

**Data Collection Committee Report
June 3, 2019
Dr. Greg Stunz – Chair**

The agenda and minutes of the April 2019 meeting were approved.

Review of Proposed Data Collection Advisor Panel (AP) Charge (Tab F, No. 4)

Committee members asked for clarification as to what input the AP might provide on data collection costs as stipulated in the draft charge. Council staff indicated the intention of including costs in the charge would be to allow the AP to comment on issues related to user-incurred costs due to data collection programs. The draft charge was amended to clarify this intent.

The Committee recommends the Data Collection AP charge read and I so move: **To review and evaluate data collection and monitoring management programs. The AP should make recommendations to the Council for data collection programs in relation to their implementation, efficiency, end user costs, and feasibility.**

Motion carried with no opposition.

Discussion of Commercial Fishing Unique Trip Identifiers

Dave Donaldson reported that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission along with state and federal collaborators have been in discussions about pinpointing the minimum data inputs required to uniquely identify commercial trips. He indicated that persistent challenges in data sharing among agency divisions and standardization of data collection practices among states makes creating unique trip identifiers difficult. Ms. Bosarge suggested focusing efforts on the federally permitted reef fish and Individual Fishery Quota (IFQ) participants as these stakeholders were the first to approach the Council about trip identifiers. Dr. Simmons stated the Council Coordination Committee indicated that the Gulf Council will be very close to identifying for-hire trips after implementation of the Southeastern For-Hire Integration Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) program. Dr. Jessica Stephen indicated that SERO staff supporting the commercial IFQ program are actively working to recognize weak points in the program for creating a unique trip identifiers and provide resolutions for how those data gaps can be addressed. The Committee decided to send a letter to SERO asking for a presentation outlining potential solutions relating IFQ data information collected by the Southeast Fishery Science Center and the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).

SEFHIER Implementation Plan Presentation (Tab F, No. 5)

Ms. Sue Gerhart gave an update presentation on the implementation of the SEFHIER program which outlined the required data inputs and listed the approved vessel location monitoring equipment. Additionally, her presentation addressed the previously reported “sticking points” which were identified during a series of stakeholder workshops. Ms. Gerhart also indicated that the implementation timeline had been modified, and the program would become effective in

early 2020 rather than late 2019. Mr. Jesse Leslie with NOAA Law Enforcement showed the Committee representative VMS units to help the Committee visualize how these units would be installed and function on a vessel. Mr. Andrew Peterson (Bluefin) and Ms. Emily Muehlstein then gave the Committee a demonstration of the utility of the VESL reporting application.

The Committee advocated including survey questions about descending and/or venting devices. Questions regarding these devices could be used to also help determine the universe of for-hire vessels using these devices, so that future promotion of their use could be determined in the for-hire sector. One Committee member indicated that questions about descending and/or venting devices could be included in recreational surveys (MRIP) as well to determine the universe of recreational anglers that may also be using the devices. SERO staff indicated that changes to the data collection program were difficult to make at this time. Committee members asked when changes to the program could be made and SERO staff stated that changes could be made after the program was implemented by the Council in the future.

Since the timeline for SEFHIER implementation has been modified, Ms. Boggs suggested reaching out to stakeholders to communicate this modification. Dr. Simmons suggested Council staff work with SERO to identify relevant information and revised implementation timelines to provide to all federally permitted for-hire permit holders via a letter.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.