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Tab A, No. 8

# Advancing Equity and Environmental Justice in Underserved Communities of the Southeast Region

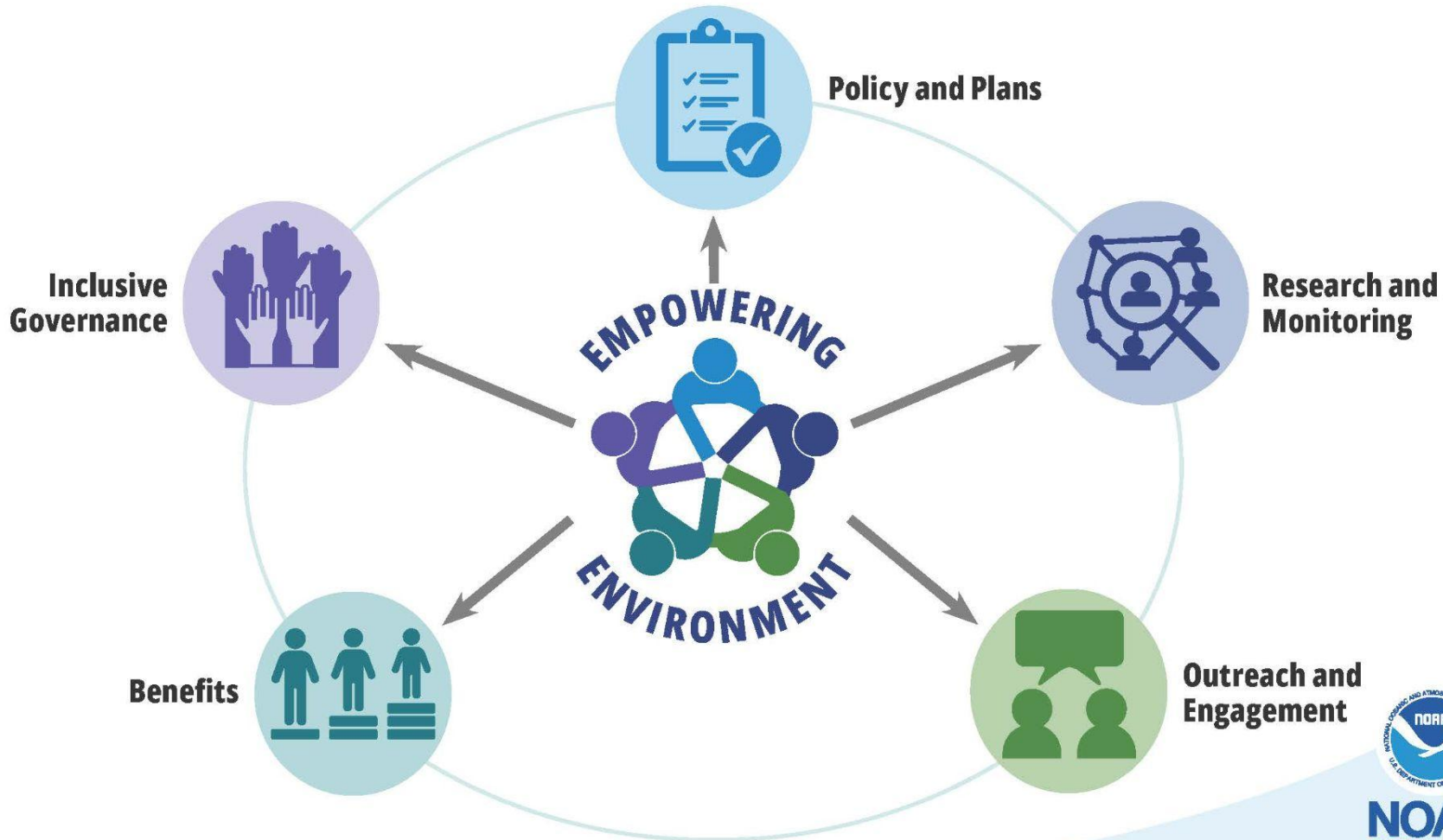
October 25, 2023

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

# NOAA Fisheries' EEJ Strategy

- Framework to incorporate EEJ into our daily activities
- Requires step-down regional implementation plans
- Seeks to remove barriers to EEJ
- Seeks to promote equity in all we do





