

Ecosystem Committee Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab Q

Agenda Item IV: Ecosystem Technical Committee Recommendations on Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Timeline Status: Information, discussion, and feedback

Committee input and next steps: Staff will provide an overview of progress toward development of the Gulf Fishery Ecosystem (FEP), including an update on Inflation Reduction Act projects to support the completion of the FEP and regulatory streamlining projects. Staff will review the recommendations for the FEP provided by the Ecosystem Technical Committee (ETC) during its May 2025 meeting. The ETC provided feedback on the draft structure of the FEP, steps within the Fishery Ecosystem Issue (FEI) Loop, and the scope of work for a social science consultant to support FEP stakeholder engagement efforts. The Committee should review the meeting summary and provide feedback on the draft structure of the FEP, FEI Loop, and the objectives for the forthcoming social science consultant.

Agenda Item V: Discussion of Red Tide Fishery Ecosystem Issue Pilot

Action: Information, discussion, and feedback

Committee input and next steps: The ETC tested the FEI Loop using red tide as a pilot issue to determine whether the FEI Loop was a suitable approach for investigating ecosystem issues of concern. Staff will review the ETC discussion on red tide FEI goals, challenges, and ongoing red tide research relevant to federal fisheries management. The ETC concluded based on the red tide pilot exercise that the FEI Loop was an appropriate vehicle for systematically evaluating FEIs, but recommended that a task force be formed to conduct further work on a full red tide FEI, which still requires substantial effort to synthesize existing information and identify management onramps. Staff will provide information on potential paths forward for a red tide FEI. The Committee should review the meeting summary, provide feedback on the red tide pilot exercise, and provide any recommendations to staff prior to the development of the full red tide FEI.

Agenda Item VI: Any Remaining Ecosystem Technical Committee Recommendations

Action: Information, discussion, and feedback

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Committee input and next steps: Staff will review any additional recommendations provided by the ETC at its May 2025 meeting, including ETC discussion on the new process for developing and updating Ecosystem Status Reports for the Gulf. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and provide feedback as appropriate.