

# Executive Director's Report

## January 2026

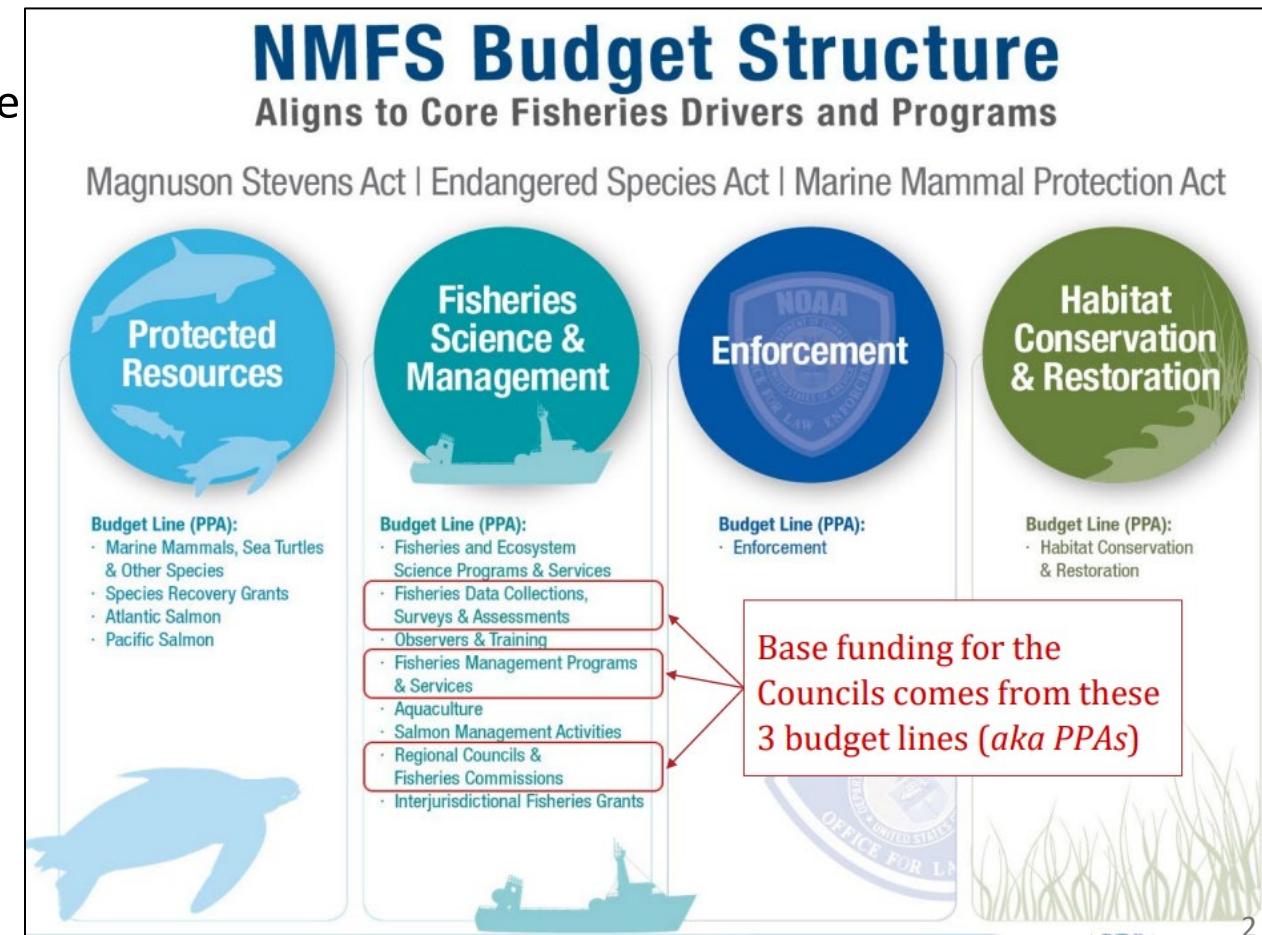
Cate O'Keefe

New England Fishery Management Council  
January 28, 2026  
Webinar



# Financial Update

- 2025 – 2029 Cooperative Agreement Award (\$21,690,804)
  - Funding contingent upon availability from Congress, discretion of Dept. of Commerce
  - CY25: 99% funds received for Jan – Dec 2025 (\$4,848,761)
  - CY26: no funds received to date
    - Continuing Resolution through Jan 30, 2026
    - FY26 DOC budget awaiting President's signature
    - Expected funding drops:
      - NOW(ish) – 25% (~ \$1.2 million)
      - Mid-March – 75% (~ \$4 million)
- Inflation Reduction Act (\$2,494,982)
  - 100% funds received
  - End date Mar 31, 2027
  - Request extension to Dec 31, 2027
- 2020-2024 No-Cost Extension (2025)
  - Complete



