as a funding contingency mechanism. Committee members noted that while in-

person meetings are important for productive public engagement and very much preferred, virtual meetings can result in substantial savings. **The Committee recommends that, if adequate funding is not secure, we follow a one virtual, one in-person meeting schedule.** Thus, depending on our financial situation in June, we may decide to hold the October 2025 meeting virtually.

- Costs of in-person meetings vary by location, with Anchorage typically being the cheapest place to meet except in June, and Seattle and coastal communities being the most expensive. The Committee discussed the costs and timing of different meeting locations, and the contracts to which the Council is already obligated from now through 2027. The Council is contractually committed to hold the June 2025 meeting in Newport. **The Committee recommends that after June 2025, all in-person meetings be held in the least expensive location, likely Anchorage, until such a time that funding improves.**
- The Council incurs extra costs when an in-person meeting ends early (we pay penalties for unfilled room blocks, airfare change fees, etc.). The Committee finds that we need a new way of doing business where costs can be controlled. Thus, **the Committee recommends that the staff pay careful attention to agenda timing, scheduling when booking venues, and hotel contract language on adjustments to meeting length in order to avoid incurring expenses for meeting time that we are not sure we will need (e.g., having the Council end on a Monday versus scheduling for Tuesday just in case).** Additionally, **the Committee recommends that staff explore not securing room blocks for the public when meeting in Anchorage due to the large number of rooming options available.**
- The Council is hosting the Council Coordination Committee meeting in 2026. Given the budget uncertainty, we may wish to rethink the plans for an in-person meeting in Homer AK. **The Committee recommends that NPFMC leadership discuss with the CCC in May the potential for meeting in a cheaper (hotel and travel costs for attendees) location such as Vancouver WA, or holding a virtual meeting only.** The Committee suggests that the chair determine if in-person CCC meetings work when NMFS folks are participating remotely at an in-person CCC meeting (which might again be the case in 2026).

Discussion of other cost control measures (including pass-through funds, AP stipends, etc.) would occur at future committee meetings as necessary, based on any changes in financial status.

**Executive Director Performance Review** – The EC completed a performance review for the Executive Director.