

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
(NOAA)

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COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING

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WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 11, 2023

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The NOAA Council Coordination Committee met at the Hilton Arlington National Landing, 2399 Richmond Highway, Arlington, Virginia, at 1:00 p.m., Kevin Anson, Chair, Gulf of Mexico Council, presiding.

PRESENT

GULF OF MEXICO COUNCIL:
KEVIN ANSON, Chair
J.D. DUGAS, Vice Chair
CARRIE SIMMONS, Executive Director

NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL:
ERIC REID, Chair
RICK BELLAVANCE, Vice Chair
CATE O'KEEFE, Executive Director

MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL:
WES TOWNSEND, Chair
MIKE LUISI, Vice Chair
CHRIS MOORE, Executive Director

SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL:
CAROLYN BELCHER, Chair
TRISH MURPHEY, Vice Chair
JOHN CARMICHAEL, Executive Director

CARIBBEAN COUNCIL:
CARLOS FARCHETTE, Chair
VANESSA RAMIREZ, Vice Chair
MIGUEL ROLON, Executive Director

WESTERN PACIFIC COUNCIL:
WILLIAM SWORD, Chair
KITTY SIMONDS, Executive Director

PACIFIC COUNCIL:
BRAD PETTINGER, Chair
PETER HASSEMER, Vice Chair
MERRICK BURDEN, Executive Director

NORTH PACIFIC COUNCIL:
ANGEL DROBNICA, Chair
BILL TWEIT, Vice Chair
DAVID WITHERELL, Executive Director

ALSO PRESENT:
JANET COIT, Assistant Administrator, NOAA
Fisheries
ALEXA COLE, Director, Office of International
Affairs, Trade, and Commerce
KELLY DENIT, Director, Office of Sustainable
Fisheries
EVAN HOWELL, Director, Office of Science and
Technology
ADAM ISSENBERG, Assistant General Counsel for
Fisheries, NOAA Office of General Counsel
JON KURLAND, Regional Administrator, Alaska
Regional Fishery Office
SARAH MALLOY, Acting Regional Administrator,
Pacific Islands Regional Fishery Office
EMILY MENASHES, Deputy Assistant Administrator
for Operations, NOAA Fisheries

BRIAN PAWLAK, Chief Financial Officer & OMB
Director, NOAA Fisheries
MICHAEL PENTONY, Regional Administrator, Greater
Atlantic Regional Fishery Office
SAM RAUCH, Deputy Assistant Administrator
for Regulatory Programs, NOAA Fisheries
KATHERINE RENSHAW, Section Chief, NOAA Office
of General Counsel
ANDY STRELCHECK, Regional Administrator,
Southeast Regional Fishery Office
JENNI WALLACE, Sustainable Fisheries
CISCO WERNER, Director of Scientific Programs
and Chief Science Advisor, NOAA Fisheries
DAVID WHALEY, Independent Consultant

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Adjourn

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (1:06 p.m.)

3 MR. ANSON: Okay, everyone. We're
4 going to go ahead and begin. And I am Kevin
5 Anson, Chair of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
6 Management Council and 2023 Chair of the Council
7 Coordination Committee. And I am pleased to call
8 this meeting of the CCC to order. This meeting
9 is open to the public and copies of the meeting's
10 agenda and documents are available on NOAA
11 Fisheries website and will be posted to the U.S.
12 Regional Fisheries Management Council's website
13 after this meeting.

14 After presentations, the floor will be
15 open to CCC members for questions or
16 clarification. When all presentations are
17 completed, followed by CCC discussion and action
18 as appropriate. Public input is a vital part of
19 the Council Coordination Committee process and we
20 will welcome public comment from in-person and
21 virtual attendees. Persons wishing to give
22 public comment in the meeting room must sign up

1 by indicating that they will provide comment on
2 the sign-in sheet. Persons wishing to give
3 comment virtually must raise their hand on the
4 webinar when I call for public comment to receive
5 an invitation to unmute.

6 Members of the public will be provided
7 an opportunity to provide the CCC with their
8 comments at the end of the agenda each day on
9 Wednesday, October 11th, Thursday, October 12th,
10 and Friday, October 13th. Public comment may end
11 before the published agenda time. If all
12 registered in-person and virtual participants
13 have completed their comment. In-person
14 participants, please remember to speak directly
15 into your microphones so that all can hear in the
16 room and online. Lastly, I ask that all CCC
17 members turn off the sound ringers on their cell
18 phones and mute your connection on other devices
19 while the CCC meeting is in session.

20 So we'll begin with introductions and
21 I'd like to have the CCC members introduce
22 themselves starting with the Gulf Council.

1 DR. SIMMONS: Carrie Simmons,
2 Executive Director at the Gulf Council.

3 MR. DUGAS: J.D. Dugas, Vice Chair of
4 the Gulf Council.

5 MR. ROLON: Miguel Rolon, Secretary
6 Director of Caribbean Council.

7 MR. FUCHETTE: Carlos Fuchette, Chair
8 of Caribbean Council.

9 MS. RAMIREZ: Vanessa Ramirez of
10 Caribbean Council.

11 MR. WHALEY: Dave Whaley, Independent
12 Consultant for the CCC.

13 MR. WITHERELL: Dave Witherell,
14 Executive Director of North Pacific Council. My
15 Chair and Vice Chair will be here tomorrow.
16 They're traveling to the meeting today following
17 a council meeting.

18 MR. PETTINGER: Brad Pettinger, Chair
19 of Pacific Council.

20 MR. BURDEN: Merrick Burden, Executive
21 Director of the Pacific Council.

22 MR. HASSEMER: Pete Hassemer, Vice

1 Chair of Pacific Council.

2 MS. MURPHEY: Trish Murphey, Vice
3 Chair of the South Atlantic Council.

4 MS. BELCHER: Carolyn Belcher, Chair
5 of South Atlantic Council.

6 MR. CARMICHAEL: John Carmichael,
7 Executive Director of South Atlantic Council.

8 MR. SWORD: Will Sword, Chair for the
9 Western Pacific Council. Kitty just stepped out
10 of the room.

11 MR. BELLAVANCE: Rick Bellavance, Vice
12 Chair of the New England Fishing Management
13 Council.

14 MS. O'KEEFE: Cate O'Keefe, Executive
15 Director of New England Council.

16 MR. REID: Eric Reid, Chair of New
17 England.

18 MR. MOORE: Chris Moore, Executive
19 Director of Mid-Atlantic Council.

20 MR. TOWNSEND: Wes Townsend, Chair of
21 Mid-Atlantic Council.

22 MR. PAWLAK: Brian Pawlak with NOAA

1 Fisheries, Chief Financial Officer.

2 MR. HOWELL: Evan Howell, Director of
3 Office of Science and Technology Fisheries.

4 MR. ISSENBERG: Adam Issenberg with
5 NOAAs Office of General Council.

6 MS. DENIT: Good afternoon. Kelly
7 Denit, Director for the Office of Sustainable
8 Fisheries.

9 MS. MENASHES: Hi. Emily Menashes,
10 Fisheries Deputy Assistant Administrator for
11 Operations.

12 MR. WERNER: Cisco Werner, Chief
13 Science Advisor of NOAA Fisheries.

14 MR. RAUCH: Sam Rauch, Fisheries
15 Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory
16 Programs. And Janet will be here imminently.

17 MR. ANSON: Thank you. And Morgan, we
18 have those that are participating online from the
19 regional offices if maybe they can stop with
20 GARFO and maybe work down south and then west
21 from there.

22 MR. PENTONY: Hi, everybody. This is

1 Mike Pentony, RA for Greater Atlantic Regional
2 Office.

3 MR. STRELCHECK: Hey. This is Andy
4 Strelcheck, Regional Administrator for NOAA
5 Fisheries Southeast Region.

6 MR. KURLAND: And John Kurland,
7 Regional Administrator in Alaska.

8 MS. MALLOY: Sarah Malloy, Acting
9 Regional Administrator Pacific Islands.

10 MR. ANSON: All right. Thank you to
11 everyone here at the table and those
12 participating online. Next is approval of the
13 agenda. The proposed agenda is in your briefing
14 materials under Tab 1. If anyone has any
15 modifications, please raise your hand. Yes, sir.

16 MR. SWORD: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
17 Chair. Yeah, we would like to propose moving the
18 Endangered Species Act up to an appropriate time
19 for later on tomorrow. And exchange it, I think
20 with the Subcommittee updates if possible.

21 MR. ANSON: Okay. So I have a request
22 to move the Endangered Species Act topic to

1 Thursday. Subcommittee updates, there are other
2 people that are scheduled to speak at that time.
3 I think a few of them at least are here on staff.

4 MR. RAUCH: I might be able to do
5 that, but I need to just make sure --

6 MR. ANSON: Okay.

7 MR. RAUCH: So I'm open, but I want
8 the other people --

9 MR. ANSON: Yes. So I guess we'll
10 table it as a pending action, yeah, while Sam can
11 check his schedule. And I think he's willing to
12 accommodate. He just needs to check some things.
13 So as long as we keep that in mind, I guess, as
14 we move forward with the agenda. Are there any
15 other comments or additions to the agenda? Any
16 items? Seeing none, is there any objection to
17 approving the agenda as amended? Seeing none,
18 the agenda is approved.

19 So then that will take us to our next
20 item and that would be for Ms. Coit. She is
21 still imminent, Sam?

22 MR. RAUCH: Supposed to be here 20

1 minutes ago.

2 MR. ANSON: I wonder -- Let's maybe
3 take just a few minute break then and we will
4 reconvene once Ms. Coit is here. So let's take
5 just a short break. She is just around the
6 corner. Thank you.

7 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
8 went off the record at 1:13 p.m. and resumed at
9 1:16 p.m.)

10 MR. ANSON: Okay. So while Ms. Coit
11 has some transportation difficulties to the
12 meeting, so she should be here in just a little
13 bit. But while we're waiting on her, we'll go
14 ahead and get NOAA Fisheries Policy Updates from
15 Ms. Kelly Denit.

16 MS. DENIT: Great. Thank you, Chair.
17 Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to step us
18 through an update on our Advanced Notice of
19 Proposed Rulemaking or ANPR on the National
20 Standard Guidelines for 4, 8, and 9. As a quick
21 reminder, our objective here was to determine
22 whether any updates to any of these national

1 standard guidelines are in fact needed or
2 warranted. And the goal overall was to solicit
3 public input across the spectrum of our
4 stakeholders with respect to those three national
5 standards, the guidelines specifically.

6 Background, again just as a real quick
7 refresher because I know that you all have the
8 National Standards memorized. National Standard
9 4 is the one specific to allocations. National
10 Standard 8 is focused on impacts to communities.
11 And National Standard 9 is minimizing bycatch and
12 bycatch mortality to the extent practicable.

13 As we highlighted in the ANPR, there
14 were two challenges that we specifically
15 highlighted for stakeholders to provide their
16 input with respect to those three national
17 standard guidelines. Those related to climate
18 impacts on fisheries, as well as equity and
19 environmental justice and how that is in our
20 fisheries management system.

21 So quickly touching on an overview of
22 the comments we received and the process that we

1 undertook, we conducted presentations at all of
2 the Regional Fishery Management Councils. Thank
3 you all for hosting us very much. We also did a
4 national webinar and two tribal-specific webinars
5 for our stakeholders to try to create as many
6 opportunities for folks to get an overview of the
7 ANPR outside of what was just written in the
8 actual ANPR.

9 Overall, we got approximately 390
10 comments. We got comments from all regional
11 fishery management councils and other state
12 management agencies. You can see the specific
13 numbers up there. We also received a number of
14 comments from fishery organizations, tribes,
15 NGOs, and then of course individual stakeholders.
16 We really appreciate everyone's thoughtful input.
17 Most of these comments were multi-page, very
18 thoughtful and thorough comments that we received
19 from all of you, including all the stakeholders.

20 And so we are in the process of
21 reviewing those comments now. And I will quickly
22 give you a quick and dirty summary here of some

1 initial impressions. Obviously we're still
2 digging into the details of all of those comments
3 that came in, but some initial impressions to
4 share.

5 We received a number of comments from
6 the councils, as well as others that indicated
7 the changes to the National Standard Guidelines
8 are not needed. That there's currently enough
9 flexibility in the existing guidelines in
10 particular to allow the councils to work with
11 respect to climate and EEJ issues. A number of
12 other fisheries participants, including reps from
13 fishing communities and environmental groups
14 provided some comments that changes to the
15 guidelines were appropriate, in particular as it
16 related to National Standard 4 and National
17 Standard 9.

18 Overall, there was a significant
19 amount of comments opposed to changing the
20 definition of "fishing communities". You might
21 recall that in the ANPR, we had specifically
22 solicited input on that balance between

1 dependence and engagement. And had put forward
2 the notion that potentially there could be -- It
3 could be appropriate to look more at engagement
4 as part of the National Standard Guidelines. And
5 there was a number of comments in response to
6 that who indicated that the dependence was
7 equally, if not more important than engagement.

8 Finally, last overall takeaway was
9 that there were a large number of stakeholders
10 who commented in general about trawling and its
11 impact on fisheries and habitats that were not
12 necessarily specific to the National Standard
13 Guidelines. But nevertheless were sentiments
14 with respect to in particular, National Standard
15 9, but also just general gear-related conflict
16 kind of information.

17 So our next steps as we had indicated
18 to you back in May, we are currently reviewing
19 our comments and that is still our plan. If
20 after we review all of those comments in detail,
21 we determine that a proposed rule is appropriate,
22 then we would aim to target publishing that

1 proposed rule in the spring of 2024. We
2 certainly have heard loud and clear and we know
3 from our experience on revisions to the National
4 Standard 1 guidelines that you all, as the
5 councils are keenly interested in the opportunity
6 to participate and engage and provide input.

7 Obviously we have our constraints
8 around our rulemaking processes, but we recognize
9 that we need your input as we're moving forward.
10 And so any proposed rule that we do develop would
11 have the opportunity for further comment and
12 council engagement as part of our regulatory
13 process. And of course, we will continue to keep
14 the CCC updated, including at the May 2024
15 meeting, depending ultimately on what the Agency
16 determines is appropriate to do moving forward
17 based on the comments we received under the ANPR.

18 That's my update, Chair. I'd be happy
19 to answer any questions from folks.

20 MR. ANSON: Thank you for the
21 information. Do we have any questions? I don't
22 see any hands. Any hands from outside? No.

1 Okay.

2 All right, we're still waiting on Ms.
3 Coit to appear, so we will come back to her when
4 she arrives. But we'll go to the next item on
5 the agenda. And that would be Brian Pawlak with
6 the budget and 2024 outlook.

7 MR. PAWLAK: Yeah, thank you. Thank
8 you for the opportunity to talk about the budget.
9 Let me just make sure I'm driving the clicker
10 okay here. Yeah, good.

11 Well, thank you. I'm glad to be here
12 again talking about the budget and where we
13 stand. I think those that -- I see many familiar
14 faces from the Key West CCC meeting. So I have a
15 few updates here, just where we are on budget
16 timeline and just where we stand with council
17 funding. So some of this will seem a little
18 repeat from the CC discussion, but we will have a
19 little more information on where we stand on the
20 FY24 status as we've had the Senate mark since
21 the Key West engagement. And we can talk a
22 little bit about -- and give you kind of an

1 overview for some of your more deep dive
2 discussion on where we stand with the budget
3 supplementals and some of the IRA funding and
4 activities around that, that's going on at
5 Fisheries.

6 So the federal budget timeline, you've
7 all seen this slide, probably maybe even tired of
8 this slide from me because I always present where
9 we are in the budget process. Although this time
10 of year and this time with the slide, this is
11 probably behind the scenes. This is probably the
12 most exciting slide that I'll ever have in my
13 budget given all the discussion debate on where
14 we are still with the FY24.

15 So I think one reason I always present
16 it here is just to give an overview of where we
17 stand in the budget process. I think as you all
18 know, we've closed out FY23, but still working on
19 close-out activities; expenditure carryover fund,
20 closing the books, that type of thing. I think
21 as you all heard from me in Key West, we've
22 submitted our budget -- the '24 budget to

1 Congress. But as we all know and have been
2 watching the news, we are still waiting for an
3 enacted budget. We are operating under a
4 continuing resolution presently. We're all
5 eagerly hoping and waiting we'll have an enacted
6 budget in 2024 or at least another CR before the
7 end of -- current CR, which I believe is November
8 17th.

9 We'll dive into '24 and what we know
10 about '24 a little more in a few more slides.
11 But also as we mentioned, I think Key West, we've
12 talked about this budget formulation. In the
13 midst of that with discussions with OMB, the
14 internal kind of administrative process there is
15 ongoing and well underway. Delays in '24 and you
16 know, understanding what happens in '24 can
17 always delay that process as I think you've heard
18 me speak before. Usually the first week of
19 February is supposed to be the President's
20 budgets released.

21 We haven't been on that schedule for
22 several years now. And with the delays in '24

1 enacted budget, who knows if we're going to be on
2 that schedule again. It's hard to predict. And
3 then we're also initiating and starting to think
4 about '26. But again, hard to dive into '26
5 planning mode when you're unsure of where you
6 land with FY24.

