

IV. COUNCIL POLICY

A. Council Considerations

Meeting Procedures

The Council is now in its 60th plenary session. Meeting procedures have evolved over our eight years, but it may be time for a review to see where improvements could be made. Our general procedures are summarized in item IV.A.(1).

The following questions may help guide the discussion on this topic.

1. Are you satisfied with the usual order of business with most routine and special reports in front followed by special business such as permit review, and then the plans?
2. How is the use of times on the agenda working out?
3. What additional reports would you like?
4. Should we revise our limits on public testimony from the current 5 minutes/person and 10 minutes/group?
5. Should abstentions from voting be allowed? Under what circumstances?
6. Would the Council be better prepared to deal with agenda topics if orientation sessions were held periodically?
7. How can the Council's workgroups be used more effectively?

Council Travel and Pay

The Department of Commerce is proposing a 47% cut in the NMFS budget for FY/85. The Councils face even larger cutbacks in that budget. While Congress will probably not go along with those cuts, we can't expect much more than level funding in any case. The last few years we have reduced our expenses by meeting only six times a year, and using the old Federal Building instead of hotels. We have also saved rent money by moving and have reduced travel costs using GTRs. Future cuts in spending will take some ingenuity.

We have seldom restricted Council, SSC, or AP travel to meetings, public hearings, or workgroups; on the contrary, participation has been encouraged. Attendance affects travel costs and salaries--the two largest areas of Council operating expense.

The Council may want to set policy on the following:

1. Who should be compensated to attend meetings --workgroup sessions, hearings, etc.--outside regular Council meetings? Any member who wishes? Just those approved by the Chairman?
2. Should salaries be paid for travel days?

Council Code of Conduct

A general discussion is probably in order on the role of Council membership and a member's professional and business activities, the role of members relative to Council actions after they've been taken and minority reports on Council decisions.

We have never developed any policy in this area.

COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURES

Meeting Schedule

January - with Alaska Board of Fisheries, Juneau  
(usually the first week)  
March - the fourth Wednesday and Thursday, with the Alaska Board  
of Fisheries  
May - the fourth Wednesday and Thursday  
July - the fourth Wednesday and Thursday  
September - the fourth Wednesday and Thursday  
December - with Alaska Board of Fisheries (usually the first week)

Notice of Meetings

Advance notice of Council, SSC, and AP meetings will be published in the Federal Register and mailed to the general news release mailing list in a timely manner.

Agenda

The draft agenda will be mailed to the public approximately two weeks prior to each meeting. The final agenda will be approved by the Council as the first order of business at the beginning of the Council meeting.

Council Meeting

Order of Business. The Council shall convene at the time announced in the notices to the public, with periodic breaks to be determined the Chairman. Meetings will continue until Council business is completed or a motion is made for adjournment. Evening sessions may be called by consensus of the Council when required to complete Council business. The order of the Agenda will be followed as closely as possible. Council shall consider each agenda item separately after presentation of staff, SSC and AP reports and public testimony.

Registration. Members of the public should register their attendance in the registration book on the table at the entrance. If you wish to be placed on the Council mailing list for newsletters or other material, please indicate that fact when you register. A complete reference book, as used by Council members, is available for study at the door. Extra copies of Council agenda items are also available.

Public Testimony. Public testimony on individual agenda items will be received by the Council after staff, SSC, and AP reports and/or presentations and before Council discussion/action. Written testimony will also be welcomed. Witnesses are required to submit a registration card before testifying and all cards for a particular agenda item shall be submitted prior to the start of public testimony on that agenda item. Verbal testimony will be limited to five minutes per individual and ten minutes for groups or organizations. In addition to public comment on specific agenda items, there is a period set aside toward the end of the Council meeting for comment on any subject you believe to be of interest to the Council. If you wish to testify at that time, please indicate "general comment" on the registration card.

Newsletter

As soon as possible after adjournment, the Council will distribute a newsletter summarizing Council meeting actions and notices of future meetings of the Council and other planned meetings.

B. SSC Considerations

The SSC is the Council's major source of scientific and technical advice and review on fisheries management issues. They are called on to review the merit of all proposed alternatives to a particular problem in a fishery. The eleven members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Council. Members assigned to the Committee as agency representatives have an alternate.

The above is provided for in the Council's SOPPs. The only question that has come up recently on SSC policy and procedure has been Council policy on alternates on the SSC. The latest policy on the books is the following from March 1982:

Each statutory agency designated as a member of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 shall have a member on the Scientific and Statistical Committee. That member may have an alternate, although it is expected that the primary member from an agency will attend meetings of the Scientific and Statistical Committee in person whenever possible. The statutory agency may nominate the alternate for their primary member, notifying the chairman of the SSC by letter of that selection. Alternates will be appointed for the same period as the primary member.

Other Scientific and Statistical Committee members may have an alternate on a case-by-case basis when the member would be unable to participate for an extended period of time. It is expected that those alternates would be experts in the same field as the member and familiar with the work of the SSC and the Council.

The SSC suggested liberal interpretation for best operation of the Committee and the Council concurred. The key requirement in appointing members or alternates is for the Council to maintain the highest level of objective scientific and technical expertise.

1. Does the Council wish to reaffirm its policy on SSC alternates?
2. Should the SSC and Council review the qualifications of nominees for alternates and be allowed the final decision on that appointment?

C. Advisory Panel Considerations

The Council's SOPPs prescribe that the Advisory Panel is to be composed of persons who either fish or are knowledgeable and interested in fisheries conservation and management. Panel membership should reflect expertise and interest from the standpoint of geographical distribution, industry and other user groups, and the economic social groups encompassed in the Council's geographical area of concern. Members are appointed by the Council for two-year terms and are to be drawn from a list of nominees. Interim vacancies are filled by the Council Chairman and confirmed at the next Council meeting. The Panel shall meet in part or in full at the request of the AP Chairman with approval of the Council Chairman, as often as necessary to fulfill the Panel's responsibilities, taking into consideration time and budget constraints.

We've had essentially this same system since the Council began and there have been comments voiced that possibly the Council is not using the AP to the maximum effectiveness. I consider the AP to be the Council's major source of industry expertise. In that role, their advice will be of considerable importance as we struggle with future economic decisions that pit U.S. user groups against one another, rather than as in the past, U.S. vs foreign interests.

Every Council establishes and uses its industry panel in different ways. For example, the Pacific Council has a panel for each major fishery and that panel is called in only when that fishery is up for discussion. We, of course, use the 25 members on all plans.

1. Is there a better way to set up and use our AP to achieve the best industry advice?
2. Should there be a special panel for each fishery that is called in only when that topic is on the agenda?
3. Should criteria for membership be revised?
4. Under what circumstances should we change AP membership?
5. Should AP travel and attendance policies be revised?