

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 264TH MEETING

4
5 FULL COUNCIL SESSION

6
7 Naples Grand Beach Resort

Naples, Florida

8
9 JUNE 7-8, 2017

10
11 **VOTING MEMBERS**

- 12 Kevin Anson.....Alabama
- 13 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 14 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
- 15 Doug Boyd.....Texas
- 16 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
- 17 Pamela Dana.....Florida
- 18 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 19 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 20 Johnny Greene.....Alabama
- 21 Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
- 22 Campo Matens.....Louisiana
- 23 Paul Mickle (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
- 24 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 25 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 26 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 27 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
- 28 David Walker.....Alabama

29
30 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 31 Glenn Constant.....USFWS
- 32 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 33 Leo Danaher.....USCG

34
35 **STAFF**

- 36 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
- 37 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 38 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 39 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist-Statistician
- 40 Douglas Gregory.....Executive Director
- 41 Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist
- 42 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 43 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 44 Jessica Matos.....Administrative Assistant
- 45 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 46 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 47 Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

1 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**
2 Eric Alexander.....
3 Pam Anderson.....Panama City Beach, FL
4 Anna Beckwith.....SAFMC
5 Susan Boggs.....Orange Beach, AL
6 Ryan Bradley.....Mississippi Commercial Fisheries United, Inc.
7 Eric Brazer.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance
8 Shane Cantrell.....Galveston, TX
9 Mike Colby.....Clearwater, FL
10 William Copeland.....New Port Richey, FL
11 Scott Daggett.....Madeira Beach, FL
12 Kenneth Daniels.....Madeira Beach, FL
13 Jason Delacruz.....FL
14 Traci Floyd.....MDMR
15 Will Geraghty.....Naples, FL
16 Sue Gerhart.....NMFS
17 Bill Goulding.....Naples, FL
18 Buddy Guindon.....Galveston, TX
19 Ken Haddad.....ASA, FL
20 Chad Haggert.....Clearwater Beach, FL
21 Scott Hickman.....Galveston, TX
22 Chris Horton.....
23 Dylan Hubbard.....FL
24 Alison Johnson.....Oceana
25 David Johnson.....Tarpon Springs, FL
26 Heidi Johnson.....FWC, Naples, FL
27 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA
28 Garrett King.....Galveston TX
29 David Krebs.....Destin, FL
30 Randy Lauser.....FL
31 Kai Lorenzen.....FL
32 Edward Maccini.....FL
33 Rich Malinowski.....NMFS
34 Sean Meehan.....NMFS
35 Milo Mitrovic.....Clearwater, FL
36 Bart Niquet.....Lynn Haven, FL
37 Chris Niquet.....Panama City, FL
38 Scott Pearce.....Florida FWC
39 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
40 Valerie Sirch.....
41 Bob Spaeth.....Madeira Beach, FL
42 Russell Underwood.....Panama City, FL
43 Ed Walker.....FL
44 Shawn Watson.....
45 Tom Wheatley.....Pew Charitable Trusts
46 Sam Young.....Naples, FL

47
48 - - -
49

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1
2
3 Table of Contents.....3
4
5 Table of Motions.....4
6
7 Call to Order, Announcements, and Introductions.....7
8
9 Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes.....8
10
11 Review of Exempted Fishing Permit Applications9
12
13 Presentations.....23
14 Florida Law Enforcement.....23
15 Summary of Anecdotal Data Efforts.....26
16
17 Public Comment.....36
18
19 Presentation on Coral Reef Conservation Program Report.....88
20
21 Other Business.....93
22 Lionfish Discussion.....93
23 Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ AP Discussion.....101
24
25 Committee Reports.....106
26 Gulf SEDAR Committee Report.....106
27 Reef Fish Committee Report.....125
28 Administrative/Budget Committee Report.....146
29 Spiny Lobster Committee Report.....147
30 Joint Coral/Habitat Protection & Restoration Report.....150
31 Data Collection Committee Report.....158
32 Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report.....158
33
34 Announce Advisory Panel Members.....169
35
36 Supporting Agencies Update.....170
37 South Atlantic Council Liaison.....170
38 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.....170
39 U.S. Coast Guard.....171
40 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.....177
41
42 Adjournment.....178
43
44
45

- - -

TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 115: Motion in 2018 to assess in priority: 1)gray snapper benchmark continued; 2)MRIP calibration updates; 3)king mackerel research tracks; 4)gray triggerfish standard; 5)cobia standard; and 6)red grouper standard. [The motion carried on page 120.](#)

PAGE 120: Motion to assess in 2019, in order of priority: 1)scamp research track; 2)vermilion snapper standard; 3)yellowedge grouper standard; 4)tilefish standard; 5)Spanish mackerel standard. [The motion carried on page 122.](#)

PAGE 123: Motion for the red grouper assessment in 2018 the terminal year will be 2016. [The motion carried on page 125.](#)

PAGE 126: Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 6 the preferred alternative. Alternative 6 is for the reef fish stocks listed in Table 1.3.1, reef fish stocks MSST equals 0.5 times BMSY or proxy. [The motion carried on page 127.](#)

PAGE 127: Motion to approve Reef Fish Amendment 44, and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. [The motion carried on page 129.](#)

PAGE 129: Motion to approve Reef Fish Amendment 47, and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate. [The motion carried on page 131.](#)

PAGE 131: Motion to make Option 3 the preferred option. Option 3 is to modify the total number of hooks to be unlimited of which no more than 750 hooks are fished or rigged for fishing. While the option of greater than 1,500 hooks per vessel was not analyzed in Amendment 31 (GMFMC 2010), the regulation to only allow 750 hooks to be fished or rigged for fishing would remain in place. Therefore, there should not be any additional concern for protected species interactions. Law enforcement would only need to check the number of rigged hooks (750) because there would be an unlimited number of unrigged hooks allowed in this option, reducing any burden on law enforcement. [The motion carried on page 131.](#)

1 [PAGE 132](#): Motion to approve the Abbreviated Framework Action to
2 Modify the Number of Unrigged Hooks Carried Onboard Bottom
3 Longline Vessels, and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of
4 Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified
5 text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial
6 license to make the necessary changes in the document. The
7 Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the
8 codified text as necessary and appropriate. [The motion carried](#)
9 [on page 133](#).

10
11 [PAGE 134](#): Motion in Action 2 to add a new alternative that
12 would modify the recreational closed season from January 1 to
13 July 31. [The motion carried on page 134](#).

14
15 [PAGE 134](#): Motion to move Action 3 to Considered but Rejected.
16 2.3 Action 3, Modify the Recreational Minimum Size Limit,
17 Alternative 1, no action, do not modify the current recreational
18 minimum size limit of thirty-four inches; Alternative 2, modify
19 the minimum recreational size limit for greater amberjack to
20 thirty inches; Alternative 3, modify the minimum recreational
21 size limit for greater amberjack to thirty-two inches;
22 Alternative 4, modify the minimum recreational size limit for
23 greater amberjack to thirty-six inches. [The motion carried on](#)
24 [page 135](#).

25
26 [PAGE 136](#): Motion in Section 2.3 to add an alternative for an
27 adaptive management redistribution method based on cyclical
28 redistribution, which depends on fishing participation. [The](#)
29 [motion carried on page 136](#).

30
31 [PAGE 137](#): Motion to direct staff to write a letter to NMFS to
32 request a determination if an auction of commercial red snapper
33 quota above 4.65 million pounds would require a referendum. [The](#)
34 [motion carried on page 137](#).

35
36 [PAGE 137](#): Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2, Option 2b
37 the preferred. Alternative 2 is establish a fishing quota
38 program that provides participants with shares and annual
39 allocation. Option 2b is a Permit Fishing Quota program. [The](#)
40 [motion carried on page 137](#).

41
42 [PAGE 137](#): Motion in Action 2 to make Alternative 1 the
43 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 137](#).

44
45 [PAGE 137](#): Motion to move Action 2 to Considered but Rejected.
46 [The motion carried on page 137](#).

47
48 [PAGE 137](#): Motion in Action 3, Alternative 2, to make Options

1 2a, 2b, and 2c the preferred. [The motion carried on page 138.](#)

2
3 [PAGE 139](#): Motion in Action 3 to move Alternative 2, Options 2d
4 and 2e to Considered but Rejected. [The motion failed on page](#)
5 [142.](#)

6
7 [PAGE 142](#): Motion in Action 6.1 to make Alternative 3, Option 3a
8 the preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 142.](#)

9
10 [PAGE 143](#): Motion to make the Status Determination Criteria
11 Amendment a priority on the proposed action schedule. [The](#)
12 [motion carried on page 143.](#)

13
14 [PAGE 143](#): Motion to direct staff to begin work on a document to
15 address turtle release gear. [The motion carried on page 144.](#)

16
17 [PAGE 147](#): Motion to recommend that Spiny Lobster Regulatory
18 Amendment 4 be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review
19 and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and
20 appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the
21 necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given
22 the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as
23 necessary and appropriate. [The motion carried on page 149.](#)

24
25 [PAGE 149](#): Motion to direct staff to begin work on a plan
26 amendment to address the bully-net issue and reestablish the
27 protocol procedures with the State of Florida. [The motion](#)
28 [carried on page 149.](#)

29
30 [PAGE 150](#): Motion to move Actions 1 and 2 to Considered but
31 Rejected. [The motion failed on page 152.](#)

32
33 [PAGE 152](#): Motion in Action 1 to add a new alternative that
34 would exclude octocorals in the EEZ off of Florida from federal
35 management. [The motion carried on page 153.](#)

36
37 [PAGE 156](#): Motion to direct staff to define criteria to evaluate
38 areas for "evidence of fishing" using VMS and ELB datasets. In
39 areas that have evidence of fishing, to direct staff to include
40 options that allow for a "tiered approach," or specific
41 exemptions, for fishing with bottom tending gear. [The motion](#)
42 [carried on page 156.](#)

43
44 - - -
45

1 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
2 Council convened at the Naples Grand Beach Resort, Naples,
3 Florida, Wednesday morning, June 7, 2017, and was called to
4 order by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

5
6 **CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTIONS**

7
8 **CHAIRMAN LEANN BOSARGE:** Welcome to the 264th meeting of the Gulf
9 Council. My name is Leann Bosarge, Chair of the Council. If
10 you have a cell phone, pager, or similar device, we ask that you
11 keep them on silent or vibrating mode during the meeting. Also,
12 in order for all to be able to hear the proceedings, we ask that
13 you please have any private conversations outside.

14
15 The Gulf Council is one of eight regional councils established
16 in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, known
17 today as the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The council's purpose is to
18 serve as a deliberative body to advise the Secretary of Commerce
19 on fishery management measures in the federal waters of the Gulf
20 of Mexico. These measures help ensure that fishery resources in
21 the Gulf are sustained, while providing the best overall benefit
22 to the nation.

23
24 The council has seventeen voting members, eleven of whom are
25 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and include individuals
26 from a range of geographical areas in the Gulf of Mexico with
27 experience in various aspects of fisheries.

28
29 The membership also includes five state fishery managers from
30 each Gulf state and the Regional Administrator from NOAA's
31 Southeast Fisheries Service, as well as several non-voting
32 members.

33
34 Public input is a vital part of the council's deliberative
35 process, and comments, both oral and written, are accepted and
36 considered by the council throughout the process. Anyone
37 wishing to speak during public comment should sign in at the
38 registration kiosk located at the entrance to the meeting room.
39 We accept only one registration per person. A digital recording
40 is used for the public record. Therefore, for the purpose of
41 voice identification, each person at the table is requested to
42 identify him or herself, starting on my left.

43
44 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** Johnny Greene, Alabama.

45
46 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Kevin Anson, Alabama.

47
48 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** David Walker, Alabama.

1
2 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Dave Donaldson, Gulf States Marine
3 Fisheries Commission.
4
5 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Ed Swindell, Louisiana.
6
7 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:** Patrick Banks, Louisiana.
8
9 **MR. CAMPO MATENS:** Camp Matens, Louisiana.
10
11 **DR. THOMAS FRAZER:** Tom Frazer, Florida.
12
13 **DR. PAMELA DANA:** Pam Dana, Florida.
14
15 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Martha Guyas, Florida.
16
17 **MS. ANNA BECKWITH:** Anna Beckwith, South Atlantic Council.
18
19 **MR. GLENN CONSTANT:** Glenn Constant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
20 Service.
21
22 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Mara Levy, NOAA Office of General Counsel.
23
24 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.
25
26 **MS. SUSAN GERHART:** Susan Gerhart, NOAA Fisheries.
27
28 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA Fisheries.
29
30 **MR. LANCE ROBINSON:** Lance Robinson, Texas.
31
32 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Greg Stunz, Texas.
33
34 **MR. DOUGLAS BOYD:** Doug Boyd, Texas.
35
36 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** Paul Mickle, Mississippi.
37
38 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Dale Diaz, Mississippi.
39
40 **LCDR LEO DANAHER:** Lieutenant Commander Leo Danaher, U.S. Coast
41 Guard.
42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUGLAS GREGORY:** Douglas Gregory, council
44 staff.
45

46 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Our agenda for our council

1 session can be found under Tab A, Number 3. Are there any
2 additions or revisions to the agenda? Dr. Crabtree.

3
4 **DR. CRABTREE:** I would like, at some point, to talk a little bit
5 about lionfish and exempted fishing permit applications and some
6 ideas we have about how to handle that.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. So noted. Any other additions or
9 revisions? Seeing none, I will entertain a motion to adopt the
10 agenda as revised. It's so moved by Dr. Dana, and it's seconded
11 by Mr. Greene. Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing
12 none, the motion carries.

13
14 The minutes from our last meeting are located under Tab A,
15 Number 4. Were there any revisions or edits needed to those
16 minutes? Seeing none, I will entertain a motion to approve the
17 minutes as presented. It's so moved by Mr. Banks, and it's
18 seconded by Dr. Stunz. Any opposition to the motion? Seeing
19 none, the motion carries.

20
21 Next on our agenda is a Review of Exempted Fishing Permit
22 Applications, if any, and so I will look towards the NMFS realm
23 of the house to see if we have any to review.

24 **REVIEW OF EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT APPLICATIONS**

25
26
27 **MS. GERHART:** Yes, we do. We had one application for an EFP
28 that came in from the State of Louisiana, and I will introduce
29 that. If you have questions, you can ask those to Mr. Banks.
30 This application is to test the use of a data reporting system
31 for private anglers for red snapper.

32
33 It would be a two-year program. What they would do is take
34 25,000 pounds from their state quota that they manage by, as you
35 heard earlier, and convert that to numbers of fish and allow a
36 certain number of anglers, and I believe it's 150 anglers, to
37 catch those fish in federal waters outside of the federal
38 season, but during the state season.

39
40 The estimate right now, preliminarily, is about twenty fish per
41 angler, and those anglers would be chosen randomly from a pool
42 that includes those that have the saltwater fishing license as
43 well as the offshore landing permit.

44
45 What these people would be required to do is hail-out at least
46 twenty-four hours before they leave on a trip to say that
47 they're going on a trip and declaring where they will be landing
48 and at what time, so that they can be sampled, if desired. When

1 they come back in, they will have to report electronically at
2 the dock, how much they've landed as well as how many anglers
3 were on the boat, so that there is an estimate of effort.

4
5 They would be exempt from the bag limit and would just be
6 limited to the number of fish that they have been assigned,
7 their allotment, but they would be still held to the size limit,
8 and so that is the EFP that is under consideration by our
9 office, and, like I said, if you have questions, please direct
10 them to Mr. Banks.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I am assuming that you're in the very initial
13 review phases of this? All right. Are there any questions
14 about the EFP? Ms. Guyas.

15
16 **MS. GUYAS:** I had a question about it, and so I was trying to
17 figure out how the reporting works for these anglers and how
18 this -- I think I understood that anglers would only be
19 reporting and hailing-out and all of that if they're doing a
20 federal waters red snapper trip, but they would also be able to
21 fish state waters for red snapper separate from those twenty
22 fish?

23
24 I guess my question is are they only reporting on those federal
25 red snapper trips, or are they reporting every time they go into
26 federal waters? For example, if they go offshore to fish
27 amberjack or something like that and then how the state season
28 plays into this as well, and it was kind of confusing to me.

29
30 **MR. BANKS:** Those are good questions. Much like what Dr. Mickle
31 had described in their app, they will have to hail-out through
32 the app or through a call-in, and they will be issued a trip
33 number. During that trip, they are declaring that they are
34 fishing under this EFP, that they will be fishing outside of the
35 regular federal framework, and they will be restricted to doing
36 that.

37
38 It will be a situation -- When we were working with our
39 enforcement agents, they didn't want the confusion of folks
40 working under this experiment as well as then also coming into
41 state waters and harvesting state-water fish, and so, once you
42 declare that trip, that's what you would declare.

43
44 If you were in state waters harvesting fish, then you would be
45 in violation of that and not be allowed to participate in the
46 program anymore. That was the way our enforcement agents
47 preferred that we run it, so that there was not any confusion
48 for the enforcement agents.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** A follow-up, Ms. Guyas?
3
4 **MS. GUYAS:** I thought it said in there that they could fish the
5 state season, and so I'm confused now.
6
7 **MR. BANKS:** They can fish the state season, but just not on the
8 same day.
9
10 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay, and they would not be reporting those state
11 trips, right, and they would not be reporting any other federal
12 trips that they're making?
13
14 **MR. BANKS:** That is correct.
15
16 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer.
19
20 **DR. FRAZER:** To Martha's point, I guess, it causes a little bit
21 of confusion if the purpose or the intent is to figure out how
22 an angler might distribute their effort over some period of
23 time, because they actually have two options to go fishing, and
24 so, from a science perspective, I guess, if you're trying to
25 evaluate what it is that you're actually trying to evaluate,
26 there is a conflict there, and I don't know how to resolve that.
27
28 **MR. BANKS:** That's a good point as well, and I'm not exactly
29 sure that I know how to resolve it either. One of the things
30 that we feel like this experiment gives us is a chance to learn
31 from the anglers in terms of how they want to distribute their
32 effort.
33
34 We are working with some LSU researchers, from a sociology
35 standpoint, to try to understand that, but that's really a minor
36 part of what we're trying to learn. We're more trying to learn
37 whether we can get better data through this electronic reporting
38 and bring that uncertainty down in our catch estimates, but you
39 bring up a good point that different anglers will be
40 distributing that effort differently, because I can certainly
41 see that I may want to distribute my effort over the course of
42 ten days, and you may want to distribute your effort over the
43 course of one day, and so that's something that we need to
44 address as we look at the stats, I guess.
45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** A follow-up, Dr. Frazer?
47
48 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, just a quick follow-up. There's an option

1 right now, I guess, for you guys simply to modify the request in
2 a way that would say, if you're going to participate in this
3 program, or you elect to participate in the program, then you
4 can only -- Every time you go out, you're going to fish through
5 this permit, essentially, and so you're going to be denied
6 access from fishing the state, those participants. In my view,
7 that's kind of the only way to get out of it.

8
9 **MR. BANKS:** Are you saying the only way to get at it would be to
10 keep them from fishing in the state waters on the same day or
11 for the entire state season?

12
13 **DR. FRAZER:** For the entire state season.

14
15 **MR. BANKS:** That's definitely an issue for us. That's not how
16 we anticipated this program going, and that's not how we want to
17 -- We don't want to restrict these folks in any way in our state
18 waters, other than on the same day. I'm not exactly sure that I
19 follow the rationale of why you would have to restrict that, but
20 I would like to talk to you more about it, to see if we can't
21 rectify that.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Just to follow up, if you restricted them
24 though, to where they couldn't fish in the state-water season,
25 whatever that is, will that skew your data in a different
26 direction though, because that may change the way they fish in
27 federal waters. Do you see what I'm saying?

28
29 Now you're restricting a certain amount of access, and that may
30 change how they fish and skew your results, which you're trying
31 to look at effort and how, I guess, that's diversified, and then
32 the data collection that goes along with that, so that you can
33 measure that, in other words, measure that effort.

34
35 I don't know, but there's a few -- I guess the other option is
36 you would have to hail-in and hail-out and declare all your
37 fishing trips, no matter where you're going or what you're
38 fishing for, while you're in this program, so that you can get a
39 real good picture of it, of that effort, a collection of data
40 effort. Anyway, that's just another idea. I am not a
41 scientist, and so I probably shouldn't weigh in. I had Mr. Boyd
42 over here.

43
44 **MR. BOYD:** Mr. Banks, many private boat anglers land at private
45 docks or at their boat slips. How will you all validate their
46 input when that happens?

47
48 **MR. BANKS:** That's a good question, Doug. As part of accepting

1 to be part of the program, they would have to allow us to sample
2 them at their -- They would have to accept that we could come to
3 their property and sample them. That's part of the deal, I
4 guess you would say.

5
6 **MR. BOYD:** Okay. That means is then you have to have the
7 location of a dock for each individual that's in this program,
8 and you will have to have a way to contact them to find out
9 where they're going to land, when they hail back in.

10
11 **MR. BANKS:** That's correct. That will be part of the hail-out
12 information. They will be telling us when they're going fishing
13 and when they're expected back and where they're going to, or
14 where they're coming back into.

15
16 **MR. BOYD:** Thank you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I think I had Mr. Diaz next, and then I will
19 go to Martha.

20
21 **MR. DIAZ:** I have two things. One thing that I'm going to wade
22 into that I am not sure that it's even relevant, but, to Dr.
23 Frazer's point, if you was to not let them fish in state waters,
24 and it's a voluntary program, some people might decline to
25 participate, because they have good access in certain parts of
26 the state to federal waters, where other people that have no
27 access would be eager to participate, and so you might skew it
28 in the direction where people that are in areas that have to
29 travel a long way to get out to deep water to fish might be
30 eager to do it, and other people might not, and I don't know how
31 that affects the conversation, but I figured I would throw that
32 out.

33
34 One thing I wanted to ask Patrick is obviously you all will
35 communicate with your law enforcement, and that's very easy, but
36 I can think of at least four other law enforcement agencies that
37 might encounter people fishing out in federal waters when it's
38 closed to everybody else, and so do you all have a plan in place
39 to communicate with the Coast Guard or NOAA Enforcement or
40 Alabama and Mississippi enforcement, where everybody understands
41 what they might encounter on the water, Mr. Banks?

42
43 **MR. BANKS:** That's another good question, Dale, and I don't know
44 that we have worked those details out, but, in our meetings with
45 our enforcement agents, they also brought up that issue, that
46 they would need to make sure that they coordinated their
47 enforcement activities with the Coast Guard and everybody else,
48 and so I don't know that I could tell you exactly how that will

1 occur, but I just know that our enforcement agents are already
2 thinking about that, and they're going to be working through
3 that for us, and so it's something that, while I can't say it's
4 completely been addressed, it is certainly part of our process.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Ms. Guyas.

7
8 **MS. GUYAS:** Doug brought up the validation, which was one of the
9 things that I was going to ask about, and then, also, I'm just
10 curious. How did you choose the 25,000 pounds and 150 anglers?
11 Tell us about that.

12
13 **MR. BANKS:** That's a good question too, because we went round-
14 and-round about this. I was concerned that 25,000 pounds
15 wouldn't give us really enough data to work with, but one of the
16 things that was critical, in my mind, was that, if we were going
17 to be -- Well, first of all, we wanted to make sure that we did
18 an EFP that did not impact any other state.

19
20 We didn't want to take fish out of the buffer or wherever and
21 then end up with the other states or the federal season being
22 impacted, and so we were advised to use some fish from within
23 our self-imposed quota, which, at first, I was not all that
24 happy with. I thought that EFPs were supposed to use extra
25 fish, but I understood the rationale.

26
27 Then I said, well, if we're going to use it within our self-
28 imposed quota, if we use very many fish, we're going to impact
29 our own state season, and that's not what we wanted to do
30 either, and so we felt like that was the amount of fish that was
31 so small that it wouldn't impact our state-water season. We
32 wouldn't have to significantly, possibly not at all, reduce our
33 state-water season, but it would still give us enough fish that
34 we could run the experiment for two years, and so that's how the
35 poundage came out.

36
37 In terms of the 150, it was one of those things where it was,
38 well, how many fish can one person use to entice them to
39 actually want to participate, and I wasn't quite sure that,
40 anything less than twenty, that folks would even really get all
41 that excited about helping us with it, and so that's the
42 rationale we used to come up with those numbers.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** A quick follow-up, Martha?

45
46 **MS. GUYAS:** I forgot one of my other questions that I was going
47 to ask, and I think I know the answer, but I just want to
48 confirm. Can the EFP anglers fish the federal season?

1
2 **MR. BANKS:** Yes, they can.
3
4 **MS. GUYAS:** As an EFP trip or separate?
5
6 **MR. BANKS:** Not as part of the same trip, no. We want this test
7 to be done outside of the federal season and outside of the
8 state-water season.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. I have a lot of hands. I am
11 going to go first to Mr. Anson, because he hasn't asked a
12 question yet.
13
14 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Patrick, what is your, this
15 year or last year, the pounds that you were shooting for for
16 state management?
17
18 **MR. BANKS:** We were managing, last year, to about 1.1 million
19 pounds. This year, it has dropped a little bit, because of the
20 Amendment 28 scenario, and also because, as Joey mentioned in
21 his presentation, we, unfortunately, went over about a thousand
22 pounds, and so we backed that out of our self-imposed quota, and
23 so we're down to about 1.04 million pounds, I think.
24
25 **MR. ANSON:** Certainly I'm all for state management and
26 flexibility of the states and such, but, in trying to see where
27 this could go, potentially, the long-term application, and, if
28 you assume that you have 20,000 individual private recreational
29 anglers, and if you assume they're going to get twenty fish, and
30 you calculate that out with the seven-and-a-half-pound average,
31 and I got some information provided by Joey, you end up with
32 three-million pounds landed under that situation.
33
34 I am, I guess, a little concerned or have questions about the
35 number of fish for this pilot program, particularly if they're
36 able to fish the federal season and such, and that gives them
37 even more fish, or more chances for fish, and trying to match
38 that up with reality and trying to provide as much access to
39 anglers that would want to go fishing, and, again, just the
40 long-term goals of this program.
41
42 **MR. BANKS:** Kevin, I think you bring up an excellent point that
43 somewhat helps show that the ultimate goal is not twenty fish
44 per person. That is not what we're trying to get to, because,
45 obviously, as you said, the numbers don't work out. We would
46 need a lot more fish to be able to do that, and that's just not
47 the goal, to try to get to an eventual allocation per person.
48 The goal with this is to entice people to help us determine

1 whether electronic reporting can help decrease the uncertainty
2 around our harvest estimate.

3
4 If we were trying to work it out to a certain number of fish per
5 person within our 1.1 million pounds or whatever, we're looking
6 at about five fish per season, and we know that's not acceptable
7 either, and that's not the way we want to go.

8
9 Dr. Mickle talked about their electronic reporting and how the
10 PSEs were low, or maybe it was you, but somebody said something
11 around -- I can't remember the number that Dr. Mickle said, but
12 then, when we heard from Texas, and the iSnapper check there had
13 PSEs quite a bit larger than the traditional, I think that
14 shows, to me, or it further validates, to me, that we want to
15 test an electronic reporting system to see if it can work for
16 us.

17
18 Can we get as good as what Paul sees or will our electronic
19 reporting be as uncertain as I guess the iSnapper check? Joey
20 showed how well LA Creel works, and it really does. It's a
21 great system, but can we get it even better? If we go to a
22 state-managed system out to 200 nautical miles, will you guys
23 trust that we can manage this resource effectively and be able
24 to shut down quickly to prevent overfishing?

25
26 I feel like that, with large error estimates, or large
27 uncertainties, like what was reported about iSnapper, if that is
28 the situation, I am not so sure that I can convince you guys to
29 give us that responsibility, and I'm not so sure that I would
30 feel comfortable giving us that responsibility.

31
32 I am just trying to find any way we can to prove that we can
33 manage responsibly and that we can manage to a very tight limit,
34 so that we don't have to impose these huge buffers if we got
35 state management, and that's the goal of this situation.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, I have Mr. Boyd, followed by Mr.
38 Greene.

39
40 **MR. BOYD:** Patrick, going back a second to validation, I can see
41 that you could probably validate some percentage of 150 people
42 who are reporting, because they're not going to all be fishing
43 on the same day in your program. What percentage of those trips
44 do you think you can validate with officers at public ramps and
45 at private dock locations?

46
47 **MR. BANKS:** That's a good question, Doug. I am not so sure that
48 I even know at this point. I think that's something we're going

1 to have to evaluate as part of this test, because another part
2 of the test that's going to be very helpful to us is to know
3 whether we could even administer this on a much larger scale.

4
5 If we ramped this up from 150 to all 18,000 ROLP holders, if we
6 don't feel like we can validate enough on the 150, then we may
7 not, administratively, be able to handle it for all 18,000, and
8 so that's part of the test as well, is to test our ability
9 administratively, and so you bring up a valid point, and I'm not
10 so sure that I have an answer yet.

11
12 **MR. BOYD:** That was my next question. That was a great segue.
13 How do you go from 150 people to 15,000 to 20,000 people,
14 because it seems the validation process for that many would just
15 be onerous, and I don't know how you would do that, and, in
16 listening to Bonnie over the last few years, self-reported data
17 needs a lot of validation to make sure that it's accurate and
18 useful, and so I'm not sure what the end game is and where you
19 may be able to go or even not be able to go.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, I have Mr. Greene.

22
23 **MR. GREENE:** Thank you. To follow up on a comment that Mr. Diaz
24 made about how you're going to work with law enforcement, I
25 think that would be simple enough. You're going to have some
26 type of a letter granting you EFP access, and the individuals
27 can be named and have some type of specific letter with a phone
28 number that, if an enforcement guy boards this guy and he has
29 fish, then he has some type of laminated paper copy of proof
30 with a phone number that they could check in and verify that
31 they are indeed within the parameters of the law.

32
33 The other comment I had is that, if you're going to grant these
34 guys twenty fish, it's kind of simple. Rather than having three
35 days, would you be willing to have twenty fish and use them when
36 you want to, and so it's kind of one or the other.

37
38 I would encourage you to perhaps consider maybe not allowing
39 these guys to fish in a short federal season and give them the
40 opportunity and let them make that decision. What they do in
41 state waters may be irrelevant, but you kind of give them a
42 carrot here. Either you want to do this or you want to do this,
43 and we'll take up to 150 people, and I think that may resolve
44 some of the conflict, potentially, that Dr. Frazer had raised.

45
46 **MR. BANKS:** To that point, the only thing I'm concerned about is
47 could we legally restrict the citizen from operating in the
48 federal three-day season? I am not so sure we could. I don't

1 know. Roy, do you have any idea about that?
2

3 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think, as long as people choose to participate
4 in your EFP, then you could make it a condition of that choice.
5

6 **MR. BANKS:** I would have to look at that, Johnny. It's a good
7 suggestion. Again, some of the things we wanted to make sure
8 that we did was that we gathered this data without impacting the
9 other states, that we gathered this data without making the
10 people who participated have to really sacrifice anything. We
11 wanted to make it easy as possible, and so we'll have to
12 consider that.
13

14 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Lieutenant Commander.
15

16 **LCDR DANAHER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to also
17 kind of echo off of Chairman Greene's point there. Having some
18 kind of administrative guarantee that they're permitted to be
19 partaking in that assessment really kind of irons out any
20 trouble that we might face when we're just trying to verify the
21 catch onboard, and typically we're not doing a lot of boardings
22 solely for fish inside of nine miles.
23

24 If a recreational vessel happens to be boarded within nine
25 miles, it's usually for safety, and then they will verify the
26 bag limits onboard, but, if they have any kind of concern as to
27 is it abiding by the state regulations, then they usually just
28 reach out to their agency partners to confirm that.
29

30 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Matens.
31

32 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I do have some concerns on
33 the merits of this, but I don't wish to speak to that. This
34 thing came into the public domain on I think the 24th, a Friday,
35 and we had a week, a business week, and we here we are today to
36 chew on this.
37

38 There was a fishing tournament at which I was a committee
39 member, and snapper were involved, last weekend. We had 400
40 fishermen for two days, and I tried to talk to as many of the
41 guys that were going offshore as possible. During this week, I
42 tried to talk to as many people that I knew that snapper fished
43 as possible.
44

45 The response to my discussions with them were that the Louisiana
46 recreational fishermen do not want this. Daryl Carpenter is the
47 President of the Louisiana Charter Boat Association, and he had
48 surgery yesterday, and he's still in the hospital. Accordingly,

1 he couldn't come, but I had a long conversation with Daryl, and
2 Daryl asked me to voice his complete opposition to this
3 proposal.
4

5 To the extent that Louisiana is opposed to it, I can report to
6 you that, last week, the Louisiana House voted eighty-five to
7 six in opposition to this, directing the department to abandon
8 this program. The Louisiana Senate voted twenty-nine to zero.
9

10 It's my understanding that, in tomorrow's commission meeting,
11 there will be a motion to ask this proposal not to go forward,
12 while who knows what happens, but I have every reason to suspect
13 that it will in fact pass, and so all of the people that -- The
14 people that are involved in this in Louisiana don't want any
15 part of this.
16

17 It's hard for me, as a lifetime Louisiana citizen, to be in
18 opposition to my own department. It's new territory for me, and
19 it's with reluctance that I am making these statements, but we
20 cannot support -- The people that I know cannot support it, our
21 legislative body cannot support it, and I don't think the
22 commission is going to support this effort. I would ask you to
23 oppose it. Thank you.
24

25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Since we get so few of these EFPs,
26 I just wanted to remind the council that today we're just
27 reviewing it and discussing it. We don't actually vote on it
28 until after public testimony, and so we have it on the agenda to
29 vote up or down on this at 2:15 tomorrow afternoon, just as a
30 reminder.
31

32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Emily, did you have something for us?
33

34 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** I did, and I'm sorry to interrupt the
35 committee. However, we have received a couple of comments on
36 the EFP, through our general comment form and our
37 gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org email, and so Jessica was going to
38 navigate it. If she goes to the amendments under development
39 page and scrolls to the very bottom, there is a general comment
40 form that people have been submitting this one to, because we
41 haven't created a specific EFP comment form.
42

43 If you will notice, we have about ten commenters that have
44 submitted comments. Of the ten, I think only one of them was
45 opposed, but it was the Panama City Beach Boatmen's Association.
46 They wrote a letter in opposition, but the comments that we
47 received on the EFP were in support of Louisiana moving forward
48 and the council supporting the vote, and so I just wanted to

1 make sure that I pointed out that we have had some public
2 comment, and I would encourage you guys, as council members, to
3 go to that general comment form and read that spreadsheet on
4 your own.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Emily. I appreciate that. Any
7 other questions? Dr. Frazer.

8
9 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Camp, can you elaborate a
10 little bit on what you know, as far as the opposition to this
11 goes from Louisiana and the constituency there?

12
13 **MR. MATENS:** I'm not sure that I understand the question.
14 Specifically, what do you want to know?

15
16 **DR. FRAZER:** Why are they opposed?

17
18 **MR. MATENS:** They're opposed because they are concerned that
19 this leads to an effort to reduce effort in the Gulf in the
20 private recreational sector for red snapper and having that be
21 extended to other species. The people that are opposed to this
22 fear that this is going to lead to something that they really
23 can't accept.

24
25 I have heard talk that the red snapper fishery, the private
26 fishery in the Gulf, is overcapitalized, and I'm not sure what
27 that means, but I think most people would rather see, and I will
28 just pick some numbers out of the air, but a ten-day season for
29 everyone rather than a twenty-day season for half of us.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Banks.

32
33 **MR. BANKS:** Camp brings up some good points and some valid
34 concerns, and we have heard that. When we first started talking
35 about EFPs with some of the recreational community, it was back
36 in March, and we heard those very concerns. We brought some
37 ideas of EFPs to a small group at that point, and they made
38 those very concerns.

39
40 We have tried hard to make sure that folks know that that's not
41 the route we're going, and I think Camp has said to me before
42 that, well, you may not be going that way, but other people may
43 use the information to go that way, and that may be true, Camp.

44
45 I don't know that I can control what other people will use the
46 information for, but I just know that we give a commitment to
47 our anglers that we're not trying to develop an IFQ system or a
48 tag program. We heard loud and clear that tags is not

1 acceptable, and that's not what we want to do either.
2 Administratively, tags are almost impossible for us to deal
3 with, with 18,000 anglers.

4
5 I want to reiterate that again. We have put fact sheets out on
6 our website to tell people what this EFP is meant to do and what
7 it's not meant to do. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to
8 quell the fears of folks who have received misinformation,
9 through the media and through a variety of sources, and we have
10 done our best to dispel that, but, unfortunately, it's just been
11 very, very difficult.

12
13 **MR. MATENS:** To that point, I certainly wouldn't characterize
14 information from the press and everybody else as misinformation.
15 It might be information that people don't like, but I don't
16 think that misinformation is provable.

17
18 The tags, a lot of people are against tags. A lot of people are
19 against IFQs, but that's not the issue. The issue is, by any
20 means, whatever means is used to reduce access and effort in the
21 private recreational fishery, it is going to be opposed by many,
22 many people, and apparently a lot of people in Louisiana,
23 including our legislative leaders, and the press, for that
24 matter.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Mickle.

27
28 **DR. MICKLE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to keep my
29 comments short, but I do want to -- This has been a contentious
30 issue that we're talking about. It seems like when we start to
31 talk about red snapper that things get polar, even when we don't
32 want them to be, and I want to commend Louisiana. You're taking
33 a scientific approach to a management problem, and I hope we
34 don't discourage that in any form at any time, and it's tough.

35
36 I do want to complain about something else though, since I've
37 got the mic. I think our fishing permit process, our exempted
38 fishing permit process, has some issues in the process itself,
39 and I would like to discuss that, maybe on an agenda item or
40 not, but I don't think the detail is presented in these
41 proposals in the form where we know if it's good science or not,
42 completely separate from the present proposal we're discussing.

43
44 Right now, I think it should pass through a very transparent
45 process that allows the public to be educated more. It dodges
46 some of these issues that have come up here today, and knowing
47 that the questions that are trying to be answered by a permit
48 are actually going to be answered, if there's an analysis and a

1 yes-or-no question that's being addressed, and this is from
2 someone who has gone through the EFP process before, and we
3 spent a lot of time on the proposal, and I don't think many
4 people looked at the proposal to know how much work we had put
5 into it, and that's all. Thank you.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Very good points. I appreciate it. On a
8 broader level. All right. Are there any other questions for
9 the moment on this? Mr. Boyd.

10
11 **MR. BOYD:** Just one more question, Patrick. The 14 percent that
12 you're using as your target, does that 14 percent include all
13 recreational fishermen, including for-hire?

14
15 **MR. BANKS:** Yes, it does.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Thank you. At this point, it is
18 -- Yes, sir, Mr. Banks.

19
20 **MR. BANKS:** There is a lot of consternation about this, and I
21 want to say that I feel compelled to have to say that, we as
22 scientists, we want to test things. We want to perform
23 experiments, and I think we all should take what Paul said about
24 what has gone on about this EFP, and Camp brought up a lot of
25 political decisions that have been made, and also the
26 possibility of our own commission voting on whether to support
27 this EFP or not.

28
29 I think the scientists sitting around the table should take
30 Paul's -- This kind of situation, we realize that, when
31 political pressures affect regulations and laws, that's part of
32 our process, and we all accept that, but, when it tells us what
33 experiments we can run, when it tells us what tests we can do
34 and what data we're allowed to gather, that's a sad day for
35 science, and that's a sad day for management. I just want you
36 guys to realize that that's my feeling on it.

37
38 In some ways, it's shameful, and I am very disappointed to see
39 that happen, but, with that said, with all of the uneasiness
40 over this proposal, all of the uneasiness with some of my very
41 good friends around this table, we would ask that we delay this
42 EFP until August.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. So noted, sir. Very well said. That
45 will free up a little more time tomorrow on our agenda, since
46 we're so far behind. Let's see. It's 11:42. We were scheduled
47 at 11:00 to start our presentations for Full Council, and so is
48 Captain Pearce -- Not to put you on the spot, but are you ready?

1 We are ready for you, sir, whenever you want to proceed.
2

3 **PRESENTATIONS**
4 **FLORIDA LAW ENFORCEMENT**
5

6 **CAPTAIN SCOTT PEARCE:** I want to thank you all for letting me
7 come out and talk to you today. I wanted to do a presentation
8 on our offshore patrol vessel program for the Gulf of Mexico,
9 our JEA enforcement efforts for this year, and I will keep it
10 kind of short and sweet, because I know you all have got a lot
11 to get to.
12

13 The Offshore Patrol Vessel Gulf Sentry, which is located out of
14 St. Petersburg, is commanded by Lieutenant George Wells. This
15 year, as of up to the beginning of May, they have conducted 213
16 hours of JEA enforcement and forty-six hours of TED enforcement,
17 and they have issued two federal warning and fourteen federal
18 citations, seven state warnings and four state citations, and
19 they wrote seven warnings and four citations that were basically
20 federal violations, but written under state rule.
21

22 The Offshore Patrol Vessel C.T. Randall, this vessel has been
23 down for most of the year, due to repairs, but I believe they're
24 back up and running, and so they're trying to make up for lost
25 time, but they had acquired up to thirty-eight hours of JEA
26 enforcement and twelve hours of TED enforcement, as of May, but
27 they have been out for most of the year. They have written two
28 citations, to date, for state citations, and they are based out
29 of Marco Island.
30

31 The Offshore Patrol Vessel Guardian, which is commanded by
32 Lieutenant Jason Marlow, is based out of Carrabelle, Florida.
33 To date, they have conducted 150 hours of JEA enforcement, or as
34 of May 1. They've actually got more now, and thirty-hours of
35 TED enforcement, and they have issued thirty warnings for
36 federal violations and forty-one citations for federal
37 violations. They have issued twenty-seven state warnings and
38 sixteen state citations and also seven warnings that were
39 federal violations written under state rule.
40

41 The Offshore Patrol Vessel Vigilance, which is commanded by
42 Officer Pete Rockwell out of Destin, Florida, has conducted over
43 267 hours of JEA enforcement and twenty-four hours of TED
44 enforcement. They have issued five federal warnings and twenty-
45 three federal citations, and they have thirteen state warnings
46 and one state citation.
47

48 The Offshore Patrol Vessel 2005 Fincat, which is based out of

1 Crystal River and commanded by Officer Laird Canfield, has
2 conducted over 308 hours of JEA enforcement patrolling the Gulf
3 of Mexico, twenty-three hours of TED enforcement, and they have
4 issued four federal warnings and twenty-three federal citations.
5 They have issued ten state warnings and three state citations
6 and then also four citations that were federal violations
7 written under state rule.