7 Where we are with the council funding
8 and just the status of funding, I think updates
9 here from Key West largely are reflected in where
10 we stand from the Senate mark. So we've crossed
11 the columns here, FY22 enacted. Moving to the
12 right, you can see the FY24 Senate mark. And
13 largely here, what we're seeing is a flat budget
14 from the Senate mark. In '23, we were lucky
15 enough to have our fully enacted request, which
16 reflected, you know, just shy of \$1.5 million in
17 ATBs, so adjustments to base. We kind of
18 calculated adjustments for cost of living
19 increases, that type of thing.

20 Enacted in the budget in FY24, you can
21 see from the top line budget there, that column
22 next to last, we again have requested increases

1 for ATBs again at about \$1.5 million. The Senate
2 mark though at this point is marked up that
3 budget in enacted level and basically results in
4 kind of flat status quo budget for us. I think
5 that last column is new information updated from
6 our Key West discussion.

7 FY24, Quarter 1 particularly, this is
8 some new information and new slides here,
9 something we haven't really talked about here.
10 It's pretty technical in the weeds, but it has
11 the impacts to this meeting actually and impacts
12 to what's just going on in the organization. And
13 that we are in a period of transition. Really it
14 will be through all of '24, but Quarter 1 and the
15 month of October most impacted is that we are
16 transitioning and building into a new financial
17 management system; termed BAS, Business
18 Application Solution.

19 Basically what we're doing is
20 replacing a 25 year old financial management
21 system that we've had obviously in operation for
22 25 years, if not more. A system that's not

1 really maintained by a vendor anymore. It's kind
2 of patch work. All of our financial activity in
3 the organizations relies on our current system,
4 CBS it's called, not that, that really matters to
5 you. But we're changing out that core
6 foundational system for our system across the
7 Department of Commerce and across NOAA.

8 And that is happening right now. The
9 conversion is a start to FY24. How that
10 impacted, as you're wondering why folks might be
11 on the phone or who's traveling and not
12 traveling, that produced for us direction from
13 commerce and the vendor putting together the BAS
14 that we really need to limit activity in the
15 financial system as they convert the system to
16 the new one. So it's forced this blackout period
17 of travel to try to reduce obligations during
18 this month of October.

19 That's put a limit on some of the
20 folks on the phone, ability to travel. And what
21 that comes down to is as we're transitioning to a
22 new system, they're trying to connect everything

1 and make sure it works. When they turn the new
2 system on, there's a concern about, you know,
3 being ready to go. They don't want it
4 overloaded. Kind of all obligations that happen
5 in October have to be hand in key entered into
6 the new system. So it's the direction from the
7 Department to manage that obligation. And
8 obviously travel results in obligations.

9 And so that's the basis behind if
10 folks are wondering what's going on with the
11 system? Why are we doing this? It's not a
12 furlough thing. It's not a government shutdown
13 thing. This is a financial management transition
14 system, which will be much over the next year
15 working with, getting used to, and trying to
16 manage and learn how to adapt to that system.

17 Also how that impacts you is all the
18 feeder systems into BAS, which is the core kind
19 of financial system, including for acquisitions
20 internally, things that you might not have to
21 deal with. But for things you do have to deal
22 with are grants and our Grants Enterprise

1 Management System are also changing and being
2 modified. And I believe at the technical level,
3 your Grants folks have been briefed on this.
4 You've been given approaches and methods for how
5 to deal with the new grant system.

6 But just flagging here, lots of system
7 changes requiring lots of kind of changed
8 management practices going on internally to NOAA
9 and NOAA Fisheries. Many of those you won't see,
10 but on the external front of that, your
11 engagement and interaction on how the grants are
12 processed through the systems you use will see a
13 change and difference. And I know Danny Mern,
14 have been working your grants people on
15 explaining those processes, getting folks
16 connected the right way.

17 I haven't heard any great concerns or
18 risk there at this time right now with the
19 councils. But just giving you a heads up, a lot
20 of system changes that will be impacting your
21 staff and working through your staff and through
22 my staff to help you guide these new systems.

1 I'll move on here. So on the council
2 funding, specifically the other thing we've got
3 with the "blackout" period here in October, we're
4 unable to have any grant recipient, not just the
5 Councils, draw down on funds available to them.
6 So we were seeking this early. We gave messages
7 to your finance people to draw down funds in
8 September to cover October costs because you
9 can't draw down in October. Looking at the data
10 this morning, it looks like every council did
11 that. There was extra draw down in September in
12 prep for October, so I think we're in good shape
13 there. But just giving you some of the rationale
14 and reason behind that.

15 We fully expect October 25th, these
16 restrictions will disappear and we'll be back to
17 normal and normal operations with the systems up
18 and running at least hopefully from your end of
19 the -- kind of receiving end of the grants. And
20 executing it, you will not see any impacts to
21 your operations.

22 So shifting a little bit on IRA

1 funding and what the Regional Fishery Management
2 Council is going to expect and see, which I think
3 was a detailed conversation tomorrow or later
4 today on this topic that Kelly will lead. What
5 we're looking at is \$20 million of funding to the
6 Fisheries Management Councils. I think you guys
7 have seen -- already heard and have been talking
8 about this. We're talking about an obligation
9 years of FY24-FY26. It has to be obligated by
10 the end of '26. '23, we've laid out the plan in
11 the program profile to OMB. But you know, it was
12 late in the year before we got kind of approval
13 on the plan.

14 We didn't execute anything in '23. So
15 that's why the plan as Kelly will outline with
16 you and talk about is how we're going to execute
17 the specific grants to each council. The \$20
18 million over now this three year period. And
19 Kelly will be talking later, I believe about the
20 process and approach to doing that.

21 High level overview of where we stand
22 in '24 and the status update. So this is new

1 from our Key West discussion. I think new here
2 in the process. I think we all know we're
3 waiting for a final budget, but we do have a
4 Senate mark. So the Senate waiting on the budget
5 and I can provide some of those details here.

6 We are waiting for House mark, so we
7 usually at this time of year, we fully --
8 actually usually back in the summer, June/July,
9 sometimes even earlier, we usually have a full
10 House mark. We see where the House wants to take
11 the budget and a full Senate mark. And we see
12 where the Senate wants to take the budget.

13 So we have a good plan of like we're
14 either going to fall in the middle or we got
15 pressures in certain direction. Those are still
16 open-ended from the House side. Lots of things
17 obviously changing quickly in the budget
18 environment as you all are just tuned into the
19 news on just where we might be.

20 But we do have the House mark --
21 sorry, the Senate mark to reflect on. And within
22 the Senate mark, kind of the top line story under

1 the Senate mark is our budget request, '23
2 enacted, just slightly north of \$1 billion. The
3 Senate mark keeps us just about the same level at
4 \$1.1 billion. But some challenges for us in the
5 Senate mark is we did not receive our
6 inflationary adjustments or ATB or adjustments to
7 base.

8 We did see a number of increases, not
9 necessarily in the places that we've specifically
10 asked for money, but in prior areas that the
11 Senate had for us, which I'll highlight here in a
12 second. So it's again kind of speaking to the,
13 you know, kind of the story of the -- common
14 story for us is flat budgets and flat budget
15 environment is where we look like we were sitting
16 with the Senate. And no word from the House at
17 this point.

18 What the Senate is interested, I won't
19 read through each one of these for you, but the
20 Senate expressed an interest in the funding that
21 it gave us, that those increases that I just
22 reflected on, they provided these increases in

1 kind of our bend kind of big program areas here.
2 They're obviously interested in protected species
3 and what we're doing in the North Atlantic Right
4 Whale. That's where their increases are. You
5 can see some of the increases in the Fishery
6 Science and Management area and our Habitat
7 Restoration Programs. That's the place the
8 Senate landed with the increases. Those
9 increases differ from almost their similar dollar
10 size. The increases we asked for in the present
11 budget, but not in the same place that we asked
12 them.

13 We do know a little bit about just
14 kind of setting the stage for what the budget
15 environment might look like. And we don't have a
16 House mark. We don't have the details on what
17 the House might be putting together for NOAA. We
18 do have an overall -- kind of overall arching
19 bill. And so for NOAA across the board at the
20 ORF level -- the acronym, it's Operations
21 Research Facilities -- the ORF funding for NOAA,
22 which is our core base programs across all of

1 NOAA is -- the House bill, \$3.3 billion. Just
2 pointing out that the House bill here -- I'm
3 pointing to the slide -- is significantly lower
4 across NOAA. No details on the fisheries level.
5 No detail of the line office level. But at a
6 NOAA level, that's kind a bit of a reduction from
7 our past budgets and just flagging at that debt
8 is potentially influenced and potentially we'll
9 cascade to NOAA Fisheries in a detailed House
10 mark.

11 What does this mean for -- That says
12 "what does it mean for you here", but it really
13 means what does it mean for all of us here? And
14 I think the conclusion kind of repeating here.
15 We're going to be prepared to operate with flat
16 budgets. As you can see here on the slide here,
17 you can see premise to bid on the Debt Ceiling
18 Agreement, although if you're following the news
19 and the continued resolution of government
20 shutdown, we're not sure how much weight the debt
21 ceiling agreements will hold going forward or if
22 things will be changed there. But the debt

1 ceiling agreement and things agreed to there have
2 really left us at a place where we will stay in
3 flat budgets in '24.

4 In '25, there's a little bit of room
5 for increase, but we're not sure just how that
6 will pan out with everything else going. But I
7 think the driving factor and overarching factor
8 from the congressional standpoint is we're in
9 austere budget times, I think tough budget times
10 for NOAA. And I think optimistically we're
11 looking at flat budget environments all across.

12 A bit of highlights, kind of overview
13 of supplemental funding. So although I might
14 have depressed you on the flat budget environment
15 for our base funding, supplemental funding is
16 actually a bright light for us where we have an
17 opportunity to make a significant difference over
18 a number of areas and long-term transformational
19 difference on our ability to respond largely to
20 climate change and climate impacts in our
21 fisheries management regime. So I'm not going to
22 highlight each one of these details other than to

1 identify here what our bins or buckets, however
2 you might want to refer to it, are specific
3 components in our focus areas in our IRA spending
4 where the top items, and we have others in the
5 room that can speak in more details to each one
6 of these if you'd like here.

7 We have a large focus on Hispanic and
8 modernized our stock assessments, building stock
9 assessments in our data collection for the
10 future. And in consideration of climate impacts.
11 We have a number of regionally specific kind of
12 species. Even specific focused areas that focus
13 on protected species. Some that come straight
14 out of the IRA language where they've asked us to
15 focus on Pacific Salmon. You can see there, the
16 Regional Fisheries Council's component, which we
17 will talk about later this as well. Big focus on
18 North Atlantic Right Whale recover, some of Red
19 Snapper and Pacific Salmon, as well as a big
20 component of Pacific Salmon, but related to
21 tribal activities.

22 In particularly, on the hatcheries

1 components here, the bulk of this funding is for
2 capital improvements, construction, and repair of
3 the hatchery system on the West Coast, which is,
4 you know, way beyond the expected lifespan in
5 places needing major repair and recapitalization.
6 And that's the focus of the tribal pieces.

7 Again, a little bit of a boost here
8 for our environmental permitting, inefficient
9 permitting reviews to be able to handle kind of
10 the workloads that come in partly generated by
11 IRA funding to other agencies. And good news for
12 us, as you've heard me talk about facilities
13 before at this meeting, a lot of our facilities
14 are very old, states of disrepair and this
15 funding is going to allow us to make huge gains
16 and leaps in addressing a new Northwest Fishery
17 Science Center, we hope and some improvements at
18 the Western Coast -- Western Regional Center in
19 Seattle as well.

20 There's a link in there, the great
21 COMS new web story on each one of these
22 components with a summary of each one of these.

1 If you haven't looked at it, it's a really great
2 summary for the different activities that we're
3 undertaking under IRA. And I think -- Yes, so I
4 did have a couple in here that are different from
5 my notes here. This is just highlighting where
6 we've already executed BIL and IRA funding. So
7 we have a few longstanding programs with the
8 Habitat Restoration programs and the Pacific
9 Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, grant programs,
10 internal programs that states NGOs, tribal
11 entities as well. So those programs have been
12 able to get up and running quickly. And already
13 make here, you know, +480 million of awards
14 across 109 awards.

15 Just kind of a little celebratory
16 slide here of where we've done the work and where
17 the work's ongoing and the awards that are
18 already underway and obligations already made,
19 funding already being put to good use for our
20 habitat restoration components. And kind of just
21 a -- you know, a public service announcement
22 here, we do have open funding opportunities for

1 the Habit Restoration Program and these different
2 categories here, just again offered here as you
3 or your constituents might be interested in these
4 and the application dates are up and coming, you
5 know, largely November timeframe here. But
6 according to these, there's opportunities still
7 out there with IRA/BIL funding as well.

8 And Chair, that's my summary. I'm
9 glad to take questions or however you want to run
10 it.

11 MR. ANSON: Thank you, Brian. Do we
12 have any questions for Brian? Brian, I have one
13 question. It's a very small monetary component
14 of what you provided. But there was something in
15 there about the extra money that the Agency would
16 be receiving. And it had to do with a survey
17 contingency fund for \$1.5 million.

18 MR. PAWLAK: Yes.

19 MR. ANSON: Do you know, what is that
20 fund or what's the purpose of the fund? And does
21 it support -- Is it fishery dependent,
22 independent? Is it socioeconomic fisheries? I

1 mean what does that mean?

2 MR. PAWLAK: Yeah. The fisheries
3 contingency piece, which I can maybe get there
4 quickly if folks want to see that piece in there.
5 Yeah, second column there, first top line. That
6 is really a contingency for where we have had
7 challenges with the NOAA white ship and fleet
8 being able to get out due to repair and
9 replacement, that type of thing. So it's the
10 Senate recognizing that. And then recognizing if
11 we can't get vacancy in our NOAA fleet, that
12 we're going to have to charter externally. And
13 that's for that.

14 MR. ANSON: Thank you. Yes, sir.

15 MR. PETTINGER: Brian, on the
16 condition to the BAS conversion, how confident
17 are you that you'll be done by the 25th of
18 October? The reason I ask is we have a council
19 meeting that starts the very first week of
20 November.

21 MR. PAWLAK: The Department's running
22 that. I have full confidence that they're

1 telling us they're going to be done by that
2 timeframe. I think after that timeframe though,
3 we do not expect blackout for travel and that
4 type of thing. So right now, I would be
5 confident that we should all be good to go after
6 the 26th or 25th, whatever the date is.

7 MR. PETTINGER: Thank you.

8 MR. ANSON: Dr. Simmons.

9 DR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 Thank you for the presentation, Brian. And thank
11 you for including the information about the GEMS
12 system and the change in travel and everything.
13 That really puts it all in perspective. And I
14 think we are going to need some hand holding as
15 we work through this process. We'll try to see
16 how the Coral grant works for us when we try to
17 submit our report --

18 (Simultaneous speaking.)

19 DR. SIMMONS: I'm not quite done yet,
20 otherwise I'd just hand it to you right here.
21 But I had a question about the climate resilience
22 money and timing. So I think in Kelly's

1 presentation, I know I'm getting a little bit
2 into what Ms. Denit's going to cover tomorrow,
3 but can you tell us about the timing of when
4 you're going to release the request for funding
5 for the initial \$3 million for the councils?

6 MR. PAWLAK: I will maybe defer to
7 Kelly if she knows anymore. It should be soon.
8 We do have review and processes that have to go
9 for that. But I expect it within -- I'll make
10 less of a commitment to the 25th. We expect it
11 soon is what I can -- what I can say.

12 MR. ANSON: David.

13 MR. WITHERELL: Nice presentation,
14 Brian. It's hard for me -- at the next CCC
15 meeting, we'll be already looking at our first
16 drafts for our five year grant period -- assuming
17 a four or five year grant period. And we're in a
18 situation where inflation is definitely eating
19 into what we can do like all the agencies. So in
20 our case, we are reducing our staff and planning
21 to have a reduced number of meeting or go all
22 virtual or some other combination beginning in

1 2025.

2 And what I look -- if I keep -- in my
3 mind, if I plan out level funding for five years
4 with an inflation adjustment of even something
5 reasonable like 4 percent a year, that's
6 reasonable now, I think we're going to be at a
7 point where we just have a handful of staff. And
8 all we're going to be able to get done are the
9 required provisions of Magnuson Act of you know,
10 LAP program reviews and allocation reviews, EFH
11 5-year reviews and setting the specs.

12 And that will be all we do -- we're
13 able to do. And so I'm a little frustrated about
14 the whole thing and it's difficult in that we
15 have lots more to do and there's more higher
16 expectations that will be set up through the IRA
17 funding to do more with obviously a whole lot
18 less. So I don't really have a question. It's
19 just a statement of concern.

20 MR. PAWLAK: No, I definitely have a
21 sense of that and hear that. It's a conversation
22 we have had, I think I expressed this in Key West

1 too regularly with the Hill and then the
2 appropriators, that it's across -- we feel that
3 as well. And obviously we have different budget
4 lines and different flex -- maybe more
5 flexibilities than the Council does even in our
6 total budget. But it's the same pressure felt
7 everywhere and it's a -- it's a conversation
8 we've had on the Hill across the board. That's
9 why I kind of pointed out we're glad we saw
10 success in those ATBs the last couple years. But
11 then this mark doesn't land there, although we
12 keep putting that in and trying to convey those
13 issues that you're conveying.

