



## Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901

Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | www.mafmc.org

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

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

# MEMORANDUM

**Date:** December 11, 2023  
**To:** Chris Moore, Executive Director  
**From:** Brandon Muffley, Council staff  
**Subject:** Inflation Reduction Act Funding – proposed Mid-Atlantic Council project priorities

On October 25, 2023, NOAA Fisheries sent a [letter](#) to the regional councils informing them about the availability of \$20 million from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to support the development and advancement of “climate-related fisheries management and implementation efforts.” An initial \$375,000 will be made available to each Council in year 1 (i.e., 2024) and the remaining \$17 million will be allocated to the Councils, up to a maximum of \$3.5 million for any one Council, based on a competitive project proposal evaluation and ranking process. The larger funding opportunity would release funds to support approved projects from 2024-2026, with all approved projects to be completed by the end of 2027. Funds provided by NOAA Fisheries must focus on fisheries management and governance issues, and not on science and data needs.

Each Council is required to submit their grant applications by December 31, 2023. Grant applications need to include detailed information for projects that will be funded with the initial \$375,000. They also need to provide general information for projects that might be considered for potential future funding up to the \$3.5 million maximum. Submitting information for projects up to \$3.5 million does not guarantee funding but serves as a placeholder to help facilitate the transfer of funds in future years for selected projects. Detailed project proposals for the larger, secondary funding opportunity are due by January 31, 2024.

Council staff have identified nine potential projects – two for the initial \$375,000 and seven for the subsequent funding up to \$3.5 million (Table 1). Many of the project proposals address outcomes and action items identified from the East Coast scenario planning summit and all projects are aligned with IRA funding priorities. The initial two proposals are stock/fishery specific projects that seek to evaluate the challenges and identify potential management strategies to reduce discards and bycatch. The eight proposals for the secondary funding are larger, cross-Council projects that evaluate changes to the existing management framework and increase the Councils adaptive capacity to respond and adapt to a changing climate.

Council leadership and staff are working closely with the other East Coast Councils to

minimize overlap of potential projects and coordinate the cross-Council proposals. Staff are also working with the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission on those proposals that have joint management implications. Council staff will continue to develop the grant application and project proposals to ensure timely submission of all documents by the deadline(s).

**Table 1.** List of anticipated projects, and associated costs, to be submitted by the Mid-Atlantic Council to NOAA Fisheries for funding consideration as part of the Inflation Reduction Act funding made available to all regional fishery management councils.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Funding Pool</b>	<b>Anticipated Cost (\$)</b>
1	An operational forecast to reduce bycatch of River Herring in the mid-water trawl fishery	\$375k	\$260,000
2	Collaborative strategies to adapt Scup GRAs to changing ocean conditions	\$375k	\$115,000
3	Implementing the outcomes of MAFMC/GARFO program review; use and structure of Council committees	\$3.125 million	\$300,000
4	Updating Essential Fish Habitat source documents: life history and habitat characteristics, for federally-managed fish in the Northeast	\$3.125 million	\$600,000
5	Operationalizing ecosystem and habitat indicators to support climate ready fisheries management in the Mid-Atlantic	\$3.125 million	\$500,000
6	Evaluating the data needs and management strategies to support climate-ready fisheries management	\$3.125 million	\$450,000
7	Developing a process and indicators to evaluate stock distribution changes and governance issues	\$3.125 million	\$575,000
8	Characterization of federal and state permit landscape along East Coast	\$3.125 million	\$300,000
9	Scenario planning progress evaluation, follow up summit, and priorities update	\$3.125 million	\$400,000
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>