# NEFMC 2025-2029 Cooperative Award

Approved Budget - Pending Congressional approval and DOC discretion

	Year 1 Federal	Year 2 Federal	Year 3 Federal	Year 4 Federal	Year 5 Federal	Total
Personnel(non-research)	\$2,258,605	\$2,752,453	\$2,890,076	\$3,064,884	\$0	\$10,966,018
Fringe Benefits	\$933,588	\$1,218,667	\$1,288,199	\$1,376,382	\$0	\$4,816,836
Equipment	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$140,000
Travel	\$367,697	\$386,082	\$405,386	\$425,655	\$0	\$1,584,820
Supplies	\$64,420	\$67,641	\$71,023	\$74,574	\$0	\$277,658
Contractual	\$1,079,402	\$840,309	\$875,147	\$817,867	\$0	\$3,612,725
Other	\$70,960	\$74,008	\$72,210	\$75,569	\$0	\$292,747
<b>Total Direct Charges</b>	<b>\$4,874,672</b>	<b>\$5,339,160</b>	<b>\$5,602,041</b>	<b>\$5,874,931</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$21,690,804</b>
Indirect Charges	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Federal</b>	<b>\$4,874,672</b>	<b>\$5,339,160</b>	<b>\$5,602,041</b>	<b>\$5,874,931</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$21,690,804</b>
Non-Federal	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Realized funds = **\$4,848,761**  
99% funded  
Difference = **(-\$25,911)**

Subject to change annually  
Increase or decrease

# 2025 Budget Update – 12/31/25

	BUDGET CY-25	YTD \$ Spend	YTD % Spend	Carryover CY-26	NOTES
PERSONNEL	\$2,258,605	\$1,868,034	83%	\$390,571	Periods of vacancy; increased time on IRA
FRINGE BENEFITS	\$933,588	\$814,675	87%	\$118,913	Periods of vacancy; increased time on IRA
TRAVEL	\$367,697	\$209,228	57%	\$158,469	Uncertainty measures - webinars
EQUIPMENT <i>Capital &gt; \$10,000</i>	\$100,000	\$0	0%	\$100,000	Uncertainty measures - paused server replace - 2026
SUPPLIES	\$64,420	\$31,777	49%	\$32,643	Uncertainty measures - paused hardware - 2026
CONTRACTUAL	\$1,079,402	\$582,093	54%	\$497,309	
<i>OPERATIONAL (Prof Services, Lease/Rent, Admin)</i>	\$526,754	\$357,093	68%	\$169,661	Rescheduled IT/Website services - 2026
<i>PROGRAMMATIC (FMP Support, States, Reviews)</i>	\$552,648	\$225,000	41%	\$327,648	Uncertainty measures - increase 2026
OTHER	\$70,960	\$40,657	57%	\$30,303	
<i>Communications</i>	\$19,560	\$8,647	44%	\$10,913	Rescheduled VOIP upgrade - 2026
<i>Training &amp; Education</i>	\$20,600	\$4,374	21%	\$16,226	Uncertainty measures - increase 2026
<i>Insurance &amp; Taxes</i>	\$12,800	\$11,807	92%	\$993	On target
<i>Utilities</i>	\$18,000	\$15,829	88%	\$2,171	On target
<b>TOTAL BUDGET PROPOSAL</b>	<b>\$4,874,672</b>	<b>\$3,546,464</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>\$1,328,208</b>	
 CY25 Realized Funds	 \$4,848,761				
% Difference Proposed to Realized	99%				
CY25 Deficit/Surplus	(\$25,911)			\$1,302,297	Coverage for non-realised funds - Jan 2026 (~ 400K)

- Scenario planning for up to 30% reduction in Council budget – implemented uncertainty measures in CY25
- Expected budget stability in CY26 – unpause/reschedule equipment, IT, website, comms; increase contract support
- Carryover funds are currently supporting January costs – no CY26 funding received to date

