

E.O. 14276 Public Input

189th Caribbean Fishery Management Council Regular Meeting

The Buccaneer Hotel, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

April 22 2026



Timeline for input on E.O. 14276

- August 27 2025: NMFS Requests Council input
- September 23 2025: CFMC letter to Mr. Piñero addressing priorities
- December 1 2025: Public comment period extended
- December 15 2025: Public comment period ended
- April 22 2026: CFMC Review Public Comments Received -Action
- **April 30 2026: CFMC Revisions of Comments Submitted**
- The comments pertinent to the CFMC during the public comment period (7 received) addressed the following issues:

Priority Ranking CFMC and Additional Comments

Priority Number	Action type (e.g. Changes to Regulations, Orders, Guidance Documents, Other Similar Agency Actions)	Ongoing	Additional Input
1	Regulatory (Amendment) - Review species currently managed under the Puerto Rico Fishery Management Plan to determine if any species are no longer in need of federal conservation and management.	YES	Move Spiny Lobster management to territory management (provides feedback on SEDAR process including social, cultural, economic aspects of process)
1	Regulatory (Amendment) - Review species currently managed under the St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Management Plan to determine if any species are no longer in need of federal conservation and management.		
1	Regulatory (Amendment) - Review species currently managed under the St. Croix Fishery Management Plan to determine if any species are no longer in need of federal conservation and management.		Remove lobster from federal management

Priority Ranking CFMC and Additional Comments

Priority Number	Action type (e.g. Changes to Regulations, Orders, Guidance Documents, Other Similar Agency Actions)	Ongoing	Additional Input
2	Revision of Compatible and Non-compatible Regulations Between Federal and State Governments (Regulatory Amendment)	Ongoing - input from local governments	Have the North and West portion of the Buck Island Reef National Monument* open at the 33-fathom curve for deep water snapper fishing and fishing for pelagic species
1	Review possible redundancy in regulations of seasonally closed areas, no take areas, and seasonal closures for spawning fish species (Regulatory).		Implement seasonal closures for spawning aggregations instead of year-round Closed Areas
1	Review effectiveness of current MPAs to determine which are effective and which can be eliminated. (Regulatory - Amendment)/ Science Data collection for monitoring MPAs	Ongoing: Collaborative surveys with fishers at Tourmaline	Open Tourmaline and Abrir La Sierra Banks (red hind do not aggregate there); maintain protected areas that are juvenile habitats

*Not CFMC Jurisdiction- No Take regulations DOI

Priority Ranking CFMC and Additional Comments

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3	Collect recreational data in the US Caribbean (Science)		implement recreational fishing license
1	Regulatory (Amendment) - Revise the accountability measure for the Caribbean Spiny Lobster in Puerto Rico. Science/Data collection: survey that samples individuals larger than those being caught in the fisheries to confirm there are large individuals in the population (SSC and Fishers' recommendation).		

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1	Revise accountability measures for managed pelagic stocks (Regulatory Amendment)	YES	Allow fishing for pelagics during the seasonal closure for red hind at the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of Lang Bank on St. Croix from the 33 fathom dept seaward	Fast track the National Permit process for the USVI to install 6 fish aggregating devices (FADs) in the EEZ of St. Croix and 6 in the EEZ of St. Thomas*
1	Consider alternative approaches for Annual Catch Limits (Regulatory)	SEDAR 103	Carryover unused annual catch limits (except conch)	include (and pay) elite fishermen for their expert knowledge and include this in stock assessments, and avoid use of single species models meant for temperate ecosystems (instead use models for multi-species tropical fisheries and include an estimate of effort)

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1	Conduct queen conch population assessment in the U.S. Caribbean (Regulatory Amendment)		Remove queen conch from ESA listing
1	Assess commercial and recreational fishing data to determine fishing effort in the U.S. Caribbean. Develop methodology to determine fishing effort by gear type as needed. (Regulatory; Data collection)		
1	Enforce import regulations for spiny lobster and queen conch		Address lack of enforcement of fisheries regulations
1	Prioritize socio-economic data needs for decision-making in the U.S. Caribbean fisheries (Science/Data Collection)	YES	re-evaluate SEDAR (especially social and economic elements)
	Policy and Funding - Implement policies that would help domestic spiny lobster and queen conch products compete against imports.		for seafood imported to US - implementing a tariff could fund upgrades for US fishermen (gear, boats, facilities) and create a more competitive industry

Additional comments

- Use SK grant to establish a sustainable economy based on the invasive lionfish (study in 2014 showed this was feasible but it was never implemented)
- Recommend creation and implementation of a culturally grounded fisher's assistance plan that will provide training on gear modifications, regulations to reduce bycatch and habitat damage and issue EFPs for pilot programs and research.
- Mentions occupational development (training, certification support, mentorship and apprentices for next-generation fishers), habitat preservation incentives (data collection rewards, eco compliance bonuses, science partnerships), individual digital profiles.

Additional Comments

- Require all restaurants serving seafood to disclose the source of the seafood; food stamps, financial support for local not imported seafood