U.S. Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

Meeting

Tuesday

September 10, 2024

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee met at the Kodiak Area Native Association, 111 W Rezanof Drive, Kodiak, Alaska, at 8:30 a.m., Jocelyn Runnebaum, Chair, presiding.

Members Present:

Kristina Alexander, Endowed Chair of Marine Policy and Law, Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University
Bob Beal, Executive Director, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*
Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service
Hugh Cowperthwaite, Senior Program Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Jaime Diamond, CEO/General Manager, Santa Barbara Landing LLC; Owner, Stardust Sportfishing
David Donaldson, Executive Director, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission*
Thomas Fote, Retired, Recreational Fisherman*
Jamie Goen, Executive Director, Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers
Jim Green, Master/Captain, F/V American Spirit
Amy Green, Director, Center for Science & Technology in Education; Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership, College of Education, University of Maryland
Jennifer Hagen, Marine Policy Advisor, Quileute Tribe; Marine Biologist*
Bobbi Hudson, Executive Director, Pacific Shellfish Institute
Natasha M. Hayden, PE, Vice President of Lands & Natural Resources, Afognak Native Corporation
Marissa Merculieff, Director, Office of Justice and Governance Administration for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Alaska
Meredith Moore, Director, Fish Conservation Program at Ocean Conservancy
Linda O'Dierno, Fish and Seafood Development Specialist

Ryan Prewitt, Chef and Owner, Peche Restaurant
Kellie Ralston, Vice Chair; Vice President for Conservation and Public Policy, Bonefish and Tarpon Trust
Jocelyn Runnebaum, Ph.D., Chair; Marine Scientist, The Nature Conservancy
Sarah Schumann, Fisherman; Owner/Principal Consultant, Shining Seas Fisheries Consulting, LLC*
Patrick Sullivan, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University
Clayward Tam, Cooperative Fisheries Research Coordinator, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group*
Brett Veerhusen, Principal, Ocean Strategies

NOAA/NMFS Staff Participants Present:

Russ Dunn, National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries
Heidi Lovett, Supervisory Policy Analyst, Office of Policy, and Acting Designated Federal Officer
Emily Menashes, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations
Marjorie Mooney-Seus, Communications Program Manager, Alaska Fisheries Science Center
Sam Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Regulatory Programs
Jenni Wallace, Director, Office of Policy
Cisco Werner, Director, Scientific Programs and Chief Science Advisor
Amilee Wilson, Tribal Relations Coordinator, Alaska Regional Office
Katie Zanowicz, Assistant DFO

Also Present (NOAA/NMFS Staff and Visitors):

Alisa Abookire, Alaska Coastal Observations and Research

Caitlin Adams, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Administrator
E. Anderson*
Scott Arndt, Mayor, Kodiak Island Borough
Cynthia Berns, Vice President of Community and External Affairs, Old Harbor Native Corporation*
Eva Benedezova, APS Kodiak
Julie Bonney, Owner and Executive Director, Alaska Groundfish Databank
Loretta Brown, Policy Analyst, Salmon State*
Shannon Carroll, Director of Alaska Public Affairs and Fisheries Development, Trident Seafoods*
Kylar Chandler, Program Analyst, NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries*
Laura Diederick, Lead, External Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement
Bill Donaldson, Fishery Management Specialist, Alaska Fisheries Science Center
Paul Doremus, Vice President for Policy and Sustainability Strategy, Trident Seafoods*
Jenna Dutton, Communications Specialist, NMFS
Brandee Gerke*
Seamus Hayden, Fisherman
Clayton Hevly, North Pacific Seafoods
Davis Hovey, KMXT Radio*
Nicole Kimball, Vice President, Alaska Operations, Pacific Seafood Processors Associations
Lindsey Kraatz, Ph.D., Senior Science Advisor
Tom Maier*
Julie Matweyen, Alaska Sea Grant
Katy McGauley*
Gabriela McMurtry, Fisheries Policy Analyst, NMFS Office of Policy*
Connie Melovidov, ECO Fisheries Tribal Liaison, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island*
Patty O'Donnell, Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association

Mateo Paz-Soldan, MP Strategies*
Amy Peterson, Community Affairs Liaison, Koniag
Theresa Peterson, Fisheries Policy Director, Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Mike Pfeffer, Chief Executive Officer, Kodiak Area Native Association
Will Poston, Policy Consultant, American Saltwater Guides Association*
Wyatt Rhea-Fournier, Alaska Fisheries Outreach Manager, Marine Stewardship Council*
Danielle Ringer, Fishermen, Ringer Consulting
Sean Rooney, Fisheries Biologist, Alaska Fisheries Science Center
Tim Sartwell, Deputy Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries, NMFS*
Melissa Schmeil, Fishing Family
Tyler Schmeil, Kodiak shipyard owner; F/V Alaska Spirit
Deborah Shapiro*
Dots Sherwood*
Spencer Showalter, Advisor to the Chief of Staff; Advisor to the Deputy Administrator for Operations
Marc Solano, Seafood Processing Workforce Development Coordinator, Alaska Sea Grant*
Maureen Trnka, Ph.D., Senior Advisor for Regulatory Programs
Jordan Young, Welder, Highmark Marine
Geoff Toy*

*participating via webinar

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Proceedings

(9:00 a.m.)

Welcome, Roll Call, & Agenda Review

Chair Runnebaum: Thank you. It turns out we're doing karaoke today. So do I get to -- do I get to hit the gavel?

All right, I would like to call this meeting to order.

Ms. Lovett: Hi, I'm Heidi Lovett. I'm going to read a privacy statement first. Pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974, all federal agencies are required to tell people, one, what our authority is for collecting personally identifiable information, or PII, from them, what the purpose of the collection, how we are using and sharing the PII, and whether or not the person can refuse to provide the PII, and finally, what if any are the consequences of refusing to provide PII.

In order to collect PII at all in a system of records, which this meeting is, even if accompanied by this privacy statement, we also have to notify the public generally of this collection, which is why we are reading this statement at the front end of this meeting.

We're sharing this because we want you as participants in this meeting and public commenters to not provide personally identifiable information, PII, or any business identifiable information, or controlled unclassified information, which is known as CUI, during any recorded virtual conferences.

Speakers, sessions, presentations, and any public comments during federal advisory committee meetings are made publicly available, and today, this is through this webinar, and later the transcripts will be on the web.

We're not recording the audio of this meeting other than the transcriber in the corner. The purpose of noting all of this is that an individual's permission is

required for use of photographs, video, and audio in any format used for communications, outreach, interviews, and dissemination of mission products intended to promote awareness and appreciation of the environment, and NOAA science service and stewardship rules.

NOAA's websites and social media outlets must not collect any personal information from children under the age of 13, so anyone that's on the video, please be sure to blur your background if you have young people in your home.

I think that's all I need to say. Thank you.

Next, I'm going to do a roll call so we know who all is in attendance as members. Christina Alexander?

Ms. Alexander: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Hugh Cowperthwaite?

Mr. Cowperthwaite: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Jamie Diamond?

Ms. Diamond: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Tom Fote?

Mr. Fote: Here.

Ms. Lovett: We can hear you. Thank you, Tom. Jamie Goen?

Ms. Goen: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Amy Green?

Ms. Green: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Jim Green?

Mr. Green: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Jennifer Hagen?

Ms. Hagen: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Natasha Hayden?

Ms. Hayden: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Bobbi Hudson?

Mr. Hudson: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Marissa Merculieff?

Ms. Merculieff: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Meredith Moore?

Ms. Moore: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Linda O'Dierno?

Ms. O'Dierno: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Ryan Prewitt?

Mr. Prewitt: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Kellie Ralston?

Ms. Ralston: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Jocelyn Runnebaum?

Chair Runnebaum: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Sarah Schumann? She's not here. Pat Sullivan?

Dr. Sullivan: Here.

Ms. Lovett: Clay Tam?

Mr. Tam: Present.

Ms. Lovett: And Brett Veerhusen?

Mr. Veerhusen: Here.

Ms. Lovett: I know that John Young is not present, and our three advisors, the executive directors of the commission, will be joining us later in the week. Oh, David is on, I apologize. David Donaldson.

Mr. Donaldson: Hi, I'm Here.

Ms. Lovett: Great to See You, or Hear You.

Mr. Donaldson: Yes.

Ms. Lovett: Thank you. We are done with roll call.

Chair Runnebaum: Great, well, I want to welcome all the new members that are joining us for the first time in person.

It's really exciting to get to be here together and to see everybody. So this is super, super exciting.

And thank you, Janet, and your leadership staff, leadership team, for coming. It's really, it's great to see everybody.

So I wanted to start this meeting with a land acknowledge for Kodiak. So we are gathered here today in the ancient homeland and traditional territory of the Alutiiq Sugpiaq.

On behalf of MAFAC, I would like to acknowledge the ten tribes of the Kodiak Alutiiq region.

We acknowledge that Alaska's native people have been indigenous to this land for other 10,000 years, living their cultural and tribal values as their ancestors and elders taught them.

We acknowledge the painful history of colonization and genocide here in Alaska and across the nation, and we acknowledge and admire the resilience of the Alutiiq families who make up an important part of Kodiak today.

I believe it is important, excuse me, I believe it is important to state this land acknowledgement because MAFAC's scope is throughout what is now the United States and its territories.

It is important for us to understand and acknowledge the history and enduring cultures of those who have been here since time immemorial.

Quyana to the Alutiiq Sugpiaq for their stewardship since time immemorial. I made it through without crying.

The first time I read that yesterday, I was feeling very moved by it. So, Heidi, I want to acknowledge that Bob Beal is on, too.

So, I'm really grateful that MAFAC is fortunate enough to be here in Kodiak this week, so that we can hear directly from the community whose culture and identity are dependent on the health of fisheries and the marine resources here in this region.

Thank you to all the MAFAC members who traveled near and very far to join us this week, and thank you so much to the members who are joining online.

I know it's a struggle to be remote and joining remotely, so I appreciate you putting in the time to join us.

So, MAFAC is an advisory body to NOAA Fisheries. We provide recommendations to the agency on national level policies, procedures, and initiatives.

Throughout this meeting, we have several opportunities to get to hear from members of the public through the panels and through public comment periods.

We have two for this meeting to make space to hear from the community directly.

Being able to hear from the community really strengthens MAFAC's recommendations that we generate through our subcommittees, so I think this is a really incredible opportunity to be here in community and place.

I also think that MAFAC is extremely fortunate to have NOAA leadership join us this week.

It makes it an incredible opportunity for both MAFAC and NOAA to get to hear from community directly at the same time.

So I'm really personally very excited for my fellow MAFAC members to get to experience Kodiak.

Kodiak holds a really special in my heart. This is the first place I was introduced to commercial fisheries.

I set net in Uganik Bay for a couple of summers and really learned quite a bit while I was here.

So the agenda planning committee for the MAFAC committee that created today's agenda, or this week's agenda, really committed to creating significant opportunity for all of us to be able to learn about this community and the richness and some of the struggles that this community is facing so that we can be better informed as MAFAC.

So I think I've touched on all the things I wanted to say, and I will now hand it over.

Oh, no, there's a lot more to say. Okay, so first, we're going to go through our agenda, and I'm going to open up my very fancy binder that I pulled together to be organized and not forget these things.

So today, we are going to wrap this up quickly, so I'm not talking anymore, and hand it over to Mike Pfeffer, the Chief Executive Officer from Kodiak Area Native Association, which is where we're meeting today, to hear a few remarks.

And then I will hand it over to our assistant administrator, Janet Coit, for her remarks and report out, and then we'll have a discussion there.

We'll have a brief break, and then we will, at 10:30 we're going to move into our first panel, which I'm super excited about. This will be the community and local industry perspectives panel.

And I would just note that there are a few changes to that panel. So unfortunately, a couple folks won't be able to make it.

Denise May won't be able to make it and Cooper Curtis will not be joining us, but is sending Jordan

Young instead.

And then we will break for lunch, so please take some time to sit with each other, meet with your mentors, and get to know each other.

And then we'll come back at 2:00 o'clock for the Climate-Ready Fisheries panel part two, which is the fishing industry perspective.

And the only agenda change I would note there is that Nicole Kimball unfortunately won't be able to make it today, but the rest of the participants remain the same.

So then we'll have another break and in the afternoon, in the later afternoon, we'll get an overview from Maggie Mooney-Seus and Amilee Wilson on the overview of the Alaska Equity Environmental Justice Activities.

And we'll do a brief recap, and then our meeting will adjourn. And we are going to be leaving straight from here, the buses are here, to go to our dinner tonight.

So if you feel like there's anything you need to go for the full evening, you might want to get it at lunch time. Is that right, Katie? Okay.

Okay. Now, Emily, can you pull up the slides, please? So we're just going to go over our team commitments and norms.

These were introduced some time ago, a few meetings ago, and I think it's super helpful that we talk about these.

And we don't have to have a big discussion or any discussion at all, but this is what we've maintained as proposed team commitments.

So please actively listen. Listen to better understand and not simply to respond or provide feedback.

Lean in, lean out, so please take space and provide your viewpoints and also make space for others to

provide their viewpoints.

Please speak on behalf of yourself using I statements and speaking from your own experience and not on behalf of others.

And really, I think this is important for today, embrace difficulty conversations. We talk about a lot of nuanced and complicated things in this space, and I hope that we can continue to do so in a really respectful and thoughtful way.

Assume good intent. I think that it's good to give people the benefit of the doubt. But sometimes we mess up, and our actions don't necessarily meet our intent.

And so acknowledge our impacts and work to bring intent and impact closer together.

And practice curiosity before practicing defensiveness. So if you hear something that you think you disagree with or feels a little uncomfortable, it's good to sit and reflect on that.

And every time I read these, I feel like I need to have this posted in my house to remember every day.

So, Emily, if we can go to the next slide, I just want to -- we've only met -- this group has mostly only met remotely, so our meeting norms are a little bit different when we're in person.

So of course, please try to limit distractions and try not to multi-task. I also know that life is still happening in the background for many of you, and you still have businesses and families happening at home.

We have these amazing karaoke microphones. Please use these to speak so people online can hear.

And for those that are online, Heidi read the privacy statement, but if you feel that you need to protect others in your home, please blur your background.

And for those that are online, we're hoping to limit the online chat for IT support only, and that if you want to jump into the conversation, please signal your interest to speak.

Here in person, we get to stick our placards up like this. And if you're online, just raise your hand.

And then we don't have any voting, but this is just here for if we do. We vote the same way that we want to speak. We just flip the card up, I think is how we've been doing it in the past. But we don't have any voting today.

Okay. I think that those are -- I think we're good. Thank you. Now let me go to my agenda before I put Janet on the spot again.

Mike, yes. I keep wanting to just jump right to you. I'm sorry. Okay, Mike, wonderful, we don't have a seat for you.

Mr. Pfeffer: Good morning. Thanks. You want to stand up front? In the back? In the corner? Anywhere?

No, no, I said too much. Thanks, though. I'll stand here to the corner so I'm not behind too many folks.

Good morning, I'm Mike Pfeffer. I'm the Chief Executive Officer with the Kodiak Area Native Association, or KANA.

Thanks for being here. Welcome to our facility here. The Kodiak Area Native Association is a consortium of the ten federally recognized tribes in and around Kodiak Island.

We provide health, social services, economic developments, climate resilience programs.

We partner with NOAA on a couple of grants. We've got a coastal rehabilitation grant, a climate resilience grant, and a couple of others.

I tell folks the story about driving down the road one

day past our health clinic on a Saturday and I saw some folks jogging around town for a cancer awareness run that was being run by KANA past a battery and recyclable gathering point that KANA was supporting.

And then seeing some of our folks out on the -- out on the beach digging mussels and collecting mussels for shellfish testing.

So we do a lot in the community. We're really proud of what we do. We really support the community in areas where we are able.

KANA was incorporated in 1966 and we put this building together, for example, as part of our economic development initiative.

We feel that if we can support the community through any opportunity that we're going to try to find those opportunities.

And investment into Kodiak through economic development when we developed this facility was something that we felt was important so that we would have presence in Kodiak, a welcoming area for folks like you to come and enjoy our community and we're glad we could share it with you today.

If there's anything that we can do to help you during your time here, Emily is our person always at the ready.

So if there's anything that I can do, I'm glad to help. Just let me know. I'm right down the hall.

But other than that, welcome to Kodiak. Welcome to KANA. We're glad to have you.

Chair Runnebaum: Thank you. Great, thank you, Mike. This is a really beautiful space and I'm excited to get to be here.

Now, I can hand it over to Janet.

Ms. Coit: Good morning. And Mike, before you leave, thank you so much. Thank you, Emily.

This is an outstanding facility. We feel really fortunate to be here and you guys are amazing.

So I am so glad to be here in beautiful Kodiak for the MAFAC meeting. It's great to be with you all, including those online, and to be back in such a special place, to hear more about Alaska and Alaska fishery issues, Alaska communities.

We know fisheries issues are core to Alaska's identity, economy, welfare, culture. So I'm so looking forward to the presentations, the discussions, the field trips, and hope to illuminate how the federal work of the National Marine Fisheries Service impacts and is informed by the people of Alaska.

And I'm super glad that we're going to our lab and that we'll be hearing from state and local leaders and that we're going to processing plants.

We are all part of communities and the resilience and health of these coastal communities is so intertwined with fisheries and the health of the ocean.

And so when we talk about ecosystem based fisheries management, we're very aware that humans are part of the ecosystem.

Our impact, our dependence on natural resources. So, I think this is going to be a really special MAFAC meeting.

I'm here with the leadership of NMFS. Right next to me is Cisco, our chief scientist, Cisco Werner, Emily Menashes, our Deputy Director of Operations, and next to Heidi is Sam Rauch, the head of our regulatory enterprise.

So, we all look forward to these meetings and feel like this is a very special opportunity to hear from you directly.

It's your meeting, not ours, but we're pleased to be here and part of it.

I want to give special thanks to our chair, Jocelyn Runnebaum. We had a chance to have a coffee in Maine this summer and really talk about her vision for MAFAC.

And I think that you can see the fingerprints of the planning team all over this agenda. So I'll give a shoutout to Christina Alexander, Jamie Goen, Natasha Hayden, Meredith Moore, Jocelyn, and Brett Veerhusen.

This is a fantastic agenda and I'm excited about the climate ready fisheries panels today as well as the rest of it.

So thank you in particular, Natasha and Brett, from the panels.

I also wanted to welcome -- I know a couple of you, but the new MAFAC members because I wasn't able because of a family obligation to go to the last virtual meeting.

So if you don't mind just raising your hand when I call out your name and please introduce yourselves if I haven't met you and let's make an effort to get to know all of us at NOAA Fisheries.

Christina Alexander. Jamie Goen. Amy Green. Jim Green. Bobbi Hudson. Marissa Merculieff. And John Young, who is not here.

So thrilled that we're all here together. Thank you for being here. And I want to mention also, congratulate Jamie Goen.

This is her -- she is a short-lived member of MAFAC. So she was recently -- to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

And so per our policy, she will be here today and then be stepping off to join that council.

My first in person MAFAC meeting was in Puerto Rico. I just want to acknowledge that Natasha came the furthest.

She had five or six flights. They got delayed. She spent the night in the airport. So I remember how important that meeting was and our interactions with the fishing community there.

But I just want to say, Natasha, I'm so glad we could come to your home turf and you could have a short commute.

And I also wanted to add a few words about the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, known as MAFAC, which Jocelyn and all of you were convened today, because I believe it's one of the first advisory committees created by Congress.

It has to comply fully with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. And the point of MAFAC is to be an expert source of consultation on Marine Resource policy for NOAA, specifically NOAA fisheries, but also for the Department of Commerce.

And some of what you've done is write to the secretary and elevate things to commerce. You really have a unique role.

We're often in more formal regulatory settings, so the fact that it's your meeting and we have this opportunity for dialog, that we get to draw on all the life experience and expertise that you're bringing into the room is really special and really valuable.

You are free working with us to create your own priorities and agenda, but some of the things that we ask for advice on are setting national living marine resources policies, developing and implementing departmental initiatives and programs, evaluating and recommending needed changes during the reauthorization process for the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and assessing other areas of interest that are relevant to the mission and goals of NOAA

fisheries.

So a broad scope of influence and by representing so many points of view, tribal, commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, aquaculture, academic institutions, seafood and consumer groups, our important mission to protect marine mammals and protected resources, just to name a few.

You're informing and enriching and deepening our ability to carry out our mandates. There's a lot of examples.

I think the one that we cited at many meetings of MAFAC's influence has been the work that a MAFAC subcommittee led in the Columbia River creating a Columbia River Basin Partnership.

That was absolutely fundamental and critical to the progress that we have made in this administration, making commitments to restore salmon to the Columbia River.

And I think if not for that MAFAC effort, which was a more neutral ground for perspectives to come together with goals beyond delisting salmon, having healthy and harvestable salmon in that river basin, we wouldn't have come so far.

So don't underestimate the power of MAFAC.

This meeting, it's special to be in Kodiak right now, but I want to acknowledge that it's a very difficult time in Alaska for a variety of reasons.

The coastal communities and the fishing industry are grappling with a whole host of issues. Some folks have termed it a perfect storm.

So we have the collapse of important fisheries, like the crab fishery and some of the salmon populations.

There is still COVID-related hangovers. There's global market factors that are adversely affecting Alaska fisheries.

There's concerns about bycatch and how that's impacting Alaska natives and fisheries. And there's very serious concerns.

We've had more federal fisheries disasters in Alaska in the last few years than ever before, largely due to climate change crashes, but other factors.

And there's been delays in getting that funding out. And I just want to acknowledge that because I think that's something we'll hear about.

There's a lot of reasons for those delays. We're working very hard and I believe we'll get significant funding out this month.

But that causes real pain for people when you have a disaster and you hear help is on the way and it takes years for that help to get there.

The programs aren't really accomplishing their goal, and I just want to acknowledge that up front.

We're working hard to improve the system. We will do better, but there's been a real impact on the ground in ways that are very tangible and painful and wrapped up with the whole well-being of families and communities.

Alaska waters support some of the most productive and valuable commercial fisheries in the world, and we've been really proud of the management of those fisheries under the Magnuson Stevens Act.

However, and this is something we're talking about here, climate change is impacting those fisheries and the ecosystems at a devastating pace, and the impacts require informed decisions, so more science, and difficult choices.

Cisco likes to talk about -- he doesn't like to -- he talks about non-stationarity, and that is the systems that we've seen fluctuate over decades aren't behaving that way anymore.

And it's a relatively recent phenomenon as the result

of climate change, and it's really taxing our fisheries management, our fisheries governance, and the systems we have in place.

So the effects of climate change touch down here in very tangible ways, and again, communities are about culture and food.

When we talk about resilience, it's about are people healthy? Are they able to put food on the table? Are they able to work? Can their kids go to school?

So the things that we're talking about just manifest in very, very significant ways here in Kodiak and in other communities.

I don't want to talk too much about specific climate change conditions, but recently we published a paper about the borealization of the Bering Sea changing from an arctic to a subarctic environment and how that is related to the crash of the snow crab.

There's other closures and impacts and communities for the changes that were seen related to climate change.

And for me, that is a fundamental framework for all the work that we're doing here at NOAA Fisheries.

We want to work with you all. We're going to hear from the seafood industry, the native Alaskan communities, and have been working very. Closely with the Alaska congressional delegation on the very questions that we're here to talk about.

How can NOAA fisheries do more to address with the authorities we have, with the funding we have, to address these tough issues and increase the resilience and the predictability of our fisheries and help communities that are struggling.

Again, some of the work that Cisco's talking about, about modernization our data collection to have a better grasp on the changes and to predict changes is an important part of our work.

And we all know a core tenet of MSA is sustainability. So seeing and predicting changes, restoring habitat, adapting and innovating to address the challenges, that's what we need to do, mandate of sustainability.

One of the -- you're going to get kind of a preview of the Alaska Seafood Snapshot Report. I'm afraid that's all just validating what we know.

Prices are up. Revenues are down. Tremendous losses for the Alaskan communities, processing facilities closing.

So we're going to go over that information. It was part of what we had committed to do as part of our National Seafood Strategy, which is trying to delve more into the economic and socio-economic issues around fisheries so they can be taken into account more intentionally in our management decisions.

So that snapshot report we'll preview with you and talk about. It's something members of the fisheries have requested us to do, and we very quickly, for NOAA Fisheries we very quickly turned it around.

We have a lot of interviews with folks in the industry and it's an example of the type of research we want to do in various regions of the nation as we look at a goal of ours, which is again looking at the economic, socio-economic factors that are involved in the decision making at the councils and with the states and communities.

The National Seafood Strategy is something that the Secretary of Commerce was excited about from the time Gina Raimondo started, and something I was excited about, something I had done in my capacity in my Rhode Island job.

So our goal there is to support and sustain a thriving domestic U.S. seafood economy. And when we started that, things were in a better and different place than they are now.

But I think it's even more important that we have a

strategy. Again, we've been working with the Alaska delegation.

The strategy talks specifically about things that we can do that are in our purview, but also commits us to working with other federal agencies, which we've been doing very specifically.

Alexa Cole has put together a working group on trade. We've been working with the State Department on some of the issues involving other nations around the world to similarly ban Russian imports.

We've been working with USDA on their programs. So while we want to talk about what's within our authority, we also want to use the might of the U.S. government, and nobody's speaking out for fisheries and seafood the way NOAA Fisheries is. And that's part of the strategy.

Shifting gears a bit, I wanted to just emphasize the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as two statutes that we've talked about at previous MAFAC meetings, and where we've had an opportunity to have additional funding, much of which has gone out in grant programs, some of which we're using as one-time funding to invest in some of these advances in science to work with the councils.

Sam can talk more about that if you'd like, but I just want to say that's been a very high priority focus for NOAA Fisheries to use that money wisely.

We've made progress with the grants. Many of them have touched down in Alaska. And we focused on fish passage, recovery of west coast and Alaska salmon, tribal treaty fishing rights, Pacific salmon and steelhead science, and a number of grant programs that are around fish passage, habitat restoration, coastal resilience, citizen science, et cetera.

So this has been Carrie Robinson and her Office of Habitat Restoration has been the primary leader for the grant programs.

And with that funding, we have awarded over 200 grants totaling almost a billion dollars over the last few years.

Projects all over the country, $223 million have gone to tribal nations and indigenous communities.

That has been a significant focus under this administration, and Alaska partners have received a number of grants for that important work.

There's more to come. There's a third round of the grants that we're going to be rolling out starting this fall, so that is the last round of this bump up, but part of what we've been doing and trying to work with tribes and underserved communities is encouraging applications and having people get out and talk about these opportunities.

I wanted to just highlight one example in Alaska. There are many, many grants that go into Alaska and Alaska native communities, but one is an investment in the long-term survival of the prize Alaska Copper River salmon.

So that is a fish that plays a crucial role for Alaska natives for the commercial fishing industry.

Their numbers are declining, and the grant went to partners to address the threat to the fish by removing the barriers that blocked the access to spawning grounds and blocked the access to the cold water rearing habitat.

So that project is intended to and I think will open up more than 70 miles of stream to migratory salmon.

And we've been working with the Eyak Corporation, an Alaska Native Village Corporation, to break ground on this project.

That's the type of work that's being funded with these grants, looking to restore habitat and to work with partners, many of which under these grant programs we've never worked with before.

So we're really proud of that work. Again, I want to emphasize that while it's all about habitat, that is a future oriented important critical prospect, but it doesn't address or remedy the short term and immediate needs, so we need to do both, which is a good segue to turning to our shared commitment to furthering equity and environmental justice.

And I do believe that in the last few years, we're moving in the right direction, and there's a long way to go.

We so appreciated MAFAC's really thoughtful input on our equity and environmental justice strategy, what we call EEJ, and we recently have shared our regional implementation plans that are intended to incorporate the strategy into the work at the regional level.

Our goal is to make the services we provide available to everyone so that no community is overserved or lacks access, and hopefully to embed these EEJ tenets so they're part of just our business as usual at NOAA and they're not an add on, but they're core.

Sam Rauch will talk more about these efforts when he speaks tomorrow and later today. I think, I believe Maggie Mooney-Seus is going to talk about Alaska's EEJ implementation plan.

I just want to say because equity gets a lot of attention is one of those topics that is sometimes discussed heatedly.

I mean, I think everyone can agree that access and equity when it comes to a public resource like fisheries, that those are laudable goals and that this agency should be pursuing them.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, EBFM, ecosystem based fisheries management, is at the heart of work and climate change requires really updating that science and how we approach it.

I recently listened in to your very efficient MAFAC

meeting where you discussed and voted on the recommendations to approve our revised ecosystem based fisheries management roadmap and we are still in the process of reviewing your recommendations.

But I particularly appreciated your points on both accelerating the action to better address climate impacts and the call for better inclusion of indigenous knowledge and for the call to apply the principles of our EEJ strategy in that EBFM roadmap, so thank you.

Just to reiterate that I'm really looking forward to hearing from you and learning more about all of you and your perspectives at this meeting.

I'm sure we will have a very robust discussion, some of your work around climate ready fisheries and what does that mean and how that touch down is very much on that dialogue.

We feel that we are in this together. We appreciate that we have MAFAC to advise us. And just end again by saying thank you to all of you and I'm happy to open the floor to questions.

Chair Runnebaum: Or comments. Go ahead, Natasha. If you press the green button, or press the little button until it turns green.

So we have -- we're doing great on time. We have until 10:15 to have a conversation with Janet Coit, so Natasha, kick us off.

Climate Ready Fisheries Panel Part I: Community and Local Industry Perspectives

Ms. Hayden: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Janet, for being here. Thank you for your lovely and extensive remarks.

I am just wanting to extend my gratitude. I'm from Kodiak, born and raised here, and I'm just delighted that you were all able to come in here and that Kodiak is putting on its finest for all of you this morning.

And I really am quite delighted that you in particular here with your leadership team to have an opportunity to see boots on the ground.