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# Southeast Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan: Engagement Strategies

- Eight focus groups with underserved community members and liaisons
  - Brownsville and Kemah, Texas
  - Gretna and Houma, Louisiana
  - Biloxi, Mississippi
  - Bayou La Batre, Alabama
  - St. Petersburg and Key West, Florida
- Scoping in Panama City, Florida
- Public request for information (closed September 30, 2023)
- Virtual multilingual listening session (conducted September 28, 2023)



# Who We've Engaged



- Ethnicities: Hispanic, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, African American, Native American, White
- Gender/Sexual Orientation: male and female, LGBTQ
- Age: young adults to retirees
- Employment: NGOs, commercial fishers and vessel owners, charter captains and vessel owners, fishing crew members, fish processing workers, community organizers

# Key Focus Group Takeaways

- Further diversify communications and outreach platforms to more effectively meet underserved communities where they are
  - Location
  - Timing
  - Education Level
  - Technological Capability
  - Language
- Increase presence in communities and leverage support of trusted and knowledgeable community liaisons (Sea Grant, port agents, community NGOs) where applicable
  - Recognize / acknowledge the value of community liaisons
  - Institutionalize communication mechanisms with community liaisons
- Understand cultural and historical context

# Key Focus Group Takeaways

- For many, the situation is dire
  - Shrimp fishers report there will be no community left to save if imports are not addressed immediately
  - IFQ fishers who do not hold shares report they are being priced out of the fishery
  - Related impacts on ancillary businesses combined with loss of fishing infrastructure are breaking down the social fabric of communities



# Key Focus Group Takeaways

- Underserved communities do not feel decision makers understand, consider, or represent their perspective and viewpoints
- Underserved communities feel exploited by industry and federal projects (OSW, LNG, diversions)
- Underserved communities are depending on us to partner with each other and other state and federal agencies to find solutions



