



Introduction

On June 12, 2025, the California Fishermen's Resiliency Association (CFRA) was invited to contribute to the California 5th Climate Change Assessment report for the North Coast region. We thank the Cal Poly Humboldt leadership team for the opportunity to address our concerns and observations concerning climate impacts and state policy impacts to Northern California's fishing fleet and fishing communities. While the CFRA represents fifteen California Fishermen's organizations, no one entity can perfectly capture all experiences and opinions within a given industry or community.

Who we are

In January 2022, California Port Commercial Fishermen's Associations formed the California Fishermen's Resiliency Association (CFRA), a California Nonprofit Mutual Benefit Corporation. CFRA membership extends from Crescent City to Ventura California and includes fifteen separate fishermen's organizations (December 2024). The CFRA represents its members' interests and provides support at the local, state and federal levels, concerning spatial challenges to fishing grounds access, non-fishing ocean industrialization, ecological and environmental concerns, zoning and port infrastructure and impact mitigation. The CFRA represents all fisheries and gear types through its member associations.

The California Fishermen's Resiliency Association serves as a point of contact and negotiator for fishermen with developers of offshore wind power, telecommunication and energy transmission subsea cables, and offshore mineral extraction projects.

The term *fishermen* is used inclusive of both our fishing men and women.

What Climate impacts do fishermen on the North Coast face?

Lack of real-time management and infrastructure loss to adapt to climate change.

Fish move and fishermen move with them. Generations of fishermen have successfully adapted to short- and long-term changes in the ocean environment. El Niño events in 1982, 1986, 1997, and 2014/2015 resulted in the northward shift of many California Commercial fisheries. What did not shift was California fisheries regulations and critical fishing port infrastructure necessary to adapt to the changes in our ocean.

A perfect example of these problems occurred in 2014 when warm water moved vast quantities of market squid (*Loligo opalescens*) from south and central California to the Eureka area. Local fishermen observed huge squid schools for months, but regulations prohibited any local fishermen to take even one squid. The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), passed in 1998, advocates for “the principle of adaptive management”, but “the MLMA does not provide guidance on implementing adaptive management”. Since 1998, the Department of Fish and Wildlife in conjunction with the California Fish and Game Commission has only been effective at closing fisheries and access. There is still no real-time adaptive management to address climate/environmental species shift in a meaningful time frame.

When the news of commercial quantities of market squid off Humboldt County reached the Southern California limited entry seine fleet, high market demand motivated two major Southern California fish processors and five purse seiners to mobilize to Humboldt County to fish squid. The loss of shoreside processing infrastructure (the closure of Eureka ice and cold storage in 2008) resulted in forty semi-truck and trailer rigs a day to transport flake ice from Salinas to Eureka and forty trucks per night trucking squid back to Monterey County for freezing. The northern shift of the squid resource resulted in five million pounds of squid landings in Eureka over a two-and-a-half-month period. Lacking any capacity to make ice and the loss of large-scale freezing infrastructure resulted in a huge carbon footprint for this fishing, little or no local employment for fishermen and no discernible shift in state attitudes for re-establishing modern cold storage and freezing facilities on the North Coast. Where is the forward-looking response in dealing with climate change in relation to Northern California commercial fishing port infrastructure?

Most recently (2024), Governor Gavin Newsom has declared the California/West Coast albacore fishery a disaster, due to the lack of landings. Albacore is frozen at sea. Frozen albacore deliveries in California require a cold storage facility capable of storing tens of thousands of tons of frozen fish. No such facilities presently exist. Frozen albacore is delivered to Westport, WA.

Q: What state climate policies are (or will be) adversely affecting fishing communities?

1. 30x30 strategic plan/Offshore wind (OSW) expansion — California has the most protected coast and ocean of the United States. California also has the most regulated fisheries. The plan to increase marine protected areas combined with the anticipated loss of 5000 additional square miles of fishing grounds to OSW development and cable lanes will jeopardize California's fishing communities' ability to survive. MPA's have no proven effect to prevent warming of ocean waters. A far more effective effort to protect and restore California's coastal oceans is to curtail point and non-point pollution sources from our cities.
2. Ocean industrialization in the form of wind power, wave energy, tidal energy and water pressure power generation - The California Energy Commission is advocating for all of the above experimental energy projects. Fishermen and others have these concerns:
 - a. Will the state remove OSW projects when it is seen that extracting wind energy has reduced upwelling and ocean productivity — probably not.
 - b. Who will clean up these projects when they fail physically or economically? No one.
 - c. Can these projects really be carbon neutral? Before any of these experimental projects go forward will anyone accurately and truthfully assess the total carbon footprint to mine, smelt, fabricate, paint, transport, maintain and decommission by removal, all of this massive equipment?

What programs or initiatives have fishermen developed in response to climate and state policy impacts?

Northern California fishermen, at the repeated requests from state agencies, formed the California Fishermen's Resiliency Association in 2022. Incorporated as a 501 c 6 non-profit mutual benefit organization, the CFRA serves as a point of contact and negotiator with non-fishing OSW developers, telecommunications and energy export transmission cable and ocean industrialization projects and with state and federal agencies. The CFRA inclusively and democratically represents all fishing gear types and fisheries through its 15 member associations from Crescent City to Ventura, CA. The CFRA is structured in such a manner as to encourage statewide co-operative policies through the negotiation and operation of industry-to-industry agreements. The CFRA is primarily funded by the Ocean Protection Council, along with a few other smaller grants and donations.

<https://www.californiafishermensresiliencyassociation.com>

Needs and Guidance to the State

California fishermen, operating through the CFRA need:

- A. Serious continued state support through state permitting conditions to require negotiation and cooperation between the CFRA and non-fishing ocean users via industry-to-industry contractual agreements overseen by the Coastal Commission
- B. Access to state and federal infrastructure funding to repair and replace major ice, freezing and cold storage facilities for both coast fishing communities and the public at large.
- C. Stop proposing and implementing state policies that disempower California fishing communities. Instead, embrace the legal guidance provided by the California Legislature contained in SB286 (2023 McGuire) and, direction given by the California Coastal Commission contained in Consistency Determination reports which advocate for industry-to-industry agreements between a broadbased fishermen's legal entity and OSW developers. Please stop lip service to fishermen's associations involved in the process only to ignore or diminish fishing industry concerns over direct and indirect climate impacts.

Thank you on behalf of the California Fishermen's Resiliency Association Board of Directors

Ken Bates and Linda Hildebrand, Executive Co-directors

CFRA

