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Please share the following with the AAFA Board and Membership as it recounts items of interest that arose during the month of March and looks forward to certain events occurring in upcoming months.

Follow-up on February's upcoming events:

1. March 7 – 13 – Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Vancouver, Wa. While there was nothing specific to Albacore on the Council's Agenda – there was discussion centered on housekeeping amendments to the HMS Fishery Management Plan. A few of us expressed some concern over the inadequate amount of time we had to digest and review the proposed changes. After deliberation, the Council opted to slow down on this FMP Amendment and will revisit it during the June meeting.
2. March 14 – Port of San Diego Redevelopment meeting at Sea World/Hubbs. We were presented an updated version of a proposed layout of the updated Tuna Harbor. Based on feedback, the Developers will prepare and distribute a further modified layout soon.

Federal Register Items of Interest:

The following appeared in the Federal Register which may have an impact on AAFA vessels.

1. March 1 – Executive Order enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda. This requires administrative agencies (like NMFS) to review their regulations and make recommendations to streamline or remove unnecessary regulations. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-03-01/pdf/2017-04107.pdf>
2. March 6 – The EPA issued a notice of its intent to review, rescind or revise the Clean Water Rule. This is designed to address the uncertainty behind the phrase, “water of the United States” and what its meaning is. There have been a number of legal cases trying to define it – which has led to uncertainty to stakeholders regarding how the Clean Water Act applies to their activities. This could have profound impacts on the upcoming expiration of the small vessel moratorium in December of 2017. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-03-06/pdf/2017-04312.pdf>
3. March 14 – NMFS, in coordination with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, notices the preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the U.S. Pacific Island deep-set tuna longline fisheries. The analysis would include certain longline fisheries based in Hawaii, the U.S. west coast, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-03-14/pdf/2017-04996.pdf>

Other items of interest:

1. *Letter from Chairs of the Fishery Management Councils to Pres Trump.* The Councils highlight problems with use of the Antiquities Act to close off large patches of the ocean to commercial fishing activities. See - http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/A3_Sup_Att2_CCC_LtrToPresidentTrump_Mar2017BB.pdf.
2. *Letter from House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee to Pres Trump.* Highlighting the misuse of the Antiquities Act and its impact on several of the Nation's key fisheries. See - https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/03.07.17_ltr_to_potus_re_monuments.pdf
3. *Offshore Renewable Energy – BOEM/California Energy Commission Workshop.* On March 3rd a workshop was held on the viability of offshore energy off the California Coast. While it was informative, it still left many questions unanswered. There was the promise of future workshops. During public comment I, along with Noah Oppenheim (PCFFA) and Chris Kubiak (Morro Bay Cable Committee) expressed concern about the lack of outreach to those fisheries most likely to be impacted by a facility off the Morro Bay coast. See - <http://calenergycommission.blogspot.com/2017/03/california-partners-with-federal.html>
4. *US-Canada Albacore Treaty.* On March 14, David Hogan (US State Dept) sent an email which included the following. “– I am pleased to report that on Friday, March 10 the United States reached agreement in principle with Canada based on the U.S. proposal to extend the terms of the 2014-2016 regime for another 3 years, with no substantive changes. We also completed an exchange of letters (see attached) to document the catch attribution arrangement and it's evolution to a continuous arrangement.” Since receipt of this, we drafted and sent a letter to Mr. Hogan seeking clarification on the terms of the attribution language as it does not comply with what we agreed too when agreeing to support a future regime. At the time of this report, we have received no response from Mr. Hogan.
5. *State Fish and Wildlife Budgetary shortcomings.*
 - a. State of California. The DFW is currently operating with a \$20M/yr deficit. The Director of the DFW has proposed increasing landing fees (calling it a fee because that carries a lesser vote requirement in the State Legislature). Albacore currently has a landing tax of \$0.0013/lb; the Director's proposal will increase that to \$0.05/lb. This amounts to an increase of 3,846.13%. As you can imagine, this is causing concern within the State's various commercial fisheries. Other fisheries which may be of interest: Lobster is facing an 8,000% increase, Dungeness crab - 13,157% and swordfish - 2,000%. See - http://www.dof.ca.gov/Budget/Trailer_Bill_Language/documents/802CommercialLandingFees.pdf

Upcoming items of interest

1. April 6 - 11 – Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Sacramento, Ca. There are no HMS items on the Agenda; but there are other items which could impact the albacore fishery. For example – anchovy management will be on the Agenda and BOEM will be giving a presentation on offshore renewable energy.
2. April 18 – 20 – Highly Migratory Species Management Team meeting in La Jolla, Ca. Of the proposed topics, only one could impact the albacore fishery - the review of biological reference points for HMS stocks managed under the Council's Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species. These biological reference points, identified in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, include maximum sustainable yield, optimum yield, and status determination criteria. The HMSMT will initially focus on identifying these reference points for Pacific bluefin tuna.