

# Reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Act: A Council Perspective

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# Considering MSA Reauthorization at the Pacific Council

- Managing Our Nation's Fisheries 3 Conference (May 2013)
- Council discussion/prioritization (June, September, November 2013)
- Council letter to Begich and Hastings (November 2013)
- Council testimony in Congress (January, February 2014)
- Council review of House Discussion Draft (March 2014)
- Council letter to Hastings (March 2014)
- Council discussed HR 4742 and Senate draft (June 2014)
- Council letter to Begich and Hastings (August 2014)
- Council to discuss second Senate Draft (September 2014)

# Considering MSA Reauthorization in the Council Coordination Committee

- Joint meeting with Managing Our Nation's Fisheries 3 Conference (May 2013). Councils provided input regarding their reauthorization priorities.
- CCC submitted comments on priorities to Begich and Hastings (November 2013)
- House Discussion Draft released December 2013
- CCC meeting: Discussed priorities and formed working groups on MSA issues. (February 2014)
- CCC meeting with reports from working groups (May 2014)
- CCC submitted comments on priorities to Begich and Hastings (June 2014)
- Next meeting: Interim meeting February 2015

The MSA has been successful in creating a science-based management process that ensures long-term, sustainable fisheries while preventing overfishing and mandating rebuilding of depleted stocks.

... But there is room for improvement.

# Two Topics Important to the Pacific Council

- Better align NEPA and MSA requirements in the environmental review process
- Provide the flexibility to manage stocks when the best scientific information available is insufficient

# Better align the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the MSA

- Problems:
  - Delays and duplication
  - Workload and expense
  - NEPA subsuming the MSA
  - Section 304(i) never fulfilled by NOAA



# Better align the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the MSA

- Proposed solution:
  - Incorporate the essentials of NEPA into MSA as a requirement
  - If this new MSA requirement is satisfied, then compliance with NEPA is designated as fulfilled.

# Data-Poor Fisheries

- Consider exemptions or alternatives to annual catch limit requirements for data-poor species
- Councils should have discretion to determine alternative control methods for data-poor stocks



# Council Coordination Committee Priorities

- Management flexibility (rebuilding plans, management of mixed stocks, transboundary stocks, data poor fisheries)
- Better definition of “overfished”
- Transparency in Council meetings, but not mandating video recordings or Advisory Body streaming
- Flexibility in collection and use of fisheries data (encourage electronic monitoring, etc.)
- Encourage ecosystem approaches; consider role of forage fish
- Better align NEPA and MSA by incorporating certain NEPA requirements into the MSA

# Priorities of Other Councils

- New England, South Atlantic: management flexibility on ACLs and Rebuilding Plans
- Western Pacific: International issues
- Gulf: Recreational issues