There's nothing like it. There's nothing that will inform your ability to understand the challenges that we face and the needs that we have as our community and just really grateful that you're here. Thank you.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Natasha. I think having you on MAFAC is likely the reason we're here. And I'm really thrilled we're here, too.

Okay, Jamie?

Ms. Goen: Thank you. Thank you for the opening remarks. I know my time here is short lived on MAFAC, which I'm very sad to say, so I'll get in some comments while I can.

Thanks for your opening remarks. Really appreciate what the agency is doing to speed up fishery disasters.

You know that our Bering Sea crab fleet has been hit hard by a crisis and collapse in part due to climate change, so we really appreciate that the agency is working to speed up that process.

And also I appreciated your comments on ecosystems based fisheries management and really working to accelerate starting to do adaptive management.

What does that mean? What does it look like? And really trying to start making changes that will make these fisheries more resilient and the communities that depend on them. Thanks.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Jamie. You better make the most of this MAFAC meeting.

Ms. Moore: Thank you. Thanks for the great overview. I just want to put a quick note in that certainly as you are all working to get the IRA and

BIL funds out and seeing the work and what that is changing for all of you, I think many of us are really keen to help communicate to communities and to decision makers about the benefits and what you were able to build with that infusion of funding.

And I will just say think about what MAFAC can do to help as you are all seeing the results of that and need to communicate it out and what role we can play in that, I think we are all very interested in making sure that these sorts of investments and what you're able to accomplish are well understood and what can be built on top of them. So I just wanted to say that.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Meredith. We've been trying to -- having partners and people in communities that are invested in these projects speak to the value of that is the most I think persuasive and impactful.

So in trying to get out and highlight those projects and have partners talk about them. Some people talk about jobs associated with them.

Some people care about the habitat that's opened up. We're trying to highlight all the benefits.

I think it's really important that the need or the demand far outstripped what we had. So even though we had this huge increase, we found for some of the programs we were getting ten times the amount of applicants that we could fund.

So when they bounce back to their previous levels, that is a very small fraction of what they've been, we're going to find that a lot of projects dry on the vine because there's no funding.

So I really appreciate that opportunity, and I think talking about the pride and impact of the projects with folks in decision making positions is going to be really valuable.

And we have great information on our website. And so check out the projects.

Dr. Sullivan: Good morning. Thanks for everything. I was wanting to let everybody else, but I don't see any other cards up, so I thought I'd tell a story, being an old guy.

The discussion about funding and budgets and so forth reminds me of what our strategic planning and budget group was talking about.

And I saw a YouTube video the other day, Neil deGrasse Tyson. I don't know if that got shared with you or not.

But he spent his whole show talking about the NASA budget, which I thought was really kind of interesting.

So, thinking about transparency and getting a voice out there for it. And so what he did is he held up a dollar that represented the entire U.S. budget and then clipped off the dollar what represented NASA's budget.

And that was the clear portion of the dollar. Just this little sliver of the entire U.S. budget.

Well, it turns out that NOAA's budget, not just National Fisheries Service, but NOAA's budget is one fourth of that little sliver, right?

And so, I like space and space is infinite. But we often think about the ocean as the last frontier, right?

And so there's, in my heart, I think we should be spending more money on this, and I just keep trying to think of how we can get the message out there that we're doing something important and folks should focus on that.

So, I'm just voicing that to be supportive. I'm not critical in any sense, but of course this is something everyone in this room is concerned about.

And I thought it was a very interesting -- but Neil says what he thinks, of course. But have to have some spokespersons out there on our behalf would

be really super if we can kind of think about that in some way. So thanks.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Pat. Christina?

Ms. Alexander: Hello, and thank you for your comments about fishery disaster funding. And I'm coming from the perspective of them in the Gulf of Mexico where we had a severe cyanobacteria outbreak in 2019 that eliminated our oyster and shrimp fisheries in eastern Louisiana and Mississippi and parts of Alabama.

The money was not delayed too much compared to what I've seen on the website where you list when the secretary's decision has been made.

But it's not just getting the money from NOAA, because then it goes to a commission. And then it goes to the state.

And I was getting calls from somebody who works $10 an hour at a cannery and my guess is none of that went to him.

So I don't know how NOAA looks at the disbursement of the funds, whether there's any auditing of that, to see how much the commission and at what point does the commission give the money to the states, and then similarly, how -- I know it's up to the states to decide how to hand it out, but the statute directs it towards fishery and fishery related industries.

So, I'm just raising this point that there's more to just NOAA handing the money out for it to reach the people who need it. Thank you.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Christina. That was a real focus in Puerto Rico when we met with some of the fishing collaboratives.

A couple reactions. One, I'd also been thinking about end-to-end, because we've been focused on our part of the process, but in days on, a lot of the disaster funding that's going to be awarded this month will be

going to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

But when we're looking at improving the process, we need to look at it from the beginning, what's submitted to us, to the end, when does it get to folks?

And I think you acknowledged that the actual spending plans, of whether it goes directly to fishermen or now it can go to processors, are coming to us from the states or from the tribes.

And so, so long as they are within the bounds of the law, they're making the determination of where the money goes.

And, yes, we do audits to see if it's going where it should be, and if it's not, then there's an effort to address that.

And we might want to think about -- you might want to think about a fishery disaster session to talk about the process, the new law, how we're improving the process and the outreach that we're doing.

It seems like there might be an interest. So just a thought. Jamie?

D: Thank you. I really appreciate actually that comment and your statement. In California with our salmon disaster, we, while that's not my fishery, it's my neighbors to the north of us, and the way the money gets distributed, it was very clear that there were some that received quite a bit in the first round and some that received nothing.

And that was the cause for a lot of upset and a lot of harm done to people ultimately. And so thank you for clarifying that we want to look at how this is really happening, where this is going to, when disaster money gets released.

Is this really helping all of those who are impacted? And I'm not trying to make a blanket statement, but this happens everywhere and every time.

But there's room for improvement. And so it's been a rough couple years for folks there and just like here in Alaska, on an even bigger scale.

And so this is something that I believe in light of climate change we are going to be seeing more frequently, and we really need to make sure that the dollars are going to the people that need it the most. Thank you.

Ms. Coit: Thank you. Just another comment on the disasters. Just like we're seeing more billion-dollar disasters in America, we're seeing more fishery disasters.

It's not a program that gets year to year funding. It's a program that gets supplemental funding when Congress so deems.

So we're actually out of money right now, and if we get it in tranches, talking about a climate ready fishery's ecosystem changes happening, but the disaster program is kind of, not ad hoc, but it gets surges of funding, and then when that disappears, we're at the mercy of whether we'll get another surge of funds, which we're in need of right now.

Jim and then Jamie and then Jennifer. Oh.

Ms. Goen: Yes, I agree more with the comments made so far on fishery disasters on needing to get it into the hands of those that need it most, and that is making it or helping it get into those hands is the trade relief program a couple of years ago and the months.

Like, it was like two months they got money out the door instead of the years that it takes for fishery disaster process.

And the longer it takes to get the money out, it's less useful to the people in need. So I like the idea of having a session where this group would discuss fishery disasters and the legislation from December 2022, I think it was, that really helped improve the

process.

Mr. Green: Yes, and I guess I was kind of going to echo some of that, too. In Florida, we have a Congressman, I believe it's Byron Donalds right now that's working on a bill to get passed that forces the agency to make a determination within like 30 days to get that funding rolling.

Because that's one of the biggest things that we've seen, hurricanes, red tides, stuff like that where we've had disasters in Florida, is you get the money 18 months from now.

Business has gone bankrupt. Your bills haven't gotten paid. So it's getting it out quickly and getting it to the right people.

Excuse me. No offense to someone that's working in a cannery or stuff, but I would like it if we do go that route to make something, to make some policy on it, then making sure that those affected that actually -- fisherman in the fishery or someone in a cannery that's doing that, if they can find another job that their skillset allows them, or fishermen and marinas and fish houses don't have that opportunity because they've been wiped out and maybe we should prioritize that.

And I was really trying not to talk, because that's when I get in trouble. And when I put my card up, I got a couple looks.

But nothing against people in canneries or anything like that, but I'm just saying that there's some people that in a disaster have nowhere else to turn and there's some people that have -- that might be in a disaster that they actually, their skillset allows them to find another job and to make sure that the money's going to the people who do not have the opportunity, if that makes sense.

Ms. Coit: Jim, just two things to clarify. So when we talk further about the federal fishery disaster process, it has multiple stages, and each of them are

reviewed by OMB and others.

So the declaration requires getting economic information that demonstrates that over the course of the year there has been economic losses of a certain amount.

So sometimes when there's an acute event, it isn't possible to assess whether that's going to add up to the economic losses.

If a season is closed, it's clear, a season for a $200 million plus fishery, it's clear. But if it's an event maybe at the beginning of a fishing season, then you have to wait to get that economic information. It's all scrutinized.

Secondly, I just want to reiterate again that it is the state or the Tribe or the municipality that puts together the spend plan, but NOAA Fisheries.

What we're looking at in OMB is, is it consistent with the authorities. Jennifer?

Ms. Hagen: Good morning. Thank you for your earlier report out. I want to caution us on this idea of fixing something that maybe there's things that need to be fixed, but as disaster funds from early on, we were recipients back in '15-'16 but we didn't see the money until '19.

We couldn't spend it until '20. Where were we? COVID. And I appreciate the term COVID hangover because it's real.

For everybody's awareness, what we did, so as a sovereign tribe, it's applying to Department of Commerce and NOAA directly.

And we made the decision that half of the funds would go directly to the fishers and then the other half thereabouts to improve our ability to respond to fisheries management issues.

And so I'm just becoming familiar with the new process. But I hope it's not fixing too much, because

having that flexibility in a small community where a dollar in a tribal village versus a dollar in Seattle are two very different things.

And being able to bring that into the fold of the work you're doing going forward in response to climatic changes, et cetera.

So just wanted to put that clarification out there. Thanks.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Jennifer. Brett?

Climate Ready Fisheries Panel Part II: Fishing Industry Perspectives

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you, Janet, for your remarks and Natasha for all your help in bringing us to your home. It's really nice.

So just changing gears a little, on the same topic of disasters, which are reactive to something that has happened, and kind of understanding we're in a little bit of a wait and see period, it seems like, in major actions with agencies or Congress as we await other major actions happening this fall.

What is the agency doing or what can we expect from the agency to be releasing that is proactive so that we are able to adapt to issues around climate change in a more -- in a capacity that isn't so reactive we're having also to dole out additional disaster dollars?

What can we expect the agency to be doing this year? Because I think there were some things that we were expecting and hoping to expect.

And what is the agency working on in the coming years that hopefully will help make it to where we're not all so reactive.

Because it feels like whack-a-mole I'm sure for everybody.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Brett. And I would suggest that particularly Cisco and Sam also as you do your

presentations take that on.

If you'd like to add something now, just holler.

So, great question. A few things. And one, before I try to give you a specific answer, I just want to mention, I just attended the SCS, which I'll tell you -- I don't know what it stands for, but it's the head of all of the science and statistical committees getting together every two years.

It was in Sitka two years ago. It was in Boston a couple months ago. And the whole focus on the Sitka meeting, and then it was more narrow in the meeting that I just attended, was the advice that the SSCs are giving the councils, that the council's requesting in regard to stock assessments in particular, and how the climate impacts and climate predictions can be incorporated in that so that we can move more quickly.

And where is the flexibility? Or where is the opportunity? For instance, there were a lot of presentations on socio-economic or economic issues.

They wanted in the process, earlier in the process, can some of that be incorporated?

So I think in all our councils, our SSCs, folks are grappling with these issues.

A few things that we've done and are doing, one, we just released a governance policy that clarifies when have shifting we might switch the governance of those stocks to a different council or a shared council. What are the triggers for that?

That was very much done that we're also looking at what would be a threshold at which you would consider different measures to -- about that.

Sam will also mention, but we've been working on updating the national standards, particularly for eight and nine, allocation, coastal communities, and bycatch, to incorporate climate issues and EEJ issues.

We have a proposed rule that we went to OMB. So it's working its way through the process. When it comes out, there will be a public comment period and we'll work on a final rule. I cannot tell you the timing of that.

Each of the regions has a climate action plan and some of the funding that we're investing in the IRAs intended to accelerate some of the work that needs to be done, both around the science and then the grants to the councils so they can more specifically address some of these climate related issues that they have a full plate and they're also looking for additional resources and expertise.

I think further, I would just add that the -- both the pace and other strictures I think need re-examining because of how quickly we're seeing ecosystem changes.

It's mostly taking folks somewhat by surprise and leading to these disasters and other consequences.

There are on the Atlantic coast, and I'm familiar with from my home state of Rhode Island, species that are moving.

They're not in bad shape but they're moving where they are. They're increasing the distribution, like black sea bass, and again, the government's policy is what we're talking about in regard to access, is to make sure there's access to the fish that are actually proximate to where the fishing communities are as these fish change their distribution, and how this delivers systems, whether that's rationalization or which council's governing it.

They're maybe not set up well to address that. So I think the talks about how management needs to have flexibility, how science needs to better inform the decisions of the predictive way, are really at the heart of everything we've been talking about.

And I'm hoping that some of the -- that the proposed rule for the national standards and some of the

initiative the councils are taking the scenario plan will manifest some changes.

I do think there's frustration always on the pace. So when you have a process that is intended to have a lot of public input, a lot of transparency, you have the Administrative Procedures Act, you have litigation almost always.

Jim helped us with some really important work in the Gulf that largely -- that was very positive around BMS tracking and charter boats.

And you lose ground frequently with the litigation. So I think we're all moving in that direction.

I hope I've given you some specifics, but it's work that is at the heart of a lot of discussions within our councils and within our staff, and thinking about concrete ways to innovate and move forward is something I hope you will hear more about on your panels.

Christina and then Kellie.

Ms. Alexander: This is perhaps coming from left field. Those are such nice fisheries. I guess this is the Gulf of Mexico.

And I'm interested in the progress of Rice's whale conservation and consideration for the habitat.

I see a lot of funding towards Northern Right whale. This does impact as many right whales as there are Rice's whales.

And I don't see much attention yet towards what's happening with the Rice's whale. There's a lot of concern for the shipping industry with the shipping limits with the proposed habitat for the Rice's whale.

And I don't expect you to pull this off the cuff, but I want the people who are very interested in this in the Gulf of Mexico, and from all sides.

We're a bunch of whale huggers. And we're also

people who like to fish and ship. We have three of the nation's biggest ports in the Gulf of Mexico, the top three biggest ports.

And so, any sort of protection to the Rice's whale would probably limit some of the extra price of shipping and so in anticipation of conflict and a lot of excited public input, I'm just interested to hear what you might have to say now or this because you cut strings, and I appreciate that.

Chair Runnebaum: Thank you. Happy to address succinctly and then we can also discuss more later including during Sam's time.

So we are working a critical habitat designation, and it is expected with a court order date, actually, for December 3 for the critical habitat.

For those who don't know, there's well under 100 Rice's whale in the gulf and there is very active litigation that you're probably reading about addressing exactly some of the issues that you raised in terms of what is needed to do to adequate protect Rice's whale and the impact from the oil and gas sector.

So happy to talk more about it. But couldn't agree more that we need resources devoted there, and the next step is our recovery plan.

And they were very much impacted by the Deepwater Horizon spill so negatively, as were so many other marine creatures. Kellie?

Vice Chair Ralston: Hey, first, Natasha, thank you so much for making all this happen, and everybody who is on the planning committee.

It is truly an honor to be here. Just such an amazing place. And I'm looking forward to the rest of the week.

So I'm going to go to left field again, outside the Gulf, just kind of to highlight the framework around my

question.

One of the things that in my experience councils have struggled with are really understanding the flexibility within the Magnuson and the flexibility within the national standard and how agency can help foster that.

We have a greater course legacy and options as we look at management scenarios. Just thinking in terms of the online litigation that's landing over marine preparational management metro share.

It would be really helpful in the longer term for the agency to kind of give some framework around those opportunities or options for course council so that they actually understand how hard we push this.

And I know that that may kind of gray lines and it might be challenging for the agency to do.

But it is an issue. Don't say no, you can't. But many of the councils locked in to management measures that are longstanding.

And I think given the challenges that we're talking about here, that we're experiencing elsewhere in the country, it would be really helpful to understand how we can get outside of that box, given the framework that we have.

Ms. Coit: Thank you, Kellie. I think that the management strategy evaluations have been really useful in trying to explore options.

I don't know. I think there was just a favorable decision in the litigations that you just talked about

I don't know if anyone, since you mentioned it, I don't know if Sam or Russell want to say something about that court opinion.

Okay. Yes. But I appreciate that along with flexibility you need to have a backbone to actually make hard decisions.

So I'm not sure that the flexibility is as limited as maybe people think it is, because maybe there's options out there. But there's blowback to actually pursuing them.

Vice Chair Ralston: We can talk about that at the break. I won't put you on the spot.

Ms. Coit: We lost our virtual people.

Vice Chair Ralston: We're working on it.

Ms. Coit: Okay, but they're coming back. They're coming back. Jim, do you have your -- and you cannot be around this table without talking, so get used to it.

Mr. Green: It was kind like off of what Kellie just alluded to is have the flexibility. It's been set under the act, peer-reviewed science made changes in catch and buy stocks, stuff like that.

And one of the things that we're experiencing right now for red snapper Gulf-wide, enough of the folks have left.

Gulf-wide we're hearing about declining stock and after size, it's smaller but it's getting less pushback off the road.

And one of the things that I brought up in the last meeting was having a policy from the agency to -- Andy talked on this briefly.

He didn't identify a lot of people, but have the thresholds where when we start seeing an average size fish declining to a certain level or an abundance study that says -- if we start seeing -- we go back to some threshold.

And I don't know exactly how to determine how to make that threshold, but have it where we start seeing fish decline, that we can put the brakes on it, at least put the brakes on it and say, oh, you need a 10 percent reduction in their allocation and wait for this.

Right now, the benchmark stocks has been starting this critical low. It's going to be 2086 before we have -- and if we're having all this, it is a low.

We're having all this pond water testing where we say, hey, you swallow them, you test them, you put them offshore.

The system, just one will give you, this is throughout the gulf. If there's a way we need to create policy to stop this because, I tell people all the time, early at least to the world in access, cut it off now in case it's bent.

They don't realize there's a portion of the laws that achieve the sustainable -- operate the sustainable level.

So they have them. So watch the fishery, the next year we're going to -- we're seeing a lot of seasons in 20 years on the red snapper, and we're going to go through another garbage of putting these fisheries through a beat down.

And if that's something -- I'm trying to be bold and discuss it brief to you, possible change.

What we manage to find in our spawning potential ratios is a long list of other stuff, but we should even have a policy where if something is starting to get into a nose dive, pull up and at least check them for a little bit when you get a trigger announced, a trigger in a benchmark or something like that.

And I was hoping to get your thoughts on that. I know it's a lot.

Ms. Coit: Yes, it is a lot.

Mr. Green: Well, eat up the last time, so --

Ms. Coit: I don't think I can eat up the last time. It's just for the sake of everyone, Andy who Jim referred to is Andy Strelcheck, who is our regional head for the southeast regional office.

Later in this meeting, we'll have Bob Foy who is the head of our Alaska Fisheries Science Center.

And I just want to recommend to all of you that those folks who are the regional leaders are often where the rubber meets the road on having these conversations at the council level.

Jim, I don't feel like I can speak in an informed way to what you're saying right now, so I hear and understand what you're saying.

And I think often we see the fishermen who are in the water having an observation that is years later emanating in the stock assessment.

And I think part of what you're talking about is what are the management measures that can be taken to address the discrepancy between what people are seeing and experiencing and when we get the peer-reviewed information.

Again, Cisco or Sam may want to speak to it more, but I appreciate your comments.

Mr. Dunn: I can tell you're around all the time. So, I mean, I think conceptually, conceptually what you're talking about is similar to our control.

You've got three set triggers for these. When you hit trigger acts, certain things are sort of pre-determined that will occur.

And so, and in fact, that's sort of, that was the ruling. The specifics are the same conceptually. Just keep prevailing on it in that court ruling in New Jersey.

So it's certainly something that has been explored and now used, and used in other ways. Atlantic HMS had framework actions where when certain triggers are hit, and then an action will automatically occur because you've already poured buckets through. So, yes.

Mr. Green: And I was just going to say that again, for accountability measures, I'm guessing I may have to

say roundabout, accountability measures and acts and policy by the agency, we're not going to get the council to handcuff themselves.

You know what I mean? So like, creating a policy that is an accountability measure would enforce them and be like, okay, ask them to fact check this. That's the whole thing.

Chair Runnebaum: Jim, thank you for sparking that conversation. I think that's a really interesting topic that would be really helpful to talk to Bob Beal about and see if there's lessons learned from what they did for American lobster and resiliency.

I recognize that we only have a few minutes left and I want to give Tom the floor and invite our other online participants to jump in here if they have any comments or questions. So, Tom, go ahead.

Mr. Fote: So I guess I got -- we were -- and I got kicked off. I got back, just got back on. But I wanted to ask, I think you might have already probably found this one out, I got to telling Jim, said I couldn't hear Jim.

I think Bob is going to push him the fact that helping get it adjusted more because taken into consideration the Gulf water.

And as the commissioner for a many years with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, we have a different set of rules than the Mid-Atlantic Council.

That became pretty evident the other day, the other day in a council meeting and joint meeting with the commission, when fish have finally decided --

(Audio interference.)

Mr. Fote: -- black sea bass. Because for years, they --

Chair Runnebaum: Tom?

Mr. Fote: Yes?

Chair Runnebaum: Tom, try maybe going with your camera off because the connection is pretty unstable.

Mr. Fote: I'll do that.

Chair Runnebaum: And see, we'll see if that's better.

Mr. Fote: Okay, is that better now?

Chair Runnebaum: Yes, that's better. Thank you.

Mr. Fote: Okay, basically, Mid-Atlantic Council commission with the separate beds like sea bass, because even 20 percent, we've been twice targeted for many years, and they keep predicting that it's going to be lost in three or four years, and we keep restricting the fishermen.

And I think because of climate change, we keep seeing the stocks build or it's not showing up the models they're using to see what the stock is going to do.

And with all the restrictions we're putting on other species when you have a species that you can actually harvest and grow in your port and commercially, and they can make it available.

We're going to see this. And so we need the rule to be a little flexible. And I'd be interested to see what happens with the merging of the commission rule and mid-Atlantic rule takes place at the northwest region.

And I'm over the commission, so it's not like my prerogative is at stake on it, but I'm just wondering how it's going to happen.

Chair Runnebaum: Tom, unfortunately, we didn't catch all of that, and I'm hoping that maybe during the break we can work on your audio issues.

So maybe Janet has better ears than I do, but maybe not. So I think we just are going to have one last comment from Janet and then we're going to go to a

break.

And Tom, we're going to try to work on your -- yes, we're going to work on your audio issues.

And if you want to put it in the chat, that's also fine, too. Thank you.

Ms. Coit: Thank you. So first, thank you all for the comments and the discussion. I just wanted to close with -- well, I took my time to try to highlight some of the issues that we've been talking about over the years, that where there is a celebration coming up in the Klamath watershed.

And there's a lot of good things happening out in the world, too. And that is an amazing habitat restoration success with four major dams coming out.

The Yurok Tribe, the Karuk Tribe, the Hupa Tribe, Klamath Tribe, the tribes who really were critical in driving this change.

But how exciting to see one of our major salmon rivers have a chance to be restored and all of this habitat opened up.

And our staff have been working on that for many, many years. There's some good things happening out there, too, and that's an amazing story of help and restoration. Thank you.

Chair Runnebaum: Great. Okay, thank you so much. We're going to take a break. We'll come back at 10:30 and we'll start with the panels.

(Whereupon, the foregoing matter went off the record at 10:17 a.m. and went back on the record at 10:31 a.m.)

Chair Runnebaum: I'm sorry to break up this conversation and energy. It's really great to hear. Thank you.

It was just a buzz in the room, and I'm sorry to break it up. But I'm super excited that we're going to move

on to the next phase with our panelists.

Katie? I'm sorry. Are we going to have our moderators down at that end? Okay, great. So let those get set up. And maybe we don't need the music.

Ms. Lovett: Just for everyone that's attending, including the people in the audience, we'd really appreciate it if you sign in on the front table and thank you and list your affiliation. That would really help. Thank you.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you, Heidi.

Chair Runnebaum: Okay, Natasha, are you ready to kick this off? Great. Okay. Thank you so much Scott Gordon and Amy for joining us today.

And thank you so much to the MAFAC powers who pulled together this really amazing panel, particularly Natasha, Fred, and Jamie Goen.

And thank you, again, to NOAA leadership for being here to get to hear these panel discussions. I'm really looking forward to what we have in store today.

So we're going to turn it over to Natasha who is going to be our moderator for this first panel.

I just wanted to provide a brief introduction to MAFAC for the panelists and for the community folks that are in the room now.

So MAFAC is a federal advisory committee. We provide advice to the Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Fisheries on policies, initiatives, and programs.

While the MAFAC members you see around the room today bring a lot of their own expertise and experiences, it's really helpful for us to hear directly from the community to enrich and strengthen our recommendations to the agency.

So I really appreciate the three of you coming today to provide input to the MAFAC committee.

So, I lost myself. NOAA Fisheries is -- sorry. NOAA Fisheries has tasked MAFAC with providing recommendations on really urgent issues facing the seafood industry, including issues around trade, the well-being of fishing communities, and the seafood industry, and the need to respond to fine impacts on marine resources.

MAFAC feels an incredible sense of urgency to increase adaptation of our fisheries management system to climate change to address long-standing and increasing severe issues, and at the same time capitalize on some new opportunities that might arise because of climate change.

So the two panels that were developed were developed by MAFAC, and they are going to inform some of our future recommendations to the agency on what communities need and want from NOAA in the face of climate change.

So we are a consensus-based committee, and we seek to provide recommendations that reflect all viewpoints.

Doing this work sometimes demands having challenging conversations, especially with diversity of viewpoints that we need to make space for.

So for this reason, I'm super committed to having and creating safe spaces where everyone can be heard in a respectful and thoughtful way.

So I wanted to just introduce the panelists and future panelists to our commitments that we just went over this morning.

So I'm just really kind of hammering this home today, I guess. So Emily, if we could just pop up our slides really quickly for our meeting norms or commitments, team commitments.

So we're really committed to each other to have these nuanced and complicated conversations and as so, we're committed to listening to better understand

and not simply react or provide an immediate response.

We want to make space for everybody to have their voices heard, so please speak up and provide your input and also make space for others to provide their input as well.

We ask that folks speak on behalf of themselves and not necessarily generalized for others.

And we are here to embrace some really difficult conversations that we know communities are facing and we want to have a safe space for that to happen.

Please assume good intent. We're all striving to do the best we can and giving the benefit of the doubt is important.

And also, it's important to acknowledge that sometimes our intent doesn't necessarily meet -- or, sorry, our impact doesn't necessarily meet our intent. And so it's important to recognize that.

And last but not least, sometimes there are things that we disagree with or that makes us uncomfortable, and so please practice curiosity before defensiveness and just reflect on something that might be sitting with you in just an uncomfortable way.

So with that, I just really want to thank you all for joining us today. This is an incredible opportunity for MAFAC to really get to hear directly from members of the community.

So, Natasha is going to be your moderator today. She comes from people who fished in these water for millennia, has fished and owned fishing vessels, and is committed to sustainable fisheries for the next thousand years.

Natasha is a person who inspires me to live vulnerably and with love and forgiveness in my heart. And I am so excited to turn it over to her for this first

panel.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you for that. Way to get me -- way to like work up the waterworks when I've got to get to work here.

Thank you, Madam Chair. So thank you, Scott Arndt, Mr. Arndt for joining us, Mr. Jordan Young for joining us kind of at the last minute. I appreciate your willingness to step in, and Ms. Amy Peterson.

All three of you, very excited about your ability and willingness to come and have this discussion with us today.

So, like Madam Chair said, we're here to talk about climate ready fisheries and fishing communities.

And so wanting to really hear from people who have experience and are currently experiencing what it's like to be a part of a fishing community and the impacts of these climate change sort of unprecedented times.

I am going to ask Ms. Peterson, Ms. Amy, if you would kindly start us off with an introduction, just prompting some of the things that we would really -- are really interested in hearing about.

Our MAFAC, as you heard, we come from -- not, we, I'm from here, but everybody else is from all over the country, and I've tried -- hold your hand up if you came here -- who had to travel the furthest to get here?

Florida, Maine, New York. Yes. South Texas. So really, representation from all over the nation, and we do have some west coast people here.

So we're wanting to hear some about who you are, what do you do, how is climate change impact seafood and fishing business, industries, and coastal communities in Kodiak?

What are you most worried about from the impacts of climate in the future? And I know that all of those

could take up an entire day, but if you want to just introduce yourself and give us some of your preliminary thoughts, that would be great.

Mr. Arndt: Good morning. My name is Scott Arndt. I'm currently the Kodiak Island Borough Mayor.

And Alaska uses boroughs rather than counties, and that's because when basically the state constitution was being drafted up, it was a bunch of attorneys from the east coast. So that's how we got boroughs instead of counties.

So, because I get a lot of confusion about that.

But I moved here when I was ten years old. Didn't have a choice. And that was 1964, after the tidal wave and earthquake in Alaska.

So I've been here ever since, and seeing a tremendous amount of change. A lot of change in the fisheries, a lot of change in the climate.

I think basically, we can go back, I can go back because it ended up that my first wife's grandparents had come to Kodiak in the late '20s.

Her grandfather ended up fishing both cod and salmon out of dories. And that was in the Karluk area.

It's fascinating listening to the stories that he told on there. Kodiak used to have an awful lot of canneries around the island.

This year the last of the two remote, which were Alitak and Larsen Bay, closed. One of those two will never open again, is the anticipation.

And I've seen a tremendous amount of change on the waterfront in town here, seeing the collapse of the Kodiak king crab fishery, the Kodiak shrimp fisheries.

