

B1 NPFMC Management Priorities Framework for Council Discussion



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2026

DIANA EVANS, OCTOBER 2026

Plan for meeting:

B reports: Framework for prioritization (B1)
 Review Council actions, NMFS input (B1, B2)
 Receive public testimony

E staff tasking: Prioritization discussion



Introduction & Context

Why this discussion is needed

- Council operating costs increasing due to inflation
- NMFS Regional Office and AFSC staffing capacity reductions, including those with specialized technical expertise and redundancy for essential functions
- Ongoing reassessment of priorities and budgets within agency

Opportunity for Council-NMFS alignment regarding essential actions, and to set clear expectations for staff and for the public



Objectives of the October Discussion

- Review “must do” versus “would like to do” Council actions in current context
- Consider how and what to prioritize, curate tasking list
- Consider process changes to ensure prioritization has intended impact

CAVEAT: EXPECTATIONS FOR PRIORITIZATION OUTCOMES

- Scheduling staff work is complicated: goal is to optimize staff capacity to effectively achieve as much as possible, and to make progress on all Council tasking
- Priorities = primary guidance for resolving capacity bottlenecks
- **May see some actions scheduled for review sooner than prioritized actions**

Required Council Functions (Magnuson-Stevens Act & Other Laws)

MSA functions

- Develop and amend FMPs
- Public hearings
- Harvest specifications / annual catch limits
- Other activities consistent with MSA:
 - research priorities
 - essential fish habitat (EFH)
 - rebuilding plans
 - bycatch measures
 - allocation, LAPP reviews

Responsibilities under other laws

- Propose measures for halibut management
- Fishery measures in response to ESA, MMPA

Other roles

- Informational / B reports
- Consultations on exempted fishing permits (EFPs) and EFH
- Comment on national/regional policies, plans



How much discretionary agenda time is available?

