GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE

Naples Grand Beach Resort Naples, Florida

June 5, 2017

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Tom Frazer.....Florida
John Sanchez.....Florida
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Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Anna Beckwith.....SAFMC
Eric Brazer.....Gulf Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance
J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL

Traci Floyd.....MDMR
Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
Chad Hanson.....Pew Charitable Trusts
Scott Hickman.....CFA, Galveston, TX
Mark Hubbard.....FL
Alison Johnson.....Oceana
Bill Kelly.....FKCFA
Rich Malinowski.....NMFS
Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
Betty Staugler.....Sea Grant
Jessica Stephen.....NMFS

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The Sustainable Fisheries Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the Naples Grand Beach Resort, Naples, Florida, Monday morning, June 5, 2017, and was called to order by Chairman David Walker.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

CHAIRMAN DAVID WALKER: I would like to call to order the Sustainable Fisheries Committee. Members are Greg Stunz, Patrick Banks, Roy Crabtree, Dale Diaz, Tom Frazer, John Sanchez, Ed Swindell, and the staff person is Mr. Atran.

The first item of business is Adoption of the Agenda, Tab E, Number 1. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

The next item of business is Approval of the April 2017 Minutes, Tab E, Number 2. Any changes or revisions to the minutes? The minutes are approved. We're on to the Action Guide and Next Steps, Tab E, Number 3, and Mr. Atran.

MR. STEVEN ATRAN: We just have three items on the agenda. The first is we're going to receive a presentation from Florida Sea Grant on their activities with respect to barotrauma in fish.

That will be given by Captain Betty Staugler, and that will lead into my discussion of a preliminary options paper on a framework action to require possession of descending devices or venting tools onboard fishing vessels possessing reef fish. Then Ryan will be reviewing an options paper for potentially allowing a carryover of unharvested red snapper quota, and I'm not sure if it's red snapper or all species in general.

The presentation doesn't require any action on your part. It's just informational input. On the descending tool and venting tool options paper, we are asking for guidance on if you want us to proceed or if you want any changes to the options paper. Then it's the same with the carryover of uncaught quota. We'll be asking for some guidance on how to proceed with that, and that's pretty much it.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Okay. Does anybody have any comments or questions? Seeing none, we're going to move on to the Florida Sea Grant Presentation on Barotrauma, Tab E, Number 4, and Captain Betty Staugler.

FLORIDA SEA GRANT PRESENTATION ON BAROTRAUMA

CAPTAIN BETTY STAUGLER: I am going to briefly describe two surveys, stakeholder surveys, that were conducted through the University of Florida to get at stakeholder knowledge, perceptions, and intentions related to barotrauma mitigation.

The first survey was conducted by Florida Sea Grant back in 2014, and it was done via email. We used a random sample of recreational anglers from the Florida fishing license database. That could have included guides, but we did not break that out as an independent sector, and so they are aggregated together. It was done for the Gulf and Atlantic as a whole, and we did try to piece out and see if there were any regional differences in the data, but we did not find anything that stuck out, and so the analysis was done for the entire state of Florida.

The second survey was done by U.S. Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, under the direction of Dr. Kai Lorenzen, and that survey was completed for the Gulf Council. It was also focused on Florida, and it included both the Gulf and the Atlantic, and it was parceled out for commercial fishers, recreational anglers, and guides, and so those are all analyzed separately. The surveys went out in late 2015 and 2016, and, in some cases, the demographics, where there were differences in the Gulf and the Atlantic, they were pulled out in the manuscript, but the bulk of the analysis is combined for the State of Florida.

The Florida Sea Grant barotrauma survey, the objectives were to develop a better understanding of anglers' understanding regarding the science of barotrauma, if they could recognize those, whether they were aware of the different barotrauma mitigation tools, whether they were using any tools to mitigate barotrauma, and then we wanted to see what kind of gaps in information, as extension agents, we could fill in through education and outreach and how they preferred to receive their education. This survey is published as a Florida Sea Grant document, which is available for download on our Florida Sea Grant website.

The Fisheries and Aquatic Barotrauma survey, that is currently in manuscript, submitted to *Fisheries Science*, and the objectives of that study were to predict and explain fisher intentions to use venting tools and/or descending devices based on this theory of planned behavior, which looked at attitudes towards a method, subjective norms, or the perceived social pressure to use barotrauma mitigation, and then perceived controls, which was confidence in their level of ability to use

the devices.

My mode of operation is to go through the Florida Sea Grant survey first and show you the results. Where there is some overlapping information with the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey, I will interject those, and then I will finish up with the Fisheries and Aquatic Science survey.

With the Sea Grant survey, or actually with both surveys, we had a series of introductory questions aimed at paring down the sample size to only those who would potentially experience barotrauma. Then, from there, we asked them if they had experienced barotrauma while out fishing, and we avoided the use of the term "barotrauma". We referred to it as floaters, or fish that couldn't get back down, so that we wouldn't intentionally alienate people who may not be familiar with the term.

When we asked that question, 71 percent of our respondents said that they did experience barotrauma, and that was pretty consistent with the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey, in which 69 percent of recreational anglers and 67 percent of commercial fishers also indicated they had experienced barotrauma.

Next, we wanted to see if respondents were able to recognize the signs of barotrauma, and so the table on the bottom shows where we asked them to -- It was a true or false question to let us know which were visible signs of barotrauma, and, in general, respondents were able to identify those signs, the most notable one being the organs sticking out the mouth, and we didn't tell them what the organ was, because we wanted to know if they knew what that organ was. You can see here that only 34 percent of respondents did know what that organ was.

The next question was do you use any type of gear or device to help floaters return back down to depth, and 89 percent said they did. The Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey limited their responses to in the last year, and 77 to 80 percent of respondents said they had used barotrauma mitigation in the last year.

For the 11 percent on the Sea Grant survey that said they did not use any gear, we asked them why, and 47 percent said they were not aware of any gear or devices that helped fish return to depth, and then there were a variety of other reasons.

Next, we asked them if they used a venting tool, and this went

to the 89 percent that did do something, and 92 percent said that they did use a venting tool, and that was pretty consistent with the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey.

We then wanted to know if they were using the venting tool correctly, and so we asked them a couple of questions to get at that. This question that you see up here asks them to select the option that best described how to use a venting tool, and the correct answer is highlighted in the yellowish-orange, and only 51 percent were able to accurately select the option.

What I don't have up here is a heat map that we showed them that asked them to put a mouse clicker on the fish where you would insert the needle, and 63 percent were able to accurately describe or select where you would insert that needle, and so lots of outreach opportunities.