The thing we seem to be assured of is change. But I'm also going to say that this cycle is the worst that I've ever seen in the 60 years I've lived here.

And part of the reason for that was we were having stress to some of the fisheries and then along with that we had the imports flooding U.S. markets which then tore the markets apart.

And so in the sense it's that perfect storm and we thought the first of the year that that had been care on fisheries going end. We were mistaken.

The fisheries imports have continued through June, and that's devastating because we have -- the federal government can't tell us how much came into the country, and that's going to affect the market for untold number of years on here.

I worry about not just Kodiak but all of Alaska, the remote. I've seen the change in the outlying areas, the outlying communities around Kodiak.

And then we see what I call the largest seafood processor, Trident, and the upheaval that they're going through.

And we're all trying to figure out how that's going to affect Kodiak. And what we're seeing on other communities, I'm going to say Peter Pan, Icicle, just tremendous amount of stress on the fisheries and the communities.

Because the communities from -- the local government exists off of the taxes that come on the seafood fisheries income.

We all benefit. So when it falls, it's, I'm going to say the families, it goes down to the smallest of setnetters, I'm going to say. The largest fisher processors all the way down to the setnetters around Kodiak, and we have a lot of them around here.

So, I don't claim I have all the answers. I'm willing to listen. But we're in trouble, and from a local government standpoint, we're trying to figure out how to keep paying the bills, providing schools, which is the biggest responsibility of boroughs in Alaska, and I'm willing to answer any questions that you

might have of me.

So I'm, a little background on myself, been self-employed since 1980, construction, excavation. Done a little bit of everything in that respect, so thank you.

Mr. Young: My name is Jordan Young. I'm here as an alternate for Cooper Curtis, the owner of Highmark Marine Fabrication.

Lifetime Alaskan. My family is from down southeast Alaska. Multi-generation fisherman. And I grew up in rural Alaska, and then have been in Kodiak since 2017 servicing local commercial fishing fleet.

And then spent the year of 2022 commercial crab fishing out in the ocean chain.

Basically, I can't speak to a lot of the -- as far as the climate change exactly. I haven't spent a lot of time crab fishing or being directly involved.

Mostly just servicing the fishermen and hearing their concerns and what affects them. So I can only speak to that as far as what their needs are for adapting the different kinds of fishing and staying relevant in the fragile and volatile markets, which has been key for a lot of them.

I know that's something that can be done going forward, is designing vessels like from the ground up to be able to cater to different kinds of fishing.

A lot of variety of boats here that are on their way out have been repurposed already from different kinds of fishing.

It's kind of the way that it is, and to me it looks like that's important to be able to adapt. Pretty much, that's just the way that it is.

So going forward, we can learn from that and find ways to do it better and more effectively and sooner.

One thing that was mentioned to me is the fact that I think we're -- well, you were talking about the kinds

of support that government can provide, and an important aspect of that is the response time.

Basically, when a season has been declared a disaster or not profitable for the people that participated in it, it's an entire additional year before any kind of action has taken place, but all of the effects are felt immediately.

So being able, like, by the time the relief for the corrective actions are taking place, the damage is almost too severe to really effectively come back from.

You're really taking two steps back and one step forward. So, response time would be key, I think, in finding ways to do that.

Having a plan in place already, an A, B, and C ready to go, so that way when it is time to put that into effect, we can do it effectively.

Thank you all for coming out here.

Ms. Peterson: I don't know if I'm just nervous or having a hot flash, but we might have to turn up that -- whew, all of a sudden, I'm like, whoa, I came in freezing and now I'm like, turn up the air conditioning.

So, I extend myself. I apologize. I often do not sit on panels, so forgive me a little.

My name is Amy Peterson. My home community is Old Harbor. I have lived in Old Harbor since the age of 19, so I have been there for a long time.

Old Harbor became my home after I visited at age 13. My parents came from South Dakota in the big boom in the early '70s of when they brought rural community schools in their rural communities.

And my parents came to teach home ec and shop. And they not only taught in Old Harbor, but they also taught in Port Lions.

So I have a lot of friends across the island thanks to my parents. My late husband, Conrad Peterson, and I raised five children in Old Harbor, and we have another grandbaby on the way, which would make nine for us.

Some of the things that I first seen when I came to Old Harbor and really drew me back to Old Harbor, my parents were long gone, was community.

And when I say community, I mean true community. You walked to your neighbor, their door was open.

You went and had coffee. You could literally go from door to door to door to door to door, and eat and visit and discuss things.

It might be somebody building a shed and you stopped and you picked up a hammer. A lot of those things you don't see anymore.

When I first moved to Old Harbor at age 19, we had more than 40 boats in the harbor. You never had to touch the dock. You didn't have to touch the float.

You could hop on at the end from the beach and make your way about and see all your family and see your friends.

There was storytelling. There was sharing. There was, hey, did you fish over here? You should have fished over here. Tomorrow you're going to go with me.

There was young people that were brought in and they were taught. It wasn't a get out of here, don't fish here.

You were brought in and you were taught. Those types of things now, it's a battleground out there, and it's because we are suffering. We don't have enough crew anymore.

There is very few spots that give us what we need any more in the fishery. A lot of places that we fished many moons ago don't exist. It's a story of the past.

One thing I really want to share today is a few years ago Nate Roads and Duncan Fields and a whole bunch of people came out to Old Harbor.

And I was working for the native corporation at the time. And my background is in medical. I've been in the medical field since I was 16 years old and left it to work in our school system and then left it to work in our native corporation.

Everybody's around the table and they're all telling their stories and they bring our young men in that do not like to come to town and talk to groups of people.

It's not their thing, but if you put them on a boat, you give them a needle, they're sewing that same, now that same individual you're going to get to know.

We have Brian Kuzata sitting at the time, and I had Brian in school when I worked at the school district.

Brian was always my kid that said, oh, Ms. Amy, why am I doing this? I don't want to do that. Nobody can do that. Come on, Ms. Amy, don't make me do that.

I bribed this kid with cookies. Like, breakfast. I don't care. I bribed this kid to do his stuff.

But something that really stuck with me one day, him and Nate were sitting at this table and they were doing an interview and talking about fisheries, and he was talking about his grandfather and how he had fished on a jitney in storms I can't even sit on the beach for, so I can't even imagine being out on a boat.

And Brian looks up and he said, yes, I know, I had Ms. Amy in school and one time she said, Brian, I'm going to have to give you an F if you don't do that resume.

And he said, I looked at her and I said, I'm never going to do this resume, Ms. Amy, because I'm never going to do anything but fish in my life.

And Nate pokes him a little bit and says, so you'd

rather take the F? And Brian said, yes, for fishing.

Thank you for having us today.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you for bringing that into our discussion this morning, Ms. Amy. I really appreciate it.

So I somehow fell through the cracks. I wasn't able to get Mr. Scott his questions in advance.

I was hoping that if you guys had all the questions that you could give you a little bit of time to prepare.

But we did reach out, and I also had wanted to share with everybody here in the room and everybody online that we have reached out to several fishermen in hopes to bring people into the room who are actively in the fisheries and have been in the fisheries for some cases generations.

And all of them, who the person said, well, I can't commit because I'm probably going to be fishing.

And so, thank you for being willing to come in here. And unfortunately, we're missing some of that other expertise.

But we did hear back from our Mayor, Pat Branson, and what Scott was sharing earlier about the Kodiak Island Boroughs is we also have got a city of Kodiak.

And so those are our two municipalities. The borough is mandated with funding all of the schools and I'm hoping that later if you get an opportunity, we might speak to -- with our six villages that are traditionally Alaska native villages outside of the city of Kodiak.

And each of them has got a school, and three of them have closed in recent years because of outmigration of population, and there's just a whole host of other issues with that.

But, and then, so he's the mayor of the borough. We have a mayor of the city of Kodiak, and her name is Pat Branson.

And the city does have taxing authority. And so they collect landing taxes on all of the fish that is delivered here in the community, and that's how they fund the municipality.

And so I'm going to just lead us off with she provided written responses to the questions that we had given her.

Our first question is, what is important for us to hear about the types of support communities like Kodiak might need right now into the future? What do you see as the risks of not preparing for climate change in the fisheries?

And Madam Mayor's response was, is there are risks not just for fisheries but communities as a whole in not preparing for climate change.

But of course, Kodiak's main economy is about fisheries. I think where NOAA comes in is explaining to those involved in fisheries and community leaders, your best guess is in evidence of science regarding those climate changes, so planning for those in the best way is possible.

Perhaps regular community updates and meeting with the Kodiak Island borough and the City of Kodiak Fisheries Work Group would be great outreach.

So I'm going to go back to you, Scott. Probably because you also could share with us information about the fisheries work group as well.

But so, our next question is, like I said, what is important for us to hear about and the types of support that communities like Kodiak need right now, and what are the risks for not preparing for that in the future?

Mr. Arndt: Thank you, Natasha. A lot of questions going through the community, the uncertainty as to what the future holds for us.

As I, in my opening remarks, telling you about some

of the devastation to the different fisheries that we've lost around Kodiak.

Like I told you, too, I don't claim to have all the answers. Information, NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries with research they're doing at the Kodiak Borough Fisheries Research Center on Near Island, especially with the crab and trying to figure out what works, not just for Kodiak but also the Bering Sea as we've seen tremendous devastation in the stocks out there.

I'm hearing from the fishermen in Bristol Bay the numbers of fish are similar to what was anticipated, but the size of the fish, the weight, is down about a third.

We don't know the reasons for that. I guess we need -- it comes back to the science. What is the science as to why some of this stuff is going on?

And government is always reactionary, not out front of the problem. Because sometimes we've had great fisheries in Bristol Bay returns, and this year was a different story on the size. Didn't see that coming.

The devastation on the snow crab, we knew something was wrong but we didn't know what, and now we think we have some answers.

And it's interesting. From a local government standpoint, we're contending with a bunch of different things. Thank you.

We have the loss of revenue, which we're trying to forecast and not just in Kodiak but as a member of the Alaskan Municipal League and meetings that we've had and talking about out west.

And there are communities, 100 percent of their revenue comes from fisheries tax, landing tax, state share tax on there.

And they're now trying to figure out how they can reduce their expenses. Some of them have saved

some money and trying to figure out how they can invest that money that they have, which I'll call as their fund balance, into being able to continue to exist to just provide basic services to the community.

In my travels around Alaska, especially with Alaska Municipal League, I've learned a lot. Like I told you, my background is construction.

I would say I probably started out when I was 14. I went out on a three-day crabbing trip. And the boat owner was Chuck Bundrant, who was the founder of Trident Seafoods. He used to live in Kodiak and fish here.

I chose, since I was sea sick all the three days, I decided I was a land lover, and found a different profession.

So what we're trying to do as communities I think is the same thing, adapt, try different things, see what we can do.

But the big problem to me is the families that are being impacted. It's not that easy to change directions, especially when you made a major investment in things.

So I heard you earlier here talking about disaster and the funding for that. It seems like it takes forever to get from the concept to the checks actually being written.

But I am also going to say that the Kodiak Island Borough and the City of Kodiak have received some of that money, and it's helpful.

So, that's all I have to say right now, but it's very trying times that we're going through. But I welcome you to Kodiak and trying to see what affects us.

And what I'm hearing is Natasha is responsible for you being here. So thank you, Natasha.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you for coming. Do you want to take a stab at this one?

Mr. Young: Sure. I guess, sorry, can you remind me of the question, exactly, the last fine point?

Ms. Hayden: What is important for us to hear about the types of support communities like Kodiak might need right now and into the future?

And then what are the risks of not preparing for climate change and fisheries?

Mr. Young: Thank you. So as far as the types of support, like I said, I can only speak to what's relevant for me, or from my perspective, one of those being, so for example, like recently, we have been focusing on putting government grants to use.

One example of that is we made the purchase of a 120-ton crane with a small shipyard grant, and that has greatly increased our capacity in which we can service the fleet and really provide cost-effective options to the needs of the boats here.

And that is something we are really actively pursuing going forward. So it is important we all have a responsibility to voice our needs, but also effectively use these grants, these assistance, and whatnot, and find ways to put it work economically and efficiently.

So, but, it's a constant battle, basically. One of the biggest struggles that we have is maintaining workforce.

I think any construction company can relate to that. And we do like small shipyards across the world, they really supply the big shipyards with their workforce.

It's a place where guys get to learn and then they go out to these other big shipyards and we lose the guys that we spent all this time training.

I can speak to that. I've left before. And but, did come back because I do see the value in communities and the role that we play, the grants, the big scheme of things, and I love being a part of it.

And so, those shipyard grants are very important,

and that's an example I can give to their usefulness.

Ms. Peterson: So, this question for me is kind of a tough one, because it's like what do I think that you need to hear to support our communities?

I think a lot of it has been said many times. Like, and Scott had kind of pointed out earlier than the science is there.

But we've been talking about it for so long that we know that our resources are diminishing.

We've known for a long time. I will use Old Harbor as a really good example. Probably in 1990s, we had a lot of very large boats in our harbor. We had a lot of small boats in our harbor.

But every single year, those boats were filled with crew because they knew they could fish. Those upcoming kids of those fishermen were not on those boats.

They were grooming those kids to go to college. You need to get a better thing. Fishing is dying. That was in the '90s. That was in the '90s, 30 years ago, and we're still in that same spot.

So I think that what I think for what is important for us to hear is like what are we doing with this information for the past 30 years and the 10 years before that and the 10 years before that?

Where is this information? What are we going to change? We can't continue to do the things that we were doing by, oh, guess what, the salmon are completely gone, or there's no king salmon.

We've been talking about that. My son at age 10 caught a 67.8 pound king at age 10, and an elder looked at him and said, son, you're never going to see another one of those in your life. And he hasn't. And he hasn't. He's now 24 years old. And he has fished at a gillnet site.

He was deck boss by 16 on a commercial vessel. And

now he guides. And even tells his clients, you're going to get what we go out and we get. But what you should be happy with is that you're here.

So what I would like to see for our communities to start hearing is, what are the next steps?

We're fully aware everything is getting smaller. I even called my son the other day and said, oh, my God, are the silvers in the creek? I need to come home, but I have all these commitments right now.

Are they going to be gone by the time I get there? And he said, they're small, mom, and they're moving all the way up. They're not stopping. They're not feeding.

Well, now, why are they not feeding? Why are they zipping all the way through, spawning, gone?

It used to me months. We could fish for months in our subsistence creeks. For months. And now it's barely a two-week time period, and if you miss it, it's done.

So I really think like what is important for us to hear is what are the next steps? We have this documentation. We have studies.

We have science. But where is this getting implemented to be quicker on our turnaround when we do have this? When we have disasters? When we have no fish?

Or when we have fish and the market price is so bad that you're better off to package it and take it home with you. It's valued more.

I have a really hard time when I sit down with my son-in-laws. I have two son-in-laws that still commercial fish.

My son guides. And it's really hard to listen to them tell me I didn't even go to the dock today.

I'm like, why didn't you go to the dock today? And he

literally tells me, I couldn't let that fish go for that price.

My son last night on Facebook was literally like, I can't give my fish to somebody that doesn't value it.

This is my bloodline. This is what I've done. This is what my generations have done. And he went into debt to go ahead and get back in the fishery.

He went away to college and came back and worked, and he said, I just can't. I need to be on the water. I have to be on the water.

It calls to me. I think it is so much of a draw and a yearn for him, I think that he would rather just go out and just give it his best, give it his all, but be true to where he came from versus then not do it.

One of the other things that was kind of on the question list here is what are the risks? It's going to be a memory and a conversation for our kids. That's what the risk is.

It's going to be something of the past. It's going to be a tradition that we only speak of.

You look back at pictures. I mean, we look at pictures now, back of these amazing fish, and a resource that you took what you needed.

I'm not sure when that has really gotten away from us. Even our commercial fishermen took what they needed and put back what they got in that net that didn't belong there.

And I'm not sure how we're getting so far away from that and that isn't -- it is a focus for sure, but there still isn't changes for that. Not significant changes.

And the fish are much smaller, or they're just obsolete. Old Harbor does not have a red rum. But we have fish that zip by in a couple spots.

And if you're out there on a lucky day, you'll get them. This year there was like 25. Twenty-five reds

were zipping by one day, and my son was like, I got 25.

I was shocked because I think the last time he went out a couple years ago, I think he came home with three, and it was -- and he fed his elders.

We've always raised our kids to believe and understand that you are young and you can feed yourself at a different time, but your elders are first.

Something that really hit home, too, when we were kind of talking about things that are important to hear, type of support for our communities, our communities, from the moment I started to live in Old Harbor in '92, '91, they have gotten smaller and smaller and smaller.

The outmigration is at an almost even keel, but if it continues to go like this, there just won't be communities.

And when you shut a community down, because our infrastructures are already cracking, they won't open again. They will not open again.

So if I can leave you with anything today, it's what we want to hear is what are some steps that are going to start happening that are going to be helping these fisheries?

What is the -- it seems like the decision process for things to be implemented seems long. And I know there's a lot of science that has to go and be supported, and I know there's got to be like checks and balance.

I understand that for sure, but there has to be better. We're in 2024. There has to be a better way. There just has to be a better way. Thank you.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you for that. And if at any time during the discussion, if any of you panelists have got any other thoughts or anything else you'd like to contribute to, please do.

This doesn't have to be a me asking questions, you guys giving answers. So I actually would like to ask you, Jordan, a question.

Earlier, in your open remarks, you commented on how the business that you are a part of is helping fishing vessels convert to being able to be adaptable to different fisheries.

And I was hoping that you might be able to expand on that a little bit. And I want to give a little bit of context in that.

So I'm born and raised in Kodiak, but growing up here, everybody fished all year round. There was multi-species, multi-fisheries.

Every season brought a different opportunity and time to fish a different species. And in recent decades, that has -- management has really strayed away from that, and it's really kind of caused to single species management.

So you either got just longliners or just trawlers, these boats that are just very gear specific.

And so do you have any -- can you share any insight into what you guys are seeing, and what's the motivation behind that and the reason why fishing vessel owners are looking to make modifications?

Mr. Young: You bet. Thank you for the question. It's a very important focus to have in business to remain adaptable and be able to diversity to what the market needs or where the pockets are that you can fill.

And we have been able to stay in business through pursuing those avenues. So as far as like fishing boats go and whatnot, having one boat that can only do one thing is not effective and not -- can't be prosperous.

So being able to adapt or adapt the deck space, manage your ways that you pull gear and whatnot, developing means of fishing that are less -- sorry, I

have the proper verbiage written down -- that are, yes, that are not, thank you, means of fishing that don't indiscriminately kill other species and whatnot, that don't have more negative impacts than positive impacts.

And, yes, reducing bycatch, not damaging the species that you're going after and letting them go.

And I know that, or I've seen, there's like in Europe, they have more control measures that like kind of regulates the fisheries and whatnot, and it has forced them to develop better, more effective, less detrimental or less harmful means of fishing on the environment and whatnot.

And that has really helped them lead the way in a lot of development and what not. So that's just an example that I can give.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you for that. That was a little bit of a curve ball. Nice. And then I wanted to circle back with you, Scott.

You had mentioned, well, I didn't realize that you actually fished on Chuck Bundrant's boat and that he lived here, so you're from the generation before me a little bit, and so thanks for sharing that.

But along those lines, and for those of you that are not familiar with the -- we talked about it earlier, about the dire circumstances in the global seafood market and the impact on Alaska fisheries, what we see, that Trident is the biggest in Alaska, I think.

I think Trident is the biggest in the United States. And they have earlier, right at the end of last year, right at the beginning of this year, they announced that they were selling their processing facilities and all of their assets in four coastal communities in Alaska, Kodiak being the largest.

And they're selling their processing facilities, but they're also selling their -- they had purchased the biggest apartment building to use to house their

transient workforce.

And so this was a huge shock to the Kodiak community from the processing community, fishing community, and the community.

And so I don't know if from your -- go for it, Scott.

Mr. Arndt: Thank you, Natasha. We're trying to, both the borough and the city, trying to see what they're going to do, and we've been in touch with them.

Stefanie Moreland, one of the spokesmen for Trident, has tried to keep us informed a little bit.

But it's taken them a lot longer, and we still don't' know what they're going to do in Kodiak.

They are by far the largest in Kodiak. Not only did they buy other processors in Kodiak, they also bought the fishing quotas.

The bought the boats and the shares that went with them. And we've seen a tremendous change.

I'll go back to the late '60s and early '70s when limited entry on salmon was started. I remember everybody being in an uproar over that.

That has ended up being the tamest of all the limited entry things.

Because you still, in salmon, had the ability to go out and see what you could catch. Now, you buy the quota.

And some it becomes far more expensive to get into the fisheries on there. And it used to be, and I'm speaking from my history in the community and different fishing families that I've known, it used to be that the young people could go in and the older people retired and pass along the boat on there.

Now overnight, we made multi-millionaires by the restrictions we put on the ownership on there.

It should never have been the intent, but it was very upfront and straightforward and it's creating problems. That's going to have to change at some time in the future, too, on there.

But there will be a lot more. There's been discussion. There will be a lot more discussion about that.

As Natasha was saying on the schools, because town Kodiak, basically, we have six small community school and then the logging camp up on north end of a fog neck.

There isn't enough families up there to have a school on the logging camp. Karluk has closed, been closed for six, this might be the seventh school year I think it is now.

Larsen Bay has been closed for the same amount of time. Karluk has two students. Larsen Bay has one on there.

The Kodiak Island Borough owns those facilities. We've this year turned over the school in Larsen Bay to the tribal council so they can use it for the community, with the understanding that should they ever get, because it takes a minimum of ten kids to open a school.

The state will not help us with that unless there's ten kids. So basically, what kids there are has done correspondence on there.

But we have some other communities where the schools are getting down to around 14, 15. It's getting too close.

I remember Old Harbor having 125 kids. And Amy, as you referred to it, your parents coming up to teach, it's what we call the “Molly Hootch decision”, which puts the high schools back into the local communities, all across Alaska.

So put the high schools in there. And I've had the privilege of attending one in the past. I was on the

school board and sometimes went to -- was able to make one of the graduations in Ouzinkie High School graduation on there.

The schools are the biggest part of the community, and it tears me apart to see a school close on there.

And especially when we haven't been able to reopen them. So, we're suffering across the board on there, and any help that can come on the fisheries end on the research end on there, which involves part of the climate change that's causing it.

It's interesting. I made a mistake a month ago in referring to -- it's when I first got on the borough assembly in 1980. I was 26 years old.

And kind of that bad penny that comes back every 20 years. So this is my third round at it.

First time as mayor for the last year here. But I made a mistake. I was thinking 1981, and I said 1918. And I don't think I'm going to live that one down.

So, but it's a -- we live here on this island because we love it. And having lived in Kodiak for 60 years and not getting out much and then getting out to Sitka and Juneau and King Salmon and Dillingham and some of the other places I've had the opportunities to go to, we all have a lot of the same problems.

We rely very heavily on the revenue from fisheries to support the communities, and I'm not sure where exactly we're going to go, especially since the state revenue, which relies heavily on oil, has been declining, and then the state hasn't been doing its job of funding schools, which puts more pressure on the local communities and the taxes have gone up.

The property tax is what pays a lot for the school. It's become quite a burden and it's been one of my goals to do everything we can to try and reduce that, the property tax.

And this is the -- this year and last year are the first two years we've lowered the mill rate since Kodiak Island Borough was formed in 1963, because we realized there's a problem in the cost of living here and trying to -- we've got to try and economize on some of the stuff that we do.

And school administration and the school board is looking at trying to make us, because the student population is dropping, but costs don't go down proportionately, is the big problem.

So I know I'm speaking a lot about the cost of the community, but that's where my expertise is.

And what happens in the fisheries trickles down to everybody here. So, as different things come to mind, I'll gladly interject. But I hope I'm helping.

Ms. Hayden: Very much so, Scott, thank you. And I just would like to add a little bit more about the community of Karluk.

There has been Aleutian people that have been thriving there for 10,000 years and it is the first site in the south coast of all of Alaska that Americans came to establish a fish processing facility.

And at one point, there was more -- huh? Karluk had the largest fish processing community in all of Alaska.

And that was the community that he was talking about that the school is closed.

And then I'm going to ask Ms. Amy another question and then I'd like to open it up for our MAFAC council to ask any questions.

But, Amy, I was hoping that you might share a little bit more about -- this is something that I know that only you would be able to help people understand here.

You commented that the young people and the fishermen in your community would not ever come to a public meeting and speak about fisheries.

And that's why I am so deeply grateful that you came, and because you can convey the sentiment of the people in your community and my community, because it's the same with me.

Like, I represent -- the tribal citizens that I represent are thousands strong, and one of the things --

And if you could just expand on that a little bit more, I would really appreciate it.

Ms. Peterson: Yes, thank you. I even had to bribe Brian up there to the office that day with more than just cookies. It was a full lunch and a couple snacks to go.

I think it's a cultural thing. I really do. It's kind of funny because one of the questions was like, oh, which one was it? I kind of giggled a little bit, because I was like, oh, I have an answer for that one for sure.

It talks about like, how do you think NOAA should get involved? Well, here's how I think NOAA should get involved.

Go to the communities. You need to go to those communities, because if you were to walk the street or go down on the dock and they were down doing network or cleaning the boat or whatever, they would talk to you.

But they are not going to get on airplane to come to town and sit in a meeting room. They didn't want to sit in a classroom. They didn't want to go to college.

This is not their scene. This is not it. They're going to do it. And a lot of their elders never even went to school past maybe eight grade if they even went.

So again, this is an environment that is not friendly to them. It doesn't speak their language. It's more like going to the doctor, getting a tooth pulled. They're like, no thank you.

If they really want to talk to me, they're going to come and see me. That's the mentality. If they really

want to know what I know, they're going to come see me.

I have to giggle a little bit. Larry Matfay, a very dear elder of ours who has passed, when I first was working in the school district we had an Alutiiq Week and all the classrooms were designated for some sort of project or activity, but our way last classroom in our school is the science room.

We had the elders in there for storytelling and it was kind of their own like room to sort of relax or whatever, but you could mill in and out.

And I went down to take Larry some coffee and some pie and he said, Amy, he said, are you a can opener cook?

And I stopped dead in my tracks and I thought, I have no idea. And he said, well, let me help you. Do you do this motion when you cook? I said, oh, my God, I'm a can opener cook.

It dawned on me that day that he was giving me much bigger message than just picking on me.

He was telling me that it was time for me as a young person who came from South Dakota from a ranch, I mean, I can wrestle down a calf, I can wrestle down a cow, let me tell you what, I can.

But it was time for me to learn how to live in that community. And I always tell everybody, I was young when I moved there and I had my parents' views instilled in me.

Had all that great stuff. I was ready to tackle the world, until I got to Old Harbor and I had an elder who made me come to their house for a week to knead the bread but never taught me how to make the bread and then later told me, the ingredients aren't the important part. It was how I was doing it.

And that has stuck with me. And I always tell everybody, I was raised by the elders in that

community and I'm still being raised by them. I'm still learning from them every day.

But if we don't take the time to go and actually see those communities and sit with those people that are living the fishing life every single day, I mean, I get sea sick so they know to take me very few minutes away from home because I will be crying all the way back home.

But for my kids, for my grandkids, something happened with my grandkids last year where my daughter Fawn called in an uproar and said, I just called the school district and I was fuming.

And I said, what happened? And she said, I literally had to fill out a piece of paper for migrant ID to prove that my child subsisted this year.

She got off the phone and then called back the school, hung up the phone, and then drove to the school, and said, I don't ever want to be asked again about my kids picking berries and putting away fish.

We are a commercial fishing family. We always have been. It's in our blood. If want to give my kids like something in school, I don't want to fill out a form for it.

Schools should be where it is for everybody and not just one because they have maybe picked a berry or gone out and fished.

Everybody does it on this island. That's our life. It's the way things are. And she was just appalled that she had to fill out a piece of paper to prove that they had subsisted that year or had used resources that year.

She was very insulted. Very insulted. And when we do talk about our schools, it is very true, there is nothing worse than watching your numbers dwindle.

There used to be 120-150, and they would hunt in the morning. You would see guns in the foyer, in

Hondas parked on the basketball court, because they hunted.

They fished. They couldn't wait. There were fishing poles. We would leave school to go take the kids down to fish.

There were no academics that day inside the building, they were all outside the building. And that just doesn't happen anymore.

Now, if you have bad scores, well, they changed the curriculum ten times, kids can't follow the curriculum, the scores keep dropping, they don't think kids are learning anything, but they're very wrong. They're very wrong.

I wanted to touch a little bit too on what are the barriers to getting the support we needed?

I think some of the barriers are just that, that the people that you really need to see or what you really need to see with your own eyes don't have the desire to come here, not because they don't want to fight for their fisheries. It's because of the fact that they want you to fight for them.

That is what they want to see. They want to see you fight for them. Because they have been fighting and fighting and fighting and fighting, and they're very aware of what's happening.

Climate change, 15 years ago we were out on the boat and we were in Barling Bay and I was reeling in, oh, probably about a 30 pound king.

And it had these weird sores on its side. And I got it on deck and I remember just like, just shocked, and my husband was just like looking at this fish.

We quit fishing that day. We didn't put this fish back. We brought this fish home. He literally drove that this around to elders and was like, hey, have you ever seen this before? You ever seen this before? You ever seen this before?

Hadn't even split it yet, and next thing you know was like, we had elders all down in the harbor who were ready for him to split that fish to see what the inside of that fish was going to look like.

Sure enough, it was a very sick fish. Obviously, the elders like, don't eat that. It was a very sick fish.

Climate change is very real. It's happening. A few years ago, we had a massive drought here on Kodiak, and there were hundreds of thousands of fish that died.

Old Harbor was lucky. We have one subsistence stream that is fed by a glacier, which is also just disappearing.

I have pictures when I first moved to Old Harbor, this thing just looks huge. And I looked back one time. The kids and I were talking about it. I was like, yes, I took pictures way back when. I was like, hold on, I'll find that photo album, which by the way is very old and the plastic crumbled.

