

**Ecosystem Committee
Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab Q**

Agenda Item IV: Draft Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Timeline Status: Document, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Staff will provide an overview of the draft Gulf Fishery Ecosystem Plan, which is a non-regulatory document to guide the use of ecosystem information in Gulf fisheries management. The draft Fishery Ecosystem Plan outlines a structured process for investigating Fishery Ecosystem Issues (FEIs) of concern and identifying potential approaches for addressing these issues. Due to the government shutdown, the Ecosystem Technical Committee has yet to review the draft Fishery Ecosystem Plan but will be provided the opportunity to do so as soon as practicable. The Committee should discuss the draft and provide feedback for staff and the Ecosystem Technical Committee. After the Ecosystem Technical Committee reviews the draft, the next phase for operationalizing the Fishery Ecosystem Plan will begin with conducting stakeholder engagement strategies in Spring 2026 with the support of a contractor. The Council is currently in the process of selecting a contractor to develop and conduct the Fishery Ecosystem Plan stakeholder engagements, which will include identifying stakeholder-driven FEIs, prioritization considerations for FEIs, and gathering information on the social and economic impacts of each prospective FEI from Gulf stakeholders.