14 MR. ANSON: Kitty.

15 MS. SIMONDS: So hi, Brian.

16 MR. PAWLAK: Hi.

17 MS. SIMONDS: I was looking at, you
18 know, the IRA funding and obviously the North
19 Atlantic Right Whale pops up and \$82 million.
20 How are you folks funding our regions highest
21 protected species priorities, which is the false
22 killer whales, which lacks funding for surveys

1 and we have lack of information. And so I'm told
2 that if we divide up that \$82 million, each whale
3 is worth \$250,000. So I could use four of those
4 whales for our funding out there for the false
5 killer whales.

6 But it's a question. It's our biggest
7 priority right now. And there's just not enough
8 surveys. And then when the surveys come in, you
9 know, the assessments and the analysis takes so
10 long to happen. So one of the things is where's
11 funding for that? And the other is for you to
12 instruct your Science Center to make those
13 surveys the highest priority for our center.

14 Really, you know, we have a new
15 director and I think he's going to be fine. But
16 I did have to remind him that, you know, the
17 Magnuson Act is the statute -- the number one
18 statute that they work under. And this is
19 really, really important. I can't say enough.
20 And so I would like to hear from you. Not today,
21 but sooner than later about what kind of funding
22 our center is going to get for our false killer

1 whales.

2 MR. PAWLAK: No, I can appreciate
3 that. And Janet may want to speak to this or
4 others as well that you know, some of the
5 decisions in IRA driven from, you know,
6 Congressional interaction, engagement with the
7 Department of Commerce. We also have in the --
8 Let me go back to it here or maybe go forward --
9 We do have the EEO. There is potentially, I only
10 will saw potential because we don't have the
11 plans worked out, the data modernization
12 components here and the data acquisition pieces
13 that we're speaking about, I think there is a
14 look being done across kind of all our survey
15 needs and all of our surveys and protected
16 resource and sustainable fisheries that we might
17 need to look at. So there is potential
18 discussion there with the Center on what they
19 need to address their survey gaps.

20 MS. SIMONDS: Because otherwise,
21 ridiculous regulations are imposed on the fishery
22 because there's enough information. And I

1 repeat, that's our biggest protected species
2 issue at this time.

3 MR. PAWLAK: Yeah, thank you.

4 MR. ANSON: Any other questions?

5 Merrick.

6 MR. BURDEN: Yeah. Thanks, Brian.

7 I'm looking at the same slide here and this might
8 be a question for Kelly's presentation on IRA
9 funding later. I'm not sure. I'll let you both
10 decide. But I'm looking at the list of topics
11 here, some of which are clearly related to
12 climate change, some of which look more like
13 routine business or maybe updating routine
14 business. And what my mind is trying to do is
15 crosswalk that with the objectives that the
16 councils are being given for -- not objectives --
17 priorities that councils are being given for IRA
18 funding.

19 I'm hoping someone can square that for
20 me, so I can better understand and we can all
21 better understand if we are being held to the
22 same standard if you will. So are we being asked

1 to do more whereas the Agency is proposing to use
2 funding for more core activities? There's just
3 not enough detail in this slide for me to square
4 those two things.

5 MR. PAWLAK: Yeah. No, good question.
6 I and maybe Cisco, if you want to jump in at all,
7 I would not characterize expanded stocks as
8 solely core activities. This is meant to
9 transform us and move us into a new environment
10 and understanding of data collection and how it
11 relates to climate, so we can be prepared to make
12 the management decisions under the changing
13 climate that I think we're asking you to do with
14 the IRA. But I don't know, is there a better way
15 to characterize that than I did there? That
16 works.

17 MS. PERKINS: Any other questions? Dr.
18 Werner.

19 DR. WERNER: Yeah, I might expand a
20 little bit on your question, Merrick in my
21 intervention later on if that's okay. Yeah,
22 thanks.

1 MR. ANSON: Sure. Pete.

2 MR. HASSEMER: Yes, thank you. I hate
3 to dwell on such a small budget category, but the
4 survey contingency came up. And I appreciate the
5 answer to the other question I had, but it
6 created another question in mind. Out of all the
7 categories we've seen, it's the only one where
8 there are not plans to spend it. It's something
9 you bank in case you need it in the future. And
10 if you get to the third quarter and you haven't
11 used it as intended, what happens to that money?
12 Is it a specific line item and surveys? Would it
13 be available for other contract surveys across
14 the councils and regions? We have survey needs.
15 Or does it go away? And I guess related to that,
16 are there other contingency funds that exist that
17 are under the same type of management?

18 MR. PAWLAK: Right. No, good
19 question. So I think first, I'm remembering
20 that, that's presently the Senate mark. So we
21 don't know if we'll get that. Right? So we
22 don't know if that will be there. Yeah, we did

1 not ask for it. So right now we don't have like
2 a detailed plan for it. Right? We're just
3 seeing how that falls out.

4 But we would take that funding and put
5 it into our full survey plan. Right? I don't
6 think we would -- we wouldn't sit at -- you know,
7 we wouldn't put it in the back pocket and wait
8 and see if we needed it. I think it would be
9 part of the whole plan. I think the point there
10 is _ recognizing challenges of shifting plans
11 from white ship to charter. And as we would plan
12 for the full amount -- I mean the full survey
13 amount that we get, you know, I think it just
14 gives us flexibility over any contingencies that
15 might arise. So it's not like -- we wouldn't put
16 it in the back door to wait and see.

17 And then we typically have -- we have
18 at least a minimum of two years to spend the
19 money. And in a way, budgeting complication that
20 I've stated in here, we often have even longer
21 than that with our survey money where it becomes
22 no year money. So it doesn't go away. And it

1 won't go away without fully being able to
2 evaluate at the beginning of each fiscal year how
3 we use what balances we might have left. It's
4 not necessarily use it or lose it thing, I guess
5 is the point I'm making. It is use it or lose
6 it, but we always have a plan to use it. In the
7 year that is coming up, you know, kind of the
8 first-in, first-out model.

9 MR. ANSON: John Carmichael.

10 MR. CARMICHAEL: Yeah, thanks for the
11 updates. Just a point of clarification, the Red
12 Snapper is just Gulf Red Snapper. That's what we
13 were told. So I think it would help to clarify
14 that in these presentations. We have plenty of
15 issues with Red Snapper in the Atlantic, but have
16 no access to any of those funds.

17 MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, now good point.
18 Thanks.

19 MR. ANSON: Any other questions for
20 Brian? Seeing none, thank you, Brian. So we'll
21 go back. Ms. Coit is here and we're glad that
22 you could make it. And certainly we'll enjoy

1 listening to what you have to say, so take it
2 away.

3 MS. COIT: Thank you, Kevin. And good
4 afternoon, everyone or good morning to some of
5 you perhaps who are joining virtually. I want to
6 start with asking for a little empathy. Perhaps
7 this has happened to you. I'm late because I
8 plugged in the correct street address, but
9 apparently got dropped off in a different town.
10 So I was on my phone working and the Uber driver
11 said we just passed your address. And I said
12 thank you and I got out and I was miles and miles
13 away from here. I had to get a new Uber and come
14 over to Arlington. So apologies for being late.

15 Yeah, I wanted to spend, you know,
16 five to ten minutes going over some priority
17 areas. And I'll start by just saying thank you,
18 Kevin for hosting and welcome to the new members
19 of the CCC. And again, this is a hybrid meeting
20 and I know some folks are joining virtually, but
21 I really appreciate the effort those of you made
22 to travel long distances to come here.

1 So I'd particularly like to call out
2 Kevin as the Chair -- the new Chair of the Gulf
3 of Mexico council and the Chair of the CCC and
4 host of this meeting. J.D. Dugas who is the new
5 Vice Chair of the Gulf of Mexico council. Carlos
6 Farchette who is the new Chair of the Caribbean
7 Council. And Vanessa Ramirez who's the new Vice
8 Chair of the Caribbean Council. Wes was over
9 there, the new Chair of the Mid-Atlantic Council,
10 sorry. Will Sword, the new Chair of the Western
11 Pacific Council. And I know Angel Drobnica is
12 coming, I believe tomorrow who's the new Chair of
13 the North Pacific Council. And also Kate
14 O'Keefe, I haven't met you yet in-person, but our
15 new executive director of New England Fisheries
16 Management Council. So thank you all and
17 congratulations to the new folks who are around
18 this table. You're not really new around this
19 table, but in a new role some of you. Some of
20 you are new.

21 I also wanted to start with a couple
22 of updates on our NMFS staff. And shortly will

1 turn it over to Emily Menashes to say a few
2 words. I think Emily's name is probably familiar
3 to many or some of you because for ten years she
4 was our Deputy at Sustainable Fisheries at NMFS.
5 And then went on to take leadership positions in
6 the National Ocean Service and in NOAA research.
7 So she's filling the role that was ably filled by
8 Paul Deramus at Overseas Budget and HR
9 International Agriculture Law Enforcement and IT.
10 It's a very -- it's a very broad scope and a very
11 important role on their point on our
12 international seafood strategy.

13 So we're thrilled to have Emily and I
14 wanted to also just publically state my great
15 appreciation for Jim Landon. He filled the role
16 in an acting capacity, as well as continuing to
17 head up the Office of Law Enforcement and was a
18 very steady hand over the past year. So Emily,
19 just offer you the opportunity to say hello and a
20 few words.

21 MS. MENASHES: Yeah. Hello,
22 everybody. It's actually really nice to be back

1 in the fisheries family. As Janet said, I left
2 sustainable fisheries in 2018 and then spent a
3 few years in the National Ocean Service. And
4 then most recently was in a very similar type of
5 position for NOAA research. I learned a lot and
6 worked a lot with NOAAs Climate and Weather and
7 Ocean Research activities, as well as ocean
8 exploration and sea grant. But it is nice. This
9 is my third week back in fisheries and it's nice
10 to be hearing familiar conversations and topics
11 and things that kind of align with my background.

12 So I'm very excited to be back here.
13 It's nice to see some familiar faces, but also a
14 lot of new faces in this group. And I look
15 forward over the coming months to either get
16 reacquainted or get to know all of you. And then
17 what we can do on my side of fisheries to support
18 your work. So thanks and it's good to see you
19 all.

20 MS. COIT: Thanks, Emily and of course
21 I'm joined by the other NOAA leadership and this
22 is such an important opportunity for us to get

1 together with you, our partners.

2 Kitty already mentioned Dr. Charles
3 Littnan. And since we last met in Key West, he
4 also joined in the leadership position as the
5 head of the Pacific Island Fishery Science
6 Center. And he comes with a great background in
7 innovative research and conservation, marine
8 mammals, sea turtles. And he's already making a
9 difference and we appreciate and welcome Charles.

10 Many of you have heard me say one of
11 my favorite quotes from Yogi Berra, which is "you
12 can see a lot by looking." And I wanted to
13 continue to get around the country and go to
14 council meetings and meet people and you know,
15 see directly the challenges that folks are
16 experiencing. So I just thought I'd quickly run
17 through since our meeting in Key West last May, I
18 was able to join the Sport Fishing Association of
19 California and joined them doing some cooperative
20 research. And it turns out I'm pretty good at
21 reeling in Vermillion Rockfish. But it was a
22 very impactful day for me seeing the recreational

1 sector take on some research in order to improve
2 in-season management.

3 I was able to join the Western Pacific
4 Council meeting and American Samoa was a
5 fantastic opportunity to get to know our new
6 Chair, Will Sword better and others -- other
7 members of that council tour the Tuna processing
8 facility, meet with local fishermen, get a much,
9 much better sense of the challenges and
10 priorities in that unique territory. I really
11 appreciate the hospitality.

12 I spent a week touring the Klamath
13 Water Shed starting in Coastal California and
14 going up to the headwaters in Oregon. Met with
15 the Yurok tribe, the Karuk tribe, the Klamath
16 tribe, and toured ranches and farmlands,
17 participated in a meeting with the Bureau of
18 Reclamation as we prepare for the largest dam
19 removal in the U.S. Four dams are coming out of
20 the Klamath River with great hopes of restoring
21 Salmon habitat. But there's many conflicts to
22 work through in that area in terms of the various

1 species needs, up river and down river. So it
2 was a wonderful trip.

3 Recently I was in Alaska for a week.
4 I got to finally see our offices in Juneau and
5 meet with folks in Anchorage. I met with the
6 processors and other seafood leaders, state
7 agency leaders, and then joined a really
8 inspiring event called Beluga's count where the
9 community -- hundreds of people participate in
10 observing and looking to count Beluga whales and
11 Cook Inlet. And we were there to celebrate that
12 event. All the voluntarism and the work around
13 recovering Beluga whales which are right there,
14 you know, proximate to the industrial port. And
15 very busy part of Anchorage. And we also were
16 celebrating as we are all year long, the 50th
17 anniversary of the Endangered Species Act.

18 Closer to home, since I saw you last,
19 I've testified twice before the House of Natural
20 Resources Committee. Also on the Endangered
21 Species Act on White Whale issues and joined Bob
22 Biel and others at Capitol Hill Ocean Week Jay

1 Odell (phonetic), Jamie Khan (phonetic) to talk
2 about climate-ready fisheries. And also to
3 participate in a really fun event, the return of
4 the fish fry. Sam was a bartender. I saw many
5 of you -- many folks there and lots of members of
6 Congress came. I'm not a veteran of that event.
7 It was the first time I'd been there. But it was
8 really great to see senators and members of
9 Congress come and enjoy delicious seafood and
10 talk to people about why it's important. We had
11 representation from all over the country. Great
12 booth from the Caribbean.

13 And I got an invitation and I'm going
14 to the South Atlantic meeting in December. Thank
15 you. That will be, I think the last of the
16 council meetings and then we'll start over again,
17 hopefully coming to New England soon and continue
18 to kind of tag team with Sam and Cisco and Emily
19 to make sure that we have some leadership at your
20 council meetings -- some of the leadership from
21 Silver Spring.

22 I'm not going to go over your agenda.

1 I was going to hit on some of the issues and, but
2 I know that Kelly went ahead with her
3 presentation on the national standards and that,
4 that's of extreme interest to you and to me. And
5 let me just address briefly that we have a full -
6 - we have a lot of great issues.

7 And I think some of the questions that
8 you raised, we'll have a chance to get into more
9 deeply at the meeting proper and some of our side
10 conversations. But I did want to mention a few
11 things, including the IRA funding. And I'm not
12 going to get into it deeply, but I think the
13 point that David made is something that we've
14 been talking about, which is how do we make
15 strategic use of this funding knowing that our
16 dollar is not going as far. We're struggling to
17 fulfil our core responsibilities. And you know,
18 we are looking to use that funding wisely to both
19 make progress in key areas, but try to leave
20 ourselves in a better place.

21 So we'll talk more about the grants of
22 the councils and others. For things like the

1 North Atlantic White Whale grants, you know,
2 we're hoping and expecting that the research we
3 do there on vessel detection and avoidance on
4 improving monitoring, on pursuit of hopeless
5 technologies. We'll have application broadly for
6 other marine mammals and in other fisheries like
7 the crab fisheries on the West Coast.

8 So in every instance as we use this
9 money strategically -- and I think everything
10 Brian said was well said. We have a confluence
11 of factors. We have members of Congress who want
12 to see funds spent a certain way. We have our
13 own priorities. We have the Department looking
14 to make sure that we're responsive to our tribal
15 consultations and other -- you know, there's many
16 factors at play, but we want to see that
17 tremendous historic influx of funding used wisely
18 so it's not -- oh, we had the benefit of this
19 money and now we're right back into a deeper
20 hole. But we had the benefit of this funding and
21 now we're able to do things better in the way of
22 observations, you know, expanding surveys,

1 keeping up with our core responsibilities.

2 So I appreciate the opportunity to get
3 deeper on those issues. One of the ways we've
4 used IRA funding and Congress of course directed
5 us to use the bipartisan infrastructure law
6 funding that way is to significantly bump up our
7 community-based restoration grant programs. And
8 all told, between the over \$400 million that went
9 over 100 projects and the over half a billion
10 dollars that is currently out in notices of
11 funding opportunities, you know, that will be a
12 billion dollars going towards habitat
13 restoration, fish passage, on the types of
14 projects that states and communities have been
15 hoping to fund when it comes to removing dams or
16 improving passage for many, many years. And we
17 have the resources to direct to those. So that's
18 a very, very exciting and rewarding part.

19 I think we'll get more into some, I'm
20 not going to talk more about the IRA funding,
21 except to say that while we've given you kind of
22 broad brush, I think in some instances you're

1 going to ask more detailed questions than we're
2 able to answer right now. We are working with
3 the Department and the White House that can roll
4 out more specific plans for each one of these
5 funding buckets. And until we roll those plans
6 out, we are keeping our conversations at a higher
7 level. Having said that, I think we will be able
8 to announce the \$20 million or at least the first
9 aspect of the grants to the councils and the
10 funding for Red Snapper, which again, I think
11 improving the catch and effort data and working
12 with the states and the Commission will bear the
13 South Atlantic and other areas. That is our
14 goal.

15 I just want to shift to -- so the IRA
16 funding, the overall framing of it has been
17 around climate-ready fisheries. But its reach
18 and extent, I think overlaps but goes beyond
19 that. But I did want to talk a bit more about
20 climate change and the work that you're all doing
21 and that we're doing and the need to work
22 together as we see these ecosystem changes and

1 look at the resources and the processes we have
2 in place. And whether we need to pick up the
3 pace or innovate or take more risks as we work
4 with our advisory panels and our SSCs and our
5 council process.