8
9 Our 2006 Fincat, commanded by Officer Matt Cushing, is out of
10 Pensacola, Florida. He has conducted over 207 hours of JEA
11 enforcement and thirteen hours of TED enforcement. He has
12 issued two warnings for federal violations and sixty-two
13 citations for federal violations. He has issued four warnings
14 for state violations and one state citation.

15
16 The Offshore Patrol Vessel Interceptor, based out of Key West,
17 and the captain retired this year, but they conducted over 270
18 hours of JEA enforcement and forty-seven hours of TED
19 enforcement. They issued one federal citation and fifteen state
20 warnings and fifteen state citations and three citations that
21 were federal violations written under state rule.

22
23 The combined efforts in the Gulf of Mexico for our offshore
24 patrol vessel fleet accounted for 1,454 hours of JEA
25 enforcement, 203 hours of TED enforcement, fifty-eight TED
26 inspections, and 359 enforcement actions, whether it be
27 citations or warnings, and 126 hours of outreach.

28
29 Just some case examples, the longline vessel Patriot, and this
30 is the Offshore Patrol Vessel Gulf Sentry, but they found them
31 to be in possession of 110 pieces of king mackerel being used
32 for bait on a longline rig.

33
34 The bandit vessel Miss Morgan Starr had 140 pieces of red
35 grouper being used as bait and no longline endorsement, and they
36 were also deploying longline gear deployed inside of twenty
37 fathoms.

38
39 The longline vessel Rachelle was found to have 106 pieces of
40 shark, vermilion snapper, and grouper being used as bait. They
41 also had possession of undersized red grouper, and they were
42 charged with interference for dumping fish overboard as the
43 officers approached the vessel.

44
45 The online vessel J.U.M.A. was in possession of over 750 hooks.
46 They had 1,300 hooks onboard, and they were also rigged. The
47 hooks were rigged with reef fish for bait.

48

1 This is an example of one of the recreational cases that was
2 made. It was an undersized red grouper case. The fish were
3 hidden onboard the vessel, and officers found them. They had
4 over the bag limit of red grouper, undersized red grouper, and
5 they were also not in whole condition. They had eviscerated the
6 grouper, cut the heads off, and filleted some of them. Again, I
7 told you that it was going to be short and sweet, but I would be
8 happy to answer any questions that you might have.

9

10 **MR. GREENE:** Are there any questions?

11

12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Thank you, Captain Pearce. Did
13 your crews intercept any shark finning incidents?

14

15 **CAPTAIN PEARCE:** No, sir. We didn't have any shark finning that
16 I was aware of this year. I would have to go back and check all
17 the stats, but I don't think we had any this year, with the
18 longline vessels or any of the bandit vessels.

19

20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Just to follow-up, I've got a
21 little bit of experience with some of your crews in the Key West
22 area, and I speak very highly of them.

23

24 **CAPTAIN PEARCE:** Thank you very much, sir. They work really
25 hard.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

28

29 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Captain Pearce, for the presentation. I
30 am curious to know if you keep any records or would have the
31 data structured whereby you could determine if there's been an
32 increase in the number of citations issued this year or last
33 year that might be able to be compared historically, to see if
34 there is an increase in fisheries violations, specifically to
35 recreational.

36

37 **CAPTAIN PEARCE:** Yes, sir. We conduct our JEA reports, and so
38 we track everything as we board them, all the citations that are
39 written, and so we would have our annual report tabulations for
40 each year, and so we should be able to go back and effectively
41 look at different activities for each year.

42

43 **MR. ANSON:** Have you not looked at it then to know offhand?

44

45 **CAPTAIN PEARCE:** I have not done that as of yet, but, again, I
46 will say that I just newly came into this position, and so
47 there's things that I haven't had a chance to look into yet.

48

1 **MR. ANSON:** All right. Thank you.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Any other questions or comments? Mr. Greene.

4
5 **MR. GREENE:** Thank you for the presentation. Being from the
6 Orange Beach area, I deal with your vessel out of Pensacola on a
7 regular basis, and I just want to commend those guys. They're
8 very professional and quick, and I do appreciate the fact that,
9 when they do get onboard, they allow me to kind of resume my
10 course and heading and kind of continue on, typically.

11
12 We may have a trip that's waiting on the dock for us to get back
13 in, and I kind of feel like they are in no way trying to impede
14 me from getting back to the dock to unload to pick up other
15 people, and I do appreciate their willingness to understand
16 that, hey, I'm not in a big hurry and I can just stop and wait
17 right here or can I continue on, because I have pressing issues
18 that I need to tend to, and I do appreciate that.

19
20 **CAPTAIN PEARCE:** Yes, sir.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Captain Pearce, thank you very much, and
23 thank you for waiting patiently, sir. We appreciate that.

24
25 **CAPTAIN PEARCE:** No problem. Thank you, all.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. Emily, not to put you on the spot
28 here, but, if we skip down the presentations, can we skip to the
29 Summary of Anecdotal Data Efforts and do that one, and then, if
30 time permits, we will work on our Coral Reef Conservation
31 Report? Ava, are you ready over there?

32
33 **DR. AVA LASSETER:** I don't believe I am giving a presentation.
34 I believe it's Emily.

35
36 **SUMMARY OF ANECDOTAL DATA EFFORTS**

37
38 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** You're giving a couple of slides at the end of
39 mine. John, I just want to double-check with you that that's
40 okay, because I know that I was going to -- You were going to
41 lead in, but we'll work around it, and I'm happy to go for it.
42 If we bring up the self-reported angler data presentation, we'll
43 go ahead and do it. Thank you, guys.

44
45 If you remember, at the last council meeting, Madam Chair had
46 brought up a discussion about sort of considering ways that the
47 council could collect some sort of self-reported angler data
48 from our fishermen, knowing that those are the folks that are on

1 the water and seeing things every day and thinking that the
2 council could probably benefit from as much information as we
3 could gather from them.

4
5 What I would like to do, just very briefly, is go over a quick
6 report of some of the external and also internal efforts that we
7 have noticed in the region, and, when I say that, the Southeast
8 region, to collect this type of self-reported angler data and
9 utilize that.

10
11 We will start with initiatives by other fishery management
12 councils. The first is some of the councils -- I know that the
13 Mid-Atlantic Council and the South Council have both done these
14 fishery performance reports, and what they do is actually draw
15 upon their advisory panels and ask their advisory panels to
16 summarize their perspectives on a variety of species and
17 specific issues, and some of the specific things that they have
18 gathered information on from those groups are fishing behavior,
19 biological trends, environmental issues, and market conditions.

20
21 In other words, they actually go out to their advisory panels
22 and ask them directed questions, so that they can get feedback
23 on some of that angler-reported data, and recognizing that those
24 advisory panel members are very involved anglers in the process.

25
26 The next thing that is sort of happening in our Southeast region
27 is that the South Atlantic recently hired a full-time position
28 to conduct citizen science, and so it's actually Amber, who used
29 to be their old Outreach Coordinator, and she has switched over,
30 and she is now the full-time Citizen Science Coordinator. I
31 spoke with her about her program, and she pointed out some very
32 important aspects of citizen science that I thought were worth
33 mentioning.

34
35 The first is she said that all citizen science programs are
36 going to be designed to meet specific data gaps, and so, in
37 order words, rather than sort of just collecting general data
38 from our fishermen, you would do something like identify that we
39 have, for example, a data gap on discards for gag grouper, and
40 then you would go out and design a study or a citizen science
41 project that would intentionally target that data gap and try
42 and get information to fill that in.

43
44 She also mentioned that citizen science is typically done so
45 that the project is designed collaboratively with both
46 stakeholders and scientists, and so, in other words, they want
47 to make sure that the scientists are involved, so that they know
48 that their end product is something that is usable and that the

1 citizens that are going to be reporting are involved in the
2 program, so that they know what those fishermen are going to be
3 willing to do in order to give information.

4
5 They also talked about some sort of certification program or
6 something that will ensure that the data that is reported by
7 those citizens in those citizen science projects is
8 standardized, to the extent that that is possible.

9
10 At this point, the South Atlantic, like I said, has hired that
11 full-time position, and they are coordinating and making their
12 strategic plan for their citizen science, and, right now, they
13 are looking for funding in order to get that program up and
14 rolling.

15
16 Next, we work with SEDAR, and they do a couple of things to
17 incorporate self-reported angler data. During their data
18 workshop, there is actually private, for-hire, and commercial
19 fishermen that participate, and their input is critical to
20 understanding the data in fishery trends that are happening
21 during that data workshop.

22
23 Next, there are SEDAR observers at the assessment and review
24 workshop, and so those are fishermen that are there to provide
25 insight and ground-truth model results, and so, if the SEDAR
26 panel sees trends or sees something that is kind of strange,
27 they will ask that SEDAR observer if they have any idea what's
28 going on on the water that might be causing some sort of output
29 from a model.

30
31 Before I hand it over to Ava, we also are doing some things in
32 the Gulf region already to collect information from our anglers.
33 In a lot of ways, we haven't asked directly for self-reported
34 data. However, in some of the efforts, we collect that
35 information sort of secondarily anyways, and so we do have a
36 data portal, and I think John was going to present on that.

37
38 I'm not sure if that will continue to happen at this meeting or
39 the next one, but, very briefly, on that portal, we actually do
40 have a tool that's up and running that collects information on
41 goliath grouper encounters, and so anglers can actually sort of
42 georeference where they've seen a goliath and report that
43 information on our portal.

44
45 We are also considering doing that for lionfish, and then have I
46 have coral up there with a question mark, because we've talked
47 about it, but there hasn't been much motion moving forward, and
48 so we do have a mechanism with which we're doing that with very

1 targeted species in very targeted instances here, and then we
2 also, as you guys know, collect public comment through a number
3 of different mechanisms.

4
5 We do have our online comment forms, which are amendment-
6 specific, but, as proven in the last couple of days when I
7 report those comments that we hear that are amendment-specific,
8 there is always usually an area at the bottom that mentions the
9 non-amendment-specific comments, and that's where we heard some
10 things about concerns with the cobia stock and stuff at this
11 meeting. Then we also have that general comment form, where
12 anglers can report data.

13
14 We also have oral testimony, both at our hearings and at these
15 council meetings. I think, a lot of times, we do hear from
16 anglers that come up and express their concerns. Finally, we do
17 get a number of emails through that gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org
18 email account, and then we also run our council Facebook page,
19 which is very active, and that's a really good sort of
20 repository that we have of anglers sort of reporting what
21 they're seeing and what's going on so far.

22
23 With that, I am actually going to hand it over to Ava, because
24 she's got some specific ways that she utilizes our public
25 comment, and I think it will be helpful for her to explain that
26 to us.

27
28 **DR. LASSETER:** Perfect. Thank you. I just wanted to share with
29 you a little bit about a database that I maintain and that uses
30 a specific qualitative data analysis software, and what I do is
31 I compile public comments in this software.

32
33 We have the public testimony from council meetings are
34 transcribed, and so I'm able to import the actual transcriptions
35 from the public testimony, like what we'll hear this afternoon,
36 directly into this software. I also have available the written
37 comments, both from the website, that thermometer link, as well
38 as letters that are submitted as well. Now, I do work much more
39 with the public testimony, as that's far easier to import into
40 this.

41
42 Once all of these transcriptions and written comments are
43 imported, I code it for content and themes, and so, basically,
44 content would reflect tagging chunks of text, comments, by state
45 of the person speaking, sector, perhaps the topic or the
46 specific amendment that the person is speaking on, and then
47 theme codes develop over time, after I have coded for the
48 content, and I will develop themes that look at maybe a common

1 perspective or some kind of underlying idea that I start to see
2 a pattern.

3
4 This is just a screenshot of what the software interface looks
5 like, and so you can see, at the upper-left corner, there is all
6 of the documents, and I can activate and deactivate them,
7 depending on what I want to look at. The bottom-left, that's my
8 code book that is continually in kind of an iterative process of
9 development, and the center there is where I actually am tagging
10 these segments of text.

11
12 Then, on the right side, it's just an example of some of these -
13 - When I retrieve segments of text, it will pull out all of the
14 things that I've asked for and then lays them out for me, and
15 then it also identifies from which document they came from as
16 well.

17
18 Again, this is kind of the process of what I do. It's
19 retrieving the segments depending on what I want to look at. If
20 I want to look at say support or opposition to a proposed
21 management action, I can do that, and I can compare the comments
22 by sector or state. Then, as I develop these codes, these
23 thematic codes, further, I start to identify some of these
24 patterns, and that can then inform further questions.

25
26 I have used these in the social effects sections, where
27 applicable, in some of the documents, when I reference public
28 testimony, that we heard very often in public testimony such and
29 such, and so I will use these in that Chapter 4 part of the
30 document.

31
32 Then I just kind of wanted to make a note, because I hear people
33 talking a lot about anecdotal data, anecdotal data, and I think,
34 in all scientific disciplines, it's really direct observations,
35 anecdotal observations, that are the foundation for building
36 theory and later testing hypotheses, and so I just find that
37 valuable and interesting.

38
39 Really, it's what people first observe and talk about, and, over
40 time, when it starts to become a pattern or repeated
41 observations, somebody then may be interested in examining that
42 more fully, and so there's a real relationship between kind of a
43 deductive and inductive approach, and so that's all I have
44 there, but you're welcome to come talk to me anytime if you
45 would like to see more about this software. Thank you.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, ladies, especially since I put you
48 on the spot. Were there any questions or feedback for Emily or

1 Ava? Martha.

2
3 **MS. GUYAS:** Just a quick one. Emily, I think on 4, you had
4 talked about maybe starting up a data portal for lionfish, and
5 would the idea here be to streamline it with the other places
6 that are collecting lionfish sighting information, like USGS and
7 REEF, and I think NOAA is doing it as well?

8
9 **MS. MUEHLSTEIN:** I am going to defer to John on that one,
10 because he's actually working on that project much more closely
11 than I am.

12
13 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** The idea was that -- It's the same thing
14 with goliath grouper. As you know, there is a number of
15 institutions that are collecting this information. We receive a
16 lot of traffic and a lot of interest from people that are on the
17 water, and so the idea is to provide some portal, if you will,
18 where we can collect compatible information and provide it such
19 that we have -- One, that we have as large of a database as we
20 can have, and, two, that we're fairly well integrated in, so we
21 understand the limitations and we can convey that out.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Mr. Diaz.

24
25 **MR. DIAZ:** Real quick, and I know we're bumping up against
26 lunch. I would like to see, in the future, for us to maybe have
27 the Citizen Science Coordinator from the South Atlantic Fishery
28 Management Council come and give us a presentation, after she
29 has enough time to get established and has a good feel on where
30 she's going, and maybe even have a few results. I don't know
31 what that time is, but if we could try to plan that for the
32 future, I think that might be good for us to do. Thank you.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So noted. Any other questions or comments?
35 Dr. Stunz

36
37 **DR. STUNZ:** I know we're running up against lunch, but I think
38 the council can really facilitate a role here. My research team
39 are big proponents of citizen science. Does it drive us crazy
40 with fish identification and all of that? Yes, but, at the end
41 of the day, we still get very valuable data that we've used, but
42 I guess the issue, Doug, for you and your group, is that you
43 still need projects that they're feeding into.

44
45 I know we have public comment and all of that, and that's very
46 useful, but facilitating projects and working with others that
47 are involving citizen science might be the way to go, to have
48 partnerships, and you're feeding that information into the

1 process. There is a lot of avenues. I can think of a dozen
2 groups around the Gulf that are doing that sort of thing now.
3 Barotrauma, for example, is one.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, and it sounds like, really, there is a
6 lot of different avenues we can take here, a lot of different
7 roads we can go down. The one that peaked my interest, that
8 maybe one day we'll be able to pursue, is you talked about a
9 specific project, right, and Emily even mentioned that the
10 citizen science program with the South Atlantic -- They try to
11 identify specific data gaps and then go to their fishermen with
12 those, to get input.

13
14 What I thought of, my ultimate goal with this, was to have the
15 project be an individual stock assessment, and like, for
16 example, yesterday, during our conversations around this table,
17 Johnny mentioned that -- When we were talking about amberjack,
18 he said, you know, I fillet fish at the end of the trip, a lot
19 of times, and I've been noticing that I am having roe in these
20 fish in March and April, which is earlier than he is used to
21 seeing it.

22
23 I said, hmm. You know me. I'm always thinking. I said, you
24 know, I know a lady that works on amberjack that's a scientist,
25 and I wonder if she would find that information helpful, if she
26 already knows that, or if it's meaningless or whatever. I said,
27 well, it won't take me but about three seconds of my time, and I
28 will just send it along.

29
30 So I sent it along, and she emailed me back last night, and she
31 said, no, that actually is very useful information, and she had
32 a follow-up question of, by the way, would you ask the fishermen
33 this for me, and so that is the kind of thing that I'm hoping --
34 The kind of information that I am hoping that we can make it
35 easier for a broader universe of fishermen to communicate
36 specific information, like specific to that stock assessment,
37 whatever that species is that we're looking at at that point
38 that they think might be helpful.

39
40 We do have fishermen involved in our SEDAR process, but it's a
41 limited number of fishermen, as we go through those workshops
42 and such, and I was trying to kind of broaden it out to a larger
43 universe of fishermen, and I actually brought it up at the CCC
44 meeting that we attended, where all eight councils are together,
45 last month.

46
47 There were some fishermen in the Northeast that were pretty
48 interested in it, just due to some of the climate change things

1 that they're seeing and how some of their species are moving,
2 and it was the commercial fishermen, mainly.

3
4 The fishermen are saying that these fish are out there, but
5 they're over here, but it's not showing up in the stock
6 assessments and that there's really a disconnect somewhere,
7 possibly, a perceived disconnect, but they were very excited
8 about the possibility of, if we could ever elevate our anecdotal
9 data, our anecdotal information, directly to those scientists,
10 maybe we could find a way to tweak the process to test our
11 hypothesis of where these fish are or what's happening with
12 these fish and incorporate that eventually, if it pans out.

13
14 Anyway, that's where I was hoping to head with it, but I hear
15 some other really good ideas. I liked what Martha and John were
16 talking about with lionfish, and I liked what you were saying
17 too, and so maybe we'll continue to explore this and figure out
18 where we want to go with it. Dr. Stunz.

19
20 **DR. STUNZ:** Just one brief thing. Of course, I really like
21 Dale's idea of seeing where they're going with it and how we
22 could model after that, perhaps, but, in addition to the
23 informal work you're talking about that is real valuable, you
24 know Bonnie and Roy both have problems, through the Cooperative
25 Research Program, for example, that is set up to do that very
26 thing, as well as, to some extent, MARFIN, and so we already
27 have some of those more formal mechanisms in place that the
28 council could partner and do things to broaden the scope there,
29 and so, yes, there's a lot of potential.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

32
33 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it's a wonderful
34 idea to bring the coordinator for the citizen science program
35 over for a talk when that really hits the ground and they've got
36 some traction on that. I've been very involved in the
37 development, from the onset. It was a council initiative, in
38 collaboration with some folks from the private sector that are
39 experts in the acquisition and use of citizen science
40 information.

41
42 Some of the observations that I have made along that way is that
43 a good program really is a match-maker, and, by that, it's
44 essentially finding a group of fishermen who are willing to
45 collaborate, but finding an end-user for the information,
46 because, if you only have one and you don't have the other, you
47 don't have a project. You have a sack full of data that nobody
48 wants or is committed to using, or you have an unmet need but

1 nobody to help.

2
3 Those two things are really important in conjunction with one
4 another, and so I think it would be a wonderful thing to hear
5 about the evolution of that program and then how long it takes
6 to actually get up and running with some projects.

7
8 I also really appreciate Dr. Lasseter's point on the anecdotal
9 information. We anecdotal and often, too often, hear it is a
10 pejorative term, and it is not. It is really the best basis for
11 a testable hypothesis.

12
13 We can't use it as a solid data point, because our stock
14 assessments are pretty demanding, in terms of what can be used,
15 but it can be used as that starting point, to recognize that
16 something is changing, and the people who are on the water full-
17 time are always the first people to notice it, and that gives us
18 the ability to, if we're hearing that, to be able to look at the
19 data and to see if the data support these observations and is it
20 localized or is widespread.

21
22 The answers to those questions really are the things that keep
23 us from using one data point without substantial follow-on
24 collections, but that it is a crucial step in really exploring
25 change in these very dynamic systems, and so applaud you for
26 this discussion.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any other discussion on that
29 topic? Well, then I will let you go to lunch. Sorry. Slight
30 change in agenda, because I guess we probably should -- I was
31 going to have them come back from lunch early, but we will do it
32 now. Dr. Dana, would you come to the front, please, ma'am?

33
34 (Whereupon, Dr. Dana was recognized for her service on the
35 council.)

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you very much, Dr. Dana. You can go to
38 lunch now. We are scheduled to come back from lunch at 1:30.
39 That is the actual start time for our public testimony, and so I
40 would prefer that you try and be back in this room by 1:25, so
41 we can all be seated by 1:30. Thanks, guys. We will recess
42 until then.

43
44 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on June 7, 2017.)

45
46 - - -

47
48 June 7, 2017

1
2 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION
3
4

5
6 - - -

7 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
8 Council convened at the Naples Grand Beach Resort, Naples,
9 Florida, Wednesday afternoon, June 7, 2017, and was called to
10 order by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** On our agenda now, we are scheduled for our
12 public comment session, and so I am going to read our statement,
13 and then we will get started.

14
15 Good afternoon. Public input is a vital part of the council's
16 deliberative process. Comments, both oral and written, are
17 accepted and considered by the council throughout the process.

18
19 The Sustainable Fisheries Act requires that all statements
20 include a brief description of the background and interest of
21 the person in the subject of the statement. All written
22 information shall include a statement of the source and date of
23 such information.

24
25 Oral or written communications provided to the council, its
26 members, or its staff, that relate to matters within the
27 council's purview are public in nature. Please give any written
28 comments to the staff, as well as all written comments will also
29 be posted on the council's website for viewing by council
30 members and the public, and it will be maintained by the council
31 as part of the permanent record.

32
33 Knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the
34 council is a violation of federal law. If you plan to speak and
35 haven't already done so, please sign in at the iPad registration
36 station located at the entrance to the meeting room. We do
37 accept only one registration per person.

38
39 Each speaker is allowed three minutes for their testimony.
40 Please note the timer lights on the podium, as they will be
41 green for the first two minutes and yellow for the final minute
42 of testimony. At three minutes, the red light will blink, and a
43 buzzer may be enacted. Time allowed to dignitaries providing
44 testimony is extended at the discretion of the Chair. Thank you
45 all for coming today.

46
47 As you can see, we do have the list of speakers on the screen,
48 so that you will know what order we're going to call you in, in

1 case you need to step out for a moment. If for some reason
2 you're not in the room when I get ready to call your name, I
3 will circle around back to you at the end. I will keep a little
4 list of anybody that wasn't in the room when I called you.
5 First on our list today will be Mr. Scott Daggett, followed by
6 Mr. Bob Spaeth.

7
8 **PUBLIC COMMENT**
9

10 **MR. SCOTT DAGGETT:** Good afternoon. My name is Scott Daggett,
11 and I'm from Madeira Beach. I'm an owner-operator and SOFA
12 member, and, as you can see on the screen, this is what we use
13 offshore. I'm trying to make this as quick as possible. I know
14 I only have three minutes, but the top box I didn't even bother
15 drawing, because it's really not going to affect us. I

16
17 t's further offshore, but all those marks you see going down
18 north and south, I believe that's the mounds right there, and
19 I'm not sure of the name. I got kind of confused on that, but
20 they really don't affect us, but what I really want to talk
21 about is Pulley Ridge, and, if she could bring that up, it would
22 be a huge help, because you will see the yellow, I believe, and
23 Pulley Ridge is the first box. This is the existing Pulley
24 Ridge box right now, and the purple is the expanded.

25
26 As you can see, I historically fished there for a lot of years,
27 and what it comes down to is between thirty-five fathoms in the
28 summer, when we're pushed out past thirty-five fathoms, in fifty
29 fathoms, there isn't much there, and, by your 2009 numbers, when
30 we were going to get pushed to fifty fathoms, I used that, but I
31 didn't have time to bring it up though. In spots, just to the
32 north of that, it's only ten miles wide.

33
34 What I'm trying to get at is, in the summertime, is we use that
35 area so much, and it's just going to stress the fishery out.
36 We're going to be too many boats in one small spot. The further
37 we're spread apart, the better, and that's pretty much what I've
38 got to say.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Just for clarification, these are the HAPC
41 coral areas that we're looking at closing?

42
43 **MR. DAGGETT:** Yes, ma'am. I got all the numbers from Morgan.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That's your fishing effort within those?

46
47 **DR. DAGGETT:** Yes, ma'am, that is.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So it's heavily fished. Okay.
2
3 **MR. DAGGETT:** Some of those marks go back to 1999 or 1996.
4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. I think we have a question from Mr.
6 Sanchez.
7
8 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you for coming. What would you like to see,
9 given what's being considered for Pulley Ridge?
10
11 **MR. DAGGETT:** Anything that can keep me fishing inside that box,
12 I am happy with. If it comes down to not anchoring, I can get
13 away with that, because I think a misconception is that we drag
14 our cable up, and, from what I understand, that's flatbed coral
15 there, and, for us, we pull our line to the back of us and
16 straight up. You want to lift it up. If you drag it or pull it
17 out in front of you, where you drag stuff, it's too much of a
18 pain, and you never get your gear back.
19
20 I can see the other three boxes offshore, where the black coral
21 is at. I get that. I don't even want to stick my gear there,
22 because I am never getting it back, but, on Pulley Ridge, as
23 long as you keep it behind you and just lift the cable up, I
24 really don't see how you're doing any damage. I have fished
25 there for twenty-something years now, ever since I was a kid.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** The way the boxes are drawn right now, you
28 will be anchor? The boxes are tight enough now?
29
30 **MR. DAGGETT:** If it comes down -- I think a lot of us, if it
31 came down to fishing it and not being able to anchor and having
32 to drift it, I would. If I'm allowed to fish there and I
33 couldn't anchor, I would go along with it. As long as I'm
34 allowed to fish anywhere, I'm happy. The more bottom, the
35 better. The bigger they are, the better. You can condense this
36 down to a smaller spot and it leads to overfishing in one area.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We appreciate it.
39
40 **MR. DAGGETT:** Thank you.
41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, we have Mr. Bob Spaeth, followed by
43 David Johnson.
44
45 **MR. BOB SPAETH:** Thank you, council members. Bob Spaeth from
46 the Southern Offshore Fishing Association, Executive Director.
47 A couple of things I want to talk about is our harvest
48 capability. Due to cumulative regulations, the fleet does not -

1 - I am talking about the grouper and tilefish. It does not have
2 the ability to harvest the quota. The reduction of 50 percent
3 of the longline fleet, a three-month turtle closure, and other
4 regulations have contributed to this.

5
6 We are now under consideration of closing off part of Pulley
7 Ridge, which sure wouldn't help the capitalization. I think
8 that also that the snapper and the grouper IFQ should be split,
9 because the snapper harvest is not the same as the grouper. We
10 have availability of quota, and we have reasonable lease prices,
11 and we have a lot of participants, and the more participants
12 with the IFQ program, just the number of people that have
13 grouper IFQ and the boats that are the fishery owners.

14
15 This year, we're having a slow year. We do not know if it's
16 cyclical or whether the red snapper are taking over the habitat,
17 which is a grave concern of us, because there are so many red
18 snapper out there.

19
20 Some of our fishermen, if you question them, will be able to
21 tell you how their catches have changed and what they're
22 catching on that piece of bottom that they caught three to four
23 years ago, and it's amazing how the snapper and the discards
24 that we have, and we would like to -- We're not sure whether
25 that is happening or we have a lionfish issue, and so we don't
26 know what has taken the toll on the stock at this point, and so
27 it's too soon to call Chicken Little and the sky is falling,
28 because we've had cyclical years, where it goes up and down,
29 with all different species.

30
31 We would like you to take that into consideration, and also the
32 splitting of the red snapper IFQ to the grouper IFQ, because
33 it's not the same animal. We catch them differently. We catch
34 them slower, and I think that there's a few different things
35 that don't apply to the grouper that apply to the snapper or
36 vice versa. Thank you. That's all I have to say.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Spaeth, we have a question from Dr.
39 Crabtree.

40
41 **DR. CRABTREE:** When you say split the IFQ, they're already
42 separate IFQs. Are you talking specifically about Amendment
43 36B?

44
45 **MR. SPAETH:** What we're seeing, sitting here in the audience,
46 Roy, is that it's like when you talk about the IFQ. Everybody
47 seems to think about them as one IFQ, and what we're asking is
48 that -- Because there is a difference, that you look at them,

1 and whether you split them or not would be up to the council.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We appreciate it.

4

5 **MR. SPAETH:** Thank you.

6

7 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, we have David Johnson, followed by
8 Randy Lauser.

9

10 **MR. DAVID JOHNSON:** Good afternoon. I'm David Johnson. I'm a
11 captain. I would just like to speak on the Pulley Ridge
12 closure. It's a place that I historically fish and have fished
13 pretty much my entire career. I spent three trips already this
14 year in this area, and it's a healthy bottom. It produces lots
15 of fish.

16

17 To reiterate, with the summertime fishing, when the longline
18 fleet is pushed past the thirty-fathom boundary, it's a very
19 narrow area, width-wise, that supports red grouper. A fleet of
20 sixty boats, it's hard for us to operate all year-round when
21 we're all pushing into an area. A lot of the fleet has to shut
22 down for the summertime.

23

24 This area that you're proposing to close in Pulley Ridge will
25 actually support a lot of boats. We can pull trips out of there
26 for the summertime, when we're pushed out into that depth. If
27 you close it, it's really going to wreak havoc on our fishery in
28 the summertime, and a lot of money will be lost and a lot of
29 boats tied up for the summer, and that's basically all I have to
30 say.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We have a question for you,
33 sir, from Mr. Diaz.

34

35 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Johnson, for taking the time to come
36 talk to us. I just wanted to ask you about -- It was stated a
37 minute ago that you all are seeing a lot of red snapper, and I
38 just want to ask you a little bit -- If you could talk a little
39 bit about red snapper bycatch and if you all are able to solve
40 that with being able to lease fish or how that works in your
41 business, if you don't mind elaborating a little bit.

42

43 **MR. JOHNSON:** All right. I see a lot of red snapper, a lot more
44 in the past year or two than probably five or six or seven years
45 ago. A lot of areas that I could go through and normally catch
46 gags are now overrun with red snapper. You don't stand a chance
47 of catching a grouper, because there are so many snapper on the
48 bottom and in the area, and so you're catching a lot more,

1 basically.

2
3 As far as the lease goes, most boats can carry limited ice, can
4 carry limited fish back to the dock, and so, with the lease
5 price being as high as it is, the money that the boat actually
6 gets, after paying the lease to catch the fish, will barely pay
7 for the cost of your bait, your ice, your fuel.

8
9 In the western Gulf, these guys catch them so fast that they can
10 go out and the trip expense is offset by the rapid rate that
11 they can catch the fish. It takes us a lot longer. Our trips
12 are fourteen days. My trips, every trip, is fourteen days.
13 With the higher expenses, we can't afford the higher lease, and
14 you're basically giving up your ice and bait for fish that you
15 can't really make a profit on, because of the lease price.

16
17 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. I appreciate that input.
18 Thank you again for coming.

19
20 **MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, we have Mr. Randy Lauser, followed by
23 Edward Maccini.

24
25 **MR. RANDY LAUSER:** Good afternoon, council. My name is Randy
26 Lauser. I'm here on behalf of Southern Offshore Fishing
27 Association, and I'm pretty much here about the Pulley Ridge
28 issue, too. We only have so much bottom. If you guys close
29 Pulley Ridge, you're going to just stack boats on top of boats
30 on top of boats. It's not going to be feasible. It will stress
31 out the area, and I'm sure you guys don't want to stress any
32 more areas out. We've already got enough closures, area
33 closures, and we don't want to go to anything else.

34
35 My suggestion maybe would be to help us out and maybe put a
36 thirty-fathom line out there instead of thirty-five, because,
37 right now, we've only got that much of an area.

38
39 A thirty-fathom would give us this much area, and it would keep
40 us working through the summer, because, right now, even though
41 Pulley Ridge is still there, you put all those boats out there
42 in that area and they just go on top of each other and on top of
43 each other, and I pretty much tie my boat up the middle of July
44 and August, because it's just a waste of time. If you did close
45 Pulley Ridge, it would just put so much more stress on bottom,
46 which I don't think any of us want that. Pretty much, that's it
47 on Pulley Ridge.

48

1 On the IFQ program, I would like to see the fishermen have the
2 IFQ shares instead of letting it go public, and the people who
3 are in it, like grandfather them in and just try to revamp it,
4 to where there is no new people to come in. It would be great
5 to see the fishermen own the fish.

6
7 One other thing is, on the extra hooks that we're allowed to
8 carry onboard our vessel, I know it's already in the works, but,
9 if you could keep that and it works, that would be fantastic for
10 us, because the sharks are just eating us alive. Thank you very
11 much.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Edward
14 Maccini, followed by Mr. Bart Niquet.

15
16 **MR. EDWARD MACCINI:** Good afternoon. My name is Ed Maccini, a
17 SOFA member, and owner of a longline vessel out of Madeira
18 Beach. I think the first three guys kind of stole my thunder.
19 As far as the Pulley Ridge expansion, we already have a closure
20 for inside of twenty fathoms, to protect the nursery, and that's
21 wonderful. Then thirty-five to twenty fathoms for the turtles.
22 Great. We have the Edges, and we have Steamboat.

23
24 I think, if there is any more expansion -- As Randy mentioned,
25 he ties his boat up for the middle of July until the opening in
26 September, and one of the things that the IFQ program was
27 supposed to do was to afford us a twelve-month fishing time.
28 Here's the problem. When we get into June, most of the vessels,
29 the longline vessels, are forty-five feet or less, and so it's
30 advantageous for us to fish the deeper water, and, as of right
31 now, it's a little bit tight.

32
33 I agree with Randy that if we could move it to thirty fathoms,
34 and so, essentially, any further closures, I think will result
35 in, for a lot of vessels, a nine-month fishery, because it's
36 just not going to be worthwhile. Someone might say, well, why
37 don't you go for deep water another time of year, and the
38 problem with that is, with the smaller vessels, in the
39 wintertime, the weather is terrible.

40
41 We have short days, as far as the sunlight is concerned, and so
42 you're not going to be able to get the same results as the
43 summertime, where you have good weather and longer days, and so
44 any more closures, I think that would really hurt a lot of the
45 smaller vessels.

46
47 Randy mentioned the hook issue, and I am totally onboard with
48 that. I think we should have unlimited hooks, of which only 750

1 can actually be fished.

2
3 As far as the IFQ reef permit, I kind of go along with that. I
4 think that you should have a reef permit, and I was talking to
5 someone earlier that mentioned possibly the people who have
6 allocation presently, with no reef permit, would be allowed to
7 continue, but, from this day forward, we'll say, anyone that
8 wants to buy allocation I think should have some skin in the
9 game and have a reef permit with a vessel with the capacity of
10 catching fish.

11
12 I think that's pretty much about -- One other thing. If you
13 look at the -- I was looking at some of the tables. With the
14 deepwater landings, if you look at those three months, it's 35
15 percent of the landings take place at that time, because of the
16 better weather, the longer days. If there is any more closures
17 in that area, you're going to see that go down, because you're
18 going to have less vessels that are going to go out there,
19 because you will just be bumping heads, and it wouldn't be worth
20 it. I guess that's about it. Any questions?

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.

23
24 **MR. MACCINI:** Thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, we have Mr. Bart Niquet, followed by
27 Shawn Watson.

28
29 **MR. BART NIQUET:** Here we go again. I'm Bart Niquet from Lynn
30 Haven, Florida. I've been fishing for the better part of
31 seventy-five years. My first problem is the council keeps
32 harping on the discard problems and the new recruits in the red
33 snapper fishery. Both problems are being solved by the lease
34 programs. Boat captains and owners can lease small amounts of
35 poundage, in order to retain fish that they would normally throw
36 away, and make a profit on them at the same time.

37
38 Using the council's own figures of three-dollars for a lease and
39 five-dollars for the price of the fish, your profit margin is 40
40 percent, and where in the world else can you get that kind of
41 profit? You can't buy anything that will give you a 40 percent
42 return. The only way it works though is if you use snapper as a
43 bycatch or incidental catch and not a targeted species.

44
45 I personally lease allocation to bandit boats, seventeen bandit
46 boats, and eight fish dealers, five in Florida, two in Texas,
47 and one in the Louisiana area. That the money I'm counting on
48 for my next three or four years, which is about all I've got,

1 and so I don't see why I, after being in the fishery for as long
2 as I have, and having permits as long as I have, that I should
3 be penalized because I didn't keep my permits, and what about
4 the wills and children of captains that had permits and died?
5 Who is going to take care of them?

6
7 On another subject, if you're going to close an area to bottom
8 fishing for commercial boats, why not for everybody? An example
9 is Pulley Ridge, the Middle Grounds, Steamboat Lumps, the Flower
10 Gardens, and this list goes on and on. It's not fair or
11 equitable, which was the aim of this program we're on.

12
13 The agent from Florida, when he got up here, he said that only 5
14 percent of the anglers in Florida go offshore to fish. Why then
15 are they given such a high priority of the attention and the
16 allocation? Don't be blackmailed, and don't be jealous. Let's
17 go back and do some business, but Dr. Barbieri said between
18 350,000 and 450,000 offshore anglers in Florida waters catch
19 snapper.

20
21 If each one of them caught two fish and went one time a year and
22 fished six pounds, they have already gone over three-million
23 pounds of fish. Alabama is the same thing. They've got over
24 three-and-a-half-million pounds of fish reported. Somewhere or
25 another, somebody is doing something wrong, and I don't know
26 whether it's my fault or not, but maybe I can't bring it over to
27 you.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Niquet. Thank you, sir.
30 Next, we have Shawn Watson, followed by Mr. Chris Niquet.

31
32 **MR. SHAWN WATSON:** Good afternoon, council. My name is Shawn
33 Watson, and I'm a boat owner out of Madeira Beach. I'm a member
34 of Southern Offshore Fishermen's Association. I would also just
35 like to echo some of the things that some of my other friends
36 here have mentioned.

37
38 On Pulley Ridge, I think we definitely need to look at other
39 options for that, because these guys need to be able to go down
40 there and harvest those fish when we're in times like this, when
41 the shallow water is closed. Again, putting so much pressure on
42 a small area is just going to really create problems and more
43 hazards for the fishermen.

44
45 Also, I want to say that I am in total favor of the loan program
46 that has been mentioned here at the council meeting. I think
47 that's a great idea, as far as getting new entries into the
48 business, just like myself. I am still fairly new into this

1 industry. I am still learning a lot about it, through these
2 other guys, and that's pretty much what I have to say.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Chris
5 Niquet, followed by Mr. Ken Haddad.

6
7 **MR. CHRIS NIQUET:** I'm Chris Niquet from Panama City, Florida.
8 I'm one of those fellows that leases out his allocation. Ever
9 since I got permits, which changed to allocation, I have leased
10 out 100 percent of my allocation to those people who need it for
11 bycatch or to make their operation profitable.

12
13 I have heard discussed some modifications to the IFQ program
14 that is supposedly going to solve this problem. If you want to
15 modify this program and restrict how I deal out my poundage,
16 there is going to be about fifty boats that I service with
17 poundage that ain't going to get no poundage, not a pound. I am
18 going to fish them all myself. That's fifty boats that is going
19 to be catching fish, red snapper, and throwing them back dead.

20
21 On the next subject, the charter fishing industry, they caught
22 48 percent of their red snapper quota this year. They had I
23 think it was forty-six days to catch them. This year, you gave
24 an increase, I think, to forty-eight or forty-nine days. Let's
25 do the math, folks. You should have been giving them eighty-
26 five days and see if they can catch 90 percent, because one of
27 the things in Magnuson is maximum sustainable yield. That's
28 what you're going for, and you ain't getting it. You don't give
29 enough days.

30
31 About the IFQ system, in short, nobody here has told me the
32 problem that exists in the IFQ system that you're trying to
33 solve. If it's lack of fish to lease, raise the TAC. If you
34 don't have the supply, you can't lease them. You've got more
35 problems in the recreational fishery than you have ever had, and
36 you're harping on the IFQ system, the commercial fishery, to
37 solve them, and it ain't going to happen.

38
39 The last thing, and this is in Magnuson, make sure that it's
40 fair and equitable, because, if you reallocate wrong, if you
41 take these fish off the table in the wrong kind of way, we're
42 going to litigate, I promise you. Thank you for your time.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Ken
45 Haddad, followed by Alison Johnson.

46
47 **MR. KEN HADDAD:** Thank you, Madam Chair and council members.
48 First, I want to thank Dr. Dana for her service to the Gulf

1 fisheries. I want to talk about a few different topics.

2
3 The red snapper ACT for recreational, first, we appreciate your
4 attempts to maximize access and keep us below our ACL. I know
5 it's tenuous on how you do that, and I have some thoughts, and
6 I'm going to give them in questions. I don't know the answers,
7 and I'm not expecting answers, but I am just throwing them out
8 here.

9
10 One question would be do the new Standard 1 Guidelines, relative
11 to multiyear determinations of overfishing, give you any ability
12 to use a three-year average before making changes, as you think
13 about this? I don't know, and that may not be relative, but
14 it's worth looking at.

15
16 Two, do you have the ability to use underages in the ACL across
17 sectors to help reduce accidental overages by the private
18 recreational? If so, could that be part of the ACT development?
19 Those are my questions relative to that.

20
21 Snapper allocation, you had a discussion on that, and we would
22 ask the council to start a snapper allocation amendment that
23 reestablishes a fair allocation. NOAA staff have somewhat
24 clearly articulated that this can be done and that the recent
25 lawsuit was narrowly defined, and we think that you can learn
26 from the suit and provide an accountable new allocation.

