

Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Update on Efforts Related to Staff Recommendation #1

November 4, 2020

Recommendation: Develop and adopt a policy and definition for coastal fishing communities.

Overview: Consider developing a new policy related to coastal fishing communities for Commission adoption. A policy could help clarify how the Commission wishes to consider coastal fishing community needs in decision-making, and the information necessary to help support those decisions. A policy could help flesh out the vision for the role Commission decision-making can play in preserving coastal fishing communities in California. Developing a draft policy is best accomplished in collaboration with stakeholders, tribes and tribal communities, academics, the Department, and other government agencies and jurisdictions that influence the sustainability of coastal fishing communities through their actions.

Progress by Focal Area

Commission and Department Initiatives

- *Definition:* Commission staff worked with stakeholders to develop a working definition of “coastal fishing community”, which was adopted by MRC in November 2019 for use in the Coastal Fishing Communities Project as reported to the Commission in December 2019. The working definition is:

“A coastal fishing community is defined as a social, cultural, economic, and/or place-based group whose members are fishermen dependent upon or engaged in commercial, recreational, or subsistence fishing to meet the social or economic needs of the community; this includes, but is not limited to, businesses and organizations that depend on or support fishing by providing goods and services, including infrastructure. A fishing community may be a subset or member of larger or associated coastal communities which have an interest in and/or are dependent on healthy ocean ecosystems.”
- *Policy:* Previous Sea Grant fellows to the Commission have examined legislative context and stakeholder comments submitted in response to the SR, and worked to organize concepts for potential inclusion in a draft policy.

Relevant External Actions and Models

- *California Ocean Protection Council (OPC):* Through its [2020-2025 strategic plan](#), OPC has signaled that “Supporting Ocean Health through a Sustainable Blue Economy” is a key strategic priority (Goal 4); the objective to “Advance Sustainable Seafood and Thriving Fishing Communities (Objective 4.1) identifies the Commission and Department among the partner agencies to help achieve the objective.

- *Federal:* The Pacific Fishery Management Council's Climate and Communities Initiative, which has similar goals to the Commission's Coastal Fishing Communities Project, is guided by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the act's definition of fishing community.

Education and Outreach

- **Website:** The final staff synthesis report approved in December 2019 has been posted to the Commission's website, along with information from each of the public meetings held between 2016 and 2018.

Potential Next Steps

Draft a potential policy to bring to a future MRC meeting and/or workshop for review. In drafting any potential policy, rely on previous stakeholder comments on the staff report, consider the efforts of previous Sea Grant fellows, and reach out to interested stakeholders, tribes, and governmental agencies to solicit additional input on priorities for the contents of a policy.

Linkages to Other Staff Recommendations

This recommendation is linked to others in that it could provide a foundation to support various types of initiatives, depending on the content of the policy. For example, a policy could support interagency outreach in support of communities (SR 5), community self-sufficiency (SR 6), collaborative work (SR 7), or continued outreach and collaboration with communities (SR 8).