6 So a few just sobering facts. August
7 2023 was the Earth's hottest August over the 174
8 years that NOAAs been keeping records on the
9 climate. Last year, it ranked as the sixth
10 warmest year on record. Since 1880, the ten
11 warmest years on record have all occurred since
12 2010. In 2022 last year, the annual Antarctic
13 Sea Ice coverage was at a near record low. And I
14 think we were all perturbed to see ocean
15 temperatures off of Florida reach over 100
16 degrees this July. They're supposed to -- There
17 normally would be in the high 70s and 80s at that
18 time of year.

19 So I want to acknowledge all the great
20 work that's gone on in the councils and just
21 reiterate our commitment to working together to
22 understand the ecosystem changes and to make sure

1 that we're managing for resilience. And that
2 we're working with industry and stakeholders to
3 better understand and inform decision making.

4 I'm going to call out again the
5 excellent work of the East Coast Scenario
6 Planning that involves several councils and I
7 look forward to hearing more about that. And I
8 know Kelly's speaking more about governance
9 issues. And to me, those two efforts dovetail.
10 I was just in Alaska and got a lot of schooling,
11 as well as had some good discussions about
12 ecosystem changes and the concerns that folks
13 have there and the work that our Science Center
14 has been doing and the questions that industry is
15 asking. And just want to applaud the work that's
16 gone on at the North Pacific Council in that area
17 too.

18 Every time we talk about climate
19 change, and I know this is very much on the minds
20 of many of you, you know, I want to bring up off
21 shore wind. I know that's something I was asked
22 to cover. And it has dramatically impacted the

1 workload at GARFO and then Northeast Fishery
2 Science Center and for the New England Council in
3 particular, also for our Office of Protected
4 Resources. And increasingly our South Atlantic
5 and Gulf regions. And there's a lot going on.

6 A lot has happened since I started
7 this role. And the pace of the projects have
8 presented many challenges. I worked super
9 closely with Sam to increase our staffing, to
10 increase our capability, and to keep up with the
11 regulatory responsibilities that we have with the
12 goal of helping to meet the administration's
13 ambitions to scale up offshore wind with the
14 action agency being Interior Department's Bureau
15 of Ocean Energy Management while simultaneously
16 trying to ensure that we maintain fisheries,
17 address the survey impacts, protect and mitigate
18 threats for our protected resources. And it's
19 been a steep hill to climb.

20 It's been a lot of work. And I'm
21 proud of the work that we've done. I think we've
22 learned a lot even from these first projects and

1 will continue to be tasked. That's an area that
2 is on top of all the core responsibilities, the
3 councils, and the Agency are trying to address
4 and ensure that this development is done
5 responsibly and sustainably. And it continues to
6 be a new frontier for the Pacific Coast and for
7 the Gulf of Maine and we're going to see a next
8 generation of projects that are floating
9 technologies, looking at the Caribbean, looking
10 at the Pacific.

11 So I just want to highlight that,
12 that's an area that the President has continued
13 to press and to put in his budgets. The House
14 and Senate have continued to increase the budget.
15 And we've been working very hard to understand
16 where best to place those resources to make sure
17 that we're meeting the demands and our
18 responsibilities under the law. And needless to
19 say, folks who are reading the papers, some of
20 the challenges that Dave mentioned with inflation
21 and cost are besetting every industry. So that's
22 having an impact on the offshore wind industry.

1 But our workload has not slackened in any way in
2 that respect while there's many challenges that
3 the industry is facing. So that's a very fraught
4 issue. It looks like there might be a few
5 hearings coming up in the House and Senate on
6 that issue. And I would be participating in
7 those as well.

8 I will just reiterate that from the
9 time I got here, we did a MOU with BOEM about the
10 mutual goals of pursuing clean, renewable energy
11 and ensuring a healthy ocean. And that's
12 something we've been advocating for in every
13 forum.

14 Then just a few more -- just a few
15 more things. I wanted to emphasize as we have at
16 every meeting and we had some very good
17 discussion, our equity and environmental justice
18 strategy. That's something that was a particular
19 focus of some of my conversations when I was in
20 American Samoa, as well as when I went to the
21 Caribbean Council meeting. And I applaud the
22 work and the leadership of those two councils in

1 that area.

2 I also wanted to highlight, Dave, the
3 work that you just earlier this week, the North
4 Pacific Fisheries Management Council adopted a
5 final local knowledge, traditional knowledge and
6 subsistence protocol set of recommendations that
7 came out of a taskforce under the Bearing Sea
8 Fishery Ecosystem Plan. And that involved a very
9 extensive effort hearing from stakeholders and
10 incorporating information into the council's --
11 local and traditional knowledge of the council's
12 decision making process. And I'm very interested
13 to hear more about that and to have you share --
14 you and Angel and Bill share how you went about
15 that with the other folks around this table.

16 Since we unveiled our strategy, we've
17 been working on implementation plans that are
18 informed by the input that we got from the
19 communities. And as we put those together, we
20 want to come back and continually continue this
21 dialogue with the councils so that we make sure
22 that we're working together on these priorities.

1 So I hope you'll again share what you're all
2 doing and continue to work with us as we try to
3 be very strategic about moving forward and
4 implementing the plans on these issues again with
5 the resource constraints that we're all facing.

6 I want to the thank the Council -- all
7 the councils for the work that you did with
8 Russell Dunn on the National Salt Water
9 Recreational Fishing Policy. I think that went
10 pretty smoothly and we're really pleased with the
11 new policy that's in place and are working on
12 implementation plans there. The strategy is
13 online. We've completed the strategy with your
14 input and appreciate that.

15 And then lastly, just very important
16 to me that we keep moving on the National Seafood
17 Strategy. October is National Seafood Month.
18 Pretty much every place that I go and talk to
19 industry, they ask if NOAA would do more to
20 promote the sustainability -- to promote the work
21 that you're doing -- the sustainability of our
22 fisheries management, the benefits of supporting

1 our seafood industry and sector. And we are
2 interested in doing that. We have a seafood
3 strategy that has, you know, four main pillars.
4 But the first one is all about maintaining
5 sustainable management so that we have a resource
6 that we can depend on. And promoting that U.S.
7 seafood is sustainably managed. And the work
8 that you and continue to do under the MSA, which
9 is key to accomplishing that.

10 In that vein, I just wanted to
11 highlight a couple other -- we're about to
12 announce the rebuilding of our 50th fish stock.
13 And that is the Snohomish coho salmon stock,
14 which was declared overfished in 2018 and has now
15 been rebuilt to a sustainable level. So that's
16 of course accommodation of the fishery management
17 practices and habitat restoration, but really a
18 terrific accomplishment, 50 stocks rebuilt.

19 Also the -- Where did I have that
20 statistic? Sorry. Yeah, I also -- Kelly reports
21 to me and Sam regularly on our progress. And
22 recently sent up the statistics about over 90

1 percent of our fishery stocks are not subject to
2 overfishing. And I think it's important that we
3 as government representatives and as council
4 members, continue to talk about the economic
5 importance of our fisheries and the sustainable
6 way they're managed. And we aim to do that under
7 the National Seafood Strategy. And again, we're
8 working our implementations plans, talking to
9 industry, plan to talk to you further about how
10 we can implement that strategy in a way that's
11 effective.

12 It's certainly an interesting and
13 exciting time to be doing this work. And I just
14 want to close by thanking you all for your work
15 and the strong partnership. We may not agree on
16 everything we discuss, but we sure feel that
17 we're in this together with a group of terrific
18 expert, hardworking folks. And so I think these
19 meetings are a really important time for us to
20 talk through the really difficult issues and
21 hopefully keep moving forward in a positive
22 direction. So thanks.

1 Kevin, I'll stop for any questions.
2 And I want to note that because of the virtual --
3 because of the travel ban or blackout, you got a
4 smaller group of us in the room. And I know I
5 have to be in and out a bit for meetings, but
6 we're going to try our best to always make sure
7 that we have a leadership presence and that we
8 hang with you here over the next three days.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. ANSON: Thank you, Janet, for the
11 words and the information. Anyone have any
12 questions for Janet? I don't see any hands.
13 Thank you, again.

14 MS. COIT: Thank you, Kevin.

15 MR. ANSON: So that moves us to our
16 next agenda item. That would be the NOAA
17 Fisheries Science Update by Dr. Cisco Werner.

18 DR. WERNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
19 And it's a pleasure to be here again and see
20 everybody and be able to provide a little bit of
21 a summary of our Science enterprise updates.
22 I'll be presenting this jointly with Evan Howell

1 who's our Director of Office of Science and
2 Technology.

3 So if I could go to the next slide
4 please. The outline of the topics that I will
5 cover is -- I'll give a brief summary of surveys
6 and fleet updates. I'll talk also about IRA
7 updates and these will be topics that hopefully
8 will address some of the questions that came up
9 earlier from Merrick, Kitty, and others.

10 I'll spend a little bit of time on
11 what we're referring to as mid-life repair
12 periods. This is something that's going to
13 potentially going to take up quite a bit of our
14 time in the next decade or so. And so it's time,
15 I guess, to present it. Even will provide a
16 little bit of an MRIP update and then we'll open
17 it up for discussions.

18 So if I could go to the next slide
19 please on the survey and fleet updates. I think
20 you all know, you know, the challenges that we've
21 been having with the -- with completing some of
22 our surveys. And just to summarize it, roughly

1 we executed about 70 percent of our surveys
2 nationally with some variation by region in FY23.
3 And the challenges as we reported last time, you
4 know, include a number of things, but the
5 workforce, you know, the ability to hire wage
6 mariners is one that was a dominant one in some
7 areas. There's also some issues with repairs,
8 maintenance, dockside repairs, et cetera that
9 really, you know, cause some of these delays and
10 this 70 percent execution on average that we
11 experienced in '23.

12 For '24, so I'm looking ahead, our
13 fleet plan -- and I'm only speaking about our
14 white ships so to speak, we're estimating around
15 1,500 days for fisheries pending of course, final
16 appropriations and such. And so we're -- you
17 know, despite the challenges that we had in '23,
18 we're trying to aim a little higher in '24 and
19 see if we can overcome some of the challenges
20 that we had, both in terms of how we work with
21 OMAO on the workforce and the repairs and plan
22 ahead. So we're estimating or we're trying --

1 we're targeting this 1,500 days.

2 But just as we were doing that, I
3 don't know if some of you might have heard, you
4 know, one of ships experienced a bit of a fire.
5 Everybody was safe, but it's likely that this one
6 ship, which is mainly one that was out in the
7 Western Pacific and in the Pacific in general,
8 will likely be unavailable for just about all of
9 FY24. It was not a trivial fire if you will.
10 And you know, the repairs and the assessment and
11 even perhaps a cost benefit ratio of what to do
12 with that ship is still pending. So that's an
13 impact right there. It's one of our 15 white
14 vessels or white ships.

15 Looking forward, you know, there's
16 contracts out for the construction of two Class B
17 vessels, which are the charting vessels. We
18 don't use those a whole lot. We do use them. We
19 go on some of those missions, but in general, you
20 know, those two Class B's will be more for
21 hydrographic and charting work. Completion is
22 somewhere around '27 -- 2027 for those.

1 But more relevant to us on the
2 fisheries side is that there's an ongoing, what's
3 referred to as an AOA, an Analysis of
4 Alternatives for Class C vessels, which are
5 fisheries and coastal science vessels. These are
6 a bit smaller than our FSVs and this analysis of
7 alternative is underway. And if everything goes
8 right, we're still talking about 2030 and beyond,
9 you know, before, you know, there's any kind of
10 completion of Class C vessel delivery. Again,
11 these are -- These are just in -- It's not even a
12 design. It's just looking at what's possible.
13 But it's worth mentioning that this is -- this is
14 going on right now.

15 So this is the one slide I wanted to
16 talk about on the fleet and the survey. The next
17 few slides -- if I go to the next one -- and I'll
18 pause in this one before I go into depth -- and
19 it really is updates on IRA-related activities
20 that have to do both with development of, you
21 know, these models, these, you know, climate-
22 informed models that were -- that we're

1 developing, as well as I'll get a little bit into
2 the data collection.

3 But I wanted to say that the next four
4 or five slides that I'll be talking about on IRA
5 are very much in sync with the recommendations
6 that came out of the SCS from SITCA in 2022. You
7 know, the SCS meaning the Scientific Coordination
8 Subcommittee of the Council, you know, had a
9 workshop in August of '22 and the topic was
10 "Adapting fisheries management to a changing
11 ecosystem."

12 And that was a very nice presentation
13 by Diana Strahm in Key West last year. And I'll
14 just repeat the four key findings if you will
15 that, that workshop put forward. And the first -
16 - And the fact that these recommendations are
17 very much in line with what we're trying to do
18 and what we are aiming to do with IRA, which
19 again, I think lines up with some of the
20 questions that came up earlier.

21 So the first recommendation was that
22 the councils need to start preparing for

1 increasingly complex management decisions due to
2 climate change. And I'll talk a little bit about
3 that when I talk about the CFI. The second one
4 was investment in new data collection and
5 analysis tools. And I'll talk again, there's an
6 IRA component of that. You know, the fact that
7 SSEs and councils need to be prepared for a
8 transition perhaps to a more sophisticated and a
9 broader suite of toolboxes in terms of how to
10 look at it.

11 And the last one -- the last
12 recommendation was the importance of stakeholder
13 engagement, you know, for adaptive management to
14 be successful. And so as I read these that of
15 course you're familiar with and I'm sure you
16 reviewed, you know, as I go through what we are
17 looking forward and planning ahead in the IRA,
18 hopefully you'll see that resonance.

19 So on the first one, if I was going to
20 say that we need to prepare, you know, for more
21 complex management decisions and developing, you
22 know, a new suite of toolboxes, this Climate

1 Ecosystem and Fisheries Initiative, which is
2 familiar to many of you, you know, that's
3 something that was in some way launched out of
4 the ACLIM project in Alaska. But there's also
5 the NECI project in the Northeast and others.
6 The idea here is, you know, to build this and to
7 end operational ocean modeling and decision
8 support system for climate ready fisheries.

9 It's something that truly integrates,
10 you know, from physics -- The changes that we're
11 seeing in the physics of the ocean to the impacts
12 at various levels of the ecosystem, all the way
13 obviously to the -- to the species that we
14 manage. And of course, you know, the impact on
15 the economic and the coastal communities that
16 depend on our understanding and delivery of this
17 advice.

18 And this double mobius strip or this
19 double helix here that you see -- I think you've
20 probably seen before, the idea is that it's not a
21 linear process of passing information down from
22 one group to another. It's interactive. It

1 starts of course with describing and
2 understanding what happens in the climate ocean
3 and the living marine resources.

4 But then it moves into that middle
5 area, which is really the development of climate
6 informed stock assessment. So how do we do
7 things differently in terms of how do we
8 incorporate climate in perhaps the assessment
9 that, you know, were perhaps developed with --
10 under the assumption of prevailing conditions.
11 And then of course, you know, how we inform? How
12 do we take that -- all that information in a way
13 that's actionable? And then in turn, you know,
14 there's a feedback. Did it work? Did it not
15 work? What was missing? You know, were answers
16 being provided to questions that weren't being
17 asked or vice versa?

18 So this is a process that -- The next
19 slide, I'll -- if I could please say where we are
20 within the CFI. So I wanted to get a little bit
21 more specific here. Our goal in terms of where
22 we want to be in '24, '25, '26. So in the next

1 year -- Well, we're already in FY24, the idea is
2 -- And we need to build these robust ocean
3 projections in six regions. Down below you see,
4 you know, maps of the West Coast and Alaska, the
5 Arctic and the East Coast. There's one's being
6 developed, of course for the Western Pacific and
7 Pacific Islands region. We just don't have them
8 here yet. And the idea is to have these
9 available publically of course, you know, through
10 an information hub that will allow these various
11 decision support teams, you know, to access
12 information. And again, turn it into again
13 actionable advice.

14 In '25-'26, so again this two or three
15 year period, you know, the idea is to be able to
16 begin to provide climate-ready information that
17 can be assessed and evaluated in terms of, you
18 know, how actionable is it? Is it useful? Is it
19 the right kind of information with the right
20 level of detail? The picture on the right, you
21 know, that flow diagram if you will, just simply
22 is there to illustrate the process of hiring and

1 actually building these teams.

2 It's a cross line office effort.

3 There's folks in oceanic and atmospheric
4 research, you know, starting with models -- these
5 global models that are run at GFDL in Princeton,
6 New Jersey, but then are cascaded down if you
7 will through the regional models, you know, the
8 pictures there in the bottom left, that then in
9 turn are, you know, coupled with other biological
10 formulations and such where that link between the
11 physics and the climate and the ecosystems happen
12 ultimately leading to the bottom most panel,
13 which is those decisional support teams where we
14 actually take all of that science and translate
15 it into -- into advice.

16 We're in the midst of beginning to
17 conduct interviews, you know, bringing people on
18 board. There's been an enormous interest, I mean
19 in some advertisement for positions and such,
20 we've had 20 some people, if not more, showing up
21 for these positions. And they're really -- I
22 think, you know, the message there is that, you

1 know, hopefully, you know, in early '24, we will
2 begin to formulate these teams and keep track,
3 you know, and be able to deliver these products
4 that we need to deliver. There's a lot of again
5 -- cross work with the councils. You know,
6 again, following the recommendations that came
7 out of the SCS and such.