27
28 Just kind of an observation on the AP, the rec AP. I was there
29 for one day, and I just wanted to share that our first Gulf
30 Angler meeting was identical to the first meeting of the rec AP,
31 and so there is a lot of information that isn't understood and
32 isn't known. We spent considerable time developing questions
33 for NOAA and digging up information to get to even talk about
34 possible management options.

35
36 Even then, it became clear that, without scenario analysis,
37 which is kind of like taking some guesswork out to where you
38 might end up if you take a given alternative, it's very
39 difficult to decide what direction to take, and so I just wanted
40 to share that with you. Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Ms. Alison
43 Johnson, followed by Mr. Will Copeland.

44
45 **MS. ALISON JOHNSON:** Good afternoon, Chairwoman Bosarge and Gulf
46 Council members. I am Alison Johnson, Southeast Campaign
47 Manager with Oceana. Thank you for the opportunity this
48 afternoon to provide public comment.

1
2 Although Oceana feels that deep-sea coral protection would be
3 better accomplished by using the discretionary provisions in the
4 Magnuson-Stevens Act, we do appreciate the extra level of
5 protection that the HAPC provides against oil and gas
6 exploration.

7
8 Regarding Action 1 in the deep-sea coral options paper, we
9 prefer Alternative 2, which would add all deep-sea water
10 octocorals to the fishery management plan, along with all other
11 deep-sea coral species that could be present in the Gulf. We
12 would also like to see a mechanism whereby newly-discovered
13 deep-sea coral could easily be added to the fishery management
14 plan.

15
16 Regarding Action 2, we prefer Alternative 2, Option 2, which
17 would establish strict annual catch limits and annual catch
18 targets and overfishing limits for all octocoral species in the
19 Gulf.

20
21 Lastly, in all new HAPCs, we would like all bottom-tending gear
22 to be prohibited, including anchoring where deep-sea coral is
23 present. We commend the council, again, for helping and doing
24 this amendment and working with the council as this moves
25 forward, and thank you very much for your time.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Next, we have Mr. Will Copeland,
28 followed by Mr. Eric Brazer.

29
30 **MR. WILL COPELAND:** Ladies and gentlemen of the Gulf Council, I
31 am William Copeland, a commercial fisherman from New Port
32 Richey, Florida. I am here today supporting Amendment 36B-
33 related proposals, which I believe will improve access to
34 allocation leasing and provide opportunities for fishermen to
35 earn a place in the fishery.

36
37 For those of you who don't know me, I grew up in Florida, and I
38 commercial reef fished with my father in the late 1960s through
39 the mid-1970s. My commercial fishing career was partially
40 interrupted when I went to college, and I spent twenty-one years
41 in the Air Force. I'm now a retired Lieutenant Colonel.

42
43 Being in the Air Force didn't stop me from commercial fishing.
44 I spent seven years in Florida during my active duty time, and I
45 commercial reef fished during those years. I have been
46 commercially licensed in Florida continuously since 1982. I own
47 two commercial vessels. One I fish inshore, primarily for
48 Spanish mackerel, and I have one reef-permitted vessel that I

1 fish offshore.

2
3 Again, I am here today in reference to Amendment 36B. First, I
4 agree with an allocation set-aside that I think NOAA Fisheries
5 should establish a reef fish allocation bank to provide better
6 and more consistent access for fishermen to lease allocation.
7 The percentage you want to put in there, I recommend between 10
8 and 20 percent, but obviously that's not my decision.

9
10 The cost to lease this allocation would be paid directly to
11 NOAA, to pay for program operations, and possibly pay for
12 additional data collection for stock assessments. Allocation
13 leased by people from the bank by fishermen could only be used
14 to harvest fish by the vessel and the account that leased the
15 allocation. That would be my proposal. I provided a handout,
16 and there is more details on my recommendations for that bank in
17 there.

18
19 I agree with an adaptive share program also, but only if an
20 allocation bank were established. Without the bank, eventually
21 allocation leasing would dry up, and people without shares would
22 no longer be able to fish.

23
24 Third, in reference to having to have a reef permit to hold
25 shares in an IFQ account, I agree with the Niquet's that, if you
26 have an account now, that you should be grandfathered and still
27 be able to have those shares to lease out into the future. For
28 anyone entering the IFQ program, I don't think, in the future --
29 I think you should have to have a reef permit.

30
31 In summary, I think that we should establish an allocation bank
32 and implement an adaptive share program, and I think that will
33 improve our access to allocation leasing, provide fishermen an
34 opportunity to earn their way into this system and not have to
35 buy their way into the system, as has gone on in years past.
36 This should reduce our bycatch and help reduce discard loss, and
37 I see that I am blinking, and so I will quit.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Copeland. We appreciate you
40 being here.

41
42 **MR. COPELAND:** You're welcome.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Next, we have Mr. Eric Brazer,
45 followed by Ms. Valerie Sirch.

46
47 **MR. ERIC BRAZER:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am Eric
48 Brazer, Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish

1 Shareholders Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.
2 I want to hit on five things quickly today.

3
4 Number one is the abbreviated framework action to modify the
5 number of unrigged hooks carried on longline vessels. We
6 support Option 3, which would be to modify the number of hooks
7 to be unlimited, while still requiring 750 rigged hooks. You
8 have heard about the problems of losing hooks to sharks and for
9 other reasons, and this is a simple solution. It takes care of
10 that, and it works for the fishermen, and, as you guys heard
11 yesterday, it works for enforcement as well.

12
13 Number two, on the federal financing program, Jessica gave a
14 great presentation on this yesterday, and we really can't stress
15 enough that the industry needs this. If the council really is
16 committed to helping young fishermen and replacement entrants,
17 this should be a slam-dunk. It's already proven itself in other
18 regions, and it doesn't take anything from the existing
19 fishermen, and it addresses what we believe to be one of the
20 true barriers to entry, which is access to capital.

21
22 Ironically, and we've said this before, when you start injecting
23 instability into a program like this, the ones you're really
24 impacting the most are the young guys who are trying to go out
25 and find money to build that business, and so we urge the
26 council to work with the agency and figure out what we,
27 including the industry, collectively, can do to get this program
28 up and running.

29
30 On Amendment 36B, all I'm going to say at this point is that the
31 challenge here, from our perspective, is that the council
32 doesn't have a clear vision for what it's trying to achieve, and
33 we heard this over and over and over again yesterday, and so,
34 until you can come to consensus on this, there is going to
35 continue to be a fundamental disconnect between the ideas that
36 are being brought up and what the true impacts are on the fleet
37 itself.

38
39 With regards to corals, we really appreciate the inclusion of
40 Alternative 4 in Action 3. This acknowledges the significant
41 historical fishing that has taken place in this Pulley Ridge
42 area and the minimal impacts of bottom longline on corals.

43
44 This gets us closer to a more informed understanding of
45 historical fishing access and true gear impacts, and we look
46 forward to a broader conversation about how low-impact fishing
47 and coral protections can work together.

48

1 Briefly, on reallocation, I've got say something about it.
2 According to the judge, Amendment 28 was fundamentally flawed,
3 and that's her words. That's her language. That's not mine.
4 That action took a lot of time, and it used up a lot of staff
5 resources, and to say that it was controversial is the
6 understatement of the year, and all for what? The courts
7 vacated it, and the federal private angler season kept getting
8 shorter and shorter.

9
10 We really want the council to work with us and not against us to
11 find some real solutions that don't penalize the half of the
12 fishery that has an accountable system that prevents these
13 overages. On a positive, but sad note, we want to thank Dr. Pam
14 Dana for her service and her dedication. We are going to miss
15 you. Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Ms. Valerie
18 Sirch, followed by Mr. Kenneth Daniels.

19
20 **MS. VALERIE SIRCH:** Hi. My name is Valerie Sirch, and I am an
21 IFQ shareholder, and I'm really nervous talking to you guys, and
22 so please try to bear with me. I am here today because of the
23 decisions that you are considering making about 36B. I don't
24 pretend to know everything there is to know, but I have been
25 involved with the commercial red snapper fishery since before
26 the IFQ system even started.

27
28 I have seen the fishery during the derby days, when there were a
29 lot less red snapper to catch and dockside prices were much
30 lower. Some of you were here then, and you know and remember
31 all of this.

32
33 Now the red snapper fishery is much better. After ten years, we
34 started seeing some real progress. We all have business plans
35 that we depend on, and so, when you start talking about
36 restricting this and limiting that and the use-it-or-lose-it,
37 you need to know that you are not just impacting fishermen, but
38 you're impacting business people and families.

39
40 You are impacting the fishery by even talking about some of
41 these things. Permit prices are going up as we speak, and some
42 fishermen are just getting really fed up with all of this stuff
43 about the IFQ, and I think that the Amendment 36B is filled with
44 a lot of unintended consequences. I wish you all would stop
45 trying to tear down a system that seems to be working, and I
46 thank you.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Ms. Valerie. Next, we have Mr.

1 Kenneth Daniels, followed by Mr. Garrett King.

2
3 **MR. KENNETH DANIELS:** I'm Kenneth Daniels. I'm a commercial
4 bottom longline fisherman from Madeira Beach, Florida. I'm a
5 member of SOFA and also a member of the Gulf Shareholders
6 Alliance bycatch reduction. I would like to speak a little bit
7 today about the Pulley Ridge issue.

8
9 As I understand the paperwork that came back on it, it said it
10 was some of the most pristine coral seen outside of the Pulley
11 Ridge HAPC area, and that's because we take care of it. We
12 don't want to tear it up.

13
14 I would like to speak about the hooks. An unlimited number of
15 hooks, not tied up and ready to go, really does help out,
16 because you guys did a great job of bringing the sharks back.
17 There are plenty of sharks out there, and they eat a lot of
18 hooks.

19
20 Then the IFQ system seems to be working pretty good, but it was
21 set up to be a flexible program that worked for the fishermen
22 and the fisheries. Once we start talking about restrictions,
23 you lose your flexibility, and that was one of the big selling
24 points to the fishermen, was the flexibility of it. That's
25 about it today. Thank you for your time.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Garrett
28 King, followed by Mr. Jason Delacruz.

29
30 **MR. GARRETT KING:** My name is Garrett King, and I'm a commercial
31 fisherman from Galveston, Texas. I'm an owner-operator of a
32 small commercial boat there, mainly fishing snapper. I've been
33 in the fishery since 2003, and I've been an owner-operator since
34 2013.

35
36 Last year, I landed around 75,000 pounds of IFQ-related fish.
37 It was all leased quota. I do not own any quota. My business
38 depends completely on the availability and leasing of quota to
39 survive. I am not in favor of the use-it-or-lose-it or the
40 redistribution of the quota. I feel it will take the leasable
41 allocations off the table and will be detrimental to my
42 business, and there will also, I'm sure, be other unintended
43 consequences.

44
45 I am in favor of a loan program. I would like to grow my
46 business. Just like any other business, you have to invest to
47 grow your business, and it would be a great way for me to be
48 able to get the capital to buy quota from other people and

1 continue with my operation. To me, this is the only option to
2 safely proceed without any major unintended consequences, mainly
3 putting me out of business. Thank you.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We have a question from Mr.
6 Anson.

7

8 **MR. ANSON:** Mr. King, thank you for coming all the way from
9 Galveston. I appreciate it. How many pounds of fish do you
10 land in a typical year, IFQ fish as well as non-IFQ fish?

11

12 **MR. KING:** Last year, I landed 76,000 pounds, close to 76,000
13 pounds, of IFQ fish and about close to 13,000 pounds of other.

14

15 **MR. ANSON:** How much, if I could ask, how much, on average, do
16 you pay for your IFQ fish, and let's just say red snapper, to
17 make it easy, if you were buying multiple species?

18

19 **MR. KING:** It's around the three-dollar area.

20

21 **MR. ANSON:** If I could also ask how much is dockside price for
22 that?

23

24 **MR. KING:** It's normally somewhere around in the five-dollar
25 range.

26

27 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

28

29 **MR. KING:** Yes.

30

31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Jason
32 Delacruz, followed by Mr. Bill Kelly.

33

34 **MR. JASON DELACRUZ:** Good afternoon. Thank you, all, for giving
35 me a chance. Before I forget, I want to thank Pam Dana for
36 doing a truly thankless job. This council process is tiresome,
37 at best, and you stuck it out. You did a good thing, and I
38 really appreciate that.

39

40 First, I will hit the hook thing I've been working on. You guys
41 were willing to talk about it in committee, and going to the
42 unlimited is the smartest, best play for us, and I've kind of
43 made it pretty clear that all you're doing is making penalty
44 boxes for me, and, in this case, it's a small hook box that puts
45 us in that position, and so I appreciate you guys moving forward
46 with that.

47

48 Secondly, I want to talk a little bit about the coral closure.

1 I really like the idea that everybody has picked up on, is that
2 we can identify these areas and protect these areas, but allow
3 historical access. I do think that's a really critical
4 component, and I hope that that moves forward with all of these
5 closures that we move into, because, if we can't establish that
6 we're actually causing a problem, I just don't see a reason for
7 you to remove us from it.

8
9 I mean, one of the challenges in our entire fishery and oceans
10 right now is that we don't understand some of the things that
11 are happening, and, if we don't have a clear delineation of what
12 it is, we're not going to pick the only thing we can control,
13 which is fishing, and say we're going to kick you out, but all
14 the other things that are really causing the problem, we're just
15 going to let those happen, because we can't control them anyway,
16 and so, to me, that seems patently unfair, and giving my guys
17 the opportunity in fishing these areas is critical.

18
19 It's the first time I have heard the concept that Randy brought
20 up about let's move that turtle closure to thirty fathoms, and
21 that sounds awesome to me, and I know that's a whole other game
22 that we have to deal with on ESA issues, but I would like to
23 talk about that, and I will work on that in the future, and so
24 I'm looking forward to that.

25
26 The IFQ in 36B, you guys -- I appreciate the fact that we're
27 going to start trying to figure out what you guys want to
28 accomplish up here, but you guys need to be really careful. The
29 unintended consequences that can happen here may completely
30 backfire on what you think is going to happen, and so I think
31 that's something that this council, as you guys work through the
32 process, you need to pay close attention to the conversations
33 that we have when we're standing around the table, or we're
34 standing at the bar, and try to understand the things we're
35 saying. It's completely different than everybody thinks.

36
37 Also, I really hope this isn't an unintended or a background way
38 to try to work reallocation, because I see these things
39 happening, and reallocation is just -- I mean, there is a reason
40 that we provide this access, and I don't want to see us lose the
41 ability to provide both, and I have always understood, in my
42 heart, that the concept behind our allocations are really more
43 based on where the fundamental usages are.

44
45 Us giving access to people for fish is a reason that the numbers
46 are so dissuaded. When you get into my grouper fishery, there
47 is a reason that more of a commercially-landed red grouper is
48 like that, because that's how it works. It made sense.

1
2 It was a balance, and it was a naturally-occurring action, and
3 all of these allocations are close to that, and I think
4 everybody forgets that it happened not in a vacuum. It happened
5 in the normal, natural world, and everybody thinks that we can
6 manipulate that now and fix some problems that we just can't
7 fix, and so I really hope that that's not the reason that 36B is
8 moving forward and that we actually try to accomplish something.

9
10 Also, and I know I'm just about done, but the fishery finance
11 plan, I have been asking for that, and I've been at this podium
12 no less than probably five times on that specific subject, and,
13 even ten years ago, I was asking about it, and so let's get that
14 moving and get it done, and let's solve our new entrant problem,
15 because capital is the most constraining thing you do, and, in
16 this fundamental group, it's causing that problem. Thank you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Bill
19 Kelly, followed by Ms. Pam Anderson.

20
21 **MR. BILL KELLY:** Madam Chair and council members, Bill Kelly,
22 representing the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's
23 Association. I have two issues. One is yellowtail snapper and
24 the other being lionfish. Here we are again, after a number of
25 years of working with both councils, and we have an early
26 closure in the yellowtail snapper fishery in the South Atlantic.
27 It shut down the last week in May instead of the end of July.

28
29 Why bring this to the Gulf Council's attention? Because we
30 perceive that we're going to have exactly the same problem next
31 year and the year after that and the year after that. While
32 there is great sentiment and attitude that the South Atlantic
33 Council should correct this, we need help.

34
35 We left a million pounds on the recreational side unharvested in
36 the South Atlantic, and we're going to leave a half-a-million
37 pounds unharvested in the Gulf. What we're suggesting and
38 asking for is the Gulf Council's assistance in working with the
39 South Atlantic Council.

40
41 Let's combine both the Gulf and South Atlantic stocks. They're
42 one anyway, and manage it under one ACL and let's correct this
43 problem. It's absolutely a shame that we're not making these
44 fish available for harvest and available to America's consumers.

45
46 Number two, lionfish, as you all know, and you approved a
47 profile and a project that we initiated, and we're now working
48 on it in the fourth year. We expect that, with the Gulf and

1 South Atlantic Council's approval, that we would rapidly get an
2 approval from National Marine Fisheries Service and NOAA, only
3 to be rebuffed last October by the administrative officials in
4 the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, under the assumption
5 that we were trying to initiate a new commercial fishery within
6 the Gulf and South Atlantic, specifically a trap fishery, which
7 is not the case.

8
9 We have really come up with some novel ideas here. One, we have
10 the combination lobster trap that is already responsible for
11 harvesting well over a million pounds of lionfish as bycatch in
12 the recent history of that fishery, as these lionfish have
13 exploded.

14
15 Then we came up with another novel concept. We put an optical
16 camera recognition device on that trap that only opens a trap
17 door when it identifies a lionfish, and so it eliminates
18 bycatch, and then you're really going to like this one. We sit
19 on the bottom, and we bait it, and we let that trap door do its
20 thing, and then we come back a week later and it was full of
21 lionfish, and can you imagine that, and the sanctuary didn't
22 want to go along with that.

23
24 Now we've got some major administrative changes that have taken
25 place there, as most of you are aware, and we hope that the new
26 regime there will be much more receptive to this, and I will be
27 meeting with them in Washington, and we have re-filed our
28 application to test in the sanctuary, and then we will go back
29 to Dr. Crabtree and his staff and see if we can get a final
30 approval, but I wanted you to be aware of that and up to speed
31 on things. Thank you for your time.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you for that update, Mr. Kelly. Next,
34 we have Ms. Pam Anderson, followed by Mr. Shane Cantrell.

35
36 **MS. PAM ANDERSON:** Good afternoon, Madam Chair and council
37 members and Dr. Crabtree. I am Pam Anderson of Captain
38 Anderson's Marina and fishing rep on the Bay County Chamber of
39 Commerce in Panama City.

40
41 For the MSST document, you are increasing the buffers, and I am
42 not seeing a visual that shows the stock versus the harvest,
43 something like this, and different species reproduce and grow at
44 different rates, and it's seemingly a one-size-fits-all approach
45 to this and not maybe the best path. The suggested buffer of 25
46 percent for red snapper instead of 9 percent, I would think, is
47 clearly unnecessary.

48

1 Vermilion snapper is not overfished or undergoing fishing.
2 Headboats need vermilion snapper to operate days beyond red
3 snapper season. That's just about all we have left to access in
4 northwest Florida, and there are plenty. If anything, we need
5 the ACL higher and just keep the bag limit the same.

6
7 Amberjack, charter boats in northwest Florida need amberjack for
8 their spring season. I will refer you to comments sent by Bob
9 Zales for detail, but, with the early closure in March of this
10 year, to look at the faces on the charter boat guys, you would
11 think that BP hit again. It's very important to have access to
12 amberjack in the spring. I have a flash drive in my pocket if
13 anybody wants to see just a random spot that the divers took and
14 they looked up to see all the amberjack above them.

15
16
17 We in Panama City are against any catch share programs, except
18 for one boat operator, according to Bob Zales, President of NACO
19 and PCBA.

20
21 I would like to take a minute to look at this chart that I have
22 provided. The purpose of the original chart presented by
23 Representative Steve Southerland's staff was to determine
24 whether or not the stock could increase with a four-fish, six-
25 month season, and it did, from fifteen-million fish to twenty-
26 three million fish. They were still small, and average pounds
27 of each harvested had only increased from two pounds to about
28 three-and-a-half pounds, but they were growing.

29
30 The purpose of my recent request for updated information was to
31 see what the effect of the stringent regulations and negative
32 economic impacts have had on the stock, assuming there would be
33 very significant increases.

34
35 To my surprise, the data seems to show that, in a six-month
36 season, four-fish bag limit, the data points from 2000 to 2006
37 are a steeper incline. The stock was growing faster than that
38 of the data points from 2007 to 2016.

39
40 I believe these questions need to be answered, assuming the
41 information is accurate, and I believe that it probably is, or
42 close, and why aren't we looking at a much more significant
43 increase in the stock? With the stock increases so apparent to
44 all of us, why are the OFLs so low, and, if the fishery impacts
45 are not worsening the stock, but instead it improves, with
46 longer seasons, why are we not considering that as an option, as
47 a necessary change in the FMP?

48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Ms. Anderson, I've got to ask you to wrap it
2 up, please, ma'am.

3
4 **MS. ANDERSON:** Okay. The rest of it, you will see in the
5 paperwork, and I will just give you one quick statement. I said
6 before that we are overfishing the limits sometimes set by
7 SEDAR, the SSC, and the Gulf Council, but we're not overfishing
8 the stock, and that's quite obvious with these charts. I would
9 like for you to see a chart like this for every species that you
10 have to work with. Thank you.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, ma'am. Next, we have Mr. Shane
13 Cantrell, followed by Mr. Tom Wheatley.

14
15 **MR. SHANE CANTRELL:** Thank you, all, for welcoming me to sunny
16 Florida. It's a little different than I've seen in the past,
17 but, first, I want to thank Pam Dana for her years of service
18 and dedication to this council. She has done a phenomenal job
19 of working through these very complex issues, and I would like
20 to also thank Leo Danaher for his time here. We appreciate all
21 of your insight and knowledge into this process, and we look
22 forward to working with the next representative on this council,
23 and other councils as well.

24
25 I also am the Co-Chair for the Boundary Expansion Working Group
26 at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. As that
27 process goes on and develops in the future, I would like to
28 continue to welcome this council to provide input and be a
29 partner in developing that, as it's been critical thus far.

30
31 For Amendment 41, I would like to see the amendment proceed, at
32 this time, with the committee recommendations and the preferreds
33 on the number of species. As John pointed out in committee, he
34 got a lot of response from adding those fish in there.

35
36 I personally think that five species is necessary in there, but
37 understand that some of these species are more regional than
38 others, and, looking at it from a different perspective, greater
39 amberjack and gray triggerfish, it's not that long ago that they
40 were open year-round, and we're looking at a closed season on
41 both of them, and so I don't think that's unrealistic for these
42 other species.

43
44 However, I want to see this amendment move forward, and that
45 seems to be the best opportunity for that to go forward, and
46 that doesn't prohibit us from continuing that exploration and
47 moving forward in the future.

48

1 We want to see the cyclical redistribution continue to be looked
2 at. That's the best viable opportunity without per-vessel catch
3 history, and we want to continue to look at that and see an
4 aggressive reclamation timeline and be able to convene the AP to
5 look at that and have discussions among the industry for the
6 development of that.

7
8 For greater amberjack, I would like to see you consider the
9 previous failures of the rebuilding plan as we look at what
10 we're going to do in the future. I believe that, late in the
11 amendment, there was not a lot of -- There was a lot of progress
12 made late in the amendment to start rebuilding, but it was a
13 little bit too late, and so I want to consider a January 1 to
14 July 31 closure, to open those fish up in August, and that
15 provides an ample opportunity and a level playing field for all
16 recreational fishermen to access that fishery and, that late in
17 the year, there is not a lot of other fisheries open.

18
19 Snapper will be closed, amberjack will be open. Gray
20 triggerfish, as we just finished that amendment, will also be
21 open, and, if there's any questions that you all have, please
22 feel free.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Tom
25 Wheatley, followed by Mr. Mike Colby.

26
27 **MR. TOM WHEATLEY:** Good afternoon, ma'am. I'm Tom Wheatley, and
28 I'm with the Pew Charitable Trusts. I live, work, and fish out
29 of Tampa, Florida. Thank you to the council and to staff for
30 their hard work thus far on Coral Amendment 9.

31
32 As you know, the Gulf of Mexico deep-sea corals do form diverse
33 habitats of reefs and mounds and undersea forests, which are
34 important for many species of fish, including our groupers and
35 snappers. These fragile, slow-growing corals can take decades
36 or longer to recover if at all damaged.

37
38 It's encouraging that the council has provided opportunities for
39 fishermen and scientists and other stakeholders like myself to
40 be involved in this process to this point, and we think that
41 that level of cooperation is really representative in the
42 document that you provided so far.

43
44 For instance, as we've heard from some of the fishermen here
45 today, Pulley Ridge is one of the more controversial sites in
46 the document. However, Dr. Kilgour has done a good job of
47 reaching out to affected fishermen to get their input, and, as a
48 result, we think that the action has an appropriate suite of

1 alternatives that will hopefully lead to a satisfactory outcome.
2 We do have three recommendations for your consideration.

3
4 In Action 4, which includes the Many Mounds site, which is off
5 of Florida, we have been speaking with bottom longline fishermen
6 who target deepwater groupers in this site, or close to it, and
7 they are concerned with the eastern boundaries of these sites.

8
9 At last year's joint Coral SSC and Shrimp AP meeting, there was
10 discussion of possible modifications to the boundaries of these
11 areas, and that would be good to consider as an additional
12 alternative in the amendment, and it's worth noting that a
13 member of your Coral SSC and also a council staff member will be
14 going on a research cruise to these areas this summer, and we're
15 hopeful that the new research and continued dialogue will get us
16 to an outcome that protects the corals and allows for continued
17 fishing.

18
19 In Action 8, we are concerned that no regulations are included
20 for consideration for these sites. These sites are particularly
21 deep, and the VMS and the shrimp ELB data provided indicates
22 that there is no fishing occurring in most of those areas. Now
23 is the time to consider how best to protect these fragile corals
24 from future harm, really before anyone is economically invested
25 in fishing in these sites.

26
27 As technology improves, our oceans change, and new markets
28 develop for different fish, it's possible, and even probable,
29 that new fisheries may develop in these deeper waters. It seems
30 like waiting until there is vested economic interest and the
31 corals potentially have sustained damage before acting -- It
32 kind of seems like you're waiting for the horses to have left
33 the barn before you shut the doors, and so we encourage the
34 addition of options that include regulations to the options
35 paper, so that, at a minimum, the appropriate analysis will be
36 completed and the council can fully consider this issue.

37
38 Lastly, we are concerned about removing octocorals from the
39 amendment this early in the process. We certainly are
40 empathetic to the concerns of Florida and the marine life
41 collectors.

42
43 However, there are sites under HAPC consideration in this
44 document, particularly off of Texas, that have abundant
45 octocorals, and I think, with some creativity, there may be
46 solutions to allow for deep-water octocorals to be protected via
47 this amendment while allowing Florida to retain full management
48 of their marine life collectors, and, as a Floridian, lastly, I

1 would just like to say thank you to Pam Dana for your service
2 here on the council. We appreciate it. Thank you.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Wheatley. Next, we have Mr.
5 Mike Colby, followed by Mr. Russell Underwood.

6
7 **MR. MIKE COLBY:** Good afternoon. I'm Mike Colby, and I'm with
8 the Gulf Seafood Institute and the Clearwater Marine
9 Association. Thank you, council members, and thank you, Dr.
10 Dana, for your time here.

11
12 I finished blowing out my heat exchangers on the boat earlier in
13 the week, and that was bad enough, and I thought that this will
14 be easy. I will get in the truck and shoot down the Skyway
15 Bridge on Tuesday and get here. After I almost got blown off
16 the Skyway Bridge, I finally get here, and then I thought I
17 would rather be back in that hole messing around with those
18 cores, but. anyway, I am here.

19
20 I always am compelled to give the council some update on our GSI
21 CLS ELB project. We are currently looking at additional
22 funding, which we hope to secure shortly, that are going to put
23 about 200 or 300 more units to hopefully -- It may be a bit of a
24 stretch, but we would like to get those installed by the end of
25 the year and have funding for a third year of the ELB project.

26
27 What's interesting in that funding is going to be approximately
28 resources for twenty port location training sessions, and this
29 solves some problems also when the Fisheries Service rolls out
30 the plan for the amendment that was passed here, hoping to get
31 fishermen dialed in, in some way, to using an ELB tablet and
32 understanding what they have to do, regardless of what platform
33 they use. The twenty port location training sessions is not a
34 stretch. Those are in the works, and I am hopefully going to be
35 involved in a bunch of those for Florida.

36
37 The other comment I had was, every time I come here and listen
38 to presentations, I always learn something, and I think that's
39 part of the hoped-for outcome of having management council
40 meetings, is that you bring fishermen and people here and you
41 get educated. Today's presentations on the reef survey
42 platforms of the states was very interesting, and it reminded me
43 of some of the challenges that we face in the ELB project.

44
45 Something that resonated with me was, Kevin, your discussion of
46 the Alabama Snapper Check and that you have this
47 capture/recapture platform and you've got an expected number of
48 trips out there, or participants in this, and you garner -- I

1 think the number was 200 reports, with eighty having dockside
2 intercepts for recapture, and I thought, now, that's a pretty
3 good number actually, and I'm sure Alabama would like to see
4 that higher.

5
6 Our CLS GSI ELB project is not quite there yet, but, to me, it
7 did indicate the challenge of getting fishermen to do this and
8 getting fishermen to do it. My guess is, unless I didn't hear
9 correctly, that some of that is probably due to people just
10 falling off the radar screen or not feeling comfortable enough
11 with doing certain things, but it did iterate to me the need for
12 training, the need to get fishermen -- I have said this before
13 at other council meetings. You're at the dock, you're icing,
14 you're fueling, they're all freaked out, and you have to
15 incorporate it into your everyday activity. I am hoping, with
16 extra port location trainings, that we can hopefully get over
17 some of those challenges. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Colby. Next, we have Mr.
20 Russell Underwood, followed by Mr. Chad Haggert.

21
22 **MR. RUSSELL UNDERWOOD:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am Russell
23 Underwood from Panama City, Florida. I've been fishing for
24 about forty-five years, ten years of it in the recreational
25 fishery, and, the last thirty-five years, I've been commercial
26 fishing out of Louisiana, out of Belle Pass, Louisiana.

27
28 The first thing today is let me say something about the snapper
29 IFQ. I think it's doing very well. I think I said the last
30 meeting that you all need to commend yourselves on what this
31 program has done for the fishery and for the fishermen and for
32 the resource.

33
34 I am very thankful to have this fishery program, and I am still
35 actively involved, and, yesterday, listening to the committee
36 meeting, I heard some very disturbing things. I am little bit
37 confused, and I've been coming to these meetings for about
38 thirty-five years, and I think the public and the audience is a
39 little confused about exactly what is going on.

40
41 We've got a great IFQ program that's doing good, and we're
42 feeding the American public. The stocks have been raised, but
43 then, yesterday, I heard, in disbelief, that we had a
44 discussion, a long-time discussion, about how we're going to
45 reallocate or how we're going to put our fish that we have
46 worked so hard to rebuild the stock -- We're talking about
47 putting it in an auction.

48

1 I am thinking, my God, this council worked so hard, and the
2 fishermen has done their part in building this resource, and now
3 you all are talking about putting it on an auction to give fish
4 to other people that is not even participating in this fishery.

5
6 Maybe they are not fishermen. Maybe they might be stockbrokers,
7 and that really offends me, and I think it offends the whole
8 commercial sector, that we thought that we were building up to
9 something to do better for this industry and for the American
10 consumer. It just don't make no sense.

11
12 We had a conversation yesterday about getting loans for the new
13 fishermen, and I know I'm getting a little bit old. Captain
14 Buster, he is ninety-one years old, and he's my sea pappy. He's
15 been there a long time, and we talk about maybe putting him out
16 of business or maybe making him get something that he ain't had
17 in a while, and so I just -- You all sent a lot of people a
18 little bit of confusion, and they are scratching their head and
19 saying, my God, I'm a new fisherman and I want to get into this
20 fishery, but now you all are trying to set rules to put me out
21 of the fishery.

22
23 One thing I did do in life is I've got two kids. Caroline is
24 thirty-five, and I've got a great son at Berkley. He is fixing
25 to graduate and get his PhD, but one thing I taught these kids
26 was never go out of your way, never go out of your way, to hurt
27 anybody intentionally. You all have got a job to do, but I just
28 heard a lot of things today, and you all should be proud of what
29 you all have done in bringing this fishery back. You all have
30 got lots of other problems besides Amendment 36B.

31
32 One gentleman said that yesterday, that we've got other problems
33 to address. The recreational fishery, they need things to work
34 out, and I think about Ms. Pam Dana. She's been here for years
35 and has done a great job, and Ms. Pam, even though she was
36 recreational, she has never gone out of her way to intentionally
37 hurt me, as a commercial fisherman, and that's why I've got a
38 lot of respect for this woman, and so she could be a good
39 example for a lot of new council people, to never go out of your
40 way to hurt somebody else that ain't done nothing wrong, and I
41 thank you.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Chad
44 Haggert, followed by Milo Mitrovic.

45
46 **MR. CHAD HAGGERT:** Good afternoon. I'm Chad Haggert with the
47 Double Eagle Fishing Fleet, partyboats out of Clearwater Beach,
48 Florida. Mine will be short and sweet here today. I apologize

1 that I missed the committee meeting yesterday, in all the
2 wonderful weather that was there, and I was out fishing
3 yesterday, with thirty hardy souls, and almost a limit of red
4 snapper for sixty feet of water off of Clearwater, Florida,
5 which is almost unheard of until recent days here.

6
7 I hear Amendment 41 going forward with three fish, and the guys
8 are asking for five. In the sake to keep it moving, if it needs
9 to be three, that's fine. Amendment 42, I know, has the five
10 species. I am kind of torn between whether I have to have that
11 or not.

12
13 Part of me would want it, because, when I go offshore targeting
14 the red snapper, the amberjack and grouper are part of the catch
15 as well, and it would help me reduce throwing those fish back
16 with the discards. I would be able to harvest them, instead of
17 watching them possibly float off.

18
19 The vermilion snapper, from what I have looked at in the
20 information today, it looks like that might have only been
21 overfished for one year and close to overfished another, and I
22 don't know why there is discussion on reducing that.

23
24 That's another fish that we catch in the offshore reef complex
25 that, if we're out there and there happens to be a season on
26 them, that would hurt their survival rates, and so, with being
27 able to harvest them, and, if it hasn't gone over their quotas,
28 I don't know what the reasoning would be behind that, and so
29 thank you very much for your time.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Milo Mitrovic,
32 followed by Susan Boggs.

33
34 **MR. MILO MITROVIC:** Good afternoon. I'm am Milo Mitrovic. I am
35 a private recreational angler out of Clearwater, Florida. I
36 have a huge concern about the three-day red snapper season we
37 had here. The American red snapper three-day season, the Gulf
38 of Mexico is overrun by red snapper, from depths from forty feet
39 out to 200 feet off of Clearwater.

40
41 There has been -- I was thinking of another option for the
42 three-day season for American red snapper. NOAA thinks that
43 every boat out there is fishing for red snapper, and I think
44 that's totally false. I think every offshore recreational
45 angler should report their catch and be accountable for it, so
46 NOAA knows what is going on out there in the Gulf out there.

47
48 NOAA thinks that every boat out there is fishing the Gulf, and

1 that's another false, and NOAA needs to get their science
2 straight, so they can get a better data source, and so I was
3 thinking, for the offshore private recreational angler, every
4 private boat that's going offshore should have a VMS, so NOAA
5 knows who is out there fishing in the Gulf and so we can have
6 more days to fish than the three-day season.

7
8 I know, myself, I know a hundred private anglers that have boats
9 themselves, and they don't even go fishing for three days. They
10 didn't go, and that's including myself. I didn't go fishing on
11 those three days. I was working, and, everybody else that I
12 knew was out, they didn't go because of work, and, basically,
13 the weather wasn't that cooperative either.

14
15 I think we need to do something about this, because I can't even
16 catch fish, because it's only a three-day season, and I want to
17 go out and catch a fish, and I don't mind. I am happy that the
18 stocks are coming back for the red snapper population. I think
19 it's really good the population, how the red snapper are coming
20 back, but I think we need to do something a little bit better
21 than three days, guys, and I can't -- When I'm fishing off of
22 forty feet off of Clearwater, I can't even get to my gag grouper
23 spots, because, every time I drop down a pinfish, or even a
24 whole sardine, I'm catching red snapper, and that's all the way
25 up to Crystal River.

26
27 I went up to Crystal River a couple of months ago, just trying
28 it out, and it's all red snapper. From forty out to sixty feet
29 of water, it's all red snapper, and that's my concern today, and
30 I hope that we can make a change and we can all work together.
31 Thank you.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you for coming, sir. Next, we have Ms.
34 Susan Boggs, followed by Dylan Hubbard.

35
36 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Good afternoon. My name is Susan Boggs from
37 Reel Surprise Charters in Orange Beach, Alabama and Sand Rock
38 Cay Marina, Orange Beach, Alabama. Randy apologized that he
39 couldn't be here today, but, as you all know, it's red snapper
40 season, and he is out fishing.

41
42 Amberjacks, I support Action 1, the closed season January
43 through June. With the triggerfish opening in the spring, and
44 snapper season and June and July, I think that the fishermen
45 would prefer to have something to catch in the fall months.

46
47 Vermilion snapper, all I can remember is, in 2013, the
48 recreational sector was cut by 50 percent. I would like to not

1 see any more cuts to the recreational sector. I agree with what
2 Pam said. When snapper season, triggerfish and jacks and all of
3 that is closed, that's all that's remaining out there to be
4 caught.

5
6 I want to touch on something that most of you all, I know, are
7 very aware of, and that was the Orange Beach red snapper protest
8 that took place this past Sunday. It was not a success.
9 Eighteen boats showed up to that protest, and I stood at the
10 specially-called council meeting in the City of Orange Beach,
11 and I said to the council, just as we come and say to this
12 council, not one recreational fisherman has come to this podium
13 and offered a solution, and I would really like to see, and I
14 commend this council for the recreational AP. I know it's a
15 slow process, but look at Amendment 41 and 42. We're making
16 progress. It's moving forward, and I thank this council for
17 that.

18
19 I encourage the recreational fishermen -- My message to you is I
20 brought that message to Orange Beach two weeks ago and said show
21 up at these meetings and help us work through this process.
22 It's important, and it's taxing, and it takes time, but the
23 fishermen do it, and we have seen successes in this fishery.
24 Thank you.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Next, we have Dylan Hubbard,
27 followed by David Krebs.

28
29 **MR. DYLAN HUBBARD:** Hello, council. I'm Captain Dylan Hubbard
30 from Hubbard's Marina. Hubbard's Marina has been operating
31 fishing vessels off the coast of the Tampa Bay area for nearly
32 ninety years. We are family owned and operated, and we have six
33 federally-permitted vessels, two being large partyboats and four
34 being private charter vessels, two of which are multi-passenger
35 vessels.

36
37 The first thing was the options paper for the Framework Action
38 to Require Possession of Descending Devices or Venting Tools
39 Onboard Vessels Possession Reef Fish. We support Action 1,
40 suggesting Alternative 3a, in conjunction with Alternative 4, to
41 increase the survival of released fish, thereby minimizing the
42 mortality of bycatch when barotrauma is present.

43
44 The development of an outreach program would be a great addition
45 to the requirement of having a venting tool onboard, because
46 many anglers will need to learn how to vent fish properly.
47 Finally, we strongly encourage you to consider removing the
48 possibility of making a descending device required, because it's

1 not realistic to be used offshore.
2
3 We would have to hire a special mate just to man that descending
4 device and designate a special area of the vessel to do so, and
5 it just wouldn't be realistic to use on a partyboat or a
6 headboat, in a situation where we're catching small, undersized
7 fish or fish that are out of season. It would take a great
8 amount of time, and, in my opinion, become more of a shark
9 feeder and result in more dead discards, due to shark predation,
10 especially in the summertime.
11
12 Then, also, Amendment 41, the revised draft of Allocation-Based
13 Management for Federally-Permitted Charter Vessels, Chapter 2.1,
14 Action 1, we propose Alternative 1, no action, with an added
15 Option a that would make a logbook reporting mandatory, like it
16 is for the headboat industry. After a set amount of time, like
17 three, five, or seven years, we could reevaluate, and there
18 would be historical catch data to work from when instituting the
19 initial IFQ distribution.
20
21 If Alternative 2 is pursued, against our recommendation, we
22 would highly recommend to the council that they utilize the
23 headboat historical data. For example, if you were to institute
24 the allocation-based management for federally-permitted charter
25 vessels, you could look at the headboat historical catch data
26 geographics, and some of the arguments we heard in the council
27 was where is the red snapper being caught and they don't catch
28 it on the western coast of Florida, and, well, we catch a lot of
29 it. As you've heard many times, we can't get away from them.
30
31 There is plenty of amberjack, and there is plenty of gray
32 triggerfish around our area too, and there is a ton of grouper,
33 and so looking at that headboat historical catch data would give
34 you a good starting point when you're looking at the initial IFQ
35 distribution for Amendment 41, if you were to go that route,
36 which we would strongly advise against.
37
38 Also, draft Amendment 42, Federal Reef Fish Headboat Management,
39 we didn't really discuss it during this meeting, but I would
40 like to see Amendment 41 and Amendment 42 move together, not
41 only in the timeline, but also in the species managed.
42
43 If you're going to manage certain species in Amendment 41, we
44 feel they should be managed in Amendment 42 as well, which would
45 make it easier for the public, because the public takes these
46 trips. This isn't for us.
47
48 I know what's in season. I have to know what's in season. It's

1 my job, but the public needs to know how to book a trip, and,
2 right now, we have four different red snapper seasons, and I
3 spend a lot of my time at work explaining how the regulation
4 works and why it's this way and trying to explain different
5 seasons.

6
7 If you had Amendment 41 and Amendment 42 pass, and you have this
8 allocation-based management system and some species are included
9 in one and some species are included in another -- I've got
10 charter boats and headboats. I would have to spend an hour on
11 the phone telling a client what they can and can't keep, based
12 on which boat they take, and it would really, really complicate
13 an already complex system, and I would strongly recommend moving
14 those together, not only in the timeline, but also as far as
15 what species are being managed.