Table 1 p.5

Typical meeting: 5-7 days

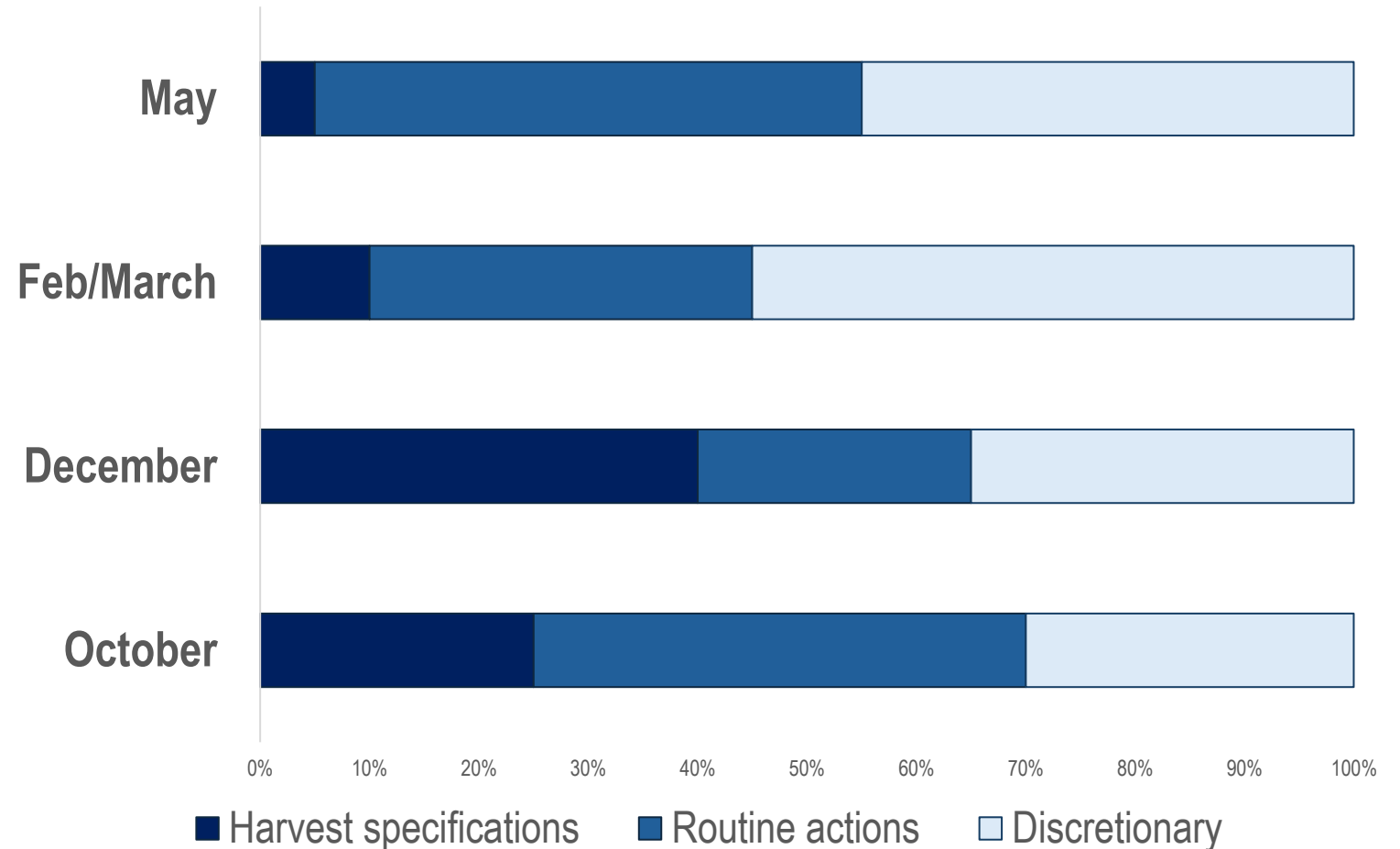
One day = ~15-20%

MSA-required: Harvest specifications

Routine Council actions: Monitoring (ADP, annual report), B reports, Staff tasking

Discretionary: also includes time needed for non-annual MSA-required actions (e.g. EFH, LAPP reviews, etc.)

Assessment of Council agenda time spent on required or routine agenda items



NMFS Regional Office Priorities – more info to follow in B2 report

First priority – activities that support ongoing fishery operations

- Ongoing inseason management, monitoring programs, fishery data
- Harvest specifications, halibut measures
- Response to public: eg, litigation, FOIA, EFPs, emergency rules

FMP/regulatory amendment work

- First: implementing Council final action recommendations
- Then: input to actions and analyses that are still under discussion at the Council

Relevance for Council Prioritization

Some of the actions that are on the Council's tasking list require more intensive input from NMFS staff, usually because technical regulatory or implementation expertise is critical to the Council's recommendation on an action.

Council has opportunity to give input to NMFS – more info in B2 report



How should Council members consider prioritizing among discretionary actions?

Impact Considerations

- Who is affected - which fishery, which persons?
- What types of impact will the action have - improve conservation, improve efficiency, enhance compliance, increase or reduce costs?

Legal / Executive Considerations

- Is the action on the Council's Executive Order 14276 workplan? Does it meet the EO 14276 criteria?
- Relationship to the Council's statutory authority?
- What is the likelihood the issue could be addressed through some other non-regulatory administrative (NMFS) or industry process?

Capacity / Logistics Considerations

- Has the Council already invested staff and public time into the development of an analysis?
- What staff capacity and Council agenda time is required to develop the analysis and implement Council recommendations? Are the analysis and alternatives simple or complex?



Council's Current Management Actions – from 3 meeting outlook

Table 2 p.7

- 22 actions currently on 3 meeting outlook
- Table reports on various capacity and executive considerations

Table 2 Management measure actions under development, as of September 2026

Sort order roughly indicates how much staff time and/or Council agenda time has been invested in each action to date (based on a quick assessment by staff).

