

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MACKEREL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Webinar

April 12, 2021

**VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 Robin Riechers.....Texas
- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 13 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 14 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 15 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 16 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 17 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- 18 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 19 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 20 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
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- 25 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 26 Lt. Nicholas Giancola.....USCG
- 27 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
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- 42 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
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**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- 47 Martin Fisher.....FL
- 48 Peter Hood.....NMFS
- 49 Clay Porch.....SEFSC

1 Spud Woodward.....SAFMC

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1 The Mackerel Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
2 Management Council convened via webinar on Monday afternoon,  
3 April 12, 2021, and was called to order by Chairman Robin  
4 Riechers.

5  
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**  
9

10 **CHAIRMAN ROBIN RIECHERS:** I will call to order the Mackerel  
11 Management Committee here on Monday afternoon. The first order  
12 of business is under Tab C-1, and that's our agenda, and I am  
13 calling out to see if there is any changes to the agenda or  
14 additions to the agenda. If not, do I hear any objections to  
15 adopting the agenda as it is written? I will give a moment for  
16 hands to possibly pop up. I'm not seeing any, and so, if staff  
17 doesn't see any either, then the agenda is adopted as written.

18  
19 With that, that takes us to Tab C, Number 2. That's the minutes  
20 from the last meeting. Are there any additions, deletions, or  
21 corrections to the minutes from the last meeting? I am not  
22 seeing any hands go up or anyone chiming in. If not, if there  
23 are no hands up, is there anyone -- Is there any objection to  
24 adopting the minutes as they are written? Hearing none, or  
25 seeing no hands come up, and, staff, I will lean on you all as  
26 well to look, but, seeing no hands, then we will assume that  
27 there are no objections and the minutes are adopted as written.

28  
29 The next part of this, and, Dr. Mendez-Ferrer, you can tell us  
30 whether you want to go through the Action Guide and Next Steps  
31 or whether you prefer just to do that as we walk through the  
32 really three items on the agenda that were underneath that, I  
33 believe.

34  
35 **DR. NATASHA MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will go  
36 briefly over this, the Action Guide, as we go through the items,  
37 and so, next up on the agenda, we'll have Mr. Peter Hood from  
38 the Southeast Regional Office to provide an update on the CMP  
39 landings relative to ACLs, and, as usual, this is for  
40 information only, and no action is required by the committee.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you. Peter, you're up. That  
43 is under Tab C-4(a) and Tab C-4(b), for people trying to keep  
44 up.

45  
46 **COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS LANDINGS UPDATE AND PRESENTATION**  
47

48 **MR. PETER HOOD:** Thank you. I'm just going to go over the CMP

1 landings for coastal migratory pelagics, and we'll start out  
2 with cobia. As you know, the different CMP species all seem to  
3 have different fishing years, but cobia is actually a January 1  
4 through December 31 fishing year.

5  
6 This is commercial landings, and we have 2021 in blue, and this  
7 will be the same for all of them. 2020 will be in orange, 2019  
8 in gray, and then an average of 2017 to 2019 will be in a  
9 lighter shade of orange.

10  
11 Basically, if you look at this, you can see that, at least as  
12 far as this year goes, through March 22, our landings are pretty  
13 similar to what we've seen in all the other years, and maybe a  
14 little bit behind, but, really, about where it has been.

15  
16 This is for recreational landings, and we do not have any  
17 recreational landings for 2021 yet, and our 2020 landings do not  
18 incorporate MRIP landings, except for early in the year, just  
19 because we haven't got those yet, and we'll be hearing from Dr.  
20 Cody tomorrow morning, in Reef Fish, and he's going to be  
21 talking a little bit about how we're going to get landings --  
22 How they're going to be imputing recreational landings, and so,  
23 hopefully at the June meeting, we'll have some of that  
24 information, and we'll be able to fill it up in our figures.

25  
26 This is for the FLEC Zone, and this is important, because you'll  
27 be talking about this as you talk about Amendment 32, which is  
28 your next item on the agenda, but, again, basically, this is  
29 commercial landings, and you can see that, last year, cobia  
30 landings were a little bit off, and you can see that, for 2021,  
31 the landings are a little bit lower than what we've seen in the  
32 past. I don't have an explanation for that, but that's what our  
33 information is showing us. This for recreational landings, and,  
34 again, 2020 is basically flat, mostly because we just don't have  
35 that information.

36  
37 This is commercial king mackerel, and this is one slide which I  
38 think something is off on it. You will see that, for 2021, our  
39 landings are kind of high. For king mackerel, the fishing year  
40 starts on July 1 and goes through June 30, and I think maybe,  
41 when this slide was put together, maybe it -- Really, that blue  
42 line should be shifted over to July, at which point then it  
43 would show us that 2021 landings are comparable to what we've  
44 seen in other years.

45  
46 However, I would like to just mention that we did get a lot of  
47 landings in January. The gillnet fishery caught a little bit  
48 over their quota, or ACL, which is 575,000 pounds, roughly, and

1 then we did have a lot of commercial landings that were reported  
2 from Louisiana, and I don't know if somebody sent in some  
3 reports that were late or what, but we did get a bunch of fish  
4 then, and so that did get us up probably over 600,000 pounds, in  
5 terms of landings that were reported in January.

6  
7 Remember that king mackerel are divided up into four parts. We  
8 have the Western Zone and the Northern Zone. The Western Zone  
9 is at about 80 percent of its ACL, and the Northern Zone is  
10 about at 28 percent of their ACL, and the Southern Zone gillnet  
11 fishery caught -- They caught their fish fairly rapidly, and  
12 their season opens the day after MLK, which was January 19, and  
13 then they caught their quota by January 28, at which point we  
14 closed that particular part of the king mackerel fishery.

15  
16 The Southern Zone, when we tallied up the landings in January,  
17 we projected they were going to meet their ACL, and so we closed  
18 them on February 22. However, as February went on, the landings  
19 seemed to be stabilized around 87 percent of their ACL, and we  
20 were hearing from fishermen that they would like to see the  
21 Southern Zone reopened, if possible, and so we did reopen the  
22 fishery for five days, and this is the hook-and-line fishery,  
23 and so that season opened on April 4. It went through April 8,  
24 which would be five fishing days, and then it was closed on the  
25 9<sup>th</sup>.

26  
27 We don't have -- We can't say whether or not they have caught  
28 their ACL or not, because we don't have that information yet,  
29 but we did have a reopening, and I know that that helped out  
30 some of the guys down in south Florida. This is recreational  
31 landings, and, again, we don't have the MRIP landings, and so,  
32 for 2020, it's fairly flat, and we don't have 2021 landings yet.

33  
34 This is Spanish mackerel commercial landings, and you can see  
35 that 2020 was a little bit -- The landings were below what we've  
36 seen in previous years, and, also, for 2021, you can kind of  
37 make out a little bit of blue down there in the lower-left, and  
38 so I don't know. It's tough to say, at this point, whether  
39 Spanish mackerel landings will be lower than normal or they'll  
40 go up. I mean, it appears that, when you get into the spring  
41 and stuff, that's when landings start to increase.

42  
43 Then we have recreational landings, and, again, we don't have  
44 those 2020 landings, but hopefully we'll see something next  
45 year, and then I think that's it for me, but let's see if  
46 there's another slide. That's it. Thank you. I would be happy  
47 to take any questions.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any questions for Peter regarding any of  
2 that info? Peter, on the one slide where you think it's just an  
3 error in how it was plugged in, and my eyes may be a little  
4 deceptive, as you try to slide that line over, but, I mean, I  
5 assume you're double-checking into that, and have you already  
6 confirmed that that's all that was?