16
17 Also, lastly, the final action on Amendment 47, Chapter 2.1,
18 Action 1, we suggest Alternative 1, no action. A proxy is not
19 needed, as this is a healthy stock and not being overfished.
20 Chapter 2.2, Action 2, we suggest, again, Alternative 1, no
21 action. The ACL for vermilion snapper should remain at 3.42
22 million pounds, as we currently have a very healthy fishery, a
23 very robust fishery, with large fish.

24
25 If the ACL is adjusted down around the bordered catch, the catch
26 landings are already being recorded at, and it happens to be hit
27 once or twice, we don't want to see the vermilion have the
28 overfished designation and all the problems that we face with
29 red snapper, amberjack, and gray triggerfish as well. Thank you
30 for your time, council.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. I think we have a question
33 for you from Mr. Boyd.

34
35 **MR. BOYD:** Dylan, thank you for your testimony. I have a
36 question on barotrauma and venting devices. I am assuming, from
37 your testimony, that you have venting devices on your boats, and
38 I am assuming that you have trained your crew on how to use
39 them.

40
41 **MR. HUBBARD:** To be honest, council, I thought that I was still
42 supposed to have them on my boat, and so they have never left
43 the boat. We have used venting tools for a long, long time, and
44 well before they were ever mandatory, and we continue to use
45 venting devices, and I often do seminars, probably three to four
46 times a month, not only to promote my business, but also to
47 raise awareness about our fishery, and every seminar I give
48 includes how to vent a fish, how to properly vent a fish, where

1 to vent that fish, and when you need to vent a fish.

2
3 Obviously, as the council knows, anywhere from seventy to ninety
4 foot and beyond, depending on the water temperature, barotrauma
5 is present, and proper venting of a fish will totally make that
6 fish a healthy discard.

7
8 In my opinion, when you use proper tools, like a de-hooker, not
9 using needle-nose pliers and not bringing that fish on the deck
10 and letting him sit on the deck, but a properly-vented fish that
11 is de-hooked quickly and properly is going to go home healthy
12 99.9 percent of the time, and a descending device is extra
13 required material that's going to sit on the roof next to the
14 black spare tire for the turtle devices. In my opinion, a
15 venting tool is all that needs to be required, and it would
16 result in plenty of healthy discards.

17
18 **MR. BOYD:** Thank you.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.

21
22 **MR. HUBBARD:** Thank you.

23
24
25 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, we have Mr. David Krebs, followed by
26 Mr. Ed Walker.

27
28 **MR. DAVID KREBS:** Good afternoon, council. I'm David Krebs,
29 owner of Ariel Seafoods in Destin, Florida and Sebastian,
30 Florida. I'm an IFQ shareholder and sat in your IFQ advisory
31 panel to develop the program back in 2004. A lot of the
32 discussions that are being held today, if you'll go back and
33 review some of the AP discussion in 2004, you will find 100
34 percent of the things you're talking about. We addressed it in
35 2004, and, unfortunately, it wasn't adopted by the council in
36 2007, as we moved forward.

37
38 I find it frustrating that I look at the makeup of the Reef Fish
39 Committee, and what I have for commercial representation on that
40 committee that's actually commercial, because what do I have for
41 commercial on this council? Mr. Walker, Ms. Dana, and Johnny
42 Greene, and, yet, I haven't heard any of them say there's a
43 problem with the red snapper IFQ program that needs to be
44 addressed.

45
46 For some reason, everything that I hear comes from the
47 recreational component of this council that we need to do
48 something about the most successful program that has ever come

1 out of this council, and it's frustrating, because, during that
2 whole time, the recreational participation on this council has
3 not come up with one idea to advance recreational red snapper
4 management.

5
6 So, now, thank God, we've got Congress involved, and we've
7 actually got something on the table that says, hey, maybe if we
8 get the states to give up their state seasons, we could come up
9 with twenty-one days. Weekends are twenty-seven days, twelve
10 weekends and three special days.

11
12 That is a start. For five years, where has that come from from
13 this council? For five years, all we've talked about is how do
14 we interfere, interrupt, and destabilize the best system that we
15 have ever had, the IFQ? It was vetted over fourteen years. We
16 spent three or four years just arguing about allocation in the
17 AP process, and yet we want to destabilize it.

18
19 When you tell people they can't lease their fish anymore -- A
20 man dies that fished for me for twenty-five years, and I still
21 have the ability to lease his fish. Guess what? That keeps my
22 fish house in business. If you take that away from me, you
23 affect the community of Destin, Florida, because, eventually, my
24 fish house goes away. Maybe that's the intent of the
25 recreational industry. I hope not.

26
27 Dr. Dana, thank you so much for all that you have done for us.
28 You have been impartial, you have been fair, and I don't
29 understand why you're not still here. Thank you.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Mr. Krebs, we have a
32 question from Mr. Walker.

33
34 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, David. Thank you for coming off of work
35 to come here and be with us and give testimony. I have a couple
36 of questions here. The loan program, can you maybe give us your
37 thoughts on this loan program?

38
39 **MR. KREBS:** David, that does go back to my talking about what
40 happened in the AP development. We recognized, back then, that
41 there needed to be a federal loan program for new participation,
42 because it was going to change over time, and you have a
43 successful business model that, yes, the more successful it
44 gets, the more expensive it gets, but why couldn't there be a
45 loan program for new participation?

46
47 The frustration always was that we were told to consolidate our
48 fleet to reduce our footprint. We did that, and now the

1 argument that's coming into play to destabilize the fishery is
2 we need new entrants. No, we need replacement entrants. We
3 need somebody that can buy somebody out and replace them without
4 disrupting the whole system, and that's my frustration as a fish
5 house in Destin.

6
7 If my fishermen, as they get older, are forced to sell their
8 fish, that's going to go someone who has the money. The only
9 people that have money are big corporations, and so you're going
10 to find other people in different areas, and it moves all the
11 fish away from a community, and so we need a loan program, and
12 whether that's community based or federal based, but it makes
13 perfect sense. That way, a guy can get in.

14
15 I mean, if you get a 2 percent loan and you're getting a good
16 return on your fish, it makes nothing but commonsense, and so I
17 certainly hope -- We talked about it ten years ago, and I hope
18 we will talk about it more in the future, and actually do more
19 than talk about it, but look at that as a solution to new
20 participation. Thank you for the question.

21
22 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Ed Walker,
25 followed by Captain Bill Goulding.

26
27 **MR. ED WALKER:** Thank you very much. My name is Ed Walker, and
28 I am a recreational fisherman, a charter boat fisherman, and a
29 commercial fisherman, among other things, and I am here to speak
30 today on Amendment 41, the multispecies part of that, actually.
31 Where I live here in west Florida, the Clearwater area, grouper,
32 to me, is the most important species, red grouper and gag
33 grouper, particularly.

34
35 This area where I live is the biological center of abundance for
36 both of those species, and I personally would like to see
37 groupers removed or set as not preferred, which I understand
38 that your committee did already, from the multispecies in
39 Amendment 41. I still support Amendment 41, but I think the
40 grouper should be pulled out, and I will tell you why.

41
42 Red grouper and grouper are not overfished or undergoing
43 overfishing. We're allowed to fish for red grouper all year
44 recreationally and on a charter boat, and so we're good with
45 that. It's not broke, and don't fix it.

46
47 I do a lot of gag fishing in my charter business and
48 recreationally, and we have a six-month season for those. It's

1 actually grown in the last couple of years, and we like that
2 path, and it's the same principle. To me, the gag is not
3 broken, and let's not fix it, and so keep the groupers out, but
4 go with the other species.

5
6 I am on the charter boat AP that kind of drafted what used to be
7 called the cyclical redistribution plan, which I still like. It
8 spreads the fish out, and then, over a long period of time,
9 they're supposed to kind of work their way to where they need to
10 be, which is a great plan, but, since the groupers are not
11 regionally-distributed across the whole Gulf, and there is very
12 few in Texas, and most of them are over here, I think we should
13 just skip those years of all that redistribution and pull the
14 groupers out and move forward with Amendment 41 with the three
15 current species. Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Captain Bill
18 Goulding, followed by Mr. Scott Hickman.

19
20 **MR. BILL GOULDING:** Hi. My name is Bill Goulding, and I'm a
21 local boy. I work here out of Naples, and I run a diving,
22 spearfishing, and charter business. I am not on the commercial
23 level, like most of these guys. Basically, I run four or less
24 on my charter boat, and, if you know these waters, within nine
25 miles, the visibility is going to be iffy, at best. Once you're
26 beyond that, it tends to get better. At twenty to thirty miles,
27 the visibility actually can be as much as sixty and seventy
28 feet.

29
30 With the moratorium on the reef and pelagic licenses that was
31 enacted in 2003, it was supposed to be a three-year moratorium.
32 At the end of those three years, it was extended indefinitely, I
33 believe was the term, with the caveat that, at least every ten
34 years, this should be reviewed. To my knowledge, this has not
35 been reviewed. I sent several letters to the council, and I
36 never have got a response.

37
38 Also, in the original moratorium, Alternative B7 stated that
39 charters with four or less harvesters would have a moderate
40 adverse biological impact and should be exempt. This was not
41 included and incorporated into it, and so, at this point, I'm
42 still not allowed to go beyond nine miles.

43
44 I guess what I'm asking is this will this be considered whenever
45 this new study is done on the moratorium. Spearfishing in
46 southwest Florida requires visibility. If you know these
47 waters, you need to be at least fifteen to thirty miles
48 offshore.

1
2 All the new reef deployments that we just put in here, we put in
3 thirty reef deployments, of which I was a part of. I did a lot
4 of the diving, pre and post-survey dives, for the Paradise Reef
5 Project.

6
7 Every one of those is in federal waters, and so I have people
8 calling me and saying, hey, Bill, I would like to go
9 spearfishing on your boat and let's go to the reefs, and you
10 know I was restoring the reef, and I was in the movie and all of
11 that stuff, and I say that I can't take you there, and they go,
12 what do you mean, and I say that I can't go beyond nine miles at
13 this point, unless I want to buy a license.

14
15 Now, when these licenses came about, I'm not sure of the exact
16 fee, but it was a minimal charge. In 2006, when I looked at
17 them, they were going for about \$4,000. Currently, a captain, a
18 friend of mine, just sold his license that he wasn't using for
19 \$20,000.

20
21 Fishing, diving, there's like four dive boats here in Naples,
22 and that's it. They all have four or less licenses, and so our
23 impact is going to be minimal, I would say, at best, or at
24 worst, and, basically, spearfishing charters -- We're kind of
25 like water taxis. We take divers out, and they exit the boat
26 and dive. If they each hold their own licenses, why do I need
27 one?

28
29 On the Florida Wildlife site, it says, under dive charters,
30 scuba divers engaged in lobstering or fishing must have an
31 individual saltwater fishing license if the vessel that they are
32 on does not have the necessary vessel licenses, and why does
33 this apply in state waters and not federal waters, especially
34 since FWC enforces in both areas?

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Captain Bill, I will have to ask you to wrap
37 it up, please, sir.

38
39 **MR. GOULDING:** Okay. Spearing and diving require visibility.
40 It's a safety issue. Fishing does not require the same thing.
41 Our business is minimal compared to fishing charters, and our
42 clients require specialized training and equipment and comprise
43 probably 2 percent of the fishing population.

44
45 If we run two or three trips a week, it's a lot. All I'm asking
46 is that I would like to know when we expect to see if anything
47 has been done on this, and, if I can be involved, I would be
48 happy to. Thank you.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Scott
3 Hickman, followed by Mr. Buddy Guindon.
4

5 **MR. SCOTT HICKMAN:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the
6 Gulf Council. Madam Chairman and council members, thank you for
7 having us here this afternoon. First off, I would like to thank
8 Dr. Pam Dana for the amazing job she has done on the Gulf
9 Council, and Lieutenant Commander Danaher as well. He has also
10 served with me on the Flower Garden Banks, and he's a great guy,
11 and we're going to miss him. I just met his replacement,
12 another Texan, and we look forward to having him participate in
13 this process.
14

15 First off, there's been a lot of discussions on cobia. I have
16 been a long-time big fan of catching cobia. I've been in the
17 fishery for thirty years as a charter boat captain, and recently
18 as an IFQ participant, and I have kept records on cobia. I used
19 to catch about 200 keepers a summer, and I continue to watch
20 that number dwindle, dwindle. Last year, I think I was in the
21 low sixties. I've kept real good records on that, and we've got
22 an issue with cobia.
23

24 I think a one-fish bag limit for cobia would be warranted. I
25 know the APs that I've sat on has sent that to you all before,
26 and it's never really been discussed, and we would like to see
27 that looked at a little closer.
28

29 Sitting through this meeting this week has been kind of a
30 shocker, being in Galveston and having so many friends that are
31 recreational fishermen. They're so unhappy and so angry to see
32 all the time spent attacking the only system that works in the
33 Gulf right now, which I'm a new participant in, which is the IFQ
34 system, instead of focusing on recreational issues.
35

36 Now, I applaud Patrick Banks' state on what they tried to do
37 with this EFP, which I guess it's not going to move forward now.
38 It's a great idea, and they're trying something. Some people
39 may like it, and some may not, but they're wanting to try
40 something.
41

42 This council needs to think outside the box and start trying
43 stuff. Our state directors that are working on this thing by
44 shutting their state waters down to do this federal plan and
45 giving these guys weekends, do it. Let's do something. Let's
46 work with the Secretary of Commerce. He's got an idea. Shut
47 your waters down, and let's do something for these recreational
48 fishermen.

1
2 HAPCs to protect our deepwater corals, I want the agency to
3 redefine what's really nationally significant coral areas. No
4 anchoring in HAPCs, period. Shrink the no-activity zones for
5 oil and gas and the fishing industry, due to better drilling
6 technology and better fishing navigational and sonar
7 technologies.

8
9 I support the preferred alternative motions in Amendment 41 made
10 in the committee yesterday. As far as barotrauma release
11 devices, I am currently involved in Cooperative Research Project
12 on sampling fish on platforms. We're doing some acoustic
13 tagging of fish, tag and recapture studies.

14
15 You release these fish. You put GoPro cameras on these release
16 devices, and you do it, every time without a cage, a shark or a
17 bottlenose dolphin is eventually going to eat that fish. They
18 are weak. The only way the descending device is really going to
19 make an impact is if you move off the site and you put them in a
20 cage and you put them down and let them sit for fifteen minutes.
21 Then you open the cat-trap door up, once the fish has totally
22 come back and got its strength back and it can swim back to the
23 site.

24
25 We have seen, over and over and over again, that, yes, they go
26 down. Yes, they release, but, the majority of the time, it's
27 like putting a Twinkie down. The predators wait, and they kind
28 of look at it. The release device lets them go, and they start
29 to swim off, and, nine times out of ten, something is going to
30 eat them, and that's what we're finding on the science side of
31 it. I would have never believed it until I saw it, and so thank
32 you, all, for your time, and try to enjoy this weather and the
33 rest of your time in Florida. Thank you.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I think we have a question for you from Mr.
36 Walker.

37
38 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, Scott. You are relatively new in the
39 IFQ program. You've been it in a few years now, but I guess if
40 you could give some of the benefits you've seen in it and then
41 maybe how the loan program may help new people in the program.

42
43 **MR. HICKMAN:** I will take the loan program first, because I
44 actually sat on the AP when we talked and developed that, and I
45 think that the council sent it up to the Secretary of Commerce,
46 and I don't know why it didn't get funded or passed.

47
48 It would sure help my kids' college account, because I have

1 spent a lot of money buying into the system. It's a great
2 system. Doug's motion about me having to buy back 40 percent of
3 the fish that I've already bought is very disconcerting to me
4 and my family. It would be a huge financial hardship for us.

5
6 I don't have to throw back dead fish in the water anymore. It's
7 a conservation-based system, and it works. It's super high-
8 level accountability, with logbooks and observers on my boat,
9 and safety gear, and on and on and on, but I can fish when I
10 want. I can fish when the weather is good. I can fish when the
11 price is high, when the fish house needs them, and it's a great
12 system. It works on very different level.

13
14 You can go back to arguing about how the initial allocation was
15 done, and that's way in the past, and there is no effect on me.
16 I bought into it. A loan program would help folks like I heard
17 about one from of our local guys from Galveston, Garrett King.
18 He fishes eighty-something-thousand pounds a year and makes a
19 living off of just leasing fish.

20
21 If you start meddling with this thing, you take that guy off the
22 water. The guy that has those fish, that's an older guy, you're
23 going to force him back on the water, and you're going to hurt
24 young fishermen, and you're going to hurt young families. I
25 disagree with that. A loan program would help, and I think it
26 would give the ability for some of those people that want out of
27 the fishery to buy in, and I think that's the better way to
28 attack this thing.

29
30 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana, did you have a question?

33
34 **DR. DANA:** I do. Thank you. Captain Hickman, has your fleet
35 had the opportunity to think about the amberjack season
36 preferred, like what months to have closed or open?

37
38 **MR. HICKMAN:** I appreciate you bringing that up, because I
39 should have mentioned that, and I'm sure Mike Jennings is
40 probably blowing up my texts somewhere right now. Yes, we
41 discussed it at length.

42
43 As most of the folks here know, we don't have good weather in
44 Texas in the winter and spring. Right now, we start to get our
45 good weather, in June, and so we're not even getting to access
46 this fishery. We've got a very healthy amberjack fishery in the
47 western Gulf. The science shows that. We would prefer an
48 August 1 opener. We would like it to go three months, if we

1 could, and we support a thirty-six-inch minimum. We want to see
2 those fish spawn before we take them out of the fishery.

3
4 If we can't get three months out of it, with a one-fish bag
5 limit, we would support a trip limit on charter boats and
6 headboats. We would support a trip limit, to be able to get
7 three months out of it. That would help the Destin Fishing
8 Rodeo in October. They need that fish in October. Our
9 Galveston fleet needs a trophy fish in August and September,
10 when our tourists are still there.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. We have one more question for you.

13
14 **DR. STUNZ:** Scott, thanks. A quick question. I was just
15 interested in the comment you said about all the fish dying
16 released from the Seaqualizer devices, and certainly I would
17 agree with you that mortality can be an issue, especially in
18 certain regions and certain places, but just I think a broad
19 statement that all those fish are dying probably isn't the case.

20
21 You know, there is many investigators, throughout the Gulf, that
22 are seeing a lot of survivorship coming from these devices, and
23 so we too, and many others, put the GoPros, but, at the same
24 time, predators aren't in every spot, and there is still a lot
25 of utility in that, and I don't think putting them in a cage,
26 while that's clearly probably the best, is not practical for
27 everyday anglers and charter captains that are out there.

28
29 **MR. HICKMAN:** I could probably explain that a little better, Dr.
30 Stunz. If you're just doing a few, just to do the Seaqualizer,
31 just a few fish, but, if you're on a headboat or a charter boat,
32 where you're catching multiple numbers of fish, and that vessel
33 is -- We know charter boats do highgrade. Everybody wants to go
34 home with a big fish.

35
36 The more you're putting up and down, you are drawing those
37 predators in, where I think, from the scientific studies you're
38 probably seeing, where you're just doing a few per site, if
39 you're doing fifty or a hundred or 150 fish, in a short period
40 of time, you're more apt to draw the predators in during that
41 scenario.

42
43 I think you're right that there's going to be more predators at
44 different areas, but, overall, just from what I have seen in
45 doing some of these scientific projects, as you're doing a lot
46 of fish, or even on charter boats, where you're catching a lot
47 of fish, up and down and up and down and up and down, you're
48 going to eventually draw them. It's like chumming, but you're

1 chumming with fish that are weak, and so that's just my own --
2 As a professional fisherman that spends a hundred days on the
3 water every year, that's my opinion.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.

6
7 **MR. HICKMAN:** Thank you, all.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Buddy Guindon is going to be next, followed
10 by Will Geraghty.

11
12 **MR. BUDDY GUINDON:** I wasn't going to here, but, now that Roy is
13 out of the room, and Ken brought it up, and it was the
14 explanation that I heard yesterday explained by Roy about the
15 lawsuit, and I heard it explained that all the court found was a
16 failure to explain how Amendment 28 was fair and equitable.

17
18 The suggestion was that, if the council had only done a better
19 job explaining what it did, the court would have upheld
20 Amendment 28. This is dead wrong. What the court found was a
21 fundamental flaw. The court found that Amendment 28 rewarded
22 the recreational sector for an inefficient management plan that
23 resulted in anglers catching too many fish, and it penalized the
24 commercial sector having an efficient management plan that
25 guaranteed compliance with its catch limits.

26
27 This is what the court said. Amendment 28 places the commercial
28 sector in a permanent disadvantage by failing to take into
29 account the IFQ program and its impact on reallocation, and the
30 court could not deem such a scenario fair and equitable. The
31 court made emphasis on "permanent", the damage to the commercial
32 fishery.

33
34 The bottom line is that it's unfair to take away from a sector
35 that has an accountable system that prevents overages and gives
36 those fish to a sector that lacks an accountable system and
37 routinely exceeds its catch limit. If all the court found was a
38 failure to explain something, it could have remanded Amendment
39 28 and asked National Marine Fisheries to provide the missing
40 explanation. Instead, the court vacated Amendment 28, because
41 it's flawed, its flaw is fundamental, and it could not be
42 corrected.

43
44 I just want to make that clear, because I don't think the
45 explanation that Dr. Crabtree gave was clear, and I think that,
46 before you move forward and continue to take money out of the
47 pockets of hard-working fishermen, we should think carefully
48 about this, because, in Magnuson, Section 303(a)(14), to the

1 extent that rebuilding plans or other conservation and
2 management measures, which reduce the overall harvest in a
3 fishery are necessary, allocate taking into consideration the
4 economic impact of harvest restrictions or recovery benefits on
5 the fishery participants in each sector. Any harvest
6 restrictions or recovery benefits fairly and equitably among the
7 commercial, recreational, and charter fishing sectors in the
8 fishery.

9
10 I would like to say that we have a lot of things to do. Let's
11 move on and do them. Let's not think about a rent resource or
12 an auction. If you want to do that, do it at a national level.
13 There is fisheries all around this country that are operated the
14 same ways ours are, and so, if you want to do something, go to
15 the federal government and get that law changed and quit picking
16 on snapper fishermen because they did a good job and they're
17 making some money and our fishery is just booming and better
18 than it has ever been in most of our lifespans.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Guindon, I have to ask you to wrap it up,
21 please, sir.

22
23 **MR. GUINDON:** I will wrap it up, ma'am, but I do have to mention
24 that Pam Dana has been a fabulous addition to this council, and
25 I appreciate your service. You have been fair. Thank you.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We have a question for you.

28
29 **MR. GUINDON:** Yes, sir.

30
31 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, Buddy. It's kind of a two-part
32 question, or just two questions. The first one is about the
33 abundance of snapper and what you're seeing off the coast of
34 Texas and Galveston, and then I know that, not long ago, they
35 had you on Fox News 8, and I think some things came up earlier
36 about there was some misinformation in Louisiana, and then
37 someone said there was not, and so maybe you could speak to
38 that, since you were actually in that, and maybe what you know.

39
40 **MR. GUINDON:** Okay. As far as the abundance of fish off of
41 Texas, I have been fishing for thirty-nine years of my life,
42 right off the coast of Galveston, and, this year, I was shocked
43 and amazed and happy to see an abundance of fish that were ten
44 to twenty-five pounds in fifty feet of water, fifty to thirty-
45 six.

46
47 The bank off of Galveston runs about fifty miles long. It runs
48 all the way down into Louisiana, and they call it Sabine Bank

1 down there, but there was an abundance of these big, breeder
2 fish in there, that I have never seen in my life. Once in a
3 while, you catch one or two, but I am talking about maybe 2,000
4 that were taken off of there between April and the end of the
5 three-day recreational season.

6
7 To me, that says that, if your breed stock is that prevalent in
8 that depth of water, we're doing something right, and we need to
9 be careful not to screw that up.

10
11 As far as the Fox News channel bashing of successful businesses
12 in the Gulf of Mexico, that was perpetrated by Congressman
13 Garret Graves. He used folks that have been locked up, are
14 felons, for fisheries violations to say that he got cheated out
15 of initial allocation and everything bad that you could say
16 about a system that has rebuilt a fishery and has made
17 successful businesses.

18
19 I think that anytime a congressman gets involved in fisheries
20 management, it can be a really bad thing, because their
21 knowledge is given to them by a staffer. They don't have
22 institutional knowledge in fisheries. They get it from a
23 staffer, who has been briefed by whomever that congressman feels
24 is an expert.

25
26 When those things were done and they put our incomes on the TV
27 and talked poorly of our management system, while lying about us
28 not paying anything from the use of the resource, and everybody
29 tries to avoid the fact that we pay 3 percent, and that's more
30 money than -- You know, I tell that to people that are in
31 business around me, that I pay 3 percent of my gross to the
32 federal government to manage the fishery, and they go, what?

33
34 In most businesses, that would crush their business to pay 3
35 percent. Oil companies don't pay 3 percent royalty on their
36 leases in the Gulf of Mexico when they drill a well, after that
37 production. It's less than 1 percent, and so that's all.
38 Anything else?

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

41
42 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Buddy, for coming. Those were really
43 thoughtful comments that you provided, but I am just curious. I
44 am not familiar with that part of the Gulf of Mexico, but you
45 mentioned that bank that you were talking about the brood stock,
46 and it was in fifty feet of water, and is that --

47
48 **MR. GUINDON:** On one end, it's fifty feet, and, on the other

1 end, it's thirty-six feet.

2
3 **MR. ANSON:** How many miles offshore is that from Texas or
4 Louisiana?

5
6 **MR. GUINDON:** About twenty-seven.

7
8 **MR. ANSON:** Okay. Thank you.

9
10 **MR. GUINDON:** Yes.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I think we may have one more question for
13 you.

14
15 **MR. BOYD:** Sorry, Buddy, to bring you back up here, and I should
16 have asked this to Mr. Krebs as well, but you both talk about a
17 successful management program and your business, and this
18 management program has helped you guys build a business, and can
19 you explain to us a little bit about what kind of business does
20 this program support for you? I mean, how many people do you
21 employ or how many boats does your allocation go to that then
22 employs people? I just want to try to get an idea of what kind
23 of business type of impact this program has.

24
25 **MR. GUINDON:** For me, personally, I have five fishing vessels
26 that I own that use a portion of my quota. They each employ
27 five people, or sometimes six, if we have greenhorns on the
28 boat, because we need an extra guy.

29
30 I have a fish house that employs, most of the time, twenty-five
31 people. We service about seven other commercial fishing
32 operations, one of which is here today, Garrett King, and we
33 procure allocation around the Gulf of Mexico to make sure that
34 they can stay viable as a business, and you heard how much fish
35 he caught.

36
37 I also, when someone calls me on the phone and says I need this
38 or someone has landed at the dock in Florida and they're under
39 on their allocation, we do our best to make sure that they're
40 taken care of. We have started a quota bank in the Shareholders
41 Alliance that is addressing that problem, and that just feeds
42 right into Chris Niquet, who came here trying to save his
43 business and his father and his brother, that have fished all
44 their lives.

45
46 This need for allocation leases is huge now, that we have built
47 a program that's successful, and it's brought in people,
48 replacement people, new entrants, whatever you want to call

1 them, but without the ability to buy a boat and have the time
2 and the allocation to fish and pay for that and then go after
3 owning their own quota.

4
5 Garrett is thirty-something, or maybe he's early forties, but he
6 has twenty years now with a paid-for boat to build allocation,
7 or build shares, that then he can retire with. That was the one
8 thing missing in the commercial fishery when I got in it, was,
9 when you retired, what did you have? You had a ragged-out boat
10 and a ragged-out body, and so you better have saved your money,
11 or you're going to live really poorly.

12
13 Now we have the ability to not only have a great retirement, if
14 we choose, but to build a family business. I have four sons
15 that are in my business, and they have all joined in because of
16 the IFQ system. Without the IFQ system, I would have never let
17 my kids become fishermen and fish house operators. They would
18 have finished college and went on to do something else, because
19 it's a tough business.

20
21 Now, it's a very successful business, and I hope that this
22 council considers what they do and the impacts that it will
23 cause down the chain, and not to me, but to the people that are
24 new in this fishery and to my family. Thank you. Thank you for
25 the question, sir.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Sam Young,
28 followed by Mr. Ryan Bradley. I am so sorry. Next, we have
29 Will Geraghty. Then we will have Mr. Sam Young.

30
31 **MR. WILL GERAGHTY:** Good afternoon, Madam Chair and council.
32 I'm Captain Will Geraghty from Naples, Florida, charter/for-
33 hire, and I appreciate you guys coming and holding your council
34 meeting down here in Naples, and I hope you have enjoyed the
35 weather. It's been awesome.

36
37 More importantly, I appreciate the opportunity to come before
38 the council and speak on a few items today. It is my
39 understanding that the Louisiana EFP has been kind of shelved or
40 pulled off the table for now, but my initial instinct is to
41 commend the council for the vibrant dialogue and even
42 considering the item, as the need for innovative data collection
43 methods and models is quite important, especially to the true
44 recreational sector, given the pushback of the three-day snapper
45 season.

46
47 I really feel bad for those guys. Imagine if the season started
48 on Tuesday. These guys wouldn't even be able to leave port. I

1 think that they need to be held accountable though, and, without
2 accountability, there can't be sustainability, and so I would
3 urge the council to consider looking at different models and
4 innovative tools to collect data, specifically speaking to the
5 true recreational sector.

6
7 My second item would be myself and fellow colleagues here in the
8 southwest Florida charter/for-hire fleet are kind of struggling
9 with the August opener for amberjack. The fear would be that
10 the potential for less fishing days or no fish when that species
11 becomes a viable target for us here in southwest Florida. We
12 typically start fishing, or encountering those fish on a
13 consistent basis, late December, January, February, and March,
14 and an August 1 opener might leave us with a whole lot less
15 fishing days, or no days to fish for the species whatsoever.

16
17 The third item would be the motion to pull grouper out of
18 Amendment 41. I have been fed some real compelling arguments as
19 to why the groupers need to be backed out of Amendment 41, and
20 part of my fleet agrees with that, and there is several that
21 would like to see it remain a five-species moving forward.

22
23 What I would like to hear from the council would be more
24 dialogue on how pulling the groupers out of 41 would affect the
25 amendment or not affect the amendment moving forward, and,
26 again, I appreciate the opportunity to come and speak to you,
27 and, reverting a little bit back to the EFP and the three-day
28 snapper season, from a personal note, it's a little discouraging
29 for me to see an extreme lack of disengagement by the true
30 recreational sector, given that they only got three days to
31 fish. This room should be packed with people demanding a little
32 bit better access or more days to fish. Thank you once again.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Sam Young,
35 followed by Ryan Bradley.

36
37 **MR. SAM YOUNG:** Good afternoon, council. Thank you for being
38 here in Naples. It's not often we get the chance down in our
39 neck of the woods to enjoy your company, and so welcome, and
40 thank you. My name is Captain Sam Young, and I'm here on behalf
41 of the Marco Sportfishing Club. I am Director of Fisheries for
42 the club, with 800 members.

43
44 First and foremost, when I sent out the e-blast to the
45 membership, with the agenda attached, I got my phone ringing off
46 the hook, and emails were going off left and right, and they
47 were saying to me that I have read some of these amendments, and
48 I don't understand what they're talking about, and so all these

1 recreational fishermen don't speak in scientific language, and
2 so, for lack of a better phrase, could you dumb it down a little
3 bit, or at least give us a preface as to what this really means
4 to the stakeholders, be it recreational, for-hire, or
5 commercial, kind of a synopsis upfront of what all that stuff
6 behind it, with algorithms and what have you, means to them at
7 the end of the day, so they can get a good idea of, okay, this
8 is what Amendment 44 means to me, and now I can go and make a
9 decision of whether I want to go and listen and participate.

10
11 That was the big push-back on my folks. They needed a reason to
12 be here, and, when they read through the documents, they said,
13 if this is how it's going to be spoken to, I don't get it, I
14 don't understand it, and it will be a waste of my time, and so I
15 didn't want to leave that impression with them, and so I said,
16 if you do anything, just come and listen to one of them, or at
17 least participate in this forum, where there was questions and
18 answers, or where you will hear from people that know what
19 they're talking about and you will learn something.

20
21 I have been to a lot of meetings in Stuart, for the South
22 Atlantic and the Gulf Council, and I always have learned a great
23 deal when I go to those, and so I appreciate that opportunity.

24
25 Having said, that, that was my main point, to just consider the
26 recreational fishermen, who is not scientific, and give us
27 something that we can understand upfront, before we try to read
28 through the document. That would go a long way to getting more
29 attendance.

30
31 Secondly, I am always curious, because I was a member of the
32 MREP. I participated and graduated from the MREP program, and
33 that was a great education, and I am always nonplussed when I
34 see this barotrauma come up, time and again, and what we learned
35 at MREP was that the Seaqualizer was clearly, through the data
36 that NOAA has done, is the absolutely best release methodology
37 to be used, and so I don't know why it keeps coming up.

38
39 I have two on my boat, and our club, when we sponsor a grouper
40 tournament, each charter captain, or each captain that's in the
41 tournament, is required to have a Seaqualizer onboard, and so
42 it's kind of a no-brainer to me.

43
44 As far as the red snapper goes, I know it's Roy Crabtree's
45 favorite topic, but, in any event, there has been -- All the
46 data points that I saw at MREP were really Tampa and north, and,
47 right out here, and, on Monday, I did a charter believe it or
48 not, in that weather, and we limited out on red snapper in 132

1 feet, big ones, and so they're here, and I would like to see the
2 council consider redeploying some of the long-standing test
3 sites or evaluation sites and relocate them down to this neck of
4 the woods, so you get an idea of what we really have down here
5 for red snapper populations.

6
7 There is a lot of red snapper out here, and so I think that's
8 been discounted, and so, again, I think it's been
9 underestimated, when you look at the total population, from the
10 top of the state to the bottom of the State of Florida.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Young, I am going to have to ask you to
13 wrap it up, please, sir.

14
15 **MR. YOUNG:** Okay. I was going to speak about amberjack, but I
16 think enough has been said, or comments have been made, and I am
17 done.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Don't leave, because I think we have a couple
20 of questions for you. Dr. Dana.

21
22 **DR. DANA:** Thank you, Captain. My question for you was, on the
23 red snapper that you're seeing an abundance of, is that in state
24 waters, or is that out past nine miles?

25
26 **MR. YOUNG:** We have to run -- That run was seventy-two miles
27 west.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Then Mr. Sanchez.

30
31 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would like to hear what you have to say about
32 amberjack.

33
34 **MR. YOUNG:** Again, I am not sure of where all the data points
35 are coming from. Again, I look back to what I learned at MREP,
36 and most of the test sites and data points were coming from the
37 northern Gulf and central Gulf and not down here in the southern
38 Gulf, and our demographic is very different than all of those
39 others, and we have an abundance of amberjack.

40
41 I am also a spear fisherman, and so I dive these various wreck
42 sites, and you can't -- The numbers are stunningly high, and big
43 fish, wherever you go. Wherever you dive, they're there. You
44 can't fish a wreck without getting hooked up to an amberjack on
45 a yellowtail or a mangrove snapper, or a barracuda will get it
46 first, but the amberjack are incredibly prolific here, and in
47 great numbers, and so everyone that I have talked to at our club
48 is nonplussed by the fact that -- Why did they shut it off

1 already?

2
3 Then the last comment that I would make is that our club is very
4 strongly in support of doing something with the goliath grouper,
5 because this area, right where we live here, is the mecca for
6 goliath grouper, and they are a nuisance fish, and people are
7 starting to take it into their own hands, I am told.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Martha and then Dr. Crabtree.

10
11 **MS. GUYAS:** Thanks for being here, Sam. So, to follow up on
12 John's question about amberjack, we're considering potentially
13 tweaking the recreational closed season, and some of the options
14 would include potentially opening in the spring and then running
15 it until the quota is gone, or waiting to open until August, and
16 what do you think people in your club and folks down here would
17 like to see, in terms of when amberjack would open? When would
18 it need to be open for you all?

19
20 **MR. YOUNG:** We can catch them pretty much year-long around here.
21 As I said, they're at every wreck site or every big ledge that I
22 fish or dive or -- My other compatriots have found the same
23 thing. You can't fish a place without getting into amberjack,
24 and so I'm not sure why we -- I wouldn't mind -- I think the
25 limit now is two per person in federal waters, or is it one? Is
26 it one? I don't know why that couldn't go on year-round, based
27 on the numbers that we see of amberjack, but, if you want an
28 answer to would spring be better, yes, probably spring.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Mr. Sanchez.

31
32 **MR. SANCHEZ:** This will be quick. If we got far enough along to
33 having to consider ways to stretch a season, it would helpful if
34 there is some talk amongst your group as to lowering, maybe, a
35 bag limit or maybe even a vessel limit or something. Again, if
36 it comes down to looking at a premature closure or perhaps
37 extending this somehow, and that would be helpful for me to
38 hear.

39
40 **MR. YOUNG:** I think there's a number of things that you could
41 look at, in terms of bag limits and whatnot, if you've got a
42 group, whether you're recreational or on a charter. They would
43 like to keep one fish that they can bring up and take home.
44 That's what they pay for to do, and we bring up them up and they
45 say, what, you have to throw that back? Sadly, I have to say,
46 yes, it's got to go back, and so, in any event, bag limits, I
47 think, we need to consider, for a number of different species
48 maybe.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir, and we appreciate the
3 amberjack feedback, because we are going to take final action on
4 that at our next meeting, more than likely.
5

6 **MR. YOUNG:** Thank you very much.
7

8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Next, we have Mr. Ryan Bradley.
9

10 **MR. RYAN BRADLEY:** Thank you, council, for allowing me to be the
11 last one to speak today. I appreciate it. I know you all are
12 ready to get out of here, and so don't ask too many questions.
13 No, you can.
14

15 My name is Ryan Bradley, and I'm the Director of the Mississippi
16 Commercial Fisheries United, Incorporated. I am also a fifth-
17 generation commercial fisherman, and I'm here today to talk
18 about the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Management Plan and the
19 current individual fishing quota programs.
20

21 Currently, Mississippi has the least amount of individuals or
22 entities with reef fish permits or individual fishing quotas.
23 Further, essentially, Mississippi has landed zero pounds of
24 commercial red snapper in recent years. This is a big problem
25 for us in Mississippi. We're missing out on a lot of economic
26 opportunities.
27

28 To rectify this problem, we have initiated some grassroots
29 efforts to pursue opportunities to create a permit/quota bank to
30 assist underserved communities, such as those fishermen in
31 Mississippi, to gain access to the fishery, if they agree to
32 predefined sustainable fishing practices. If we could get some
33 further input from some of you all on that, maybe that could
34 help us out some.
35

36 Further, we applaud the council's steps to consider cyclical
37 redistribution in the commercial IFQ fishery yesterday.
38 Currently, all of the organization's constituency favors
39 cyclical redistribution, because this management method gives
40 new entrants a viable avenue towards IFQ share ownership for
41 those fishermen who are landing the fish.
42

43 However, after speaking with the current shareholders, there are
44 some unintended consequences that may arise. Therefore, to be
45 effective, cyclical redistribution must be coupled with a quota
46 set-aside for new entrants to access. Magnuson-Stevens allows
47 for this. This can be done in a couple of ways.
48

1 An initial allocation bank operated by NMFS for new entrants to
2 access is one way. A state-water commercial season is another
3 way. If you say that is not possible, Mississippi had a state-
4 water red snapper season in 2011 and 2012. Fishermen were able
5 to harvest a 200-pound daily bag limit. These are avenues for
6 these fishermen to get historical landings.

7
8 This set-aside and quota could be deducted from any potential
9 increase in the TAC, as to not take away from the current
10 shareholders. The current generation of fishermen must be able
11 to utilize landing history, much in the same way the initial
12 shareholders received their percentage of shares. My question
13 to the council and to the initial IFQ shareholders is this. If
14 initial shareholders had the opportunity to utilize historic
15 landings to obtain shares, should new entrants not have that
16 same opportunity?

17
18 Currently, new entrants are already having to pay a hefty price
19 to access the fishing privileges that the initial shareholders
20 never had to pay. Under the current system, the initial
21 shareholders retained their shares indefinitely, regardless of
22 participation. This is a real problem and not just a perceived
23 one.

24
25 Last, I would like to give a quick summary on a fishing report
26 and what we're seeing in Mississippi. The red snapper biomass
27 south of Mississippi waters is essentially untapped. We are
28 also seeing good numbers of large cobia year-round. I know
29 there's a lot of talk about these fish migrate annually.
30 However, we're not seeing that. We're seeing big fish hanging
31 around the same spots all year-long.

32
33 We're also seeing more red grouper coming our way, which is
34 historically unheard of. We never would see a red grouper.
35 They're starting to show up around our area. We're also seeing
36 mangrove snapper move in closer than we ever have before. I
37 mean, they're catching mangrove snapper off the beach, pretty
38 much, and one species we're not seeing a whole lot of is
39 amberjack. We have seen a pretty sharp decline in the amberjack
40 biomass around our area, south of the Mississippi.

41
42 Lastly, our inshore shrimp season opened today. I talked to a
43 few fishermen, and there's pretty good reports of modest
44 catches. However, the number of vessels participating in the
45 opening day is at an all-time low, and I bring this up, Dr.
46 Crabtree, because I wonder how much lower can our active shrimp
47 industry vessels go, especially if you implement another TED
48 rule that's going to put fishermen out of business. With that,

1 I don't have much more to say. I have a little something that I
2 would like to mention about the loan program.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Bradley, I am sorry. We've got a
5 question from Dale.

6
7 **MR. DIAZ:** I would like to hear what he's got to say about the
8 loan program, and so I would ask you a question, because it was
9 brought up by several other people, and I would just like to see
10 if you all are similar to other folks or not.

11
12 **MR. BRADLEY:** For the loan program, if you want to make people
13 richer, implement a loan program. I talked with our fishermen
14 about it, and money is not the problem. We've got money to
15 invest in this fishery. It's largely not profitable, is why
16 they're not trying to get in it right now. If some minor
17 modifications were made, plenty of capital would flow into the
18 fishery.