Nobody uses photo albums anymore. And my kids couldn't believe the drastic change from when I came 35 years ago to what it looks like now.

But we were saved by that glacier that day. But when that glacier is gone, and it will be, it is warming and it's warming and it's warming, those fish aren't going to make it.

Our fish sat in the mouth of our creek and just ate. Those silvers just got fat. The old guys would go out with chairs at the end of the runway and watch this school of fish.

Just watch it, every day. They'd be reporting in. It was like an evening time activity.

There are so many fish out there, I guarantee, you could have walked across them. It was crazy.

We got lucky, very lucky. The buskin didn't fair that lucky. It did not. It was covered in dead fish. Covered

in dead fish.

Old Harbor got lucky. We ended up having a fast storm. It raised the water maybe an inch or two and those fish took off.

Some of those silvers that year were 17 and 18 pounds at the mouth, because they were so just sitting there eating.

But that was it. They went up, spawned, they were gone. There wasn't a week of fishing.

So even though our fish made it, there was barely any subsistence that year because you couldn't get up there.

And nobody wanted to. Nobody wanted to disrupt the fish. There was elders that was talking about, we'll just race, we'll just race don't disrupt, just wait, just wait, just wait, just wait.

But where's that knowledge? Where is that? Where is that in our communities where you have an elder saying, you really shouldn't do that? And people listen.

That's gone, too. There's not that respect anymore. And that's kind of where I'm hoping that today with us being here, your elder pack, you have to be our elder pack.

You have to take into consideration the science of it, but you also have to take in the traditional knowledge of it and you have to be our elder pack.

I need you guys to fight for those fishermen that won't come here. I really do. I need you to fight for that Brian Kuzata that was going to take the F that day. He didn't care, he has taking the F.

I'm going to fish the rest of my life. That's what I'm going to -- and he does. He still fishes. And he still brings fish to me. SO thank you.

Ms. Hayden: Thanks, Amy. I do have to say, the best

roll that I have ever had was in Old Harbor that Amy prepared.

The kneading bread lessons really worked. Thank you so much for sharing all that. I'm going to open it up to any of the members of MAFAC if you would like to ask any questions, Katie's got the microphone and it looks like, I'm not sure who was first.

Madam Chair, maybe it looks like yours is up first.

Mr. Prewitt: Thank you.

Ms. Coit: Go ahead.

Mr. Prewitt: First of all, thank you all for all of your insights. That was really wonderful.

So I live in New Orleans, and it's remarkable to me how similar a lot of the issues that you're all outlining are the things that we face in southeast Louisiana.

And one that I find particularly interesting is how you combat the graying of the fleet and the exodus from the fishing industry, and we have tried a number of different things in south Louisiana to bring new entrants, to bring young people into the fishing industry.

And I'm wondering if any of you can comment on any strategies that you've had success with or that you've seen fail to appear to help more people get into the industry.

Ms. Peterson: So this came up in Old Harbor a few years ago at our leadership summit, and our leadership summit, it's our city, our tribe, and our corporation.

One of our young men there named Darien Christiansen stood in front of all of us and said, hey, I have a young family and it is really hard for me to go out and fish and then come back and maybe had a really bad season and still feed my family.

And a couple of the old guys were like, well, get one

of the part time jobs, and he said, that's the problem. He said, I'll take that part time job and then you'll fire me because I choose to go out fishing.

So we kind of all got together, sat about, and just kind of listened to what these young people had to say and came up with job sharing.

So if Darien's wife was home, she would do the water temperature, or she would do the, oh, help me out, the pump house.

Yes, so she'd do the water treatment plant while he was gone during the summer. So then when he came back, he did it in the winter.

We had to come up with solutions for these young people to be able to do both. We had to allow those people to get out on that boat that wanted to get out on that boat.

And one year, Darien came home with only $1,200 for a six-month season, but his family carried him. Our community carried him.

When he came back, he went back to that job. But we've had to get super creative in that. We've had to get super creative where some things we kind of shut down during that time and maybe only do I'll say like garbage pickup.

We have garbage pickup, and it might be that instead of running it four times a week we have to do it two times a week with less people, but it's more of an incentive now instead of a punishment.

So I think that that is one of our creative solutions that we've had to come up with. We've also had to come up with just allowing them to express themselves in that manner.

We've given them a platform to really tell us what they were feeling and I think that made a huge difference, made a huge difference for us.

Mr. Arndt: Thank you. Yes, one things I would expand

upon, Amy, is Old Harbor has also been influential in giving what I'll call purchasing community shares, and then allowing the fishermen to go I'll say lease it.

The community gets something, the fishermen, because the investment for the fishing, the right to fish, is expensive.

And that's one of the things that's also happening around Alaska is I want to say loan programs to help younger fishermen get in there, because there is a risk.

And the investment is huge on there. And they have. Fishermen have, the boat owners, have a hard time getting crews together.

And with the graying of the fleet, yes. It used to be our parents were the characters in the community. Now, we're the characters. So it's all just a challenge. Thank you.

Ms. Hayden: Truer words never spoken. Thank you. Who, was Kellie next or?

Ms. Zanowicz: Jennifer. That's okay.

Ms. Lovett: Jennifer. Go ahead.

Ms. Hayden: So thank you, all of you, for coming here today and I can totally relate to your sharing how people do not like to come to public meetings and provide input.

I'm from Costa, Washington. I work for a sovereign nation, small tribal community. Our nearest neighbor is more than 20 miles away and the next town over from that is an hour away.

And recent trends by many federal agencies and state agencies to try to capture traditional ecological knowledge has applications not just in tribal communities.

The fix has been, we're going to have a forum and

we want people to come, and we're like, well, you could at least have food. I still don't know if they'll come.

But it's a very good message for you to be sharing with us today because we have some folks from NOAA leadership here that need to hear that message from the communities, that that's an option, a way of doing business, that's not very successful.

And getting out in the streets and walking on the streets is definitely it. So thank you very much.

The other thing I wanted to ask about is I think you just hinted at this, community development quotas.

So there are communities in Alaska who have done that. Has that happened here? I know we've thought about it as far as does the get into owning vessels so that we can do this?

I really love this idea of job sharing. So can somebody take me down that road a little bit further? Thank you.

Ms. Peterson: So our corporation established Cap Barnabas, and I'm really bad with the history of it.

But we leased out -- they have purchased IFQs and then this last round, our Tribe also bought IFQs.

And it is so that anybody in our community that wants to fish, they can lease them.

And so they come in, they do a one-page application, and it's super quick. It's super easy. And then our staff pretty much does all the rest of the work.

We call NMFS. We have them get all that stuff. We get all that stuff set up for them.

So it's another thing that's like, it's a one-pager. We more or less just need your name and a few documents. And like we'll do the rest of the work.

But it is. It's a lovely program. And I don't even, at this point, I can't remember how many IFQs Old Harbor is using.

Ouzinkie does it, too. Old Harbor, Ouzinkie. I don't know if any of --

Ms. Hayden: Port Lions just did it last year.

Ms. Peterson: I was going to say, didn't Port Lions just --

Ms. Hayden: Yes.

Ms. Peterson: -- get established?

Ms. Hayden: Yes, and so for just a little bit more of the background information on that, is that national fisheries regulates the halibut and sablefish in a limited access privilege program and it's called IFQs.

And there was a new program in 2004 that was created that allowed for communities to be eligible to buy into the fishery, and that's -- Old Harbor led all the communities in that effort.

But there's still two big things. You still have to have the capital to go out and purchase quota from other people who already own it, and then you're still subject to the fluctuations of the biomass of the stock.

And so Old Harbor in particular purchased a lot of quota. I think it was like 30,000 pounds to be able to harvest per year.

And over the next ten years, their total number of pounds diminished to I think 6,000 pounds at one point while still having to make the debt service on 30,000 pounds of quota, which is hundreds of thousands of dollars.

And so, and then the other note about -- and I'm aware, I know this because I'm on a Kodiak Island Tribal Coalition, and our coalition worked with our tribes to try to develop a mechanism for the tribes to

support those communities to purchase additional quota.

Tribes are not eligible to purchase or own halibut fishing rights or any fishing rights for that matter, any of them, state or federal, and so the tribes had to develop a financial arrangement with the community quota entity so that they could do that.

And so, that is one of the things that I have talked to NOAA leadership at our regional council extensively about this barrier for our community.

So you guys' program, hopefully it's on an upswing, and hopefully it's not going to continue to diminish. It's been pretty effective.

Ms. Hagen: Could I follow up?

Ms. Hayden: Yes, go ahead.

Ms. Hagen: So some of the -- when we got these community quotas, you're enabling these community members to be part of the district but are you also taking part of that. Oh, sorry. Taking part of that and putting it back into the community, like road improvement, et cetera. Do you know?

Ms. Hayden: Yes, so, the way that the program is, is there's limitations on who can harvest the fish.

So if Old Harbor, the community quota entity purchased the quota, only people who have resided in that village for the previous 12 months can be eligible to be a harvester.

And then they have to have a -- it's like a lease agreement. So the harvester, and what the whole reason behind it so that they can have fishermen in their community be able to go fish.

And so the fisherman gets a portion of the sale of the catch and then the quota entity who purchased the quota also gets a share.

And then there are limitations I think in the

regulation on what that money can be used for.

So, yes, it has to be used in the community and fished by community members.

Ms. Peterson: Yes, and one of the strategies that we've also done in Old Harbor is if you have family quota, then they try to make sure like let's say that my son Kaden has quota, but maybe he doesn't have a boat, so then they'll be like Rocky II who will go ahead and do the lease, but then everybody on that boat will be able to fish, not only the quota that they leased but then the quota that his family has and then it's shared, which is really nice.

So, yes, if there's any debt service on it, that portion of the IFQ holders is then paid off with that as well.

But then in hopes to build that program to buy more.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you. Who is next? Somebody online? Clay, hi. Clay, go ahead.

Mr. Tam: Yes, hi, can you hear me?

Ms. Hayden: Yes.

Mr. Tam: Yes, aloha, great. Clay here from Honolulu in the west arm region. Awesome panel discussion.

It really hits home for us in our area, too. The local knowledge, the regional area, our fisheries.

Pretty much, you're surrounded by water. That's all we have. You might want to say we're locked on a rock, so to speak. And it's all we have.

The unfortunate part is over 50 percent of our native population has moved. They're on the mainland. They're elsewhere.

Because we cannot support that through our region and fishery, but I think it's important and a lesson learned from what you're talking about in terms of a panel and expertise that you have.

It's important to follow that through. I mean, for us, it's important to have -- fishermen should be part of the solution, not a problem.

Many of you have heard me say that. We need to get boots on the ground and have that meshed with our science, as I heard earlier, that some of these problems were detected many, many years go, and it's the same thing here in the western region.

And it was once managed the same way, local knowledge. And they managed the fisheries without computers, without PhDs, without all this great Science and structure.

But I think some of that needs to be revisited. And much like what you're doing there, it's important to reconnect it to the resource, and we need to be involved and live it every day to understand it.

Those that work in and amongst us that reside in buildings are not always there and don't quite understand it. And it's quite evident as I sit on many panels.

In fact, yesterday, I was on a meeting with one of our stocks here in the islands, and I think it's important to understand that.

And the other thing that our fisheries could use is to me subsidies. I mean, if you look at the beef industry, cow industry, corn, soy, they are subsidized on the mainland area.

Lot of incentives to grow or not grow crops, and our fisheries have been dealt the short card in that aspect.

I mean, even when looked at the last meeting we had, we talked about the funds from the trade which goes into our SK programs.

I mean, hundreds of millions, and it trickles up to $7 million to our really needy communities that these funds help support and drive in terms of the

economy, projects, and relocalized projects that really come to help.

I mean, this last round, much of it went to institutions and agencies while eventually, they are high over and none of that money doesn't get to the community, unfortunately.

And so some of the bigger problems, I think. And we talk about a million here and there, and yet our own government is giving away to foreign aid billions of dollars.

Think about it. I mean, we're donating to people that don't contribute to taxes, that don't contribute to the U.S., don't fight our wars, and yet we're at the short end of the stick, which is unfortunate.

But thank you very much for coming and staff, and all of these in Alaska. Wish I could be there. But thank you very much.

Chair Runnebaum: Thank you, Clay. Jamie? Go ahead.

Ms. Goen: Hello. Thank you for this panel. I thought it was really interesting hearing from your various perspectives.

I'm going to try and weave something I heard Jordan say and something I heard Scott say together and I'm curious about the panel's response.

Jordan, you were talking about workforce and how at a small shipyard workforce gets trained there and then leaves for bigger, larger shipyards that can pay more, so that outflow from a small company to a larger company, and what that means for community.

And then, Scott, I heard you talk about the Trident situation where a large processor may leave a community, but it's not just the effects of the taxes coming from the landings of that large processor, it's also the quota leaving and the vessels leaving.

So given these kind of two situations, I guess, where there's a large corporation that really supports a community and then also small companies that also support a community and need workforce and struggle to keep people there, what do you see that would help the community from your perspectives? What could be done to help the community?

Mr. Arndt: Good question. It's a multi-faceted question. There's so many things that affect it.

During my lifetime in Kodiak, seeing a lot of the ups and downs, I'll say the different -- at different times, what's called a recession elsewhere has been like a depression in Kodiak, and a lot of it was fisheries related.

Workforce, first we had a problem with a loss of population, and that usually means the younger people going elsewhere and trying to have those jobs bring them back.

That's part of what helps in Kodiak is that we have the largest U.S. Coast Guard base in the United States, is in Kodiak.

That is a big help that attracts people. The healthcare system, be it Kodiak Area Native Association, and Providence and the other private providers around, that has been an increase in employment for people on the island here.

In construction, there's always been a problem. And I'm going to say I always tell young people that because it's been true the entire 60 years I've lived here, is that attrition is high.

People come and go, and the ability to move up, get promoted, and do better is great, much greater here than you're going to find in other places, because people get into positions and they stay there until they retire.

Amy, I can see you shaking your -- you're agreeing. So there's opportunity due to turnover, and then the

other side of that coin is we'd rather not see all the turnover that we're seeing.

Part of it is attracting people. Kodiak, like everywhere else in Alaska and kind of throughout the United States, is housing is an issue.

And one of the things that we see is, I'm going to speak as one of those older generation residents here, is we got established, we got a bigger house, raised a family, the family's gone, and we don't want to get rid of the house.

So we are part of the problem also. That's the truth of the situation that goes on. It's a vicious circle, it seems like, in many ways.

But we're trying to address the different things, but the economy is one of those things that's, it's a large unknown right now and it tends to prevent people from investing in the community because investing is trying to be assured you're going to get a return.

And that exists in the fisheries industry, too. So what a good friend of mine, Duncan Fields, was very influential in lobbying for Old Harbor and Ouzinkie for the fishery ownership, community ownership and the leasing program that you've heard a little bit about.

It's not the answer to everything, but every little bit helps. And so we try to be open to different ideas and tried to come up with different ideas on there, because fishing is still a way of life and it's a big part of this community, and I think always will be.

But it's heartbreaking to see the turmoil that we're going through right now. So --

Mr. Young: Thank you for that question. As far as getting the younger generation involved and because it is relevant to them, it's going to -- the responsibility will fall within them or us.

I can attest to a couple things. One thing is I made it through trade school because of a few scholarships.

I went through AVTEC and it was pretty tough for me at 18 to come up with $20,000 to go through that with welding school, but through the help of a couple scholarships, one being a native scholarship and the other being a State of Alaska, I can't remember exactly, but economic or basically just getting kids through trade schools, homeschooled, so it was available to me.

That helped me get into it and another thing that I saw or seems to be useful, was it you, Jamie, who helped put together the crabbing video?

Yes. Stuff like that, basically reaching out to that demographic on a relevant platform where their focus is already at is huge.

There's kind of a theme of taking pride in what you do and whatnot going around on there.

And it's one thing I appreciate all you guys coming out here, but also reaching out with these other tools and whatnot is extremely valuable and effective and that's one thing that I've seen that's effective.

Mr. Arndt: I'd add one more thing. It's kind of related, but to the communities, one of our issues is the infrastructure.

We have failing infrastructure, be it in our boat harbor facilities. And Kodiak, the city of Kodiak, owns the boat harbor here in town, and requesting funding for.

Senator Murkowski has gotten what I call pork barrel funding. I forget what the new term is.

Ms. Coit: Community directed spending.

Mr. Arndt: Yes, thank you. It is $10 million that will help, but it's going to end up being a $60 million to $80 million project.

So it's a start. But infrastructure is aging. I'm going to say the sewer system, the treatment plant, it's one of those things where the federal government, DEC,

has created more roadblocks for us than any help than we ever get from them.

I'll give you an example. Years ago, this would go back I want to say it was in the early '70s, basically through intimidation and threats by the federal government, DEC, you will not do primary treatment, you will do secondary sewage treatment.

And we'll give you a little money to help you do that. But the problem is, fortunately, Anchorage, the largest community in the state of Alaska, told the feds to take it and shove it, and they're still primary treatment.

And the feds are still trying to intimidate them into going to secondary treatment.

Give you an example, too, recently, be it over the last eight years, our landfill in Kodiak here, we had to go through the permitting process to expand it and you have to go to a lined landfill.

I don't have any problem with that. But we have a leachate treatment that then they were requiring us, while it was being designed, we were designing to storm water standards.

While we were halfway through the design, DEC changed it. No, you're going to have to go to drinking water standards. And this is effluent. It goes roughly a half mile and dumps out into the ocean on there.

And these costs are horrendous, $30 million investment. So we got some of the most expensive landfill fees that we charge in the state of Alaska, and it's due to federal regulations not related to NOAA, but put a tremendous burden on the communities.

They keep changing, even though we can shows that the effluent with just the regular secondary treatment and discharge into the ocean, that the ocean's healthy out there.

It's not like it's barren and dead. But then they say,

no, you've got to start doing this.

You've got to remove the chlorine treatment. And so you've got to go in and spend $5 million to the ozone treatment of that effluent, and its more money, more money, more money.

And so there's just so much overburdening regulation on trying to exist as a community that it's tremendous. Thank you.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you for that. I think we're going to -- we've just got time for a couple more questions.

I'm not sure, was it Jaime was next? Go ahead, please.

Ms. Diamond: How about now? There we go. Better, Jaime Diamond, Southern California Charter Recreational.

But I also wear another hat. I'm the president of the school board for our district.

And so a lot of the education side, early childhood education and the issues you're talking about speak to me.

And I'm feeling what you're hearing and I'm -- we have a small district as well, four elementaries, one middle, and one high.

So I was looking at -- your high school is beautiful, by the way. I was looking at it. Wow. It's impressive.

And so I'm thinking when you were speaking about CTE programming, career technical education programming, it used to be called something else when vocational -- over the years it's changed, but CTE is what we're now calling it, and I looked at what you're offering.

And to me, it's telling of what you're doing with your students and the shift and how to meet the needs of your community through that programming.

And it was interesting that there was certified nursing, culinary, business management, welding, four different units of welding, and only two units of fishing.

And then I looked at your middle school and I saw that greenhouse and agriculture, but I'm not seeing aquaculture or much emphasis on fishing, and I can immediately tell that you are trying to prepare your students for a life without fishing, to be more reliant on something else.

And that's very forward thinking and it's also very sad that that's what you're having to do in a place like this where that should be the overwhelming majority of your programming for your students.

So I see that and I recognize that, and bravo to you for trying to set your students up for success, especially those that don't fit in the box of going to a four-year college.

My son is like your Brian, I believe it was. He's a fisherman. He's father was a fisherman. That's what he wants to do.

And so how do you support those kids moving forward when you see a future that I don't know if that's the future I want for my kid.

So how do break it to them that the dream they have is something that you hope they maybe don't achieve because that's not a great place for them in the future?

And so my role as a parent and as someone in education and someone that has a voice in fisheries is what can I do about it to create that space for them?

So pivoting the fishery, pivoting the roles in fisheries and how we approach fisheries is huge, but the idea of setting our students up to be meeting the needs of the fisheries in a different way, in a different capacity and going more into things like aquaculture.

I see you hydroponics as something, and so looking more at aquaculture, things like that, and less climate dependent to some degree, recognizing the issues that your fisheries here are facing, with the departure of the larger scale processing and companies focusing more on the small independent operator, like what you're doing with your community quotas.

That was a wonderful idea. Declining enrollment and population birth rate decline and population drop, specifically with youth coming into the schools.

That's something that's nationwide, but in a small community like yours, I'm hearing you have the biggest apartment complex here that was owned by Trident that's being sold, and I don't know that that necessarily, it sounds like that was more so single adults probably in the community, not so much families, and recognizing that the larger companies, while they bring in people, they aren't bringing in families.

In my community, it's more so older retirees moving in making it more difficult for the younger folk to buy a home and raise a family in the area.

And so, creating a space using where these larger companies are leaving, how can you create space for families to be successful and stay and lay roots and move forward in that way?

The other thing that I wanted to think of is, Jordan, is that your -- okay, in the beginning, you were like, well, I'm not really in fisheries as much.

And I want you to know that what your -- and you were worried that what you had to offer or say doesn't necessarily have much to do with climate, but it does, because you see the type of issues the vessels are having, the frequency at which they're breaking, the types of breakage due to more severe wave impacts, occurrence of bigger roadways or whatever the damages.

You're noticing those changes, the frequency at which boats are having to hull out and get new props or weld cracks in the hull because they're hitting bigger waves with more frequency, with more strength, things like that.

And so, you do see that. It's not as deliberate as, or as -- I see less fish, it's because water forming.

It's different, but you're seeing it. And so you're still in the game. You're there and you have something to contribute in that sense.

And it's an important viewpoint because vessel design and our safety, the safety of my husband and my son and my friends and other family, other families, relies on people like you and being able to anticipate how to create these vessels stronger, more sea-worthy in light of changing ocean conditions.

So it's really important and that's another community support, and there's the fishing and then there's all of the support services to that.

And in my community, one of the things we're talking about is do economy jobs, and it's yes, commercial fishing and recreational fishing, but all of the supports and all of the ancillary services that help support that and the job opportunities that that creates.

And we're looking at how the city college can create pathways for people who aren't going to go down the four-year track but could go into any of these other things and how that relates down to the high school and down to the middle school.

And so seeing where the lack is within the community for jobs and how can build that out within our school system, and those two things are very linked.

And you're going to have the transiency that exists, but you have your core community.

And my people also are the people that are not going

to show up at a meeting. That's why I'm here, because I had to learn how to do this.

I went to culinary school to be a pastry chef and now apparently I'm an expert on a lot of different things that have nothing to do with that, and that's because my husband -- if they're here, they're not on the water.

They do what they do because, we call them the Island of Misfit Toys. They don't fit in an office, they don't fit in a setting like this, and so recognizing that and honoring that and being their voice is really important, all of you, so thank you.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you. I think is Jim next? Jim and then Christian.

Mr. Green: Hello. Hello, thank you, panelists for being here. Thank you, Natasha, for putting it on. It was very informative.

I'm from Destin, Florida. I'm also a charter and head both operator.

I was Brian, did you say his name was? I was Brian. I took the F. I skipped school. I bribed teachers with fish.

I was a -- I'm a third-generation fisherman. I'm raising a fourth generation fisherman.

And as you can tell, I'm a little, like, you all don't know, but I'm a little raw compared to the other folks around the table.

So I did not conform, either. And I'll tell you, I went to my first gulf council meeting in 2006. Eighteen years later, I'm on a national marine fisheries advisory committee.

So I did not want to speak. I write way more now than I ever did in college. Like, I do more, and that was an adaptable thing, and as fishermen, we're adaptable.

And I don't want you to -- I was a little -- I mean, we're all experiencing a lot of stuff. Like Ryan said, it's very unique how it's the same problem with a different twist somewhere else in the country.

But I want to implore you to push people like Brian, because people that would take an F for fishing are the people who have a passion for this.

And I was not. My parents, I wanted to go to a four-year college. They said to go community college.

I got my captain's license, a semester and a half later, driving a fishing boat.

So, it takes people with that kind of passion for this to do this kind of stuff. In the southeast, we -- or on the eastern coast, there's a thing called MREP, Marine Resource Education Program, and it used to be two weeks but now they combined it into one week.

It's put on by the University of Maine I believe is one of the people that -- it brings them in and teaches them the science and teaches them the management part of Magnuson and how to operate within this realm.

And I just want to say that without those pushes from my mentors in the early times to speak and say my mind, and without the help of people that I've met like through the agencies over the years, I wouldn't even be here.

Like, I was that guy. Like, I don't fit in the box. Like, I had to take off time like Jaime said.

I don't belong here. I belong in my wheelhouse, and they'll tell you, whenever we get on a meeting, you'll see I'm in a wheelhouse driving a boat while I'm in a meeting.

So I don't belong here, either, and Brian might not belong here, either, but I implore you to push.

Because I used to be the young guy and I'm becoming the gray part really quick, really faster than

I want to be, but it takes that kind of passion.

If a guy is willing to take an F to go fishing, then he's willing, then he has the passion to be here and speak to people and give us their stories.

So please urge them to be part of that, because if not, they're just going to left out. You're either making the menu or you are the menu kind of thing, and I decided that I didn't want to be on the menu, I wanted to be making it.

So please push Brian and everybody in your community that has that kind of passion to get involved and that MREP is free.

Like you can sign up and apply for it and they'll fly you over there and teach you how Magnuson works, and I think that would be very beneficial especially in these rural very isolated places that I flew 15 hours to get here.

It's the absolutely most gorgeous place on the earth, but that's the whole point is to bring them to it and teach them so that they can go back and education you all, and I appreciate you all being here.

Chair Runnebaum: Thank you.

Mr. Dunn: I just want to make one comment. There is an Alaska MREP. And this is the first year we've had it all around the country. Sorry, thanks.

Yes, so this is the first year we've had it in all parts of the country. It was executed.

So the agency dedicates substantial resources to it. It's about $2 million a year put into this program.

So, it's a great program and we would encourage you if anyone wants more info about it, just let me know and I can connect you with all the right people.

Ms. Hayden: Thank you, Russ. Kristina?

Ms. Alexander: Thank you for your question. Hi, quick

question, Jordan, you went to trade school? Were you able to do that on the island? Or did you have to leave?

Mr. Young: Actually, not from Kodiak, but I did have to leave. I grew up in the woods, but, yes, I did have to go somewhere, elsewhere.

Ms. Hayden: Madam Chair?

Chair Runnebaum: I got it, I think. Thank you all. Thank you to the three of you for being here.

I think a lot of the questions that I had were kind of raised or asked around the table, but I do know that Kodiak was a particularly creative, innovative, and resilient community.

And it would just be really great to hear some of your experiences of how you've been able to integrate some of the outdoor education, Amy, that you mentioned into the everyday lives in the school program, and how, Scott, when the city is, or the borough has supported communities to be able to do that, as well as how is the community even able to support some of the technical training that exists.

I have a four-year-old that spends his days outside in day care and I can't imagine him in a classroom next year, and I think it's going to be pretty rough.

So Amy, what you said really resonated with me, and Jordan, I come from Bath, Maine, where we have Bath Iron Works and a technical training program within the high school.

And it's a huge employer and supporter of our community. So I just, I see, like Jaime said, I see the role that your company plays having a really important part of education program in the community.

And so I would just like to hear a little bit about how you're all working together, because I really see how connected you all are.

Ms. Peterson: Okay. So for some of the education outreach, it's kind of fun. So I work for Cognac, which is a regional corporation and I am our community affairs liaison, but I work a Title 1 contract that complements with the Refuge, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, so I get to do a lot of very fun things.

In fact, last week I was just out in Old Harbor. I travel around to all the rural communities, probably anywhere from six to seven, sometimes eight times in like six months, and I do nothing but educational outreach.

Last week was bear safety and deer collaring and drone work. And so we go out and we teach anatomy. We get the kids outside.

We do bear safety. I dress up as a bear. They get to dart me and collar me. And, yes, by the way, they also bear spray me, just so you all know, and it is, yes, fake, but it still smells terrible.

But it is such a great time because we've done it now for two years. I've been in my position, this will be the fourth year.

I started this position kind of coming out of COVID. And the kids don't get tired of it.

They can't wait to collar me and just take me down. This last year, I got a deer suit and then decided that was probably a bad idea, so now I have a Cabella's one and the kids get to go out and they dart that and then they collar it and then I run off in the woods and bed it down, and the kids have to use telemetry equipment and then they have to use the drone. So I'll put hot packs on it to use the heat seeker. It's a lot of fun. It's a two-day thing.

But my upcoming thing, which I will share, and I must give NOAA a shoutout. Here in a second I will give you a shoutout. Hold on.

But in the spring, we are doing aquaculture and mariculture. We are going to be taking little tiny

baskets and we're going to teach them how to grow oysters and then we're going to teach them how to string kelp and get their kelp to grow.

My part of it is definitely more of the in-classroom part. I'm going to teach paper mache and we're going to do what is your kelp going to look like in six weeks and then they'll grow it in their classroom all strung up on the wall.

And eventually I'm hoping that what I want to do with that is then turn around and use it as a cultural art piece so that they don't forget where they've come from.

One of the really cools things that we've also got to do is, and this is where I get a little shoutout, we had comp this year, and for the first time ever in my life, because normally I'm not here, I'm dealing with children or whatever, or the lodge or whatever, first time comp, is two years ago.

And there's this lovely lady from NOAA and I was like, oh, my gosh, like, look, you have like fidget stuff all over.

Like her spot was my favorite. Well, she had game boards. She had a walleye game board.

And I said, oh, my God, what is that? I eat walleye. I love walleye. And so she's going through this thing with me. And I say, can I have one for my grandkids?

And she goes, oh, yes, absolutely. So I leave there and I have this game and I'm super excited. I play with my grandkids, and I'm like, there has to be more.

Almost every single federal agency of some kind has educational stuff on their website.