Then we asked them how confident they were that they were correctly venting the fish and how confident they were that venting helped the fish survive, and you see some fairly good confidence, but not overconfidence, in both of these responses.

The last question that we asked pertaining to venting tools was if respondents felt that they needed more information on the proper use of venting tools, and this went to all respondents who practice barotrauma mitigation, regardless of whether they vented or descended, and 63 percent indicated that they felt that they needed more information.

The next question asked if they used descending gear or recompression gear to help floaters return to depth, and 9 percent indicated that they did, and so there was 1 percent overlap with respondents using both gear. In the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey, 14 to 27 percent used descending gear, and there was 46 percent overlap with the gear.

For those 91 percent that indicated that they didn't use descending gear, we asked they why, and you see the two most commonly-selected responses were that they were already venting fish or that they didn't know what the fish descenders were.

In terms of confidence that they were properly descending fish and that the gear was helping their fish survive, there was some pretty good confidence, and, again, we asked if they needed more information, and, again, this went to all respondents who did something, and 70 percent indicated that they felt that they needed more information.

We then asked what preferred methods that they would use to receive information, and so this is for venting tools, and we had asked them a whole litany of -- We gave them a whole litany of choices, from word of mouth to traditional workshops to fishing expos, and these were the top four that were selected. This is for descending gear, and you see the same four selected.

We're now onto the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey, and recall that, with this, we are using the three variables to predict and explain the use of barotrauma mitigation, and so we're starting out with attitude, and for this, respondents were given five statements, and they were asked to select their level of agreement with the statements, and you can see, on the first two statements, there is pretty good level of agreement, and these had to do with use of a venting tool or descending gear helps a fish return to depth and that it will improve survival of the fish.

Where there was a little bit of divergence was in the last three statements, and these had to do with ease of use and the expense of the equipment, with those respondents preferring venting tools indicating that they disagreed that venting tools were difficult to use or took a lot of time or were expensive, whereas those respondents that were using descending gear were a little bit more on the fence regarding those three items.

Now we're on to perceived control, and perceived control is kind of that social pressure that respondents would experience, more of those external factors, if you will, and so six questions, or six statements, were provided. I am confident in -- Sorry. I am too far.

These are social norms. Six statements were provided, and these were fishers like me use venting tools, other fishers expect me to use venting tools, fisheries managers expect me to use venting tools, and other fishers think venting tools can improve the survival of fish, and I feel social pressure to use venting tools, and then the same statements for descending gear.

Again, they were asked to pick their level of agreement, and you can see here that respondents felt more subjective norms associated with venting tools than they did for descending gear.

In terms of perceived controls, this got at their confidence in their ability to use the tools, and you see some pretty good confidence, on the bar on the left-hand side, they are pretty confident in their ability to use, and this was pretty consistent with the Sea Grant survey, except for the tools were

flipped, in that there was more confidence in using the descending tools in the Sea Grant survey and more confidence in using the venting tools in the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences survey.

Where there was quite a bit of divergence though was under the third bar over, where they were asked if they felt that they needed more information on how to use venting tools properly and descending tools properly, and you see here that 6 to 17 percent indicated that they needed more information on venting tools, and 9 to 21 percent indicated they needed more information on descending gear, whereas, in the Sea Grant survey, you may recall that it was 63 percent that needed more information on venting tools and 70 percent needed more information on descending gear.

Part of the reason for the divergence in those two studies could be that, in this particular study, only those who currently vented were asked that question, whereas, in the Sea Grant survey, all respondents who practice barotrauma mitigation were asked the question, and so we would have gotten some respondents who used descending devices who were responding to the venting tool question in the Sea Grant survey.

Next, respondents were provided two statements that got at intention to use devices, and so those statements said, the next time I experience barotrauma, I intend to vent, or, the next time I experience barotrauma, I intend to use descending devices, and 81 to 86 percent of respondents said they intend to vent the next time they experience barotrauma, and 20 to 27 percent intend to use descending devices.

Here, you're looking at multiple linear regression showing the relative ability of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived controls to predict the intention to use venting tools or descending gear across sectors, and you see, where I have it outlined, these subjective norms indicate -- The subjective norms predicted the highest intention, or the highest increase in intention, to use both venting tools and descending gear across sectors, and it was always a strong predictor of intentions.

This is some sources of fisheries information that was collected in the fisheries and aquatic sciences survey, and you see they're pretty similar to the Sea Grant survey, except for those word-of-mouth sources. Other anglers, boat captains, and tackle shops came out kind of strong in this survey, where they weren't as high in the Sea Grant survey.

The last question that was asked got at attitudes towards regulations, and, again, they were provided with four statements and asked to provide their level of agreement, and what you see here is that there's -- Most respondents were fairly neutral to slightly agreeable towards regulations in regards to barotrauma mitigation, although they were slightly in disagreement in regards to a regulation that would require a specific barotrauma mitigation tool, and so it would appear as though more choice may be preferred.

There is lots of additional findings, and I'm not going to go through this, but I just wanted to make sure that you guys had this. It was stuff that I pulled out of the manuscript that got into some of the discard rates and also that there was a perception that more fishers were using the barotrauma mitigation when it was required.

Real quickly, some take-home messages are, in general, respondents are pretty familiar with the signs of barotrauma, but there's lots of educational opportunities in regards to the proper use of some of these devices. Emphasizing barotrauma mitigation as a social norm is predicted to have the greatest impact on barotrauma mitigation, and those can be reinforced through opinion leaders or fisheries forums and different regulations.

We do think anglers may be overconfident in their ability to use barotrauma mitigation, and so some outreach efforts may be needed, and, of course, we, from the survey, recognize that fishing magazines, TV shows, websites, and YouTube videos are a popular place for respondents to get information and that reintroduction of a requirement would probably be opposed by a very small minority of fishers, and so that is it.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Thank you, Captain. Is there any comments or questions?

DR. GREG STUNZ: Thank you, Captain. That was a very informative presentation, and I just have a comment as much as a question. Other groups, and I don't know if you're familiar, but Andy Loftis has been doing a lot of work along the South Atlantic and over into the Gulf. It's very nice complementary work to what you guys are doing here, and so that's a good thing.