8 I'll jump quickly here to these are
9 the models, but we need of course data to support
10 this. And so the next slide if I could please,
11 you know, talks about that part again, IRA
12 funded, what we refer to as "essential data
13 acquisition". And there's two parts I'll talk to
14 here. One part has to do with modernizing what
15 we do. And the second one, I'll be talking about
16 maintaining and making more efficient things that
17 we already are doing.

18 So modernization is essential, right?
19 I mean think, you know, just to be real quick
20 here, the topics and the initiatives that we are
21 looking to develop and fund are the ones listed
22 here on crude systems. Familiar with everybody

1 on how this is beginning to be transformational
2 in terms of how we collect data. The whole
3 characterization of ecosystems through molecular
4 approaches, the omics, active and passive
5 acoustics, you know, is something that is -- that
6 is -- you know, it's bread and butter, but you
7 know, we need to take it to that next level.

8 Optical systems, you know, again
9 there's been enormous success studies in the
10 Pacific Islands and on the East Coast in terms of
11 how we use these together with our official
12 intelligence and others. Remote sensing is
13 something that has various levels, anywhere from
14 satellites to things that we can do more locally.
15 But it's also changing how we look at this and
16 ultimately how do we evaluate this through social
17 science?

18 And in answer perhaps to, you know,
19 the question that Kitty asked about, you know,
20 how do we -- how are we thinking about impacts to
21 other protected species such as false killer
22 whales and such, the remote sensing, the passive

1 acoustics, you know, the active acoustics. All
2 of these are synergistic if you will with other
3 efforts, whether they're North Atlantic White
4 Whale or other reference and build into our
5 ability to really characterize and really bring
6 in a new level of science to how we monitor and
7 assess, you know, the species that we need to
8 look at. And so that's one aspect of how in the
9 next two to three years, you know, we need to
10 make progress and modernize these, you know, our
11 approach to how we collect the data.

12 The second slide or next slide if I
13 could on essential data acquisition is one that
14 is there to mitigate the recent loss of at-sea
15 survey capability, as well as increasing the
16 efficiency of our traditional platform data
17 acquisition. And I have -- And I'll talk a
18 little bit about this. There's a number of
19 things that we're funding here. The idea here is
20 to make sure that we have continuity in our
21 legacy surveys in how we collect time series --
22 how we put together time series.

1 So that when we bring in the data
2 modernization, you know, the tools that I talked
3 in the previous slide, there isn't a disruption
4 of the integrity of the time series. Part of
5 this has to do with the fact that we're running
6 into challenges with ships. Part of it has to do
7 with the mid-life repairs that I'll talk about in
8 a second. But the idea here is that we're
9 investing on the West Coast -- on this integrated
10 West Coast Pelagic Survey. This actually
11 integrates the hake survey with the CPS, the
12 Coastal Pelagic Surveys. It's a very important
13 and tricky integration, that we have to do. But
14 we have to do it and I'll explain to it in a
15 little second.

16 There's other efforts of, you know,
17 how do we charter more broadly in the Pacific?
18 And this is a collaboration between the Alaska
19 Centers -- the Alaska region, the Pacific Islands
20 and Southwest to make sure that we cover the area
21 that we need to -- that we need to cover. You
22 know, again, supported through this mitigation

1 effort from IRA. We're looking at actually
2 purchasing a vessel in the Southeast.

3 We're looking at supporting Alaska
4 Fisheries charters. And that's the picture
5 there on the right. And I'll talk about that in
6 a second. We're developing a National Survey
7 Program and there's other priorities that we're
8 developing in conjunction with our normal annual
9 survey budget that we have. Very quickly on that
10 picture, the Alaska region is at -- as we also
11 anticipate that there's changes in climate and
12 there's changes in distribution and we perhaps
13 want to modernize and make our surveys more
14 efficient, we are in discussion and evaluating --
15 I should say we're evaluating the possibility of
16 perhaps how do we change the surveys?

17 How do we evolve the surveys so that
18 building on the data that we have, building on
19 the experience that we have, we can actually try
20 to do more because we have to because things are
21 -- because it's required in the sense of
22 understanding what's going on, but also because

1 we need to or we can in terms of the opportunity
2 afforded by IRA and our knowledge of how systems
3 work. So these are just two examples of how
4 we're also in addition to modernizing data
5 collection, we're trying to make more efficient
6 the data collection that we are doing right now.

7 And I want to go now, the next slide
8 is going to segue into this mid-life repair
9 period. And bear with me on this one a little
10 bit. It's an important topic that is actually
11 going to impact probably the next ten years of
12 how we conduct surveys at a national level.

13 Basically the context here is that,
14 you know, our FSVs, you know, the Dyson, the
15 Bigelow, the Pisces, the Lasker and the Shimada
16 model were designed for a 20-year service life.
17 And they were launched, you know, between 2003
18 and 2012 and so they're reaching that point.
19 They're reaching the point of this mid-life, you
20 know, extended life service period.

21 And what is a mid-life repair? What
22 is a mid-life extension? As the bullets there

1 say, it's a thorough, it's a bow-to-stern
2 evaluation of the material condition of each
3 vessel. Repairing what's there, upgrades as
4 needed. And upgrades could reflect the fact that
5 we need to include capabilities of perhaps
6 bringing on board some of the new technologies
7 that I just talked about before. And ultimately,
8 they're not inexpensive. It's about \$85 million
9 per vessel and it can take 12 to 14 months. So
10 not only is it costly in terms of the resources,
11 but it's also -- you know, it takes a -- there
12 will be an impact to our survey schedules and
13 such.

14 So the next slide continuing on this
15 is what's the current schedule? Okay. This is
16 as of -- as of right now, this is the schedule.
17 Right now, there's actually one vessel that's
18 undergoing mid-life repair. It's OARs, the Ron
19 Brown delineated here and focusing on the
20 fisheries survey vessels. And you can see then
21 every vessel there that we have is on a schedule
22 of about a year of being in mid-life repair. And

1 then there's a gap of maybe a half a year, then
2 we begin the next one, half a year, next one.
3 And the schedule is first a Dyson, then the
4 Bigelow, then the Pisces, then the Shimada, and
5 the Lasker.

6 Right now only, the Dyson has received funding,
7 supported largely by IRA. All the other ones are
8 on a schedule to be requested to be able to enter
9 this mid-life repair.

10 And the challenges are not trivial.
11 The next slide is -- We've been working on what
12 we refer to as a strategy and a road map in terms
13 of what all needs to be thought about in one of
14 these mid-life repairs? And as I said, it's not
15 -- it's not an easy lift. If we're looking at
16 impact on a particular ship and such, you know,
17 how are we to make sure that the essential
18 surveys continue? How do we work with charter
19 vessels, whether it's the academic fleet or
20 charter industries, et cetera.

21 How do we factor in -- I just talked
22 earlier of how the Rainier had a -- you know, a

1 fire. And it's also one of the older ships such
2 as the Sette and the Oregon-II, and the Gunter.
3 So what happens if these other ships also, you
4 know, are laid up for whatever reason? As well
5 as planning for other delays.

6 We need to formulate the budgets. We
7 need to make sure we understand how this impacts
8 the personnel that we have. How do we implement
9 new technologies? So here we are trying to
10 develop new technologies and we're juggling
11 ships. And obviously then the communications
12 with all folks involved.

13 I'm going to go through a little bit
14 of a detail of an example of what's happening on
15 the West Coast, but this is not just a West Coast
16 Pacific region -- I shouldn't say "West Coast".
17 It's not just a Pacific region. This is also an
18 Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico region. And so I'm
19 going to go to the -- so what you're going to see
20 on the next slide is five of these versions here
21 of all the moving parts or part of the moving
22 parts here.

1 So this is how do these mid-life
2 repairs affect the Dyson, the Shimade, and the
3 Lasker. And I'm not going to talk about how it
4 affects the Bigelow and the Pisces, but there
5 would be similar impacts here. So in '24/'25,
6 we're operating, you know, as we always have.
7 The Dyson is up in Alaska. The Shimada is
8 working -- The Shimada and the Lasker are
9 operating, conducting surveys off the West Coast.

10 In '26, do you see that bottom picture
11 there where the Dyson goes away into mid-life
12 repair. And then you're just -- then we're now -
13 - we're just left with two ships, the Shimada and
14 the Lasker. The Shimade has plans to go up into
15 the Alaska region. And the Lasker will be left
16 alone to conduct the West Coast regions. One of
17 things that we're doing is integrating the
18 surveys that I talked about earlier along the
19 West Coast that will allow the Lasker to actually
20 conduct both the CPS and the hake survey.

21 Dyson comes out of mid-life repair in
22 '27, '28, '29 while the Pisces and the -- and the

1 Bigelow are undergoing repairs. The West Coast
2 kind of returns back to normal, except that we
3 know a little bit more about how to integrate
4 surveys, so we might be able to actually think
5 about doing more things. Come 2030, the Shimada
6 goes into mid-life. We have to juggle things
7 again. Come 2032, the Lasker goes into mid-life.
8 Have to juggle things again.

9 And as I said, this is -- This is
10 something that we're beginning to look at and
11 plan in how do we move ahead. But it's not a --
12 It's something we haven't done. And so it's
13 something that we're carefully planning now in
14 terms of how we actually integrate and anticipate
15 all of the issues that we -- that we need to look
16 at.

17 If I go to the next slide, I'm going
18 to -- haven't covered this as a high level. I'm
19 going to turn it over to Evan to talk a little
20 bit about how we wrap this up in terms of the
21 vision for the future and the MRIP summary as
22 well. Evan?

1 MR. HOWELL: Thanks, Cisco. Good
2 afternoon, everybody. So, hopefully this is a
3 slide that you've either seen before, but again
4 we know we have some new members. So we wanted
5 to kind of reiterate our survey vision for the
6 future.

7 This is something we developed about a
8 year ago when we were having issues with the
9 fleet, to really try to figure out how we're
10 going to face these issues and succeed.

11 And so, we broke it into three parts.
12 And so, the thing that we wanted to add today,
13 and you'll see it in text in red, for each of
14 those there are things that we've done. There
15 are actions that we've done towards each of
16 these.

17 The first one was really just for us
18 to be able to sustain our core strength, do the
19 work that we know that we need to do, get the
20 information we know we need to acquire now, as we
21 build the additional capacity.

22 You know, the mid-life repairs is a

1 piece that we'll bring into this. But we've done
2 a lot of work and a lot of planning, as Cisco
3 said, to hopefully mitigate this.

4 We also were successful in getting \$14
5 million dollars in new appropriated money. So,
6 this is annual funds that were added to our
7 survey budget.

8 And we now have that. And then we're
9 able to use that in terms of our annual planning
10 to get the sustaining of the core strength
11 together.

12 We also did mark of the \$105 million
13 dollars that Brian presented in the data
14 modernization we have two buckets there. We've
15 got the sustaining, and really putting money
16 towards mitigating to get that core data that we
17 need.

18 So, in reference to Kitty and other
19 points, you know, when their priorities arise,
20 and the annual funding isn't quite there, at
21 least for these three years, we've got some extra
22 ability with IRA.

1 But we also have the \$14 million that
2 we're looking more to long term balancing as we
3 also go through the other two steps, which is to
4 modernize.

5 We know that we need to sustain what
6 we need to do. But there's also efficiencies
7 that we can gain either by incorporating advanced
8 technologies, or either by looking at the survey
9 design to try to find efficiencies there.

10 Again, with the success goal being
11 that we're able to acquire the data that we need
12 to get to the assessments and management
13 decisions that we need to make.

14 So this modernization really is
15 available now to incorporate and implement these
16 new advanced technology platforms through IRA.
17 And that's why a major chunk of that bucket is on
18 those seven strategic initiatives that Cisco
19 described, or Brian described earlier as well.

20 These are our advanced technologies
21 that we feel have the greatest success
22 probability for operationalization to get us to

1 be a regular part of our survey enterprise.

2 The third part was to also strengthen
3 really our national program. So, to strengthen
4 our ability to do survey planning,
5 prioritization, and management.

6 The money's no good if we don't know
7 how to spend it effectively, and we don't have a
8 national prioritization. Otherwise, it's every
9 region for themselves, trying to make sure that
10 they advocate the strongest, or get their thing
11 in.

12 We'd like to avoid that and get all of
13 the priority work done. And so, with that we
14 have created a new national survey program.

15 We're looking for a January 2024
16 launch of this, and working the rest of fall 2023
17 to work with all the regions to get the
18 participation into the groups that we're creating
19 for this national survey program.

20 And really, what you'll see come out
21 of this is that program structure. You should
22 see an increase in prioritization capabilities,

1 getting the priority work done.

2 But also we've got products that we're
3 going to produce as part of the National Academy
4 of Public Administrators' request or
5 recommendation. That would be the prioritized
6 list of surveys, the prioritized list of
7 assessments.

8 And again, this gets into early 2024,
9 which is when I believe that most of the regions,
10 the councils, the science centers, the regional
11 offices work together to start to set out the
12 next year's priority work.

13 So that's where we could start to
14 identify where these stock assessment priorities
15 are, the survey prioritization to get the
16 information we need for those assessments, and
17 starting to get that cycle in. So, that's where
18 we see a lot of this input coming.

19 If we could go to the next slide. One
20 more thing that we wanted to talk through today
21 is to talk through the MRIP, Marine Recreational
22 Information Program, FY 24 improvements.

1 So, about a month and a half ago we
2 did present that we found the results from a
3 pilot study that showed that there are potential
4 overestimation in the effort survey, the Federal
5 Fishing Effort Survey.

6 As an extreme, up to 30 to 40 percent,
7 and average a little bit lower than that. But
8 enough of an indication that we wanted to do a
9 fuller study beyond just the pilot. We've got
10 the funds to do that. That contract has been
11 set.

12 We will start that, implementing that
13 study in January of 2024. That will look at both
14 the question order that we saw in the pilot
15 study, as well as what the precision estimate
16 increase would be to get better precision
17 estimates by going to monthly waves. So, we're
18 running that testing through the entirety of
19 2024.

20 Throughout this there's two other
21 things that we want to do. Continued
22 coordination with the councils. Janet talked

1 about going to the South Atlantic. I've spent
2 time in the Gulf. Colleagues in MRIP have gone
3 to the Mid-Atlantic.

4 We're really trying to work with not
5 just the councils, but also the commissions to
6 really identify what can we start to do for
7 potential actions now while we're doing this
8 testing, and getting some of the preliminary test
9 results so we don't have to wait all the way
10 through 2024 to look at potential actions.

11 So, a lot of this is looking at
12 potential scenario plans, and really trying to
13 estimate, especially in the management actions,
14 what are the real impacts if these changes were
15 to be sustained through the final testing.

16 I know that there's some sensitivity
17 analyses that are already being done. The Gulf
18 has looked to stand up a group. I think there's
19 some work potentially in other councils as well.

20 But we really want to continue these
21 discussions, and feel, and have people feel
22 empowered, so that we have an expectation. And

1 we're waiting for these results to come in. And
2 we know what actions we take based on what those
3 results come back. So, that's a big push for us
4 in FY 24.

5 The third is to really continue this
6 work on a new vision for the Federal-State
7 Partnership for Recreational Fisheries Data
8 Collection and Usage.

9 We're pushing this just in terms of
10 the NIMS headquarters role. Currently a lot of
11 the program MRIP really does come out of the
12 headquarters role.

13 But we've spent the last year really
14 working throughout fisheries to bring the regions
15 in, have a stronger voice, and a stronger
16 leadership role in really dealing with, just
17 internally in fisheries how we work through
18 recreational fisheries, the recreational data.

19 But also working stronger with the
20 recreational partners to define what this
21 partnership looks like. We can only bring 50
22 percent at most of what this partnership looks

1 like. We have to work with the regional
2 partners.

3 So, please do expect that in FY 24 we
4 will be looking for action to start to bring in
5 the coordination and that collaboration to get
6 the actions together for what this new
7 partnership would look like, and building that
8 out.

9 So, I'm here today and tomorrow. I'm
10 happy to talk to anybody either now or if you
11 want to follow-up with me in terms of this. It's
12 being led through my office.

13 But we really are, it's a joint
14 collaboration with a lot of NMFS leadership from
15 the regional offices, as well as working with the
16 commissions and the council staff as much as we
17 can.

18 So, any ideas that you have for this,
19 really want to make this an active engagement to
20 really do this right. So, that's what I had for
21 the MRIP updates. And then I think that takes us
22 to the final slide, if we can go to that slide.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. ANSON: Thank you, Dr. Werner and
3 Dr. Howell. Anybody have any questions for Dr.
4 Werner? Yes, Merrick.

5 MR. BURDEN: Yes. Thank you both for
6 that talk. I'm going to try to get down and be a
7 little bit more specific in my question. And it
8 deals with some of the issues we are dealing with
9 on the Pacific coast, which are not new, but I
10 suspect we're not the only one.

11 So we, if we think about stock
12 assessments there's a, you know, as with any
13 assessment many of the life history parameters
14 that are in the assessments that we use are
15 incredibly powerful in driving the outcome. So,
16 natural mortality, or longevity, or fecundity, or
17 what have you.

18 And there's an assessment we're
19 wrangling with right now that has some
20 sensitivity analysis around natural mortality.
21 And that the range of sensitivity analysis, any
22 of those natural mortalities are fairly

1 plausible.

