



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

December 13, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

FROM: Megan Davis *Megan Davis*
Chair, Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee December 2022
Recommendations

This memo transmits the recommendations from NOAA's Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) that were endorsed by unanimous vote at our recent meeting, November 29 – December 1, 2022 in Silver Spring, Maryland. MAFAC took action on three topics:

1. Workforce Development and Critical Components for Developing a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce
2. Recommendations for Updating the NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy.
3. Recommendation that the Department of Commerce and NOAA adopt a more flexible work policy to allow NOAA Fisheries employees to telework and remote work, with supporting justifications.

A high level summary of each is provided below.

Workforce Development for a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce

Following our May 2022 meeting, we submitted a recommendation regarding workforce development and conducting local **needs assessments** of all industries linked to fishing and seafood production and distribution. At that time, we pledged to continue our work to identify strategies that ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. fisheries and seafood and improve their resilience in the face of changing climate and other stressors to coastal ecosystems and communities. Our resulting work is the report, *Workforce Development and Critical Components for Developing a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce*. It provides more detailed recommendations on needs assessments, as well as recommendations on education, training, and innovation and entrepreneurship. We encourage you to also share this report with the National Sea Grant College Program.

Recommendations for Updating the NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy

MAFAC was pleased to have the opportunity to review and provide input on the current NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy, established in 2015, to reflect current conditions. Recreational fishing continues to be an important socio-economic component of healthy coastal communities and is important to the nation. Our recommendations emphasize the

importance of: improved transparency in fishery management science and processes; understanding the universe of anglers in federal waters; the need to address equity, environmental justice, and climate impacts; continuing focus on sustainably managing the impact of recreational fishing on the health of fisheries and ecosystems; outreach and engagement, which continues to be important as a two-way dialog; and identifying and using metrics to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy.

Adopt a more flexible work policy

MAFAC members discussed and recognized the importance of flexible work policies to improve employee retention, morale, and work-life balance; provide the opportunity to live in more affordable, non-urban areas; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with commuting. Additionally, allowing employees to live in seafood producing communities, which are often located in remote, rural, and underserved areas, improves the exchange of information, knowledge, trust, and social capital with agency stakeholders, and can help support these communities. In light of these facts, MAFAC recommends that the Department of Commerce and NOAA adopt a more flexible work policy to allow NOAA Fisheries employees expanded telework and remote work opportunities.

We appreciated the opportunity to engage with you and other NOAA Fisheries leaders directly at the November-December 2022 meeting. The Committee is ready, willing, and at your service as partners to move these recommendations forward.

Attachments

- Report, *Workforce Development and Critical Components for Developing a Modern Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Seafood Workforce*
- Report, *MAFAC Recommendations for Updating the NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy*
- Recommendation that the Department of Commerce and NOAA adopt a more flexible work policy to allow NOAA Fisheries employees to telework and remote work, with supporting justifications