Action	Next Step at Council	Scheduled for...	EO workplan?	Council has reviewed a version	NMFS coordination needs?	Category of action
IFQ cost recovery improvements	Final action	May 27	x	x	High	Reporting/ Monitoring
GOA Tanner crab protection measures	Initial Review (2nd)	Feb 27 (T)		x	Med	Bycatch
BS Herring PSC limit changes	Initial review	Feb 27 (T)	x		Med	Bycatch
Omnibus FMP recordkeeping and reporting	Initial/final review	Dec 26 (T)	x		Med	Other
A80 vessel replacement	Initial review	Dec 26			Low	Reporting/ Monitoring
Charter halibut permit data request	Discussion paper	Oct 26		x	Low	Halibut IFQ/ Charter
CQE/IFQ adjustments	Expanded discussion paper	Oct 26	x	x	Med	Halibut IFQ/ Charter
PSC disposition	Discussion paper	Dec 26 (T)			High	Reporting/ Monitoring
ACL overages inseason authority	Initial review	May 27			High	BSA/GOA fish manmt

Each links to the most recent Council motion

Is it on the Council's EO 14276 workplan, last updated Oct 2025?

Identifies dependence on NMFS staff for action to be ready for next Council review

Actions at top of list have the most staff work and/or Council time invested

Corresponds with category in left column of 3 mtg outlook



Prioritizing Discretionary Items

Staff recommendation: Identify 3-4 key priorities across the entire list

- Priorities are guidance for staff assignments and to resolve bottlenecks.
- Continue making progress on other actions when capacity and expertise allow.
- Expect that some lower-priority but simpler actions may reach the Council sooner than a priority action.



Consider removing items from the list

- Reevaluate need based on current circumstances – value for effort, capacity
- No judgement on merit; Council could re-task in future
- Provides clearer signal to public

Pot gear regulation consistency

- Worthwhile, but NMFS is unlikely to have capacity to work on this in near term

NMFS-approved motion scales for sablefish

- With development of EM, may be better addressed in broader action

Charter halibut management measures timing

- Complex cross-agency process, higher priority data review being addressed now

How do NMFS regional EO 14276 priorities fit in?

More information on EO 14276 regional priorities letter during B2 report

Identifies 4 action items for Council consideration

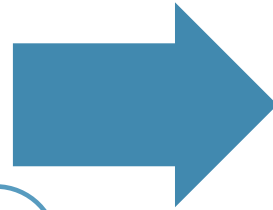
- Review SSL closure boundaries – *would be **new task** to initiate*
- Eliminate 2% IFQ deduction for bled sablefish – *already tasked, but not yet scheduled for review*
- Systematically assess current FMPs and consider removing species – *would be **new but small task** to complete report and formalize Council response*
- Collaborate with NMFS on expanded use of EFPs – *NMFS working on action to remove Alaska-specific regulations, with Council support*



Staff recommendation for Council process changes to staff tasking

Current process

- New actions can be initiated at any meeting during staff tasking
- Most accessible for public, but may not appropriately set realistic expectations about timing



Potential changes

- New actions initiated only once or twice a year (Oct only, or Oct and Feb)
- At other meetings, ED / Chair wrap-up only; no public testimony or Council action
- Annual October strategic planning / prioritization

Emergency actions could still be considered when applicable.



RECAP: Possible Council action at Staff Tasking

1. **Highlight 3-4 priorities** among the Council's discretionary actions.
2. Review the "Items not yet started" list on the 3-meeting outlook to see whether any **items should be removed** for the present.
3. Affirm and/or provide **input on NMFS' implementation priorities**.
4. Consider changing approach to staff tasking at future meetings, to constrain **Council tasking of new actions to designated meetings** once or twice a year.
5. Commit to an **annual strategic planning discussion** in October, to develop priorities for the upcoming year.