I mean, I think, at least my opinion, coming from the scientific perspective, is what I'm hearing from you is this is well

accepted in the fishery. We've got the science that shows that there really is value to doing this, in terms of reducing discard mortality, and so I guess my point, sort of to this group and the council, based off of your presentation, is this -- - Unlike a lot of the stuff we deal with this, this is a real win/win deal, and it represents a way to really outreach in a positive way to all the constituents on ways to -- I mean, everybody wants to reduce discard mortality, and so, anyway, I enjoyed your presentation, and I think it fits really well into some of the discussions that we'll have here in a little while.

CAPTAIN STAUGLER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Martha.

MS. MARTHA GUYAS: Along those lines, thank you for the presentation. Our agency is also interested in this topic, and we're going to be doing a survey this summer, where we're issuing various descending devices to folks and surveying them on their use and what the barriers are that they encounter when they're using that device, and so, when that information is all compiled and we have results, we'll be happy to share that, and hopefully that can help the council's decision as they're trying to consider how to move forward with this as well.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Captain Johnny.

MR. JOHNNY GREENE: Thank you. That was a very good presentation. One of the things that I hear on the water a lot, on the VHF radio and around the docks, is that, in regards to venting fish, and maybe Dr. Stunz or yourself could kind of draw some attention to this, but that is that why should I vent the fish? I talk to divers all the time, and we vent them, and they show up and they dive on the wreck and there's hundreds of red snapper laying on the bottom all around the reef.

Now, I am not a diver. I don't like jumping over the side and lowering myself down the food chain. However, if anybody is brave enough to go down there and could speak to that, I think it would certainly help out, because I've heard that more than once, and, normally, I will hear something and let it go, but when you start hearing something ten or twelve or fifteen or twenty times getting repeated, I feel like it needs to have some attention drawn to that, and so that's just a comment, and, if anybody would like to speak to that, I would certainly welcome that.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Camp.

MR. CAMP MATENS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I really had two comments, but now I have three. I am a diver, and maybe it's just because I can't get to the bottom, because it's too deep, but I don't see a bunch of snapper on the bottom. It's too muddy anyway.

The first question is when there was a small group of people that indicated that these descending devices were too expensive, how expensive did they think that they were?

CAPTAIN STAUGLER: I don't know that I can specifically answer that, but they're certainly more expensive than venting tools, and especially when you get into the Seaqualizer. That tends to be the one that maybe is more preferred by a lot of fishers, but it is probably at the higher end of cost.

MR. MATENS: Okay. Greg may know the answer to this. I don't think they're that expensive. I mean, the ice costs more than the device, and so I'm not too sure how -- A little education there might be helpful. Greg, do you want to respond to that now?

DR. STUNZ: If it's okay with Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Yes.

DR. STUNZ: Okay. Camp, to respond to your question, we talk around this table, or we have been a lot, about the Seaqualizer, because we had recommended that, and, relatively speaking, it is expensive. It's fifty-dollars, but, in the cost of an offshore trip, that's really inexpensive, but the Captain put some great pictures in here of much lower-cost devices, and there is Shelton descender hooks, which are literally a reverse safety pin, that are less than five-bucks. They don't quite work as good, but they still get the job done. I guess an expense thing is probably not a good argument. They're basically nothing compared to the cost of the trip.

MR. MATENS: I wasn't trying to lead you guys into anything, but that's what I think. My wife and I are on Social Security, and it's kind of like dove hunting. The shells are the cheapest thing of the trip.

The other comment that I had was, and maybe I was misinformed and I didn't understand, but I was under the impression that mortality due to barotrauma was significantly greater at a depth of 150 or 180 feet and that, above that, it wasn't that great,

but most of these guys are reporting fishing at ninety feet or less, and I know that they know what barotrauma is. You can see it, and can you help me with that, please?

CAPTAIN STAUGLER: Well, I think you're absolutely correct. In the Gulf of Mexico, most respondents were saying that they were fishing at ninety feet or less and that they were rarely experiencing barotrauma in this survey, and you certainly can experience barotrauma in ninety or less feet. In the Atlantic, they were fishing in deeper depths and experiencing it probably more often. What that discrepancy is, I don't know that I can explain.

MR. MATENS: Thank you, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Any other comments or questions? Captain Johnny.

MR. GREENE: I'm sorry, and I'm not on your committee, but one more question. Me and Mr. Fischer have had this conversation several times, that just because we're fishing in 200 feet of water, it's 200 feet from the surface down to the bottom, and that doesn't necessarily mean that we're fishing on the bottom. Was there any conversation about that in any of your discussions?

CAPTAIN STAUGLER: No.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Okay. Any more comments or questions? Thank you. I guess we will move on to the next options paper here, Framework Action to Require Possession of Descending Devices or Venting Tools Onboard Vessels Possessing Reef Fish, Tab E, Number 5. Mr. Atran.

OPTIONS PAPER - FRAMEWORK ACTION TO REQUIRE POSSESSION OF DESCENDING DEVICES OR VENTING TOOLS ONBOARD VESSELS POSSESSING REEF FISH

MR. ATRAN: Just to give you a little bit of background, in 2008, the council did require venting tools as part of our Reef Fish Amendment 28. It was part of a suite of regulations to try to reduce release mortality, and it included the requirement to use non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural bait and a requirement to possess and use venting tools and dehooking devices.

We ran into a problem with the requirement to use venting tools, not just to possess them, and a lot of folks felt that they were

being required to use those tools even when it wasn't necessary to decompress the fish. Also, descending devices were really just starting to come on the market, starting to generate interest about that time, and folks felt that the requirement to use venting tools interfered with their desire to use a descending device. It would just increase the stress on the fish to use both types of methods.

In 2013, the council removed the requirement to use venting tools. It just took it off the books completely. Now, since that time, we have gotten some additional information. Some new studies have been published on both venting tools and descending devices.

Dr. Stunz gave a presentation at the last council meeting, and the general view is that both of these methods can be useful in helping increase survival of fish, and so the council asked staff to start putting together an action to either require or recommend that these devices be used, and this options paper is our first go at trying to present you with something, based upon what you have asked.

The purpose and need that we have right now for this options paper states that the purpose of this action is to suggest ways in which management can encourage the use of venting tools and descender devices while giving fishermen the flexibility to decide if and when they are appropriate to use.

The need is to reduce discard mortality, to the extent practicable, through the use of devices intended to increase the survival of released fish, thereby minimizing bycatch or minimizing mortality of such bycatch. What we're trying to do is get back to having fishermen use some sort of device, but give them the flexibility to decide which device and when it's appropriate to use.

What we've got right now for alternatives in this options paper, and, like I said, this is just a first crack at trying to put something together, and it's on page 4, and Alternative 1 is no action, do not require or recommend venting tools or descending devices be present onboard vessels where reef fish are present.