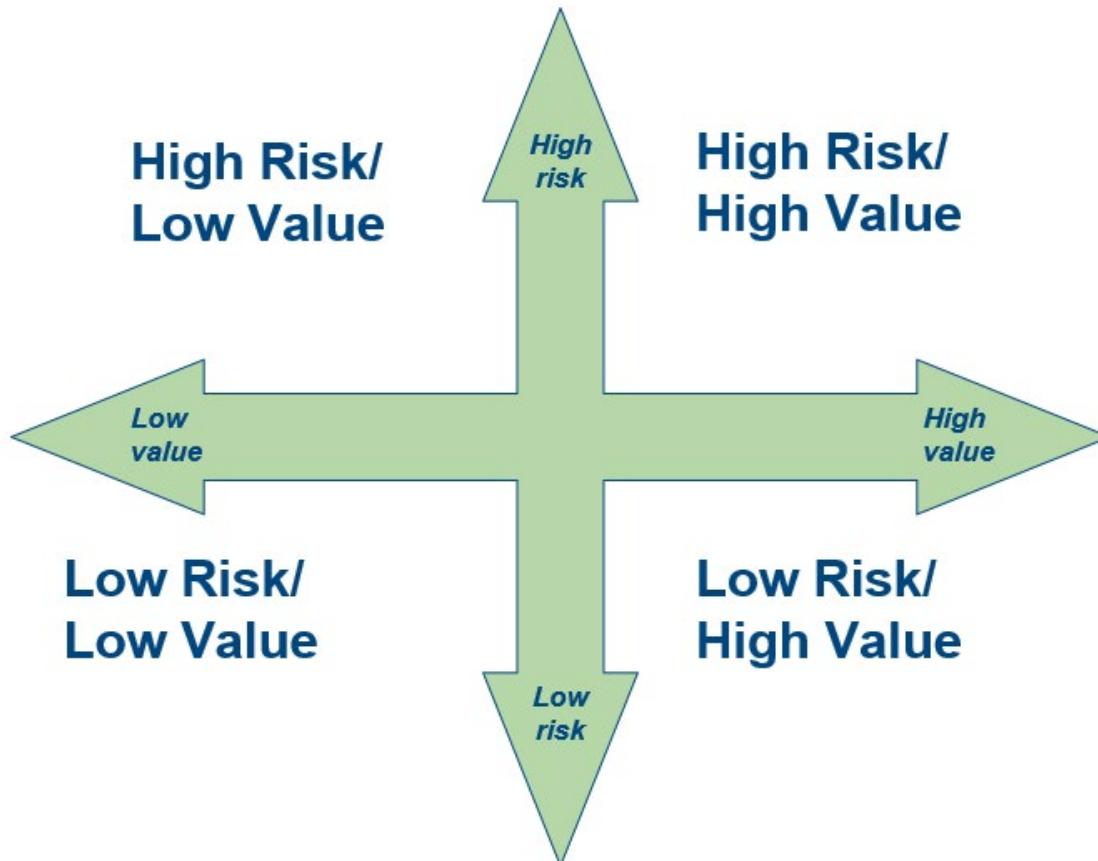
# Interagency Updates/Meetings

- Executive Directors Meeting – Dec 11, virtual
  - Letter to Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Assistant Administrator
    - Timing of Council action review and rulemaking
- Northeast Region Coordinating Council Intersessional – Jan 13, virtual
  - Budget and Capacity
    - Regional approach to Risk/Value Prioritization Matrix
  - 2026 Work Priorities
  - Stock Assessment Schedule and Process
    - Tentative approval for 2027 schedule to be revisited in May 2026
- Executive Directors and NOAA HQ Meeting – Jan 20, virtual
  - 2026 Budget Update
  - Risk/Value Prioritization Matrix
  - EO 14276

# NOAA Risk/Value Matrix Process

- Goal:
  - Provide framework for narrowing the scope of NMFS management and science
- Baseline Assumptions:
  - NMFS cannot continue to manage the 500+ stocks/complexes currently in FMPs
  - There will be impacts to changing how NMFS manages fisheries
    - NOAA staff, Councils, fishing industry and communities
  - Want to balance national consistency and interoperability with regional flexibility while maintaining accountability
  - Creation and application of regional Risk/Value matrices must be co-developed with Science Center, Regional Office, and Councils
    - Scientists involved with management changes; Managers involved with science changes

# NOAA Risk/Value Matrix Process



- **Value Categories**

- Commercial
- Recreational
- Social

- **Risk Categories**

- Relative stock status – B/B target
- Susceptibility to environmental phenomenon
  - Climate Vulnerability Analysis (CVA)
  - Probability & Susceptibility Analysis (PSA)
- Proven impact on ecosystem
- Effectiveness of management
  - Considered at end of process