19
20 A loan program, in my opinion, would drive up share prices, and
21 it would drive up the cost to fish, and it would impact the
22 markets and the restaurants. I don't think the lack of capital
23 is the reason why people aren't lining up to buy these shares.
24 That's my opinion.

25
26 I am trying to think. Over the loan program, we favor a set-
27 aside in quota for new entrants to access or state seasons for
28 new entrants to earn their way into the fishery, much like you
29 hear a lot of these guys say that they earned this. Well, I
30 will tell you what. Let our guys go out and get a little
31 allocation and let them fish and let them earn their way into
32 the fishery.

33
34 A loan program, you're going to put people into slavery. You're
35 going to put them into a position where they may not be able to
36 pay that loan back, and people are going to get heavily invested
37 in it, and ten years may go by, and they can't pay their notes
38 and they're going to lose everything, and they might have not
39 should have been in that in the first place if they had to get a
40 loan, and that's all I have on the loan program.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We appreciate it.

43
44 **MR. BRADLEY:** All right. Thank you.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. That wraps up public testimony
47 for the day, and we are ahead of schedule. Aren't you all so
48 excited that I may work you a little later? We have just a

1 couple of agenda items that we did not make it to before public
2 testimony, and so I hate to tell you this, but let's take a
3 quick bathroom break, and then we're going to come back and do a
4 little more work, and so I'll see you back in about fifteen
5 minutes.

6

7 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

8

9

PRESENTATION ON CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAM REPORT

10

11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** The first thing that we're going to continue
12 on with, under our schedule today that we were not able to
13 complete before lunch, is our Coral Reef Conservation Program
14 Report, and I believe John is ready to give us that.

15

16 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I am ready. I just wanted to give the council a
17 brief update. As you may or may not be aware, we have received
18 support for the Coral Reef Conservation Program since -- This is
19 our sixth year, and so we've had a number of ongoing efforts
20 relating to coral and improving data and things like that, and
21 so I'm just going to give you an update on some of the things
22 that we've done. We're currently finishing up a three-year
23 grant cycle.

24

25 This current cycle, we sort of had three themes, which I have
26 highlighted in the blue boxes, and some of this -- The first one
27 was this information about coral ecosystems, and we've developed
28 the portal, the gulfcouncil.org website. If you haven't had a
29 chance to look at that, I encourage you do that.

30

31 We have tried to provide a source for coral spatial data,
32 habitat-related information, to provide to our stakeholders and
33 interested users, in what we hope to be a useful format, and
34 we've developed other products and things as well.

35

36 A second objective of this is enhancing stakeholder engagement.
37 It's kind of a catchall term, but we've tried to do is provide
38 some content about the importance of corals from the management
39 and fishery perspectives and other things related to tropical
40 habitats in what we've called learning modules, and I have a
41 slide about those.

42

43 We have developed a few different ones, and we're still in
44 development, and the idea was an eye-catching kind of useful
45 format that someone would be engaged enough to click through and
46 learn about something relevant to what we do at the council.

47

48 Then this third tier, this coral management, what we're doing

1 here is intended to complement the activities in Coral Amendment
2 9 and just to provide a different way to look at the pros and
3 cons of different ways to identify critical habitat or HAPCs,
4 and so we have some things, and that's really what we're working
5 on now, and so this is just a quick screenshot of the portal
6 page, and the different thumbnails down there are just some of
7 the applications.

8
9 We have the Coral HAPC Viewer and lobster viewers and some of
10 the learning modules down there on the left, and so, if you ever
11 have a chance to scroll through those and give us feedback, we
12 would love to hear it.

13
14 This is just a summary of one of the coral reef learning
15 modules. It's a web-based thing, and it tends to have text on
16 one side and pictures and interactive graphics and things, and
17 so try to make them user-friendly and short. Someone could look
18 through them in two or three minutes and hopefully learn
19 something.

20
21 A second theme is we have a couple of mapping applications. We
22 have called them "enhancing stakeholder engagement". Those are
23 the buzzwords in the grant. This top one, you may have seen it
24 before, but it's an interactive web map viewer to complement
25 some of the decision-making in the coral amendment.

26
27 As you all have narrowed down the areas you wanted to focus on,
28 we have tried to provide those in such a way that interested
29 people could download the data or kind of look at the areas on
30 their own terms and gather some of that information, and so
31 there is tabs in the data and some other things in there.

32
33 This bottom one here is the spiny lobster closed areas. As you
34 remember, in Spiny Lobster Amendment 11, we introduced sixty
35 closed areas, I think, and they're small, in the Keys. People
36 tend not to know where they are, because they are not marked and
37 things, and so we developed a mapping application, where people
38 could kind of go look through there, and they can look at the
39 coordinates and things and see where they might fish relative to
40 those, and it's really just something simple to provide some
41 information to people if they're interested.

42
43 In terms of feedback, just a quick graphic here. This map on
44 the top right just shows you the blue areas, and the darker blue
45 shows you where people visit our website from. What you can see
46 is that we have a fairly broad reach, and so people well outside
47 of the Gulf come and visit our site for various reasons, and so
48 we do make an impact. We always think of ourselves as Gulf-

1 focused, but we do have an impact throughout the nation, and so
2 it's always good to remember that.

3
4 In terms of the evaluation of the corals and the HAPCs, again, I
5 am interested in -- We're doing some modeling things to try to
6 complement the analyses in the document, and, really, this is to
7 facilitate understanding of what is being done and to provide
8 some supplementary information about this.

9
10 Just a bit of history here. If you recall, the coral HAPC
11 process began as part of a workshop that was sponsored through
12 our previous coral grant, and so, again, this started at the
13 2013 CRCP workshop, in which we convened a group of experts, and
14 they provided feedback on a number of areas that they thought
15 might be suitable for some additional management, and so it set
16 of this sort of cascade of checkmarks of meetings and gathering
17 experts and things like that, and this square on the bottom
18 screen here is the management strategy evaluation, and that's
19 what I mentioned here, and I will describe it more just briefly.

20
21 If you're not familiar with the term, "management strategy
22 evaluation" can be used sort of however you like, but, in this
23 context, we're using a modeling approach to evaluate closed
24 areas and different ways that you might select areas for space-
25 based management, depending on your priorities and your
26 objectives.

27
28 Again, it's not to usurp what's being done at the council, but
29 it does provide a way where you specify your objectives and you
30 specify things that are meaningful and you can see what the
31 result might be.

32
33 The way these models work, and I won't get too far into the
34 weeds. If you're interested, I'm happy to talk more about it,
35 but we're just sort of learning this, but it's a spatial-based
36 approach in which you have some data and you develop it on a
37 grid, and the data that we primarily are considering at this
38 point is the fishing, the ELB and the reef fish data, and we
39 know where people fish, and the objective is try to minimally
40 disrupt these activities while providing some additional
41 protections.

42
43 We know where the coral habitat is, and the management decisions
44 are just how much area you might want to conserve or specify for
45 some additional protection, and then this level of
46 fragmentation, and what that means is that you could have, in
47 terms of management areas, you could have one really big area or
48 you could have many small areas, and so, as you increase the

1 level of fragmentation, it would be a smaller area, and so there
2 might be various reasons you might want to do either of those,
3 and this provides a method to explore that option.

4
5 Just in terms of the inputs, as you are all aware, we have, in
6 terms of the fisheries, we have the reef fish VMS data, and we
7 have the ELB, shrimp ELB, and this is broad-brush and not any
8 specific user or anything like that. We aggregate it in these
9 green grids, and there is a graphic on the right, where the
10 areas in red are areas of a lot more intense effort. The areas
11 in green are much less effort, and so the idea, from this
12 perspective, is putting closed areas in the green area would be
13 less disruptive.

14
15 Depending on how you wanted to optimize this, if you wanted to
16 weight one fleet more than another or not weight it at all or
17 something, this provides a way to examine the sensitivity of
18 your inputs to the outputs, and the outputs would be theoretical
19 areas that you could designate as HAPC or something else.

20
21 The other input to this are these maps of habitat suitability.
22 I know you've all had different conversations about models and
23 observations and things, and, in this case, we have used some
24 modeled inputs of potential habitat suitability, using sort of
25 this standard methodology, and we have put these in here at a
26 ten-by-ten grid size, and what you end up with is you get
27 layers, GIS layers, if you will, and you can stack these on as
28 inputs into the model.

29
30 I don't really have any results, if you will. We are still
31 working on this. We're learning as we go, but hopefully, in the
32 next couple of months, we'll have some ideas and things and we
33 can provide some more context in this, but this is what we're
34 working on now. Again, if you have more questions, we're happy
35 to talk to you about it.

36
37 One other feature of this portal that we've talked some about is
38 the idea of self-reported angler data, and we do have one of our
39 learning modules that we developed was on goliath grouper and
40 talking about the biology and ecological benefits and perhaps
41 consequences of these animals and their recovery.

42
43 We have some maps, and we worked with FWC, where you can look at
44 their scientific information regarding the distribution of
45 goliath grouper, and we also developed a tool which anglers
46 could report an observation or an interaction or something,
47 which we can store that in the database and provide to whoever
48 would want it, and so the idea that we can work with FWC and

1 other agencies that are collecting these data to make sure we
2 have a compatible database.

3
4 This screen on the right is just sort of the form, if you will,
5 and it just lives in a web-based map, and so you could either go
6 to the site, and it's on our portal, and just click a spot and
7 populate most of the information, and you can provide as much or
8 as little as you wanted, and then it just lives in a database
9 that we have.

10
11 We have had it only a few months. We haven't marketed it much,
12 but it's something that we're interested in developing. It's a
13 very scalable concept. It's lightweight, but it would be easy
14 to add or subtract fields, data, species, whatever you have in
15 mind.

16
17 This next slide is a similar approach. As I think we mentioned
18 earlier, we are developing a lionfish learning module, and we
19 intend to make this available, as far as reporting and things,
20 as well, and so we hope to have that up and going in the next
21 month or two.

22
23 The next steps are the grant cycle ends on September 30, and we
24 have been told that we've preliminarily been selected for
25 additional funding in continuing years, and so we intend to
26 continue developing the portal and the products that go there.
27 We're going to finish these learning modules and some of these
28 management strategy evaluation tools in this one. Then we have
29 some new stuff that we can hopefully tell you more about once we
30 get word on the final funding in 2017. I will take any
31 questions.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. That was very interesting.
34 Did we have any questions or discussion from the group? Yes,
35 Mr. Anson.

36
37 **MR. ANSON:** John, are any of the self-reported data -- Are those
38 data reported by anglers or divers or whatever, for the lionfish
39 and the goliath -- Are those data available for review via an
40 interactive map, once the location is identified, or are you
41 kind of keeping those close to the vest?

42
43 **DR. FROESCHKE:** We haven't got a lot of traffic, because we
44 haven't marketed it. I don't have them up there now. If that
45 was something that we wanted, I can definitely do that. There
46 is no technical limitations on doing that. The good thing about
47 the platform that I've developed these in is that it's -- You
48 can do what you want, and so, if that's something that you think

1 would be of use, we can certainly do it.

2
3 **MR. GREENE:** Thank you. Is there further questions? Mr. Diaz.

4
5 **MR. DIAZ:** I just want to make a comment. I did go to the site
6 and use it to help me when I was going through the coral
7 document, that Coral Amendment 9 that Morgan has been working
8 on, and, anyway, I am impressed with the amount of work.

9
10 I know this is a tremendous amount of work, and so please tell
11 your staff, Brian, and I think Claire might be helping with
12 this, and thank you, John, for all of your hard work. I think
13 continuing to put some effort into this is a good thing, and so
14 your hard work and good work doesn't go unnoticed. Thank you,
15 sir.

16
17 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Thanks for the feedback.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, and I can see where we can scale it to
20 use it for a lot of different purposes, and so I am pretty
21 interested in it. Thank you. Any other feedback from the group
22 on this? Thank you, sir.

23
24 We do have a little bit of time left, and we probably have some
25 decent things to tackle still tomorrow, and so we're going to
26 keep plugging along, guys. I think we've got at least one item
27 under Other Business. Let's see if we can knock that out first.
28 We'll get the low-hanging fruit, and, if we have time, we may
29 jump back into that SEDAR Report. We'll get into the SEDAR
30 Report and see if we can't hammer out what we need to figure out
31 there with those assessments, and so, Dr. Crabtree, you had an
32 item under Other Business regarding lionfish and EFPs.

33
34 **OTHER BUSINESS**
35 **LIONFISH DISCUSSION**
36

37 **DR. CRABTREE:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Our office currently
38 has four requests in hand for either letters of authorization or
39 exempted fishing permits to test the effectiveness of new trap
40 designs for lionfish removals, and none of them is complete
41 enough yet that we're going to review them at this meeting, but
42 you did hear Bill Kelly speak some about one of the projects
43 that he's working on. Some of the work is specific to the Gulf
44 of Mexico, and some of it would occur in both the Gulf and the
45 South Atlantic regions.

46
47 We previously have issued a letter of authorization for work
48 that's being done by the National Ocean Service off of

1 Pensacola, and they have been working to test the effectiveness
2 of a FAD, fishing attracting device, based non-containment
3 curtain trap, they call it, and we're currently reviewing a
4 request to review that authorization.

5
6 We have also issued and renewed an exempted fishing permit for
7 work that's being done by other researchers off of North
8 Carolina, and they're looking at testing the effectiveness of
9 Maine lobster traps in harvesting lionfish on artificial reefs
10 and hard-bottom areas and to assess the regional market
11 conditions for the species.

12
13 Last year, you reviewed and recommended that we approve the
14 proposal that Bill Kelly spoke of, and this is from the Florida
15 Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association, for an exempted fishing
16 permit that would expand some of what they're doing using
17 modified spiny lobster and black sea bass traps, and we're still
18 working with Bill on that project. Other applications we have
19 at hand would also test modified spiny lobster trap designs, the
20 NOS FAD-based design, and some kind of modification combination
21 of the two.

22
23 Now, the Fisheries Service and the region strongly supports
24 efforts to come up with gear that could be used to develop
25 commercial-scale fisheries for lionfish. I don't think lionfish
26 are ever going away, but, I think if we can develop a commercial
27 fishery for them, we can potentially keep the populations at
28 lower levels.

29
30 I also think, if we can increase fishing opportunities for
31 fishermen and they can make money off of fishing for lionfish
32 and we can provide seafood, that's all a good thing, but these
33 applications that we have are proposing to deploy a fairly
34 substantial number of lionfish traps, and I think we need to be
35 careful about evaluating the impacts of that research.

36
37 We need to look at bycatch of other species in that, and we need
38 to look at the impact of these traps on protected resources,
39 like corals and right whales and those kinds of things, and so,
40 because there are a lot of commonalities in the objectives and
41 the activities that all of these applications are proposing, we
42 are currently looking at a way that we might be able to help
43 organize the work under a programmatic exempted fishing permit
44 and the associated environmental review documents, so that the
45 various applicants can do their work to support a broad
46 scientific survey on them, and I wanted to get your thoughts to
47 that approach and input on any concerns you might have or things
48 you might like to see as we do this kind of work.

1
2 Then the other thing is we have a blanket ban on fish traps in
3 both the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and most of these types of
4 traps that are being developed meet the definition of fish
5 traps. It's a very broad definition.

6
7 What we're envisioning, ultimately, is coming up with something
8 similar to the bycatch reduction device protocol, the BRD
9 protocol that we have, where fishermen can test a bycatch
10 reduction device, and, if it meets the criteria laid out in the
11 protocol, it gets certified as a useable BRD and they can
12 install it in shrimp trawls and use it to reduce bycatch.

13
14 I would like to get to some type of lionfish trap protocol,
15 where fishermen can do the work on a type of trap and then, if
16 it meets the criteria we set, in terms of minimal levels of
17 bycatch and those kinds of things, it would then be exempted
18 from the fish trap prohibitions in the Gulf and South Atlantic,
19 but I think there are going to be questions about, even if we
20 can come up with some types of traps that work, how many of
21 these do we really want to put out and those types of things?

22
23 I wanted to lay out these thoughts to you at this meeting, and
24 I'm going to do the same thing next week with the South Atlantic
25 Council, because, if we did get to setting up some sort of
26 protocol and exemption from the fish trap review, we would
27 probably have to do some type of amendment to our management
28 plans to do that, but it does seem, to me, that we need to think
29 about some strategy of how we want to go about it.

30
31 I don't really want to end up with fifty exempted fishing
32 permits for a whole lot of disconnected and unrelated projects,
33 and I do think, to get to a real commercial fishery that is
34 focusing on lionfish, they need to be operating under the
35 regular rules of the road and not under exempted fishing
36 permits, because, for the market to develop, it's going to need
37 to have some consistency in the regulations, and so I would be
38 interested in hearing your thoughts about these kinds of things.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, sir, Mr. Anson.

41
42 **MR. ANSON:** Thanks for bringing this up, Roy, to the council.
43 Alabama has received a request from an entity, and they said
44 they have submitted an EFP request to you, and I believe to
45 Florida, but we are concerned. We have similar concerns as you
46 relative to effects or impacts to protected resources, debris
47 effects.

1 I mean, some of these things are very light. They don't have
2 any markings, at least the ones that were proposed to us. They
3 just kind of put something down on the bottom and mark it with a
4 GPS. Then, a day or two later, they come back and what happens
5 if a storm comes, if they're not able to come out and a storm
6 comes?

7
8 They were talking about potentially, on the South Atlantic too,
9 including the Gulf, 20,000 of these diver-deployed traps and
10 retrieved traps, and I certainly believe there is potential for
11 our market in our area and the Pensacola area and Orange Beach.
12 There is quite a few spear fishermen that go after them, and
13 some have even bought some state licenses to go out and conduct
14 that activity that have never been commercial fishermen.

15
16 There is potential there, and there is a need, and so I agree
17 that there probably needs to be some sort of overarching
18 structure or something that we can get to that will not only
19 help federal waters, but potentially it could be used for state
20 applications, too.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Swindell.

23
24 **MR. SWINDELL:** How big are these fish?

25
26 **MR. ANSON:** They can get up to twenty-plus inches, but,
27 generally, they're about a foot now, but they can get bigger.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer.

30
31 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you. It's an interesting proposition,
32 creating a commercial fishery for an invasive species. I am
33 sitting here thinking, well, if you want to incorporate them
34 into the management plan, how do you do that?

35
36 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I don't think it's appropriate to
37 incorporate them into the management plan, because the Magnuson
38 Act is designed to protect and conserve resources, and what I
39 want to see happen with lionfish is I want to overfish them as
40 bad as we can, and it seems to me that's something we have
41 learned how to do over the years, and so I don't think we want
42 to have a conservation plan from lionfish, but what we do need
43 to do is make sure that the gears being used are consistent with
44 our fishing regulations and that they're not having undue
45 impacts on the resources we are trying to protect and conserve.

46
47 To some extent, if we can reduce the lionfish populations, I
48 think that's good for the resources we're protecting, but it's

1 just we need to balance the benefits of reducing lionfish
2 populations with the potential downside of some of the habitat
3 impacts and other types of impacts that having the traps out
4 there might create.

5
6 **DR. FRAZER:** I agree with all of that. We obviously want to get
7 rid of them as soon as we can. The issue is sometimes you think
8 about these unintended consequences. When you create a fishery
9 and some type of a financial dependence, then you don't know
10 necessarily where that's going to go, and so I just would be
11 real careful there.

12
13 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes, and I appreciate that. It's just I'm not
14 sure where -- I think the only way to generate the levels of
15 effort that would be needed to make a big difference in their
16 population would be if people can profit from them, because I
17 don't see where the government funding sources are going to be
18 sufficient to support that effort without some sort of market
19 driving it.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Ms. Guyas.

22
23 **MS. GUYAS:** Thanks. The commercial fishery is happening now, in
24 state waters in Florida, and federal. There are people that are
25 spearfishing for them, and that's what they do. That is their
26 income. There is also some that people are taking as bycatch in
27 lobster traps, and, like what Kevin said, we're getting these
28 requests as well, and it seems like it makes sense to coordinate
29 and really look at them from a holistic viewpoint and make sure
30 that when we're -- I guess come up with some kind of standards
31 when we're looking at these, making sure we're not impacting
32 habitat and all of that and that we have acceptable levels of
33 bycatch, or no bycatch or whatever, but I think what you have
34 outlined seems to sound okay.

35
36 **DR. CRABTREE:** Martha is right on that the market is happening.
37 I am told they're getting six-dollars a pound for these in the
38 Keys, and so --

39
40 **DR. FRAZER:** It's fifteen in New York.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer, and then Mr. Anson.

43
44 **DR. FRAZER:** What are you seeing in the Caribbean? They have a
45 similar problem, and are there people trying to do fish traps
46 there for them?

47
48 **DR. CRABTREE:** They do. The Caribbean is a little different,

1 because fish traps aren't prohibited in the Caribbean. That's
2 one of their gears that they use, and so, from a regulatory
3 perspective, it's somewhat different down there, but they have
4 the same problems. They have a growing and abundant lionfish
5 population. They are harvesting them, and they're getting them,
6 but I plan to -- The next Caribbean Council meeting will be in
7 August, and we're going to have this same conversation.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** One more follow-up and then Mr. Anson.

10

11 **DR. FRAZER:** Because they're not -- They're a legal gear in the
12 Caribbean, and there's a lot to learn from the people that have
13 different gear designs, and I am just thinking if there is an
14 opportunity, perhaps, to put on some type of a workshop or
15 something to kind of gather all the information. You've got
16 five-million people trying to build traps, and we can learn from
17 one another.

18

19 **DR. CRABTREE:** We can certainly look into doing that, and I'm
20 not sure that the traps that they're using for fish traps down
21 there are all that effective at getting lionfish. There is a
22 lot of spear fishery for it down there. The trouble with the
23 spear fishery though is you are limited in the depths you can go
24 to, and lionfish occur well beyond the limits of divers to
25 effectively harvest them.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

28

29 **MR. ANSON:** Roy, what were you envisioning? I mean, Martha said
30 that the state -- I suggested that we ought to probably
31 cooperate, but do you want to develop a document within the
32 council process or do you want to do it independent through your
33 office and just come back to the council when you get everything
34 finalized?

35

36 **DR. CRABTREE:** Like I said, we're looking at some type of
37 programmatic exempted fishing permit, and, to do that, we would
38 have to do a NEPA document of some sort, and so that could
39 become the basis for it, and we could certainly keep the council
40 in the loop on it as we develop it. We're really just in the
41 formative stages of trying to figure out how we would do this
42 and what we might do, but we'll certainly keep you involved in
43 the process as we figure this out.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Stunz.

46

47 **DR. STUNZ:** Just from an informational purpose, from a western
48 Gulf perspective, at least further in the western Gulf, they're

1 certainly there, but we don't see them anywhere near like what
2 you see in Florida.

3
4 The Flower Gardens, a natural coral reef there, certainly has
5 their fair share of them, and they seem, for whatever reason, to
6 like the natural bottom just a slight bit better, but they're
7 available, and you see a pair or so, and so I don't know that --
8 In our region, the fishery probably wouldn't be realistic, and I
9 hope that stays to be the case.

10
11 Each year, we tend to think this is going to be the year of the
12 lionfish and we're going to see that explosion, but, since 2011
13 when we first saw them, we never have seen them really get a
14 foothold, and so maybe that's sort of part of their range. I
15 don't know, but we don't see a whole lot of them, fortunately.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Matens.

18
19 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This may be somewhat off
20 the subject, but I was diving -- I lived in Africa for a number
21 of years, and, thirty years ago, lionfish were everywhere in
22 east Africa. They covey up to anything, any little anomaly on
23 the bottom. If it's something like a rock that you can pick it
24 up, you can pick it up and they will just stay right there and
25 move around with you.

26
27 My wife and I also dive in the Caribbean, and not in U.S.
28 waters, and they've got some pretty cool programs. One of the
29 places that we dive, if you're interested, you go in the water
30 with a local authorized person with a sling, and you have to
31 prove that you can shoot three coconuts floating in the coral
32 without damaging the coral. If you do, you get a license all
33 week, and you can kill all the lionfish you want, and they take
34 them. I'm sure they eat them. They take them.

35
36 I think the point of that is that other people have found
37 creative ways to deal with this, and I agree completely with
38 Roy. These things are far beyond the limits of sport diving.
39 Maybe not for Jason Delacruz, but, again, the point I wanted to
40 make is these darned things are not afraid of anything.

41
42 I have no idea what eats them. I have never seen another fish
43 take one in east Africa, but, at any regard, that's enough. I
44 don't want to get on a sidetrack, but we're not the only people
45 facing this. It's going to take creative measures to do
46 anything, if it's possible. I mean, you guys are biologists.
47 If this even possible? These things are at 2,000 feet.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene.

2
3 **MR. GREENE:** Well, we see these things a good bit off the
4 northern Gulf coast, up in Alabama, and these fish will get on
5 artificial structures. When you pull up on a spot, it looks
6 more like a fuzz on the bottom, as opposed to a tradition spot
7 with fish up in the water.

8
9 If the lionfish are removed off the spot, within a couple of
10 weeks, you can go back to that spot, and there will be fish back
11 up in the water, and so there is a huge impact that these
12 lionfish are having, and it may be part of the reason that you
13 see some of these fish spreading out or some of these fish --
14 Finding red snapper ranging into different areas, and there may
15 be a whole host of reasons, and who knows what the answer is.

16
17 Roy, I am going to support what you're trying to do, and I would
18 be glad to help you, but my question is going to be for Mr.
19 Constant down at the end of the table. You and I have talked
20 about lionfish in the past. Do you guys have anything on you
21 all's radar screen? Is there anything that you can offer help
22 or advice or warnings or anything you can offer us?

23
24 **MR. CONSTANT:** Certainly we do have them on our radar, and I
25 think the same kind of discussions have taken place in the
26 Department of Interior with not only lionfish, but Asian carp
27 and other species, where eradication is not a realistic option
28 into the future.

29
30 I think one thing that we've done, I think through the Gulf
31 States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Invasive Species
32 Program, is modified or had the national invasive species plan,
33 and I don't recall the exact title, but there is a task force
34 that has developed a lionfish plan, and so we propose that that
35 be, part of it at least, funded with some of this Gulf
36 restoration money, and I think the commission actually voted to
37 support that.

38
39 The other thing is I think we've had discussions about a little
40 bit longer-term forecast in the prospect of developing things
41 like commercial fisheries or to manage invasive species, and,
42 while I guess, Roy, it would be an interesting question to kind
43 of dig into, if it evolves to the point where it's a viable
44 control, and not an eradication, and there is a dependency in
45 the commercial sense in the fishery, whether or not long-term
46 that's a sustainable measure, in trying to avoid -- Without a
47 fisheries management plan.

1 If you don't manage the availability of lionfish, will it
2 eventually be that the fishermen run out of fish or that the
3 market dries up?

4
5 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I don't know. I mean, if I could
6 exterminate them entirely right now, I would, but I don't know
7 how to do that, and so I don't know what, fifty to a hundred
8 years from now, people's view of lionfish will become, but I
9 think, right now, to the extent that we can -- If we can do it
10 with avoiding habitat impacts and all the other downsides, I
11 would say fish them down as far as we can fish them down.

12
13 **MR. CONSTANT:** I agree, and so, to your point, I think we're
14 interested in evaluating what the sweet spot is, and I think
15 this plan that the commission has supported is maybe a viable
16 way to get to partner, at least, in the effort to kind of
17 advance this idea of either exempted fisheries and market
18 development.

19
20 **MR. GREENE:** Thank you.

21
22 **AD HOC RED SNAPPER IFQ AP DISCUSSION**

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Was there any other comments that
25 anybody wanted to make? Okay. Good discussion. I did have one
26 thing for Other Business, and we'll go through it real quick.
27 It was kind of based on a lot of the feedback that I heard in
28 public comment, and I am wondering if the council would be
29 interested in creating an ad hoc AP that is specific to the IFQ
30 program and try and garner some feedback from people that,
31 number one, that are involved in it every day, that operate in
32 it, so that we can have a good handle on what some of these
33 unintended consequences are.

34
35 We could have some people on there that are new entrants and not
36 the people that got original shares, original shares in the
37 distribution. We want some of those too, but, in other words,
38 have a good range of people on there and then have some people
39 that maybe are commercial fishermen that want to become the next
40 generation IFQ holder.

41
42 I feel like we -- Even myself, and obviously I don't operate in
43 the IFQ, but I am from the commercial fishery, and I threw out
44 an idea that I thought, okay, surely this one would be an easy
45 one, to get rid of the middle man, and we punched holes in it
46 around the table enough that I was not interested in it. Then,
47 when I walked to the back of the room on our next break, they
48 were like, oh, yeah, and you didn't think about this and this.

1 I said, oh, gosh, that would be terrible.

2
3 I really think that we need to get that feedback. I think that
4 I am getting some of it from all three of those different
5 angles, as I walk around the room during breaks, but I think we
6 probably need that in a more formal sense, to make sure that
7 we're getting all the information that we need that can help
8 feed into some of this decision-making.

9
10 I was asking Doug, and he said that when that first five-year
11 review came out that we did form a -- Right before it, maybe, or
12 maybe it was involved in the review, but, anyway, we did form an
13 ad hoc red snapper IFQ to give some feedback on that, for that
14 review process, but we are looking now at both red snapper and
15 grouper tilefish, and I think we probably need to make sure,
16 especially based on some of the comments that we had during
17 public testimony, that we're going to get good coverage from
18 both of those groups.

19
20 It overlaps in some ways, but it sounds like some of that
21 grouper tilefish is a little bit concentrated, as far as your
22 specialty and your area that you fish out of, and so I think
23 it's going to probably be important that we get good
24 representation there from both of those IFQ systems, but is that
25 something that the council would be interested in doing, in
26 forming an ad hoc, to make sure that we get some good input as
27 we move forward with that amendment, or no? That is my question
28 to you all. Ms. Guyas.

29
30 **MS. GUYAS:** I will start. Based on some of the things we heard,
31 from the grouper folks in particular, I kind of feel like maybe
32 this is a question that would be better to answer after we have
33 the grouper five-year review, because what I heard basically was
34 grouper is a whole other animal, well grouper and tilefish,
35 really, than red snapper, and, if they want completely different
36 things or there are completely different issues in that IFQ
37 program, maybe we would want to consider that and pursue a
38 separate path, but it's difficult for me to say how to handle
39 that now without kind of seeing the review. I kind of wanted
40 the big-picture of what's happening.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Walker.

43
44 **MR. WALKER:** That's kind of what I heard from Bob Spaeth, was
45 they're two different species and maybe they have two different
46 areas, too.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

1
2 **MR. ANSON:** I don't necessarily have a problem with forming an
3 AP or something to give some feedback. I think maybe though, if
4 we gave it our best attempt to identify options or, as we're
5 going through this document right now, is that we ought to try
6 to get more specific, if we feel it's necessary, more specific
7 items in the document that we could then give to them and say
8 here is what the council is generally thinking, rather than them
9 kind of coming up with things, in case they don't come up with
10 things that the council is interested in getting feedback on,
11 and so I think we need to make sure that that document is pretty
12 all-encompassing of those ideas or concepts that we're thinking
13 of implementing for them to review and comment on.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I think you and I are the same page there,
16 because what I was thinking, from a timeframe, is, well, if the
17 council decided this was a good idea, we could start to try and
18 advertise for it.

19
20 We would do that preliminary review in August, and then we would
21 have that secondary review in October, which means this group
22 really probably wouldn't even meet and give us feedback until
23 next year, and I guess that's why I was throwing it out now,
24 because I figured, by that point, we're probably going to need
25 some feedback, but that was my idea.

26
27 I just didn't know if anybody else was interested. I just felt
28 like it gets so complicated so fast, and I would really want
29 some input from people on the ground. Like Kevin said, as we
30 get farther along and we're starting to hone in on some things
31 and make sure that we are aware of all the consequences and okay
32 with that, and we may be okay with the consequences, and that's
33 fine, but I just want to make sure that we're aware of all of
34 them. Yes, sir, Mr. Walker.

35
36 **MR. WALKER:** Maybe I could get a chance to speak to some of the
37 industry tonight and we can come back to Full Council and
38 discuss it tomorrow, whether they would like to see them
39 separated or see this. I had actually mentioned to Kevin one
40 time that I would like to see the AP get back together and
41 discuss this, the original red snapper AP, but a lot of those
42 folks were around from the very beginning, and some of them were
43 not. Some of them were small shareholders too during that, and
44 some were large.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Is anybody kind of all-out opposed to it,
47 because I don't want to go down that path if there is anybody
48 really opposed to it. Okay.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** We would need a motion to do
3 something like this, because our normal procedure for dealing
4 with ad hoc APs is to review them in January and determine if we
5 still need to keep them and determine if any of them need to be
6 advertised.

7
8 Then we would advertise them, along with the other APs that are
9 being advertised at that time, but there is nothing to stop us
10 from doing it at a different time, like now. I mean, it's
11 doable, but I don't want to go through all of that unless
12 there's a motion of the council that really tells us to do that.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Right.

15
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** The idea of having separate ad hoc
17 APs for each fishery versus having one -- I think, if we do one,
18 if we try to combine, I would like to revisit the idea of
19 categories, so that we know this person is a reef fish IFQ
20 holder and this person is a grouper IFQ holder and this person
21 has both, and, if you want other categories, like fish house
22 operators or somebody that just leases stuff, instead of owning
23 it, then we can try to pepper it with a more representative
24 listing of stakeholders in those specific groups.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That's a good idea. Mr. Anson.

27
28 **MR. ANSON:** Doug kind of took most of what I wanted to say, and
29 that is for us to try to get as diverse of a group as possible,
30 representing all of those different areas that we talked about,
31 and I guess that we could access most of those, at least,
32 through the IFQ program, as far as those that are shareholders
33 and those that acquire leased or have allocation and that type
34 of stuff.

35
36 We can at least use that as a pool, to make sure that we contact
37 those directly when the announcement goes out, and that, somehow
38 or another, we put the feelers out, through outreach, for those
39 that may not have leased, that are on the fence of thinking
40 about getting in, actually new entrants into the fishery, to
41 make sure we get at least a couple of those and get their
42 perspective.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Matens.

45
46 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just curious. I am
47 looking at the population on the ad hoc red snapper IFQ, and I
48 wonder how many of these people are in both fisheries. I mean,

1 Billy Archer and Jim Clements and Delacruz and Mike Eller and
2 Buddy Guindon, and I wonder if maybe we could utilize this AP to
3 do the same thing that you want to do.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Well, it could be possible, but I'm not -- I
6 mean, I would have to look at it, but it sounds like, from what
7 Mr. Anson was saying, that we would want to make sure -- I agree
8 with you, Kevin, that we make sure that we have a good cross-
9 section of people that maybe were initial shareholders, that are
10 maybe newer shareholders, that are people that are leasing only,
11 so that we get all perspectives.

12
13 I agree. For expediency, Camp, I thought about, well, maybe we
14 could just do a separate grouper-tilefish and leave that old red
15 snapper one, but I said, if we want to make sure we really have
16 the broad perspective, as we're honing in on this document that
17 we're trying to incorporate, we may want to re-advertise and do
18 that.

19
20 **MR. MATENS:** To that point, you may be right.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Let's just think about it between now and
23 Full Council. It was something that I wanted to throw out
24 there, and you all can kind of chew on two ad hocs or one ad
25 hoc, however you think is the best way to line it up, but I just
26 thought I would throw -- It dawned on me during public testimony
27 that that might be a good thing to form.

28
29 All right. It looks like it's now five o'clock. Surely that's
30 probably what we were -- Well, we were scheduled until 5:30, but
31 I'm not going to work you until 5:30 today, but I think we had a
32 great day. Tomorrow morning, we do not start until 8:30, you
33 will be excited to hear, and so we will recess until tomorrow
34 morning at 8:30. Thanks, guys.

35
36 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 7, 2017.)

37
38 - - -

39
40 June 8, 2017

41
42 THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

43
44 - - -

45
46 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
47 Council convened at the Naples Grand Beach Resort, Naples,
48 Florida, Thursday morning, June 8, 2017, and was called to order

1 by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** This morning, we actually are going to lead
4 off with the Gulf SEDAR Committee Report, if that is okay with
5 the council. We will rearrange that schedule a little bit, just
6 because we do have a little bit of business there that we want
7 to take care of, and I think Mr. Rindone is available if we need
8 him. He hasn't called in yet, but, if it looks like we need
9 him, we can get him to call in for us, and so that's what we'll
10 lead off with.

11
12 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
13 **GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE REPORT**
14

15 SEDAR Steering Committee Review, staff reviewed the proceedings
16 from the May 5, 2017 SEDAR Steering Committee webinar. The
17 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, FWC, notified
18 the Steering Committee that the SEDAR 48 assessment of
19 southeastern U.S. black grouper would not continue, due to
20 issues with species identification and other issues, which would
21 be outlined in a later report from the FWC.

22
23 The Steering Committee supported the recommendation of the
24 Marine Recreational Information Program, MRIP, Transition Team
25 to delay recalibration work until 2018, when more data will be
26 available.

27
28 The proposed research track assessment method has suffered a
29 setback, largely due to scheduling and deadlines for
30 deliverables to SEDAR cooperators. At this time, stock
31 assessments scheduled to be research track assessments are being
32 relabeled as benchmark assessments until the research track
33 method is clarified. Lastly, the scamp research track project
34 will be delayed until 2019.

35
36 SEDAR Schedule, staff reviewed the SEDAR schedule with the
37 committee. Gray triggerfish is set to be assessed in the first
38 half of 2018. Staff recommended that the council request a
39 terminal year of 2016 for the data going into the stock
40 assessment, which would add three years of additional data, plus
41 new sex-specific growth curves and an updated larval index.

42
43 Due to the shuffling of workloads at the Southeast Fisheries
44 Science Center, as a result of the delayed work on the MRIP
45 recalibration, the Gulf Council has been left with an available
46 assessment slot for late 2018. Staff recommended consideration
47 of cobia or red grouper.

1 Council members noted a considerable amount of input received
2 from stakeholders concerned about the health of the Gulf cobia
3 stock. Further, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4 is going to assess cobia in 2018 also.

5
6 The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council will also be
7 considering removing Atlantic cobia from the Coastal Migratory
8 Pelagics FMP and turning management over to the Atlantic States
9 Marine Fisheries Commission, since approximately 85 percent or
10 more of the Atlantic cobia landings come from state waters.

11
12 However, it was noted, after the council filled the 2018
13 assessment slot with cobia, that the same analyst is responsible
14 for both gray triggerfish and cobia, which could create a staff
15 availability issue and prevent both of those species from being
16 assessed in the same year. Alternatively, fishermen have
17 reported difficulty in finding red grouper for the last couple
18 of years.

19
20 I am going to pause here, before I read that motion, because, as
21 you remember in the committee, we made some motions to change
22 the SEDAR schedule around, based on the information that we had
23 received that we had an open slot, and we tried to look at our
24 priorities, and we moved some things around. I think Dr.
25 Ponwith has a little bit more information for us, before we get
26 everything finalized, that she would like to give us an update
27 on what the staff can handle and how that looks.

28
29 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just as a preface, when
30 we look at any schedule, we have to look at the schedule
31 relative to the full list of SEDAR clients, because essentially
32 our stock assessment scientists work with all of them, and so
33 that's the South Atlantic, the Gulf, the Caribbean, and the HMS
34 species, coastal species.

35
36 Then the other thing that we need to do is consult with three
37 sort of specialty groups, essentially the biological sample
38 people, the life history people who do the otolith reading and
39 the fecundity, the data analysts, and the assessment analysts.

40
41 Essentially, what I was able to do is do some consulting
42 yesterday, based on the input that you got, and what we see as a
43 feasible schedule for 2018, with the number of hands we have
44 available, is to do an assessment on red grouper in 2018 and to
45 also add the gray triggerfish. In speaking with a select number
46 of folks and consulting, it sounds like gray triggerfish has a
47 much higher-intensity need right now, and so, essentially, put
48 gray triggerfish on in 2018, but do that late in the year.

1
2 The reason for that is the analyst who does gray triggerfish is
3 in the middle of gray snapper right now, and he essentially
4 can't be leading two of these at once. That is more than we can
5 handle. Then, when the calibration information comes in, to
6 begin those MRIP lites also late in the year.

7
8 What that will cost is dropping vermilion. We can't do
9 vermilion and red grouper in the same year without several years
10 of advanced work, because those are very data rich and lots of
11 otoliths that need to be cut and red and inter-calibrated with
12 the other labs that are participating. What the schedule would
13 look like then is red grouper, gray triggerfish, the MRIP lites,
14 and with Florida conducting the hogfish assessment.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

17
18 **DR. CRABTREE:** Bonnie, on cobia, the South Atlantic is doing a
19 cobia benchmark, and I guess that's going to be done out of
20 Beaufort. Why couldn't that assessment just be expanded to
21 include the Gulf as well, because I know we have a stock ID
22 workshop, and it's not outside the realm of possibility that
23 they would decide that it's all one stock to begin with and they
24 would have to be tied together, and it does seem they are
25 interrelated, because any change in the boundary is going to
26 affect both stocks, and I would personally like to see Gulf and
27 Atlantic cobia assessed in a similar manner with the same model,
28 the same set of assumptions and all that.

29
30 **DR. PONWITH:** We can absolutely do cobia instead of gray
31 triggerfish, and everything you said makes perfectly good sense.
32 The catch is for the data people. If you have one assessment
33 team do one full cobia assessment and basically capture all of
34 the data, from Texas all the way around to the Mid-Atlantic,
35 there really isn't that much of a change in how you set the
36 model up, but it has a profound impact on the amount of data and
37 data contributors that our data team has to work with.

38
39 Right now, they are the bottleneck on that, and so I agree with
40 you. I think that's advisable. If we do the stock ID workshop
41 and determine that cobia is extremely distinct in the Gulf of
42 Mexico, there still may be rationale for setting the model up
43 the exact same way, but a less strong push to do it all in one
44 massive assessment, but, if the results of that stock ID comes
45 back and says this is one homogeneous stock, then we are going
46 to want to have the Gulf of Mexico data in there.