2 And the outcome is that the stock is
3 either at one percent of unfished biomass, or 65
4 percent of unfished biomass. And we've picked
5 one which is a plausible one to pick. But so are
6 some of the others.

7 And so, that's just one indication.
8 But there are many, many cases like that on the
9 Pacific coast. And so, when I look at this talk
10 it's very informative. It's exciting. I love
11 the idea of all the climate modeling and data
12 collection.

13 But it's those parameters. They're
14 really driving our management regime, especially
15 for ground fish on the West Coast.

16 And so, I'd like to understand how
17 these plans will help us there, not just with the
18 trend data and stock abundance, and leaked comps,
19 and things like that, but in the life histories
20 and the biological parameters, how that helps us
21 today.

22 And then, what we do in the fact of

1 climate change as those become more and more
2 uncertain. And we're trying to pick, some sort
3 of management target, which seems less and less
4 certain. We're already uncertain.

5 So, I don't know if you could wax
6 poetic on some of that. But that's what's really
7 driving a lot of our issues on the Pacific now.
8 And I'd love to close the gap between your talk
9 and that issue a little bit more.

10 DR. WERNER: Yes. Thanks, Merrick.
11 Thanks, Mr. Chair. I couldn't agree with you
12 more, Merrick. A lot of the things that we do
13 now are based on parameters, vital rates, et
14 cetera, that you, as you mentioned that were
15 perhaps collected and estimated based on
16 conditions that don't exist anymore.

17 You know, responses to, you know,
18 temperatures that are not there anymore,
19 responses to feeding environments that's evolved,
20 you know. So, the whole underlying ecosystem in
21 many ways has changed.

22 And those are going to be critical for

1 perhaps those more advanced models, right. And
2 those advanced models can't rely on parameters
3 that don't exist anymore, or at least are
4 reflective of conditions that don't exist
5 anymore.

6 So, I think, you know, evolving, you
7 know, how do we assess those new vital rates?
8 How do we understand those new parameters that
9 actually form, you know, the basis for some of
10 the predictions that we make, or some of the
11 forecasts or assessments that we make has to be a
12 core of how we rethink, you know, how we look at
13 the system, right.

14 And so, what would we do? I mean,
15 let's just pick a couple of things. Some things
16 I think are going to require perhaps new, more
17 laboratory work, whether it's funded here or not.

18 I don't, you know, we might need to
19 think about that. But some of the laboratory
20 work might need to be there to again begin to
21 expand or consider conditions that didn't exist,
22 you know, back in the '80s when we took some of

1 the measurements.

2 Other methods, such as like the
3 molecular approaches can offer some aspects,
4 maybe not, beyond obviously presence/absence.
5 But also in terms of, you know, the parts having
6 to do with the transportomics and proteomics part
7 of these molecular approaches that say, how do
8 these ecosystems function? How do they process
9 differently under these different conditions?

10 And I think that's an area that I
11 think we have to expand on, and have to look at.
12 Because as you say, you know, to be running
13 predictions based on conditions that don't exist
14 anymore is going to put us in a weaker position.

15 Another thing that I think is going to
16 be important is actually taking some of these
17 measurements at sea. And this goes back to the
18 importance of how do we evolve our fleet, right?

19 In other words, are we, is the fleet
20 something that should be, you know, doing the
21 routine measurements that we can perhaps do with
22 uncrewed systems, right?

1 So, can we now trade off, you know,
2 some of these routine measurements that are, that
3 could be done with uncrewed systems, and then
4 focus these new ships, you know, that might
5 happen, that might be more capable through the
6 midlife repairs, et cetera, to be more like
7 floating laboratories that can look at particular
8 regions and seeing, why is it that, you know, the
9 recruitment isn't happening somewhere?

10 Why is it that, you know, that the
11 organisms aren't, you know, growing the way it
12 should be in situ, not just in the laboratory?

13 So, I think what you've laid out is
14 key in terms of how we evolve, and bring together
15 the capabilities that we have with the new
16 technologies, with the modeling, but also with,
17 you know, the at sea presence of what we do.

18 But I couldn't agree with you more on
19 the importance of not losing sight of the fact
20 that a lot of what we do is in some ways based on
21 conditions that we are getting past.

22 I don't know if that answers your

1 question. But it's fundamental to how we evolve
2 our ability to look into the future.

3 MR. ANSON: Chris.

4 MR. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 Cisco, like Merrick, you know, I'm overwhelmed
6 every time you do that presentation with all the
7 cool stuff that you guys are thinking about and
8 working on.

9 But I come back to the same thing that
10 I say I think at every CCC meeting, which is,
11 don't forget the basics. And still we, I think I
12 can speak for others, we're very concerned about
13 the port sampling program on the East Coast, for
14 example, and where that's, what's going to happen
15 with that.

16 You know, we're, we basically, the
17 Mid-Atlantic Council was able to help for the
18 year or so. But after that it's uncertain. And
19 I think you, you know how important that program
20 is to not only the two councils but the
21 commission as well.

22 And certainly, you know, I'd like to

1 hear more about possible plans for that. And,
2 you know, I understand, you know, you're dealing
3 with a situation where you're trying to, you
4 know, maintain the old stuff, and thinking about
5 the new stuff. And it's difficult. I get it.

6 But I, you know, I'm really concerned
7 about the port sampling program. I'm sure you're
8 aware too of our, you know, the issues that we've
9 had with surveys. And we're working through
10 those.

11 And certainly, you know, John here has
12 been very receptive to our comments. And, you
13 know, both councils have made comments about
14 maybe thinking about the new survey, you know, or
15 the Northeast stock assessments.

16 Again, just the basic, you know, basic
17 stock assessments continue to have problems with
18 stock assessments coming out of the center. And
19 we're working with John. And I think, you know,
20 we're getting there. But there's problems.

21 So again, bottom line, all this is
22 really cool. But don't forget the basics.

1 Thanks.

2 DR. WERNER: Thanks, Chris. Thanks
3 for the question. And the, again, like with
4 Merrick, I mean, I couldn't agree with you more
5 that we have to make sure that we keep that
6 integrity of the data and the time series that
7 took so long to develop and to understand.

8 Of course, on the East Coast there's
9 the added challenge of the presence of offshore
10 structures, wind farms, et cetera, that are a
11 different aspect of disruption that we need to
12 consider, which we all hope that what we can do
13 with the new approaches isn't just, is, I
14 shouldn't say isn't just.

15 But in addition to measuring more, can
16 measure in places that we would not be able to
17 measure because, say for example, we can't go
18 into the wind farm regions, and such.

19 So, we're trying to solve multiple
20 challenges at once. But if we break up those
21 time series, if we don't have that integrity of
22 the data that you're talking about it sets us

1 back enormously. And so, that's something that
2 we can't afford to do.

3 You know, the mid-life repairs
4 basically accelerate a lot of that decision
5 making that we have to do. On the West Coast we
6 have to integrate two surveys. And we have to
7 make sure that we do it in a way that we
8 understand what those impacts are as we change
9 our sampling schemes, et cetera.

10 The grid I showed in Alaska is the
11 same thing. We're trying to build on knowledge
12 that we have, to maintain the data that we have,
13 and try to do more. It sounds like a little bit
14 ambitious, you know. But I think, or
15 aspirational. But I think we can do it, based on
16 the experience that we have.

17 So, the guiding principle in all of
18 this is both. It's maintaining the integrity
19 that we have right now, but also be mindful that
20 we have to respond to things that in some cases
21 are out of our control, so that we can continue
22 to provide the advice.

1 And how to bring those two together,
2 how to make sure that the numbers are not just
3 different but right, if they are different, that
4 they're still right, is something that we're
5 going to have to all work together in terms of
6 how we do that, you know.

7 So, thanks Chris. And keep asking the
8 question. But, you know, it's important to make
9 sure that we don't drop that. Thanks. Thank
10 you, Chris.

11 MR. ANSON: I think I had a few
12 people. I thought I saw Dr. Howell. Did you
13 have your hand up earlier?

14 (Off microphone comment.)

15 MR. ANSON: Oh, okay. I have Eric,
16 followed by Rick.

17 MR. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes.
18 So what Chris said. I'll start with that.
19 That's the easy part of my -- I'm trying to
20 figure out what I should actually say.

21 As far as maintaining the time series,
22 and if you don't do it how disruptive that is.

1 Well, I mean, I'm from New England. The
2 Bigelow's not doing the job. And it can't be any
3 more disruptive to the people who actually suffer
4 from that, which is the fishing industry.

5 You don't collect the data. I don't
6 know how many of your models can run with no
7 data. Because you have no data. So, if you can
8 do that, that would be awesome. But I don't
9 think you can.

10 So, that being said, I want to know
11 how you feel about supporting an industry vessel
12 based survey to complement the Bigelow. That's
13 my first question.

14 Because that is a contingency plan
15 that may happen. And one of the contingency
16 plans is rob Peter to pay Paul, which is to keep
17 the Pisces on standby if the Bigelow doesn't do
18 the job.

19 In which case, if the Bigelow fails,
20 then I think the Pisces is going to -- Mr.
21 Carmichael may not care for the fact that the
22 Pisces is in New England doing its job.

1 So that's my first question. My, I
2 guess my next comment is, your Slide 4 with I
3 think you call it the mobius on that, I'd like to
4 know how much of that stuff you actually think
5 you're doing.

6 Because I don't think you're doing any
7 of it for us. I just, I look at the list, and
8 it's like, I don't see where that's happening.
9 You can give me that answer off line.

10 But I guess my real question is about
11 money. I'd like to talk about money. We've
12 received a couple of presentations, one in the
13 Mid-Atlantic, one in New England about what
14 things cost.

15 And it is said that the Bigelow
16 doesn't cost anything to NOAA, which I can't
17 imagine any, you know, I mean, boats cost money.
18 I know a lot about boats. And they cost money.

19 So, I'd like to know what the cost of
20 a day at sea is for the Bigelow, what OMAO pays
21 for a day at sea for that. Because the Bigelow
22 is going to be out of service for what is

1 projected to be 12 to 14 months.

2 I mean, it can't get out of the
3 shipyard for really basic stuff. And it fails on
4 a survey because the padeye broke. In my mind
5 you're talking about 18 months, 24 months. And I
6 don't know what that's going to look like
7 downstream.

8 So, I guess those are my two
9 questions. Would you support a complementary
10 industry based survey to support the Bigelow?
11 And my second one is, what is OMAO, what does it
12 cost for a day at sea for that boat when it's at
13 sea? Because I know it's not zero. Thank you.

14 DR. WERNER: Thank you for the
15 question. On the cost of a day at sea on the
16 Bigelow, it's roughly \$20,000 dollars a day.
17 Variable ops. That's for us. There's other
18 costs that have to do with, you know, the crewing
19 and all that stuff. But for us it's about
20 \$20,000 a day.

21 I think all-inclusive it's probably
22 closer to \$30,000 a day or so in terms of, you

1 know, what it would cost NOAA. So one thing is
2 what it costs Fisheries, and the other thing is
3 the broader cost of what it costs NOAA.

4 In terms of this being something that
5 could be done jointly with industry, say, I think
6 this is a -- well, not a, I shouldn't say I
7 think. It's an idea that we've been thinking
8 about for quite some time.

9 And we're also looking at, for
10 example, how some of our colleagues in other
11 parts of the world, like in Norway, I brought
12 this example I think last time, are doing. We're
13 following this very closely.

14 Where again, it's a combination of can
15 we use some aspects of the modern tools, you
16 know. Like whether it's, you know, the things,
17 the list I have there. Whether it's uncrewed
18 systems or other to collect some of the data that
19 might not require, you know, a ship, you know, to
20 collect the samples.

21 But partner with industry, with, and
22 have industry collect some of the biological data

1 that we need to do. And this is something that,
2 as I said, you know, Norway is beginning to look
3 at quite closely.

4 And that partnership between, you
5 know, the Institute of Marine Research, sort of
6 the equivalent of our Fisheries mission with
7 Industry. So, I think it's going to be part of
8 the solution.

9 The mid-life repairs again I think are
10 going to accelerate that. I think that, you
11 know, how we move forward in the planning with
12 the Pisces and the Bigelow that I didn't talk
13 about here, because I just focused on one
14 example, I think has to include that as a way
15 forward.

16 I think the partnership with industry,
17 cooperative research, and all of that is going to
18 be the way that we're going to get through some
19 of these challenges.

20 Things that you brought up about how
21 long does it take to do a repair? And we know
22 it, unfortunately recently it has been longer

1 than anticipated. So those contingencies, you
2 know, that you mentioned are of course again have
3 to be there through these partnerships with
4 industry.

5 So, I think those are aspects that we
6 need to perhaps begin to formalize as we plan
7 into the mid-life repairs of the Bigelow and
8 starting in about '26 or something like that.

9 So we have to start basically now to
10 start making, to ensuring that those
11 contingencies are there, and if we're going to
12 make those changes so that they're there '26,
13 '27, '28, something like that.

14 With regard to the mobius strip, the
15 CFI isn't implemented yet. I mean, there's
16 examples of mobius strips. Like, you could say,
17 may mobius strips, which are basically the MSEs,
18 the Management Strategy Evaluations, are
19 basically a form of the double mobius strip,
20 right.

21 You come up with a formulation. You
22 come up with scenarios. You evaluate it. And

1 did it work or not? That's a feedback on to the
2 system of, you know, the scenario planning, or
3 scenario generation.

4 So, I think that the mobius strip
5 builds on the successes and lessons learned from
6 how MSEs work. And I, you know, it's not
7 implemented. But we're keeping close, we're
8 following closely what worked with MSEs to make
9 sure that the double mobius strip also happens.

10 MR. REID: Thank you very much. As
11 far as your timeline success, I'd prefer it
12 starts in 2023 or 2024. I mean, there is a
13 possibility to get a pilot going with industry
14 vessels on the East Coast that would benefit the
15 Mid-Atlantic and New England as well, and perhaps
16 solve some problems.

17 And as far as, you know, disrupting
18 the timeline, I've already made my point on that.
19 So, thank you.

20 DR. WERNER: Sorry. If I could
21 follow-up then. I, in part, you know, that
22 contingency fund that was mentioned in terms of

1 part of the budget is something that would allow
2 us, as we think through and as we plan ahead for
3 the mid-life repair or other contingencies, you
4 know, perhaps to direct towards how do we, you
5 know, come up with alternatives to the way that
6 we're doing the surveys right now so it could
7 potentially be accelerated. Yes.

8 MR. ANSON: Rick.

9 MR. BELLAVANCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 Thank you, gentlemen for your presentation. My
11 question is for Evan, in regards to your slide on
12 the MRIP improvements.

13 And I'm glad that you included that in
14 your presentation. I think it's important to a
15 lot of people. I was encouraged by the plan you
16 laid out. I agree with most of it.

17 I'm just still struggling with a
18 component that I see is missing. And that's like
19 the messaging part of it to the stakeholders.
20 And as council folks and commission people we're
21 on the front line. We hear people, interested
22 stakeholders come to us and ask, well what's this

1 mean? What's it going to do for us? When are we
2 going to start changing things?

3 And I personally don't have any
4 answers for them. I'm curious if, like this plan
5 lays out something that goes out until 2025,
6 maybe management responded in 2026, people on the
7 street or on the water are saying, we want
8 something now. Because this means a lot to us.

9 So, I'm curious if you've given any
10 thought to the messaging from the agency
11 perspective, or any guidance to us for how we
12 could frame it when we go back to our
13 constituents? Thanks.

14 MR. HOWELL: I appreciate that. I
15 think that's a great point. I had a meeting
16 earlier this week with Richard Cody and Catherine
17 Popacostas from the headquarters group. And we
18 kind of laid out three things that we need to
19 work out in parallel.

20 One is sort of this leadership, and
21 sort of, you know, to me that's what we kind of
22 presented today. How are we going to lead a

1 change? How are we going to lead through, you
2 know, these issues?

3 The second one was comms. And that is
4 getting to sort of the messaging. And I'll come
5 back to that in a second.

6 And the third was the technical,
7 really working at technical committees, and
8 trying to make sure that people are aware of what
9 these potential changes could be, and how to work
10 through them.

11 Coming back to the comms. I think it
12 will be important in two things. In the short
13 term I think it's an imperative for us to have
14 some of that messaging.

15 I would like for this to be a part of
16 that partnership, and to start that we form the
17 comms together. I realize that right now that's
18 not the time. We don't have that yet.

19 But I'd like to see over the coming
20 months in FY 24, starting now, that while we
21 might start doing the lion's share of the comms,
22 that we start to generate a lot more of these

1 comms together.

2 It does two things in my mind. One,
3 it kind of breaks the insulation that the
4 headquarters group could have at times. Part of
5 it is us getting out and talking with people, and
6 really hearing first hand from the constituents,
7 and the concerns.

8 But the second is also working through
9 to see what comms would be effective. And rather
10 than it being really a factual here's the stats,
11 here's the facts, it being a combination of,
12 here's the changes that we expect to happen, but
13 also how we could potentially mitigate or how we
14 want to hear and potentially change what we're
15 doing based on that, the communication and
16 feedback.

17 So, I'd say to start we're working on
18 that internally to release it. But let's also
19 partner more on those comms. And we can do that
20 through I think the council meetings as we're
21 participating more. So, I'm not sure if that
22 answers your question. Yes.