Alternative 2 would not require. It would establish a policy that the council recommends vessels fishing for reef fish possess either descending tools or venting tools onboard. Alternative 3 is a requirement, and, because it's hard to determine if a vessel is fishing for reef fish, but it's easy to determine if reef fish are onboard the vessel, this requires

that vessels, where reef fish are onboard, possess, and then there's a number of sub-options. Option a would only require venting tools. Option b would only require descending devices. Option c would require either venting tools or descending devices, and Option d would require that both of them be onboard.

Then, because most of the descending devices that I have seen -- They need to be rigged. They need to be hooked up to a rod-and-reel or somehow rigged to return the fish to depth, and I added a provision that descending devices should be rigged and ready for use while fishing is occurring. Otherwise, if they are just stocked away and they have to be set up, that's additional surface time for the fish and additional stress, and so just trying to add a provision that would make the descending devices a little bit more effective.

Then Alternative 4 states to develop an outreach program in conjunction with the Sea Grant programs to educate fishermen on the availability and correct use of venting tools and descending devices, including best handling techniques to minimize stress to the fish, and you have seen, in this presentation, that Sea Grant has been working on that. This would get the council a little bit more involved with that, and Alternative 4 could be adopted concurrently with either Alternative 2 or Alternative 3 in here.

Basically, Alternative 1 is no action. Alternative 2 is establish a policy that we recommend, but don't require these devices, and Alternative 3 would require the devices. Then there are some options as to which devices to require. Alternative 4 would, in conjunction with one of the other alternatives, work with Sea Grant on developing an outreach program on the proper use of these devices and proper ways to minimize handling stress on the fish.

Then, just to give you an idea of what we're talking about on release mortality, at the bottom of that page is a table in which I included the release mortality rates that have been used in some of our recent stock assessments, and so you can see that vermilion snapper is assumed to have an overall 15 percent release mortality, gray triggerfish is 5 percent, and then, if you look at greater amberjack and red snapper, you can see there is two sets of release mortalities.

During that period when venting tools were required, from 2008 to 2013, the stock assessments credited the requirement with reducing the release mortality, and so, with greater amberjack,

the stock assessments assumed there was a 10 percent release mortality during the period when venting tools were required and a 22 percent release mortality when they were not required, and then the same thing with red snapper. A lower release mortality was assumed when they were required and a higher release mortality when they were not required.

Before anybody asks, I am not sure exactly how the assessments arrived at these numbers. I would have to go back and look into the stock assessments to find out how they were derived, but they did credit the use of venting tools with better survival of the fish.

This is where we stand right now, and I also have some appendices in here to provide some background information on some of the studies on both venting tools and descending devices that have been published recently and also a couple of appendices just giving some examples of some of these devices, and, as far as I could determine, what the costs would be.

Under descending devices, one device is a milk crate that's rigged and weighted so that it would be upside down when it's lowered into the water, and the fish would be in the box until it's lowered to a depth where it's able to swim out on its own. Under costs, that could be as little as six-dollars if you just use a cheap milk crate that you buy at the hardware store, or maybe even have in the house and rig it, versus one online store was selling these things already rigged, and I believe it was around twenty-dollars or so for the whole thing already rigged to go.

That's just to show you that there are a number of alternatives available. One thing that I did find, when I was trying to look at what's available on venting tools, is that there don't seem to be as many brands, as many models, available today as there were back in 2008, when we first required them. I don't know if that's because there were too many and they outcompeted each other or because the demand for them dropped once we removed our requirement, but there just don't seem to be as many on the market right now as there used to be.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Any questions? Dale.

MR. DALE DIAZ: I've just got a comment. As I was reading through the document, I think the document is well put together, and I tried to think, you know, are there some other alternatives that need to be added, or some that need to be removed, and I think it covers everything the way it is.

I strongly believe Alternative 4 is a good thing for us to do, whenever we get to the point where we're ready to do something, and so, I mean, we can discuss that more as we work our way through this document. I have come to like YouTube videos. I mostly use them trying to be a handyman around the house, but I think a YouTube video could go with all of those other types. I mean, we could have how you get to it from a magazine article. If we have some education on the website, we could have a link to a YouTube video, or we could just have those links available for everything.

I guess the whole reason that I wanted to raise my hand is what would be the plan of action for this document? I know it's an options paper at this point, but we did have some regulations in force previously, and so are we thinking about taking this out to public comment once we think it's ready to go for public comment? Are we going to do some other alternative method before we move it forward? What is kind of the next step? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Mr. Atran.

MR. ATRAN: We haven't done scoping meetings on this. I think we do have this on our website, and folks can comment if they want. My thought was that, if you ask us to further develop it, we have an IPT set up. It hasn't met yet, but we could get together and decide what we need to do and try to expand this into a draft framework action and bring that back to you.

One question in my mind, and I don't know if this is a legal question or a procedural question, is, if you decide to go the route of recommending devices rather than requiring them, then that means there would not be any regulation implemented. If that's the case, would we want to continue with the framework action, or would we just discontinue it and work on developing whatever the formal policy is going to be?

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Okay. I see your hand up, Greg.

DR. STUNZ: Well, yes, and a couple of things, and Steven really hit on the point that I was going to make. I guess, first, I certainly am in favor of moving this forward, however we proceed that we think is appropriate. I think Dale had a good point that -- I am a little bit conflicted, in a way, on Alternative 3.

Alternative 4, I think that's a no-brainer, especially in light

of the presentation that we just saw, and a lot of other groups, and I could cite three or four works that -- Sean Powers' group out of Dauphin Island has shown that there is a lot of room for education here, particularly with venting.

The part that I'm conflicted a little bit about is the venting versus the descending, and maybe that's where Dale -- Let this go to public comment and see what the public says, but the science shows that venting works. There is no question about that. We don't detect a difference in using descending devices, but that's if it's done properly, and that's a big caveat, and so that gets back to Alternative 4 as well.

The other thing I guess I would say is that we probably want to build in flexibility, because descending devices don't work on all vessels, like headboats, for example, where the pop-and-drop method is most efficient and better if it's done, but then we have the whole situation of -- A perfect example is just this past weekend.

We were out fishing in less than a hundred feet of water, and we didn't have to do anything to any fish that was released, and they looked very -- They returned to depth very easily and very strong, and so we somehow have to build in that flexibility into this, and that gets back to this how do you require it, but then we don't want to put in something that no one is going to use.