47
48 **DR. CRABTREE:** This is what I am struggling with, because I

1 don't believe that it will be acceptable to this council to
2 delay gray triggerfish. I think that's going to have to happen.
3 What are we going to do though if we then get to the South Atlantic
4 cobia assessment and they do decide it's one stock? Does that
5 assessment then get hugely delayed? I think that's going to
6 create problems on the east coast with it, and so I am trying to
7 find some way that we can get gray triggerfish, but still get
8 cobia done.

9
10 **DR. PONWITH:** I can talk to our data people, to find out -- The
11 story on cobia is our age readers do not read most of the cobia
12 tissues. That is done by other groups, and so we would have to
13 find out sort of where we are on cobia and the availability of
14 those partners who read the cobia, to make sure that those
15 structures are caught up, and I can find out from our data
16 people what the implications are and look at extreme measures,
17 relying on the states to do the data preparation for the
18 assessment or something like that.

19
20 **DR. CRABTREE:** Okay, because I think where we are is it's going
21 to be unacceptable for this council to delay gray triggerfish,
22 and I'm pretty sure that next week it's going to be unacceptable
23 for the South Atlantic Council to delay cobia, because both of
24 them have become huge issues that are creating great problems
25 for us, and so it would be really good if we could figure out
26 some way to reconcile that.

27
28 **DR. PONWITH:** The other thing is I would have to talk to the
29 South Atlantic analyst who leads on cobia. In a situation where
30 if we do it as one uniform stock, is that one lead analyst, who
31 just ingests all the data exactly the same and runs -- If you're
32 sitting on a mountain of data this big or sitting on a mountain
33 of data that big, the model would run the same, but, if there
34 are idiosyncrasies in the way the model needs to be run, we may
35 be in a situation where we need two analysts.

36
37 The challenge there is the analyst who is doing gray snapper
38 right now, and the data part of that has hit its peak intensity,
39 and the analysis part of that is just really getting underway,
40 and that person will be busy doing that assessment really now
41 for the coming months, and, when the assessment is done,
42 technically, it's really not done for the analyst, because we
43 have to wrap up the report and we have to present to the SSC,
44 present to the review committee and present to the SSC, and then
45 essentially run projections for the council to be able to set
46 ACLs from the ABCs, and so there's a lot of follow-up work that
47 has to be done.

48

1 That's the thing that keeps you from having that same person be
2 in the middle of a second assessment, because it's pretty
3 laborious, and so our challenge, again, is the gray snapper
4 analyst is the person who is responsible for gray triggerfish
5 and is the person who is responsible for cobia, and so it's a
6 pretty giant traffic jam.

7
8 I can talk to our analysts and find out, if the stock ID says
9 they're separate, then we can agree to use the same methodology
10 on cobia in both regions, but they don't necessarily need to be
11 done at exactly the same time. If stock ID says this is one
12 homogenous stock, then the next question is do you have one lead
13 analyst for that or does it require two and what are our
14 alternatives, because right now, that's kind of the jam that I'm
15 in. I mean, it's a jam.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. I am going to recap and make sure
18 that my notes are right, Bonnie. Gray snapper is ongoing at the
19 beginning of 2018, and it's actually ongoing now, because it
20 started in 2017, and it's going to finish up somewhere around
21 spring of 2018.

22
23 Now, that person would be the lead analyst for a gray trigger
24 and/or a cobia assessment that would be done, and so that's kind
25 of a little bit of the bottleneck there, that they can't be in
26 two places at once. They can't do trigger and cobia. Then the
27 issue with the vermilion -- Our other option, if we didn't do
28 cobia, was to do red grouper and bump it up on the schedule, but
29 the issue there is that the lead analyst that does red grouper
30 is also the lead analyst that does vermilion, and is that
31 correct?

32
33 **DR. PONWITH:** There is no problem doing red grouper. We can do
34 red grouper in 2018.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Can you do red grouper and vermilion snapper
37 in 2018?

38
39 **DR. PONWITH:** No, and the problem with red grouper and vermilion
40 is, number one, we won't be able to get all of those otoliths
41 read in time to get started. Number two, that just makes the
42 data preparation worse. Our data people -- That overloads the
43 data people who are doing all the data prep for the assessment.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana.

46
47 **DR. DANA:** Dr. Ponwith, I just find it troubling that it's a
48 matter of availability of analysts in your shop. Do you have

1 vacancies there, and don't you have other folks that could
2 competently take the lead on some of these? These surveys and
3 such are very important to so many constituent groups, and, to
4 have it all sitting on you guys and you don't have the proper
5 bulk of folks to handle them, it's troubling.

6
7 **DR. PONWITH:** Yes, I agree, Dr. Dana. It is troubling. We did
8 have an analyst who left exactly at the end of the year, which
9 was just a handful of weeks before the freeze. Essentially,
10 there was a freeze on hiring federal employees that lasted
11 through into the spring, and that freeze was ultimately lifted,
12 which creates the ability to make hiring decisions and initiate
13 the hiring process, but, anytime you have a freeze, you create -
14 - The freeze stops you from hiring, but it doesn't stop people
15 from leaving.

16
17 Essentially, you create this giant backlog of actions that then
18 you have to work your way through the backlog of accumulated
19 hiring actions, and so it creates a traffic jam in workforce
20 management.

21
22 In addition, there are -- This spring, there were a lot of
23 budget uncertainties, with the continuing resolution. Would the
24 continuing resolution come back at FY16 levels or was it going
25 to come in lower? All of those decisions are very important in
26 making decisions that you know are going to be sustainable, in
27 terms of how you backfill those positions.

28
29 We have a vacancy in our assessment team for the Gulf of Mexico,
30 and, also, in that same timeframe, we had a very senior data
31 person on our data team retire, and, again, that has a similar
32 effect on the data preparation side, and so the retirements can
33 happen quickly. The finding suitable talent to replace someone
34 who is senior and tried and true -- It's asymmetrical. It takes
35 longer to fill those positions than it takes them to be emptied.

36
37 I share your concern. In terms of building a bench to be able
38 to cross-train people would be a way to prevent a situation
39 where you had one lead analyst who was an expert on a stock, and
40 that certainly is ideal.

41
42 What that takes is building this cadre of people who have been
43 through a stock assessment, trained up on how the process works
44 within a council arena, and then, once they have gotten one or
45 two assessments under their belt, then actually have them serve
46 as an assist on other ones, so that, in the event that we do end
47 up in a situation like this, there is more than one person with
48 competence.

1
2 It takes time to get to that point. They have to -- When I fill
3 that vacancy, I have to have them conduct an assessment in sort
4 of journeyman status for one year and then bring them on as a
5 lead. Only after they have been a lead are they in a situation
6 where can start the cross-training.

7
8 **MR. GREENE:** To that point, Dr. Dana?

9
10 **DR. DANA:** Thank you, Mr. Greene. Given this situation, and
11 given that, and I mean I appreciate the time it takes in order
12 to advertise for positions and refill with competent folks into
13 your offices, especially scientists. That is a whole different
14 ballgame, and getting the people that are competent and can
15 carry on some pretty complex investigation, and I wonder if -- I
16 mean, gray triggerfish has to go forward. I mean, we should
17 have been doing that a long time ago, and so that needs to move
18 forward and not be delayed any longer.

19
20 On the cobia though, given that we're hearing so much public
21 comment about that in the Gulf, I wonder if the states -- Our
22 Gulf states have a pretty good understanding of the fishery, and
23 they have some talented researchers, and I wonder if they can
24 come up with some idea to get some of their researchers to work,
25 and I don't know, but to work together to help fill that void,
26 given that your office cannot handle it right now.

27
28 **DR. PONWITH:** We can certainly -- We are certainly going to have
29 to rely on our partners on the age analysis, because my
30 understanding is that the data holdings of those tissues reside
31 largely with our partners, and the competence to process those
32 really relies in some of our partners, and so we're going to
33 have to rely on our partners pretty heavily to work those
34 tissues up.

35
36 I will have to go back and discuss with the team what options
37 exist for dealing with cobia, because Dr. Crabtree makes a
38 really valid point. I mean, if the stock ID comes back and says
39 this is a homogenous stock, then it really does become crucial
40 to set that model up to do one massive assessment. I will have
41 to talk with the team to find out whether that's a one analyst
42 with several assists or a multiple-analysts approach.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Mr. Anson.

45
46 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Bonnie, a little -- I need
47 some clarification, I guess, on the issue relative to red
48 grouper and vermilion snapper. In one sense, it's not an

1 analyst problem, I think is what I heard you say. It's more of
2 a data problem, and so you talked about the partners and such,
3 and so I just want to get clarification.

4
5 Is it a data problem, from the perspective of processing
6 otoliths, or is it a data problem with respect to processing
7 otoliths and your capacity with staff, seeing that you had the
8 retirement of that key person? Is it both or is it just the
9 one?

10
11 I guess I don't know the timing of what these events are, and,
12 like you said, retirements can happen fairly quickly, but these
13 items are discussed at the Steering Committee level, as far as
14 coming up with a list, and, at least in the short term, barring
15 any unforeseen events, in the short term, the species -- There
16 shouldn't be much doubt or concern about doing triggerfish this
17 late in the process and still having it on the list placed in
18 2018.

19
20 **DR. PONWITH:** Yes, you've made it abundantly clear that gray
21 triggerfish is a priority, and we are prepared to deal with gray
22 triggerfish. The issue with vermilion is multiple challenges.
23 Number one, there are a lot of otoliths for vermilion and for
24 red grouper. To be able to do both of those this year, in
25 addition to the other otolith preparations that we're working
26 on, to be on track, is just not feasible.

27
28 The other thing is that, if we have gray triggerfish on the
29 agenda and red grouper on the agenda, having vermilion on two
30 overtaxes the data preparation for this, and so that's twofold.
31 Then the third complication is that the people who are working
32 on red snapper are the people who would be working on vermilion,
33 and so it creates a jam there.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, I have Mr. Walker.

36
37 **MR. WALKER:** Dr. Ponwith, I was kind of wondering, or maybe Dr.
38 Crabtree, and we hear a lot about the analysis and some of the
39 resources, and I've heard this before, but what would be the
40 best path to attain more funding to help give the Science Center
41 more resources?

42
43 **DR. CRABTREE:** The overall funding level for the agency is set
44 by Congress. Now, there are allocation decisions made within
45 the agency, but, overall, to increase funding, and I can tell
46 you that every region has similar problems and feels they need
47 more funding, that's in the hands of Congress.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory and then Mr. Greene.

2
3 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I think a large part of this
4 confusion is that, as of a month or so ago, we thought most of
5 the 2017 and the beginning of 2018 was going to be taken up with
6 the MRIP calibrations, and so, back in last October, we only had
7 scheduled gray triggerfish and red grouper, according to the
8 SEDAR Steering Committee Report, but, when we came to the
9 council in January of this year, the council substituted
10 vermilion snapper for red grouper, and it was supposed to be a
11 vermilion snapper update.

12
13 The only thing we were expecting in 2018, as of our January
14 meeting, was finishing gray snapper, doing the MRIP calibrations
15 at the beginning of the year, the scamp research track, the king
16 mackerel research track that's joint with Mexico, the gray
17 triggerfish standard assessment, and the vermilion update.

18
19 At our Steering Committee meeting webinar, two or three weeks
20 ago, or I guess a month ago now, we learned that the MRIP
21 calibrations would not start until the end of 2018, and so that
22 left some space for us to do some other assessments in the
23 beginning of 2018, and so staff starting piling it on.

24
25 We had vermilion on there, because of the council's decision in
26 January, and red grouper was already on the radar for a SEDAR,
27 because of the meeting we had in October, but staff pushed cobia
28 to be priority, because of anecdotal data they had heard from
29 the fishery, and then I, being on the SEDAR Committee myself,
30 had the same logic that Roy had.

31
32 If there's going to be a cobia assessment on the South Atlantic
33 side and a stock ID, it makes sense for us to do one. At that
34 time, we did not know about the conflict demands on the analyst,
35 and so we brought this to the council at this meeting and pushed
36 cobia in the beginning, and now we're just learning about the
37 analyst conflicts.

38
39 There has been confusion, and it's not because -- It's because
40 the situation has changed. We were given an opportunity to do
41 more assessments, and we tried to slip more in there, and so,
42 really, I guess the -- I don't know if Dr. Ponwith was thinking
43 of vermilion as an update or a standard, and I don't know if
44 that makes a difference in whether vermilion can be done or red
45 grouper in 2018.

46
47 The red grouper was originally scheduled by this council for
48 2019, but we were calling it operational track at that time, as

1 opposed to a research track, and so that would probably have
2 been a standard. I hope that clarifies a little bit of why we
3 have this confusion right now.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Mr. Greene, I hope you can bring
6 us to a head here.

7
8 **MR. GREENE:** I am going to bring us somewhere. I don't know how
9 well it's going to work, but I'm going to throw it up there and
10 see how it sticks, with the intention of showing where our
11 council is with the intent of priority and understanding Dr.
12 Crabtree's point about cobia.

13
14 I am going to make a motion here in just a second, but I have
15 one question that I would like to get answered by I guess Dr.
16 Crabtree. If the cobia is assessed in Beaufort, is that -- That
17 is a different Science Center than Miami or -- You said
18 something specifically to Beaufort, and I'm not sure that I
19 understood what you meant.

20
21 **DR. CRABTREE:** It's all under the Southeast Fisheries Science
22 Center, but many of the South Atlantic assessments are done by
23 analysts at the Beaufort Lab, and the Gulf assessments are done
24 by analysts, by and large, at the Miami Lab, but that breaks
25 down with coastal migratory pelagics, because the Miami Lab has
26 normally done the mackerel assessments, and I am not really -- I
27 don't even know who did the last cobia assessment. I don't know
28 if that was Beaufort or Miami. I am not sure, but you have two
29 large assessment groups that do the assessments for these two
30 councils, and that is one in Miami and one in Beaufort.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. Procedurally, if Mr. Greene is going
33 to make a motion that's going to adjust a SEDAR schedule,
34 procedurally, I am going to go back to my committee report
35 first, and I'm going to make the motion. I am going to read the
36 motion that was made in committee to change the schedule, and
37 then, if someone wants to make a motion, they can make a
38 substitute to what we did in committee. Just a heads-up that
39 that's where we're going here.

40
41 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to assess gray**
42 **triggerfish and cobia in 2018 as standard track assessments,**
43 **with a terminal year of 2016.** The motion carried with no
44 opposition. Mr. Greene.

45
46 **MR. GREENE:** I would like to make a substitute motion, and I
47 will try to characterize from the SEDAR schedule handout, in
48 orders of priority from one through six. Essentially, the

1 handout that you guys have that has the list of fish that are
2 going to be assessed in 2018, I am just going to number them one
3 through six with the stock accordingly, and so I'm not sure how
4 the -- I am trying to kind of make sure that I get the motion
5 correct as we go, and we may have to go back and modify the
6 motion, to get it correct as to my intent, and so bear with me
7 here, ladies. I am sorry, and I will try to go at your speed
8 here on this.

9
10 **For the year of 2018, I would like to see, in the number one**
11 **spot, and so number one would be gray snapper benchmark**
12 **continued, number two would be the MRIP calibration updates,**
13 **number three will be king mackerel research track, number four**
14 **will be gray triggerfish standard, number five will be cobia,**
15 **and number six will be red grouper, and that would be a standard**
16 **for cobia and red grouper. If I get a second, I will give you**
17 **my rationale.**

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** The motion has been seconded by Martha.

20
21 **MR. GREENE:** My rationale for this is, while I am extremely
22 understanding and sympathetic to everything that Bonnie said,
23 and, Dr. Ponwith, I heard everything you said, and I understand
24 most of it.

25
26 From the side of it as to what we set up as a priority and what
27 you can do, it is, in my book, kind of two different things, and
28 so, without the intent of this council showing what our
29 scientific research needs truly are and trying to be sympathetic
30 to the problems that you have, I think it takes away from how
31 important these six assessments truly are.

32
33 If we don't pass some similar motion to this, saying this is our
34 absolute we've got to have this done needs, and it comes back
35 that you can't accomplish that because you don't have the tools
36 in your toolbox to do that, then I think something is truly
37 lost.

38
39 The cobia deal that Dr. Crabtree laid out is a huge deal,
40 probably a lot larger than what most of us in this council
41 understand, because we typically stick to our business in the
42 Gulf, and we don't have a ton of joint management plans, like
43 the South Atlantic does. I think about everything they do that
44 they have to deal with one council in the Gulf or to the north,
45 and so they typically have to deal with this stuff all the time.

46
47 The cobia deal in the Atlantic is a huge, huge deal. I think
48 that's something that we certainly need to put in there and move

1 forward with it. If there are provisions that a research lab in
2 Beaufort can assist by doing this, I think then maybe we need to
3 reach out to other avenues to help the Science Center in Miami
4 get what it needs to do that.

5
6 I think it also sends an important message to our constituents
7 that, yes, we hear you, and, yes, we want to do everything we
8 can to help you, and we have put it in a motion, and we have
9 sent it up the ladder, and we will do our best, knowing that
10 Bonnie is going to do everything in her power to meet our
11 demands and try to legitimately do what we want to do.

12
13 With that being said, I think this is the only path forward for
14 us to take. I know that Bonnie may come back and say, look,
15 I've talked to everybody, and it's just simply not going to
16 happen, but that doesn't change the fact that this is our
17 priority list and we need to move forward with that.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Any further discussion? Mr. Matens.

20
21 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Johnny has captured my
22 sentiments exactly.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Ponwith.

25
26 **DR. PONWITH:** I actually agree with you that I think it's
27 crucial that in these discussions that we don't lose your sense
28 of priority. Your sense of priority is crucial, because it
29 helps us to understand where we are sufficient and where we are
30 insufficient, and it helps us to understand where we've had to
31 use baling wire and chewing gum to try and get something done or
32 failed to get something done that you set as a priority.

33
34 We don't want to lose that sense of priority, and so I think
35 that's important for the administrative record. It gives us
36 something to aim at, and, as long as it's understood that we
37 will do everything in our power to honor that, but, in a case
38 where we can't, we will have to make a correction to that and
39 get back to you with what the actual can-do list is and then
40 make that part of the record as well, and I think that's the
41 best way to tackle this.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Dr. Mickle.

44
45 **DR. MICKLE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to share a few
46 things. In Mississippi, when we do stock assessments, and we
47 have these same conversations in our agency with our
48 commissioners, and it's pretty much the same exact process.

1
2 We have a list of sixteen stock assessments that we would like
3 to do next year, and we prioritize those, and we line up what we
4 funds we have, and we work down the list. Now, this motion is
5 not demanding that the Science Center do these six next year.
6 They're going to work in this priority, and it spills over into
7 the next year, and I am understanding that correct?

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, and the spillover -- This is the
10 priority list, yes. In other words, if Bonnie has an issue with
11 cobia, if something cannot be worked out there, then we have
12 made it clear that next in line for us would be red grouper for
13 2018.

14
15 Now, as far as spilling over into the next year, because 2019 is
16 a long way away, if she comes back and tells us that cobia just
17 can't be done, then we would probably revisit the 2019 schedule
18 and see how we want to realign things, or if we want to realign
19 things there, but, yes, generally speaking, yes, that's the
20 deal.

21
22 **DR. MICKLE:** An example of that is the gray snapper spilling
23 into next year, correct, and holding up this problem, and so,
24 with my experience, in my agency, which is a much smaller scale
25 and everything, when we get backed up and our commissioners are
26 screaming that they need to have things put in a faster realm,
27 we start outsourcing.

28
29 We start sending stock assessments to other places, and that
30 adds variety, and it brings in a diversity of analysts and
31 everything, and it doesn't slow down the process. It's just
32 good business to outsource when you're overwhelmed, and I will
33 leave it at that.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer.

36
37 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This question is actually
38 for Paul. When you outsource, who do you outsource to or with?

39
40 **DR. MICKLE:** I think we would all be surprised, because I have
41 already looked, and there is a lot of analysts in our country,
42 just our country, and there is private -- There is companies,
43 private organizations, that do this.

44
45 I think my predecessor actually brought this up in Galveston two
46 years ago, and I'm not quite sure how the conversations went,
47 and, surprisingly, it was about gray triggerfish, outsourcing
48 gray triggerfish. Again, I wasn't here for the subsequent

1 conservations behind that, but I don't know what happened when
2 we did discuss that, this council did, of outsourcing, but a
3 very quick look would reveal a lot of different groups that do
4 stock assessments.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory.

7
8 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Two things. First, to answer that,
9 is we just don't have the funds to pay for somebody to do a
10 stock assessment. That's something that we have discussed in
11 SEDAR for a number of years, going back to when Mr. Boyd was the
12 Chair of the council on SEDAR. He made that plea.

13
14 Two, this schedule is supposed to be fixed and agreed upon,
15 negotiated between the council and the Southeast Fisheries
16 Science Center, but what has happened is things are fluid.
17 Things change, and so the schedule is never as it was intended
18 to be.

19
20 We're supposed to get five assessments a year, but I don't
21 remember getting five assessments a year, for one reason or the
22 other, and so, yes, we can treat this as a priority list now,
23 but we still try to nail things down as soon as we can, but,
24 again, we were disrupted this time because of the change in the
25 scheduling of the MRIP calibrations.

26
27 It gave us an opportunity to do some assessments that we had
28 scheduled for 2019 in 2018, and we pushed that, and that's why
29 we're where we are today. Yes, we will take this forward, and,
30 if the council would like, we can come back and discuss 2019 and
31 2020 in August, before the September SEDAR meeting. Then we can
32 come back in October and give you the results of the discussions
33 in the SEDAR Committee, and the SEDAR Committee meetings are
34 broadcast by webinar, and so anybody can listen in.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any further discussion on this
37 motion? Mr. Greene.

38
39 **MR. GREENE:** We have the motion on the board for 2018, and I'm
40 going to bring a motion, after this one passes, for 2019,
41 understanding where we're at on this, and so I will try to
42 explain, because we did drop vermilion snapper out of this, and
43 I will pick that up in 2019, and I will have a question or two
44 before I make that motion as well, and so just because I know
45 some of you are kind of wondering where I'm going to go with
46 this, and I'm just trying to throw it out there and lay it on
47 the table, just so everybody understands where I'm at.

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana.

2
3 **DR. DANA:** Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Just for clarification,
4 Johnny, in your motion, your substitute motion, would it read
5 better if it said in 2018 "to assess in priority", because,
6 right now, it just says that all of them will be assessed.

7
8 **MR. GREENE:** Yes, ma'am, and I think that was my intent, was
9 that the numbers would signify our intent of priority, and so,
10 yes, I think that would flow a lot better.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Martha, as seconder, are you okay with that
13 addition? Okay. All right. Any further discussion on this
14 motion? **Seeing none, all in favor of the motion, signify by**
15 **saying aye; all opposed same sign. The motion carries.**

16
17 The next thing in our committee report is a motion that speaks
18 to our 2019 assessment schedule, and so I'm going to read that,
19 and, if we want to leave it as is, that's fine. If not, we will
20 need a substitute.

21
22 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to assess red grouper**
23 **as the number one priority in 2019 as a standard track**
24 **assessment with a terminal year of 2018.** The motion carries
25 with no opposition. Mr. Greene.

26
27 **MR. GREENE:** I am going to make a substitute motion in just a
28 second, but my question is that, sometime back, I was the
29 council representative, and I went to a SEDAR meeting, and I
30 believe it was yellowedge grouper and tilefish that were being
31 done at the same time. Dr. Ponwith, does that sound right, or
32 Mr. Gregory, is that right?

33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Yes, and that was in 2011. I was
35 the chair of the review workshop, and that's the one I think you
36 attended.

37
38 **MR. GREENE:** Okay. Because you were the chair of that, were
39 they -- In 2019, it fills up two spots. Is that how it was done
40 in 2011? Do you remember, Mr. Gregory?

41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** No, I don't.

43
44 **MR. GREENE:** Okay. Where I'm hung right now is I was trying to
45 see if yellowedge grouper and tilefish were going to be kind of
46 done at the same, and, right now, in 2019, they take up two
47 spots, but I'm sure they'll be done by the same analyst, I would
48 assume, being that they're so closely related, but I don't know

1 the answer to that.

2
3 With that, I am going to attempt to move on. Now, understanding
4 that if something does not get done in 2018 that it will get
5 bumped to 2019, and probably take the lead as the number-one
6 priority, I think is where we're all trying to go.

7
8 If, for some reason, the motion we just approved, if we don't
9 get to number six, which was red grouper, if it doesn't get
10 done, then it will be the number-one priority for 2019. I think
11 that was the intention that we as a council were trying to make
12 or that I was trying to kind of lead to.

13
14 **With that, in 2019, I will make a substitute motion to assess --**
15 **In 2019, to assess, in order of priority, number one will be**
16 **scamp, and I think that would be listed as RT, which will be**
17 **research track; number two will be vermilion snapper, as a**
18 **standard; number three will be yellowedge grouper standard;**
19 **number four will be tilefish standard; and number five will be**
20 **the Spanish mackerel standard. Madam Chair, I believe that is**
21 **my motion.**

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. To assess, in 2019, in order of
24 priority, 1)scamp research track, 2)vermilion snapper standard;
25 3)yellowedge grouper standard, 4)tilefish standard, and
26 5)Spanish mackerel standard. Do we have a second for this
27 motion? It's seconded by Dr. Frazer.

28
29 We have this motion on the board. Now, 2019 is still a proposed
30 type of deal, and so obviously, the motion we passed right
31 before this, there is still a question mark next to which one of
32 those last two are going to get assessed, cobia or red grouper,
33 but hopefully -- This is June, and so, hopefully in August, we
34 should have the firmed up, and, once we know that, we can
35 revisit the 2019 proposed schedule and see which one of those we
36 need to try and fold in somewhere, and so this would just be our
37 proposed for now, knowing that, at the next meeting, we'll have
38 to revisit it. Dr. Ponwith.

39
40 **DR. PONWITH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The first part of the
41 motion is for red grouper in 2019, with a terminal year of 2018,
42 and so, just so you know, it can be done that way, but what it
43 requires is that you wait until quite late in the year, because
44 it takes that amount of time for the terminal year data to
45 become final.

46
47 You can start the assessment right away, in the beginning of the
48 year, with a terminal year two years before, but, if you want

1 the 2018 data to be used in a 2019 assessment, it can't start
2 any earlier than probably the late summer, so that the 2018 data
3 have a chance to go final.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thanks for that, Dr. Ponwith, and, at this
6 point, it's somewhat of a moot point, because we've moved it to
7 the 2018 schedule, red grouper, and so that motion above it was
8 reorganizing the 2019 priority schedule, and so our substitute
9 changes the way that we're reorganizing the 2019 priority
10 schedule, but thank you for that info. It may still be relevant
11 at some point in the future. Dr. Simmons.

12
13 **DR. CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think you guys
14 did discuss this in committee, but I just thought that I would
15 bring it up again, because Ryan is texting me. He is telling me
16 the tilefish, which was primarily golden tile, was pretty much a
17 data-poor assessment, and we don't know that there is a whole
18 lot of new information.

19
20 I think there is some information on blueline tilefish in the
21 South Atlantic, but I don't know how much of that can be carried
22 over to the Gulf, regarding this assessment, and so, again, just
23 we might not end up with a whole lot, regarding a standard
24 assessment for tilefish, but we can get more information for you
25 for the next meeting.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That sounds perfect, and, since we're
28 probably going to have to revisit our 2019 schedule again, if
29 you can just bring that, so we'll have all the relevant
30 information in front of us, that will help us make some
31 decisions. Any further discussion on this motion? **Seeing none,**
32 **any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**

33
34 Let's get back to our committee report. Staff noted that, if
35 final landings data are not available in time for an assessment,
36 that preliminary landings data could be used until final data
37 are available.

38
39 Other shuffling of assessment priorities was discussed.
40 However, staff encouraged the committee to hold off on
41 reorganizing 2019 and forward assessment priorities until after
42 the October 2017 Steering Committee meeting.

43
44 The committee ran out of time to discuss the stock assessment
45 prioritization worksheet, Tab I, Number 5(b), and the NOAA Stock
46 Assessment Improvement Plan, Tab I, Number 6(a), and the
47 council's subsequent letter, Tab I, Number 6(b). Therefore, we
48 will quickly pick that up.

1
2 Our agenda includes the Stock Assessment Prioritization
3 Worksheet and the NOAA Stock Assessment Improvement Plan. Mr.
4 Gregory, I believe you were slated to tell us a little bit about
5 that on our original committee report. Give us just a second to
6 pull that up, and then we will get started.

7
8 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** It's on the council agenda. The
9 letter is before you, and it's been reviewed by the SSC and our
10 Chair, and, as we said yesterday, sometimes we don't bring
11 letters like to the Full Council, and, rather than read the
12 letter, I assume people have had a chance to read it. If there
13 is any editorial changes that people want to make, we would
14 welcome that. Otherwise, we will forward the letter as is.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** The letter is in reference to NOAA's Stock
17 Assessment Improvement Plan that they presented us a document
18 with, and we're giving them some feedback on how that plan reads
19 and what it may mean to us and where we may see room for
20 improvement. Did anybody have any revisions or edits to that
21 letter? Are you okay with it as presented? I am seeing some
22 nodding of heads around the table. All right, Mr. Gregory, I
23 believe that that letter is appropriate.

24
25 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Thank you.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That will conclude my report. Is there any
28 other related business to come before the SEDAR? Mr. Greene.

29
30 **MR. GREENE:** I can't let it go. Okay. Back to the red grouper.
31 We need to establish a terminal year for that assessment. **I'm**
32 **going to make a motion that, for the red grouper assessment in**
33 **2018, the terminal year would be 2016.**

34
35 That's my motion, and I have some more information that I will
36 provide as rationale that may change that to 2017, but I kind of
37 want to see where we go with this.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. The motion is, for the red
40 grouper assessment in 2018, the terminal year will be 2016. Do
41 we have a second for discussion? It's seconded by John. Mr.
42 Greene, do you want to give us some discussion?

43
44 **MR. GREENE:** I think the terminal year would be correct for
45 2018. Now, if that assessment is to start late in 2018, after
46 say September, then I don't know why we couldn't use 2017, but I
47 don't know how it's going to fall, but, looking at the list of
48 priorities, I would assume it's going to be late into the year

1 when it starts, and I think we could use 2017, but I kind of
2 wanted to get the council's input before I changed it to 2017,
3 because, when you just read the motion, it says, in 2018, the
4 terminal year will be 2016, but, if it started late in the year,
5 say September, then we could potentially use 2017 and get the
6 best data.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

9

10 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would agree, and, if that would help expedite
11 not having to wait for the 2017 data to be fully vetted, and we
12 can gain some time, perhaps, with the utilization of 2016, then
13 clearly that would be the path to take, but, if that's not going
14 to be the case, then we probably need to hear from the Science
15 Center and see if that is the case.

16

17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Bonnie, I know that puts you on the spot a
18 little bit. Do you know, based on the priorities we listed for
19 2018, and we had red grouper as last on that list, do you think
20 it's possible to use 2017, or should we specify 2016?

21

22 **DR. PONWITH:** With the list that you have for 2018, the
23 probabilities of getting to red grouper in 2018 are very, very
24 slim. As the sixth stock assessment on that list, the
25 probabilities of being able to do that assessment in 2018 are
26 low, and, again, that just comes from the number of assessments
27 that our data people can accommodate.

28

29 If you have a desire to have the terminal year be 2017, that
30 assessment could not be begun until the waning months of 2018 in
31 the first place, which it lands then at the same time as we
32 would conceivably be doing the MRIP lites, and it would spill
33 into 2019.

34

35 I would have to look to see -- It doesn't relieve the pressure
36 on the data people, which is where the pressure is right now,
37 being able to get those data pulled together and conditioned for
38 use in the assessment.

39

40 That really does put the pressure on the data people as well as
41 the otolith people at that point, and I would have to go back
42 and talk with staff, but my instinct right now is that that's
43 one more assessment than we're going to be able to pull off in
44 2018.

45

46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

47

48 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Simply put, but foregoing 2017 and using a

1 terminal year of 2016, so that data could be gathered, we don't
2 gain anything, is your instinct.

3
4 **DR. PONWITH:** If you put the terminal year as 2016, all things
5 being equal, it enables -- In the general case, it enables the
6 stock assessment to be begun in the beginning of the year, as
7 opposed to very, very late in the year, but, in this case, I
8 think red grouper, whether you start early in the year or late
9 in the year, is one more assessment than we're going to be able
10 to do, and so it almost renders the terminal year as moot.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any further discussion on this
13 motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? No**
14 **opposition, and the motion carries.**

15
16 Any other SEDAR-related business? Okay. One report down.
17 Let's everybody have a quick break before we start Reef Fish,
18 because I know you don't like to leave the table once we do
19 that, and so we'll take a quick, ten-minute break.

20
21 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene, I will turn it over to you.

24
25 **REEF FISH COMMITTEE REPORT**

26
27 **MR. GREENE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the Reef Fish
28 Committee Report from June 5 and 6, 2017. The agenda was
29 adopted, with the addition of several items under Other
30 Business. The minutes of the April 4, 2017 committee meeting
31 were approved with several corrections noted by committee
32 members.

33
34 Final Action, Amendment 44, Minimum Stock Size Threshold for
35 Reef Fish Stocks, staff reviewed the alternatives in the
36 amendment and the public comments received. A committee member
37 noted that the stock status information in Table 2.1.1 was not
38 based on the most recent assessment for red snapper and greater
39 amberjack.

40
41 Using the most recent assessments, the stock biomass relative to
42 BMSY was corrected as follows. Red snapper SSB current/SSB 26
43 percent SPR was 54 percent in the 2014 update assessment. This
44 means that red snapper would no longer be classified as
45 overfished under an MSST of 50 percent of BMSY.

46
47 Greater amberjack SSB current/SSB 30 percent SPR was 29 percent
48 in the 2017 SEDAR 33 update assessment. This means that greater

1 amberjack would continue to be classified as overfished under
2 all MSST alternatives.

3
4 A Committee member made a motion to change the preferred
5 alternative from Alternative 3 to Alternative 6, which would
6 change the MSST to 50 percent of BMSY. He felt that this would
7 give the council the greatest flexibility to end a stock decline
8 before the constraints of a rebuilding plan are imposed. Bonnie
9 Ponwith noted that her colleagues recommended Alternative 5,
10 MSST equals 75 percent of BMSY, but felt that Alternative 2 or
11 Preferred Alternative 3 were also acceptable.

12
13 Council staff explained that, at 50 percent of BMSY, stocks were
14 considered in danger of collapse. However, committee members
15 noted that preventing overfishing would continue to drive
16 management. If overfishing can be prevented, the stock should
17 remain above this threshold.

18
19 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in**
20 **Action 1, to make Alternative 6 the preferred alternative.**
21 **Alternative 6 is for the reef fish stocks listed in Table 1.3.1,**
22 **reef fish stocks MSST equals 50 percent BMSY, or proxy.**

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a committee motion. Is
25 there any discussion on the motion? Dr. Ponwith.

26
27 **DR. PONWITH:** I just do want to reiterate a concern that setting
28 - Based on the analyses that we've done, setting the MSST at
29 this level does actually require overfishing to -- Overfishing
30 is what would drive it to this point, and so it creates some
31 concern, having that as your threshold.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

34
35 **DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I mean I think we generally assume that
36 stocks become overfished because of overfishing, and, if the
37 overfishing is chronic and allowed to go on for many years, then
38 stocks can be driven down to low levels.

39
40 That is what happened with red snapper and a number of our
41 stocks. They underwent overfishing for twenty years or more,
42 many decades ago, but, with the laws we have now and the
43 vigilance of this council, that situation is very different, and
44 it's difficult for me, for these stocks, which are assessed with
45 some regularity, it's difficult for me to envision a situation
46 where chronic overfishing would be allowed to go on for that
47 extended amount of time, and so I understand Bonnie's comments,
48 but I think, given the way the statute is set up now, the risk

1 is fairly minimal, and so this seems acceptable to me.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Atran.
4
5 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** I just wanted to remind folks of the seven
6 stocks that this motion covers. This includes hogfish, and you
7 just, in the last amendment, Amendment 43, had adopted 75
8 percent of BMSY as the MSST for hogfish, and so, if you go with
9 this, that would modify hogfish along with the other six stocks
10 covered by this amendment.
11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any further discussion on the
13 motion? **All those in favor, signify by saying aye; all those**
14 **opposed same sign. The motion carries.**
15
16 **MR. GREENE:** Staff explained that MSST levels are not included
17 in the Code of Federal Regulations. Therefore, there was no
18 codified text to accompany the amendment.
19
20 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to**
21 **approve Reef Fish Amendment 44 and that it be forwarded to the**
22 **Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, giving**
23 **staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the**
24 **document.**
25
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a committee motion, and
27 this is final action, and so this will be a roll call vote. Mr.
28 Gregory, I will let you call the names.
29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Anson.
31
32 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.
33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Stunz.
35
36 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.
37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Crabtree.
39
40 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.
41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Swindell.
43
44 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.
45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Boyd.
47
48 **MR. BOYD:** Yes.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Sanchez.
3
4 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.
5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Dana.
7
8 **DR. DANA:** Yes.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Greene.
11
12 **MR. GREENE:** Yes.
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Frazer.
15
16 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.
17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Walker.
19
20 **MR. WALKER:** Yes.
21
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Diaz.
23
24 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.
25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Banks.
27
28 **MR. BANKS:** Yes.
29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Ms. Guyas.
31
32 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes.
33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Robinson.
35
36 **MR. ROBINSON:** Yes.
37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Mickle.
39
40 **DR. MICKLE:** Yes.
41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Matens.
43
44 **MR. MATENS:** Yes.
45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Ms. Bosarge.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** It passes unanimously.
3

4 **MR. GREENE:** Final Action, Amendment 47, Vermilion Snapper MSY
5 Proxy and ACL, staff reviewed the actions and alternatives in
6 the amendment and public comments received, noting that the ACL
7 was dependent upon the combination of preferred alternatives in
8 the two actions.
9

10 The SSC had approved alternate OFL and ABC yield streams in the
11 event the council selected the new Alternative 3 in Action 1,
12 MSY proxy equals F26 percent SPR, but they continued to
13 recommend that 30 percent SPR be the MSY proxy. There were no
14 motions to change either of the preferred alternatives. Action
15 1, Preferred Alternative 2 the proxy for vermilion snapper MSY
16 is the yield when fishing at F30 percent SPR. Action 2,
17 Preferred Alternative 3, the ACL for vermilion snapper for the
18 years 2017 through 2021 will be the constant catch average of
19 the five-year ACLs when fishing at 75 percent of the MSY proxy
20 yield selected in Action 1. With the selected preferred
21 alternatives, the vermilion snapper ACL would be 3.11 million
22 pounds whole weight.
23

24 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to**
25 **approve Reef Fish Amendment 47 and that it be forwarded to the**
26 **Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem**
27 **the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff**
28 **editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document.**
29 **The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to**
30 **the codified text as necessary and appropriate.**
31

32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. We have a committee motion. Again,
33 this is going to be final action, and so this will be a roll
34 call vote as well.
35

36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Swindell.
37

38 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.
39

40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Banks.
41

42 **MR. BANKS:** Yes.
43

44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Walker.
45

46 **MR. WALKER:** Yes.
47

48 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Mickle.

1
2 DR. MICKLE: Yes.
3
4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Boyd. Mr. Diaz.
5
6 MR. DIAZ: Yes.
7
8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Greene.
9
10 MR. GREENE: Yes.
11
12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Crabtree.
13
14 MS. GERHART: Yes.
15
16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Robinson.
17
18 MR. ROBINSON: Yes.
19
20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Frazer.
21
22 DR. FRAZER: Yes.
23
24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Matens.
25
26 MR. MATENS: Yes.
27
28 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Stunz.
29
30 DR. STUNZ: Yes.
31
32 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ms. Guyas.
33
34 MS. GUYAS: Yes.
35
36 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Anson.
37
38 MR. ANSON: Yes.
39
40 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Sanchez.
41
42 MR. SANCHEZ: Yes.
43
44 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Dana.
45
46 DR. DANA: Yes.
47
48 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ms. Bosarge.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes.

3
4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** The motion passes unanimously,
5 sixteen to zero with one absence.

6
7 **MR. GREENE:** Final Action, Abbreviated Framework Action to
8 Modify the Number of Unrigged Hooks Carried Onboard Bottom
9 Longline Vessels, staff provided an overview, including the
10 purpose and need of the abbreviated framework action to modify
11 the number of unrigged hooks carried onboard bottom longline
12 vessels.

13
14 Staff indicated the council could take final action at this
15 meeting, if warranted. Ms. Gerhart summarized recent reef fish
16 observer data on bottom longline reef fish trips that indicated,
17 since the implementation of Amendment 31 in 2010, average hook
18 loss per trip had increased. Thus, the 250 extra unrigged hooks
19 onboard is not sufficient.

20
21 The committee discussed the comments provided by law enforcement
22 officers that indicated counting the number of unrigged hooks
23 onboard could be burdensome if increased, but allowing an
24 unlimited number onboard would be ideal. The regulation of 750
25 hooks fished or rigged for fishing would not be changed through
26 this action.

27
28 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to**
29 **make Option 3 the preferred option. Option 3 is modify the**
30 **total number of hooks to be unlimited, of which no more than 750**
31 **hooks are fished or rigged for fishing. While the option of**
32 **greater than 1,500 hooks per vessel was not analyzed in**
33 **Amendment 31, the regulation to only allow 750 hooks to be**
34 **fished or rigged for fishing would remain in place. Therefore,**
35 **there should not be any additional concern for protected species**
36 **interactions. Law enforcement would only need to check the**
37 **number of rigged hooks, 750, because there would be an unlimited**
38 **number of unrigged hooks allowed in this option, reducing any**
39 **burden on law enforcement.**

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a committee motion on the
42 board. Is there any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is**
43 **there any opposition to the motion? With no opposition, the**
44 **motion carries.**

45
46 **MR. GREENE:** The committee then voted to recommend approval and
47 submission of the Abbreviated Framework Action and codified
48 text.

1
2 Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to
3 approve the Abbreviated Framework Action to Modify the Number of
4 Unrigged Hooks Carried onboard Bottom Longline Vessels and that
5 it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and
6 implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and
7 appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the
8 necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given
9 the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as
10 necessary and appropriate.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a motion on the board,
13 and, again, this final action, and so this will be a roll call
14 vote.

