

Proposed Amendment 11/12_Public comment SAFMC lack of transparency

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Since Amendment 10 was proposed and denied, the Coral Advisory Panel (AP) of the SAFMC has not been allowed by the council to take part in the discussions or to vote on the proposed amendments Coral 11 and Habitat 12. Only members of the Shrimp AP and Habitat AP were involved in the various Council meetings including the current one this week, December 2025, for the final vote. When the Council was questioned why the Coral AP were not invited or allowed to participate in these discussions or vote, we were told that the Coral AP already made their intentions clear concerning the proposed Amendment 10. The Coral AP voted against Amendment 10. So since they voted against 10 it is likely that they would vote against 11/12, and therefore not allowed to vote.

I think any review of this by a judge would find this disturbing if not outright illegal. The members of the Coral AP are the most knowledgeable members of the SAFMC regarding the Oculina reefs. The vice-chair of the Coral AP did her Ph.D. dissertation on the reproduction of Oculina and is very aware how fragile the small planula coral larvae are. Is it reasonable that they are denied a vote on a proposed CORAL Amendment?