That is sort of the conflicting part of how do we structure this, and one way might be to go forward and see how well it's used and do some of that work, and, if it's not, maybe we put a little more teeth in it or something. I don't know, but those, to me, are going to be some of the challenges, but, overall, I certainly support moving forward.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Can we scroll back down to the alternatives? I think we have Tom and then we have Dr. Crabtree.

DR. TOM FRAZER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of thoughts. I certainly enjoyed the presentation, and one of the things that I thought about, after listening to that, is that there's a lot of social pressure to use these tools, and so education is important.

The other part of me says, prior to this committee meeting, we said, well, we're trying to reduce regulations, and so, if the social pressure is kind of putting enough emphasis on people using the tools that we don't need a regulation, that's something to think about.

Then the other thing that Steven pointed out was, if you're actually using the tools and there's a rule, then you're going to account for that in the stock assessments, and you're potentially going to have more access to fish, and so these are just things that I'm weighing in my own mind. With a rule, you potentially have more access to fish. Without the rule, you don't have a regulation, and you're letting people kind of monitor themselves, and so, as we get to the final decision here later in the week, maybe people will think about those two things and the tradeoffs.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. ROY CRABTREE: Good morning. I would say that, for this document, unless you choose Alternative 3, you don't need the document. You can establish a policy or an outreach program just through a motion, and so, if you decide at some point that you're not going to require these through regulations, then you wouldn't need to do any more in the document.

One thing that we ought to think of as we look at this is there are a lot of restoration activities proposed in the Gulf that include reducing discard mortality with descending tools. Some of those proposals include purchasing and distributing tools to fishermen.

Restoration monies, generally speaking, cannot be used to purchase devices already required in the regulations, and, so, if we did require this through regulations, it might preclude using those funds to buy these and give them to fishermen, but I think that restoration monies could be used to set up an outreach program and work in that sense, but that's something to think about.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Martha.

MS. GUYAS: Thanks for recognizing me, because I'm not on this committee. I think it's been said a couple of times about how outreach is going to be really important to this, no matter what we do, and the one thing that's kind of been in the back of my mind, as I've been thinking about this, is how we define descending devices, so that it works for enforcement and they know what they're looking at, but it also allows for some innovation, as, I guess, more devices are developed. Steven, can you talk about that and what you guys are talking about?

MR. ATRAN: I was a little bit concerned about how we define

both venting tools and descending devices, because, as far as I know, we don't have any regulation or anything on the books that has a formal definition, and I've seen fishermen just pick up a fish hook and say this is my venting device, and obviously it's not.

On page 5, and it's part of the discussion, and I haven't made it part of an action, I suggested some language for how to define a venting tool and a descending device. I'm sure these both need some wordsmithing before they would really be good, but I was trying to make sure that, if you're using a venting tool, you actually are using a hollowed-out needle that can serve the purpose that we intend it to be used, and the same with a descending device, that you're using something that would actually be effective at returning the fish to depth.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Lance, to that point, and I think, Dr. Crabtree, you had a comment.

MR. LANCE ROBINSON: Just to Dr. Crabtree's comment, and, again, to Dr. Frazer's point, and I don't know if this goes to Bonnie or Roy, but, in the event that the council makes a recommendation, how does that factor -- How does the use of that factor into any stock assessment and into the discard mortality if it's just a recommendation?

DR. BONNIE PONWITH: We would have to take a look at that and make some decisions, and it's probably going to require expert input, as opposed to quantitative, because here is the thing. If you have a descending device, you can go out and do studies and actually evaluate its effectiveness, and you can control that for the depth, and you can control it for temperature, and you can control that for how effectively an individual fisher used that device, and so you can test all of that. It takes time and it takes money, but it's doable.

To me, the real uncertainty comes in when the -- We have already discussed -- Steven did a good job of discussing the requirement to have possession or to use, and so the real question is to what extent that someone possesses this on their vessels do they use it, and you will end up having to make decisions about whether you used it because you didn't think it needed to, or, if it did -- There is a lot of judgment calls to be made, and I think what we would have to do is use expert opinion and set up contingency tables for what the differential mortality rates would look like if 100 percent of the people who had them used them, and used them correctly, versus what the other bookend would be and then come up with some way to credit.

I will tell you that it will be difficult, but I think, in this situation, where it's a recommendation, we'll have to take a look at that and make some decisions.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I don't think, from the assessment point of view, it would make a difference whether we required them or just promoted them through outreach. The real question is how widespread is their use in the fishery and how effective are they. You're going to have to answer that question whether you require them or not, and so I don't think that fundamentally changes the question.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Martha.

MS. GUYAS: I guess, if we move forward with the regulatory route, I would just like to make sure that law enforcement gets a chance to review whatever we come up with here, to make sure that we come up with something that works for them.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Madam Chair.

MS. LEANN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. I'm not on your committee, but this brought -- In the outreach and education portion, it made me think about something that we have to keep onboard on our commercial vessels, and I emailed it to staff. It can be actually very helpful, because it has a lot of pictures. A picture is worth a thousand words, and maybe, if we go down the route of requiring these, we may want to do something like this for our venting and descending tools, since it sounds like some of the people want some more education.

Obviously what we have to keep onboard is in reference to sea turtles, and staff has got it up for you. It's what to do in order to help resuscitate that sea turtle and make sure that he or she survives, and we are required to have this onboard our vessels. We have to have this placard. Maybe something like this could be done for venting tools or descending devices that could be a requirement to have onboard both commercial and recreational vessels, if we go down this route. That's just an observation or an idea.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Ed.

MR. ED SWINDELL: Do we have any idea of how in the world would you quantify the amount of red snapper that are caught within

the ninety-foot or even a hundred-foot depth, versus outside of the hundred-foot depth? Do we have that kind of information?

I guess I get worried about, if we're going to require something on a vessel, and the vessel that is fishing for red snapper never goes out far enough to have one, to effectively need to have one, because a fish doesn't need venting if he's not fishing greater than ninety-foot or a hundred-foot depth. That would give me some -- I don't know that I would want to require it is all I'm saying. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Good point. Dave.

MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for recognizing me. I'm not on this committee, but we're talking about establishing a policy or actually passing a requirement, and, Greg or Steven or anyone, is there any indication, through the studies you guys have done, of what the percentage of fishermen would utilize it if there wasn't a regulation to do it? Does there seem to be widespread acceptance in the fishing population to utilize this? I know the Sea Grant kind of touched on that, and I was just curious.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: We need to wrap it up, but go ahead, Greg.