7  
8 **MR. HOOD:** I'm still waiting. Unfortunately, the person who put  
9 that slide together is out this week, on leave, and so I  
10 probably won't find out until next week, but I will provide --  
11 If it does need to be corrected, I will provide something, and,  
12 if it needs further explanation, I'll provide that explanation.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you. Leann, your hand is up?

15  
16 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thank you. That was a great segue. I was  
17 going to speak to that slide, if staff would pull it up, on the  
18 commercial king mackerel landings.

19  
20 **MR. HOOD:** I think that's the fifth slide.

21  
22 **MS. BOSARGE:** For the 2021. I think that's probably spot-on,  
23 actually. I think, Robin, what we're probably seeing, based on  
24 what I see happening here in my part of the world, in the  
25 western Gulf, is, typically, that western Gulf fishery, the  
26 quota and the season for them -- The quota is met, and the  
27 season closes the year prior, and so like say October or  
28 November-ish, of last year, it would have normally closed,  
29 because they would have filled the whole quota, but, with COVID,  
30 and the sheer volume of hurricanes, that didn't happen.

31  
32 A lot of the traveling fishermen from the South Atlantic that  
33 usually come over here, they did come, but, eventually, I think  
34 they kind of gave up and worked their back home, and so we --  
35 With the markets, restaurants and fish markets and everything  
36 else, with the country opening back up, those fishermen are out  
37 there finishing up that quota, and filling that quota, where you  
38 don't normally see that quota being filled in January, and it's  
39 all been filled, normally, by the prior October or November, and  
40 so I think that's what you're seeing right there, Robin.

41  
42 **MR. HOOD:** Leann, to your point, right now, they're at about 80  
43 percent of that Western Zone quota, and so it is off from other  
44 years.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Does anybody else have any questions of  
47 Peter? All right. With that then, thank you, Peter. We  
48 appreciate that update, and we look forward to hearing more



1 about how we're going to deal with some of the recreational  
2 landings issues as we move through the week. All right. That  
3 will take us next to Item V on our agenda, Amendment 32, and Dr.  
4 Mendez-Ferrer is going to walk us through both our action items,  
5 or our discussion of the action guide and next steps, and then  
6 enter that item as well, which, for those trying to get to the  
7 next items, those are Tab C-5(a), C-5(b), and then C-6.

8  
9 **AMENDMENT 32: MODIFICATIONS TO THE GULF OF MEXICO MIGRATORY**  
10 **GROUP COBIA CATCH LIMITS, POSSESSION LIMITS, SIZE LIMITS, AND**  
11 **FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE AND SOUTH ATLANTIC RECOMMENDATIONS**  
12

13 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Agenda Item Number V  
14 is the Draft CMP Amendment 32: Modifications to the Gulf of  
15 Mexico Migratory Group Cobia Catch Limits, Possession Limits,  
16 Size Limits, and Framework Procedure. This draft has been  
17 slightly modified from what the council saw in January of 2021.  
18 It includes a new action, and we have incorporated some of the  
19 recommendations from that meeting, and I'm also going to be  
20 showing you the preferred alternatives selected by both councils  
21 and then the CMP AP recommendations.

22  
23 What we're really looking for, from the committee, is to provide  
24 direction to staff regarding the range of actions and  
25 alternatives. I know that this is kind of a big document, and  
26 so we're really looking for some feedback here, and so we can  
27 start with 5(a), and it's sort of a short presentation.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Dr. Mendez-Ferrer, before we get started, it  
30 might be useful to remind everywhere where we are in our back-  
31 and-forth with the South Atlantic and where we would need to get  
32 to by a certain time with the South Atlantic.

33  
34 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** All right. That is included in my little  
35 presentation.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Great.

38  
39 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I guess, to maybe give you all an idea of  
40 where we are on the timeline, last year, we received -- The  
41 council saw the recommendations from the SSC based on the  
42 updated stock assessment that determined cobia to be undergoing  
43 overfishing, but not overfished, and so, during the fall, we  
44 presented kind of a scoping presentation to both councils, with  
45 a range of actions and alternatives.

46  
47 In January of this year, we included draft Chapters 1 and 2,  
48 with, at that time, six actions. The Gulf Council selected some

1 preferred alternatives, and the same document was then presented  
2 to the South Atlantic Council in March of 2021, where they  
3 approved the Gulf Council's preferred alternative and also  
4 selected some preferred alternatives, especially when it relates  
5 to changes in the FLEC Zone. They also recommended that we look  
6 into the sector allocations, and that was an action that wasn't  
7 included in the version that you guys saw in January.

8  
9 We presented a draft of this to the Gulf CMP AP, during their  
10 meeting a couple of weeks ago, and they provided  
11 recommendations, and so where we are today is an updated  
12 document that will include all of the preferred alternatives  
13 that have been selected and the recommendations from the CMP AP.

14  
15 Before we move forward, I know that we have -- There was some  
16 confusion, in terms of kind of the terminology that we were  
17 using in the document, and so, when I say, or when you read in  
18 your document, Gulf group cobia, that refers to the whole Gulf  
19 migratory group cobia stock.

20  
21 With cobia, that is all the way from Texas through the east  
22 coast of Florida, to the Florida/Georgia line, and so the Gulf  
23 group cobia is divided into two zones, the Gulf zone, which are  
24 cobia that fall within the Gulf Council's jurisdiction, and we  
25 manage that as a single stock, and then a portion of the Gulf  
26 group cobia -- The ACL is divided into 64 percent to the Gulf  
27 Zone and 36 percent to the FLEC Zone, and that's the cobia that  
28 are managed by the South Atlantic Council, and it includes the  
29 east coast of Florida and the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys.

30  
31 Like I mentioned, this kind of a big document, and we have seven  
32 actions. Actions 1 through 4 are related to catch limits, and  
33 they kind of are connected to each other, and so we begin with  
34 selecting the OFL, ABC, and ACL for the whole stock. Then, with  
35 the next action, we look into the apportionment that gets  
36 divided for each one of the management zones.

37  
38 Action 3 is a new action that looks at the sector allocation for  
39 the FLEC Zone, and we are not looking at the Gulf Zone here,  
40 because we do not have sector allocations in the Gulf Zone.  
41 It's managed as a single stock. Then, in Action 4, then we look  
42 at the ACT for the Gulf Zone, the recreational ACT, and the FLEC  
43 Zone commercial ACT. Those are kind of connected to each other.

44  
45 Action 5 is looking at proposing possession, vessel, and trip  
46 limits. We have sort of modified this action based on the some  
47 of the combinations that we heard from the Gulf Council in  
48 January. Action 6 is size limit, and then Action 7 is

1 clarifying some of the language and responsibilities outlined in  
2 the CMP framework procedure, and so those that have a pink  
3 checkmark have the councils' preferred alternatives.

4  
5 We have seven actions, and Action 5 has now been divided into  
6 sub-actions. As you can see, we have a lot of alternatives  
7 here, and so what I really want to get from the committee is, if  
8 there is a feeling, or if there is any alternative or any action  
9 that you do not want to see considered in this document, do let  
10 us know. The more actions and alternatives that we are  
11 including in this document, the more complicated it is going to  
12 be to run analysis related to combined effects and cumulative  
13 effects down the line, and so that's just something that I want  
14 you to keep in mind. I think we can go over now to the  
15 document. Does anybody have any questions at this point?

16  
17 Then we're ready for the document. For the sake of time, I  
18 think we should go straight into Chapter 2, with all the  
19 actions. In the background, we do have some tables and figures  
20 to show landings trends, with Appendix B having a more  
21 comprehensive list and tables for the reported landings, all the  
22 way from 1986.