1 MR. ANSON: Dr. Simmons.

2 DR. SIMMONS: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
3 Chair. Thank you both for the presentation. So,
4 I have just kind of a broader general question
5 about whether there's a mechanism in place to
6 allow the councils the opportunity to provide
7 feedback on the regional spend plans for the
8 climate ready fisheries.

9 And the reason I ask that is, I mean,
10 you've come to the council, and you've given us a
11 little bit of information about the red snappers
12 spend plan. And we've talked a little bit about,
13 you know, what the councils themselves are going
14 to get.

15 And then Ms. Denit's proposal
16 regarding the regional management council's
17 funding for that IRA pot, there is a proposal to
18 have some type of review body that includes, you
19 know, headquarters, science, and a regional
20 office.

21 But I don't really see the feedback
22 loop of information happening on your side of the

1 house for the data acquisition and technologies.
2 And so, I bring that up because I think the
3 council, the Gulf Council recently wrote a letter
4 requesting if some of that funding could be used
5 towards monitoring the shrimp fishery.

6 And so, I think we're kind of just
7 trying to see where some of this could really be
8 used, as was laid out by other, you know,
9 executive directors, and other folks here at the
10 table that, you know, are missing the basics.

11 And so, without a good understanding
12 of how those spend plannings are going to take
13 place, especially at the regions, we're kind of
14 in the dark right now. So, is there a process
15 for that plan?

16 MR. HOWELL: I think that there's not
17 a formal process right now. I mean, I think,
18 maybe the thing I'm struggling with a little bit
19 is how we rectify, and I've heard it from three
20 different people.

21 And I'm sure that each of the
22 councils' executive directors and council chairs

1 would feel the same. How do we keep the basics,
2 while we also invest in the future?

3 And in my mind the future is going to
4 become the new basics. And so, if we don't do
5 that, and I think right now the process that I
6 would say is probably the strongest, and I was
7 thinking about this earlier when Merrick was
8 talking, is to work regionally, and come up with
9 your regional priorities through that way.

10 We talked. I asked you to send a
11 letter to Cisco and I. But I don't think that's
12 the best process. Because they're going to get
13 lost nationally.

14 And I think coming up with the
15 regional priorities, especially for the essential
16 data acquisitions, that data mitigation, I think
17 I see that as the pot that over time that should
18 start to decrease as we're increasing our ability
19 to bring the advanced technologies online.

20 But I think working on, if you have an
21 annual process, whatever it is to ensure that
22 you've got your priorities laid out for the year,

1 especially for any delta or gaps, and whether
2 it's the life history parameterization, or things
3 like that.

4 The more that that could come into the
5 regional process, but then be collated through
6 our science board, which would be the way on the
7 science side. And there's a regional board as
8 well.

9 I think that's the best process right
10 now. And, Cisco, if you disagree or you have
11 anything to add, I think that would be the
12 strongest way to get regional priorities into the
13 conversations. Because you'll have those people
14 articulating it, and knowing that region and the
15 priorities for that region.

16 DR. SIMMONS: Yes. Follow-up. So,
17 was that kind of the concept behind this national
18 survey program you outlined, and I guess in Slide
19 12? Or is that all fishery contingent surveys
20 you were referring to there?

21 MR. HOWELL: So, mostly fishery
22 independent surveys, right. And so, I think the

1 concept of that is to also do the work where you
2 have regional representation that comes into this
3 national arena, and really gets to a point where
4 they're recommending what we should do in terms
5 of our fishery independent enterprise for each
6 year.

7 Hopefully it's not a year to year
8 endeavor. That we start to get to a multi-year
9 endeavor. But I think in the beginning we're
10 going to be looking at this through year to year,
11 especially with IRA being a three year, you know.

12 So, it doesn't quite capture all of
13 what is being mentioned today. But I think it's
14 a healthy component of it.

15 DR. SIMMONS: Thank you. So, I think
16 that's really, really helpful. I think the other
17 thing as we're working through this funding to
18 keep in mind, and the regional, you know, science
19 centers have really done a good job with this is,
20 we're going to have to be a lot more flexible.

21 We're going to have to be a lot more
22 dynamic. I mean, we can't stick it on a stock

1 assessment schedule. It might wait two or three
2 years.

3 And I agree, you know, we have to try
4 to keep these long term surveys going. But we
5 also have to be adaptable when the new data comes
6 available. And I don't think we're there yet.
7 And so, I think we need to keep that in our
8 binders as well moving forward. Thanks.

9 MR. ANSON: I had a question for Dr.
10 Werner. Going back to the presentation on Slide
11 6 you talk about the essential data acquisition
12 modernization, transforming of NMFS' advanced
13 technology and social science capabilities.

14 And you meant, you put up there social
15 science. But I don't recall much discussion as
16 to what specifically, in as much as modernization
17 and transforming of that capability, that that
18 particular initiative would do. Can you provide
19 a little bit more information, or restate that?
20 Thank you.

21 DR. WERNER: Yes. Thank you for the
22 question. Yes. This is to enable, you know,

1 perhaps an assessment of the impacts of all of
2 these advances, if you will, and advice that's
3 being generated from this on the communities that
4 depend on it.

5 So that's, it's how do we integrate,
6 you know, the information that allows us to be
7 more climate ready, the climate ready fisheries,
8 you know, under that climate ready fisheries
9 umbrella.

10 And actually then evaluate the effect.
11 I mean, so how do we know it actually worked?
12 And so, I think this is a process of how do we
13 know it actually worked at the level of the
14 community, at the level of the social and
15 economic side of things.

16 And so, that's something that in the
17 past has, I think, you know, probably hasn't been
18 as, you know, has received attention as deserved.
19 And this is something that explicitly takes that
20 into account. How do we evaluate it? Yes.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. ANSON: All right. Thank you.

1 Any other questions for Dr. Werner? All right.
2 Seeing none, we're up against a break. And so we
3 will take that break.

4 And just so that we kind of maintain
5 the schedule, so that we can have public comment
6 around our 4:45 p.m. target, let's go ahead and
7 we'll have the break extend, or go to 3:45 p.m.
8 as scheduled. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
10 went off the record at 3:17 p.m. and resumed at
11 3:49 p.m.)

12 MR. ANSON: Okay, great. So we will
13 start the meeting back up again. And we're going
14 to go to our next item. And that's Legislative
15 Outlook, David Whaley.

16 MR. WHALEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 So this is the time of day when people start
18 getting a little sleepy. And they start nodding
19 off. So there may be a quiz at the end of this,
20 so pay attention.

21 For those of you that I haven't met,
22 my name is Dave Whaley. I'm an independent

1 contractor who works for the CCC trying to figure out
2 what Congress is up to. And despite having
3 worked for the House for 30 years, I don't
4 recognize the institution anymore.

5 One of the things that I do for the
6 CCC is I send out a monthly report that you
7 should all be getting, lists bills that are
8 coming up, or bills that have been introduced,
9 hearings that are coming up, mark-ups, that sort
10 of thing.

11 I get a little bit of feedback from
12 folks, but for those of you that haven't talked
13 to me, let me know whether it works for you.
14 Give me suggestions how it could be better, that
15 sort of thing. So anyway, thank you.

16 So what am I supposed to be telling
17 you? I'm supposed to be telling you what the
18 heck is going on in Congress. So several people
19 who work on the Hill told me I should start my
20 presentation with a big picture of dumpster fire.
21 And I thought about that, but I decided not to.

22 So last time we met, but since we met

1 the debt limit showdown was resolved, which was a
2 big deal. There was a continuing resolution that
3 was passed so the shutdown was averted, at least
4 for now. Funding is available for all federal
5 agencies through November 17th. And I'll come
6 back to that in a little bit.

7 Despite the federal government almost
8 shutting down, one of the only stories that I
9 kept reading in newspapers was how Fat Bear Week
10 might be cancelled. And that seemed to be the
11 biggest concern that people had with this. So
12 I'm a little confused about where the public is.

13 But as a result of the continuing
14 resolution passing with bipartisan support, the
15 Speaker of the House was voted out. First time
16 that's happened in history. So right now the
17 House of Representatives is dealing with an
18 acting speaker. And because they are dealing
19 with an acting speaker, they cannot do any
20 legislative business until they have permanent
21 speaker in place.

22 Also since we last meet, Senator

1 Feinstein passed away, a Democrat from
2 California. Her replacement has already been put
3 in place, so that was rather quick.

4 Also Senator Menendez from New Jersey
5 is under indictment, and there's some question
6 about whether he will run for re-election or
7 whether he will be forced out before the next
8 election.

9 In addition, two House representatives
10 have resigned, and both of those seats are
11 unfilled at this point and probably will remain
12 unfilled until the November elections.

13 As I mentioned before, both the House
14 and the Senate have really tight margins. You
15 would think that would mean that people would
16 compromise to get things done. That hasn't
17 really been the case except for a couple of
18 notable exceptions like the debt ceiling and the
19 CR.

20 Some breaking news, while we were
21 sitting here today, the House Republican Caucus
22 met, and then have nom -- elected a new speaker

1 nominee, Steve Scalise from Louisiana.

2 Although he has been nominated by the
3 Republican Caucus, he still needs to be elected
4 by a majority of the House which is 217 members.
5 Right now there are 221 Republicans, so he cannot
6 lose more than three Republicans and still become
7 speaker.

8 So as you may remember at the
9 beginning of this Congress, Speaker McCarthy was
10 elected after the 15th vote. It's possible we'll
11 see something like that again. It's also
12 possible they won't bring his name up for Speaker
13 until they are sure they have 217 votes. And
14 again, if we don't have a Speaker, we can't do
15 legislative business, so things like getting
16 appropriations bills done is on hold.

17 So I know you guys hate this, but
18 going back to high school, we're going to do
19 Civics 101 again. U.S. House of Representatives
20 has 435 voting members. They each serve two-year
21 terms. And as I mentioned, right now there are
22 221 Republicans, 212 Democrats, and two

1 vacancies.

2 All members of the House are up for
3 re-election in 2024. The key committee for the
4 House of Representatives for all of our fishery
5 and oceans work is the Natural Resources
6 Committee. And we'll talk about that in a little
7 bit.

8 And note at the bottom, all revenue
9 measures must originate in the House. So when we
10 come back to appropriations remember, all the
11 revenue measures, including appropriations,
12 taxes, and other things like that, have to come
13 from the House of Representatives.

14 So the Senate, there are 100 members,
15 two from each state, that serve six-year terms.
16 Right now there are 51 Democrats and 49
17 Republicans. That's a little misleading, because
18 there are actually only 48 Democrats, but there
19 are three Independents who caucus with the
20 Democrats.

21 So I mentioned that Senator Feinstein
22 passed away, and Senator Menendez was under

1 indictment. Had Senator Menendez been kicked out
2 of the Senate, and a replacement for Senator
3 Feinstein not put in place very quickly, we would
4 have had a very tight Senate. It would have made
5 a mess over there.

6 So the key committee for fisheries and
7 oceans work is the Commerce, Science, and
8 Transportation Committee. One thing I'll note,
9 the House Resources Committee and the Senate
10 Commerce Committee have different jurisdictions.

11 One of the key differences is the
12 Commerce Committee has all transportation issues.
13 So right now we're dealing with a lot of FAA re-
14 authorization for programs under aviation
15 programs. The Senate Commerce Committee is
16 dealing with those.

17 So when I start going through some of
18 the hearings that have been held, you won't see
19 that there have been a lot of Senate Commerce
20 Committee hearings on fisheries issues. That's
21 because they've been very busy on FAA issues.

22 So a quick wrap-up on the 117th

1 Congress, you've already seen the slide, you saw
2 this in May. I just want to note that there were
3 a lot of packages, or not a lot, but several big
4 packages that were put together at the end of
5 last Congress that included fishery and ocean
6 provisions. They were put on what are considered
7 must-pass bills at the end of the Congress. I
8 don't know if we'll see the same thing next year
9 at the end of the Congress, but it's likely.

10 So the NDAA is a bill, it's a must
11 pass bill every year. I don't think we've ever
12 missed a year. It often becomes a Christmas tree
13 for non-related things. So I wouldn't be
14 surprised to see more fisheries issues next year.

15 Last year we saw the continued
16 resolution, they continued a number of fishery
17 issues. Hopefully we'll not see a CR this year,
18 but if we do it's possible that it'll become a
19 Christmas tree. And then the last one that was a
20 big Christmas tree last Congress was the
21 Inflation Reduction Act.

22 So let's look at what's going on this

1 year. As I mentioned, the key committee is the
2 House Natural Resources Committee. The Chairman
3 is Bruce Westerman from Arkansas, and the ranking
4 Democrat is Raul Grijalva from Arizona. Neither
5 of those are big coastal states, so they don't
6 have fishery constituents, but they do have a lot
7 of fishery issues within their jurisdiction.

8 On the House Resources Committee, 18
9 of the 47 members are coastal, so less than half
10 the members have coastal districts.

11 The subcommittee that we deal with is
12 the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and
13 Fisheries. The chairman is Cliff Bentz from
14 Oregon, and the ranking member is Jared Huffman
15 from California. And on this subcommittee, 15 of
16 27 are coastal members, so a little bit better
17 ratio.

18 The Senate Commerce, Science, and
19 Transportation Committee is our key committee.
20 The Chair is Senator Cantwell from Washington.
21 The ranking Republican is Senator Cruz from
22 Texas. On the full committee only nine of 27 are

1 coastal members.

2 The subcommittee we deal with is the
3 Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, Climate
4 Change, and Manufacturing. The Chair is Senator
5 Baldwin from Wisconsin, the ranking Republican is
6 Senator Sullivan from Alaska. And six of eleven
7 members are coastal members, so a little bit
8 better.

9 You'll notice the leadership of both
10 the full committee and subcommittee are from
11 coastal states, so that's good.

12 So since we last met, there have been
13 a number of hearings and markups, lots of
14 oversight by the committees, not a lot of
15 legislation moving, but a lot of oversight.

16 One thing you'll notice as we go
17 through this, the House Natural Resources
18 Committee, sometimes when you see a committee or
19 a hearing notice, it's a little unclear what the
20 focus of the hearing is or how they're going to
21 attack the issue. The House Natural Resources
22 Committee is not very subtle.

1 For instance, the first one oversight
2 hearing examining the impacts of the proposed
3 changes to the National Right Whale Vessel Strike
4 Reduction Rule, that one's a little more subtle.
5 The next one clearly isn't.

6 The Northwest at Risk, the
7 Environmentalist Effort to Destroy Navigation,
8 Transportation, and Access to Reliable Power, not
9 real subtle. The next one, ESA at 50, the
10 Destructive Cost of the ESA, again not very
11 subtle.

12 The Senate Commerce Committee did have
13 a markup recently where they marked-up a couple
14 of fishery related or ocean related bills, the
15 Sea Turtle Assistance Act, and also the Country
16 of Origin Labeling Online Act, which made some
17 changes to the COOL program and for those folks
18 who sell products online.

19 House Natural Resources Committee also
20 had a hearing on a couple of legislative bills.
21 The fishery issues that are important are the
22 South Pacific Tuna Treaty Act, the Coastal

1 Habitat Conservation Act of 2023, the SHARKED Act
2 from Mr. Wittman, and the Red Snapper Act from
3 Mr. Rutherford from Florida.

4 The reason I added the Coastal Habitat
5 Conservation Act, it's a program set up within
6 the Department of Interior, but it has a couple
7 of provisions that relate to fisheries habitat
8 and protection of fisheries habitat. So it's a
9 little unclear whether this is giving authorities
10 to the Department of Interior for fisheries
11 habitat that they don't currently have. So I
12 advise people to just keep an eye on it.

13 Some more recent hearings, oversight
14 hearing on Strategic Importance of the Pacific
15 Islands, the reason I put that on there, there's
16 another hearing that came up later on sanctuaries
17 and monuments. The Chair of that subcommittee
18 has a lot of interest in the influence of China
19 in the Pacific.

20 And after the August 24th oversight
21 hearing, that kind of became more of an issue for
22 a lot of the members on the committee. So it

1 became somewhat of a focus during the Sanctuary
2 and Monument hearing.

3 I won't go through the rest of these,
4 but the one I will note in particular was the one
5 I just mentioned, the Sanctuary and Monument
6 hearing. That was done by the Oversight and
7 Investigation Subcommittee, not by the Fisheries
8 Subcommittee.

9 So not a lot of the members on that
10 subcommittee are familiar with fisheries and
11 fisheries management. So they had a little
12 different focus than I think they would have had,
13 had it been done in the Fisheries Subcommittee.

14 So there have been a number of bills
15 that have been marked up that are moving through
16 the system that people might be interested in,
17 the SHARKED Act that I mentioned, the Coastal
18 Communities Ocean Acidification Act, the Save Our
19 Seas Amendments, which deal with the Marine
20 Debris Program, and again, the Coastal Habitat
21 Conservation Act. There's both a House and a
22 Senate version. The Senate version has been

1 marked-up.

2 There are a number of bills here that
3 hearings have been held on. So generally the
4 process is the bill gets introduced. It's
5 referred to a committee, the committee holds a
6 hearing, committee holds a mark-up, it goes to
7 the House floor or Senate floor.

8 That doesn't always happen, but once a
9 bill has had a hearing, it's more likely to be
10 marked up. It's almost impossible for, not
11 impossible but almost impossible for a bill to be
12 introduced and go to the House floor without a
13 hearing. It has happened.