DR. STUNZ: Dave, that's an interesting question. I think those that are aware of it are more than willing to use it, but what I'm discovering -- Even the boat that I sat on this weekend wasn't well aware of what this is about, and so it's just a real education type of thing.

To Leann, and I know Ed's point, there is a lot of groups that I'm aware of now that are working on exactly what you're talking about and videos, to Dale's point, and brochures and things to help just get that out, but I guess the point that I had, kind of to Roy's question, which troubled me a little bit, is we certainly wouldn't want to defer any type of restoration activity, but, Roy, do you know -- I mean, are those activities -- Could that just be a timing thing? In other words, that RESTORE activity funded before this ever became a regulation? I don't know what the timeline on something like this document would be.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I suppose that we could wait until the restoration money is used and purchases and all of that and then come in after that and revisit the requirement, but, how the timing would work out, I don't know. I guess it could be a timing issue.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Okay. Due to time, I am going to wrap it up. There was a lot of good discussion here. Thank you, Mr. Atran. We're going to move on to Options Paper of Carryover of Unharvested Quota, and this is going to be Tab E, Number 6, and this is going to be Ryan.

OPTIONS PAPER - CARRYOVER OF UNHARVESTED QUOTA

MR. RYAN RINDONE: We will start with the -- The background on this is that there are several fishery management councils throughout the country that have carryover provisions that are in place for different species, or have in the past, and the general idea is that some amount of fish has -- There is some amount of foregone yield from a previous fishing year that you can then roll over to the next year.

It seems pretty straightforward. The IPT has found out that it's just about anything but straightforward, and so you guys will get a little taste of that as we're moving through this.

What we have established is the purpose and need for this document is to consider incorporating provisions into our ABC control rule to allow for carryover of uncaught ACLs, appropriate adjustments to any quota carried over, and to modify the framework procedure to allow us to do all of this in a timely fashion, and the need is to incorporate the flexibility allowed under the revised National Standard 1 Guidelines, which talk about being able to carryover fish.

I know we're a little tight on time, and so I'm going to breeze through some of this a little bit more quickly and try and spend time on the things that I think you guys will probably the most time on, and so we'll start with Action 1, which is on PDF page 9.

What Action 1 does is it talks about the eligibility of species for inclusion in the carryover provision, and so Alternative 1 would not establish any carryover provision at all, and so, if you were to select Alternative 1 in Action 1, the rest of the document, except for some of the framework provision stuff, would effectively be null.

Alternative 2 would apply a carryover provision to harvest the unused portion of the ACL for any managed finfish species except those which are currently in a rebuilding plan, and, if you look at Table 2.1.1, which is on page 12, you can see the species that would be excluded under each of the presented alternatives.

For Alternative 2, it would exclude gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, and red snapper.

Alternative 3, similar to Alternative 2, would exclude any species that did not have its fishing year closed because the ACL was met or projected to be met, and so, if the season stayed open throughout the duration that it was supposed to, then there would be no carryover the following year. Does that make sense? Okay. There is a long list of species in Table 2.1.1 that would be kicked out for that one.

Alternative 4 would exclude species that are managed under a stock ACL, meaning that we don't have recreational and commercial allocations. It's just one stock ACL, and, when it's caught, it's caught. More of our data-poor species and some species that we haven't assessed before are in that one, and then some species we do have assessments on, like cobia, hogfish, lane snapper, Spanish, yellowtail, et cetera.

Alternative 5 would exclude any species that we do not currently have an accepted peer-reviewed stock assessment, and, again, this gets more into our data-poor species. Then Alternative 6 would exclude any species that we manage via apportionment with an adjacent fishery management council, which for us is the South Atlantic Council, and so we only have a few of those, that's black grouper, mutton snapper, and yellowtail snapper.

Now, IFQ species are not explicitly listed in Action 1 because there are different alternatives that exclude different IFQ species, and so that's why that was left out explicitly from Action 1. Any questions on Action 1 before we go on to Action 2? If there is anything you guys would like to see added, taken away, or changed, please speak up.

DR. CARRIE SIMMONS: Are you going to go through the SSC comments as well?

MR. RINDONE: I can do that concurrently or after or what's your pleasure?

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Would the committee like to wait until we're finished for the SSC comments as well, due to time constraints? Let's just move on. Let's get all the comments, the SSC comments as well, when you're done.

MR. RINDONE: Okay. For Action 2, Action 2 establishes parameters for applying carryover provisions to species managed under IFQ programs, and Alternative 1 would not establish any

parameters. Basically, if there's anything left over at the end of a fishing year, it would be eligible for carryover to the following year, contingent on whatever is selected in Action 1.

Alternative 2 says that there has to be less than 2 percent of the total commercial ACL for a species remaining for there to be carryover for the next year. Alternative 3 says 5 percent, and Alternative 4 says 8 percent. Now, unlike Action 1, where you could select multiple alternatives, you can only select one alternative in Action 2.

To give you an idea of what you guys are looking at, as far as the amount of ACL remaining in a given year, Table 2.2.2, which is on page 18, shows you the different IFQ programs that we have in the Gulf for fishing years 2014 through 2016, and it shows you the ACL, the landings, what was left over, and what was left over as a percentage of the ACL.

Within programs for those three years, it can vary pretty widely, and sometimes there's a lot left over and sometimes there is not much, and so it's something for you guys to think about with respect to Action 2. Is there any questions?

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Kevin.

MR. KEVIN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not on your committee, but, Ryan, why -- I think I know you might not be able to select more than one alternative, but is that for administration purposes, just to make it easier, one percentage?

MR. RINDONE: That's just the way that we wrote it this time around, yes. I mean, if you guys want it to be explicit to the program, I guess that we could do that.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Martha.

MS. GUYAS: I am trying to think about how this logistically would work. Would the unused quota go back to the people that didn't fish that quota?

MR. RINDONE: Right now, it would go back -- It would be carried over to the following fishing year and then be distributed across shareholders, based on their share allocation. It wouldn't necessarily go back to a specific shareholder.

This is obviously something that you guys would need to discuss on how to do this. It's really your pleasure, the best way that you would want to do this, because this is not currently part of

the IFQ program.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Go ahead.

MS. BOSARGE: I will apologize, because this is my cursory reading of this document right now. I didn't get to read it before the meeting, but, for the IFQ species, we're going to -- We have some options that will let us carry forward a certain percentage of the unused quota, but, in that first action item, we just carry -- Once we decide which species we're going to do it for, as long as they're not in a rebuilding plan or this or that, you carry the whole thing forward, but, on IFQ species, you only carry a very small percentage, or is there an action later that addresses that?