Well, boy, do you ever. So not only. Did I gather all of your educational stuff, I made life size game boards that got printed by the print shop and then I donated one to every single school and we still play

every time I go out.

And it is the most fun. So I can't wait to like see if there's more educational stuff.

I haven't looked this year, but it's my wintertime to prep for that, so I'm super excited.

For the kids going out and fishing, we have a couple different programs that you can rent fishing equipment in the communities if you don't have it.

They do fundraisers to buy all that stuff for the kids. Adults, I don't care what age group you're in. Elders, we take elders berry picking and fishing.

In town is a little bit more difficult. You get a little bit more scrutinized in town. In the rural schools, you do not.

We are a little bit lucky that when we get teaching staff, they want to learn so much about the kids that they're willing to shut the school down and go out.

And so, for that, I am always very thankful. I mean, there will be a snowy day and we'll go out and sled. So it's just a very different atmosphere than what it is in town.

In town is way more regimented. But, yes, we do a lot of fun educational stuff. There's multiple culture camps where we go out and you put up fish, smoke fish. It's pretty great.

Mr. Young: As far as programs that we have for trying to help develop that network, we at one point did have an apprenticeship program that was in the works.

I have kind of always wanted to put one together. Don't have a lot of experience in it and just spent the last six, seven years just learning the trade itself. So not a lot of time to teach.

But now at this point, it's something that I do want to put into practice. I have a lot of learning to do in

that department. I don't know how to put that together, but it's something that I -- something that I do want to pursue.

That's all I got on that.

Mr. Arndt: Thank you. As far as the schools, with the high school, there's a job shadowing that goes on with the spring where different students go on with different business owners or managers around seeing what they do and gives them an idea on there.

I grew up here, raised three daughters, one son. Now have grandkids in the school system, four right now. Had five. Oldest graduated, and she left the island. So maybe she'll come back in the future.

But the kids get kind of an exposure on their own. It's the parents that tend to get more of the exposure for them.

The school district tries, but as I said, there's a shortage of funding and I don't think the vocational program has been as good as it used to be or it could be in the future. Thank you.

And we need to try and accumulate more resources for getting that back in.

The fishing has changed in the sense that there's a lot more electronics involved. We had RSW, refrigerated sea water, in order to keep the product as fresh as possible and delivery to the cannons.

That takes more technicians and more training. The diesel engines today are much more complicated than they used to be even 20 years ago.

And so, it requires more education and being sent off for more training than we can just do here, but it helps to get a start.

One of the things that we do to budget cuts in the past, even the woodworking projects in the junior high, and that was taken out and we are pushing to get that back in there.

Because I see where those are successful in teaching innovation and different ideas. It's hands-on. I am a hands-on person. And not the book study type.

And so, education starts there. We're trying to do a lot. We're not doing enough and we need to go more.

Ms. Hayden: Jordan, is there anything else you'd like to add? You sure? We're coming to the end of our time, so I'd love to give you an opportunity if you have any final thoughts.

Mr. Young: I think I was able to hit on everything that I want to. So I appreciate it.

Ms. Hayden: That's great. I thought I saw you reaching for the mic, so I thought there was something you wanted to add.

So we are, we're coming to the end of our time already. And this has been a very rich discussion, and I'm again deeply grateful that all three of you were able to come.

I just want to add a couple of comments. The perspective that each of you bring really intertwined and are what is the fabric of our community.

And Jordan, in particular, I wanted to mention so the company that you're with, Highmark Marine, with your perspective as a tradesperson and somebody who is working in that aspect with the fisheries, what the business brings to the community and does to support our community.

An example would be, I'm going to tie this into the schools, is the school district's got the construction program.

When my brand new freshman in high school took the class and Highmark, they built a tiny house that could fit between Amy and I.

I mean, they built a tiny house on wheels and Highmark donated the chassis and the trailer. And so these high school kids built a tiny house and

Highmark just did what needed to be done and we were able to put that on that platform and then auction it off to sell in the community, to in turn support the community.

And talking about fisheries in education, I have been in the fishing family for my entire life, and my husband and I have owned commercial fishing boats. He's just recently retired from that for 35 years.

And our son, my 12th grader, my senior, signed up for the fisheries class. And he's like, they're teaching them stuff that he learned when he was about six.

And so it's not as much that there isn't hope in our community for fisheries as being in our future, it's that because this is a fishing community, the majority of the people who are gaining those skills are gaining them either through their homes, their aunties, their uncles, and that's part of the community that needs to be supported for us to be able to have a sustainable fishing community.

And so, I just thank everybody for coming and listening and thank you to the three of you for spending all this time with us and talking about something in public that is probably outside of your public comfort zone. And I just have much gratitude. Thank you.

Chair Runnebaum: Thank you so much, Natasha, for hosting our panelists, and thank you Scott, Jordan, and Amy for coming and chatting with us in a very uncomfortable hot seat with all of us staring at you.

Amy, I'll be signing up for your outdoor education class. I would like to know how to tag a bear.

Okay, we're going to take -- yes, yes. Okay, we're getting cheeky so we're going to go to lunch and we're going to talk about how to tag bears over lunch.

We'll be back to start at 2:00 o'clock, so be ready to, in your seats, to have a conversation with Brett and 2:00 o'clock. So thank you so much.

And there's some lunch recommendations that exist that are at the bottom of the agenda if you need anything and Katie is jumping out of her seat.

Go talk to Katie if you need any recommendations. She is on it.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:33 p.m. and resumed at 2:08 p.m.)

Chair Runnebaum: All right. I think we're going to go ahead and get started. Thank you all for making it back. I hope everybody is nourished and read for a second conversation. So, I'm going to give another brief introduction for the MAFAC members and those of the community that have been in this room all morning. I hopefully won't too repetitive but I fear I might.

So, first of all thank you very much Tyler, Theresa, Julie, and Nicole online for participating with us today and joining us as panel members for our second panel on Fishing Industry Perspective. I'm really looking forward to this conversation and I'm excited to hear what you all have to offer us.

So, before I turn it over to Brett who's going to be our moderate today I just wanted to give a brief background about what MAFAC is.

I think some of you are familiar but for those of you that aren't, we are an advisory body to NOAA Fisheries. We provide recommendations on policies, initiatives, and other programs.

We bring a live expertise to this table but I also want to recognize that when we are in community like this hearing the perspectives of people that are, sorry for lack of a better term, boots on the ground and really experiencing and living fisheries and everything that goes along with that. It strengthens and really makes our recommendations much better to the agency.So, I want to thank Brett and Natasha and Jamie Goen for pulling all of these panels together. I know it was a lot of work and I think that we have already had a

great discussion and so now I'm looking forward to the second part of it.

Part of our charge is to from NOAA is to fully come up with recommendations that are really urgent to the fishing and seafood industry including issues around trade and wellbeing, climate change and now I've lost my notes here and other important issues that everybody is facing.

So, we're a consensus, MAFAC is a consensus-based committee. So, we seek to provide recommendations that reflect a diversity of viewpoint. And in doing work we sometimes have some challenging conversations that are super nuanced. And so, I just wanted to introduce our commitments.

If, Emily, sorry, am I catching you off guard. If Emily could hold them up. I just wanted to run though some commitments we've made to each other.

To really be active listeners and to listen to other's stand, to make space and tell us your viewpoints and let us hear from you and also provide an opportunity for others to speak as well.

There's a lot of us that have businesses in fishing industries and other constituents that come along with us. But we also have our own expertise so providing as much, using as I statements as much as possible is great.

But I do recognize that you all represent a lot of folks. So, I know that this group has been really brave in embracing difficult conversations.

And so, with that we assume good intent and we recognize that sometimes we misstep, and so if our impact, if our impact doesn't align with our intention, we should recognize that and we are here to be super curious.

So, thank you for that. I feel really repetitive so I'm sorry to bring this up again.

So, with that I just, I really am super thankful for all of you to be here today and I want to turn it over to Brett.

So, if you don't know Brett, Brett was born in Homer, and commercially fished with his family in Chignik and Dutch Harbor. Brett owned and operated a Bristol Bay drift net boat for five years and today he owns Ocean Strategies, a public affairs firm in fisheries and seafood.

And Brett is a person who inspires me to live life authentically and to the fullest. And so, with that I'm going to turn it over and I really look forward to this great conversation.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you, Madam Chair for your kind intro. I just wish I could get introduced like that everywhere I go. How nice of you.

First there's Natasha. I can't give enough thanks. Thank you for helping organize this and thank you for welcoming us to your home and thank you for all of the folks who have participated and in the audience. It means a lot to come to truly what is an involved communities in Alaska, a true fishing community, Kodiak represents that. And it's nice to be home. You know you're in Alaska, right, when everybody makes eye contact with you and does smile back. That's rule 1. And you know you're a fishing community when you walk outside your hotel room and you smell low tide and you know it's like the lower 48 and I go somewhere like a fish processor and it smells like, it smells like money. Or really it smells like food. And you know, you're in a true fishing community when you walk outside your hotel room and it smells like food. And you know you're in Kodiak when you have a six foot welded piece of aluminum being the projector holder.

That's when you know you're in Kodiak, dangling up, you can't see on the, who is tuning in virtually. There's a, there's a projector that your faces are being lovely projected on by, it's held up by a six foot piece of welded, a piece of aluminum. So, that's your

innovation and solutions in this fishing counsel.

Just quickly before I let the panelists introduce themselves, you know, I think this is going to be just an open dialog and conversation. Some of the goals really today is just to understand what communities need and what from government specifically, NOAA Fisheries, in the face of climate change. That's kind of the overall goal is what do you need? And we're going to advise the Agency, and we will do our best to take all your input.

I also ask when we get to sort of the question an answer part of individual name tag members to please introduce who you are and where you're from and kind of what you represent, because I know a lot of us wear many hats and represent many things. But if you could just remind the folks on the panel who you are that would be at least very helpful.

So, we have joining today, and I'll let the panelists introduce themselves, Nicole Kimball, joining virtually. Hi, Nicole, thank you for being at this time despite some unfortunate illness so thank you for making the time. It means a lot. Nicole is the vice president of Alaska Operations for Pacific Seafood Processors Association.

Next we have Tyler Schmeil. Did I pronounce that correctly?

Mr. Schmeil: Correct.

Mr. Veerhusen: Great. And Tyler is a Kodiak shipyard owner and also owner/operator of the Aleutian vessel, Alaska Spirit.

Mr. Schmeil: Yes.

Mr. Veerhusen: A fishing craft out in the bay. Theresa Peterson. Theresa is the Fisheries and Policy Director for Alaska Marine Conversation Council, but also is a lifelong Kodiak resident and active set netter trying to stop of the islands.

And next to Theresa we have Julie Bonney. Julie, you were a former MAFAC vendor?

Ms. Bonney: Yeah, I was on for six years.

Mr. Veerhusen: All right. Good to have you. And Julie is the owner, executive director of Alaska Groundfish Databank and like the rest of you, how long have you lived here? Were you born here?

Ms. Bonney: Forty years.

Mr. Veerhusen: Forty years.

Ms. Bonney: I'm still a newcomer, but.

Mr. Veerhusen: Okay. Still a newcomer at 40 years.

Ms. Bonney: Yeah.

Mr. Veerhusen: Well, thank you for joining. Thank you for making time. I think one things we've learned in trying to organize these panels, there's a lot of, there's a lot of people that said, yeah, I would love to but I'm going to have decline. Yeah, I really appreciate all of you for taking the valuable time out of your day and at least to helping this be as educational and informative as possible

Mr. Veerhusen: So, what I would like to just start with to try and get things going is a little bit of intro through yourselves. I'll just go down starting with Tyler and finishing with Nicole. And if you could just tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do and maybe just give us a snippet about how is climate change impacting your business, who you represent, just kind of a brief of overview of what are you seeing under the impact of climate change?

So, we'll start with you, Tyler, if you could just introduce yourself and a little bit about how climate change is impacting you or your community.

Mr. Schmeil: Very good. Thank you. Good afternoon and thank you for the invite for this advisory committee. My name is Tyler Schmeil. I moved to

Kodiak Island when I was five years old and lived with my family in a rural village of Chiniak. It's about an hour drive out of town.

I started my life for fishing in 1978 going on the shrimp boats with my father that he was crewing on. And by 11 years old my father had purchased the salmon seiner locally and by 14 I was a full time deckhand on boats for herring, salmon, halibut, and crab around Kodiak.

I acquired my first boat when I was 21 years old, a salmon seiner. The year was 1991. In 1992, my future father in law boat the FD Alaska Spirit, it's a 98 foot Bering Sea crab boat. So, to support my salmon sailing habit, I start a crew in the Bering Sea crab industry as a crew member. I married in 1994. My wife had two beautiful kids, a boy, and a girl in '95 and '96, respectively.

And a short, 30 plus years later I sit here and I'm a 50 percent owner of that crab boat. I've invested heavily in the quota system that was given to us in the crab industry and we even purchased more in 2019. Don't ask me why. But my son works alongside me and is the engineer on the boat. We also have a 55 foot salmon seiner/halibut boat.

And in a move to diversity and prepare for my retirement I bought the local small shipyard here as a business. So, if you ask me if climate change is impact my seafood business, I will sound, and I sound I have some urgency in my voice, the answer is yes.

I am part of the Bering Sea crab industry sitting at historic lows, having my Bering Sea snow crab season closed in 2022, 2023, and possibly here in 2024 deemed to what scientists are saying was a heat wave and 2018, 2019 linked to the starvation of a biomass of juvenile snow crab in the Bering Sea. And also having my Bristol Bay red crab closed in 2022. It was shut down.

So, I've been greatly impacted. Do you want more?

Do you want more? I'm most worried about not being able to react fast enough to current situations in order to help the stocks recover and become resilient whether it's in the salmon, in the Bering Sea snow crab or the Bristol Bay red crab and losing entire fisheries. Those are my worries right now.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you very much Tyler. Theresa?

Ms. Peterson: Well, thank you. And first off I just want to say thank you to everybody to coming to Kodiak. Natasha, thank you for getting everybody here, my dear friend. But it really means a lot to us to have MAFAC come here.

So, I'm Theresa Peterson. First a correction. I'm not a lifelong Kodiak resident but it's been spent my entire adult life. I actually started fishing out of Homer 40 something years ago in my first big year trip was with Brett's dad and none of us had ever fished with Vic's Halibut here. We didn't know what we were doing. We had to have a coiler and we called it a coiler's assistant sticking the hooks in. But we pulled it off. Yeah. It was great.

Mr. Veerhusen: You still have all your fingers.

Ms. Peterson: We all did. Yeah, we all came out full. But so in getting involved in the industry, I kind of stair stepped my way up and ended up out in the Bering Sea, long lining it, you know, spent a lot of time out there baiting hooks and sitting on the back deck going, I moved to a fire. I'm going to one day live on our own boat.

Well, where do we do that? And we thought, well, Kodiak. Kodiak has a lot of diversified fishing opportunities and so we saved some money, came to Kodiak, bought this tiny little seiner. It was like a floating Tupperware container, it reminded me. I'm like wait after the big boats, I'm like, what? This little thing? We can get this close to shore.

But we made it work. You know, a few boats later, three kids later, you know, we're still here and we're

still trying to help support the community as a whole but for me it's really like the next generation.

I want to see the next generation of fishermen have the same opportunities that I have had in this industry. So, that kind of led to work with the Alaska Marine Conservation Council that I've been with for 20 years now. And just worked to help encourage fishermen and fishing communities to get involved in the policy arena, like, you know, Jim was saying earlier. It's hard and it's really uncomfortable. I feel like we're up here like a firing squad. No, you know, I mean it's nerve wracking.

But you just got to keep trying and working to encourage others to get in as well. And I'm watching things change quickly. Commercial fishing has always been a challenging, volatile industry. We kind of, we weather the ups and downs, you know. Some years are going to be good. Some years bad. I can't help but reflect back on that first salmon season. It was really good. The price was good. I'm like, wow, we're going to be, we're going to be rich, you know.

And I heard a couple of old timers talking in the post office and they said, these kids will be lucky if they ever see a season like this again. And we never have. You know, it's but you kind of know that and that was like, okay, save some money. That helped put that in my mind.

But now, like with the stress of climate change it's becoming even more volatile. And we don't really know what to expect ahead. And I can't help but think, well why would you encourage anybody in their right mind to get into this industry? What's ahead?

And so I feel like, you know, what we need is the science to help us understand what we do need to do moving forward, what we need to plan for, what type of planning we can bring into our community to maintain more resiliency and we're really, we're an island community.

Kodiak's the hub but these six villages really depend

on the infrastructure of Kodiak for their survival as well. So, we're really all interconnected and I find like the one common goal we all have is we want to stay here. We want this community to survive and we want to work together to help make that happen.

So, I think like scenarios like this help us do that. So, thank you.

Ms. Bonney: Thank you, Theresa. And so, my name is Julie Bonney. And I own the business, Alaska Groundfish Databank. So, I work for the trawl fleet here and we have about, I represent about 40 catch vessels.

I think people assume that trawlers are big boats out of off the West Coast. These are family owned, independent businesses. The majority of the boat, the crew and operators and the owners actually live in Kodiak, Alaska and so they have a big influence on the, you know, kids in school and the community overall.

I also work for the Kodiak processors, all of them and others in the Gulf of Alaska. And so, I think that there would be two take homes that I would say right now is that we have a lot going on in the seafood industry. And so, you've got climate change on the deck. But we're being totally washed out by what's going on in the seafood marketplace.

I mean I've been involved in the fisheries since, well I started with the lady that owned the business before me in 1991, and I bought the business in 2001 and been running it ever since. And I've never seen where we are, or where we've been where every fish species across the board is in the toilet. And we are still at the bottom, we're trying to get out of that and there's been a lot of efforts both on the professional side.

So, I just want to make sure that people realize what some of the ills that people are talking about doesn't have anything to do with climate change. It's what's going on in the seafood business overall.

Just to give you an idea of what's going on in this town right now is we have the P season, pollock fishery that opened on September 1 and so the monies now that what Brett is talking about is actually the Pollack fishery and we have about between 20 and 25 boats that are coming in and out delivering right now.

I would note that my office assistant, Chelsie, is on the EB Grace, which is the newest boat in the fleet and she's got Cole Monahan with her who is a stock assessment out here for Ball Pollock. So, he's, I don't think he's ever been on a fishing trip because he came in, he was all about we're going to out for dinner and do this and do that and then we informed him, well, you're leaving at he came in at 2:45 and we said, you've got to be down on the boat ready to go at 5 o'clock because when we leave.

So, the other thing that I think would be the other message is that Kodiak is probably the most diverse fishing port in Alaska and maybe even in the nation. And so, from a community's perspective, we may be able to make things up in a different fishery, but when you're individually associated with a fishery then that's when you really hear it.

So, for communities that are really maybe focused more on salmon or they're big on IFQ, if those species have a hurt, then that community is going to be a lot more risk than Kodiak because we have 22 different species that come across the dock. We have every gear type that fishes out of here.

So, typically if one fishery is down, hopefully another one is up. That's not the case right now for it because of the marketplace. Climate change, I would say the main things here is we science to support what's going on and we need to be able to react quicker. So, I'll turn on to Nicole now.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you, Julie. Nicole, do you mind introducing yourself, maybe in your recap, who has the best experiences introduce themselves as well and tell us a little bit more about how climate change

is impacting the processors out there.

Ms. Kimball: Can you hear me okay?

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah. We've got you.

Ms. Kimball: Okay. I can't see the room so that's a little unsettling. I can just see myself on the screen. My name's Nicole Kimball. I appreciate being able to present or talk to you remotely. I'd rather, much rather be in Kodiak but I came down with something and it's best I'm not sitting next to anybody.

I work for, I was born and raised in Alaska and I was born in Ketchikan and grew up in Ketchikan, Juno, and Anchorage. I'm here in Anchorage right now. I work for PSPA as Brett said and that's a seafood processing association, so it's a group of shoreside processors that operate in Kodiak, like Julie mentioned but also throughout coastal Alaska.

So, our membership is in Ketchikan and Bristol Bay and Aleutians and Alaska after that. And they take deliveries from every gear type, every kind of fisherman and they're dependent on all of these coastal communities being viable.

And I think, I was thinking about this morning's panel. I was able to listen to that and I think am I still coming in okay? I hear a really loud echo on my end.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah, we have since the audio. I mean we can go back where we were because that sounded a little bit clear to me. And we go back just sorry, Nicole.

You have, just so you know you have a room full of people very attentive and listening. So, if it's unnerving for you staring at yourself we are all, yeah.

Ms. Kimball: Staring at myself.

Mr. Veerhusen: absolutely listening and

Ms. Kimball: Okay.

Mr. Veerhusen: So please continue.

Ms. Kimball: Okay. Great. You're coming in great now. Well, I was just thinking about this morning's panel and the community folks and the leadership on that panel and I, you know, I couldn't do a better job articulating like the level of reliance on fish in Alaska.

All I know is Alaska fisheries and the level of connectivity and connectiveness across the processing sector, the fishery sector, the fishermen and communities. You just can't have a viable community without a viable fishing sector, processing sector and vice versa. They all need to be healthy.

And I think it was also well articulated and I think Julie was speaking to this too but it was hard to hear for me is the level of pressure and challenge that we're under right now most of which, a lot of which is related to lower values in the global market place.

And so, I think Julie was speaking to this but in case it didn't come through, you know, we're under situation with really poor trade policy. As everyone knows we have really high global supply of just about every, you know, salmon and white fish throughout the whole supply chain in the past year into very high cost due to inflation and really pressing down consumer demand post pandemic for seafood.

And we clearly have foreign competitors right across the pond from us that are very less regulated, less sustainable, have lower operating costs than any domestic seafood processors in the United States, let along in Alaska in really remote communities.

So, there are a lot of global market factors affecting the value of seafood and as I said, I'm speaking to Alaska seafood but I could hear other folks from other regions kind of saying the same thing this morning.

And in the past, you know, those downturns were weathered for the most part I think due to, I think Julie said some diversity and Kodiak is best situated to continue to have that diversity.

But even if you think about a processing business, which I'm supposed to be speaking from that perspective today. You know, we were able to weather those storms in downward, prices downward value because we had other things going on.

And now when you have processing, these even large ones with multiple processing plants across Alaska, you know, it used to be if salmon wasn't doing well in the Southeast you still had white fish or rockfish or cod or pollock doing well somewhere else in Alaska to kind of buffer that downturn.

And when you have a downturn like, you know, which is kind of unprecedented across species, across regions, there is no buffer for anybody. Not for processors and not for fishermen and certainly not for communities.

So, it's a really unsettling time right now. I think when we get back to the purpose of this panel, you know, climate change is obviously creating a higher level of variability season to season more variability, less predictability and that creates a huge challenge for processors to plan for production, plan for markets and it also means people are a lot less, a lot more hesitant to invest in the things that people want to see like more value added, newer products, maintaining infrastructure, support infrastructure in the community.

And there's a lot of examples for Alaska obviously as was mentioned I think by Janet Coit this morning about the disaster declarations that we've seen in Alaska lately. I mean Pink Salmon could be a good example for this year coming in 70 percent under forecast and just think about trying to plan production and supply markets with 40 million things this year compared to 170 million last year.

Tyler referenced the Bering Sea crab closures that have been completely disruptive to processors, communities, and harvesters. And then our cod closure in 2019 directly due to marine heat wave that just perpetuated through our gulf system for years.

And so those are all just really tough times for us.

I think scientists are also attributing smaller fish size to some climate factors. That affects your product mix as well as impacts the entire supply chain. In Kodiak I think it's mainly been poor volumes compared to average volumes or what's been forecasted.

And I guess I just want to emphasize and bring it back to this panel and I think Julie might have mentioned this as well, it's just the additional climate uncertainty exacerbates those challenges that we're already experiencing, a lot of which have to do with higher cost to operate and a lot of which have to do with poor global markets.

So, it's all wrapped up together but everyone in the industry I feel like is really getting squeezed and to be frank, people in commercial fisheries need to make money in order to continue to operate and be viable. So, a lot of things going on.

I can't wait to talk more about what we see. Some NOAA support might be like and thanks again for letting me part of this remotely.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you, Nicole, for your time and well spoken words around unsettling and high level of variability, less predictability right now. And I'm wondering my first question will be for Theresa.

If you could tell us a little bit more about the types of support communities like Kodiak might need right now and into the future to buffer, I think is another word I heard, around these higher rates of variability and predictability.

What are some things that the community could use, especially from a government agency standpoint to help with some of that fluctuation and variability?

Ms. Peterson: Well definitely one of our

Mr. Veerhusen: Well, if you hold it should come on

green. Green.

Ms. Peterson: One of our needs is to maintain strong climate science. I know that funding is always tight and climate science can kind of be one of the first to go when things get tight it's got to, you know, we need to maintain our surveys, we need to maintain other things. Maybe what can we get rid of that could be dropped.

And we absolutely need to pay in that because if we don't know what's going on, yeah, we don't know what to plan for. And when I think of science space, fisheries management and think of the components, you know, the biological, the ecological, environmental, economic, and social science information, we also need to continue to work to include the traditional and local knowledge.

We need more information sources than we have. And I know it's challenging to find ways to integrate that but I think we need to recognize that and keep trying. In terms of what NOAA Fisheries can help with? I think the Agency would benefit from more social sciences on board.

I think with the Alaska Fisheries science center we just have a couple. And some decisions of how to support fishing communities with really not great understanding of just the level of challenges that we're working through.

So, that level, that level supports important and I guess, you know, I think about like the level of predictions. They're really, they're just predictions in a sense.

And so, I kind of experienced something this Spring where, you know, Amy talked earlier about the drought in 2019 and the conditions for those silver salmon, those fat silver salmon that finally made it up and looking at where I just came back from fishing a couple of days ago, in.

It was low predictions. It was thinking that those,

that heat wave, that drought conditions was going to affect the returns and these processors that are operating at just razor thin margins, they're like hell we can't, we can't send down tenders this year for you. We just can't do it. It's too great a risk.

You know, it's 150 years they've been servicing that area but they're having to make really tough decisions and I found myself super flatfooted. It's like we, well what, you know, yeah, we're fishing skiff 120 miles away. But it was kind of the community, like really came together and said, we can't let that happen.

We're, you know, we're going to make sure we find somebody to pick you up and the community rallied, found another processor. We hired our own tender, got those fish to town, but then we sat down there for June and July. Didn't fish at all. I'm like, whoa, that processor was right. Yeah, there's no fish coming out of this area.

And then all of sudden it turned on like a light bulb in August and it was those late red runs came back stronger than we've seen in 22 years and it really saved our fishery. It saved us. They're still fishing down there, which is really I flew my daughter in, you know, we just like figure out how to make things work but it's like but it's like, how do we plan with all these variables?

But I think part of it is we stick it out. We work together. We make this work. You know, we weather these ups and downs. And so, we'll be eating some of those red salmon for dinner tonight. So, you know, it's just, I don't know what the answer is but we sure keep trying and we sure keep working together is kind of what my experience led me to.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah, and I'd open it up for the rest of the panelists. I don't need to be, you know, moderating who can talk when. If you have something to say, please chime in.

Ms. Bonney: So, I'm a little unclear. So, you asked,

called on her and we're just supposed to kind of feed on what Theresa put on the table? Is that what

Mr. Veerhusen: You can, you can respond to Theresa or anything else around like kind of the question about what's important about the types of support communities like Kodiak need.

Ms. Bonney: So, I've got a list.

Mr. Veerhusen: You've got, you've got a pen.

Ms. Bonney: And I noticed when we introduced NOAA, NMFS and MAFAC is about policy. So, I'm not really clear how big a policy you can get to. But we need somethings to happen in Washington, D.C. to really bolster the seafood industry.

The first one on my list is the Farm Bill. Seafood produce is a food source, feeds the world and we are traded differently than the agricultural sector. There's a couple of items within the Farm Bill that really would help us.

And Nicole, I'll turn that over to Nicole to talk to that because she's living and breathing that more than I do. But then disaster funding. That needs to we are still waiting for disaster funding from the 2020 P. Cod fishery disaster that happened in the Gulf of Alaska. And that money we hope, or they're going to start the applications this fall in October but that's four long years.

But probably that money should go to the participants. We did the, I forget the right term, but we did have funds come from USDA and they turned those funds around in two months, not four years. So, can't we come up with a system that's more reactive than that?

The other issue on my list, hit list is modernization of the U.S. seafood industry. Trident, sorry, whoops, a Freudian slip there.

They're trying to modernize their facilities and so

making some making some really hard choices but when you stack us up to what's going on in Russia, it is scary. They build brand new catcher processors and they mothball them after ten years. They have really high level catcher vessels that they use.

So, why can't we have and we're hand strung because of the Jones Act and other regulations that don't allow us to build vessels or processors that they're, what they should be in terms of this timeline. I would pick up on transportation is a big issue for us right now.

And so, what is happening from a Kodiak perspective is we're getting bypassed by Matson on certain days of the we usually get two ships a week and they bypass us when they get behind schedule.

The reason they get behind schedule, it could be weather but now what is happening is they're on, they cannot speed up. They cannot make that boat go faster because it increases their carbon emissions which is, you know, illegal. They have to live within a certain carbon output.

So, we need new ships that are going to be more green and those are going to take more time to build and so in the meantime it's affecting shipping out of Kodiak both for what's come in but we haven't, we almost ran out of containers twice and the ACs in 2024 and also the ACs in the 2023. You can't have a fishing industry in a place like Kodiak if you can't put those, that product into a freezer van.

So, then my last hit would be on surveys. And so, we have two great examples of why we need more robust surveys. First, Jamie can talk to this but when they canceled the crab survey in the Bering Sea because of COVID and that was the one survey they needed to inform what was going on with crab and it was not available.

In the Gulf of Alaska, we had what they called the blob that happened in 2014 through 2016, and basically it was called the endless summer where all

the cod basically starved to death and since we do surveys every other year, nobody understood that basically the quota way too high and we were, and the fishermen out there fishing thinking what's going on. We can't even catch the ACs in cod quota.