23  
24 Action 1 is modify the Gulf group cobia, the whole stock, OFL,  
25 ABC, and ACL. For this action, we have three alternatives.  
26 Alternative 1 is no action, retain the current OFL, ABC, and  
27 ACL, which are currently monitored in CHTS. The Gulf and South  
28 Atlantic preferred alternative, right now, is Alternative 2,  
29 which is to modify the OFL, ABC, and ACL based on the  
30 recommendations from the SSC, and this incorporates the changes  
31 to MRIP-FES in the recreational catch and effort data.

32  
33 Then, also, I want to mention that Alternative 2 has also been  
34 recommended by the Gulf CMP AP, and there were some discussions  
35 about selecting Alternative 3, which is the most restrictive  
36 alternative in this action, which would be setting a constant  
37 catch for the values of 2021. I will stop here, to see if the  
38 committee has any questions or any concerns regarding this  
39 action or if we want to keep the current preferred alternative.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any questions or discussions regarding this  
42 alternative? There are no hands up, and so, at this point,  
43 we've got a preferred, and so I would say we just keep moving  
44 then.

45  
46 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** All right. Then we can jump to Action 2.  
47 Action 1 selects that stock ACL, and so Action 2 would modify  
48 how this ACL gets apportioned between the Gulf Zone and the FLEC

1 Zone. The current apportionment would be the no action,  
2 Alternative 1, and it's to keep the 64 percent to the Gulf Zone  
3 and 36 percent to the FLEC Zone, but this is based on MRIP-CHTS  
4 average landings from 1998 to 2012.

5  
6 There was a question, during the last council meeting, about  
7 this time series, and we looked back in the record, and, at the  
8 time that the ACLs -- The apportionment was being considered in  
9 CMP 20B, this was considered to be the longest time series that  
10 is not biased by having an ACL in either of the zones, and, at  
11 that time, it was considered to be reflective of the trends in  
12 landings for cobia.

13  
14 Alternative 2 would retain the apportionment of 64 and 36  
15 percent to the FLEC Zone, and this would not use any  
16 calculations based on average landings, and so it will be  
17 whatever ACL we selected in Action 1, and you split it 64/36,  
18 and then you monitor that ACL in FES.

19  
20 Preferred Alternative 3, and this was also approved by the South  
21 Atlantic Council, would be to modify the apportionment and give  
22 63 percent to the Gulf Zone and 37 percent to the FLEC Zone, and  
23 this is based on using that same time series of 1998 to 2012,  
24 but looking at the average landings in FES to then calculate  
25 what the apportionment would be.

26  
27 Alternatives 4 and 5 would follow -- It would allow them to use  
28 a more recent time series. In Alternative 4, it's a time series  
29 of 2021 to 2015, and Alternative 5 is 2003 to 2019, but things  
30 to consider is that Alternative 5 is biased by management  
31 measures.

32  
33 Right now, Alternative 3 is the preferred by both councils, and,  
34 similarly, the CMP AP recommended maintaining also that as the  
35 preferred alternative, and I can stop here, if you guys have any  
36 questions. In the document, we have included some tables with  
37 the various calculations of what the actual poundage of the ACLs  
38 would be, but, for now, I would like to stop here and see if we  
39 have any concerns, if we want to keep all these alternatives, if  
40 we want to keep the preferred, and so on.

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I don't see any hands up. Let me just ask a  
43 question here. At this point, given where we are, and I realize  
44 we haven't gone through all of the analysis that would occur,  
45 but how helpful is it to think about removing options, since you  
46 have at least got them already written up and in the document in  
47 this way?

48

1 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Well, I mean, for example, if we were to say  
2 remove Alternative 5 from here, it wouldn't affect too much the  
3 document, I wouldn't think. It would mean that, when we're  
4 looking at kind of the compounding effects -- When we're looking  
5 at Action 3 and Action 4, we would be able to take out some rows  
6 and like make the table shrink or maybe the tables.

7  
8 I also want to mention that we do have the CMP AP Chair with us,  
9 and so, if the committee has any questions that you would like  
10 to have addressed on behalf of the CMP AP, we do have Martin  
11 Fisher with us on the line.

12  
13 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Good. Thank you for that recognition of  
14 Martin as well. Martin, thank you for being on the line to help  
15 us out if we need it. With that, I do have -- I see some hands  
16 now. Dale, you're up first, and then Martha. Dale, if you're  
17 talking, you're on mute. Dale, we're still not able to hear  
18 you. Martha, do you want to -- Dale, we're going to try to  
19 figure out what's going on with you. Martha, do you want to go  
20 ahead and go with your question, if you're ready?

21  
22 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Sure. **I was actually going to make a motion**  
23 **to remove Alternative 4.** It sounds like Natasha is wanting to  
24 remove some actions here. Alternative 4 is very, very close to  
25 Alternative 3, at least in terms of the results, and Alternative  
26 5 also provides another, I guess, latter year allocation, or ACL  
27 and not allocation, scenario. **So, in Action 2, to move**  
28 **Alternative 4 to Considered but Rejected or removed, and I don't**  
29 **know --**

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** It would be to Considered but Rejected, yes.

32  
33 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay.

34  
35 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** I second it.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Kevin seconded. Dale, we're going to come -  
38 - Just because I want to make sure we didn't step on something  
39 that you were going to try to do with Alternative 4.

40  
41 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** No, and I'm fine. Just come back to me.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. Any discussion about the  
44 motion? **I am not seeing any hands go up, and so is there any**  
45 **opposition to the motion? No hands are coming up in opposition,**  
46 **and so the motion passes.** Dale, we'll come back to you now.

47  
48 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was having some technical

1 problems. I just wanted to mention that I was the council rep  
2 for the CMP AP, and that is a very good AP. They worked very  
3 hard, and Mr. Fisher is a very good chair, and I want to commend  
4 him on running a good meeting, but I did make, in my notes a  
5 couple of times, that going back and forth between CHTS and FES  
6 is confusing, and I had that in my notes a couple of times from  
7 the meeting, where it just seemed like the committee was having  
8 trouble wrestling with that.

9  
10 It's an ongoing issue, and I even think the SSC gets confused  
11 with it, and I know we get confused with it sometimes, and it's  
12 probably just something that we have to wrestle with, but, if we  
13 can figure out a better way to stop any confusion that's  
14 happening between going back and forth, it would be helpful.  
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you for that comment, Dale. Of the  
18 groups, I'm sure the one that gets the most confused, probably,  
19 but your point is well taken that, maybe once we get these all  
20 moved to whatever approach we're taking, then we won't have to  
21 have both of them in there, and we will have made that  
22 selection, and our percentages will be based as closely -- Or  
23 that's what we've been attempting to do, is base it closely to  
24 what it was before, but, once we get those decided, hopefully  
25 then we can move to one approach. Any other questions in this  
26 section? If not, I think we can move on, Dr. Ferrer.

27  
28 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dale, on that note,  
29 we do try to include -- I know it is confusing, but we do try to  
30 include tables in these documents where you can see the CHTS  
31 landings side-by-side with the FES landings, to know what the  
32 trends are just with that migration, but, hopefully, as we  
33 progress with these documents, and switching over to the FES  
34 surveys, things will be smoother. I guess we can move to Action  
35 3.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, I think so.

38  
39 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** All right, and so Action 3 is a new action.

40  
41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Sorry, but John Sanchez has his hand up.

42  
43 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** Thank you. This question is for I guess  
44 Martha and Kevin. I just wanted to know -- I don't know that I  
45 have any real heartburn either way, but why the selection of  
46 Alternative 4 instead of Alternative 5?

