

Coastal Fishing Communities Project

Update on Efforts Related to Staff Recommendation #6

November 4, 2020

Recommendation: Explore pathways for possible community-based adaptable fishery structures (e.g., community permit banks or risk pools) to be authorized.

Overview: Explore options for community-organized structures that provide for adaptable responses within the community and could include co-management responsibilities. Consult with partner organizations and possibly convene an experts' workshop. This recommendation may require legislative or regulatory frameworks to accommodate such avenues. An example of such a structure that could be used as a model is the Monterey Fisheries Trust.

Progress by Focal Area

Commission and Department Initiatives

- *Master plan for fisheries:* The Commission-approved [2018 master plan for fisheries](#) focuses on adapting fisheries to climate change in Chapter 11, and includes flexible permitting as a method of maintaining socioeconomic resilience, providing it is consistent with the Commission's restricted access policy. The chapter commits that "...As resources permit, the Department and Commission will work with stakeholders to conduct an analysis of permit transferability in California fisheries and the Commission's policy on restricted access fisheries. This analysis will include how permits are retired and new permits are issued, and the potential for gear switching. Permitting considerations will also be included in the development of new FMPs [fishery management plans]. A working group comprised of stakeholders, outside experts, and Department and Commission staff could help to interpret analyses and develop policy recommendations."

Collaborations and Partner Efforts

- *Guidance:* A 2017 guidance document from the California Ocean Science Trust (OST), [Readying California Fisheries for Climate Change](#), provides a high-level overview of climate change impacts on state-managed fisheries; the guidance includes "adaptable permitting structures" among its recommended management approaches for preparing for climate change impacts.
- *Resilience workshop:* In 2019, OST hosted a guided learning workshop on climate change and coastal fishing communities. Planned through an inter-agency steering committee including staff from the Commission, the Department, OST, and the California Ocean Protection Council, the workshop was designed to explore policy and management options to support coastal fishing community resilience under climate change. The [workshop report](#) discussed pursuing community-owned fishing opportunities (e.g., community permit banks, permit leasing).

- *Upcoming:* A follow-up to the 2019 workshop is being pursued to explore with fishing industry representatives and fisheries managers the feasibility of adaptable management structures. OST and two economists from the University of California at Davis recently received a grant to examine the economic impact of potential flexible permitting programs in California, and whether such programs would serve to help communities weather climate change impacts to fisheries; several workshops are anticipated.

Relevant External Actions and Models

- *Case study:* The [Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust](#) has a quota leasing program which supports local commercial fishing in Monterey Bay. This program serves as a good example for how other community-based quota banks could function in California.
- *Literature review:* A [2016 NMFS Tech Memo](#) recommends region-specific management approaches, including community quota ownerships.
- *Out-of-state examples:* The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has several [community quota programs](#) for federally-managed fisheries that are intended to provide fishing villages with access and to support economic development. The programs include a community development quota program (CDQ), a community quota entity program (CQE), and some species-specific cooperatives, which could serve as learning tools for developing community quotas at the state level.

Potential Next Steps

Assign staff to determine what would be required to authorize community-based adaptable fishery structures in order to determine authority and approach. Query fishing communities in California on the desire and level of support for community-based adaptable fishery structures.

Linkages to Other Staff Recommendations

Pursuing and implementing this recommendation would likely require adjustments to the restricted access program, relevant to SR 2. The experimental fisheries permit program, discussed under SR 3, could be leveraged along with this recommendation; for example, to test community structures, a single large permit (e.g., squid seine) might be allocated to several fishermen in a community by suspending the current one-vessel requirement.