So, we need more surveys, more often and if we can figure out to do them more economically with drones or whatever, I'm all in favor of that. But we need more information to, because of the amount of uncertainty in our system right now. Thank you.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you, Julie. Thank you, Theresa. I'll just give a moment if Tyler has anything to add.

Mr. Schmeil: No, I could piggyback on a bunch of that but I don't

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah, please, and then I'll finish with Nicole.

Mr. Schmeil: Well, I totally agree with Julie about the disaster, you know, relief and stuff like that. If it is appropriate it is taking way too long to get to the fishermen or the processors or the crew.

We're losing crews. We have loans to pay. We have, you know, if you have big investments like we do, you know, and then we're watching processors shut down, you know, in the state. So, yeah, they could. Yeah, I mean that's the thing. We could use the money more expeditiously than they did.

And then on her survey, you know, I think we, you know, learned to look beyond stock assessments and see what science has to say.

You know, like they say hindsight's 2020 and what indicators to what we have whether it's cod or crab or whatever that we can apply going forward in the future, you know, what can we learn and what can we add to the science, I guess is one of my things that just, when she was saying that I was thinking that, you know, what did science miss that might

have helped us predict the collapse of crab or cod and apply this to other fisheries? You know, so it is, you know, that's pretty much all I have right now.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thanks. Yeah, I'll give space to Nicole if you have anything else to add?

Ms. Kimball: No, I think those are all great points. I guess just on the last one, I mean I really see surveys as kind of our first line of defense. So, I might have a little different take on it than Theresa.

I feel like surveys are getting cut or underfunded or not keeping up with inflation and potentially at the expense, you know, of other things, other new initiatives.

And so, I'm hoping all the new climate initiatives don't lose sight that surveys are what kind of the foundation of our understanding and that we need to ensure that those are fully funded, I mean, throughout Alaska but throughout the nation in order to be responsive to climate impacts. And sorry.

And on Tyler's point to I think it's really important. I used to just be survey, survey, survey, and then the director of the science center kept saying surveys and associated research.

Surveys and associated research and he was making, Dr. Foy, making that connection that there is a boatload of associated research that comes along with all of the information collected, a lot of it ecosystem research, environmental variables, that is only able to be done because of the survey information annually.

So, I think our ability to continue to say what is it that we missed, and what is it that we need to test or look at in the future in order to be more ready, I suppose more resilient. I think that is still stemming from our survey work.

I won't go over what Julie said except I do think the Farm Bill I know is rolled in potentially some of those

actions that's really important. I know NOAA has, you know, trying to lead on this interagency working group to basically elevate seafood to the level I hope of other proteins in the U.S. and get the same kind of understanding and support through grants, through loans, through marketing, through development, through purchasing programs that other proteins get through USDA.

I really hope that that NOAA is still working on that interagency work and the Farm Bill and things that are in there I think are really helpful to us. If I was going to say a couple of things about maybe things that haven't been mentioned yet, just regulatory stability in times when you're already dealing with climate, another moving part that's not just fisheries management but every kind of regulatory agency that we work with.

I think DEC was mentioned in the morning. Those all make a real difference into people's ability to continue to invest in Alaska. And then maybe my last one on disaster funding.

I can't, I could not agree more about the timing of it. The timing is everything in disaster funding. But I also think maybe from NOAA we could continue to push a really careful messaging when we talk about fisheries disaster and stock status and I actually think NOAA's been really great about this and maybe I just want to emphasize this lately but when people aren't cautious about messaging it can really compound things further value in the marketplace.

And so, we're trying to increase the value of our fish, increase the demand for our fish, U.S. wide and we need consumers to pay more for our fish knowing it's wild, sustainable, traceable, subject to all of these environmental regulations, labor standards, higher than our competitors. We need to recognize that all of those messages, and NOAA's messages in particular really carry very far, don't just resonate in the U.S., but customers and markets and consumers hear them and we have been really great in the U.S.

under our management system in responding to stock status when climate is the factor.

We've done what we're supposed to do. We lower tax all the time or close fisheries when that's needed for sustainability because of a climate effect. So, we're responding in the hard on the people that are dependent on these fisheries and to continue to be vocal and defend that management system and the science behind it I think is really important to continue to have fisheries that we can sell in the marketplace. So, just trying to add a few things, Brett, that maybe weren't mentioned.

Mr. Veerhusen: Well, that's, that's great. I'm adding to the hit list that Julie's given us, I'm on page 2 now. So, Nicole, that's a really good point around communication.

We've been touching around surveys and data acquisition being critical to the Agency to understand baseline information about our ecosystems and of course how to respond with fluctuations. I'm curious here in Kodiak or other communities, does the Agency do a good job at communicating its core functions to the public? Does it do a good job and if you could give an example of where the Agency does or where there's ways to improve how the Agency communicates its core functions here in Kodiak or elsewhere in Alaska?

Because this is a conversation I'll buy a little bit of time and whoever wants to, whoever wants to answer that strategically I'll give you a minute. So, I have big shoes to fill for Stefanie Moreland chairing the strategic planning and budget subcommittee for MAFAC and one of the key elements I see, Pat shaking his head, Pat, I'm doing it.

We're talking about communication, Pat is around how can we as an national advisory body help the Agency communicate its functions better and we're learning that there are some constraints in how the Agency communicates itself within like a budgetary appropriation context and then to the public.

And there are ways to use levers in the public to be advocate, to advocate for the Agency, to demonstrate the view that the Agency has not just with fisheries and data acquisition but in all the ways in which the information is being used or the public is being consulted.

I think there are, I think Pat this morning was talking about Neil deGrasse Tyson as being kind of an advocate for NASA. And I think we're trying to think creatively in recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce of how the Agency itself can be communicating what it does better as a way to communicate to those who make important decisions about the Agency's budget, understand what the value of NOAA Fisheries is to the country and so bringing it back to Kodiak, can you think of ways in what you've seen both positively or ways to improve that you think are opportunities for the Agency to communicate its core functions?

And I see Julie is grabbing the mic.

Ms. Bonney: I was given the mic by Theresa by the way.

Mr. Veerhusen: You were, you were given the mic.

Ms. Bonney: She's like, you go first this time. That is a really tough question. So, Alaska Groundfish is about information. People pay me to repackage things that comes from either the Council or NOAA to inform the, you know, spoon feed the fishermen and the processors so they know what's going on.

From the Agency point of view, I think that things have improved in terms of giving like snippets or, you know, breaking things down so it's more digestible and not so high level. I would, that woman's name that brought up MREP. We're having MREP here in Kodiak April 28th through the 2nd of May. This is the second one so that is good.

So, that in that process that we need to be tuning up people where to go to look. So, I guess the problem

that I see is the world is all about sound bites and the Facebook and social media and so how does the Agency get involved in that?

I know the North Pacific Council has been trying to develop one pagers that are informational. So, I don't I do think there's been progress. We still need to make more progress and I honestly don't know how to make that more progress.

Mr. Veerhusen: Theresa?

Ms. Peterson: You know, one benefit in Kodiak I see, or many benefits but, you know, we have the lab across the way and that, we're welcome to come in and support that at any time and the current director of the lab, Mike Litzow, he's always available to give community presentations. He gives presentations at ComFish, at the Kodiak Marine Science Symposium. And puts the complexity of the issue in understandable terms for us all.

And before that, you know, we had Dr. Foy, and Dr. Foy was the same way, just really community oriented and kind of reaching out, you know, what can I do for you? And when asked, you know, he's always there for us. So, we're blessed with that lab and its capacity across the way.

And some of the things that I think NOAA Fisheries can do better, there's always so many moving parts. Like I was just reading through the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Roadmap and update, and, you know, put comments together. Well once that's all there, where does it go? How do we get that back to us?

I feel like sometimes it's, information is kind of extracted but it's not really shared back with the communities as well as it could be. I think that could be something that could be improved upon. And it's similar I think with like the complexity of Essential Fish Habitat and working to get a better understanding of the role of habitat in a changing climate.

Is habitat more important now? Are there areas that we can understand as fishermen we should be really careful with? Is it working as intended to protect these critical habitats? Let's, you know, continually work together to share information back and forth.

I think, you know, all of that would be helpful and then, you know, I would I can't help but mention, you know, we're talking about trying to maintain resilience through a changing climate but support in helping the industry to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels could go a long way too.

We're like a fuel hungry industry and we need to continue to kind of get the support to keep transitioning away from that, you know, with renewable energy sources and I think Kodiak's a great model of what can be achieved. I mean we're rock in the middle of the Gulf of Alaska yet we've got 99 percent renewable energy between those wind turbines up on the hill and the hydro and that was through, you know, long term vision for the investment of the community.

So, Kodiak has that but our rural communities, you know, just watch Akhiok have to brings barrels of fuel on board to supply their generator. How can we help the renewable energy and ways to, given that overhead and the burning of the fossil fuels so that we can slow down the carbon emissions and maybe all our marine creatures have a little bit longer to adapt, you know. I don't know.

But I think we need to also not lose sight on our role as humans to work to reduce our carbon emissions.

Mr. Veerhusen: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Theresa. I'm going to ask one last question and then see if Tyler and Nicole have anything to add first and then with Theresa and Julie around other solutions that would support climate readiness of seafood and fishing businesses, including coastal communities that are not being discussed or implemented enough.

Any solution that you maybe see that's or elsewhere

that could be more but before I turn it over to Tyler, I wanted to read a response that we got from somebody that we also invited today but was unable to attend due to another conference and that's Nick Mangini who is a kelp farmer here on Kodiak. And we asked him this question and he just provided a short written response.

He said part of this change has to come from those affected. My personal answer has been an effort to build a new by helping fishermen diversify and this sounds like you really diversified your business. By helping fishermen diversify into something new such a mariculture as a new part of their existing fishing portfolio use current infrastructure to bring in new investment in our community and give our workforce new opportunity to processing, harvest, tendering of kelp and oysters to our region.

Many other areas of the blue economy hold similar promise and should be looked at as a source of income to our fleets and in our land based workforce. So, I thought that that was an interesting answer and perspective that I wanted to share, that unfortunately there's a competing tis the conference season there's a competing conference happening elsewhere in Alaska around seaweed. But I thought that was new.

Tyler, Nick was really focused on new industry and using existing infrastructure. And I'm wondering, Tyler and Nicole, if you have anything to add around these kinds of solutions that would support fisheries and the communities that you can think of that would, that are not being discussed enough or implemented enough?

Mr. Schmeil: Well, what I have under solutions is, you know, with me is when you identify herding stocks we need to share in the burden of conservation, you know, that's one of my points is right now I have a closed directed fishery out in the Bering Sea, my Bering Sea snow crab. So, it's affecting industry, communities, processors, everybody involved.

And my question to like NOAA is why is still bi catch being allowed up to 4.3 million pounds snow crab when we're trying to rebuild a stock. We're trying to let the little guys become resilient and adapt but we're still taking more off the grounds. Now that's one of my, one of my concerns.

You know, we have no directed fishery. We are not allowed to do it but other sectors are allowed to take animals off the ground. So, I would like to, you know, increase cooperation between sectors and work together, not fight, you know. It's really hard to get a voice to the table when you're trying to save your fishery, I feel.

Habitat protections, we need to, you know, with the science, we need to look into habitat destruction and if that's affecting our stocks, our fisheries. So, those are a couple of my take homes from my solutions. You know, diversify.

You know, I have been diversified. I've been blessed to be able to be in multiple fisheries and like they said before there's, everything is cyclical but yeah.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you. I'll open it up to the rest of MAFAC for questions and I wanted to give Nicole, if you had anything else to add I'll give you the, give the floor to you. Otherwise, we can move to the rest of MAFAC for questions. It looks like you came off mute. So, go ahead.

Ms. Kimball: Yeah, Brett, are we on the kind of what solutions would support climate readiness kind of correct?

Mr. Veerhusen: Correct.

Ms. Kimball: Okay. I think everyone's had good ideas. I think there's actually a lot on the table right now. I think on your agenda later will be NOAA's explanation of the CEFI project, the Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative. And I hope to be able to listen to that as well.

I think that's a great idea or project to build kind of our nationwide modeling system. And then I think a big part of that is how do you use that information into making decisions? What's the support system for decisions so that it's actually used in fisheries management as opposed to just being more information.

I think the survey modernization project that is ongoing for NOAA is important for climate resilience for sure. And I think some of the work that was done just a week or so ago at the National SSE workshop about harvest strategies for climate resilient fisheries and that was their whole topic for that entire panel and I think there were a lot of good ideas that came out of that.

These are, you know, surveyor modernization I think was on a five year track. I think CEFI might be on a similar track. And so, none of these are really quick things. But it is the planning and projection that we need or needed a while ago in order to get more on top of this situation.

I do think if we can bolster our survey assessments, try to incorporate more environmental variables in into those assessments to create more stability in our access long term, that is really the goal like the fewer peaks and valleys and kind of more steady state, I'm thinking about Tyler, what Tyler is saying too in terms of a closed fishery and how hard that is to regain your footing once you've had a closed fishery.

So, I think there's a lot on the table right now in terms of solutions but I think everybody is just itching for those to be implementable and their really just all kind of ongoing in development.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah, thank you. And that's part of, you know, what we, what I understand as MAFAC we can try and help, let's elevate that urgency to the Secretary of Commerce and within the Agency.

And so I know that myself and everybody here is listening attentively to hear your thoughts and part

of this for having the meeting here is Natash's doing but also it's because the members of MAFAC and as I understand that the Agency is hearing the urgency and wanted to host this meeting here specifically and not elsewhere. It was hearing the importance for the Agency to be here.

So, I'm going to turn it over to my fellow MAFAC members for questions. As a reminder, just flip your cards over if you have any and please quickly just introduce yourself, where you're from and kind of who you are representing. That would be very helpful. Would anybody like to Amy?

Ms. Green: Hi. Thank you. My name is Amy Green. I'm actually my background is education also, I know many of us in this room. I was a classroom teacher for a long time and then I went to graduate school.

So, now I'm an assistant professor at the University of Maryland. I do mostly work in Teacher Ed., but most of my work in science and sustainability in STEM education is with teachers as I mentioned. This next spring I'm branching out and I've created a course for the entire university that's a climate science education course for non-education majors and non-science majors. So, most of what we see and I'm getting to my question, I promise. I'm not trying to make this all about me. I'm also nervous. I'm new.

But so, most of what we see is that like when climate science education is addressed in education context it's usually for people who are going to be climate scientists, or biologists. Not for the general public.

And one thing that I've noticed is that there seems to be a bit of a disconnect and a lot of us regular folks kind of, it easy for us to think of climate science as something that belongs to NOAA or that's something that they do.

And I heard this panel thank you very much again but talking about the need for more climate science, more timely climate science, more robust climate science but I'm wondering if you are observing a

disconnect how the communities are able to apply that science and what are you, what are the communities perspective on climate science, on climate change?

I know all I've heard this room are pretty much in agreement about the threats and it's real. But is that what you're hearing in the community. Is this, is climate science something that they want, that they are able to consume?

So, this is the sort of thing I'm wondering about when it comes to communication. Not what was taught, how well is NOAA communicating what we do and what we can do but when it comes to something like climate change for a log of people is this scary, I don't want to face it or I don't believe it.

What's the actual community's perspective on it? And are they able to use that science? Do they want to be able to use that science? And do they see, are they do, how are they interpreting the short and long term effects of things like shutting down that snow crabfisheries and that sort of things. So, community perspective. Is that making sense? Sorry, that was so long.

Ms. Peterson: Yeah. Well, I had a, yeah, I had a lot of conversations this week trying to, you know, ask people, you know, what do you think about climate ready fisheries? And I'm like, well I don't know. Do you? You know, I'm not sure but I don't quite think we're there.

And so, I think part of what we're looking to understand is what does climate ready fisheries mean? We have an idea. We're kind of like know a little bit. Like we're diversifying in our own fishing business, trying to get ready for these different changes.

I know the direct marketing is increasing. Support for, you know, small scale processors, that infrastructure there, I know in itself and others like opening up an AirBnB at times when you're gone. So,

we're trying to diversify our economic readiness in different ways but I don't know what climate ready fisheries means yet. And I think NOAA helping to define what it means for us would be helpful.

And yeah, as far as the climate science goes, I say it but I honestly, I don't really even know. I don't get it, you know. It all sounds good. You know, I know, like I listen to those ecosystem status reports. Those provide information but then kind of echoing Nicole, how does that then feed into management decisions. And we want help figuring it out.

Ms. Green: In ways that are useable.

Ms. Peterson: In ways that are useable and in ways that are for laymen and fishermen, I guess with no science and never will have. And we know we want that help but I don't know. Sorry. I'm rambling. Who wants to go next?

Ms. Bonney: I agree with you that I don't know what a climate ready fishery is either.

(Off mic comment.)

Ms. Bonney: Yeah. I mean if there's no fishery then how did you, how could we make the snow crab fishery climate ready so you can go fishing next week.

(Off mic comment.)

Ms. Bonney: And I just, I don't know what that is. But I would comment that through the North Pacific Council you're building regulations around fisheries and those regulations had started building when the Americanization of the fisheries and we always build a bigger house of cards but we've never really gone back and revisited the cards that we've built.

And so, whether we need to, I think we need to kind of start rethinking how we regulate the different fisheries to meet certain objectives and one would be a more climate ready fishery so that you, closures for

trawl gear is a really big thing in the North Pacific and we have closed areas around Kodiak that have been there since 1986 to protect king crab.

Well, we don't have a king crab fishery today. So, maybe we need to revisit whether those closures make any sense. That's just an example. But like I said, we tend to build our house of cards but we never really assess whether the house still should be built the way it was.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yes. So, and what I'm hearing is a little bit of confusion about a definition of a term and that's really good information for us to hear, you know, as we can put words into a neat little title, but what does that mean and what we talking about, I think is something that I'm hearing.

(Off mic comment.)

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah. How do we operationalize? How do we communicate it? And do they care? Yeah. I see, I saw Meredith. Oh, I saw Kristina. And Linda was before, of course. So, we're going to have the Kristina, Meredith and then Jim. I see. We're, we'll get there. We'll get there. We've got lots of time. Okay. Linda.

Ms. O'Dierno: Hi, I'm Linda O'Dierno. I do a lot of work with consumers, food service operators, and retailers. And one of the problems that a lot of the retailers have now is they're getting sued for sustainability claims. And they're being sued basically because they are using third party certification programs to prove their sustainability.

Now we have a very strong program with fisheries to guarantee sustainability in our U.S. fisheries. But to go back to what Brett said, I don't think we do a really good job of communicating that information, what is being done for sustainability of fisheries.

And another problem that we have is sometimes we get lost in the weeds and we put out too much information. So, you need a simple, coherent

message that people can understand. Because many consumers just believe that you go out in your boat and you fish and that's it. There are no regulations.

I've actually seen in culinary school textbooks where they will say there is no food safety program for seafood. And we have to correct a lot of that misinformation that's out there.

And perhaps it would be helpful if NMFS went more into communicating with those users groups, getting a message out. Do you think that might help you to get better prices at retail and at food service, and do you think it would be useful?

Mr. Veerhusen: Nicole, I see you came up, from you I think it would be interesting to hear your perspective on this.

Ms. Kimball: I'll be brief. I just think yes. I think, I hope that's a place for NOAA to be because I do think it would be useful. I do think it would be valuable, I mean all the way down the supply chain to fishermen.

I think sustainability certification is really difficult to deal with in the first place. It does not include the ability for someone to say we had a closed fishery due to climate change, due to a marine heat wave that persisted for five years. You know, that is not you don't get a pass in your certification for things like that.

You can get dinged for things like that and the communication around it when something like that happens is so important. So, I guess I'm just I can't see who that is. But I want to say I agree with you and I do think it would be valuable.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you. Thank you, Nicole. That was Linda asking the question.

Ms. Peterson: I'll just briefly jump in. Yes. You know, absolutely. I've thought about, a lot about like kind of the challenge that the industry is in today and I think greater domestic consumption of our seafood

would help alleviate that a lot.

And I think as fishermen we need to tell our story better. We need to help the consumer understand that when you eat well caught seafood, you're helping all these fishing families. You know, you're there for us. The competition in the world market is so hard. How to make it easier for the consumer to understand, I do think that would be a great role for NOAA Fisheries to play. And that could help us immensely.

Seafood in the Farm Bill, I think that's a critical piece. We've been going back to D.C., advocating that and, you know, for that and trying to share our stories. It's just such a health source of protein that we need to do better job of helping the consumer understand that not only are they eating healthy, a healthy source of protein but they're supporting a lot of fishing families around the nation too.

Mr. Veerhusen: Kristina, would you mind asking your question and introducing yourself?

Ms. Alexander: Hello, I'm Kristina Alexander. I am with the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico studies which is in Corpus Christi, about 100 miles north of Mexico. And I'm a researcher. And I just wanted to compliment you on teaching me so much in this hour compared to what I sit and read in front of a computer.

And that's why these meetings are important as the theory that I have as teacher it doesn't match the experience. So, thank you. I've learned so much in just this little bit of time.

I've also learned that Linda was thinking along the lines of what I was which my question is along the lines of communicating, how does NOAA communicate not to the fishing community but to the non-fishing communities about fishing. And we spoke this morning about the importance of NOAA getting out and meeting the people of Kodiak in the small communities to see what's really out there and

maybe we needed to bring some people from some rectangular states here to hear what they have to say about certain things. Right.

And that's basically my, it's not so much of a question as after Linda asked it, as much of a comment. And thank you.

Mr. Veerhusen: Meredith?

Ms. Moore: Hello. My name is Meredith Moore. I'm the director of the Fish Conservation Program, at Ocean Conservancy. I don't know how to describe my job better than that.

We work on, you know, sustainable fisheries but are keenly interested in supporting the wellbeing of fishing communities and making sure we have fishing for the long term, forever and forever, Amen.

And so, I wanted to follow up on something that I think actually Nicole said but I'll tee it up to anybody who'd like to ask the currents of the questions because I think, Nicole, you said I heard a lot from the panel here about the need for science and surveys and CEFI and all of those things.

But Nicole at one point said, we also need to make sure we get that information into decisions so it's actually used in management instead of just more information. And one thing that's really interesting watching, you know, climate change play out across our fisheries is the North Pacific gen has had the most surveys and the most science and the most ecologically information of any of the Councils, and yet, and we are still in the situation that we are now with management not responding fast enough to the indicators and such that you've seen, you know, certain gaps causing a huge challenge for everyone.

And so it's kind of, it's tough to come from other regions and see like almost the wealth of information you all had and then still it wasn't enough. And so, I'm wondering what your thinking is about, do managers have a clear idea of how to use the science

that they have.

Are we seeing develop in management? Is there a relationship between the Council and NOAA really productive in solving these problems or are there ways to improve sort of the communication between the Agency and the Councils to get us on the same page to really use that information and act more quickly and support the industry?

Mr. Veerhusen: I see Julie has her hand up.

Ms. Bonney: So, I appreciate you saying that because we do have probably more science in the North Pacific than any other region. I totally agree with that.

And so, I'm involved with the assessment process. I go to all of the groundfish planning team both in September and November. And I say that there's a lot of evolution in that process over the five years. One example is they have a risk table which basically is looked at in terms of is that fish model maps which expect is the fish swimming like it should? Is there anything going on in there ecosystem that gives you concern?

So, and so it goes through where the assessment author rates their stock and they can choose to reduce the ABC, you know, reduce the quota because there's, they feel like there's too many uncertainties in the system and then Pat on the SSC is one of those that decides whether it because it goes from the assessment author, to the planting, to the SSC, and then the Council.

There are, I would say things are starting to progress that way in terms of using the better science to affect the outcomes. I still think that we have a ways to go.

Mr. Veerhusen: I'll let, Tyler, did you want to respond and then Nicole and Theresa, if you have anything? I wasn't sure who was I think everybody's kind of eager.

Mr. Schmeil: Well, I'm going to try to respond. I'm

very hopeful that with my situation that the science is evolved, and we won't have this happen, or we can foresee it happen again. I'm very hopeful. And that's what I'm, that's, you know, looking down at stock assessments to integrate other science into it so foresee or can have indicators that it's happening.

So, I'm really hoping it does evolve and you guys will direct the powers that be to get to evolve, please. So, that's kind of what I want to say.

Mr. Veerhusen: I'll finish with you. Nicole, did you have anything else I saw you came off mute.

Ms. Kimball: Thanks, yeah. I mean just similarly we're not, we're not changing. We have more climate affects and that we're dealing at a faster rate and warming at a faster rate than anywhere else in the nation. Right?

And so we're not changing the ability for these species to withstand those temperatures or withstand that level of lack of prey or withstand warm water in river, or withstand the timing now that's different where in the Bering Sea where we have no sea ice to produced, all of the things that, all the fish that we manage and want to eat. We're not changing those things.

And so, we still do have a lot of disasters because we can't undo that work. That is not the responsibility of the NOAA or the Councils. It's like global responsibility. But so, what I feel like we're trying those things and have a better response.

I mean the things that I had mentioned in terms of cod and in terms of like Bering Sea snow cab, we missed a survey before Bering Sea snow crab crash or we -- signal. But we had COVID and we didn't have that federal survey and so we missed that signal. And that was really important.

I think in 2019 we also missed a signal because we only survey the Gulf every other year and I think one of the things we've learned in additions to the risk

tables and the things that have evolved as Julie spoke about is listening to fishermen in that planting process when they're trying to determine what the over fishing levels are and the ABCs, because fishermen saw the signals well before the models did.

So, I do think that we're evolving a lot but I just don't want to give the impression we think fish management is going to solve this climate situation and all the myriad of affects that it's having on fisheries in Alaska. That's not what's happening.

But if we could better predict, you know, more than three months in advance what ocean conditions look like or what that capability might be for productivity in that ocean that would be a huge step forward for Alaska and I assume for the rest of the nation as well. So, I really appreciate the question.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you, Nicole. I see a lot of heads nodding in your response. I'll give space to Theresa, if you wanted to add anything or we can move to the next question.

Ms. Peterson: Just real briefly. I wanted to echo what Nicole said about it was the fishermen seeing it first. They were seeing, I know the gig fishermen who I work with. They like couldn't catch cod. They weren't seeing them. And then some of the catcher processors that were processing they were seeing this like raggedy meat. They're like something is going on with this. With so like channels to get that information of indicators could be really valuable. Thanks.

Mr. Veerhusen: Okay. I'm going to just ask a question here of my own. Can you tell me a little bit, can you I've been to some Council meetings and I remember some of that testimony.

So, can you walk us through for those that weren't there or to your kind of recollection of what was being communicated at that SSC, AP, or the Council by fishermen and what they were seeing on the grounds and how could have that governing body used that

information in a more urgent fashion?

Ms. Peterson: Well, that's kind of one. I think I'll pass it to Julie for that because her fleet was seeing it more and I don't think the gig fishermen, don't really communicate with the Council. So, maybe we need to work more on that too.

Ms. Bonney: And I was just, I was kind of going to go a different route here. And the fact that when the cod disaster happened and it goes through Council and they see the survey, and they quota is going down by 80 percent, huge, you're a participant in that fishery, your revenue just reduced by 80 percent.

But so, what happened, Theresa was on the Council at that point along with a couple of other people and the question was how we get the word out, you know. So, this was in December and the fishery is going to open in January. So, they actually came out with a Council update that explained how, what is happening and so that the fishermen could prepare and the processors prepare.

The thing I thought was the most interesting because this is probably most used fishery in terms of every gear type participates off shore, on shore, it's a big fishery. Nobody complained. They all accepted the fact that something was wrong and agreed that the fish wasn't there so the quota needed to come down.

And so, I always look at that in terms of the maturity of the Gulf fisheries and ask myself, why it wasn't because for crab in the Bering Sea there's a lot different reaction and I almost think it's because people had another dropping spot. So, in other words they had a diverse enough portfolio that I'm going to salmon fishing or move to something else versus my only bread and butter went away and I'm going to scream about it.

Mr. Veerhusen: Got it. So, kind of like the alarm bells weren't as loud because there was somewhere else to kind of land and maybe that is not the case as much right now.

Ms. Peterson: Because I think it's fishery by fishery.

Mr. Veerhusen: Fishery by fishery. Yeah, I'll let Tyler respond and then we'll get to Jim's question.

Mr. Schmeil: Well, I mean like they're saying, you know, there's, there can be indicator, you know, of impending. One that, you know, like hindsight being 2020 in our crab industry one of the last years that we had opilio, the processors were really complaining that the shells were really big and beautiful but the infill on them was terrible, you know.

And so, it's kind of like an indicator that the food source and so where was, I don't know how you can even integrate processors, you know, that kind of stuff. But there was, there's indicators there when you look back you're like, oh they're weren't eating enough. There was something happening with the food source. The crab weren't there. What's coming ahead of this? You know, so anyway.

I just, it was, it made me think of that when they were talking about the cod, you know, that that, you know, I heard from processors, you know, they were just saying, yeah, they're nice crab but the infill doesn't seem like what it should be. There were indicators there it's just, you know, well we're fishermen, go catch a crab, you know.

Mr. Veerhusen: Weren't thinking as far as what that meant, what that indicator meant.

Mr. Schmeil: What that indicator what going to predict. You know, what was coming ahead of us and we just fell off the cliff.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah. That makes sense. We heard some of that in the first panel around a sick king salmon that was being caught. Jim, would you like to ask a question?

Mr. Green: Yeah. And well Meredith kind of really hit on my question there right before I did but. But it's all right. Jim Green, Destin, Florida. I run a head boat

and the president of our local charter boat association and a Gulf wide charter boat association in the Gulf of Mexico.

You know, our similar things is we had, we had issues with the shrimpers down there have with imports and stuff like that and also the Grouper and the Snapper fishermen have been dealing with cheaper stuff. And really hitting home on that sustainability and the safety that the U.S. has whenever it's going through its seafood process.