47  
48 I understand the difference in the years. The time series in 5

1 brings it more to recent history, but I also feel that, in  
2 recent history, where we're hearing from our side of the  
3 equation that there is continued problems in, I guess, cobia,  
4 that they're diminishing in quantity, and so, if we were going  
5 to remove an item, why Alternative 4 instead of Alternative 5?  
6 I'm just kind of curious to hear a little expanded thought on  
7 that. Thank you.

8

9 **MS. GUYAS:** Robin, I can answer that.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Go ahead, Martha.

12

13 **MS. GUYAS:** I removed 4 instead of 5 because the percentage is  
14 almost the same as what we have as the preferred, which is also  
15 just a few percentage points off from even Alternative 2, and  
16 so, rather than just kind of run these semi-redundant analyses  
17 here, I suggested removing Alternative 4. Alternative 5 shakes  
18 out a little bit differently, and so it's just to have some  
19 variety in I guess what we're looking at here, and that was  
20 really my only rationale. Does that help, John?

21

22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Yes, that helps. I understand where you're coming  
23 from a little better. I prefer being more conservative with  
24 cobia, but I understand where you're coming from.

25

26 **MS. GUYAS:** Yes, and I'm good with the preferred that we have,  
27 but it was just trying to cut something out and save us a little  
28 bit of time as we're moving through this.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** The other part to that, John, and I will  
31 chime in, just for a second, but the other part is this is the  
32 allocation, as opposed to what we end up actually doing on total  
33 poundage, and so I think your more conservative notion could  
34 still play in, but this is how we're going to make that split  
35 between the zones. Any other comments or questions? Thank you  
36 for the question though, John. I appreciate that. All right.  
37 I think we are ready to move on now.

38

39 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Just a quick, I guess, response to Mr.  
40 Sanchez. If you are wanting to look at the actual poundage, in  
41 Table 2.2.4, you can see the comparison between the actual  
42 poundage for the years 2021 to 2023 in Alternative 3 and 4.

43

44 The smallest change would be in the year 2021, and so, if you  
45 compare Alternatives 3 and 4, those pounds for 2021, in the Gulf  
46 Zone, for example, it's like a 6,000-pound difference, and I  
47 think that's what Martha was trying to get to, that, between  
48 Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, you're basically having a 1

1 percent difference, but I can let you look at this and maybe  
2 come back to it, if you have additional questions. If there are  
3 no other questions, then I guess we can move to Action 3.

4  
5 Action 3 is a new action that our council had not seen in  
6 January. It modifies the FLEC Zone cobia sector allocation, and  
7 so we're not looking at the Gulf Zone here. We're only looking  
8 at the recreational and commercial sector of the FLEC Zone.  
9 This was an action that was requested by the South Atlantic  
10 Council, and the alternatives included here are also based on  
11 their guidance.

12  
13 Currently, in the FLEC Zone, that ACL is allocated as 8 percent  
14 to the commercial sector and 92 percent to the recreational  
15 sector, and this was based on kind of this Bowtie Equation that  
16 was previously used when -- It would include Atlantic group  
17 cobia, which would balance kind of historical catches, in this  
18 case from 2008 to 2018, with more recent landings of 2006 to  
19 2008.

20  
21 Alternative 2 would use that same equation, but it would update  
22 the landings based on FES, and so the new allocation, at that  
23 time, would be 5 percent to the commercial sector and 95 percent  
24 to the recreational. Alternative 3 would not look at the  
25 average landings, and it would just retain the allocation as it  
26 is, 8 percent commercial and 92 percent recreational, and so  
27 whatever FLEC Zone ACL is selected through Action 2, it will be  
28 split this way and then monitored in MRIP-FES.

29  
30 Then Alternative 4 would -- For the first year, it would retain  
31 the commercial ACL, which is currently 70,000 pounds, and then  
32 you would subtract that from the total FLEC Zone ACL to then  
33 recalculate the apportionment, and, when we looked at the  
34 numbers, it came out to be approximately 92 percent recreational  
35 and 8 percent commercial for the subsequent years, and so the  
36 South Atlantic has not seen this yet. They will be seeing this  
37 at their June council meeting, but we did present this action to  
38 our CMP AP, and they provided some comments on the assumption  
39 that we do have some Gulf fishermen that target cobia in the  
40 FLEC Zone.

41  
42 They recommended to maintain -- To use Alternative 3 as the  
43 preferred, under the concerns of having to change the allocation  
44 between the sectors, and so Alternative 3 would retain the 92  
45 percent recreational sector and 8 percent commercial sector, and  
46 I can stop here for questions from the committee.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I want to clarify. This was a request from



1 the South Atlantic to add this alternative dealing with the FLEC  
2 Zone, but they haven't had a chance to see the analysis on it  
3 yet at this point?

4  
5 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Not yet. This was requested during their  
6 March meeting, because, since we're looking at the stock, at the  
7 whole Gulf group cobia ACL, updating that, and we're updating  
8 the apportionment, and why not also take a look at the sector  
9 allocation in the FLEC Zone, if everything else is kind of  
10 getting shifted or revised based on the status of the stock as  
11 well as updating the recreational data with FES.

12  
13 During our council meeting, hopefully we'll get some feedback  
14 from the South Atlantic, and they meet -- I believe it's the  
15 week before our June council meeting, and so there is still an  
16 opportunity to provide some comment on this.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** But the AP chose Alternative 3, as you  
19 suggested.

20  
21 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, sir.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Alternative 3, as I'm understanding the  
24 analysis of that, or the discussion of that one, it basically is  
25 trying to -- I guess I will use the term, and you don't have to,  
26 but mirror what was there before.

27  
28 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, and it would retain the way that it's  
29 currently allocated, that 92 percent to the recreational and 8  
30 percent commercial, and so what we would do with Alternative 3  
31 is saying the FLEC Zone got that 37 percent of the stock ACL  
32 being apportioned to the FLEC Zone, and so that would give us X  
33 number of pounds. Then those pounds would be divided 92 percent  
34 to the recreational and 8 percent to the commercial. I believe  
35 we have a question from Mr. Strelcheck.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Sure. Go ahead, Andy.

38  
39 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Robin. Thanks, Natasha. Natasha,  
40 remind me, with the FLEC Zone, are we expecting that the  
41 allocation off of east Florida will be caught and that it will  
42 potentially result in a recreational closure, based on current  
43 kind of catch rates and the change to FES?

44  
45 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** That is an excellent question, and we have  
46 run some preliminary analyses that we have included, and I  
47 believe that's Appendix G and H, and so the FLEC Zone -- The  
48 accountability measures between both zones are different. In

1 the Gulf Zone, once the ACT is met, we close the fishery. In  
2 the FLEC Zone, it's a little different. They don't have in-  
3 season AMs, and they have post-season AMs, and so the fishery  
4 wouldn't close. The fishing season would be modified the  
5 following year.

6  
7 When the combined commercial and recreational ACL are exceeded,  
8 then, the next year, the fishing season is modified to meet the  
9 ACT and not reach the ACL, and I believe that's how I understand  
10 that, and someone correct me if I understood that incorrectly,  
11 but we have included those kind of preliminary analyses in  
12 Appendix G and H, and so, looking at -- It is predicted, under  
13 the most conservative ACL for the recreational FLEC Zone, that  
14 they will meet their ACL in about -- I believe it's in August,  
15 and I apologize that the discussion on this closure analysis has  
16 not been included as part of the draft. We got this kind of  
17 last minute, and we haven't been able to discuss it with the IPT  
18 either, but it is predicted that the recreational ACL, under the  
19 most conservative alternative that we included in here, would be  
20 met around August.

21  
22 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Okay, and so --

23  
24 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** For the commercial -- Just as part of the  
25 analysis, the commercial is not expected to reach at least their  
26 ACT.

