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COUNCIL

REPORT of the Guam Mariana FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

Friday, February 23, 2018

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association Lanai
Hagatna, Guam

1. Welcome and Introductions

Felix Reyes, Guam Advisory Panel (AP) Chair, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. AP members in attendance included Ken Borja, James Borja, Matthew Orot, and Jason Miller.

Also in attendance were the overall AP Chair Judith Guthertz, Council Coordinator Carl Delacruz and Judy Amesbury.

2. Report on Previous Council Action Items

The Coordinator gave a report on the previous Council actions and AP recommendations. He said that some of the letters written by the Council to Guam Department of Agriculture did not receive a response. He noted that the staff is working on a response but they have not sent it to the Council at this time.

3. Council Issues

A. Action Items

i. Precious Corals Essential Fish Habitat Refinement Options

The Coordinator provided a brief explanation of the topic and noted that the Council would be deferring action on this issue until its October meeting. The AP agreed to take up this issue at a future AP meeting prior to October.

ii. Options for an Aquaculture Management Program

The Coordinator provided the AP with an update on the status of the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement saying that it has not been published and the Council may take action to recommend a preliminarily preferred alternative for aquaculture management at its upcoming 172nd meeting. He noted that the AP previously discussed this issue at its last meeting in September.

The AP discussed the issue and agreed that there is a need for an aquaculture management program. However they recommended having it less restrictive and provide for considerations for not allowing aquaculture at the Guam fishing banks and/or near existing fish aggregation devices. The AP reiterated its previous recommendation on the issue, *recommending the Council select the less restrictive alternative.*

iii. US Territory Longline Bigeye Specification

The Coordinator presented on the options for the annual US Territory longline bigeye specification. He provided a background on the specifications noting that Guam has been a beneficiary of the quota transfer with Hawaii. He also noted the alternatives being considered,

no action; a 2,000 metric ton (mt) quota with 1,000 mt transferable; and no quota with either a 1,000, 1,500, or 2,000 mt transfer quota.

The AP discussed the issue noting bigeye fishing is not occurring in Guam so the current quota limit and transferrable quota is sufficient. *The AP recommended the Council continue to specify the longline bigeye quota for Guam at 2,000 mt with 1,000 mt transferrable.*

4. Guam Mariana Archipelago FEP Community Activities

The Coordinator gave the community activities report and provided details for the existing Territorial Science Initiative (TSI) and Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) projects in Guam. He said that TSI is continuing to work with fish dealers to collect their data through logbooks and that MRIP is working on collecting spearfishing data.

He also reported that the Council's Territory Capacity Building Scholarship is still accepting applications and he is working with Council staff on coordinating an education survey. The Coordinator also mentioned that the community-based plan for Yigo is being finished up and will be provided to the community upon completion for finalization. He also noted that a recent law was passed to create a community-based plan for the village of Umatac. He said that one of the priorities is for the Umatac villagers to be deputized to enforce their own plan.

5. Guam Mariana Archipelago FEP AP Issues

A. Report of the Subpanels

i. Island Fisheries Subpanel

AP members reported on the *balate* (sea cucumber) issue noting that the Council previously sent letters to the Guam Department of Agriculture communicating the AP's concerns about potential overharvest of sea cucumbers in Guam. The AP also discussed issues in the marinas with law enforcement vessels taking up dock spaces. They suggested that there be separate law enforcement docks. The AP recommended the Council request NMFS provide federal funding for separate law enforcement docks.

ii. Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel

AP members continued its ongoing discussion about Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs). One AP member noted that since the recent FAD deployment, three FADs have broken off and are now gone. The AP discussion centered on providing feedback on the current design and flaws in order to pinpoint the FAD problems.

iii. Ecosystems and Habitat Subpanel

AP members noted that the Guam Fishery Council has still not been formed and that there has been no movement as of late. They also noted that the military is proceeding with the firing range despite the opposition to its placement.

iv. Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel

AP members discussed the Council's lunar calendar and how popular it was amongst the fishermen. They were approached by many sources about its availability. The Coordinator noted that the calendar is available online this year and Council staff is working on revamping the calendar for next year.

B. Other Issues

The AP Chair requested that the Guam AP submit interesting articles to Council staff for use in the Council's newsletter. The AP went over the schedule of events for the year and discussed changing the meeting days for its future meetings.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment

7. Discussion and Recommendations

The Guam Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

Regarding Aquaculture Management, the Guam AP:

- Recommended the Council select Alternative 2 as its preliminary preferred alternative as it is less restrictive. Further, the Guam AP recommended the Council ensure that aquaculture does not occur on Guam's fishing banks and/or near its existing FADs.

Regarding the US Territory Longline Bigeye Quota, the Guam AP:

- Recommended the Council maintain the status quo and specify the longline bigeye quota for Guam at 2,000 mt with 1,000 mt transferrable.

Regarding Guam Fishery Issues, the Guam AP:

- Recommended the Council request NMFS provide federal funding for law enforcement to have a separate dock in Guam's existing boat marinas.

8. "At the End of the Day" – Other Business

There was no other business.