And like I said, Meredith really nailed on my question. But I was wondering if you all had tried to, you know, its one thing to hear it from NOAA which is, you know, the regulatory body, but it seems like you get a lot more traction when you get the fishermen involved.

And using your fishermen and your locals and your tribes to come up and push what that seafood is that you're trying to sell and one thing we had was fresh caught was fresh Gulf I believe is what it was called and it had a, it had a big thing in the Southeast region where it had fishermen and they had tags on it like you could tell it was in that program and it told you what boat it was caught on, when it was caught on, and they had clips online where you could, where you could actually go and see a short interview of that captain of that boat and stuff, and it, but it helped, you know, I mean nothing against our friends at NOAA, but, you know, it's a government agency.

And everybody's like, oh, they're just, you know, they're a government agency, but it seems like every time you get a fisherman involved people tend to gravitate towards somebody that actually had a hand on your fish that you caught.

So, have you all thought about doing anything like that, like trying to promote the seafood that you're catching and the sustainability and having the fishermen actually put that out there?

Ms. Peterson: I'll jump into that first, yes. Absolutely there's, that is like a growing trend in this

community. I've seen those. I think it's Gulf Wild that has yes, that's impressive. Every little fish tallied.

But I know at least like five families that have opened up some direct marketing initiatives and are trying to get more value out of the fish knowing that our harvest could go down. We need to like, in my mind, start rethinking our seafood model and gear towards maybe fishing a little slower and increasing the communications, the quality. Alaska's always been pretty big volume stuff, you know, and that's what our infrastructure is designed around and to me climate ready fisheries and resiliency means that we start thinking of ways to better utilize the fish that we have coming across the docks.

We have a lot of waste right now. Let's try to use more of it. Let's try to explore other fisheries that we're not tapped into right now. Maybe we'll be eating snails and, you know, or tuna. You know, I don't know but I think we need to start thinking outside the box and I completely agree. It needs to be fishermen led initiatives.

There's one I encountered like a year changing his boat over Emerald Island Seafoods. He does a lot of that. He's getting, you know, freezer plates onboard. He's video of what he's doing and like showing the consumer again that hey, when you buy these products, yes, you're probably going to pay a little bit more but you're going to be helping fishing families. You're going to help them stay. You know, everybody, who doesn't love a fishing community? Well, help that fishing community survive. And so, I do think we all need to play leadership roles to do more of that and share ideas, like that, you know.

(Off mic comment.)

Mr. Green: Management is leaning heavily to what we can take from the, what we can harvest and it really needs to be geared to what the fishery can safely give you and I know that sounds very similar to the same thing but to me it's prioritizing the fish over the harvester.

And I know that that's, as a fisherman that sounds very awkward and especially when you're a commercial fisherman getting paid by the pound but it needs to be, it doesn't need to mean how much can we take from the fish, it's how much the fish can safely give.

I mean if we, some people I've heard say that the crab fishing up there was over fished. It just wasn't getting caught quick, you know, it wasn't getting caught quick enough by the surveys and by the data and then that was part of the perfect storm.

The fishery was kind of, the crab fishing was declined and then you had the heat wave and all that and maybe if we didn't take quite as like, as everything that we could take from that fishery and gave us a little bit of buffer to help that fishery a little bit better in any aspect then it might be able to be more climate ready whatever that definition is. Does that make sense to you all?

Ms. Peterson: That makes sense to me. Yeah.

Mr. Green: I didn't want to explain it a third time.

Ms. Peterson: Yeah, no. And I do need, I think we need to start thinking more that way. You know, which then that, you know, that precautionary management, do we need to increase our buffers? You know, what do we need to do to make sure that those fish or crab species survey and yeah.

Mr. Veerhusen: Nicole, I know you've been waiting to jump in. I'll give you the opportunity. It looks like you came off mute.

Ms. Kimball: Oh yeah, and I forgot to put myself back on mute. Sorry. I guess I'm thinking hard about that because I really did equate those as the same thing, even crab as the example. I really think the missed survey was the tipping point for snow crab that year.

And I think Tyler is best to be able to talk about the level of buffers we have in that fishery. So, from the

over fishing level to the ABC to what you're allowed to take and there's multiple buffers in addition to that but even before they allow the harvest limit to be released it seems like we are, we are playing allowing the harvest at the level that it can be sustainable with the information that we have.

So, maybe I just see it a little bit differently that had we had better information we would have had a different harvest limit in that year that you said was so influential. And then I think to the earlier question about, you know, fishing led marketing, you know, Theresa talked about some, you know, smaller scale and we really need all small scale and large scale businesses right now for fishing in Alaska.

I want to make sure we include everybody. Everybody's viable but we do have a seafood marketing institute in Alaska and one of the most I think greatest ideas or most successful in terms of selling Alaska seafood which is you sell it generally through the Alaska brand is by getting fishermen involved and they've done a lot of marketing efforts around individual fishermen where they're from, their profiles, their family profiles, and I just see a lot of great response back on that.

And I feel like our communications arm of that marketing institute is really pushing the fishing families first message. So, I think that's still a great idea for us as an industry to push forward.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thanks Nicole. I'd like to get Natasha to the floor but in response I remember seeing a survey of proteins that the American consumer trusts most and Alaska seafood ranked number 1. This was quite a few years ago from the food marketing institute so we have some challenges that still await and I also had heard that when we elevate problems that we are trying to address with good intentions the consumer gets confused because they don't know when that problem is solved.

I've heard it simplistically put that a customer will go to a grocery store aisle and go what am I having for

dinner? And they'll be like, well chicken is easy, beef is bad, pigs are cute, and seafood is confusing. I'm going to go buy chicken.

And sometimes we make it more confusing though sometimes with the best intentions of trying to solve issues because when do we, when does that information get back maybe from the agency or others involved in the fishery, your information was used and here's how it was helpful and here is where the, here's how it ended up.

Rather than kind of feeding this information into a black box and not knowing when that's being used both on the management side but in the consumer side and yeah, I'd like to give a shout out to ASMI for topping the list of the most trusted proteins in America. Natasha, please, ask a question.

Ms. Hayden: Thanks Brett. I've got a couple of comments, just wanting to sort of drawing on the responses and the comments you guys made earlier. So, I was born in Kodiak in the early 1970s and my family has been fishing here for 300 generations.

And I don't remember back in the 1970s and I don't remember 300 generations ago but when I was a kid, there was, and I mentioned this earlier, there was, everybody fished everything.

We had, you know, before me even there was a shrimp fishery, a king crab fishery, and we used to be able to catch king crab, like giant king crab off the dock right, just a half a block. And cod, there's cod bones in the middens and halibut bones and salmon and all of that. And that changed in over a very short period of time. And there was rapid changes in the '80s where the community started, there was a shift to larger volumes. And there were large volumes of salmon that, I mean part of the whole history of statehood of Alaska is, in fact most of the history of the statehood of Alaska is based on salmon and who can get it and who, you know, how to preserve it.

But groundfish fisheries and more of the federal

fisheries that emerged and capacity shifted and transportation, not that, you know, packaging, all of that, all of that shifted and has kind of culminated into this place where we are where we've got these large volume fisheries and infrastructure, you know, the entire system, the marketing system, the consumer base that is all these things have to be holding up their part of this system for it to continue to be successful.

And, you know, but we've also heard about the community here and other communities around the nation, not just in Alaska but around the nation that have been interfacing with fisheries for millennia, you know, hundreds of years and there's a continual push/pull between management having the mandate to provide kind of what I'm getting at is, you know, feeding the nation. Like Alaska has emerged in providing protein for the entire nation.

But then there's all these other sort of like weird things that happened for, between the ocean and the consumer that make it more complex and difficult and tenuous and during that time the community, the capabilities of the community have shifted away from being able to feed ourselves.

And I remember, so my husband was in the audience earlier. He has been a small boat fisherman for 35 years and one of the happiest moments of my life being married to him is when he came home and he said one of the small processing plants was going to deserve every pound of gray cod that they caught when they were fishing another species by catch and process it and donate it to the schools.

And I don't know if you guys remember that but like even in our own town here our processes are struggling to be able to provide food to feed our community and one of the, the restaurant we were at last night they ran out of salmon. And so just, I'm just wanting to bring that back in that the discussion that we have, you know, about feeding the nation, supporting through regulations and policy and I

really, Nicole, I'm sorry that you're not feeling well.

I was looking forward to seeing you and I'm glad that you're able to participate but I really appreciate what you're saying about fishing industry and communities. We need all of our businesses and so finding ways to be able to continue to support the community and what does that mean?

And then I'm kind of being long winded because as a facilitator I didn't get to tell as much of what I thought but I didn't realize that community like in Magnuson Stevens and how you evaluate the impact on community, you know, community sustainability. And that there's, you know, who gets to choose what those metrics are?

And I didn't realize that the primary metric was how much the municipality is bringing in landing tax. Whereas I always thought the metric was going to be every single person that I knew in 1980 was in a fishing family or they got seasick and they were on the shoreside in support.

And that's changed so rapidly and so dramatically over a very short period of time that well how come this isn't metric that we're using to evaluate the success of fisheries? And it just, it wasn't.

And so I think, you know, challenging managers, and, you know, in our, so our regional councils and our SSC and Pat, thank you so much for your service and your expertise, you know, how you determine what those metrics are in measuring the success of fisheries management is, need to include those elements. And then I'm going to see if I can weave this into a question.

I guess, I would like to hear, you know, Nicole, Julie, Theresa, Tyler, you know, if you guys have any thoughts about this sort of push/push dynamic between how we support Kodiak centric, you know, Kodiak in particular with these different fisheries, different gear types, different priorities in these rapidly changing times? So, thank you.

Mr. Veerhusen: Who wants to take that up first?

Ms. Peterson: Yeah, I jump in first. I think we don't measure like overall community wellbeing well enough. If too much of the data is kind of concentrated on the economic benefits and that's where I kind of spoke to earlier, we need more social scientists involved in the fishery center so that there's a greater depth of understanding about what it means for people to be able to live and stay in a community that, you know, wants to stay here and then have access to that, to the seafood too.

There's been all these kind of regulatory boxes that have made it more challenging and I can't help but this kind of triggered a little community I saw down in Baja, like way off down dirt roads, and as I pulled in there, I'm like what is going on here?

These got new boats, new outboards, and new trucks. I'm like, and there's no hotels, no restaurants. And so, I went like marching down and I'm like what are you guys doing here? And they were operating a cooperative fishery. They had direct markets to Asia, different areas. They were getting really good value for their product.

But they also, what I thought was so neat they had a whole like circulating aquarium out front that any fish that, you know, any bi catch virtually was available for the community to come and get. They were like, you know, providing they didn't have all these regulatory hurdles. They were able to give food to the community and so that's another thing I think we need to start rethinking, is making sure that within our fisheries around here we're providing for local people that live here.

I think I know our local food bank doesn't get enough seafood to give away. And we need to do more of that and start figuring the regulatory processes to do that. Because I feel that everybody that lives in Kodiak should have access to affordable seafood but it's pretty hard to do. You need to like go to Safeway to buy your seafood unless you have a fisherman

friend that will give it to you or, you know, we trade.

We do a lot of trading here and there's a lot of subsistence fishing and to me that needs to be prioritized more than it, more than it is. And then you spoke about the cod and the middens, that's something like I think we can learn from.

And I can't remember what the words is but the Alutiiq word for cod is the fish that's not always there is what it translates to. So, there's like these bodies of information in those middens that can get a better understanding of the history of species through the Alutiiq people and their, your reliance on the main resources around this island for 10,000 years. Thanks.

Mr. Veerhusen: No, thank you. I saw Madam Chair had a question. Thank you, Theresa. Madam Chair is having problems.

Chair Runnebaum: Yeah. Thank you all. You all, several of you mentioned surveys and missed surveys, that sort of preceded the 2017 cod decline. There was a survey that missed, that was missed the year before that so, we missed some of that information and then again with the snow crab there was a missed survey to sort of give us more information leading up into that stock assessment.

So, my question for you all and something that we're grappling with on the East Coast is that our fisheries surveys are super dependent on the big white ships, at least on the East Coast that's what we're pretty focused on is that's what NOAA has access to, that's what the budget really allows for and I think that Alaska has done a pretty good job with cooperative surveys and having industry side by side surveys.

And I'm really would like to hear from this panel how we sort of scale that up and help get that information into stock assessment decision making and really make that part of the solution of these cooperative surveys that are industry based and using industry vessels along the way?

Mr. Veerhusen: Julie?

Ms. Bonney: So, I'm actually involved in a project exactly for that which in the Gulf of Alaska we used to have three trawl, bottom trawl, charter vessels, commercial that did our surveys and then that's been cut from three to two and they don't go out to the deeper stratums any more.

And so, and so this collaborative approach is actually using commercial fishing data to enhance the fish surveys because the survey functions they, in certain areas that are untrawlable and it's just because of the type of gear that's used versus the commercial.

So, and I know Bob Foy said because we see that we could potentially expand it so, you know, because fish, if you're doing it in a commercial setting that means the vessel is making an income and providing information that's structured right to be used in the modeling for the surveys.

And so, I think that would be a way to get to where we need to go by it. Because we need to expand the information we're getting because of the uncertainty of climate change and so can't we build off of the commercial boats that we have in the system right now versus always looking to the white ships. So, anyway.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you. Any other panelists like to respond. Yeah, Tyler?

Mr. Schmeil: I might ask Jamie a question on this one. Now aren't crabbers, I mean you're saying collaborative surveys. Didn't we as crabbers start additional survey information?

Ms. Goen: Yes, thank you for the question, Tyler.

Mr. Schmeil: I want to, you can speak to it way better than I can I believe.

Ms. Goen: I think collaborative research is a great added data point for the science. When our crab

stocks collapsed the agencies came together quickly both federal and state and provided money to use our crab vessels to do research on the grounds to find out what was going on.

Like right after, I mean within months of the fisheries getting closed. I think that was a great example of collaborative research helping fill some data gaps. Thanks for the question, Tyler.

Mr. Schmeil: Sorry about that.

Mr. Veerhusen: Thank you. I think to round out the remaining few minutes we have, I saw Pat had a question and finishing with Jamie and then we'll take a break

Dr. Sullivan: Thank you, Brett. Great thanks. Thank you. Thank you all for all of this. I found the conversation very insightful and deep. I'm Pat Sullivan. I'm a professor at Cornell University. My area of expertise is statistics and the fish population dynamics. Like maybe you all know me.

I'm on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, as SSC. I was on the New England one for 22 years. Before I am chair of the CIE which reviews, brings in reviewers for all of National Fisheries Services stock assessments, so I get to see that.

I'm chairing the Scallop Working Group for setting up the STARK that's coming up. I'm involved with a lot of cooperative surveys on the East Coast looking at things like shellfish and kelp and all sorts of things like that and I'm also on a bunch of national academy reviews.

So, I am involved with fisheries a lot, very close to my heart and I have a question that's sensitive and I ask it because it's brought up in the context of climate resilience. An idea here with regarding to resilience sort of a broader definition then climate resilience fisheries is the resilient part may be looking elsewhere for financial support like in the diversification.

So, we were talking about diversification before we were I meant to ask this question to the earlier panel but I'd like to ask you one of the things that comes up is going into areas other than fisheries for diversification. And so, I advise the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in terms of their science programs there and what I was, found interesting they were, they are anticipating decline in the lobster fishery out there.

So, there's the institute itself is doing a lot in terms of kelp and shellfish aquaculture and so forth. And then in a broader sense in terms of internationally in Africa recommendations were to go inland if what was happening in the ocean was going badly. That's easier to do in Angola which as an inland that's not a desert where as in Libya which is very strong fishery country has basically desert in the inside.

So, the option there in terms of going inland is not necessarily clear. But I'm just wondering, I heard bits and pieces of different things. I just heard a little bit about doing some aquaculture at least teaching students how to do that.

I'm curious if there's any opportunity to develop diversification outside of fisheries and I was surprised to, if you had asked me would commercial fishermen happy doing aquaculture I would have thought no. But they seem to be using that as an option in Maine, which was really interesting to me.

And I just, I'm just curious if you're hearing anything like that is it at all possible in an area like Kodiak or Alaska more broadly, I'd like your thoughts on that? Thank you.

Mr. Veerhusen: Anybody want to take a stab at Pat's sensitive question?

Ms. Peterson: I think that's key, Pat, the diversified income. We are limited in Kodiak and depending on where you are in your fishing career, like for an older fisherman, like my husband doing anything else other than fishing that he's been doing since 12, forget it.

But some of the younger fishermen I'm seeing are looking towards diversifying their income opportunities. I know with Starlink now out in the remote sites, like people are able to keep their day job if they have a different job longer.

I've seen four examples in the area that I was fishing this year of people knowing that fishing was going to be slow. Okay. I'm going to keep on by day job. I mean I did the same thing. This was the first summer I kept working all summer rather than just tuning out and going fishing for better or for worse. But one thing that's developing in Kodiak is the mariculture.

There's increase interest, increased growth that it requires a lot of support. Our villages are working on it. They've been working at the Kodiak Rural Leadership Forum who is meeting starting tomorrow and really wanting to make sure that they're at the front door of getting into the mariculture industry so they don't like get left behind. That then this develops maybe bigger interests come over, get the leases on the prime property and you can't financially compete with that.

And so, I think building policies and opportunity that recognized we need to provide for the people that live adjacent to the communities are key. I think diversified incomes have been important. I've known a number of fishermen that have gone back to school to become school teachers and so I guess, yes.

Dr. Sullivan: No, I agree.

Mr. Veerhusen: I see a lot of folks agreeing. Nicole, did you have anything to add?

Ms. Kimball: Well just to add maybe, you know, I think Pat might have been talking about land based aquaculture and I really haven't heard a lot of interest in at least my circles or with the fishermen I talk to in that.

I just worry about us I think the mariculture industry in Alaska is growing and really exciting and yet it's

still tiny, tiny compared to global mariculture and you still need somewhere to sell that and you need to scale it up so it's a supply market to somebody and you have to have this market on the other side.

So, there's a lot of these kind of global challenges that we've talked about in terms of creating value for something that are going to affect any kind of new endeavor like that. I want to make sure that we are not losing sight of supporting the fisheries that we do have.

We are so abundant here, 5 to 6 million pounds every year even in hard times and not just look to something like land based aquaculture or something as an alternative that would really just compete with our wild based fisheries.

So, that might have struck a nerve with me, but Pat, because you introduced it as a sensitive topic I think that was okay.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah. Thanks, Nicole for that answer and what I'm hearing is focusing what we already have, focusing on what we already have an abundance of. Jamie, would you like to close out this session, please

Ms. Goen: Yeah. Thanks, and really appreciate the panel for your engagement today. This was really interesting conversation and great ideas being shared. I think most of you know me.

I'm Jamie Goen, with Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers. I represent the Bering Sea Crab fleet, that fish for king and snow and Bairdi crab. My question is similar to Pat's, but staying within fisheries, if you could waive your magic wand I heard a lot of you say we need to diversify, your businesses need to diversify, if you could waive your magic wand and get one thing to change in the management system within a year, what would it be to help your business diversify?

Mr. Veerhusen: Well, what can I do stall to give our panelist Theresa is ready. Go for it.

Ms. Peterson: That's kind of an easy one for me. Halibut fishing is something everybody could do. You could fishing out of a skiff. But the way it's turned into an IFQ fishery it's impossible for us to buy in. You'd have set asides for communities. You'd have set aside routes for community access. So, that's, I'd get to go halibut fishing.

Mr. Veerhusen: Go halibut fishing. Anybody else if you had a magic wand what would you change in one year if you could?

Ms. Kimball: I'll go. I think that if I had a magic wand I would, I would be able to incorporate all of the environmental variables in the data we're getting from our ecosystem surveys into management practice and be able to have adaptive management on the grounds. Meaning if we saw this happening we could close this area quickly, or if we saw these environmental conditions we would move the fleet in a different direction or put a whole different season on for a fleet.

We're not able to do that under federal law. We are, we cannot kind of create a system right now whereas kind of if, then statements without doing a huge, long analysis for good reason.

But if we could better figure out kind of under what conditions would we have X management system. And then if those conditions changed, here is how we would change that without going through the full process, through the Council every single time we want to make a tiny change.

That's adaptive management to me and I feel like we're trying to inch our way there with some pretty hard road blocks in terms of kind of federal requirements.

Mr. Veerhusen: Yeah. And some folks are nodding, Nicole, saying well said. Does anybody else on the panel like to add anything on your magic wand before we close out?

One thing I would like to see is this time next year at MAFAC we have some solid recommendations to the Secretary. I think we'll look to the Agency's help in guiding us there and getting us there. I know my first year we came out the gate hot. And that was fun. And we're looking for something to do.

And I think, you know, what we the recommendations we provide to the Agency and to the Secretary of Commerce can, I have learned how they can be used, how they can be incorporated into law. They are not law.

You know, we function differently than another governing body or council but I hope this time next year we can activate the new members and bringing your expertise and the various subcommittees that we have and be providing recommendations that whichever, whoever the Secretary of Commerce is and other folks within the Agency our recommendations are being heard and folks that we've heard from panelist today you have a direct line of communication with us, because I think I've learned and those of us who have been here understanding how to kind of navigate and then our authority under the advisory committee.

So, thank you very much for your time. And maybe a round of applause from everybody. And I turn it over to Jocelyn.

Chair Runnebaum: Yeah, thank you, Brett, for that conversation and thank you to the panelist for joining us today. That was really enlightening. I really appreciate you all taking the time to be here.

So, we're going to break. We'll be back at 4:15 to get a presentation from, it'll be online and then we'll move on from there. So, see you at 4:15.

(Whereupon, the above entitled matter went off the record at 4:04 p.m. and resumed at 4:15 p.m.)

Chair Runnebaum: Okay. We're going to have one more presentation. If I can get into my chair. We are going to have one more presentation and then we are going to wrap for the day.

So Maggie Mooney-Seus and Amilee Wilson are here with us virtually. They are on the screen and they are going to present an overview of Alaska Equity and Environmental Justice activities.

So we have another hour with, we have an hour with this group with these two folks and then we will wrap for the day and head straight to the bus to go out to our lovely dinner. So I think we're getting our tech figured out. And I think there are slides that need to go with it. Okay.

So, maybe, Maggie and Amilee, do you want to introduce yourselves? I do have that Maggie is the Communications Program Manager for the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. And Amilee Wilson is the Tribal Relations Coordinator for the Alaska Regional Office. If there is more you would like to provide on background that would be great too. But otherwise, we're ready for your presentation.

Ms. Wilson: Wonderful.

Chair Runnebaum: Okay. Amilee, hello. Can you hear us?

Ms. Wilson: Hello. I can. Yeah.

Chair Runnebaum: Good. Okay. And Maggie, can you hear us as well?

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Yep. I can hear you.

Chair Runnebaum: Okay. Great. Thank you both for joining. I will just turn it over to you. We are excited to see what you have in store for us, so thank you.

Overview of Alaska Equity and Environmental Justice Activities

Ms. Wilson: Thank you so much. Cama’i and hello

everyone.

(Native language spoken.)

For the introduction and invitation to MAFAC. We're excited to be with you here today to present an overview of the Alaska Equity and Environmental Justice activities.

And we apologize first off that the team could not be there in person with you. But we are glad to be here virtually. And I understand we're the last presentation of the day before you recap and adjourn. That is a precarious situation standing between you and dinner, so Maggie and I will make our best effort not to go over time.

For those of you who may not know me, I'm Amilee Wilson. I'm the Tribal Relations Coordinator for NOAA Fisheries Alaska Region. I'm a descendent of the Shinnecock Nation, the people of the stony shore. I also have some French and German heritage associated with my name. And you can call me Emily or Amilee, which is easiest.

My family has a strong history of military service and that's where I was born, on the west coast in Olympia, Washington. I woke up this morning to see some beautiful sunshine after a few days of heavy rainfall in the small village of Yakutat where I live and work. It's located just east of Kodiak where you're at across the gulf in southeast Alaska, just a 38 minute flight northwest of Juneau.

And for the two who may be familiar with this area, have family here, you know we get a lot of moisture and a few rays of sunshine can really brighten the mood.

My husband and I fell in love with Yakutat a little over a decade ago when friends invited us to visit and we moved here nearly three years ago to fulfill a personal goal of returning to a subsistence lifestyle and eventually retiring in Alaska.

My husband and I are a blended family with six beautiful adult children and four very rambunctious grandchildren, all who live in the lower 48. Unfortunately none who have chosen the fishing industry or the natural resource management for their careers. They love the ocean and the rivers and the woods but perhaps witnessed the high stress level associated with our work.

At the start of my career, I worked as a young biologist in agriculture and private industry and then state government before I transitioned to marine and fisheries issues in state and federal governments. And then accepted a role as the Tribal Liaison first for the NOAA west coast region and now for the Alaska region.

I've been in the Alaska Tribal Liaison role for approximately one and a half years now. My job is multi-faceted. I primarily lead the Alaska Regional Tribal Engagement Team and conduct tribal consultation with Alaska native tribes, corporations in tribal-serving organizations on a variety of topics.

But I'm also the Alaska regional EEJA lead. And like many other EEJ staff, I've taken on these other duties as assigned in addition to my Tribal Liaison role because I believe in it and because it's important.

My colleague Maggie Mooney-Seus and I will be tag-teaming our presentation today. I'll share some background information on NOAA Fisheries National Equity and Environmental Justice strategy and the why behind the strategy and implementation plans that were launched for various programs, line offices and science centers across the country.

And then I will turn it over to Maggie who will share our outreach and education activities for Alaska, questions we've been asking, community feedback that we've received so far and where we're going next and how you can provide input on the Alaska EEJ Implementation Plan.

Our presentation will not take the full hour so we

hope to open it up to answer any questions that you might have and have a good discussion with you on EEJ.

Before we begin, it's important to note that the implementation plans are living documents and we look forward to more council and community engagement so we can incorporate additional feedback.

The third member of our Alaska EEJ team is Mabel Baldwin-Schaeffer. She's our Alaska Fishery Science Center Tribal Research Coordinator and currently at sea on a research vessel and sends her regards.

At this time I'm going to turn it over to Maggie to introduce herself before we get started. Maggie?

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Thanks Amilee. As Amilee said, I'm Maggie Mooney-Seus. I'm the Communications Program Manager for the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and I am the EEJ Coordinator for the Alaska Science Center.

And like Amilee, I'm involved in this effort because I have a passion for it. I think it's the right thing to do. And I think it's really important for us to do more to improve our engagement with under-served communities and Alaska tribes. And so I think that's why I'm at the table.

My background is pretty diverse. I started in communications. I've had a long career and I've been with NOAA for, NOAA Fisheries for about 17 years. And I started in the, what was the New England region at the time and then became GARFO. So like Pat Sullivan, I have my foot on two coasts.

A lot of my family is still on the east coast in Canada and the United States. And my husband and I trekked cross country almost ten years ago now and when I took this position and I'm based in Seattle. I love it. We do a lot of hiking. I don't have any kids but I do have two dogs.

So I'm thrilled to be here today and share with you some of the things that we've learned from our outreach. So I'll turn it back over to Amilee.

Ms. Wilson: Thanks Maggie. And next slide please. And we'll get started. So in May of 2023 the National Marine Fisheries Service developed an equity and environmental justice strategy.

Let's first take a step back and briefly go over why the National Marine Fisheries Service created an EEJ strategy. We know that environmental justice is not a new topic. It's rooted in the civil rights movement with the understanding that environmental management is intimately linked to the history of our country.

And this link was made explicit in the description of environmental racism which is the disproportionate and unequal impact and environmental decision on non-white people and communities.

Environmental justice was first picked up by the Clinton administration in 1994. The Executive Order 12895 on federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low income populations. More recently, in the Biden administration, he re-engaged with the topic and Executive Order 13985 which was in 2021, advancing racial equity and support for under-served communities through the federal government.

And then again Executive Order 14008 also launched in 2021 tackling the climate crisis at home and abroad.

And then finally there were two executive orders in addition to those in 2023. Executive Order 14096 on revitalizing our nation's commitment to environmental justice for all. And on further advancing racial equity in support for under-served communities through the federal government.

So that's our firm EO foundation for pursing EEJ across the nation within our federal agency. Next

slide please.

The national strategy was released in May of 2023, however, NOAA Fisheries' national effort started in 2021. It received needed input and review from indigenous and under-served fishing communities through a national public comment process.

And this was all part of the sometimes uncomfortable effort to use EEJ principles to build the EEJ strategy. It really required our federal agency to use a magnifying glass to determine how we could do better. And writing the strategy included several rounds of both internal and external input.

Recently on August 13th NOAA Fisheries released ten EEJ implementation plans across the nation. The regional and program office level implementation plans identified specific actions that could be taken across the nation to incorporate equity and environmental justice into the vital services that NOAA Fisheries provides to all communities.

And we apologize to the Office of Internal National Affairs Trade and Commerce for this is an older slide and does not include an icon for the plan. However, they are indeed part of the ten plans that are included in that release in August. And feedback from the public is welcome on these plans and Maggie will expand a little bit more on that later in our presentation. Next slide please.

So what is ocean equality exactly? There is recognition for a need to bring equity concerns into the marine environment and specifically fisheries. The strategy highlights a few points. While much of the terrestrial environmental justice literature focused on the disproportionate burden of toxicity and subsequent health concerns and outcomes, the question of course is how this relates to fisheries and how do we operationalize equity within this context?

Fortunately, we can look at the work of Bennett, et al. for guidance. Just as more broadly can include distributional, recognitional, and procedural justice

as described in Bennett, et al. 2019.

And this means we can include unequal distribution of fishery resources or regulatory burdens on communities, expanding fishery research to be co-produced and reflect diverse knowledge systems and restructuring our decision-making that will ensure authentic participation with processes that are accountable to those that are most impacted.

Also, advancing social equity in marine conservation requires directing our attention to three main themes. First, recognition. Through acknowledgment and respect for diverse peoples and perspectives, this includes the use of the environment, levels of dependence and diversity in access and needs.