27  
28 **MR. STRELCHECK:** That was the reason for my question. Looking  
29 at the landings over the last few years for the commercial  
30 sector, they're around 50 percent, a little bit less or a little  
31 bit more than that, relative to the 70,000-pound catch limit.  
32 The 5 percent allocation alternative kind of takes their quota  
33 right down to around what they're catching, and 95 percent to  
34 recreational. The 8 percent, essentially, provides a fairly  
35 large buffer, given they're not at least catching that amount  
36 currently.

37  
38 I am not suggesting that we specify a preferred alternative, and  
39 I think it would be good to have the South Atlantic Council  
40 select a preferred alternative and then come back at our June  
41 meeting, after they've met, and discuss this, but there might be  
42 some rationale and consideration for an alternative that's  
43 between the 5 and 8 percent, and so that's why I was raising it.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any other discussion? Andy offered up a  
46 piece of advice to us to delay a preferred alternative until  
47 after the South Atlantic has an opportunity to see this  
48 alternative and weigh-in, and certainly that is an approach that

1 we could take, and maybe one that's wise, in this case. If I  
2 don't see any other hands go up, then I will assume that's what  
3 the pleasure of the committee is, at least. All right, Dr.  
4 Ferrer.

5  
6 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can go to Action  
7 4. Action 4 proposes to update or establish the ACTs for the  
8 Gulf Zone and the FLEC Zone, and the actual poundage will be  
9 based on the various alternatives that we have selected in the  
10 previous actions.

11  
12 Currently, in Alternative 1, no action, it would be to retain  
13 the Gulf Zone ACT at 90 percent of the Gulf Zone ACL, and then  
14 the FLEC Zone ACT to be calculated as one minus the proportional  
15 standard error of the FLEC Zone recreational landings, or 0.5,  
16 whichever is greater. The commercial sector in the FLEC Zone  
17 does not have an ACT.

18  
19 Alternative 2 proposes to use the Gulf Council's ACL and ACT  
20 Control Rule to calculate the ACTs for the Gulf Zone and the  
21 recreational sector in the FLEC Zone, and so, basically, this is  
22 saying that both ACTs would have to be calculated in the same  
23 way. When we ran these numbers, at least for the Gulf Zone, it  
24 turned out to be that the ACT will still be at 90 percent of the  
25 ACL, and so, in terms of actual poundage, we shouldn't be seeing  
26 a difference between Alternative 1 and Alternative 2.

27  
28 Now, with the FLEC Zone ACT, it would change from -- I believe  
29 that, currently, their ACT is 83 percent of the ACL, and so,  
30 when we do the calculations using the ACL/ACT Control Rule for  
31 the recreational sector in the FLEC Zone, it comes up to be 97  
32 percent, and so there's a little change there in the buffer.

33  
34 Then, again, I guess one of the things to keep in mind, and I  
35 know this is the FLEC Zone, is that, in the Gulf Zone, we do use  
36 the ACT to -- Once that's met, we close the fishing season, and,  
37 in the FLEC Zone, the ACT is used -- In the case of the combined  
38 ACL being met, in the next year, that ACT is being used as your  
39 post-season AM. Then Alternative 3 allows the council to  
40 consider establishing an ACT for the commercial sector in the  
41 FLEC Zone, using the council's ACL and ACT Control Rule.

42  
43 We do not have preferred alternatives here by either of the  
44 councils at this point. We presented it to the CMP AP, and they  
45 are recommending to use Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 as  
46 preferreds.

47  
48 One of the things, kind of coming back to Andy's comment, is

1 what does this mean, in terms of closure, and so, as we go to  
2 Appendix F, we ran a closure analysis under the most restrictive  
3 ACT, and, if we go to Table 2, under no -- If we're only  
4 updating ACLs and ACTs in the Gulf Zone, based on the landings  
5 from 2017 to 2019, and looking at what these new ACTs would be,  
6 it is predicted that the ACT will be met around September, or  
7 August, for all of the alternatives.

8  
9 Under no additional management action, this is kind of what  
10 we're looking at, having a shorter fishing season. Then, again,  
11 once we move forward and look at Action 5 and Action 6, the  
12 things that we do have to consider is that these analyses are  
13 not incorporating any changes associated with increasing the  
14 minimum size limit in the Gulf Zone.

15  
16 As you know, that change was implemented in March of 2020. With  
17 COVID, we have very limited data, in terms of landings, at least  
18 for the recreational sector, and, again, those data were not  
19 included in the stock assessment, and so that's just one of the  
20 things that I want you all to keep in mind, and I can stop here  
21 for any questions.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I want to go -- Can we scroll back to that  
24 table again? Martha has her hand up. Let's go there first.

25  
26 **MS. GUYAS:** Thanks, Robin. Just a clarification first, and then  
27 I guess a comment. Natasha, for Alternative 1, should it say  
28 the "FLEC Zone recreational ACT", instead of just "FLEC Zone  
29 ACT"?

30  
31 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes. After reading Alternative 1,  
32 Alternative 1 needs some work, and I apologize for that. Maybe  
33 it got confused when I was getting all the edits, but,  
34 basically, it should say FLEC Zone recreational ACT, and the  
35 commercial sector does not have an ACT.

36  
37 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. Cool. That's fine. I just was confused when  
38 I was reading the alternatives versus the discussion. I guess,  
39 for this one, no matter what we choose here, the ACT for the  
40 Gulf Zone is the same. Alternative 2 and 3 are potentially  
41 changing what's happening in the FLEC Zone, and I think I would  
42 defer to the South Atlantic, at least at this point, to choose  
43 something for what's happening in the FLEC Zone.

44  
45 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I do want to highlight, Martha, if I may,  
46 the change here for the Gulf Zone would be that, moving forward,  
47 when we're looking at making additional changes to ACLs and  
48 ACTs, as it stands, the ACT is 90 percent of the ACL, not using

1 the Gulf Council's ACL/ACT Control Rule, but, with Alternative  
2 2, what this means is that, in the next round of modifying the  
3 ACT, or ACL, when we get new stock assessments, we will have to  
4 use the ACL/ACT Control Rule to calculate that ACT, and it  
5 doesn't mean that it will always be 90 percent, but it's just  
6 that this time it turned out to be the same buffer that we  
7 currently have.

8  
9 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. I see. So Alternative 1 is based on a past  
10 run of the ACL/ACT Control Rule. Alternative 2 would, I guess,  
11 allow that control rule to be run in the future and recalculated  
12 without council intervention, and is that what you're saying?

13  
14 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, and I believe that the "based on the  
15 council's ACL/ACT Control Rule", and that might have been one of  
16 the additions that maybe I missed, and I think it was in CMP  
17 Amendment 18 that this established it being 90 percent of the  
18 ACL. I apologize for the grammar errors on this alternative.

19  
20 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. It's all good. All right. Now I will be  
21 quiet for right now, but thanks for the clarification.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Further clarification on that one, and you  
24 said our CMP AP recommended Alternative 2 and Alternative 3?

25  
26 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, sir. Alternative 3 would establish a  
27 FLEC Zone commercial ACT. We have not -- When we presented this  
28 to the South Atlantic Council, they did not select a preferred  
29 alternative, and it was something that they were still debating  
30 on. I think part of it was based because we were including  
31 Action 3, which now looks at sector allocations, and so that  
32 brings a whole other set of iterations that they would have to  
33 consider.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ms. Bosarge, I see your hand is up.

36  
37 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering if  
38 staff thought that, at some point, we might have to add an  
39 alternative to this action. Right now, the Gulf Zone ACT is 90  
40 percent of the ACL, and, from what I hear Natasha saying, that's  
41 not based on any kind of ACL/ACT Control Rule, and that's where  
42 we have it set.