15
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Dana.

17
18 **DR. DANA:** Yes.

19
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Ms. Guyas.

21
22 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes.

23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Matens.

25
26 **MR. MATENS:** Yes.

27
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Diaz.

29
30 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.

31
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Swindell.

33
34 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.

35
36 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Banks.

37
38 **MR. BANKS:** Yes.

39
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Robinson.

41
42 **MR. ROBINSON:** Yes.

43
44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Mickle.

45
46 **DR. MICKLE:** Yes.

47
48 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Frazer.

1
2 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.
3
4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Stunz.
5
6 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.
7
8 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Walker.
9
10 **MR. WALKER:** Yes.
11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Crabtree.
13
14 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.
15
16 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Anson.
17
18 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.
19
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Sanchez.
21
22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.
23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Boyd. Absent. Mr. Greene.
25
26 **MR. GREENE:** Yes.
27
28 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Ms. Bosarge.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes.
31
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** **The motion passes sixteen to zero.**
33
34 **MR. GREENE:** Draft Framework Action to Modify the ACT for Red
35 Snapper Federal For-Hire and Private Angler Components, staff
36 reviewed options for modifying the ACT buffers for the red
37 snapper recreational components.
38
39 The current options represent a permanent, as opposed to a
40 fluid, change in the current 20 percent buffer, based on the
41 landings from the 2017 fishing year.
42
43 Committee members were pleased with the purpose and need.
44 However, they expressed concern with the inherent lack of
45 flexibility, acknowledging that using only two years of data
46 under the current sector separation management program presented
47 several quantitative challenges.
48

1 A committee member expressed concern that the options presented
2 were within the scope of error estimation for the landings data.
3 Another committee member noted that, while data collection
4 programs are improving, catch rates are still quite variable,
5 with weather being an unpredictable, yet influential, factor.
6 An approach which considers using a moving average was discussed
7 and was requested to be added. Staff will work to incorporate
8 an alternative which explores a moving average, as discussed by
9 the committee.

10
11 Draft Framework Action for Greater Amberjack ACL and Management
12 Measures, the committee reviewed the draft framework action that
13 considers changes to greater amberjack management measures. The
14 committee reviewed the alternatives in Action 2 that would
15 modify the fixed recreational closed season. The committee
16 discussed that opening the greater amberjack recreational season
17 later in the year would allow stability in the season and access
18 to a prized species during the fall.

19
20 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to add a new**
21 **alternative under Action 2 that would modify the recreational**
22 **closed season from January 1 to July 31.**

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion on the board. Is
25 there any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
26 **opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the motion**
27 **carries.**

28
29 **MR. GREENE:** Next, the committee reviewed Action 3 that has
30 alternatives to change the minimum size limit. Staff stated
31 that the recreational minimum size limit was increased to
32 thirty-four inches in 2016, but this change was not included in
33 the most recent stock assessment.

34
35 The committee determined that it is premature to consider
36 further modification to the minimum size limit until the effect
37 of the most recent minimum size increase is known.

38
39 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to move Action 3 to**
40 **Considered but Rejected. 2.3 Action 3, Modify the Recreational**
41 **Minimum Size Limit, Alternative 1, no action, do not modify the**
42 **current recreational minimum size limit of thirty-four inches;**
43 **Alternative 2, modify the minimum recreational size limit for**
44 **greater amberjack to thirty inches; Alternative 3, modify the**
45 **minimum recreational size limit for greater amberjack to thirty-**
46 **two inches; Alternative 4, modify the minimum recreational size**
47 **limit for greater amberjack to thirty-six inches.**

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion. Is there
2 discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition**
3 **to the motion? No opposition, and the motion carries.**
4

5 **MR. GREENE:** Report of the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Angler AP,
6 the committee reviewed the summary report from the May 8 and 9
7 Ad Hoc Private Recreational Red Snapper Advisory Panel meeting.
8 The advisory panel was asked to provide recommendations to
9 improve access to red snapper in federal waters for private
10 recreational anglers.

11
12 However, after reviewing the meeting materials and
13 presentations, the advisory panel decided that additional
14 background information was necessary prior to recommending
15 changes in management. The committee supported this request and
16 directed staff to reconvene this advisory panel and provide them
17 with the requested background information sometime this fall.

18
19 Discussion of Red Snapper Allocation Issues, Mara Levy reviewed
20 the recent court decision that vacated the Amendment 28
21 reallocation of red snapper. She noted that National Marine
22 Fisheries Service has just published a rule reinstating the
23 original allocation.

24
25 The lawsuit addressed four issues. Number one was statutory
26 violations, number two was biological issues, number three was
27 economic and social issues; and number four was compliance with
28 National Standard 4.

29
30 The court found in favor of National Marine Fisheries Service on
31 the first three issues. With respect to National Standard 4,
32 the court stated that it was reasonable to pursue a new
33 allocation, but Amendment 28 put the commercial sector at a
34 disadvantage, because its landings were constrained by the IFQ
35 system during years used to determine the allocation.

36
37 The decision did not imply that reallocation could not be
38 reconsidered or that historical landings could not be used.
39 However, all factors affected by reallocation decisions,
40 including stock assessments, should be considered.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mara.

43
44 **MS. LEVY:** Just to make one slight correction. It has the four
45 issues. Statutory violations, they were all allegations of
46 statutory violations, and so what I meant by that was one was a
47 strict that you couldn't do this under 407(d)(2) type of
48 argument. It wasn't related to the analysis of the biological

1 or social impacts, and that's just to clarify that.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Ms. Levy.

4
5 **MR. GREENE:** Options Paper, Amendment 36B, Commercial Reef Fish
6 IFQ Modifications, staff gave a presentation on the Fishery
7 Finance Program. Council staff then reviewed the draft options
8 paper and requested that the committee discuss the IFQ programs'
9 goals and objectives.

10
11 The committee discussed some potential goals the amendment may
12 address. These include reducing bycatch from the expanding red
13 snapper population, requiring shareholders to more actively
14 participate in fishing, assisting the next generation's entrance
15 to the IFQ program, and extracting resource rent through
16 auctions or royalties. Committee members noted that caution was
17 needed in pursuing these potential actions, as unintended
18 consequences may undermine the IFQ programs' performance. After
19 discussing the potential action for a quota redistribution and
20 set-aside, the committee passed the following motion.

21
22 **By a voice vote of eleven to four, the committee recommends, and**
23 **I so move, that in Section 2.3, to add an alternative for an**
24 **adaptive management redistribution method based on cyclical**
25 **redistribution, which depends on fishing participation.**

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a committee motion. Is
28 there any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
29 **opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**

30
31 **MR. GREENE:** Committee members inquired about the referendum
32 requirements pertaining to redistributing quota by auction. Ms.
33 Levy reviewed the language in the Magnuson-Stevens Act
34 pertaining to auctions. The committee then passed the following
35 motion.

36
37 **By a voice vote with no opposition, the committee recommends,**
38 **and I so move, to direct staff to write a letter to National**
39 **Marine Fisheries Service to request a determination if an**
40 **auction of commercial red snapper quota above 4.65 million**
41 **pounds would require a referendum.**

42
43 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. We have a committee motion. Is there
44 any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
45 **opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the motion**
46 **carries.**

47
48 **MR. GREENE:** Revised Draft Amendment 41, Allocation-Based

1 Management for Federally-Permitted Charter Vessels, staff gave a
2 presentation of three new actions contained within revised Draft
3 Amendment 41.

4
5 The council requested these actions at the April meeting, which
6 address the following: species for inclusion: allocation of
7 annual catch limit; adaptive management or cyclical
8 redistribution. The committee then made the following motions.

9
10 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in**
11 **Action 1, make Alternative 2, Option 2b the preferred.**
12 **Alternative 2 is establish a fishing quota program that provides**
13 **participants with shares and annual allocation. Option 2b is a**
14 **Permit Fishing Quota, or PFQ, program.**

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion on the board. Do
17 we have any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
18 **opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the motion**
19 **carries.**

20
21 **MR. GREENE:** Without opposition, the committee recommends and I
22 so move, in Action 2, to make Alternative 1 the preferred
23 alternative. Alternative 1 is no action, do not establish a
24 voluntary red snapper management program for charter vessels.
25 The red snapper management program applies to all charter
26 vessels with a valid or renewable Gulf charter/headboat permit
27 for reef fish.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion on the board. Is
30 there any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
31 **opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the motion**
32 **carries.**

33
34 **MR. GREENE:** Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I
35 so move, to move Action 2, Program Participation, to Considered
36 but Rejected.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion on the board. Is
39 there any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
40 **opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the motion**
41 **carries.**

42
43 **MR. GREENE:** The committee then discussed the range of species
44 for inclusion in the management program. The committee made the
45 following motion.

46
47 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in**
48 **Action 3, Alternative 2, to make Options 2a, 2b, and 2c the**

1 preferred. Alternative 2 is include the following species in the
2 management program. Option 2a is red grouper, Option 2b is
3 greater amberjack, Option 2c is gray triggerfish.
4

5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion on the board. Is
6 there any discussion on the motion? I will read the motion. In
7 Action 3, Alternative 2, to make Options 2a, 2b, and 2c the
8 preferred. Alternative 2 is include the following species in
9 the management program, and Option 2a is red snapper, Option 2b
10 is greater amberjack, and Option 2c is gray triggerfish, and so
11 those would be the three preferreds. Is there discussion on
12 that motion?
13

14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I just want to confirm that the
15 intent is that the Option 2d and 2e stay in the document for
16 analysis.
17

18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Ms. Guyas.
19

20 **MS. GUYAS:** I was going to make a motion after this motion to
21 pull them out, but whatever you think is the cleanest way to do
22 that.
23

24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Let's go ahead and vote this motion up or
25 down, and then, if you want to remove the other two, we'll have
26 a separate motion. Mr. Diaz.
27

28 **MR. DIAZ:** I just have a little bit of pause. I am trying to
29 think through this. I mean, basically, we pulled those groupers
30 out because they're primarily in the Florida area. We
31 distribute a lot of grouper out in the Gulf, where people don't
32 catch a lot of them, and, while gray triggerfish is not exactly
33 the same, and I believe most of them are caught in the northern
34 Gulf, and we're still going to distribute a lot of gray
35 triggerfish to a lot of areas that there are probably not a lot
36 of them harvested.
37

38 With that rationale, I am just trying to figure out what to do
39 with gray triggerfish. I am not ready to make a motion at this
40 point, but, at a future meeting, I might. Anyway, that's
41 something that I am thinking through as we talk about this, and
42 I would be interested to know if other folks feel the same way.
43 Thank you, ma'am.
44

45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. Is there further
46 discussion on the motion? Okay. **All those in favor of the**
47 **motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The**
48 **motion carries.** Ms. Guyas.

1
2 **MS. GUYAS:** I will make a motion here that, in Action 3, move
3 Alternatives 2d and 2e to Considered but Rejected.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a motion that's coming up
6 on the board. The motion is being made by Ms. Guyas, and it's
7 been seconded by Mr. Sanchez. The motion reads: In Action 3,
8 move Alternative 2d and 2e to Considered but Rejected.
9 Alternative 2 is to include the following species in the
10 management program. Option 2d is gag and Option 2e is red
11 grouper. It would remove those two species from the document,
12 from consideration. Is there discussion on the motion? Dr.
13 Dana.

14
15 **DR. DANA:** Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I would like to ask
16 Martha what the rationale would be to take them entirely out
17 versus having the council staff continue to look at the impacts
18 of -- Well, just the rationale. I'm not saying that I'm opposed
19 to it, but I just want to know the rationale.

20
21 **MS. GUYAS:** We heard a little bit about this last night, and we
22 also have -- There are several comments in the online comments
23 about this from a lot of Florida captains, particularly from
24 down here in this area. Gag and red grouper are pretty much the
25 bread-and-butter for southwest Florida, the Tampa Bay area, and
26 a lot of those guys feel like they have a pretty good system
27 right now.

28
29 Red grouper is open year-round, and gag is open seven months of
30 the year now. They feel like they have the opportunities they
31 need and don't mess with a good thing, I think was kind of how
32 Ed Walker described it last night, but the people that are
33 catching these species, primarily, don't seem to be onboard with
34 this at this point, and so that would be my rationale. I think
35 it will also probably make this document a lot less cumbersome
36 for staff, when they're doing analysis, too.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

39
40 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I guess, to add some rationale, that we mentioned
41 already in committee, they're not overfished, as opposed to the
42 other species in the preferred, and, for that reason, and the
43 regional reason, that this is a localized thing to this fishing
44 community, I would clearly support this.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

47
48 **DR. CRABTREE:** I guess I'm okay with this, but we need to think

1 about the implications for Amendment 42, because, if the
2 rationale is they're not overfished and the regional nature of
3 it, then it seems to me that that applies to Amendment 42 as
4 well, and I guess we'll come back to that at the next meeting,
5 but, if we decide to exclude them here and then not in 42, we're
6 going to need to have some sort of reason as to why we're
7 treating them differently.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Diaz.

10
11 **MR. DIAZ:** Dr. Crabtree, to that point, I do think -- Me and Mr.
12 Sanchez talked about this this morning, and there is a catch
13 history for the boats that are in Amendment 42, and so they
14 could be distributed to folks that have a catch history, where,
15 in this document, for the most part, we don't have catch
16 histories for these boats, and they will have to be distributed
17 by some mechanism to be picked out, and they'll probably
18 distribute it all over the Gulf of Mexico, and so I don't know
19 if that helps with your rationale, but that's what me and Mr.
20 Sanchez had discussed this morning, and I think Mr. Sanchez is
21 right on that. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. Is there further discussion? Mr.
24 Greene.

25
26 **MR. GREENE:** I guess I have an ignorant question, because I
27 don't know that I've run into this, but, if we send it to
28 Considered but Rejected, does that mean that we can't go back
29 and pull it back into the document later down the road?

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Ms. Levy or Mr. Gregory?

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** It would be difficult, particularly
34 near the end of the document preparation, because we won't have
35 the analyses, and it would slow the document down at that point.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

38
39 **MR. ANSON:** I am just trying to think of three years or four
40 years or five years down the road, if we go to this PFQ and the
41 flexibility, I guess, of new entrants in acquiring a permit and
42 making sure that permit kind of fits their region of
43 availability of fish.

44
45 As you expand more species, you get different combinations of
46 those fish attached with that permit, and so I guess, on that
47 hand, I would probably look to reducing it, just to reduce the
48 complexity, but I just don't know if that creates -- There will

1 be markets, I guess, or pools. The Florida permits will stay, I
2 guess, in Florida, at that point, for the most part, because the
3 other part of the Gulf that catches more red snapper will just
4 look for those permits, and so it could affect prices or
5 availability and that type of thing, in order for a person to
6 get what they need, I guess, for their particular business.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That's an interesting comment, Mr. Anson. I
9 am not thinking about it so much as to this motion, but just in
10 general as something that we may want to think about later in
11 the document. I mean, I know we have a permit that covers a lot
12 of different species, but we may want to think about,
13 logistically, how to line that up if we think it may cause a
14 problem later, because this is different, where it might be
15 attached to the permit rather than an individual, and so we'll
16 just think about that in the future. Ms. Guyas.

17
18 **MS. GUYAS:** I guess, on that note, I feel like keeping them in
19 would make sure that those permits stay in Florida. If they're
20 not in, then potentially you could pick up a reef fish permit
21 and you wouldn't necessarily have -- It's going to depend on the
22 individual permit and what you get, and I don't know. It is
23 going to be something that we're going to need to consider for
24 all of the species, I think, and it's going to get complicated.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

27
28 **MR. ANSON:** I was just throwing it out there just for discussion
29 purposes at this point. It just kind of popped into my head as,
30 again, trying to envision what the permits would look like, or
31 the availability, and, again, new entrants and how the system is
32 set up now. You can sell the permits, and, right now, you can
33 just buy a permit and go from Florida to Texas, and vice versa,
34 and that it might not quite work out that way in the future, if
35 we go down either three or five or what have you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana.

38
39 **DR. DANA:** Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I still don't
40 understand -- It's not compelling to me why gag grouper and red
41 grouper need to be pulled completely out of the document. I
42 mean, I understand taking the three, the red snapper, the gray
43 triggerfish, and I forget what the last one is there, but
44 keeping those three species as the focal point, the preferred
45 alternative. However, I don't know why you would need to
46 completely take out gag and red grouper, because, down the road,
47 you may want to bring it back up, you guys, years from now. I
48 just don't know. I haven't heard compelling arguments as to why

1 they need to disappear.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Walker.

4

5 **MR. WALKER:** I agree with Pam to just have a preferred with
6 three species, and I don't see the harm in leaving it in here.
7 There may be some more public comment that comes in that changes
8 the view, and who knows, but I don't see the harm of just
9 leaving them in the document for more discussion.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer.

12

13 **DR. FRAZER:** I agree also with both Pam and David. I would like
14 to see them left in the document.

15

16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. Any other further discussion on this
17 motion? I think we better raise our hands on this one. **All**
18 **those in favor, signify by raising your hand.**

19

20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I have seven.

21

22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** **All those opposed, same sign.**

23

24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Nine. **The motion fails seven to**
25 **nine.**

26

27 **MR. GREENE:** The committee discussed the benefits and drawbacks
28 of a set cycle and a progressive cycle for use in adaptive
29 management. The Committee made the following motion.

30

31 **With a voice vote of two opposed, the committee recommends, and**
32 **I so move, in Action 6.1 to make Alternative 3, Option 3a the**
33 **preferred alternative. Alternative 3 is the cycles for adaptive**
34 **management will occur in an increasing progressive range,**
35 **starting at X year and incrementing by one year until Y years.**
36 **Thereafter, cycles will be Y years in length. Option 3a is one**
37 **year incrementing by one year till reaching three years (cycle 1**
38 **equals one year, cycle 2 equals two years, cycle 3 plus equals**
39 **three years).**

40

41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion on the board. Is
42 there any discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
43 **opposition to the motion? The motion carries.**

44

45 **MR. GREENE:** The committee requested decision tools, similar to
46 that for red snapper, be developed for gray triggerfish, greater
47 amberjack, gag, and red grouper. For enforcement purposes, the
48 committee inquired if real-time data would be available for use

1 with adaptive management. Dr. Stephen responded that this would
2 be possible for this type of program. The committee also
3 requested referendum requirements be presented at the August
4 meeting.

5
6 Draft Amendment 42, Federal Reef Fish Headboat Management, staff
7 noted that the committee previously reviewed the management
8 actions in Amendment 42. Because the allocation of resources to
9 the for-hire components is addressed in both Amendments 41 and
10 42, staff inquired about removing it from one of the amendments.

11
12 The committee discussed the allocation issue and requested that
13 Ms. Levy provide guidance on the potential implications of
14 removing resource allocation considerations from one of the
15 amendments. Committee members requested that staff bring back
16 referendum eligibility criteria to the committee in August.

17
18 Status Determination Criteria Amendment, Mara Levy noted that
19 Amendment 43 had not defined OY for hogfish, and the council was
20 out of compliance for most of its stocks with the requirement
21 that stocks have status determination criteria. Staff recently
22 resumed work on a status determination criteria amendment that
23 would define MSY proxy, MFMT, MSST, and OY for all reef fish
24 stocks and red drum, but this amendment has not been a high
25 priority.

26
27 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to**
28 **make the Status Determination Criteria Amendment a priority on**
29 **the proposed action schedule.**

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion. Is there any
32 discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition**
33 **to the motion? No opposition, and the motion carries.**

34
35 **MR. GREENE:** Turtle Release Gear, Sue Gerhart noted that two new
36 gear types have been approved by the Science Center for use in
37 handling and releasing incidentally-caught sea turtles when
38 fishing for reef fish. These are a collapsible net and a new
39 type of de-hooking device.

40
41 Before they can be used by fishermen, they need to be added to
42 the list of approved sea turtle release gear. The South
43 Atlantic Council has a process for adding new gear to the list.
44 However, the Gulf Council has no such process. She suggested
45 that the council develop a process, so that these gear types and
46 future gears can be added to the Gulf list of approved gears.

47
48 **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to**

1 direct staff to begin work on a document to address turtle
2 release gear.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion. Is there any
5 discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition**
6 **to the motion? No opposition, and the motion carries.**

7
8 **MR. GREENE:** Louisiana Recreational Reef Fish Management Plan,
9 Patrick Banks noted that the council had recently agreed to
10 begin developing a state management plan for Louisiana for red
11 snapper.

12
13 To assist in this development, Louisiana Department of Fish and
14 Wildlife had begun working on a draft plan, which he presented
15 to the committee and was distributed to the council. Committee
16 members felt that this was a good contribution to the
17 development process. However, it was noted that the allocation
18 to Louisiana would have to be done in combination with the
19 allocations to the other states.

20
21 Seeing nothing on that, before I read that last sentence that I
22 really want to read, I just want to point out that, during
23 conversations yesterday, Dr. Crabtree had brought up an EFP
24 about lionfish, and we had a good conversation about it, and Mr.
25 Constant had also weighed in on that as well, and so I think --
26 I don't know if this is the appropriate committee for that
27 discussion to continue, but I would like to have some more
28 lionfish discussion in the appropriate committee, wherever we
29 see fit, for the next council meeting.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So noted. Is there any opposition from the
32 council to add that to our next council agenda? All right. I
33 see a shaking of heads that there is not a problem with that.
34 Ms. Guyas.

35
36 **MS. GUYAS:** Johnny, what do have in mind? I'm just curious.
37 We've got a pretty big lionfish program in our state, and I'm
38 just trying to think how we might be able to help.

39
40 **MR. GREENE:** I think that, just my observation of listening to
41 the conversation that went around between Dr. Crabtree and the
42 proposal from the EFP and the Florida Keys guys and some of
43 their stuff, and then Mr. Constant's comments yesterday, it
44 seems like there is a lot of programs going around, and I think
45 everybody is kind of working around each other, and I am hoping
46 to use our time to kind of maybe let Glenn come in and do a
47 presentation about what they're doing and see what Florida is
48 doing and kind of make sure that everybody is kind of working

1 towards the common goal.

2
3 I think everybody is going around the mountain, but I just want
4 to make sure that, when we meet, that we all hit at the same
5 place and people aren't doing work all over the place. It just
6 seems like some guys are doing work that other people didn't
7 know about, and I just hope to kind of throw it all on the
8 table, so everybody could see what was being done.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory.

11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Are you asking for a discussion of
13 the different EFPs related to lionfish, or are you asking for
14 the states to give a presentation on what they're doing with
15 regard to lionfish, much like we did with data collection, or do
16 you want scientists? I mean, there's a lot of work that's been
17 done, and a lot of science that's being started on that, and it
18 quickly gets outside the range of our grasp, I think.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I will be glad to let Johnny answer, but I
21 think it sounds like it may be as simple as probably a
22 presentation from Mr. Constant, because that's definitely
23 something that I don't think most of us are familiar with, maybe
24 what's going on in that agency, and then maybe a brief
25 presentation from the other two entities that seem to be pretty
26 deep into this already, which would be Martha's side of the
27 table over there somewhere, the Florida folks, and maybe we can
28 get Luiz back up there again right before lunch.

29
30 Then we will have maybe Dr. Crabtree or NMFS do a brief summary
31 of what they've got in the works, because they said that they
32 were looking at some things, but it was very preliminary, as to
33 how they were going to try and do something from a 30,000-foot
34 view. Then, from there, maybe we'll have some discussion that
35 will germinate and see what we can come up with. Johnny, does
36 that sound okay to you? Mr. Constant.

37
38 **MR. CONSTANT:** Along those lines, I contacted our invasive
39 species coordinator to kind of consolidate and give a summary
40 about where we are right now, with respect to the things that I
41 think, Doug, are pertinent to discussion here, certainly there
42 is a lot of lionfish work going on.

43
44 We certainly are interested in the idea that we're going to
45 maybe have an opportunity to maybe support or to contribute to
46 the development of new traps or eradication programs, and so
47 whatever you think is relevant to the discussion in the
48 pertinent committee, I would be glad to package that, and I know

1 we work with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and
2 they administer some of our invasive species money, and so we
3 can coordinate with them too and kind of package that up in a
4 presentation.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Lieutenant Commander.

7

8 **LCDR DANAHER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just offering
9 another resource on that lionfish topic, and the Flower Garden
10 Banks has hosted several events out at the sanctuary, and they
11 have done some community involvement of diverse natures, and it
12 may just be another resource to discuss some of your options, if
13 you're trying to figure out what to do on that topic.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, and, you know, if any of the other
16 states around the table have things that they're doing with
17 lionfish -- I am certainly not trying to leave you out. As we
18 get into that agenda item at the next meeting, feel free to
19 chime in and give us a little quick update on maybe what you
20 have in the works. I'm just trying to keep you from making a
21 huge presentation if it wasn't something that you were really
22 deep into yet.

23

24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Given the discussion yesterday,
25 this could be quite a lengthy presentation, and so it will
26 affect our agenda.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So we'll start at 7:30 is what you're saying?

29

30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** If you wish.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We will figure it out. Hopefully, we'll be
33 able to bring it and put it on the August agenda. If we
34 absolutely have to, we may have to bump it to October, but we
35 will get it to you as soon as we can.

36

37 **MR. GREENE:** Madam Chairman, this concludes my report.

38

39 **ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT**

40

41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. If there is nothing else, that
42 will wrap up our Reef Fish business, I think in record time, and
43 so next on our agenda is our Administrative/Budget Report, and
44 that is going to be me, and so let me get ready here.

45

46 The Administrative/Budget Committee Report, the committee
47 adopted the agenda and minutes of the April 2017
48 Administrative/Budget Committee meeting as written.

1
2 Agenda Item IV, Approval of Final 2017 Budget Funding, the
3 committee was unable to review the final 2017 council budget,
4 because we have not been provided our total 2017 funding level
5 by National Marine Fisheries Service, due to delays in passing
6 the federal budget. The council needs to approve our final 2017
7 budget once we obtain the actual funding level from NMFS.
8 Therefore, we will bring the final 2017 budget to the council in
9 August for approval.

10
11 Agenda Item V, Review of H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 Potential
12 Impacts, Tab G, Number 5, House Resolutions 200 and 2023 have
13 been introduced into committee and a number of the sections are
14 directly pertinent to the Gulf of Mexico.

15
16 NOAA General Counsel has advised the councils they could no
17 longer indicate to Congress preferences for particular sections
18 of a bill unless specifically requested to do so by Congress,
19 but, rather, in providing general input, we should only comment
20 on the potential impacts of proposed legislation.

21
22 Staff reviewed summaries of potential impacts of each section of
23 the bills that were not discussed in April, including a number
24 of sections directly related to the Gulf of Mexico. The
25 committee provided suggested revisions to a few of the sections.
26 These potential impact analyses will be used as the basis for
27 providing written or verbal testimony on these bills if
28 requested by either the Council Coordinating Committee or
29 Congress.

30
31 No motions were made in committee, and there was no other
32 business to come before the committee. This concludes our
33 committee report. Was there any other business that was related
34 to the Administrative/Budget Committee Report? All right. That
35 will take us to D on our agenda, which is our Spiny Lobster
36 Committee Report, and Ms. Guyas.

37
38 **SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE REPORT**

39
40 **MS. GUYAS:** Staff presented the final draft of Regulatory
41 Amendment 4 and provided a summary of public comments. **The**
42 **committee recommends, and I so move, to recommend that Spiny**
43 **Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4 be forwarded to the Secretary of**
44 **Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified**
45 **text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial**
46 **license to make the necessary changes in the document. The**
47 **Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the**
48 **codified text as necessary and appropriate.**

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. We have a committee motion on the
3 board, and this, again, is final action, and so it will be a
4 roll call vote.
5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Matens.
7
8 **MR. MATENS:** Yes.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Greene.
11
12 **MR. GREENE:** Yes.
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Diaz.
15
16 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.
17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Frazer.
19
20 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.
21
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Robinson.
23
24 **MR. ROBINSON:** Yes.
25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Swindell.
27
28 **MR. SWINDELL:** Yes.
29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Mickle.
31
32 **DR. MICKLE:** Yes.
33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Ms. Guyas.
35
36 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes.
37
38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Stunz.
39
40 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes.
41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Walker.
43
44 **MR. WALKER:** Yes.
45
46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Sanchez.
47
48 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes.

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Boyd.
3
4 **MR. BOYD:** Yes.
5
6 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Crabtree.
7
8 **DR. CRABTREE:** Yes.
9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Dr. Dana.
11
12 **DR. DANA:** Yes.
13
14 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Banks.
15
16 **MR. BANKS:** Yes.
17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Mr. Anson.
19
20 **MR. ANSON:** Yes.
21
22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Ms. Bosarge.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes.
25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** **The motion passes seventeen to**
27 **zero.**
28
29 **MS. GUYAS:** The committee was also updated on the issue of the
30 State of Florida bully-netting regulations. NOAA GC informed
31 the committee that though there is a protocol to allow the State
32 of Florida to recommend federal regulations, the procedure to
33 implement the protocol no longer exists. The council could
34 address just the bully-netting issue with a framework amendment,
35 or could address both issues in a full plan amendment.
36
37 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to**
38 **begin work on a plan amendment to address the bully-net issue**
39 **and reestablish the protocol procedures with the State of**
40 **Florida.**
41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a committee motion. Is there any
43 discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition**
44 **to the motion? No opposition, and the motion carries.**
45
46 **MS. GUYAS:** That concludes my report.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, ma'am. Was there anything else to

1 come before the Spiny Lobster Committee before we move on to the
2 Coral and Habitat Protection Committee? All right. Next on the
3 agenda is our committee report for our Joint Coral/Habitat
4 Protection & Restoration Committee, which is quite a mouthful.
5 Mr. Diaz, I will turn it over to you.
6

7 **JOINT CORAL/HABITAT PROTECTION & RESTORATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

8

9 **MR. DIAZ:** The Joint Coral/Habitat Protection & Restoration
10 Committee met on June 5. Review Options Paper for Coral
11 Amendment 9, staff presented the committee with the Draft
12 Options Paper for Coral Amendment 9.
13

14 There are nine actions in the document. The committee made
15 several recommendations regarding the introduction and purpose
16 and need, including clarifying the quadrants in Table 1.1.1,
17 modifying the purpose and need to state "appropriate protections
18 for corals in the Gulf of Mexico", and clarifying some language.
19

20 Action 1 addresses incorporating octocorals in the FMU. The
21 committee discussed clarifying Alternative 1. Florida currently
22 manages octocoral harvest in the EEZ adjacent to Florida. Staff
23 also presented the committee with Action 2 and some issues which
24 the IPT asked for clarification. The committees discussed the
25 current issues with adding octocorals to the FMU and made the
26 following motion. **The committee recommends, and I so move, to**
27 **move Action 1 and 2 to Considered but Rejected. Madam Chair.**
28

29 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. We have a committee motion on the
30 board. Is there discussion on the motion? Dr. Frazer.
31

32 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I am going to
33 speak in opposition to the motion and revisit it, if possible,
34 and the reason that I want to do that is really reflecting on
35 that particular action and also listening to some of the public
36 testimony yesterday and talking to staff.
37

38 I think I would really like to see the Table 2.1.1 to be
39 clarified, I guess, on those Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, that
40 those alternatives apply only to the corals in that table, and
41 then give some time for the public to weigh in a little bit down
42 the road a little bit on this.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So these are the corals, the octocorals, that
45 are being managed in federal waters by the State of Florida?
46 This would incorporate them back into the fishery unit and then
47 essentially, I guess, we would take over management from
48 Florida. Is what this would do?

1
2 **DR. FRAZER:** I think what we would do is add another alternative
3 as well in this, an Alternative 5, and I guess we could direct
4 staff to develop that alternative that exempts Florida. It
5 allows them to manage the octocorals the way that they do
6 currently.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

9
10 **DR. CRABTREE:** What we did in the South Atlantic with this is we
11 include octocorals in the management unit, but only off of
12 Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, and not off of
13 Florida, and then we set the ACL for octocorals in those three
14 states at zero, and so I guess we could do something like that,
15 where Florida is not in the FMU, because they have a state
16 management program that we have determined is sufficient. Then,
17 off of the remaining Gulf states, it's in the FMU, and the ACL
18 is zero.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Ms. Guyas.

21
22 **MS. GUYAS:** I guess, if we vote this motion down and those two
23 actions stay in the document, I would strongly advocate for that
24 kind of approach that excludes Florida from -- It excludes, I
25 guess, octocorals in the EEZ off of Florida from council
26 management. Otherwise, we're going to have some issues, I
27 think, but I will defer to other folks about how they want to
28 handle the rest of the Gulf.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Diaz.

31
32 **MR. DIAZ:** I just want to say that, based on the discussion
33 around the table right now, I am in favor of voting this motion
34 down and proceeding with some of the methods that being
35 discussed by Dr. Frazer and Dr. Crabtree. Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer.

38
39 **DR. FRAZER:** What Roy described is exactly my intent.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So it's not our intent to start trying to
42 draw boxes around these octocorals, and I will just put it on
43 the record, because, in the literature in the document, these
44 are not reef-building corals. These are more kind of off to
45 themselves type of corals, sparse and here and there, and they
46 are on muddy bottom and not -- A lot of times, they're on muddy
47 bottom, and so I don't want to get into a situation where we're
48 drawing pea-sized boxes in the Gulf of Mexico.

1
2 This is just to put them in there so we can kind of have,
3 essentially, no take on them and no harvest in the rest of the
4 Gulf of Mexico, where we're not aware that there is any harvest,
5 but we're kind of safeguarding it. That's what we're aiming for
6 here?

7
8 **DR. FRAZER:** Affirmative.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Because the one group that wants these added
11 back in, that gave public comment on it, keeps changing their
12 stance, and so, as long as we're not going to mess with Florida
13 and we think they're doing a good job, and we're not going to
14 step in and actually start trying to regulate the harvest in the
15 EEZ off of Florida, then I guess I'm okay with it, hesitantly
16 so. I will probably not vote. Dr. Crabtree.

17
18 **DR. CRABTREE:** That means, procedurally, if we're okay with what
19 Tom is suggesting, that we would then vote this motion down.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right, Dr. Frazer. We have a motion on
22 the board to move Action 1 and 2 to Considered but Rejected.
23 **All those in favor of this motion, signify by raising your hand;**
24 **all those opposed to the motion, signify by raising your hand.**

25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Sixteen. Am I missing anyone?

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I abstained.

29
30 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** **So the motion fails zero to**
31 **sixteen.**

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Ms. Guyas.

34
35 **MS. GUYAS:** **Based on that, I guess, in Action 1, I would make a**
36 **motion to add a new Alternative 5 that would exclude octocorals**
37 **in the EEZ off of Florida from federal management.**

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Before we get a second, I have a question for
40 Mara. Mara, does it make any difference, from your perspective,
41 whether we word the alternative like that, where we exclude off
42 of Florida from federal management, rather than have something
43 where options are to have that management off of Texas or
44 Louisiana or Mississippi or Alabama or Florida and then not pick
45 Florida? I guess I am just making sure that we're not getting
46 into a situation where we're trying to delegate, and I don't
47 know if that changes any of our rules, the way we do things.

48

1 **MS. LEVY:** Well, maybe the IPT can sort of figure out what the
2 best way to structure the alternative is, either an alternative
3 with options for what states you want to include, the EEZ off of
4 what states, or how it should be appropriately worded, to make
5 sure we're giving you the options and addressing Martha's
6 concern.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. That sounds great. All right. We
9 have a motion on the board. Do we have a second for the motion?
10 Okay. It's seconded by Dr. Frazer. Any discussion on the
11 motion? I think we've had some pretty good discussion. Ms.
12 Guyas.

13
14 **MS. GUYAS:** The IPT, feel free to fix this however it needs to
15 be done, but I guess my intention, at least the way this is
16 structured now, is that the committee could choose one of the
17 management alternatives, like 2 or 3 or 4, and then choose this
18 in addition to that, to basically exclude Florida from whatever
19 option is chosen, but however is the best way to structure this,
20 I am good with that, but this is my intent here.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** So noted. Mr. Banks.

23
24 **MR. BANKS:** I am sorry that I'm confused, but is it a delegation
25 or is it not, or we're going to wait for the IPT to tell us
26 that?

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

29
30 **DR. CRABTREE:** No, because we wouldn't put it in the fishery
31 management plan off of Florida.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Any other discussion? All right.
34 **All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all**
35 **those opposed same sign. The motion carried.**

36
37 **MR. DIAZ:** Staff proceeded to review Actions 3 through 8, which
38 all address creating new HAPCs in the various regions of the
39 Gulf. There were some minor edits to wording that were
40 suggested and will be included in future documents, as will
41 clarification on deep-water coral definitions.

42
43 Staff will include discussion on the differences between the ELB
44 data and the VMS data in the figure legends and will also adjust
45 the color scheme to better reflect effort. It was also
46 requested that information on how many fishermen are permitted
47 with bottom tending gear and VMS in the eastern Gulf to help
48 inform discussion on eastern Gulf areas.

1
2 Staff highlighted the two areas that were identified as
3 contentious and how the options for the alternatives reflected a
4 tiered approach for these areas. The committee discussed adding
5 an exemption or tiered approach for all areas that have fishing
6 documented, but no motion was made.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

9
10 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would like to make a motion to that effect, to
11 direct staff to define criteria to evaluate areas for "evidence
12 of fishing", using VMS and ELB datasets. In areas that have
13 evidence of fishing, direct staff to include options that allow
14 for a tiered approach or specific exemptions for fishing without
15 bottom-tending gear.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. I think we have the motion on the
18 board. Direct staff to define criteria to evaluate areas for
19 "evidence of fishing", using VMS and ELB datasets. In areas
20 that have evidence of fishing, direct staff to include options
21 that allow for a tiered approach or specific exemptions for
22 fishing without bottom-tending gear. Do we have a second for
23 the motion? Seconded by Mr. Diaz. Any discussion on the
24 motion? Mr. Banks.

25
26 **MR. BANKS:** Just a quick question for John. Are you thinking,
27 in certain areas where we have pings from VMS or ELB, in the
28 tiered approach maybe -- This is just a possibility, but, if
29 there's a certain amount of pings, it's in Tier 1, and then, if
30 there's a certain amount of pings above that, it's a Tier 2, to
31 try to determine how much fishing is going on in there, and is
32 that the type of tiered approach you're talking about?

33
34 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That would be one way, but, in addition to that,
35 one ping, two pings, ten pings, and let's vet that out. Is it
36 fishing or is transit or is this or is it that, and try to get
37 to the bottom of that.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Patrick, I will elaborate a little bit. The
40 other part of this tiered approach that that is speaking to --
41 If you will remember, we did that white paper for the Flower
42 Garden Banks, and so you may have a box, but, inside that, you
43 have different levels of activity that get progressively more
44 stringent as you get closer to the coral, and so that is
45 essentially leaving it open for staff to look at how much
46 fishing is there, and, based on what type of fishing is there,
47 can we put some sort of tiered approach in, to allow these
48 fishermen to not be in violation, if they're in that area, or

1 would it be better to just simply put an exemption in for a
2 certain type of gear, to allow them to continue that historical
3 fishing there, and that's what that's doing. Any other
4 discussion? Yes, Mr. Walker.

5
6 **MR. WALKER:** I was just going to mention that, before we had
7 VMS, paper logbooks were grids, and I don't know if they wanted
8 to take consideration of using some of that information as well.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, that's a good point, and we'll look at
11 how far back, because the VMS, I guess, would go back to 2007 or
12 so? I think the ELB data goes all the way back to like 2001,
13 maybe, somewhere in that neighborhood, or 2003, and so, yes,
14 that's something that we can ask staff to take a look at and see
15 if it helps them any to really identify what's going on in those
16 areas that they have questions about. Okay. Any further
17 discussion on the motion? Mr. Boyd.

18
19 **MR. BOYD:** Mr. Banks asked my question, and so I pass. Thank
20 you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Dr. Kilgour.

23
24 **DR. MORGAN KILGOUR:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for my own
25 clarification, when I am looking at this tiered approach, or
26 specific exemptions, I was kind of thinking you would want
27 something similar to what we did for the Flower Garden Banks
28 regulations, and just to tell you, off the cuff, that I did the
29 analysis for a lot of these areas, and most of this is bandit
30 rig gear.

31
32 I would probably be including those types of exemptions and not
33 necessarily specific areas within these areas, based on the data
34 that we have, and would that be acceptable to the council for me
35 to do that type of -- Or would you like some type of area within
36 these area-type tiers, which would be a lot more cumbersome, but
37 easily done.

38
39 I just want to make sure that I'm clear on what the intent is
40 here, because, when I looked at the data in the -- There is
41 information in the discussion, and most of these areas that
42 light up as yellow with VMS information were from bandit rigs,
43 and so I would put in, like similar to what I did with the
44 alternatives in Pulley Ridge and Viosca Knoll, a specific
45 exemption for those areas, unless there were multiple gear types
46 that were used. If that's acceptable to the council, then I am
47 very clear in moving forward. If you want a tiered approach,
48 with areas within areas, I can absolutely do that and go back to

1 the finer-scale data as well.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, it's acceptable to me for the
4 exemptions. If you find an area where you just can't make it
5 work and you need another option, there is the tiered approach,
6 but, no, I think the exemptions are fine. Is there anybody else
7 that wants to weigh in on that? Okay. We have a motion on the
8 board. **Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the**
9 **motion carried.**

10
11 **MR. DIAZ:** Staff presented Action 9, which would address
12 prohibiting dredging in existing HAPCs with fishing regulations.
13 The committee requested clarification on the different
14 mechanisms for protecting corals.

15
16 Staff highlighted that the deep-sea coral provision for the MSA
17 was intended for councils that do not have formal Coral FMPs and
18 that the deep-sea coral provision will only prohibit fishing.
19 Coral EFH automatically requires a consultation with National
20 Marine Fisheries Service for any extractive purpose, and the
21 establishment of coral HAPCs would highlight specific areas of
22 concern within coral EFH.