Second, fair distribution of impacts through maximizing benefits and minimizing burdens, including how we are measuring this in these contexts as it relates to access to data, representation and food security.

And third, procedures. Through fostering participation and decision-making and good governance, management through championing and supporting local involvement in leadership, the environment, through ensuring that efficacy of conservation actions and the adequacy of management to ensure those benefits to nature and people. And the structural barriers to and the institutional roots of inequality in conservation.

And all of these considerations are folded up into limited resources and capacity, existing material, inequities and representation or lack of in Washington.

So this is no doubt, or in Alaska, I apologize. This is no doubt a challenge and as the slide indicates, more equitable inputs equal more equal representation. Sorry about that. If I don't move in my office my light goes off to save energy. Next slide please.

So one aspect of the NOAA Fisheries EEJ strategy is

the list of under-served communities that are included in this national strategy. We started with the list of identities related to groups that have been historically identified as under-served by the federal government as listed in Biden's Executive Order 13985. This is the list that you see in the large box in light teal color in the middle of the slide.

This includes women and girls, particular racial groups, religious minorities, the LGBTQ+ peoples, those with disabilities, those residing in rural or urban areas and groups that are normally negatively affected by continued poverty or inequality. But after more consideration we also added subsets of the fisheries and remote communities that may not have a voice or representation.

For example, subsistence fishers, processors and crew of small boat owners are captured in the medium teal box to the right.

And then finally, we added the US island territories and common law such as American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, et cetera that make up part of the Pacific Islands and southeast region that are captured in the dark teal blocks on the bottom right. All of these groups are part of our under-served community definition. Next slide please.

The EEJ and national strategy includes a framework with six core areas to consider when implementing equity and environmental justice within our Agency. These contain elements of the distributable, recognitional and procedural justice outlined by Bennett, et al. in 2021, but pays particular attention to the structure of NOAA Fisheries and how staff would be able to easily recognize their work in the national strategy.

So the six core areas that are included in the slide that you see here are policy and plans, research and monitoring, outreach and engagement, benefits, inclusive governance and in the middle is empowering environment. This is the foundation to long-term EEJ institutionalization and includes

leadership support as well as supporting a trained and diverse work force.

All other core areas depend on this empowering environment to be successful. This is also where EEJ can overlap with the diversity equity inclusion and access, or DEIA efforts.

It's important to note that there are cross cutting EEJ issues that are found in all of these areas and this is why they're connected.

However, we wanted to make sure that we distinguished these six core areas because EEJ is often interpreted as only being about increasing or improving outreach and engagement with communities. We called out all core areas to demonstrate that EEJ fits into everything that we do. Next slide please.

NOAA Fisheries Alaska accomplished our goal for completion of the Alaska Implementation Plan in two phases. Now we're moving more towards our regional efforts. The Alaska EEJ outreach and engagement Phase 1 began in May and ended in December of 2023 where we hosted a few conversations among tribal forums of fishery groups by invitation.

In fall of 2023 we kicked off town hall teleconferences with our Alaska Regional Administrator, John Kurland, and our Science Director, Bob Foy, with Alaska native tribes and under-served fishing communities. And we gleaned preferred methods for engagement.

The best seasons and timing for community visits and locations as well as the best ways to solicit feedback from tribes in the under-served communities. And all of this information was compiled in December of 2023 and incorporated into our draft Alaska EEJ Implementation Plan in spring of 2024.

For the Alaska EEJ Phase 2 efforts, the NMFS Alaska team developed and secured a budget for fiscal year 23/24 in order to move towards in-person hub

meetings in key locations across the state.

We understand the importance of coming to remote communities to host candid face to face conversations to hear first-hand what types of challenges Alaska communities are facing.

And Phase Two began in January 2024 where we expanded our conversations with tribes in under-served fishing communities to glean feedback which Maggie will talk about in a moment.

And we originally identified ten locations for EEJ community outreach. Unfortunately, due to staff capacity we had to reduce the number to five hub locations in which outreach and engagement meetings occurred in two of those locations this fiscal year. The remainder will be in this next fiscal year.

So since the implementation plans are living documents with input gleaned from Phase Two outreach and engagement meetings, anything prior to April '24 was included in the draft implementation plan. Additional input that was gleaned after April 2024 of this year, and from hereon, will be incorporated into the updated NOAA Fishery Alaska Implementation Plan by December 2024.

We've also submitted an Alaska region EEJ budget request for the next year because this is a funded mandate. That includes the remaining five remote locations that we could not connect outreach in this year. And this budget request also included an internal EEJ training workshop for Alaska regional staff.

The goal of the workshop is to provide a strong foundational understanding of EEJ, increase capacity for EEJ work in NOAA Fisheries and identify new or modify existing actions and activities in the plan.

Participation in this workshop is critical to help our staff tangibly adopt the principles of EEJ and plan for how this broader framework fits into their individual work plans.

So at this time I'm going to pause and turn the presentation over to Maggie to share more details on our recent efforts.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Thanks, Amilee. If you would advance to the next slide. Thank you. So as Amilee stated we've conducted a variety of outreach to help us develop this plan. And our approach has really been tailored to Alaska.

Alaska is made up of many remote rural villages and small commercial and recreational fishing communities. These communities are culturally and demographically diverse. And many are mixed economies depending on both commercial and subsistence fishing opportunities. So when we did our initial town hall meetings in the fall of 2023 through 2024, we opted to use the telephone, as many rural communities across Alaska like much of the basic infrastructure to conduct virtual meetings and the cost to get to some of these locations is really high. So we opted to use the telephone and we think it went pretty well.

We initially targeted, as Amilee said, tribes because Alaska's home to 40 percent of all federally recognized tribal nations in the U.S. And we recognize that improved engagement with tribes and indigenous organizations in Alaska is important along with reaching under-served communities across the state.

We also conducted telephone town halls with commercial and charter fishing industry representatives and organizations and other interest groups.

We followed this up with hub meetings, as Amilee mentioned, and so far we've had two hub meetings. One in Kodiak where you all are visiting right now. In each of these communities we took the same approach, we did some radio interviews.

We held a public meeting in each location and we also conducted smaller scale meetings with those who

expressed interest in talking to us more in a personal setting.

And that included everything from NGOs to fishing organizations, small scale fisherman, representatives from the seafood sector, the Northwest Arctic Borough, which serves 11 rural communities in the northern Behring Sea and the Kodiak Island Borough, which serves eight rural communities.

Amilee also took a trip out to visit a couple of the villages around Kodiak when she was there. And maybe she'll share a little bit more with you on her experience there. If we want to go to the next slide that would be great.

So the focus of these discussions has really been, how can we improve engagement with under-served communities on science and management that we're undertaking? And what are the best ways for us to get the information to under-served communities to inform their decision-making? Next slide please.

So some of the things we've learned, as Amilee pointed out before she hit on the areas that we're trying to integrate, equity and environmental justice into our operations. And that includes everything from an empowering environment to inclusive governance.

And under each of these we heard things from our communities that we spoke to that resonated with them as areas where we could do more. For example, under the empowering government, there was a suggestion that we needed to hire more community liaisons. And we can't agree with that more given how much time we spent doing this.

Under policy and plans, a real big concern that we heard across Alaska was to consider disproportionate and cumulative burden of fishing regulations.

And one of the things that was pointed out is ways that our staff could help is to engage with our national office, our NOAA headquarters office, in

updating the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act and the national standards for eight and nine to better address this disproportionate impacts.

Under research, which is near and dear to my heart because that's where I work in the science center, we heard loud and clear the need for measuring social and cultural impacts of our actions whether that's science or regulatory. And the need to hire more social scientists, as well as investing in communities. Investing in tribal and fishing industry research.

So empowering these communities. Allowing them to be partners and project with us and share their knowledge and bring that knowledge into our discussions as we all work together to deal with some of the challenges of climate change. If you can go to the next slide.

So where we're headed next is going are going to Utqiagvik which is the far north. We are going to go to Sitka, which is in our southeast Alaska. And we're going to go to Fairbanks, which is in the interior, right in the middle of the state.

And we're open to doing more if there's interest and resources allowing us. As Amilee said we put in a request for additional funding for next year so we're hopeful that we'll be able to continue with these hub meetings. Next slide please.

So we've produced this Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan for the region. And we're still looking for further feedback as we view it as a living document that we plan to revisit on an annual basis and evaluate how we're doing.

Some important take homes for us or for about the plan itself is that we tried to highlight what we're actually currently doing and ensure under-served communities and tribes were aware of those activities. Because if we're not reaching people then they probably don't know some of the things that we are doing.

Along with this, we're seeking input on how we can improve what we're doing and where resources are available to support it expand our efforts.

As further testimony to our commitment to this effort the regional office, as Amilee mentioned, has secured a contract with critical support from NOAA Fisheries National Regulatory Programs Office. I have to give a shout out to Sam Rauch for this, to provide support to enable residents from rural communities to attend our hub meetings and to help us more effectively facilitate those meetings.

The Alaska Fisheries Science Center on our side of the house is very grateful for the Inflation Reduction Act funding and we're using that to support some of our EEJ work.

We offered a notice of funding opportunity to support local driven proposals for supporting efforts like existing indigenous knowledge networks to build capacity in remote arctic communities. It's really in line with our Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan.

We also hope that some of these funds can be used to conduct collaborative and co-produce research with academic international and indigenous partners.

And we are hiring an EEJ coordinator to support this effort. Because right now the three people that Amilee mentioned, that are involved in this effort, myself, Amilee and Mabel Baldwin-Schaeffer, are supporting this effort because we believe in it and because our bosses told us we had to. No, I'm just kidding. Because we believe in it. In addition to our regular jobs.

And we feel it's really important that we have somebody that's dedicated the effort and can coordinate across the Science Center, the regional office, to help really take this effort to another level. Next slide.

So like I said, we're looking for feedback and we are

hoping for more feedback and can incorporate that by the end of this year. We're asking people if they have suggestions for the plan that's available online right now and I'm happy to share the link where they can find that. Because I don't think that's in this presentation.

They can send their feedback to that email address at the top of that, akr.eej@noaa.gov. You want to go to the next slide.

And before I say thank you for letting us speak to you today, I'll just open it up and see if anybody had any questions.

Chair Runnebaum: Do you think, excuse me. Thank you both. Thank you Maggie and Amilee for that overview. That's really exciting. So we have some time for questions and conversation from MAFAC and Pat is going to kick us off.

Dr. Sullivan: Thanks. Thank you very much for the presentation. It's very exciting to see this. At Cornell, you know, we bring a lot of stuff with regard to this as well and it's challenging sometimes because people don't, a lot of people don't really understand what, where this is going and what it means for them. So I'm appreciating the effort you put into it.

So one of the questions that we ask about any of these programs that are out there is how you're going to measure your success in doing this? So if you can talk about that a little bit. I'd like to hear it. Thanks.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Do you want me to start, Amilee, or you want me to go?

Ms. Wilson: Go ahead and start, Maggie, and I can follow up.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: So what we are hoping to use the metrics that are being developed nationally because we're part of a collaborative effort. So that is some of it. And we are hoping to have this EEJ coordinator come on soon and I'm sure that we're very close to

hiring. So that will be a primary role for this individual is to develop those metrics at a regional level.

Ms. Wilson: And so also in the EEJ Implementation Plan if you go to the Alaska link, I believe that was on slide 12, Maggie. I think you did have a link included in there. There is an appendix that shows concrete actions that are being taken and then measureable metrics that associate with that.

So in the Plan, its set up to help measure, for example, how many meetings that are conveyed with senior leadership on EEJ topics in order to emphasize the importance of EEJ and all the work that we do.

So there are metrics that we're working on and I anticipate that as we, if we can get some funding for our internal workshop, this will help us flush out that, those metrics even more to the point where each of our different divisions who are subject matter experts within their area of work, whether it's marine mammal protection. Or whether it's sustainable fisheries or habitat conservation and recovery.

They can identify those specific actions that can be taken so that we can best deliver those services to those communities or remove some barriers that those communities have provided feedback on and be able to take action in that area.

It could also be linking up funding and identifying funding sources for those communities as well. So we're hoping to expand upon that and have that internal workshop so we can have clear discussions on what's low hanging fruit, what could we accomplish right away and then what do we want to look into the future, say, one to two, three years out.

Chair Runnebaum: Great. Thank you. Meredith, please.

Ms. Moore: Thank you so much for the presentation. I have two questions. One of which is pretty quick. I was just so glad to hear that you all are still taking additional feedback and these are living plans. Do

you know if all the other plans are also taking feedback and have sort of separate email addresses that are available somewhere?

Ms. Wilson: Yes.

Ms. Moore: I've been told, yes.

Ms. Wilson: They are listed on our EEJ website which has the whole list of the ten different plans and attached to those links to the plans are point of contacts, email addresses for you to contact for that region.

Ms. Moore: Perfect. Thank you. And thank you, Katie, for the whispered response as well. And so here's my more substantive question which is that, I mean, MAFAC has provided some comments on the initial EEJ's strategy and we're appreciative of the Agency's receptiveness to those comments. I think we have been trying to think about what our next body of work could be on the vest.

So that's just one thing to note I think for the agency in general is we're trying to figure out how we best next support some of these efforts.

But one thing that I think has been a little bit confusing from the outside is with the, how to navigate the distinctions between NOAA's constitution with federally recognized tribes and how they engage directly with those sovereign nations and any overlaps then that occur through the EEJ's strategy and Implementation Plans.

We know that those things are not like one for one overlaps, but it's been difficult I think to understand how those are moving in parallel and where they may overlap. And so I would just note that, and I know there's been recent guidance on inclusion of indigenous knowledge and those things as well.

I'm just noting I think it's a little opaque, I would say, at least I'll speak just for myself, it's a little confusing for myself about how these different efforts are either

overlapped or not overlapped and how they are supporting each other in moving forward.

And I think certainly that feels like an acute issue in Alaska and so just wanted to get some thoughts maybe that you had about how those might be working together? I note you may need to phone a friend for some of the bigger things that I've pulled out here and I'm perfectly happy for you to do that as well. Thank you.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: I think I can take a crack at that, Amilee. I think what I'd say is the EEJ is really a broader umbrella. It's a lot, it's a broader audience. It includes, it certainly does include improving relationships with tribes and indigenous communities in Alaska. But it also includes a lot of other groups.

We mentioned charter boats, captains, fishing crew, the people that are working in the processing plants. You know, we have language barriers in some of these places that we really need to think about how can we do a better job translating our science and our management measures into documents that are in different languages?

So I think it, you know, I see the EEJ is really an umbrella and I see our efforts which we are working on a parallel track in Alaska to develop a consultation protocol to do, you know, work more directly with tribes in that formal setting.

But also working with tribes in an engagement setting where some of that's going to fall under EEJ. And I think they are separate but complimentary and I think EEJ is the over-arching umbrella.

I don't know if Amilee wants to add to that or has other thoughts. She is a Tribal Coordinator so I think she probably does.

Ms. Wilson: Thanks, Maggie. And thanks for that can of worms question. You know we're learning together. This is new initiative so we are trying to sort out those pieces ourselves within the Alaska region,

how that works and as a new Tribal Liaison and a new position for Alaska how we can incorporate the EEJ effort so that it complemented our tribal relations and our improved engagement and communication with our tribal partners.

So we are working hard and diligently to incorporate both but where those lines are blurred, how do we then sit down and have those conversations to discuss where did those topics fit?

And so for tribal consultation for me it's a clear line. There are policies and actions, research and monitoring activities that take place that we consult with the tribes on that might be of tribal interest or have direct impacts to them in their communities.

And then we have other equity and environmental justice concerns that come out of that. So looking at EEJ as an over-arching umbrella really helps us determine which actions we may want to move in to a consultation versus which actions you would take just talking with our communities.

And having engagement with those folks that are on the ground living day to day with these challenges and need help from us in order to help, to better the situation or to under, of course, federal statutes and regulations be able to assist in some way. And so that's the, those are the blurred lines that we're working through right now.

But I think tribal consultation is a little bit more straight forward. We look at just the federal trust tribal relations between federal agencies and Alaska native tribes and corporations. If there are actions and policies taking place, whether it's in the fisheries realm or other, we do have that obligation to sit down and consult with the tribes. I hope that helps and doesn't muddy the waters too much more.

Chair Runnebaum: Great. Thank you. I have Jaime Diamond and then I have Jennifer Hagen.

Ms. Diamond: Hi. I'm Jaime Diamond from southern

California Charter Recreational. In California we have quite a few, majority of the tribes in California are not federally recognized. And I'm not sure of the make-up in Alaska but I am going to step out and assume that there are some tribes that are not federally recognized.

And so how it is, how are you interacting and working with them while recognizing that they aren't recognized and don't have the same rights and access to the different things that federally recognized tribes do? That is kind of part one.

Part two, if that makes sense. Part two just, yeah, how you are working differently with the unrecognized tribes versus there's the formal process for the federally recognized tribes?

Part two is similar to that. Earlier in our last panel we heard that, you know, if there was some magic thing you could do to help these small communities that are really hurting especially now.

One of the comments was these smaller communities that have, you know, have a broad demographic of tribal and non-tribal community members but they can't afford entrance into, like the IFQ fishery and the idea of having a community set aside of some kind for these smaller, isolated communities.

And is that something that I'm, obviously this not something you can answer and say yes to or, but are those the types of things that are being brought up and like these more creative different ways to bring equity to these smaller communities that don't stand a chance against big dollars of bigger companies and stuff like that, so? Thanks.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Well I guess I'll start. For your first question we are working with not just federally recognized tribes but all indigenous peoples in Alaska and some communities, tribes that are not recognized specifically. And we're doing that in a true to the EEJ process I'd argue.

But also, you know, in the last ten years since I've been here we developed a communications protocol which now we're calling an engagement protocol. And it's really a three pronged approach for the science side.

When we do research in a community where's the potential to overlap with subsistence hunting activities, we reach out broadly and we make people aware of what we're doing and that includes federally recognized tribes, subsistence hunters, you know, white people that live in the neighborhood, you know, everyone. The entire community.

We reach out through radio communications. We send out press release letting them know what's going on. We hold community meetings. We share our plans, our research plans. We set up an email list so that people who are interested in knowing, really, real time what's going on.

We provide daily updates from our survey and share, you know, what information we can from what we're seeing on the water. And we give people a heads up of where we're going to be the next day so if there are subsistence hunting activities taking place we can adjust if we need to and we do. And then we follow up with real time communications afterward.

We go back to the communities that we were working around and give them the information that we had served first so that they can hear from us what we saw. And that preliminary results is really important. And I'm trying to remember your second question was about, I'm forgetting what the second question was. Maybe I'll let Amilee go for that.

Ms. Wilson: I can go for that. I think, Maggie, you did a great job for the first one. So what are we doing that we could help those small communities that may be struggling and, yes, these are, to answer your question, these are the types of input and feedback that we're receiving from communities.

It's wonderful when they don't just share their

challenges, but they also share a solution or a potential way to overcome that challenge. And that's certainly something that can be considered in-house with the federal agency and determine whether that's something we could possibly do.

So we can't make any guarantees. Obviously we, this is an unfunded mandate so we would love to have funding attached to these actions and make sure that there could be some, perhaps grant opportunities and other things available for communities to get back on their feet. So we're willing to explore those options and have those conversations.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: And I guess I would just add to that too as I mentioned the notice of funding opportunity that we have available at the Alaska Fishery Science Center, that we have funding this year.

We're hopeful that that funding will continue for the next couple of years and that is to provide resources to communities so that they can get involved in research and management. Have a seat at the table to attend management meetings. Work on communications networks.

So it is small pool money and is not long-term but it leads to some resources for the communities because we heard loud and clear that we need to provide resources. Because unlike us with federal day jobs, are paid when we go to the meeting. A lot of people give up a day of fishing, or they give up a day of hunting to come to a public meeting.

Chair Runnebaum: Great. Thank you for that. Jennifer?

Ms. Hagen: Good afternoon, Jennifer Hagen. I work for the Quileute Tribe in the coastal Washington. Greetings Amilee, I haven't seen you in a while. I'm going to swing the pendulum far to the other side here.

So the Tribe I work for is a treaty Tribe which means

they have a treaty with the United States government and it is the supreme law of the land. These treaties in the northwest for the benefit of everybody are unique in that they served, maintained the right of northwest tribes to fish, hunt and gather off of their reservations. Specific to the Quileute tribe, it goes 40 mile out into the ocean.

I'm wondering and for this environmental justice, how you see it improving upon relationships with the treaty tribes and have you brought in and are you communicating with the U.S. Department of State as part of that process since that would be an appropriate mechanism to be including?

Ms. Wilson: I can take that, Maggie. And hi, Jennifer, it's so great to see you and hear your voice again. It's been a while.

For us in the Alaska region, we are working with non-treaty tribes of course as well treaty tribes, the Metlakatla Indian, a community that is, has a reservation but it's very different than the west coast region and now that I'm no longer the west coast tribal liaison, it is Lalena Amioette's job to work with those folks like yourself and also with the Department of State to make sure that those needs are met.

So we are, because Alaska native tribes and corporations have a unique status here in Alaska, a lot of our EEJ efforts have been combined with both tribal and non-tribal and that a lot of our rural areas that include subsistence rights, include both tribal and non-tribal entities. So treaties are not part of the conversation associated with that.

So that would be the part of my, that would be my counterpart in the west coast region, Lalena Amioette. If you haven't met Lalena, or need to get in contact with her, I'd be happy to share her information with you.

Chair Runnebaum: Jennifer, thank you for that. Natasha.

Ms. Hayden: Hi ladies. Thank you so much for your presentation. I'm Natasha Hayden. I'm here from Kodiak. So I have two questions and they are a little bit, I think they are little bit more difficult.

My first question is that my experience has been talking about equity and environmental justice in a lot of different spaces is improving for sure. It's improved to what we're doing and experiencing now just hearing this presentation and having the Agency do all of this work is quite remarkable.

But I'm still concerned it kind of falls into a little, or goes into a little bit of a black hole when you're not actually in the room with people who are fully invested in this work and bought into the work.

And so I'm just wondering if you have any insights into how to have difficult conversations with people who are involved in fisheries, fisheries management, fishing communities who don't think that this is really warranted. And I know that that's a very difficult conversation but I would just like to put that out there into this space.

Because we talk about it a lot here that, you know, it's kind of like code switching if any of you have ever heard of that. Where you talk one way when you're in one group of people and a different way in a different group of people and I think that this is, you know, I'm not, I'm never going to have this chance again with everybody here and with you online.

So if you could just speak to that a little bit and just to even, just to bring a little bit more comfort for people who are a little bit uncomfortable hearing about something that it sort of forms them.

Ms. Wilson: I can take that Maggie or --

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Well yeah -- I'll add to it because I have some thoughts but go ahead.

Ms. Wilson: Thank you, Ms. Natasha. Thank you for addressing the elephant in the room. This is new,

right. And anything that's new can be scary. Change is hard. Change always presents an unknown. What's going to happen next? How is this going to affect me? Would it have negative or positive benefits? Or will it have both? And how will I navigate that situation?

For us, EEJ is so important that we're willing as an Agency, NOAA Fisheries, is willing to institutionalize it and that's why we have those six core areas with the empowering environment in the center.

That is with leadership buy-in and staff buy-in that we're going to make changes that will benefit all. We try to make sure that those changes do have benefits to all communities and avoid those negative repercussions or situations where it may have unintended consequences.

However, that takes a lot of effort. A lot of conversations. A lot of one on one and a lot of group conversations to discuss how those impacts would affect others. So, or how a certain change would affect another group, user group?

So there's a lot of work for us to do. It's a huge daunting challenge. But there are so many staff who are willing to move into this arena now and be brave and have those candid conversations because our communities are hurting.

And it's really important for us to be able to take that flag and continue moving forward and uphold those equity and environmental justice objectives that we've established and keep them moving over time.

So that this isn't a plan that you just see in the G file later on. This is something that we continue to work on and to develop especially within the federal government to provide equity and environmental justice for all.

So we're not going to get there overnight. You and I both know that. There are people who want to push back and say, no, this is not appropriate or this is not the time or date for us to be pushing this. There's so

many other concerns going on.

But I think with enough champions to be able to voice those concerns and move forward with initiatives and take action and complete and overcome challenges maybe facing our communities, we can definitely take positive strides in that direction.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: And I think I just add to that that it really is about institutionalizing this. And, you know, it's not just external communications that we have to do. It's internal communications too. And so Amilee mentioned a workshop. We've done a few internal seminars here at the Science Center and I definitely think this idea of a workshop is a great idea.

Really, you know, changing our culture internally. And so it's a long-term commitment. It doesn't happen overnight.

And I think what's really critical is when you reach people that really are nervous about it or resistant to it, is continuing to communicate with them and helping them to understand that there is something in this for them too. That this applies to everyone. And that's the point of it. It's really trying to be fully inclusive.

And so, you know, hopefully through communications and more and more engagement and sticking with it, we'll get more and more people to see it as something valuable and embrace it.

Chair Runnebaum: Great. Thank you. As I listened to the presentation and the conversation today I am finding myself wondering if you can speak to how, and maybe to build off of Natasha's question, how this effort is supporting the councils in these efforts?

I think that as we did our recommendations as MAFAC on the EEJ strategy one of the things that still sticks with me is whose information or whose data and how the data are collected I get into the process is super influential into the management. And so I think that and then who has a seat at the table, of

course.

But I think that it, I see the work that you are doing really integrate into each aspect of the management process. And so I'm curious if you can speak to that or how you're supporting the councils in your efforts as well.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: Do you want to start or do you want me to? I'm happy to start.

Ms. Wilson: Go ahead, Maggie, and I'll clean up.

Ms. Mooney-Seus: I think, you know, one of the things that I said that we heard loud and clear is the need for social science. And really looking at science actions as well as regulatory actions and assessing the impacts of those actions on people.

I think that kind of data if, you know, we do have social scientists at the Science Center. We have been increasing our social science and economics program which I think we're all excited about here. And that kind of research is really important and definitely important it informs the council process.

I think we started because this is big as it is, with looking internally inside NOAA Fisheries and the Regional Office, the Science Center, and our national offices around and other offices around the country, we thought it was a big enough nut crack to crack to focus on NMFS first.

But I do think the things that we're doing are going to spill over and impact the council in positive ways. And I do think at some point there will be more direct engagement with the council on ways that they think we should be taking this to another level. But I think we had to start with looking internally first.

Ms. Wilson: And I just want to mention that in Appendix A we work with our North Pacific Fishery Council staff and they are just fantastic. And we have been incorporating some of the actions that have come out of the council like the LK/TK, the local

knowledge, traditional knowledge, protocol and on-ramps for incorporation of indigenous knowledge and furthering that and the work that we do.

For example, we've also reached out to tribal folks within our cooperating agencies. And sorry, I need to be jumping up and down so that my light doesn't turn off in my office on me for energy efficiency.

But I, what we did was we had a huge win this last year, this fiscal year. We were able to add three cooperating agencies that were tribal organizations to our NEPA process for the EIS both on the southeast Alaska salmon fisheries and our chum salmon bycatch, which is what we call our non-Chinook salmon EIS.

So having viewed those three tribal organizations was a first for NOAA Fisheries and having those staff come alongside us, partner with us, develop ways in which they could share that indigenous knowledge with, of course, protection of sensitive information, et cetera. And then be able to write components of those documents with us was just astounding.

I'm so excited that we continue to move in that direction and make sure that we're making inroads on incorporating indigenous knowledge along with western science in our divisions.

So I anticipate that we'll continue to move in that direction with the council and make sure that if there are other thoughts and ideas and input that you'd like to share with us that you include that at the email address that you see on the screen at the bottom left here as well. Because we're open to those ideas and we would love to work with you.

Chair Runnebaum: Great. Thank you both so much. We really appreciate your time and your thoughtful conversation that you had with us. So thank you all to make time for this conversation. We're going to wrap up our day. I don't know if I'm the only one that is starting to feel a little tired.

So as we sort of close out today I just want to sort of give a quick recap on things that we talked about. And so we had our session with the community this morning and we really heard about some of the challenges that folks in Kodiak are experiencing and just how inner-connected the fishing industry municipalities, schools and job trainings are in this place.

And I think that it resonated with a lot of people around the table that that is true for where they come from as well. At least I think that's what I heard.

We then heard directly from folks that are participating or support other folks participating in fisheries or in shore side processing.

And we heard a lot about how critical data and information is in the management process and having claimant information, having enough social science and really the surveys being super important and fundamental to the NOAA enterprise and the fisheries management enterprise.

And I don't know if anybody else saw some laughing on this end of the table when there was a question of what is climate ready fisheries. So that question still stands.

And we passed our, we had our EBFM recommendations that provided some recommendations to the Agency on that climate ready fisheries definition and how to incorporate it into the EBFM road map. And so I think that we can continue as an advisory body to really support this uncovering of what that really means.

And then thank you so much to Maggie and Amilee for how Alaska is implementing the EEJ strategy and I think I heard a couple of questions that are sitting with me and maybe can sit with all of us.

Is there a role for MAFAC here around the EEJ strategy implementation? And then sort of how do we, how is a complicated conversation being

discussed in these various spaces that exist in fisheries.

So we also, I forgot, I'm sorry. We also had a great update from our administrator here, Administrator Janet Coit and thank you for all the insight you provided to us as well. So it's been a pleasure having you here today to provide us with some of that feedback and input to us. So we're going to wrap up and close for the day. There are buses that are outside right behind me, I'm told. Katie, are you pointing to them? Okay. The buses arrived at 5:20. They are, are they departing at 5:30?

Ms. Zanowicz: They will leave at 5:30/5:35. So when you are ready, pack up, head down to the bus and get on the bus. And then if you haven't paid Heidi for the dinner, please do so. We will not let you on the bus. Just kidding.

Adjourn

Chair Runnebaum: So I think it's a 45 minute ride so please be sure to use the bathroom. Get water. Take care of your needs. And we'll see you soon, tomorrow. We'll see you on the bus.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 5:20 p.m.)