43  
44 However, I think our -- We have to match the South Atlantic, at  
45 some point, and, if we wanted to retain that, we would have to  
46 choose Alternative 1 as our preferred. I doubt that the South  
47 Atlantic is going to choose Alternative 1 as their preferred,  
48 because their ACT is based, right now, on the PSE, or the

1 percent standard error, in those recreational landings, and I  
2 think that it went up from, I don't know, around 10 or 11  
3 percent, something like that, to now it's got a 25 percent  
4 standard error, when they switched over to FES.

5  
6 I am guessing they're not going to want to do that, and so do we  
7 need to change something there, Natasha, to allow us to continue  
8 at the 90 percent, without having to use the ACL/ACT Control  
9 Rule, if that's what we decide we want to do?

10  
11 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** If you want to retain, then you would select  
12 Alternative -- I don't think both councils have to select the  
13 same alternative. I believe they have to approve each other's,  
14 and so you could select Alternative 1 as the preferred, which  
15 would retain the ACT as being 90 percent of the ACL. I'm not  
16 sure, and maybe Mara can help me out here, in terms of  
17 procedure, and I don't know if then we would have to split the  
18 alternative to just focus on -- Split this alternative into  
19 focusing on the specific zones, and that's something to think  
20 about, I guess.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ryan, go ahead.

23  
24 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** To Ms. Bosarge, about the different in the  
25 PSEs, you're correct that the PSE for the current ACT for the  
26 recreational sector is based on a PSE that's lower than that  
27 that's currently on the ACL monitoring page for the recreational  
28 sector under FES, and there is a greater proportional standard  
29 error attributable to the FES data than was previously  
30 attributable to CHTS.

31  
32 Insofar as that matters here, that PSE that was on the record at  
33 the time the ACT was established is the one that was used to  
34 establish the ACT for the FLEC Zone recreational sector. If you  
35 guys want to take another tact, you certainly can. As far as it  
36 relates to an alternative going forward though, both the Gulf  
37 and South Atlantic Councils do need to agree on the alternatives  
38 that are in this document, regardless of who it affects, and so,  
39 even if it's something that only is going to affect fish that --  
40 They both need to agree on those alternatives, since this is a  
41 jointly-managed FMP.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ryan, you were cutting out just a little bit  
44 there, but I think what you -- I caught most of it, but not all  
45 of it, but I think what you helped confirm was that we can have  
46 different rules for the FLEC Zone and the Gulf, but we all have  
47 to concur, and, Mara, I see has jumped in the fray here, but  
48 Dale has had his hand up for a while, and so, Mara, I will let

1 you try to answer and make sure that what we just heard from  
2 Ryan -- Whether you confirm that or not, and then, Leann, if you  
3 don't mind, I'm going to -- Since Dale has had his hand up, we  
4 may switch to him and let you kind of think about what you may  
5 want to do here as well. Mara first, and then we'll go to Dale.

6  
7 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. I mean, I think Ryan is correct that both  
8 councils have to agree on the preferreds, but that doesn't mean  
9 that you have to have the same preferreds for each zone, but the  
10 way that this particular action is set up is Alternative 2  
11 changes it for both zones, and so there's no -- I think we  
12 either have to have options or different alternatives, if you  
13 want to do something different for the Gulf Zone and the Florida  
14 East Coast Zone, other than using the control rule, and you  
15 don't want to stick with Alternative 1. Then we've got to split  
16 it up somehow, so that you can make those separate decisions.

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. Dale, we're going to turn  
19 to you now.

20  
21 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mine is a little different,  
22 and so hopefully I don't confuse things. I'm thinking about  
23 accountability measures. Right now, we manage with a 90 percent  
24 ACT, and we basically close in-season when we hit that ACT, but  
25 what I heard Dr. Ferrer say earlier was that the South Atlantic  
26 does not use their ACT that way. They do a post-season  
27 accountability measure, where they make it up the next year, and  
28 so does anything in this action affect accountability measures?  
29 That would be my first question. Then my second question is, if  
30 not, do we need to do something to look at accountability  
31 measures?

32  
33 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Dale. I can answer that  
34 question. No, this action does not change the accountability  
35 measures in the FLEC Zone, and, if I remember correctly, it  
36 wasn't brought up during their March council meeting either.

37  
38 I guess I'm not sure, at this point, because it would be  
39 changing accountability measures in their zone, if that would be  
40 a recommendation -- If that would have to be a recommendation  
41 from the Gulf or if it would have to come from them.

42  
43 **MS. LEVY:** Robin, to that point?

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, go ahead.

46  
47 **MS. LEVY:** Well, it's not in here now, but I think what you're  
48 saying, Dale, is a good question, because there's a discussion

1 in here. If you actually establish an ACT for the commercial  
2 sector in the Florida East Coast Zone, where they don't have  
3 one, then what does that mean, because, right now, they don't  
4 have an ACT that's linked to anything, and so the councils may  
5 want to consider changing accountability measures if you're  
6 actually going to establish an ACT. With the recreational part,  
7 with the Gulf one, you don't need that, because the ACTs are  
8 used, although you could consider changing how they're used.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Does anybody else have anything on this  
11 section? Is anyone prepared to offer a preferred at this point,  
12 or do we want to at least wait until Full Council to think about  
13 that, or, much like the last action, wait until the South  
14 Atlantic might come back with some alternatives as well? It  
15 looks like Martha is getting her hand up. Martha.

16  
17 **MS. GUYAS:** Well, just another, I guess, question, just to make  
18 sure I'm understanding this right. If we switch to Alternative  
19 2, basically, that means that we are setting it so that it's  
20 always going to be the ACL/ACT Control Rule, and not 90 percent,  
21 but just whatever that happens to run at the time, right, and so  
22 future amendments, future assessments, we wouldn't necessarily  
23 go back and change how the ACT is calculated, or it's just based  
24 on a single run, based on a new assessment?

25  
26 That's still unclear to me, because it seems like we always  
27 revisit the ACTs when we get a new assessment, which I don't  
28 think is inappropriate. I am just making sure I'm understanding  
29 the implications of I guess moving to Alternative 2 for us. I  
30 get that the percentage is the same right now, but is it going  
31 to change in the future, automatically? That's still kind of  
32 unclear to me. I think the answer is yes, but, reading the  
33 discussion, that's not super clear.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Natasha, do you want to weigh-in on that?

36  
37 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Martha, yes. Under  
38 Alternative 2, it would mean that we would have to run the  
39 ACL/ACT Control Rule once we get a new assessment, to calculate  
40 that ACT, and it wouldn't be that 90 percent of the ACL, like we  
41 currently have.

42  
43 I guess, when we run these kinds of calculations, you're  
44 accounting for landings trends and uncertainty of the stock  
45 assessment at that time, and I guess this is something that  
46 we're also using for other stocks. Does that answer your  
47 question?