14 So again, the Red Snapper Act, South
15 Pacific Tuna Treaty Act, Restoring Effective
16 Science-based Conservation Under Environmental
17 Law, Protecting Whales Act, the Coastal Habitat
18 Conservation Act I already mentioned. The
19 Federally Integrated Species Health Act, or FISH
20 Act, and I'll come back to that one. And the
21 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
22 Act I'll also come back to.

1 So what are some of the other issues
2 that may come up either through legislation or
3 hearings? Several people have asked me about the
4 Magnuson-Stevens Act re-authorization.

5 My understanding is Congressman
6 Huffman has a draft bill that's out there for
7 comment. I have not seen a copy of the bill, but
8 apparently it's very similar to the bill that he
9 had last Congress. So I don't expect a lot of
10 surprises when it gets introduced. I don't
11 expect hearings to be held on that, but it's
12 possible.

13 So another issue is aquaculture. This
14 is an issue that's been around for a while.
15 There have been bills introduced in the last
16 three or four Congresses. I don't see a lot of
17 interest in moving the bills, but there could be
18 potential hearings on the bills.

19 One of the changes this year is
20 there's also been a bill introduced just dealing
21 with kelp aquaculture. So we'll see whether that
22 moves or not.

1 Offshore wind, there are a number of
2 members on the East Coast who are pushing the
3 Natural Resources Committee to hold hearings on
4 offshore wind. Nothing has been scheduled yet,
5 but it's very possible that they'll have some
6 hearings on that, and possibly more than one.

7 Whale Ship Strike Mitigation, there
8 have been calls to have hearings on the issue,
9 not just on the east coast issues but also in the
10 Gulf of Mexico and on the West Coast. So we'll
11 see whether that comes to fruition or not.

12 Marine Sanctuaries, Marine Monuments,
13 as I mentioned, there has been one hearing.
14 There have been a number of monuments designated
15 under the Antiquities Act that have been on land.
16 A number of members on the Resources Committee
17 have been upset by this and have asked for
18 hearings on the Antiquities Act. It's unclear
19 whether they would focus just on on-land
20 monuments or whether they would actually look at
21 ocean monuments as well.

22 NOAA Organic Act or an Independent

1 Agency, my next slide is going to talk about that
2 as well as a change in protected species
3 authority. So I'll come back to that in a
4 second.

5 But one that's not on here that came
6 up today, a number of stakeholders in the
7 recreational fishing community are not happy with
8 MRIP and have started asking Congress to hold
9 oversight hearings on what's going on with MRIP.
10 That's new in the last couple of weeks. So we'll
11 see whether the committees are willing to do
12 hearings on that issue.

13 So the issue of NOAA as an independent
14 agency has been around for a while. I remember
15 this from about 20 years ago. There was an issue
16 of getting rid of one of the executive
17 departments. And as a result of that, there was
18 some discussion about whether we should create
19 NOAA as an independent agency, or should we take
20 all of the ocean authorities from all the
21 different agencies and put them in one?

22 So in this Congress, the House

1 Science, Space, and Technology Committee has
2 introduced a bill and already held a hearing on
3 the issue of establishing NOAA as an independent
4 agency. It was interesting when they held the
5 hearing. They had three former NOAA
6 administrators testify. All three of them were
7 in favor of creating an independent agency, which
8 kind of surprised me.

9 So the issue here is that the
10 authority over NOAA is split between two House
11 committees, the House Natural Resources
12 committee, which has the wet side of NOAA, and
13 the House Science Committee, which has all the
14 dry sides, the satellites and the weather service
15 programs.

16 The bill that was introduced primarily
17 deals with the dry side of NOAA. So before that
18 bill moves any further, it would have to go
19 through the Resources Committee, and they would
20 have to add provisions dealing with what programs
21 within NOAA would go to an independent agency on
22 the wet side. At least at this point, there has

1 been no interest shown in the Natural Resources
2 Committee to do that.

3 One of the other provisions that was
4 in that bill was for a study to determine whether
5 all of the protected resources issues should be
6 moved from NOAA to Fish and Wildlife Service.

7 There was also a hearing by the House
8 Natural Resources Committee where that idea was
9 brought up. And there has been legislation
10 introduced in the House, by Congressman Calvert
11 from California, that would transfer all of the
12 authority for Catadromous and Anadromous species
13 to Fish and Wildlife.

14 Being a little bit of a cynic, I noted
15 that one of the hearings that they held at that
16 committee, there were bills that they were
17 hearing on how much they were upset with Fish and
18 Wildlife Service on their bear management, on
19 prairie chicken management, and on wolf
20 management. And then they had a bill that would
21 transfer authority for Fish to Fish and wildlife.
22 So I don't think those have any legs, but it's

1 just been interesting to see that move.

2 On the NOAA independent agency front,
3 there's a discussion draft to create a NOAA
4 Organic Act that was circulated by Senator
5 Cantwell. Apparently, it's about 250 pages long.
6 I haven't seen a copy. I'm not sure I want to
7 see a copy yet until it's ready to go.

8 But this would not create an
9 independent agency for NOAA but would give them
10 an organic act for what their authorities are.
11 Currently their authorities are created by about
12 100 different laws rather than one Organic Act.
13 So there's been interest in doing that for a long
14 time.

15 Again, I don't know if this has legs,
16 I don't know if the House side is interested in
17 doing this. But Senator Cantwell, who's the
18 Chair of the committee, does have some interest.

19 Let's talk about appropriations.
20 Brian did a nice job of telling us what's going
21 on. Let me look at the big picture. So every
22 year there are 12 appropriation bills that need

1 to be passed. So far the House of
2 Representatives has only passed four.

3 Six other bills have been reported out
4 of committee. One actually was brought up on the
5 House floor and failed. And there are two that
6 have not yet been reported out of committee. One
7 of those is the Commerce, Justice, Science bill
8 which is where all the NOAA funding is.

9 I am told there are issues with the
10 bill which is why it hasn't come out of
11 committee. Nobody can tell me what those issues
12 are, so I don't know. But that would need to
13 come out of committee before it goes to the House
14 floor.

15 Going back to the whole issue of the
16 House not having a speaker, one of the issues
17 that has come up during the House Republican
18 caucus meetings is whether the House would take
19 up each appropriation bill independently and
20 whether they would be brought up under an open
21 amendment process.

22 There are a lot of fiscal

1 conservatives who want to see each of those bills
2 brought up on a regular order, and they want to
3 have their opportunity to offer amendments to cut
4 funding, you know, cut specific programs or cut
5 overall funding.

6 One of the issues that will determine
7 whether Mr. Scalise's nomination gets brought to
8 the floor is whether he makes a promise to those
9 people to bring the rest of other eight bills to
10 the House floor or not.

11 Now I mentioned that the continuing
12 resolution only goes through the 17th. Including
13 today, that gives us 28 legislative days,
14 assuming they meet five days a week. That's not
15 a lot of time to do eight appropriation bills,
16 then send them to the Senate, have the Senate
17 act, and sent them to the President. So if you
18 ask me whether I think there will be a shutdown
19 on the 17th, I think it's likely. So be
20 prepared.

21 Now looking at the Senate, of those 12
22 appropriation bills, they have done none of the

1 12. However, the Senate Appropriations Committee
2 has reported out all 12 bills. So they could
3 move those to the floor fairly quickly. They
4 could wait for the House to act first.

5 I mentioned earlier at the very
6 beginning that all revenue measures have to come
7 from the House. What that actually means is they
8 have to move on House bills. So what has
9 happened in the past is the Senate will take up a
10 House Appropriations Bill, insert the text from
11 one of their bills, and send it back. That's a
12 legitimate use of a House bill. That means it
13 has originated in the House, because it's House
14 bill number.

15 So talking about the continuing
16 resolution that just passed, as I mentioned, all
17 federal agencies are funded through the 17th of
18 November. One of the issues that came up in the
19 CR was aviation authorization programs. Those
20 are all funded through December 31st, so those
21 probably won't be an issue again if there's
22 another continuing resolution.

1 The CR provided disaster relief. That
2 did not include funding for fisheries disasters.
3 Those were all Stafford Act disasters.

4 I mentioned only 28 possible days left
5 before the next CR. That's a real tight window.
6 And if we don't have a speaker in place for the
7 next week or so, that cuts us down close to 20,
8 so less than three weeks to get that done.

9 The Senate is out of session this
10 week. I suspect they may be back next week.
11 It's a little unclear. They were originally
12 scheduled to take some time off, but with what's
13 going on in Israel and some of the other funding
14 issues, I think they may be back next week.

15 So I mentioned, the House can't act on
16 any legislation until a new speaker is elected.
17 A secret vote was taken today by the Republican
18 Caucus. It's unclear when that will come to the
19 floor again. They want to make sure they have
20 217 votes before they bring it to the floor.
21 It's unclear what kind of back room deals are
22 going to be cut to get that number.

1 So again, some of the big picture
2 issues complicating the whole speaker election as
3 I mentioned, appropriations floor procedure, some
4 of the more right wing Republicans are asking
5 that there be additional cuts in addition to what
6 was included in the debt limit legislation in
7 that agreement.

8 Right now, as you know, there's a
9 motion to vacate. One member of the House can
10 bring up a resolution to can the speaker which
11 was used to get rid of Speaker McCarthy a week
12 ago. There is some discussion about changing the
13 House rules to eliminate that. Again, the same
14 people who brought down the Speaker last time are
15 not going to be happy to remove that motion to
16 vacate.

17 As I mentioned before, if there's
18 another long term CR at the beginning of the
19 year, December 31st, part of the debt limit
20 agreement was that there would be a one percent
21 across the board cut for all non-defense
22 spending.

1 So if we have any kind of packages
2 that are put together to get through the deadline
3 of November 17th, that could cause a one percent
4 cut starting in January.

5 So again, some of the other big
6 issues, the Republicans and Democrats are both
7 concerned about, and how these get resolved,
8 could complicate the Speaker election. Border
9 security issues, Ukraine funding, and now the
10 issues with the attacks in Israel, those are
11 going to be issues that are going to complicate
12 things and also our reasons why we need a speaker
13 in place fairly quickly.

14 So that was a fairly quick overview.
15 I'm open to any questions, comments. Was that
16 too much information, to many questions on what's
17 going on?

18 MR. ANSON: Thank you for the
19 presentation, Dave, and I do look at your reports
20 that you submit.

21 MR. WHALEY: Good.

22 MR. ANSON: And they are very thorough

1 with lots of information on there. And I'm quite
2 happy with them, but if there's anyone else to
3 have any comments, as you've made earlier in your
4 presentation, please feel free to give them to
5 Dave for any improvements he may make. Does
6 anyone have any questions for Dave? Kitty?

7 MS. SIMONDS: So, Dave, about the
8 hearing, the oversight hearing for monuments and
9 sanctuaries, so what do you think the committee
10 members might do following the hearing? I mean,
11 were some of them sympathetic? Did you talk to
12 the staffers or not, or whatever? You did say
13 they're not fisheries people so --

14 MR. WHALEY: Yeah.

15 MS. SIMONDS: -- you know, that's
16 probably an issue.

17 MR. WHALEY: Yes. So these are my own
18 observations. I think there was a fair amount of
19 sympathy on the Republican side. I think on the
20 Democrat side they didn't think that there was
21 necessarily a problem with the sanctuaries or
22 monuments.

1 I think one of the issues of the
2 Chairman was his key takeaway was the issue of
3 China rather than fisheries management in
4 sanctuaries. As we've talked, the issue of China
5 is related to not having fishing vessels out
6 there --

7 MS. SIMONDS: Exactly.

8 MR. WHALEY: -- and enforcement
9 vessels out there. I'm not sure that connection
10 was clearly made. And maybe, as Eric testified,
11 not as a member of the Council but as a private
12 citizen, he may have some views as well.

13 But my impression was that at least
14 this subcommittee, they checked the box of having
15 the hearing and beating up a little bit on the
16 administration. And that may be as far as it
17 goes.

18 MS. SIMONDS: Did you think that
19 Amata's map educated some of them?

20 MR. WHALEY: I think so. I think
21 everybody around this table may have seen that
22 map once or twice before, but it was new to a lot

1 of members on the committee. And I think that
2 was a good visual.

3 MS. SIMONDS: Yes, I mean, a visual,
4 nobody really needs to say anything about the
5 effects of monuments and sanctuaries in our
6 region. So I thought that was really good.

7 MR. WHALEY: Yes.

8 MR. ANSON: Anyone else have any
9 questions for Dave? Oh, Eric?

10 MR. REID: Yes. I only spoke for
11 myself, and I had to say it three times just to
12 make sure they understood I wasn't representing
13 the New England Council.

14 Yes, I think Dave is reasonably right.
15 As far as the chart goes, it was hard for the
16 four or five members of the committee who were
17 actually there to see it. But it was a pretty
18 good visual. Because it's a big, giant red blob
19 in the Pacific which is a huge problem.

20 I did have a conversation with the
21 Chairman about the use of the Antiquities Act
22 after, and he indicated that he understood that

1 it was an issue to the marine environment. And
2 where it's going to go from there I really don't
3 know. But, you know, I suppose I fed him a
4 leading question, and he answered it in the
5 perfect political form which was, yes, we're on
6 top of it or something like that. So anyway, I
7 think Dave got it right.

8 MR. WHALEY: Just to note, the
9 Chairman of that subcommittee is from Arizona, so
10 they have a lot of experience with the
11 Antiquities Act. But those are very different,
12 the on land issues are very different from the
13 issues in the marine monument. So I'm not sure
14 that connection was made, but there is clear
15 animus towards the Antiquities Act from the
16 Chairman of that subcommittee.

17 MR. WHALEY: Well, I did mention the
18 shards of pottery if that helps you any.

19 MR. ANSON: Yes sir, go ahead.

20 MR. PETTINGER: Yes. Dave, on the
21 Slide 14, the other issues, legislation possible,
22 you mention offshore wind, where are they going

1 with that? What's the --

2 MR. WHALEY: Well, the members that
3 I've heard so far that are clamoring for a
4 hearing are mostly East Coast members. I may
5 have mentioned at the main meeting there was a
6 non-official Congressional hearing that was held
7 in New Jersey.

8 It was a hearing that was held by one
9 member. It was not committee hearing. So there
10 was actually no record of it other than on his
11 website. There was no formal committee action to
12 do that hearing. So as a result, he has been
13 pressuring the Resources Committee to hold a
14 hearing.

15 I know there are stakeholders who
16 would like to talk about West Coast offshore wind
17 issues. But I don't know that those have been
18 communicated to the committee yet.

19 MR. PETTINGER: Thank you.

20 MR. ANSON: Anyone else?

21 Seeing none, Dave, thank you.

22 MR. WHALEY: Just one quick note, I

1 think there are going to be a couple of
2 Congressional staff here tomorrow to listen in on
3 a couple of the issues. They're not going to be
4 doing any formal presentations, but if folks want
5 to meet them when they're here let me know.

6 MR. ANSON: We'll make sure that they
7 wear a target when they come in, okay.

8 All right. So moving on in the
9 agenda, that takes us to public comment. Before
10 we move into that though, we have been working
11 behind the scenes here to address the request
12 that Kitty had made when we were looking at the
13 agenda to move the Endangered Species Act
14 integration policy update that was scheduled for
15 Friday, to move it to Thursday at some time.

16 And so Sam has checked with staff, and
17 we're going to move that to Thursday in the 4:30
18 to 5:15 time slot which is currently the overview
19 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act and CEQs, NEPA
20 regulations. And that will now be moved to
21 Friday at the 9:00 a.m. time slot. So I just
22 want to let everybody know.

1 So that will take us into public
2 comment. I'm looking to Morgan. Do we have
3 anybody from the public here in person that has
4 signed up, Morgan?

5 MS. COREY: One moment. No, no one
6 has signed up in the room.

7 MR. ANSON: No one has signed up in
8 the room, okay. Thank you. And what about
9 online?

10 Okay, so public input is a vital part
11 of the Council Coordination Committee process.
12 And we will welcome public comment from in-person
13 and virtual attendees.

14 Anyone joining us virtually that
15 wishes to provide public comment should use the
16 raised hand feature on the Webex, upon which they
17 will receive an invitation to unmute. Virtual
18 participants should ensure that they are
19 registered for the webinar with their first and
20 last name.

21 In-person attendees wishing to speak
22 during public comments should sign in and

1 indicate that they will provide public comment at
2 the registration table located at the entrance of
3 the meeting room.

4 We accept only one public comment per
5 person. Each speaker maybe limited to three
6 minutes based on the total number of public
7 comment registrants and based on the discretion
8 of the Chair.

9 If you have a cell phone or similar
10 device, we ask that you keep them on silent or
11 vibrating mode during the meeting. Please note
12 that the public comment may end before the
13 published agenda time if all registered in-person
14 and virtual participants have completed providing
15 their comments.

16 So we have one person, two people here
17 for the public in-person portion of today's public
18 comment period. We have Brian Randolph. Oh,
19 he's here, but no public comment? I'm sorry.
20 Yes.

21 So no one online, Morgan, just to make
22 sure, and no one in person?

1 MS. COREY: Nobody.

2 MR. ANSON: Okay. Well, I think that
3 will conclude our meeting for today. We'll see
4 everyone for 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

5 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
6 went off the record at 4:26 p.m.)

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In the matter of: Council Coordination Committee

Before: NOAA

Date: 10-11-23

Place: Arlington, VA

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate complete record of the proceedings.



Court Reporter

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