MR. RINDONE: There is action later. Because this whole process is as complex as it ended up being, we chip away at a little bit with each action, and so you kind of do have to go through all of them to get a good idea of how the whole thing is organized. It would be a nightmare to try to do all of this in one shot, and so each action chips away at a little bit more of how we manage fisheries in the Gulf, because everything is so diverse.

The first action eliminates species right off the bat. We're not even going to consider these, because we have determined that we don't want to for X, Y, and Z. Action 2, this is how we're going to deal with IFQ stuff, and you guys can obviously change what we've proposed to whatever you think is more appropriate.

Action 3 establishes like a fixed buffer between the ABC and the OFL, to make sure that the ABC doesn't get raised to some degree close to the OFL or, if you guys want to maintain some sort of uncertainty buffer there. Action 4 makes adjustments to how much is going to be carried over to the following year, and we'll see more about that there. Then Action 5 is what makes the whole process timely and not take so long that we miss the opportunity to carry it over in the first place. We're just chipping away at a little bit of what needs to be done with each action.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Ms. Gerhart.

MS. SUSAN GERHART: Just to clarify, if the council chooses an alternative in Action 1 that already eliminates IFQ species, then this action would not be necessary any longer.

MR. RINDONE: That's correct. Now, there would be a couple that

you would probably need to select to make that happen. I will give you an example. Again, this is just an example. If gag were to be eliminated, it would involve selecting Alternative 3. For red snapper to be eliminated, it would be Alternative 2 and like that.

If a species season isn't closed, because the ACL for that fishing season wasn't met, then there wouldn't be a carryover the next year for Alternative 3, and then the rebuilding plan one is pretty straightforward, and so shallow-water groupers would be a little bit more complicated, because some of them we don't have a peer-reviewed stock assessment for.

If you were to select that we don't want to do carryover for anything with a peer-reviewed stock assessment, some of those wouldn't be eligible, and that would make that a little more hairy, and so --

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Tom.

DR. FRAZER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ryan, I guess, if you work through a scenario like in let's say Alternative 4 in this Action 2, with regard to red grouper, where you had like 42 percent below your thing -- What is the practical kind of implication of that?

MR. RINDONE: The intent of -- Like the way the National Standard 1 Guidelines talk about doing a carryover, and the way that other councils have done carryover in the past, if you're leaving a ton of fish in the water, year after year, it's not necessary to carry this huge chunk of fish over to the following fishing year.

Now, the SSC had talked about that. They were like, well, there could be a variety of reasons why there's a lot being left over, and then, all of a sudden, there might not be as much left over, and that's always something that you guys could revisit if you found it appropriate to do so, but, as a standard practice, if you're leaving 30 or 40 percent in the water, rolling that massive poundage over to the next year is likely not going to result in it being caught, unless there is something unforeseen that's causing that underage in the first place.

In most cases in the Gulf, the reason why there is so much left over has more to do with effort and direct targeting of certain species, especially for our reef fish species, than it does with something that we're not predicting. Now, occasionally, we have environmental things that may cause a species to not be as

prevalent for a year or two, but, again, if it's chronic, if it's all the time that there's a large amount left, it's more than likely going to be effort related.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Okay. We're running out of time here, but, Mara, go ahead.

MS. MARA LEVY: Just for this particular action, the whole reason for this is for the council to say that we're only going to do carryover for IFQ if there is this percentage that was left, to specifically address that question, that you're not going to do it if there's 40 percent of the red grouper quota left. This is getting at it's only going to happen as long as the portion that's left is less than 2 percent, less than 5 percent, less than 10 percent, to make a judgment call about when it's too much to carryover for IFQ species.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Mr. Rindone, continue.

MR. RINDONE: Yes, sir. All right. We'll go straight to Action 3, and this establishes a fixed buffer between the ABC and the OFL, and so, by modifying the ABC control rule to include this carryover provision, essentially what happens is, when you carry those fish over to the following fishing year, you are changing the ABC. Then that will subsequently change the ACL and tick, tick, tick down the line.

The way that it's designed right now is that let's say the private angler season is closed for a particular species, or for red snapper, since that's the only that we have a private angler component for. Let's say their season is closed and there was some left over that could be carried over to the following year.

The ABC would be adjusted, as would the ACL, but that carryover amount would go directly to the private anglers and not to the commercial or the for-hire. Now, the reason that it's component-specific like that, or sector-specific, it's just recreational and commercial, is you have differences in how and where in the size of fish that are caught by the recreational and commercial sectors and between the private anglers and the for-hire components.

One fish for one may be different, in terms of length, weight, and age, than one fish for another, and so, to make that carryover as accurately accountable in the stock assessment as possible, and to make sure that we don't mess something up along the way, the quota can only be carried over to the sector or sector component or commercial zone or smallest visible unit

from whence it came, and that's -- Does that make sense to everybody?

That is one of -- I call it control rule, but it's not a control rule in the way that we normally use that term, but it grounds this process, and that's written into the discussion.

By establishing a fixed buffer between the ABC and the OFL though, it helps account for, again, a little bit more uncertainty, if you guys think that that's appropriate. Alternative 1 would not establish a buffer between the ABC and the OFL, which means that the ABC could be increased up to and equal to the OFL, which we don't do for many things.

Alternative 2 would say that the ABC cannot be any greater than 95 percent of the OFL. Alternative 3 is 90 percent, and Alternative 4 is 85 percent. These are obviously arbitrary, but we recognize that, but it does give you guys like a fixed amount that you can work with. Are there any questions? These percentages can be adjusted if you guys think they should be adjusted.

Seeing no flailing hands, Action 4 would create adjustments to the carryover provision, and so this helps account for things like management uncertainty, natural mortality, et cetera, and so Alterative 1 would not establish any adjustments, and so any amount that is deemed available to be carried over for a species that qualifies in Action 1 gets to be carried over.

Now, the National Standard Guidelines suggest that you guys should take into account natural mortality when considering carryover, and, if you're not going to, you need to provide fine justification as to why you're not going to consider natural mortality for a species.

Alternative 2 would reduce the amount of the unused portion of the ACL to be carried over by the mean natural mortality rate of the subject species as used in the most recent accepted quantitative stock assessment.

If there is not an accepted quantitative stock assessment on the book, then, by default, Alternative 2 wouldn't apply to that species, because we don't have something to go off of, but, for many of the species that we actively manage, we have something on the books.