48



1 **MS. LEVY:** But it wouldn't be automatic, right? I mean, the  
2 council would still have to look at what the control rule output  
3 is and decide whether you wanted to adjust the ACTs based on  
4 that or on some other method based on what you knew at the time.  
5

6 **MS. GUYAS:** Right, and that's what I'm trying to understand.  
7 That makes sense to me. I mean, let's pretend it's 2076, and we  
8 get a new cobia assessment, and the result that comes out is  
9 some drastic change, and now, instead of being 90 percent, it's  
10 30 percent. I just want to make sure I'm understanding.  
11

12 If I'm understanding this right, from what Mara just said, this  
13 is -- Alternative 2 is just rerunning the ACL/ACT Control Rule,  
14 based on this assessment that is recently in front of us, and  
15 then, when we get subsequent assessments, if we want to change -  
16 - Rerun that control rule or change the ACT, the council would  
17 look at that, and it would not be an automatic process. Is that  
18 right?  
19

20 **MS. LEVY:** Correct.  
21

22 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. All right. I'm good now. I understand.  
23

24 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Martha, I do agree that, in the discussion,  
25 we probably need to make sure that comes across a little more  
26 clearly, because it does lead you to believe that it could  
27 change without another council action. Anybody else? Okay. I  
28 am not seeing any hands up, unless someone else has seen a hand  
29 up that I haven't seen. All right, Natasha. We'll, I guess,  
30 move on then.  
31

32 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will move on to  
33 Action 5, and Action 5 is a little different to what you all saw  
34 in January. There was a request to separate the alternatives by  
35 sector, and so, instead of having so many -- Since we're also  
36 looking at the changes by zone, what we did is we divided this  
37 action into sub-actions.  
38

39 Action 5.1 is focused on the Gulf Zone, and Action 5.2 is  
40 focused on the FLEC Zone. They both have the same range of  
41 alternatives, and so one other thing that I do have to mention  
42 is that, in the last couple of days, we had to take another look  
43 at the possession limit analysis, and so the numbers that have  
44 been included in this draft will be revised, and we'll provided  
45 an updated version once you see the next draft in June, but the  
46 story is pretty much the same.  
47

48 Right now, we have labeled the alternatives as preferred, based

1 on how the original motions were made, and the South Atlantic  
2 approved the Gulf Council's preferred alternative, and so that's  
3 why I'm including them here combined.

4  
5 Alternative 1, no action, would retain the current recreational  
6 and commercial possession limit of two fish per person,  
7 regardless of the number or duration of trips. We do not have a  
8 vessel limit or a trip limit defined currently.

9  
10 Preferred Alternative 2 would reduce the daily possession limit  
11 to one fish per person, and now we're providing you the option  
12 to either implement this to the recreational or the commercial  
13 sector, and, like I mentioned, right now, they are both listed  
14 as preferred, because the original motion and the alternative  
15 combined both sectors, and so, if we want to make any changes  
16 here, consider including one sector versus the other, we have  
17 the opportunity to do that.

18  
19 Alternative 3 creates a recreational vessel limit, and we have  
20 three options. Either the vessel limit is two fish per trip,  
21 four fish per trip, and six fish per trip. I do want to mention  
22 here that this is not a daily vessel limit. We're wording this  
23 as a per-trip vessel limit, taking into consideration that some  
24 of the charter/for-hire fleet might book multiple trips in a  
25 day, and so say the morning trip caught their vessel limit for  
26 cobia, and then the afternoon trip would not be affected by  
27 that. That's something that I kind of wanted to bring in.

28  
29 Then Alternative 4 creates a commercial trip limit, where  
30 fishermen may not exceed the per-person daily possession limit,  
31 and we have three options here, where the trip limit is two  
32 fish, four fish, or six fish.

33  
34 I do want to mention that these alternatives included in this  
35 action are not expected to have a strong influence on reducing  
36 fishing mortality of cobia in the Gulf Zone, because cobia is  
37 mostly an incidental type of fishery. When we look at the data  
38 from 2017 to 2019, people are already catching one cobia per  
39 person, and the same thing when we look at commercial trips.  
40 They are catching one, or less than one, cobia per trip, and  
41 similarly for the recreational.

42  
43 We have some preliminary numbers that, unfortunately, I haven't  
44 been able to include here, since we got this kind of like late  
45 on Friday, but, when we look at kind of percent reductions,  
46 under Alternative 2, which sets the per-person limit, setting a  
47 one fish per person for the recreational sector, it's expected  
48 to have about a 1.2 percent reduction in cobia landings. For

1 the commercial sector, it will be less than 1 percent.

2  
3 In Alternative 3, for setting a vessel limit per trip, the one  
4 that would have kind of the strongest influence would be setting  
5 a two fish per vessel per trip, which would have a 9 percent  
6 reduction of cobia landings, when we look at four and six fish  
7 per vessel per trip. On the recreational sector, those are  
8 expected to have a less than 1 percent, again, because vessels  
9 are not really -- The data are not reflecting people catching  
10 that many cobia per vessel per trip.

11  
12 Then, in Alternative 4, which sets a trip limit for the  
13 commercial sector, then it's basically no -- We have a zero  
14 percent reduction, and it's because most commercial trips are  
15 catching one cobia per trip, and I can stop here for any  
16 questions or comments or concerns regarding the alternatives as  
17 they are currently listed in this action.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** It does look like we at least have a  
20 question or a comment from Ms. Boggs.

21  
22 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a comment,  
23 and I understand what the science seems to show these last few  
24 years, that the cobia seem to be an incidental catch, but I  
25 assure you, at least in our area, it is not. It is a very  
26 targeted fishery, and it's down because there are no cobia out  
27 there to be caught.

28  
29 We've had cobia tournaments being cancelled, because of the lack  
30 of fish and the size of the fish. A lot of the fish that were  
31 being caught wouldn't even make the limit for the tournament,  
32 and so I believe it's not an incidental fishery, but I just  
33 believe we're seeing a downturn in the stock. Thank you.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you for that, Susan, bringing some of  
36 that real-world experience here. Any other questions or  
37 comments? Andy.

38  
39 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Robin. I wanted to expand upon  
40 Natasha's comments, and I think this is just a more broader  
41 comment, as we continue to work through this amendment, and so  
42 Natasha certainly pointed out the limitations of possession  
43 limits and that they're not going to gain us much with regard to  
44 reducing harvest, just simply because of what's being caught  
45 currently, and then Susan's comments are well taken as well,  
46 that the fishery is maybe not doing very well.

47  
48 In terms of kind of where we're heading, we have, obviously, the

1 size limit alternative coming up, and that certainly can obtain  
2 greater reductions in harvest to constrain to the catch limit,  
3 and the other option, which isn't in this document right now, is  
4 potentially a seasonal closure.

5  
6 When I asked Natasha, earlier, about the potential for a closure  
7 sometime during the year, my understanding is that -- My team is  
8 working on some analyses and a decision tool, but there is an  
9 indication that, both in the Gulf Zone, as well as the FLEC  
10 Zone, that we would have early seasonal closures, with the  
11 options that the council has selected as preferred currently in  
12 this amendment.

13  
14 If we want to try to avoid a seasonal closure, because the catch  
15 limit has been met, or a post-season accountability measure, I  
16 think the council needs to consider, obviously, either higher  
17 size limits or expanding our actions and alternatives to include  
18 some fixed seasonal closures.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you for those comments, Andy.  
21 Certainly, at some point, someone may make a motion for  
22 additional inclusions, but, at least at this point, on this  
23 action item, it looks like I also had Leann with a question or  
24 comment.

25  
26 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. **I would like to make a**  
27 **motion that we -- In Alternative 2, that we de-select Preferred**  
28 **Option 2b, and this is for Action 2.5.1.** In other words, we'll  
29 retain the Preferred Alternative 2, but de-select the preferred  
30 -- The way you have it now, it's a Sub-Alternative 2b, I believe  
31 it is.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Remove the preferred from Alternative 2b, is  
34 I think what you're getting at, Leann.

35  
36 **MS. BOSARGE:** That's what I'm trying to say, Robin. Thank you.  
37 I will give you some rational whenever you're ready.

38  
39 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay.

40  
41 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Mr. Chair, if I may, before we go into  
42 voting on this motion.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Well, we've got to get a second, but go  
45 ahead. We'll wait for the second.

