



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sylvia Spalding (808) 522-8220 or info@wpcouncil.org

From FestPac to West Pac, Guam Governor Remains Focused on Ocean Resources, Island Ancestors

TUMON BAY, GUAM (9 June 2016) The Honorable Eddie Calvo, Governor of Guam, opened the 166th meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council today in Tumon Bay, Guam, with words of respect and love for the ocean. “We have limited land spaces and a sacred view of the ocean,” Calvo said. “The Council discussion is extremely important.”

Gov. Calvo said Guam and the Council have worked on numerous projects together. He was particularly pleased with the Americans with Disabilities Act compliant fishing platform at Hagatna, which served a dual purpose as a viewing platform during the Festival of Pacific Arts, which ended Sunday. He encouraged the Council to continue work on extension of the platform.

He also singled out regional fishery concerns about shark predation and sea turtle regulations as well as a recent partnership with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) for a nationally competitive Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) grant. Calvo said the S-K funds will be used to collect commercial fisheries import and export data as well as local fisheries data.

Calvo concluded his remarks noting that the people of Guam, like the people of many other island territories and nations, believe that ancestors who have died are still present and can be called on for their strength and goodness. “We understand the value and importance of our land; the importance and value of our ocean. As we move forward and work with each other and our federal partners, particularly in Washington, DC, our love for our islands is even greater than those tasked with the job. ... The voices of the Pacific must be heard.”

Following a full-day of presentations and reports, the Council voted to pursue the following Guam fisheries-related undertakings:

- To work with the the Government of Guam to fund marine preserve markers and signs.
- To work on an educational video on fisheries in the Mariana archipelago.
- To help develop a permanent display in the new Guam museum to highlight the indigenous fishing practices of the Mariana Islands.
- To ask the National Marine Fisheries Service’s Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center to study seasonal fishes, migration and fish behavior in Guam.
- To communicate the fishing community’s concerns to the Guam Department of Agriculture regarding the potential overexploitation of sea cucumbers in Guam and assist in developing options for a moratorium on sea cucumber harvest under the Administrative Adjudication Law until an assessment of the sea cucumber populations can be conducted.

—more—

- To work with its advisory body members, the CNMI and Guam governments, the Mayor’s Council of Guam, and representatives of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Philippines and Japan to share information and management regimes, if any, and to discuss green sea turtle populations in the region.
- To work with Guam Department of Agriculture and the Mayor’s office in Yigo to identify an area in the village to build a boat ramp and to have this project included in Guam’s Marine Conservation Plan.

The Council will conclude its 166th meeting tomorrow 8:30 to 5 p.m. in the Micronesian Ballroom at the Guam Hilton, Tumon Bay. Topics to be covered include pelagic, international and Hawaii fisheries and Council administrative matters. For more information including complete agendas, go to www.wpcouncil.org or email info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov.

Recommendations by the Council that are regulatory in nature are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval. The Council was established by Congress under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976 to manage domestic fisheries operating seaward of State waters around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI and the US Pacific Island Remote Island Areas.



From left: Edwin Ebisui Jr., chair of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council; The Honorable Eddie Calvo, Governor of Guam; Kitty M. Simonds, Council executive director; and Matt Sablan, director, Guam Department of Agriculture.

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council: Appointees by the Secretary of Commerce from nominees selected by American Samoa, CNMI, Guam and Hawai`i governors: Michael Duenas, Guam Fishermen’s Cooperative Association (Guam) (vice chair); Edwin Ebisui Jr. (Hawaii) (chair); Michael Goto, United Fishing Agency Ltd. (Hawaii); John Gourley, Micronesian Environmental Services (CNMI) (vice chair); Julie Leialoha, biologist (Hawaii); Dr. Claire Tuia Poumele, Port Administration (American Samoa); McGrew Rice, commercial and charter fisherman (Hawaii) (vice chair); and William Sword, recreational fisherman (American Samoa) (vice chair). Designated state officials: Suzanne Case, Hawai`i Department of Land and Natural Resources; Dr. Ruth Matagi-Tofiga, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources; Richard Seman, CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources; and Matt Sablan, Guam Department of Agriculture. Designated federal officials: Matthew Brown, USFWS Pacific Islands Refuges and Monuments Office; Michael Brakke, US Department of State; RADM Vincent B. Atkins, US Coast Guard 14th District; and Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office.