

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PRIORITIES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) supports the Council working towards a more efficient process but highlights the following concerns for the Council to consider.

Briefing Book Production Timelines

The GMT understands that altering the briefing book production time from 21 days prior to a Council meeting to 14 days could allow Council staff more time to produce potentially more robust analytical documents for the Council, Advisory Bodies, Management Teams, Technical Teams and the public to digest. The caveat being, there will then be less time to read through all of the Advanced Briefing Book (ABB) material in preparation for the Council meeting. Additionally, states have to schedule delegation calls before the meeting, and moving the production time to 14 days creates an even narrower window to organize meetings prior to Council. It would also make it more challenging for those who expect to attend multiple pre-meeting webinars, while juggling other work. The Council should consider the tradeoffs and whether one additional week of ABB material analysis and preparation outweighs the cost to participants in the process. In [Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 1](#), Figure 1 highlights the November meeting as the one Council staff could benefit from the most under this proposed timeline, as the April Council meeting is already operating under a 14-day ABB deadline. The Council could consider shortening the production time for other meeting(s) in addition to April, while leaving some at 21 days, depending on whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

Focusing Work of Advisory Groups

The GMT focuses on groundfish issues the Council has prioritized, while addressing additional issues as they relate to groundfish management. While the GMT appreciates the Council's efforts to minimize and prioritize advisory body workload, the team is concerned that overly restricting our work to include only groundfish agenda items could preclude the Council from being sufficiently informed on how cross-cutting items (e.g., adaptive management, marine planning) impact groundfish fisheries. With uncertain future environmental and economic conditions, the GMT anticipates that many management initiatives the Council undertakes will apply to all FMPs to some extent, and collaboration across advisory groups to inform the Council's decision making will be imperative to finding creative solutions.

Informational Reports and Related Agenda Topics

While the GMT generally supports moving informational reports off the Council floor, the team acknowledges there may be instances where informational reports/topics warrant Council discussion. One option to address this concern is for Council staff to bring forth informational items that would benefit decision makers and stakeholders by having allocated Council floor time.

Update on length of meeting and implications

The GMT seeks further exploration of the consequences associated with shortening the number of days for a Council meeting. For example, in [Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 3](#), the proposed September meeting has multiple groundfish items on Council day one, which gives the GMT

limited time to produce any necessary statements during the Council meeting. In this scenario, the team may request a longer-than-average public webinar prior to the Council meeting, or an earlier start date, to have sufficient time to prepare the reports. In the long-term, the team seeks clarity on how GMT workload will be shifted or reduced to account for condensed meetings, such as whether additional front loading will be expected, the extent to which we can front load work, whether additional pre-meeting webinar time would be regularly scheduled, or whether the Council would expect proportionally condensed discussion time from the team. If the amount of GMT work time is shortened proportionally, or we have less time for in-person collaboration, the team will likely need to set even stricter priorities as to what topics do, or do not, warrant team statements, with guidance from Council staff.

The GMT is supportive of shorter Council meetings in general, assuming there is a proportionate reduction in the overall number of agenda items the team will need to comment on and enough time for the team to review materials, deliberate, and compose informative reports. If the Council is well informed, it can operate more efficiently during floor time. While strategies such as front-loading reports and longer pre-council webinars may enable a similar level of work products while shortening Council meetings, they shift the Council workload outside of Council meetings with impacts to other critical fisheries management duties team members conduct outside of Council meetings.

PFMC
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