

**DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 30, 2024**

(MEETING HELD VIA WEBINAR)

The South Atlantic Council's Executive Committee met via webinar on September 30, 2024. The Committee approved the meeting agenda and minutes of the prior meeting.

Closed Session

The Committee initially convened in a closed session to discuss personnel considerations.

Budget Review

Kelly Klasnick provided an overview of the 2024 budget with expenditures through August 2024 and a proposed draft budget for 2025. Expenditures during 2024 are on track with the budget expectations at this point in the calendar year. Final 2024 expenditures are expected to fall at, or slightly below, the 2024 total budget.

No funding allocation information is available for 2025 at this time. As in prior years, the 2025 budget is based on assuming status quo funding levels from 2024. The draft 2025 Council budget is slightly below the 2024 budget, due to a reduction in contract expenses. Additional contractual activities supporting projects such as the Snapper-Grouper MSE and a SMZ evaluation were approved for 2024, supported by surplus funds incurred during the COVID travel reduction. Costs of supporting core Council activities and staff obligations do not exceed expected funding for 2025. The Committee approved the draft 2025 budget. The budget will be revised and brought back before the Committee if 2025 funding is significantly different than assumed.

The Committee discussed the transition to a new administrative grant. Council operating funds are provided through NOAA Fisheries on multi-year grants. These grants previously covered 5 years with an allowance for a one-year no-cost extension; the current grant began in 2020 and ends in 2024. Under a new budget time period interpretation, future administrative grants will be based on a 4-year planning window while retaining and essentially 'building in' the one-year no-cost extension opportunity. This results in all the funds for a grant being expended within a total of 5 years. The next grant period will be January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2028. Grant documents have been submitted to NOAA Fisheries for approval. The expanded workplan, Attachment 3b, lists the projects to be completed during the next grant period. Documentation of activities eligible for funding under the no-cost extension is now underway and will be submitted to NMFS by October 30, 2024.

Workplan Review and Activity Schedule Review

Kelly Klasnick reviewed the 2025 activity schedule and workplan. The activity schedule, detailing planned meetings and related expenses, provides the foundation for developing the budget. As with recent prior years, the activity schedule includes the full range of Council meeting activities. The Council workplan was also reviewed, highlighting the long-term planning of activities through 2028. The Council has a full workload planned for 2025 and into 2026, with few opportunities to add new items until several current projects are complete.

MOTIONS

**MOTION # 1: APPROVE THE DRAFT 2025 OPERATIONAL BUDGET AS PRESENTED
AND MODIFIED.**

Approved by Committee