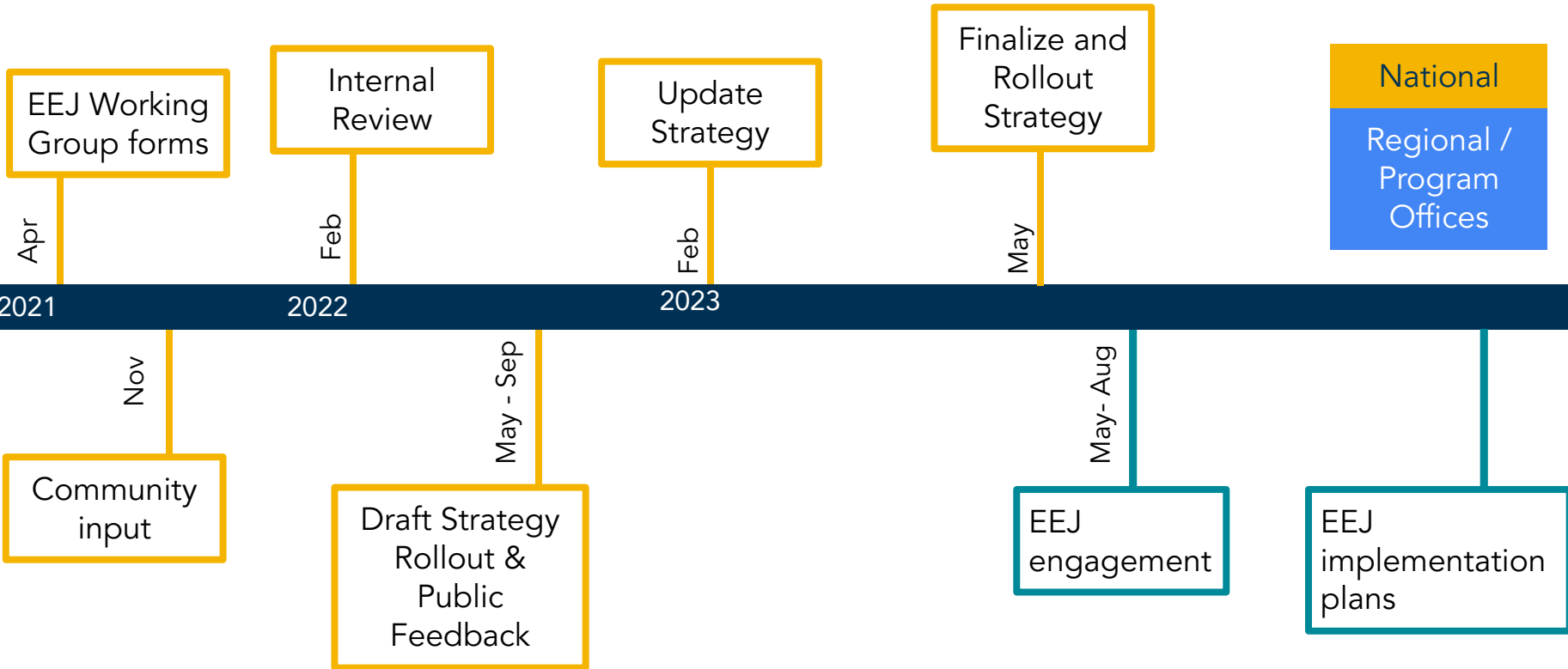


# Request for Information

- 20 comments
  - 17 individual
  - 3 organizations
- Feedback
  - 55% expressed opposition
  - 25% expressed support
  - 20% neither supported nor opposed; suggestions only
- Open and honest communication critical to address discomfort and fear about what this means and desired outcome



# Next Steps

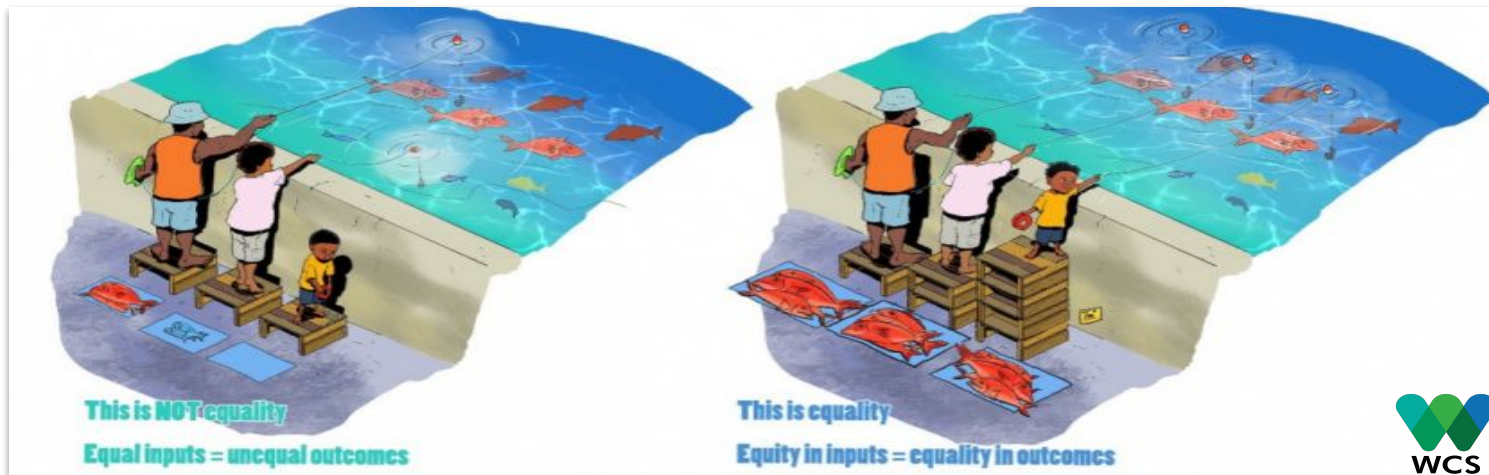


THANK YOU!

EXTRA SLIDES

# Key Terms: Equity

*Equity* means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.



Definition from Executive Order 13985.



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# Key Terms: Environmental Justice

*Environmental Justice* is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies including but not limited to:

- Equitable protection from environmental and health hazards
- Equitable access to decision-making processes
- Equitable opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized



Definition from the Environmental Protection Agency.



# Key Terms: Underserved Communities

*Underserved communities* have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.



These include geographic communities as well as populations sharing a particular characteristic such as: women and girls; Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons\*, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; persons facing discrimination or barriers related to gender identity; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Definition based on Executive Order 13985



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