



American Samoa Fisheries Task Force

Public Meeting Report #1

Meeting Date: July 30, 2026

Overview

The American Samoa Fisheries Task Force held its inaugural meeting to begin developing coordinated recommendations for the Governor on fisheries development, economic sustainability, federal and regional fisheries policy, commercial and small-boat fisheries, and the long-term strength of American Samoa's fishing industry.

The meeting focused on establishing the Task Force's initial priorities and identifying work that should move forward before the next meeting. Members emphasized that the Task Force should remain action-oriented, with major issues connected to a clear next step, responsible workstream, and appropriate decision-making authority.

Fisheries Economic Conditions

The Task Force discussed rising operating costs affecting American Samoa's fisheries sector, with particular attention to fuel and other expenses affecting fishing vessels, processing, transportation, and supporting businesses.

Members recognized that these pressures affect different parts of the fisheries economy in different ways, including commercial fleets, small-boat fishermen, processing operations, and fishing communities outside Tutuila.

The Task Force agreed to establish a Fuel and Operating-Cost Working Group to examine practical options for reducing or offsetting these pressures.

Initial work will include:

- Identifying the major operating-cost pressures affecting the fisheries sector.
- Evaluating actions that may be available to the American Samoa Government.
- Identifying potential federal assistance or policy options.
- Examining longer-term opportunities to improve fuel availability, infrastructure, efficiency, and competitiveness.
- Separating recommendations according to which level of government or organization has authority to act.



South Pacific Albacore and Regional Fisheries Negotiations

The Task Force reviewed American Samoa's interests in ongoing regional discussions concerning South Pacific albacore.

Members emphasized the importance of protecting the operating needs and future viability of the American Samoa-based longline fishery while maintaining coordination with the broader United States delegation and Pacific regional partners.

The Task Force supported continued development of an American Samoa position paper for use in upcoming regional fisheries discussions and negotiations.

The Task Force also recognized the importance of continued participation in technical and preparatory workshops leading into major regional fisheries meetings.

Federal Fishing Access and Regulatory Issues

The Task Force discussed federal fishing-access issues affecting American Samoa and the need for continued coordination with federal fisheries agencies and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

The discussion included the importance of ensuring that federal fisheries measures recognize American Samoa's unique economic dependence on fishing, geographic isolation, local fishing communities, and the relationship between fishing access and the viability of the Territory's tuna economy.

An options paper will be developed to support further Task Force review of federal fishing-access matters and possible next steps.

Development of the 90-Day Strategic Framework

The Task Force began organizing its work toward an initial strategic framework for submission to the Governor.

Five proposed areas of work were identified:

1. Economic and Market Analysis
2. Federal and Regional Engagement
3. Regulatory and Policy Coordination
4. Fisheries Development Strategy
5. Community and Industry Outreach



The strategic framework will identify priority actions, appropriate government or industry partners, responsible workstreams, and near-term recommendations for consideration by the Governor.

Members are continuing to provide input between meetings on committee participation, priority issues, and leadership responsibilities.

Territorial and Small-Boat Fisheries

The Task Force identified territorial and small-boat fisheries development as an important area for continued attention.

Future work is expected to include issues such as:

- Fuel affordability and access.
- Fishing infrastructure.
- Fish aggregating devices.
- Training and workforce development.
- Financing and vessel improvement.
- Market access.
- Support for fishing communities in Manu'a and other areas outside central Tutuila.
- Opportunities to strengthen participation by American Samoans in commercial fisheries.

These issues will be incorporated into future Task Force meetings and the 90-day strategic framework.

Local Fisheries Markets

The Task Force also discussed the need to better understand how imported and foreign-landed seafood affects local fishermen and the Territory's seafood market.

Before recommending any policy changes, the Task Force intends to improve the available information concerning market conditions, seafood flows, local fishing opportunities, and potential effects on consumers and fishing businesses.

Administrative and Follow-Up Actions

Following the inaugural meeting, members were asked to review the draft meeting summary and provide additional input through a short follow-up process.

The follow-up work addresses:

- Confirmation of the meeting record.
- Task Force leadership and administrative roles.



- Participation in the Fuel and Operating-Cost Working Group.
- Committee and workstream assignments.
- Federal priorities for the coming 90 days.
- Confirmation of regional fisheries policy positions.
- Future meeting frequency and work planning.

This follow-up process will help finalize the Task Force's internal organization and move the first set of work products toward completion.

Next Steps

Before the next meeting, the Task Force will continue work on:

- Fuel and operating-cost recommendations.
- The South Pacific albacore position paper.
- Federal fishing-access options.
- Committee and workstream organization.
- Development of the 90-day strategic framework.
- Identification of additional fisheries development and workforce priorities.

The Task Force will continue to focus on practical recommendations that strengthen American Samoa's fishing industry, support local fishermen and fishing communities, protect access to fisheries resources, and improve the Territory's ability to engage effectively in federal, regional, and international fisheries decisions.