Alternative 3 would reduce the amount of the unused portion of the ACL to be carried over by some management uncertainty

amount, and we have arbitrary values of 5, 10, and 15 percent in there, and this just says that you guys recognize what you're doing and you know there are probably some things that you don't know about what's happening, we'll say effort or what's going on in the environment, that you just haven't had a recent stock assessment to account for yet, and so, to be a little more conservative, you're going to reduce the amount to be carried over just a little bit more to be safe, and that's essentially what Alternative 3 does. You can select both Alternative 2 and 3, and you can propose different percentages for Alternative 3 as well.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Mara.

MS. LEVY: I heard the words "these are arbitrary" a couple of times, and so, as you go down this road, the alternatives that are put in Action 3 and some of Action 4, I would suggest that we think of percentages that are reasonable for a particular purpose, meaning there is the table after Action 3, for the fixed buffer, that talks about, or at least shows, what some of the buffers are for different species between the OFL and the ABC.

It might be reasonable to look at that and see an average or maybe we would look at potentially different buffers for different species, and I don't know, but I don't want to move down the road too far leaving in alternatives and options that really don't have any particular basis, and so I would just think about how to come up with percentages that might be linked to something, and I could even see the natural mortality rate or the reduction for this Action 4.

I mean, we don't know the natural mortality rate for all species, but we do know then for some, and maybe there is a way to come up with a range of things for Alternative 3 that kind of take that knowledge into account. I don't know, but I just suggest that we think about that some more.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Mr. Rindone.

MR. RINDONE: That's a good point, and one of the things that we did look at was to -- If you look at Table 2.3.1 in Action 3, and it's on page 20, you can see the percent difference between the ABC and the OFL for all the species that we deal with, and, like for the deepwater grouper complex, there is no difference between the ABC and the OFL, and we don't have an OFL defined for the shallow-water grouper complex, but, for the rest of them, you can see what the percent differences are there, and

they can vary pretty widely.

The most narrow is Spanish mackerel, which is 1.74 percent, and the current OFL of 11.5 million pounds is not being harvested, by about 40 percent, 45 percent or so, something like that, and so that's a lot of Spanish that get left over.

One of the probably more subject species to all of us, red snapper, only has a seven-and-a-half percent buffer between the ABC and the OFL, and so that would be something for you guys to think about, if red snapper is something that you want to be considered for this. Again, we can adjust these percentages for the management uncertainty and the ABC buffers however you guys would like to entertain, and we can look at those options.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Continue on.

MR. RINDONE: Anything else for Action 4, which is the adjustments? Okay. Action 5 modifies the framework procedures for the FMPs. Alternative 2 helps us pull all of this carryover stuff off in a timely fashion, and it allows us to use the closed framework procedure to adjust the ABC, ACL, ACT, and quota for a species, sub-species, species group, sector, or component of a sector to allow for the carryover of the unused ACL, as determined by the ABC control rule.

This is really explicit, but the purpose of this is so that, once the harvest from the previous year is known, and whatever amount is available to be carried over is also known, then the Regional Office can just go forward with making that adjustment to the ABC and everything else down the line and put those carried-over fish where they need to go and then issue a notice.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Dale.

MR. DIAZ: Timing-wise, I mean, we don't get final numbers -- We didn't get final numbers on stuff really until, what, May of this year. Effectively, there is going to be a lag time of a full year, or, in May, when we get final numbers, are we going to apply it then and it will be an in-season type of thing? Do you understand what I am asking about?

MR. RINDONE: That's the idea, and so we've used preliminary landings to make these sorts of adjustments in the past, and we are not precluded from doing that. Obviously using final, final, final landings would be preferable, but, to make this more timely, and you guys had indicated, when we all had a Q&A session at a previous council meeting of how you wanted this

done, you said to the following fishing year from the previous fishing year. You didn't want there to be long delays between when the fish were not caught and then when they could be caught in the future.

The following year means that we have to use preliminary landings data, and so there is some uncertainty with that. Maybe that's something that you think about when we're talking about adjustments to the amount to be carried over.

MR. DIAZ: We could deal with that in Action 3, where there was the Alternatives a, b, and c with 5 percent, 10 percent, and 15 percent? Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Okay. Continue on.

MR. RINDONE: Okay. Alternative 3 modifies the abbreviated framework procedure for Reef Fish, CMP, Red Drum, and Coral, basically everything, to allow specification of ABCs recommended by the SSC based on a new stock assessment, and so, instead of what we do currently, which takes a little bit longer, staff and the Regional Office can use the abbreviated framework procedure to update or to specify a new ABC based on a new stock assessment.

Alternative 4 would revise the framework procedures for everything, to be consistent in terminology and format, and include changes to the standard framework procedure for Red Drum, Coral, and Lobster, regarding accountability measures, and you can see those changes highlighted down there in yellow, and it talks about implementation or changes to in-season and post-season accountability measures, and it just makes them equivalent across the board.

For Action 5, you guys can pick Alternatives 2, 3, and/or 4 as preferred. Again, just real quick, Alternative 2 makes the carryover stuff timely, Alternative 3 allows the use of the abbreviated framework procedure to specify ABC after an accepted stock assessment, and Alternative 4 makes all the framework procedures for the FMPs consistent with respect to implementation or changes to in-season and post-season accountability measures. Are there questions on the boring action? Okay.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Madam Chair.

MS. BOSARGE: We are a little bit over time, but you've been doing good keeping them in line as best you can here, but we've

already gone through our break time, and so, if it's okay with you, Mr. Chair, could we save the SSC discussion for Full Council during your committee report and maybe take it up then, because I have a feeling that's probably going to spur some more questions as we go through, and we'll have a little more time then.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Yes, that's fine. Dale.

MR. DIAZ: Are we adjourning our committee? Before we do that -- - Well, if we're going to take it back up at Full Council, there's a couple of things that I think we ought to probably discuss about this document, but I also think, maybe at Full Council, we should come back and give a little bit more guidance to Mr. Atran about where we want to go with that other document. I think it would be good to just give the staff a clear path forward on that. If we can just take that up at Full Council, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Madam Chair.

MS. BOSARGE: Yes, and that was actually the other reason why I wanted to leave those SSC comments, because we need some direction for them, and, as long as we have some sort of unfinished business in that committee report, we won't fly right through it and cruise on to the next one. We will stop and have some discussion and tie up these loose ends that we need to tie up.

CHAIRMAN WALKER: Madam Chair, the Sustainable Fisheries Committee stands adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 5, 2017.)

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