# NOAA Risk/Value Matrix Process

- 9 Steps in Applying Matrix
  1. Articulate objectives – narrow scope of NOAA science and management
  2. **Regional Working Groups** – acquire data, quantify risk and value (qualitative as needed)
  3. Place stocks/fishery in matrix – identify potential management changes
  4. Review and adjust for cultural value, international, management effectiveness
  5. Prioritize stock assessments and analytical approaches
  6. Calculate data requirements
  7. Prioritize data collection needs
  8. Submit results to NMFS
  9. Concurrently:
    - a. Combine regional matrices to national matrix
    - b. Councils and Regional Offices identify FMP/database changes needed
- **Complete submission by April 3, 2026**

# Regional Risk/Value Matrix Process

- **Regional Working Group**

- NRCC initial discussion – January Intersessional Meeting
- Representation from all NRCC organizations
  - Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
  - Northeast Fisheries Science Center
  - New England Council
  - Mid-Atlantic Council
  - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Consider expertise and representation for value and risk categories
  - Management – policy and regulatory
  - Science – surveys, assessment, fishery information
  - Socioeconomics – risk policy, community impacts, cultural importance
- Confirm Working Group membership, develop work plan, complete matrix
  - Late February – Working Group and work plan
  - Spring/Summer – complete matrix and submit to NOAA (will not meet NOAA's April 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline)

# Executive Order 14276

- Second public comment period closed December 15, 2025
  - ~700 unique comments
  - Major categories – marine monuments, regulatory changes, interagency coordination
- Next Steps
  - Councils will receive list of public comments organized by Council and relevant topics
  - Council staff will review and determine if public comments require changes to previously submitted work plan
    - [September 30, 2025 Council letter to NOAA Assistant Administrator – EO14276 NEFMC Response](#)
  - If changes are required, Council to review at April meeting
  - Submit revised work plan (if needed) by April 30, 2026
  - NMFS will independently identify Secretarial actions and policy initiatives

# SSC White Hake Recommendation

- SSC met on Jan 21 by webinar to consider the following:
- Council Motion:
  - that the Council: 1) Preliminarily, approve white hake OFLs/ABCs for FY 2026-2030 as recommended by the SSC, and 2) Request the SSC consider FY 2026-2030 ABCs for white hake based on 75%  $F_{MSY}$ , taking into consideration the Council's Risk Policy and rebuilding plan. The Council accepts any revised SSC recommendations without discussion for adoption in Framework 72.
- Terms of Reference:
  - Consider the results of the most recent stock assessment for white hake and information provided by the Council's Groundfish Development Team (PDT). Reconsider prior SSC recommendations for FY 2026-2030 OFL and ABC for white hake based on 75%  $F_{MSY}$ , considering the Council's groundfish ABC control rule, Risk Policy, and white hake rebuilding plan.

# SSC White Hake Recommendation

- The SSC reconfirmed recommended OFL/ABC for white hake for FY 2026-2030 based on a fishing mortality rate of 70%  $F_{MSY}$  reflecting the current rebuilding plan.
- Recommendation:

Fishing Year	OFL (mt)	ABC (mt)
2026	1,943	1,393
2027	1,760	1,261
2028	1,640	1,174
2029	1,618	1,157
2030	1,698	1,215

# Reminder: Council Remands to the SSC

- From the Council Operations Handbook:
  - The Council may remand back to its Scientific and Statistical Committee the SSC's recommendations based on the following criteria:
    - (a) failure of the committee to follow the terms of reference provided to it by the Council;
    - (b) an error, in fact or omission, in the materials provided to the committee;
    - (c) an error in fact in the calculations, if any, undertaken by the Committee in developing an ABC recommendation; and
    - (d) failure of the committee to follow its standard operating procedures.

# Council Action Status

- Increased efficiencies: Council/GARFO staff – prelim, deemинг, final submission
- Decreased efficiencies: NMFS HQ – review, proposed, final rule publication

Council Action	Final Action	Prelim Submission	Reg Deeming	Final Submission	Proposed Rule	Public Comment	Final Rule
Groundfish - Framework 69	Dec 2024	1/9/2025	2/26/2025	3/11/2025	12/8/2025	3/16/2026	
Herring - Specs 2025-2027	Apr 2025	10/8/2024	4/22/2025	5/6/2025	6/25/2025	7/10/2025	12/11/2025
Management Flexibility Omnibus	Sep 2025	11/6/2025	1/23/2026				
Groundfish - Amendment 25 Rev.	Sep 2025	11/14/2025	12/5/2025				
Skates - Specs 2026-2028	Sep 2025	11/17/2025	1/9/2026				
Monkfish - Framework 17	Sep 2025	11/24/2025	12/19/2025	1/20/2026			
Habitat - EFH Framework	Sep 2025						
Scallop - Framework 40	Dec 2025	1/9/2026	1/9/2026				
Groundfish - Framework 72	Dec 2025						

# Questions

