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149th SSC

NASEM: National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Ad Hoc Committee on Assessing Equity in the distribution of Fishery Management Benefits.

This Committee was formed at the request of NOAA Fisheries in the context of NOAA's EEJ Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy. It is focused on Commercial and For Hire fisheries. The committee expects to issue a report by the first of the year.

The Committee's assigned tasks are:

1. Determine the categories of information required to adequately assess where and to whom the primary benefits of Commercial and for Hire fishery management accrue;
2. Determine what information currently exists within those categories and what additional information, if any NOAA Fisheries would need to collect;
3. Identify potential obstacles to collecting this additional data; and
4. Identify methodologies the agency could use to assess the relative distribution of benefits from federal commercial and for hire fishery management based on available information.

The committee is made up of academics, many of whom serve on SSCs. The membership is weighted toward regions with contentious allocation fights. They have met seven times. They have received Western Pacific Region input from the Pacific Island Regional Office Regional Administrator, Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center Human Dimensions staff, and Council Staff. Testimony presented in public portions of the meetings has focused on successes and failures in obtaining the data needed to assess equity in the receipt of benefits. Some commentary heard by the committee has suggested looking beyond the primary economic benefits from management. Some have also focused on the difficulties under the RPA: Right to Privacy Act and OMB regulations in getting the demographic data needed to assess equity in the distribution of management benefits effectively.

Contentious allocation fights may not have arisen in the Western Pacific Region, but do we have the data, or have we tried to assess their possibility? Were there equity issues in the formation of WP limited Entry Programs? In Permit transfers? Are there potential equity issues in the commercial and non-commercial Hawaii Deep 7 and Uku fisheries? Are there equity issues in the Monument declarations?

The committee's work is a work in progress, and portions of meetings are closed to committee members only, though results and recommendations, including all input, are to be made public through the NASEM process. The Council will be able to nominate reviewers for the draft report expected later this Fall. The Council will be updated as the work of the committee progresses.