23
24 The committees discussed that there should be a prohibition on
25 all anchoring in these areas. Staff will investigate how other
26 councils prohibit anchoring and if the anchoring is fishing
27 vessel specific, and they will report back to the council with
28 the information.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Diaz, if you don't mind, I have a comment
31 here, before we leave the coral amendment. Morgan, I made a
32 comment during the committee that I really feel like the
33 committee and the council should decide what we are going to use
34 as a depth for deep-sea coral, especially considering that may
35 set a precedent in the future, and there is a deep-sea coral
36 designation out there, that if things were not managed under a
37 coral FMP, they can be given a deep-sea designation, which
38 prohibits fishing.

39
40 I think that that's a sticky situation for us, to redefine what
41 depth range is considered deep-sea, just blanket, without a
42 decision point on it, and so, if you need a motion to add an
43 action in there, where we actually determine deep-sea coral is
44 either fifty meters, as the Coral SSC and AP recommended, or the
45 NOAA definition, which I think is around 150 meters, or
46 something like that. Do you need a motion in order to
47 incorporate an action item on something like this?

48

1 **DR. KILGOUR:** I can -- What I will do is I will go into the NOAA
2 Deep-Sea Coral Program and find out what their definition is,
3 and I can include that in the definition box in the
4 introduction, on what they are qualifying as deep-sea corals.

5
6 If the council wants to have a different definition, then that
7 can be a topic of discussion, but I would like to highlight that
8 the deep-sea coral provision within Magnuson -- That still has
9 to be implemented by the council, and so, unless you were to go
10 through with an amendment to implement the deep-sea coral
11 provision and do deep-sea coral areas instead of this coral HAPC
12 document, I think you're okay.

13
14 If you want a formal definition, I probably need a motion, but,
15 if you would like me to just report back to you what the Deep-
16 Sea Coral Program uses as their definition, I would be happy to
17 do that as well.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Greene.

20
21 **MR. GREENE:** I think that would be good, but, in reading the
22 document earlier, there was two different buoy gear definitions,
23 and one of them didn't quite go to the bottom and there was
24 different criteria, and this is just another area where I felt
25 like there was fifty meter versus 150 meter, and we need to kind
26 of make a decision.

27
28 I think, if you can just check into that and report back to us,
29 then we will make a decision going from there, because I think
30 it is rather confusing to the public, because, before being
31 involved in this process, I would have never guessed, in a
32 million years, that deep-sea coral would have been defined as
33 fifty meters, in anybody's opinion, but it's one of those things
34 I feel like we need to flesh out.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Does that give you enough
37 direction, Morgan? Okay. Sounds good. Mr. Diaz

38
39 **MR. DIAZ:** Other Business, staff provided a brief update on the
40 status of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary and
41 the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Expansions. The
42 council will likely be presented with updates to both expansions
43 in 2018. Madam Chair, this concludes my report.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Is there any other business
46 related to Coral before we leave that report? All right. Next
47 on our agenda is our Data Collection Committee Report, and so,
48 Dr. Stunz, are you ready? I will turn it over to you.

1
2 **DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**
3

4 **DR. STUNZ:** I am ready, Madam Chair, and thank you. The Data
5 Collection Committee met on June 7, 2017. First were
6 Presentations on Procedures to Estimate Recreational Landings.
7 Representatives from the five Gulf states gave presentations on
8 their state-specific efforts to improve their recreational data
9 collection programs, Tab F, Numbers 4(a) through 4(e).

10
11 The respective programs aim to improve the precision and
12 accuracy of reef fish catch and effort estimates that may not be
13 adequately characterized by existing programs. Many of the
14 states are working closely with MRIP to ensure the programs
15 produce accurate estimates and can be calibrated with other
16 programs that collect recreational fisheries data.

17
18 Next was the Discussion of MRIP Strategic Plan. The council has
19 been requested to review and comment on the MRIP Strategic Plan,
20 Tab F, Number 5(b). Staff has prepared a draft letter, Tab F,
21 Number 5(a), identifying specific concerns and highlighting
22 areas of improvement in the strategic plan.

23
24 Ms. Levy provided clarification that the 2006 reauthorization of
25 the Magnuson-Stevens Act does not require in-season monitoring
26 for species that have exceeded their annual catch limit, or ACL,
27 in the most recent fishing year, or rather that requirement is
28 part of the accountability measures developed by the council.
29 Staff will clarify the letter and submit to MRIP on behalf of
30 the council.

31
32 In Other Business, the committee requested an update on the
33 implementation status for the recently completed For-Hire
34 Electronic Reporting Amendment at the August 2017 council
35 meeting. Madam Chair, this concludes my report.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. Anything else related to Data
38 Collection? Seeing none, we will move right down the agenda,
39 and I think that will bring us to Mr. Walker with the
40 Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report.

41
42 **SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE REPORT**
43

44 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We will be in Tab E, the
45 Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report for June 5, 2017.
46 Florida Sea Grant Presentation on Barotrauma, Tab E, Number 4,
47 Captain Betty Staugler from Florida Sea Grant presented a review
48 of two surveys on angler knowledge and attitudes toward venting

1 and descending devices.

2
3 One survey was conducted by Florida Sea Grant in 2014 via email.
4 The other survey was a University of Florida Fisheries & Aquatic
5 Sciences survey completed for the council in 2015 and 2016.
6 Both surveys found that anglers are generally familiar with
7 barotrauma signs, with more anglers familiar with venting tools
8 than descender devices.

9
10 The greatest impact affecting the use of mitigation measures was
11 predicted to be from social norms. A requirement to possess
12 venting tools or descender devices is likely to emphasize the
13 social norm. Most anglers receive educational information via
14 fishing magazines, TV shows, websites, and YouTube videos.

15
16 Options paper for framework action to require possession of
17 descending devices or venting tools on board vessels possessing
18 reef fish, and that's Tab E, Number 5, staff reviewed an options
19 paper for possible actions to recommend or require venting tools
20 or descending devices on vessels fishing for reef fish.

21
22 Committee members strongly supported an outreach program,
23 regardless of whether devices were recommended or required. One
24 member suggested that, given the social pressure to use such
25 tools, a regulation may not be necessary. It was pointed out
26 that activities under the RESTORE Program could include
27 distribution of devices, but only if they are not required by
28 regulation.

29
30 If required by regulation, RESTORE funds could not be used to
31 distribute devices, but could be used to establish an outreach
32 program. One committee member suggested requiring a placard be
33 onboard providing instructions on how to use the devices,
34 similar to the placard required for sea turtle release required
35 on commercial vessels.

36
37 Some committee members questioned if the SEDAR stock assessments
38 could account for the use of devices if they were not required.
39 Dr. Bonnie Ponwith responded that there were many factors
40 involved, and it would be a judgement call on how much to credit
41 the use of the devices.

42
43 Staff suggested that if the council chooses to recommend rather
44 than require venting tools or descender devices, a framework
45 action may not be needed. Staff is awaiting guidance from the
46 council on how to proceed.

47
48 Options Paper, Carryover of Unharvested Quota, and this is Tab

1 E, Number 6. Staff reviewed an options paper to modify the
2 council's ABC Control Rule by incorporating a provision to allow
3 for the carryover of the uncaught portion of the ACL into the
4 following fishing year, given the conditions outlined in the
5 options paper.

6
7 Committee members asked about the amount of foregone yield that
8 might be carried over for a given species. Staff explained,
9 through the actions presented, how the council could determine
10 which species would be eligible for a carryover and how to
11 adjust the amount of foregone yield that could be carried over
12 to the next fishing year.

13
14 One large issue, which has been extensively discussed by the
15 IPT, is how to handle species that are managed under IFQ
16 programs. Staff asked for clarification on how the council
17 might like to handle IFQ species and whether the committee
18 agreed with the current direction of the document. NOAA General
19 Counsel advised the council to justify the percentages presented
20 in alternatives in Actions 3 and 4, likely using the tables
21 provided in the document. Madam Chair, this concludes my
22 report.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Walker. We did make it
25 through your entire agenda. All right. I thought that we had
26 one item left under your agenda, but we did make it through.
27 Mr. Gregory.

28
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** One of things that -- We hurried
30 through the carryover, because of the time factor, but one of
31 the things that I think was left without adequate discussion was
32 do we want to proceed with the document to implement a
33 regulation on barotrauma or do we want to give staff guidance
34 that we should come back with a draft policy and facilitate an
35 education and outreach program on this with other entities,
36 particularly with the Sea Grant programs and the Gulf States
37 Commission?

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right, council. Any feedback?
40 Essentially, if we only want to go the policy route, then staff
41 doesn't really need to develop this document further.

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Correct.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Whereas, if we're wanting to implement a
46 regulation, then we need to direct staff to continue work on the
47 document. Mr. Diaz.

48

1 **MR. DIAZ:** I will try to start some discussion. I think we need
2 to try to reduce dead discards the most effective way we can,
3 and I really don't know what that is at this point. I think Dr.
4 Crabtree had mentioned something about the fact that, if we were
5 to start this regulation and it's law, then grant money can't be
6 used to help provide these devices to people that need them, and
7 so I would hate to not be able to use grant money to provide
8 devices to people.

9
10 I really don't know what the best way for us to go right now is
11 to be most effective at reducing discards. Maybe around the
12 table, we can have some discussion and form some opinions, but I
13 don't know what path would get us the most results at this
14 point. Thank you.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Anson.

17
18 **MR. ANSON:** I am kind of with you, Dale. There have been other
19 attempts, by various groups, to get descending devices out to
20 folks for free, and they were fairly successful, at least in
21 getting out the devices, and there's been mixed results on how
22 effectively or how widely they are being used, but I certainly
23 wouldn't want, if there is some more money coming down to offer
24 it again, if we develop a policy that would prevent that,
25 because I think that could be the best path, rather than just
26 doing the policy.

27
28 I think the council should develop a little bit of outreach,
29 through video or something, that could be accessed through the
30 council's website, certainly trying to stay engaged, as much as
31 possible, with those groups that have already been actively
32 involved in trying to get out descending devices and interlink
33 each other, I guess, or try to work as effectively as possible
34 to keep the message out, particularly when it comes times for
35 opportunities when free devices are available.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I have a list here. I have Martha next.

38
39 **MS. GUYAS:** I kind of wonder. I have some of the same concerns
40 as you all, and I wonder if we put the amendment kind of on
41 hold, at least for the time being, and I think we need to do
42 outreach.

43
44 There is no doubt about that, and I think the Sea Grant
45 presentation illustrated that pretty well, that there is a lot
46 of people that really just aren't aware or don't understand, and
47 we can couple with the RESTORE efforts and what Gulf States and
48 the other states may be doing, but maybe we put this on hold for

1 now, the regulatory part.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Then I had Dr. Crabtree.

4

5 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think my inclination is that education and
6 outreach, for now, is the best approach, particularly in light
7 of the implications of this towards the use of restoration money
8 and things, and so I would probably agree with Martha, or I
9 think Martha said it, the idea of putting the amendment on hold
10 for now and embarking more on an outreach-oriented approach.

11

12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I had Dr. Stunz.

13

14 **DR. STUNZ:** Well, I am probably speaking in the minority here.
15 I mean, I am certainly not opposed at all to outreach and
16 education. In fact, I'm a huge proponent of that. You know
17 that I don't have a nice motion prepared, and I'm fine waiting
18 until the next meeting or something, but I sure would like to
19 see this move forward in a more formal way, because it takes a
20 while.

21

22 I mean, we all know with the RESTORE money, and I certainly
23 would not want to cut out any type of program that would
24 facilitate this process, but there's a lot of good work that
25 goes into the RESTORE proposals, and a lot of them don't get
26 funded, and so, for us to make decisions that may or may not
27 happen is probably not the best way, and I think, even if it
28 was, there are some ways we can work around that.

29

30 Just so I'm on the record, and, probably in the next meeting or
31 so, I would probably come back with some motions, or I would
32 like to see this move forward in a more formal way, just because
33 I see the value of these in the fisheries, and I want to make
34 one more comment, Madam Chair, if it's okay, while I have the
35 microphone.

36

37 There was some public comment yesterday about perceptions of
38 mortality and eating the discarded fish, of dolphins and other
39 things, and that's certainly true. That happens, and there's no
40 doubt about it, but, overall, I think, of all the groups doing
41 this work, they're seeing much more value than the offsetting
42 predation that occurs on these fish, and so I guess I'm fine for
43 now in proceeding in that way, but I would hope, in the very
44 near future, that we would take this up in a more formal
45 amendment.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Well, Dr. Stunz, I think I'm in your camp. I
48 think I would like to see this amendment move forward as well.

1 I mean, I hear the comments about the RESTORE Act funds, but
2 that oil spill was in 2010, and this is seven years later, and
3 we're still waiting on certain funds to come through the
4 channels, and so I don't know about waiting on funds for a ten
5 to fifty-dollar device.

6
7 We make them pay more than that to have lifejackets on the boat,
8 and we don't. That's you over here on this side of the table,
9 but, anyway, the other thing that I think about are some of the
10 new regulations that we have with amberjack. We increased that
11 size limit, and we're going to have more discards there.
12 Anything that we can do, especially for these species that we
13 have issues with -- We have issues with amberjack, and we're
14 going to have no season recreationally on triggerfish next year.
15 You're going to have a lot of -- This year, I guess it is.
16 Excuse me. We're in 2017, and so we're going to have some
17 discards, some increase in discards there.

18
19 I think it's something that we probably should continue to
20 pursue. It was also something that came from the recreational
21 community in the outside group that got together.

22
23 That was one of the things that we heard several times from them
24 that they were in favor of, and that is one piece, obviously, of
25 a solution that the recreational community has brought to us,
26 and it's something we keep asking them for, or come to us with
27 solutions, and so, I think if we kind of put this on the back
28 burner, that would send the wrong signal to them, but that's
29 just my opinion on it. Next, I had Mr. Walker and then Mr.
30 Gregory and then Mr. Anson.

31
32 **MR. WALKER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just going to
33 mention, in the commercial industry, we were using venting tools
34 even before they were required, at one time, and after they were
35 required, and there's a lot of times that fish doesn't actually
36 need to be vented, but there are times that they do need to be
37 vented, and we have always practiced that. Almost everyone I
38 know in the commercial industry has tried to use commonsense.

39
40 When you see a fish that looks like he needs to be vented, then
41 you need to vent that fish, and so I think the education and
42 outreach would be of value too, but, like in the commercial
43 industry, we're also using the venting tools and, the descender
44 device, I don't think that would probably benefit us much, but a
45 venting tool does.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, I had Mr. Gregory.

48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I was just going to elaborate.
2 When we made our outreach committee a technical committee, we
3 also expanded it, and we tried to get a representative from each
4 of the Gulf Sea Grant programs, in addition to each of the state
5 communications people that work in the state agencies.

6
7 I think one person dropped off, and so we'll try to replace
8 that, and so that gives us access to all of the Sea Grant
9 programs in the Gulf, and then they, in conjunction with the
10 commission, have started meeting at the spring and fall meeting
11 of the state commission to coordinate among themselves, and so
12 that's an opportunity where they can work together on that too,
13 and so we would simply be facilitating that, in addition to
14 doing a video and putting stuff on our website, but we certainly
15 won't be out doing workshops ourselves. We will be encouraging
16 other people to do that.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. I had Mr. Anson and then Mr.
19 Boyd.

20
21 **MR. ANSON:** Going back to what Greg talked about, that you're
22 going to hold off on any motions, I appreciate that, and I am
23 with you. I guess my question, and I'm not too familiar with
24 the RESTORE process and their funding cycles, and so I'm looking
25 down at Glenn, and he's got his hand up.

26
27 That would be my question, is that we have passed many years
28 since the oil spill, and we'll continue on many years, as far as
29 funding cycles, and so I don't want to give the indication, at
30 least where I'm at, to just keep waiting and waiting and waiting
31 for a proposal to be funded, but I certainly don't want, if
32 there is something that's in the works now to be reviewed for
33 the next approval cycle, that, if there is a proposal out there
34 to continue giving descending devices out free to the public, I
35 don't want a motion started here for someone that's in the
36 decision-making process to see that the council is going to be
37 developing some regulatory framework and so we're going to not
38 fund this project, whereas they might have if there was no
39 pending action.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** To that point, Mr. Constant?

42
43 **MR. CONSTANT:** Yes, and so a couple of points of information. I
44 think it is a pretty complex maze of funding through all the
45 different pots of resources available from Gulf restoration,
46 but, in this case, I think the NRDA pot of money has some very
47 specific funding for injury for these resources.

1 In the latest notice of intent for public input about what kinds
2 of restoration they would like to see with fish and water-column
3 invertebrates, this idea of reducing bycatch and descender
4 devices as a means of restoration has come to the top of
5 priority, and so I think there's a really good, strong interest
6 in funding these kinds of things. There are projects proposing
7 descender device distribution, in the way of mortality
8 reduction, in the hopper.

9
10 It's currently going through a prioritization process right now,
11 which will probably be completed in the next month or so, and so
12 it is a little different than the kind of broad discussions
13 about all of this available restoration money that we've had in
14 the past. That said, the expectations about when that money
15 would be available, just kind of for your information, I think
16 would be sometime in 2018, mid to late 2018, in the current
17 cycle.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** One question. When you say that money is
20 available, you mentioned some research, and so is this money to
21 research descending devices or is this money to actually say,
22 no, we're going to pay to put descending devices on licensed
23 angler vessels?

24
25 **MR. CONSTANT:** It could be either. I think the proposals that
26 are in right now are actually for the distribution of devices to
27 reduce bycatch, and so it's actual restoration effort that would
28 leave fish in the water as a restoration means.

29
30 There could also be proposals to research, because it was put
31 out for public input, and so there could be many different
32 proposals, but I can tell you that the prioritization has been
33 to actually implement restoration, which would be the
34 distribution of those devices.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** To that point, Dr. Stunz?

37
38 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes, to that point, Glenn, and maybe you can give
39 some clarification, and, Roy, please correct me if I'm wrong,
40 because I don't know if you were 100 percent certain about would
41 funding like prevent -- Since this gear, but it's kind of one of
42 those things that I don't know if that was the intent of the RFP
43 or whatever, and would that technically prevent distribution of
44 these devices if we did something like that, or you may not know
45 the answer, but we may be talking about something that's not
46 issue, is what I am trying to get at.

47
48 **MR. CONSTANT:** There are exclusion criteria that come with the

1 prioritization, and, so, when they filter through these
2 projects, one of the things that excludes proposals from being
3 considered is whether or not it's required under federal law,
4 and so, if you acted in a way that made it mandatory, it would
5 take that particular project off the table for funding.

6
7 **DR. STUNZ:** That would apply in this case then is what you're
8 saying.

9
10 **MR. CONSTANT:** Right.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Once it's written into the Federal Code as a
13 regulation, it would apply, but yet, if we had it ready with our
14 list of approved devices, and you finally bless it on your end
15 and there is money for it, and you start handing them out, and
16 then we send that amendment up to NOAA to say, all right, we
17 want to complement that and now it's required to.

18
19 **MR. CONSTANT:** I don't think there is anything that prevents
20 that scenario from unfolding. That said, it is in a
21 prioritization queue, and so there may be some consideration for
22 that, if that was the intent.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Gregory.

25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** You just mentioned a set of
27 approved devices, and we haven't really discussed that in
28 detail, and it's a slippery slope, whether we list what's
29 approved or just leave it up to the anglers to determine what
30 they're going to do, which causes enforcement a little problem,
31 but, if we start trying to list what's approved, we're going to
32 get ourselves into a TED situation, where these devices have to
33 be tested and proved effective before they can be approved, and
34 we'll be amending this document each time somebody develops a
35 new tool, and so that -- If we're going to do the regulation
36 viewpoint, that really has to have a lot of thought put into it,
37 how we're going to approach that part.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Stunz.

40
41 **DR. STUNZ:** To that point, Madam Chair, and, Doug, you're
42 exactly right, and that's one reason I favor moving this a
43 little bit forward sooner, because it is going to take a lot of
44 discussion. David Walker just brought up some great points as
45 well that would have to be built into that, in terms of do you
46 have to use it every time or not and all of that, or just
47 onboard.

1 As we well know, this process is never characterized as fast,
2 and so it's going to take some time, and that's why I would be
3 in favor of starting this sooner than later, and we can always
4 hold off if the funding climate issues develop or whatever.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Doug Boyd has been waiting
7 patiently, and so I'm going to let him go.

8
9 **MR. BOYD:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. The discussion that we
10 have just had is what I wanted to bring up. I am in favor of
11 moving forward. I think there are a lot of moving parts in
12 this, and I think there's definitions in this.

13
14 We know devices work, and we need to understand how the
15 commercial, the recreational, the for-hire industry uses the
16 devices and what's appropriate for them to have on their boats,
17 and I think we ought to move forward and discuss it. It doesn't
18 mean that we have to make anything mandatory, and it doesn't
19 mean that we even have to finalize it, but I think we ought to
20 have those discussions. Thank you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Matens.

23
24 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of things.
25 One was one of the headboat guys made a good point. If we
26 require descending devices, you've got some poor soul on the
27 deck running around descending the heck out of a bunch of fish,
28 but, more importantly, I did some quick numbers, and my
29 assumptions may be way off, but, at a fifty-dollar device, we're
30 looking at about \$25 million here worth of stuff, and I think
31 there's going to be a lot of interest in the vendor community to
32 make sure they're on that list, and I think that -- I am almost
33 of a mind not to worry about making these things free to the
34 public, but my mind could be changed, but I think that's a
35 dangerous thing to do. Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Where do we want to leave staff
38 on this? Do we want to tell them to bring it back to us again
39 in August with more analysis or do we want to tell them to just
40 hold tight for a little bit? We're going to need a motion and
41 vote it up or down if I'm not even going to get any nodding of
42 heads around the table. Mr. Gregory.

43
44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I would ask that you not specify
45 that we bring it back in August. We have a lot of other things
46 going on with red snapper, and this is not going to be a high-
47 priority item. We can continue working on it as a regulation,
48 or we can shift gears and develop a policy that's more easily

1 developed, but please don't tie us down to bringing this to you
2 at every meeting or anything like that.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you for keeping me straight. Dr.
5 Stunz.

6
7 **DR. STUNZ:** I was just going to say that -- I mean, as much as I
8 would like to see this go forward, I don't have a pressing
9 concern that couldn't be taken up and we pass the motion or do
10 something at the next meeting or in the fairly near future to
11 get this rolling, but, for right now, I think we're kind of --
12 At least from my mind, I am feeling okay.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I am going to ask this in a different way.
15 Is everybody okay with staff bringing this back at some point in
16 the future with further analysis to look at both the regulatory
17 side and what may or may not be approved and start getting into
18 that discussion? Are you okay with that or not? I need some
19 nodding of heads, at least. I am getting thumbs-up and yes.
20 All right. So there's not a time certain, but it will stay in
21 movement and getting some traction at some point. All right.
22 Thank you, guys.

23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** It was just pointed out to me that
25 one thing in this committee that we didn't cover is the SSC
26 comments, and this is Tab B, Number 14, and that had vermilion
27 and status determination criteria comments, but also a review of
28 the draft underharvest carryover options.

29
30 In these comments, we have a few SSC member questions and
31 suggestions, but, overall, in the last paragraph, it says,
32 recognizing that the carryover amendment is in the early stages
33 of development, the SSC requested to review future document
34 updates, especially in light of the simulations the committee
35 requested above.

36
37 The SSC thought that review of these simulations would allow the
38 committee to better evaluate the different outcomes and
39 tradeoffs of the various options in this amendment. We will
40 definitely be taking this back to the SSC, probably at their
41 September meeting, and then back to the council here in October.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I did have that as a note here to myself,
44 that staff needed some guidance on how to proceed with that
45 carryover document, and so is that enough guidance to staff,
46 that the SSC needs to evaluate some scenarios? Mr. Atran, was
47 the -- Was that Mr. Rindone's document?

48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** It's Ryan's.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Yes, and he's not here today. Dr. Simmons,
4 are you comfortable with where you're headed on that document?

5
6 **DR. SIMMONS:** Yes, and thank you, Madam Chair. I think we do
7 need to put the moving average information in there and then put
8 it back before the SSC again at their September meeting, when
9 it's in-person and not a webinar, and so that would be our plan
10 right now. Thank you.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. As long as you're clear and everybody
13 is okay with that on the agenda for the SSC, I don't see anybody
14 really opposed to it around the table, and so we should be good
15 there. Is that all of our guidance that we needed under that
16 committee report? I think it is.

17
18 I hesitate to ask you all this, because I work you through lunch
19 every meeting on the last day, but here's what we have left,
20 guys. We need to announce our advisory panel members, and we do
21 not have a vote on an exempted fishing permit. We have already
22 gone through that. We have our Supporting Agencies Updates and
23 then I think we have already cleared everything out of Other
24 Business, and so do you all want to work through lunch? You do
25 not have to work through lunch. I am seeing some yes. Okay.
26 All right. It is only 11:30, and so maybe you won't starve to
27 death before we get there. Next, it's going to be our
28 Announcement of Advisory Panel members, and I am going to let
29 Mr. Gregory do that for us.

30
31 **ANNOUNCE ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS**

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** We have reappointed the Coastal
34 Migratory Pelagics and the Red Drum Advisory Panels this year
35 for a three-year term. For the Coastal Migratory Pelagics
36 Advisory Panel, there is sixteen members. They are: Roy Cravey,
37 Judson Curtis, Gary Jarvis, Chris Jenkins, David Krebs, Tom
38 Marvel, Jeffrey Matthews, George Niles, Michael Nugent, Kelty
39 Readenour, William Stein III, Fred Tewell, Ed Walker, Lance
40 Walker, James Michael Whitfield, and Robert Woithe. That is the
41 Coastal Migratory Pelagics Advisory Panel.

42
43 For the Red Drum Advisory Panel, there are fourteen members, and
44 it's: Francis Donaldson, Benjamin Graham, John Green, Joseph
45 Hendon, Robert Leaf, Jeffrey Miller, Burt E. Moritz, Lance
46 Nacio, Ben Raines, Erman Rawlings, Sonny Schindler, Derek
47 Shoobridge, Dustin Trochesset, and Troy Williamson. That
48 completes the list of members.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Okay. That completes that agenda item, which
3 will bring us to our Supporting Agencies Update, and I will
4 start with our South Atlantic representative, Ms. Anna Beckwith.
5 Did you have anything that you wanted to update us on?
6

7
8 **SUPPORTING AGENCIES UPDATE**
9 **SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL LIAISON**

10 **MS. BECKWITH:** I did. You will see, under the briefing
11 materials, our last meeting report from our March meeting, if
12 anybody would like to look through that, but just a couple of
13 points that might interest you.
14

15 We are working on a for-hire limited entry. We are
16 concentrating our efforts on discussion around our snapper
17 grouper for-hire limited permit, and we will not be continuing
18 discussion, at this time, on our CMP permit or our dolphin wahoo
19 permit. We're still in the very early stages of that
20 discussion.
21

22 For red snapper, we are working on an amendment for red snapper
23 right now. We're basing our focus primarily on best fishing
24 practices, and we're waiting on some resolution to an ABC. In
25 terms of products from our visioning process, we are working on
26 amendments for recreational and commercial changes that would
27 come directly from the visioning process that we had over the
28 last couple of years, Finally, we suspended work on the
29 yellowtail and dolphin amendments until we get some revised MRIP
30 numbers, and so that's really all we're working on. Thanks.
31

32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** That sounds good. I will move over to Mr.
33 Constant. I don't know if there was anything else that you
34 wanted to update us on, but do you have anything, sir?
35

36 **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**
37

38 **MR. CONSTANT:** No, ma'am, but just unless there's other
39 questions, but my best wishes to departing members.
40

41 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. We appreciate that. I do
42 have one -- If you will keep us posted as you move forward with
43 the descending devices proposals, will you just keep us updated,
44 please, sir?
45

46 **MR. CONSTANT:** Sure, I can do that.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. I appreciate it. All right,

1 Lieutenant Commander, you're next on the list.

2
3 **U.S. COAST GUARD**
4

5 **LCDR DANAHER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We've got just one slide
6 to kind of capture some highlights here. I will try and keep
7 this -- I will stick to the highlight reel. For the first
8 bullet, we had a unique case back on April 2. This case, in
9 particular, commenced in Corpus Christi, after the Corpus
10 Christi Police Department observed a rendezvous between a lancha
11 and a vehicle on the beach.

12
13 When the lancha departed the beach, Coast Guard forces against
14 south Texas commenced a lengthy pursuit. The reason I bring
15 this case up is we're always seeing the lancha threat change,
16 and this is one of those unique cases where, during the pursuit,
17 the lancha entered the surf zone, and that pretty much curtailed
18 our ability to use warning shots and disabling fire, mainly
19 because of the safety of the people on the beach.

20
21 As you can see in the P2, the second picture down, the
22 watercraft was maneuvering quite close to the shoreline, and you
23 can actually see people on the beach up there near their
24 vehicles, and so the result was the craft actually made it all
25 the way to Mexican territorial seas.

26
27 It just became difficult to issue those warning shots and
28 disabling fire, for safety purposes, but the fact that they were
29 not fishing and their aggressive behavior, along with the
30 observations from our aircraft, just further confirms links or
31 ties with other illicit trafficking.

32
33 On the second bullet, Coast Guard forces in Texas have
34 coordinated a large-scale surge operation to enforce the Texas
35 shrimp closure. We boarded more than a dozen shrimpers that
36 were on the edge of the state line in Louisiana waters, and
37 there were no significant violations. Air Station Corpus
38 Christi also flew several missions with NOAA OLE agents onboard,
39 and they did not observe any activity of shrimpers in the Texas
40 corridor.

41
42 The third bullet, the Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant is in the Gulf
43 throughout June, and they're conducting a focus on highly
44 migratory species vessels and patrolling the maritime boundary
45 line. Coupled with fixed-wing aircraft from the Aviation
46 Training Center in Mobile, Vigilant has already boarded several
47 HMS vessels and discovered violations of tuna carcass status.
48 One vessel also received a termination, due to multiple safety

1 violations.

2
3 On the positive side, all of the vessels that were in the gear
4 restricted area that Vigilant was patrolling, all of those
5 vessels had appropriate licenses and permitted gear onboard.

6
7 The last bullet was from last week, and that is -- I missed one,
8 didn't I? May 15, Station Freeport and CBP, that was kind of a
9 last-minute addition that I added, and I apologize for not
10 mentioning that in my order of events here, but Station Freeport
11 has done a tremendous job working with partner agencies to
12 identify a lot of poaching that's going on with red snapper, and
13 that particular case, on May 15, the owner of the vessel
14 admitted to catching twelve red snapper in federal waters, but
15 they had this unique secret compartment that was underneath the
16 seat for the center console.

17
18 The owner of the vessel demonstrated how he activates the latch
19 for the hidden compartment. He basically had a switch inside
20 his electronics panel that he would flip, and then his trim tab
21 was used to open the compartment door, and so, once we knew the
22 compartment was there, we basically said that you're going to
23 have to open the compartment and show us what's in it, and
24 that's when they identified the red snapper and asked him where
25 he caught them, and he admitted to fishing in federal waters. I
26 think he got a \$2,000 fine leveraged from TP&W against him, and
27 they seized the catch.

28
29 The last bullet there, June 1, was the Lancha Working Group.
30 That was last week in New Orleans. We had the privilege to host
31 several members from NOAA Region Southeast General Counsel and
32 also from NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement at Headquarters were
33 in attendance, and, in addition to that, from our Coast Guard
34 side of the house, we had personnel from Coast Guard
35 Headquarters, Atlantic Area, and the deployable specialized
36 forces. It was all trying to address the forward thinking on
37 where we're going with the lancha threat and what to do with the
38 trends and analysis that we're still currently seeing.

39
40 There was one more lancha interdiction last night.
41 Unfortunately, we did not get them before they had retrieved
42 their gear, and so they had already caught over a hundred red
43 snapper, and, of course, you know that gets returned to the sea,
44 because we don't have any place to keep it. Madam Chair,
45 pending any questions or further discussion, that concludes my
46 report.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you. That was very interesting. We do

1 have a question from Mr. Matens.
2
3 **MR. MATENS:** Leo, I have noticed this in a bunch of
4 presentations that you've made. In P1, that lancha there, and I
5 guess they call them pangas in the west, just before the guy
6 with his hand on the tiller, there's a little vertical box
7 thing, and what is that?
8
9 **LCDR DANAHER:** That's just really like kind of a console. All
10 the lanchas that we see traditionally have tiller-driven
11 engines, but they have that sort of center post there, just in
12 front of the operator, and it's usually where they might have
13 some kind of VHF radio or any of their kind of communications
14 gear, because they do communicate with one another when they're
15 out there.
16
17 Some of the questions have been whether or not the Mexican
18 government is enforcing AIS equipment onboard the vessel, and,
19 to this date, I can report that, of all the lanchas we have
20 seized, we have never found an AIS onboard.
21
22 **MR. MATENS:** You mean they communicate over VHF radio with each
23 other, where you can listen?
24
25 **LCDR DANAHER:** Sometimes we have found VHF radio, and, other
26 times, we have found CB radios, and so they're trying to avoid
27 detection by using other types of frequencies and gear, and
28 that's just one of the methods they use to evade us.
29
30 **MR. MATENS:** Thank you.
31
32 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Dana.
33
34 **DR. DANA:** What's an AIS?
35
36 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** You can answer, but it's required for vessels
37 outside of three miles now, and, essentially, like you all worry
38 about VMS and people knowing where you're fishing, you put an
39 AIS on that boat, and everybody in the world can see it. It
40 tracks your location.
41
42 There's an app on our phone, and we can see where our boats are
43 at all times. If you want to know where to go to catch the
44 shrimp, pull your AIS up, and you can see where all the boats
45 are going back and forth and back and forth. It's wonderful.
46
47 **DR. DANA:** What does it stand for though?
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** I think it's automatic
2 identification system. Is that right?

3
4 **LCDR DANAHER:** That sounds right to me. I get into acronym soup
5 sometimes, but the AIS systems -- That is more traditional with
6 just the general commercial traffic out there, and it's
7 apparently something that the Mexican government has been
8 looking into, but we haven't -- In our communication with NOAA
9 and with the State Department, we have not yet observed any kind
10 of AIS equipment onboard seized lanchas.

11
12 Now, that doesn't rule out the possibility that they could be
13 dumping it before they get to the interdiction point, but any
14 kind of bracket system or some kind of evidence that would show
15 that the AIS was on there prior to us making the interdiction,
16 we haven't seen anything like that either.

17
18 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** There is an organization called
19 Global Fishing Watch, and they have tapped into AIS and other
20 tracking mechanisms, and you can go to their websites and look
21 at the distribution of fishing vessels throughout the world, and
22 other people are using it to monitor marine reserves and if
23 there is illegal fishing going on.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** It became a Coast Guard requirement for
26 commercial vessels over a certain length, and I don't remember
27 what the length is.

28
29 **LCDR DANAHER:** Sixty-five.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Sixty-five and operating outside of three
32 miles. If your boat is over sixty-five feet, you have to have
33 this on and operating, so everybody can see where you are. It
34 was a safety thing. It was mainly big ships and crew boats and
35 supply boats and stuff that had them before that, and, for
36 safety purposes, the Coast Guard lumped some fishing vessels in
37 there, too. Mr. Anson.

38
39 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Lieutenant Commander
40 Danaher, just a couple of questions. You mentioned the analysis
41 on the lancha poaching, and that is pretty much a set task for
42 folks in the Coast Guard, is to estimate the pounds each year.
43 I know you've been doing it, and you provided a presentation a
44 few meetings ago, but that's going to be a consistent thing
45 until the poaching threat is eliminated, or nearly eliminated,
46 correct?

47
48 **LCDR DANAHER:** Yes, sir. The lancha economic impact assessment,

1 or analysis, is something that my counterparts up at the
2 Atlantic Area are trying to conduct every single year. They
3 were unable to compute the data for 2015, based on discrepancies
4 with one of their variables for where Coast Guard vessels were
5 located, and so that's part of their computation, is to download
6 essentially the track history for all the Coast Guard patrol
7 boats in that maritime boundary line corridor.

8
9 They're hoping for better data this year to do the 2016
10 assessment, and they are also looking to coordinate a little bit
11 more with NOAA for peer review and such, but the intent is to
12 continue to do the assessment annually.

13
14 **MR. ANSON:** One other question. Setting the Mexican poaching
15 incidents aside, how much in the Gulf of Mexico do you all --
16 How many incidents or cases do you make each year, roughly, for
17 other crossings and harvesting and deployment of gear inside the
18 EEZ?

19
20 **LCDR DANAHER:** Sir, the only data that I really have is for the
21 Mexican lanchas. We have not observed any other foreign
22 nations, but we are also limited in our endurance capability,
23 and so, with the fast-response cutters that are larger, 154
24 feet, they will be coming online, two of them, this summer.

25
26 They will have the reach to give us a better assessment on the
27 edge of the EEZ, in some of the high-seas pockets, because we do
28 patrol those periodically, especially with fixed-wing aircraft,
29 but we're not going out there every single day, and the data
30 that we're receiving for those regions doesn't reflect any kind
31 of illegal activity.

32
33 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

36
37 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I am just curious. In past presentations, we've
38 seen how many boats they have caught and disposed of and
39 estimated the catches derived from those boats, and do you have
40 any sense of the magnitude of this, in terms of here are the
41 ones that we caught, but perhaps this much of it is going on
42 that we don't catch, because of obvious reasons.

43
44 **LCDR DANAHER:** Yes, sir. That point was actually made at the
45 lancha working group last week, and that is one of the items
46 that the impact assessment is trying to capture. Offhand, I
47 don't -- I can get back to you on the exact numbers, but it was
48 certainly one of those conservative estimates of we're probably

1 only catching maybe 20 or 30 percent of what's actually going on
2 out there.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Just to follow up on that, when we went to
5 the CCC meeting in May, where all eight councils are together,
6 there was actually interest from councils in Alaska about these
7 lanchas, because the pictures that were shown showed that they
8 had a sizeable amount of red snapper on them, and red snapper
9 sometimes ends up in our political realm and maybe has effects
10 on other councils, from that aspect, and so they were kind of
11 interested in, hey, are you trying to get a handle on how many
12 of those fish are being landed illegally and incorporating that
13 into your data streams and your assessments and such, and so
14 just if you maybe could pass that along to our future council
15 representative and let him know that we will still be interested
16 in seeing how that can be incorporated one day.

17
18 **LCDR DANAHER:** Certainly, Madam Chair. One other point to
19 mention is -- I just wanted to kind of bring the topics back to
20 the domestic fisheries side and segue a little bit off of what
21 Mr. Anson was asking about for domestic cases, but we are seeing
22 a very substantial compliance rate when we do the fishery
23 boardings for domestic fisheries, which is a good thing.

24
25 Sadly though, on that 6 or 7 percent where we are seeing
26 violations being committed, it falls in line with that center
27 bullet there from May 15. It's these egregious cases, where
28 people are deliberately out there trying to circumvent the law
29 and the authorities, and so, while most of the Gulf -- Most of
30 the fishermen that are out there, at least from what our
31 boarding numbers reflect, is that people are doing a good job at
32 playing by the rules, but, unfortunately, we are still
33 discovering some negligence and deliberate violations.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Sanchez.

36
37 **MR. SANCHEZ:** One last thing. I, for one, would be very
38 interested in seeing like a summary, when you get it, of the
39 June 1 lancha working group meeting. Maybe we can see that at
40 some point.

41
42 **LCDR DANAHER:** Yes, sir. I would be happy to. We're still
43 working on all of the notes and the report from that event, but
44 I would say that it was very successful, and it was the first
45 time in recent years that we had significant NOAA presence
46 there, which was extremely helpful in scoping the strategy and
47 direction.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Very interesting update, and I just want to
2 say, again, thank you so much for being around this table with
3 us. We have thoroughly enjoyed it. We wish you the best of
4 luck in your new position with the Coast Guard, but we hope to
5 see you again, and definitely in January in New Orleans, if not
6 before, sir.

7
8 **LCDR DANAHER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would say that you're
9 building a pretty good army of Coast Guard members that are now
10 more knowledgeable on the marine affairs, because I am only
11 transferring internally, and I will have more impact on the
12 operations that are going on in the field, and so, as we bring
13 on additional expertise, it's just getting to be a larger fire
14 team of those of us that are trying to help you out there.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. It's much appreciated. All
17 right. Next, I am going to go over to Mr. Dave Donaldson, to
18 see if he has an update from Gulf States for us.

19
20 **GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

21
22 **MR. DONALDSON:** Madam Chair, thank you. I do not. Being the
23 last person, I don't really have anything to share, but I just
24 want to reiterate my appreciation for Dr. Dana and the
25 Lieutenant Commander, and I wish them well in their future
26 endeavors.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** I will echo that. Dr. Dana, you will be
29 missed. I will never forget my first vote on the council. It
30 was 30B, and they called on me first, of all things. It was
31 final action, a roll call vote, and I had to decide yes or no,
32 and you have never held that against me, I have to say.

33
34 You continued to work with me, because I am pretty sure that
35 your and my votes cancelled each other out on that one, and so
36 thank you for being open-minded and always being there when I
37 had a question, as I tried to learn, and still am trying to
38 learn, and I very much appreciate it, and I have enjoyed working
39 with you, and come back and see us any time.

40
41 **DR. DANA:** I may have held it against you. Well, as I said the
42 other day at the reception, and thanks to the Charter
43 Fishermen's Association and Reef Fish Alliance for hosting that
44 very nice reception on Tuesday.

45
46 As I said then, I won't miss the process much. However, I --
47 Actually, I won't miss the process at all, but I will miss the
48 individuals on this council. It's been a privilege and an honor

1 to get to know all of you and serve with you, and this council,
2 and I don't care what side of the fence you sit on, this council
3 has absolutely fine folks sitting on it, and it's been a
4 privilege.

5
6 I thank Dr. Crabtree for supporting me for two appointments. I
7 know you stood up to put me on here, and I appreciate it, and I
8 thank Nick Wiley and Jessica McCawley and my friend, Martha
9 Guyas, for their years of support as well, and so that's about
10 it. I appreciate it.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Dana. I think that's
13 everything on our agenda. Let me double-check my checkmarks
14 here. Yes, I believe that is it. It's not too, too late. It's
15 almost noon. Thank you, everybody. I know we worked some
16 pretty long days this time. I started you early and worked you
17 late a couple of times, and we worked through lunch today, and I
18 appreciate all your efforts, and we will see you again in
19 August. We are adjourned.

20

21 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 8, 2017.)

22

23

- - -