



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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P. Weston Townsend, Chairman | Michael P. Luisi, Vice Chairman

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 31, 2024
To: Chris Moore, Executive Director
From: Brandon Muffley, Council staff
Subject: Inflation Reduction Act Funding – Mid-Atlantic Council Project Proposals

As part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed by Congress in 2022, \$20 million was made available to the regional councils to support the development and advancement of “climate-related fisheries management and implementation efforts.” NOAA Fisheries established two project proposal opportunities to distribute these funds to the councils. The first opportunity allocated \$375,000 to each council and grant applications detailing project proposals to be supported with this initial round of funds were due by December 31, 2023. The second funding opportunity would allocate the remaining \$17 million, up to a maximum of \$3.5 million to any one council, based on a competitive project proposal evaluation and ranking process with project proposals due by January 31, 2024.

On December 18, 2023, the Mid-Atlantic Council (Council) submitted the initial grant application which included detailed project descriptions, anticipated activities, and budget breakdowns for the two projects to be supported by the \$375,000. Those two projects included:

1. *An Operational Forecast to Reduce Bycatch of River Herring in the Mid-Water Trawl Fishery*. Total project costs - \$258,022
2. *Collaborative Strategies to Adapt Scup Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs) to Changing Ocean Conditions*. Total project costs - \$116,978

The Council submitted the secondary grant application on January 31, 2024 which included six project proposals that will evaluate changes to the existing management and governance framework and increase the Council’s adaptive capacity to respond and adapt to a changing climate (Table 1). These proposals, totaling \$2.125 million, are large, cross-Council initiatives that will involve engagement and input from management partners, science experts, and stakeholders to ensure greater support and successful outcomes.

NOAA Fisheries has indicated that funds associated with projects supported by the initial \$375,00 should be available by late February/early March 2024. Funds for approved projects as part of the secondary funding opportunity should be available in late spring/early summer (April/May) of 2024.

Table 1. List of project proposals, associated costs, and anticipated project timelines submitted by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to NOAA Fisheries for funding consideration as part of the secondary Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunity made available to all regional fishery management councils.

Number	Project Title	Project Cost (\$)	Proposed Project Timeline
B_1	Operationalizing outcomes of MAFMC/GARFO program review and improving the use and structure of Council committees	\$300,017	September 2024 - December 2026
B_2	Climate-ready updates to the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) source documents: life history and habitat characteristics, for federally managed fish in the Northeast	\$499,590	July 2024 - July 2026
B_3	Operationalizing ecosystem and habitat indicators to support climate ready fisheries management in the Mid-Atlantic	\$300,174	January 2025 - December 2026
B_4	Evaluating the data needs and management strategies to support climate-ready fisheries management	\$424,998	June 2024 - December 2026
B_5	Developing a process and indicators to evaluate stock distribution changes and governance issues	\$300,000	Fall 2024 - December 2026
B_6	Scenario planning progress evaluation, follow up summit, and priorities update	\$300,000	Fall 2025 - December 2026
Total			\$2,124,779