46  
47 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I forgot to mention to the committee that we  
48 have some recommendations from the AP regarding this action.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay.  
3  
4 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Basically, the recommendations are to retain  
5 the current preferreds, as they are listed.  
6  
7 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you for weighing-in with those.  
8 You kind of weaved that in on the others, and so I do appreciate  
9 you covering that. I assume -- Who has seconded the motion?  
10  
11 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** I will second the motion.  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Bob has seconded the motion. Leann,  
14 now back to you for some of the rationale that you were going to  
15 provide.  
16  
17 **MS. BOSARGE:** When we saw this document the last time, the way  
18 this action was structured, you really didn't have the choice to  
19 make a selection for one sector without making it for both, and  
20 so we did choose a preferred alternative for that one fish, and  
21 it had to apply to both.  
22  
23 They now have it separated out, where we can look at each  
24 individually, and I think that, looking at the overall catch  
25 levels in this fishery, where are somewhere between a million-  
26 and-a-half and two-and-a-half million pounds, depending on the  
27 year, there is really no bang for the buck that you're getting  
28 by changing that possession limit to one fish on the commercial  
29 side.  
30  
31 The maximum gain that you might see is 3,000 pounds, on a multi-  
32 million-pound harvest, and so I don't think -- 3,000 pounds on a  
33 million-and-a-half or two million pounds, that's a gnat on an  
34 elephant, and I don't see where it truly buys you any gains, as  
35 far as reductions and rebuilding this stock. However, it does  
36 have an undue burden on the particular fleet that you're  
37 implementing it on, because of the small size and nature of that  
38 harvest already, and so, for those reasons, I would say that we  
39 de-select that as preferred at this time.  
40  
41 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** A point of clarification, for me, and then  
42 I've got Ed has a question here as well, but, before that -- As  
43 I'm seeing what you're requesting, Leann, it's you take away the  
44 daily possession of one fish per person for the commercial  
45 sector, and so that's not a preferred, but you're still  
46 maintaining, at least in this suite of alternatives here, a  
47 commercial trip limit where the trip limit is two fish, and is  
48 that --

1  
2 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes. The way our preferreds are right now, that's  
3 correct.  
4  
5 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Mr. Swindell.  
6  
7 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Mr. Chairman, I had taken my hand down, but I  
8 agree with Leann that it's unreasonable to have a commercial  
9 limit of one per person, and I don't think that's the right way  
10 to manage the commercial fishery. I think we need to get to a  
11 per-boat limit. Thank you.  
12  
13 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Mr. Anson.  
14  
15 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Leann provided some additional clarification  
16 on that, one of my questions, but just, I guess secondarily to  
17 that, Martha -- I mean, in the State of Florida, do you all have  
18 a commercial limit, by numbers of fish, on cobia?  
19  
20 **MS. GUYAS:** If I may, Robin?  
21  
22 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Go ahead, Martha.  
23  
24 **MS. GUYAS:** Our limits are the same for recreational and  
25 commercial, and so it is one per person, two per vessel, already  
26 for Gulf state waters in Florida.  
27  
28 **MR. ANSON:** Okay. Thank you.  
29  
30 **MS. GUYAS:** So I would vote against this motion.  
31  
32 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any other comments or questions?  
33  
34 **MS. BOSARGE:** This is for the Gulf, the entire Gulf, right, and  
35 so it's not just for Florida, and I realize there are a good bit  
36 of landings that come out of Florida, but this is for the whole  
37 Gulf.  
38  
39 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you for that clarification.  
40 Kevin, I don't know if your hand is still up, or are you back in  
41 for another comment here?  
42  
43 **MR. ANSON:** I was down, but I understand -- My question,  
44 relative to the Florida limit, was for just personal  
45 clarification, but it is something that fishermen let us know  
46 about, is trying to be consistent and such, and so I was just  
47 trying to see how much that would conflict, if at all, if this  
48 were to go through as-is. That's all. Thank you.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Sure.  
3  
4 **MR. ANSON:** I am in support of the motion, by the way.  
5  
6 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. We have a motion on the board to  
7 remove the preferred option off of 2b, and so Option 2b would  
8 still be in the document, but no longer carry the tag of  
9 preferred, and the option, of course, is the possession limit of  
10 one fish per person for the commercial sector, and so it would  
11 be removing that as a preferred. We'll try this. **Is there any**  
12 **opposition to the motion?**  
13  
14 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** Before you vote, I have a question.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Go ahead, Phil. Sorry.  
17  
18 **MR. DYSKOW:** I'm sorry to interrupt, but my hands-up function  
19 isn't working. Just so we don't pollute your vote, I don't  
20 believe that Bob Shipp is on this committee, and he's listed as  
21 the second for this motion. You may want to double-check that.  
22  
23 **DR. SHIPP:** That's correct, Phil. That was my miscue, and I had  
24 my hand up a minute ago to correct that, and so, yes, I have to  
25 withdraw it.  
26  
27 **MR. DYSKOW:** I'm just proving that I'm still awake, and that's  
28 all.  
29  
30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Good catch, Phil.  
31  
32 **MR. ANSON:** I will second, Robin.  
33  
34 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. We'll go back and get our procedures  
35 correct here, and Kevin Anson seconds then, and we, of course,  
36 have had considerable discussion already, but, if there's any  
37 more discussion we need to have, let's have it. Thank you,  
38 Phil, and thank you, Bob, for trying to get back in, and we all  
39 certainly understand some of the difficulties with the hand-  
40 raising. John Sanchez has a comment, I believe.  
41  
42 **MR. SANCHEZ:** No, I'm good. I was just going to be a seconder,  
43 had you not got one.  
44  
45 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. All right. Any other comments?  
46 **Hearing none, and seeing no hands raised, is there any**  
47 **opposition to the motion?**  
48

1 **DR. SHIPP:** I object.  
2  
3 **MS. GUYAS:** Me, too.  
4  
5 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Well, Bob is not on the committee,  
6 but we appreciate the objection, and you can illuminate more on  
7 that in Full Council, and then I think I heard one objection  
8 from Martha. **The motion passes.** Now we'll turn it back to you,  
9 Natasha.  
10  
11 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess, along the  
12 same lines, just so I'm clear, we're only -- We're still keeping  
13 Alternative 4 as preferred, which would set a commercial trip  
14 limit.  
15  
16 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** As of now, yes.  
17  
18 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Okay. Moving on to Sub-Action 5.2, during  
19 January, the Gulf Council did not select any preferreds as it  
20 related to the FLEC Zone, and so the South Atlantic has done  
21 that, and, at this point, we do need the Gulf Council to approve  
22 the South Atlantic's preferred alternatives, as they are  
23 currently listed.  
24  
25 We also presented this sub-action to our CMP AP, and they  
26 recommended having, at this point, the same -- Moving forward  
27 with these preferred alternatives as recommendations, and so we  
28 do need support from the Gulf Council and our committee to  
29 approve the South Atlantic's preferred alternatives here.  
30  
31 The story here, when we look at the data, is it's similar to  
32 what we've seen in the Gulf, that most anglers are catching --  
33 Most are catching less than -- One or less than one cobia  
34 harvested per person. Similarly, in terms of cobia per vessel,  
35 the majority of the trips are catching one cobia per vessel, on  
36 the majority of the trips, and so I will stop here, in case  
37 there are any other questions, but, at least as it stands on the  
38 CMP framework procedure, which we will discuss in Action 7, the  
39 South Atlantic cannot change possession, vessel, and trip  
40 limits, I believe, on their own, and so we do need the Gulf  
41 Council to approve this.  
42  
43 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** We've got Martha's hand up.  
44  
45 **MS. GUYAS:** I will make a motion that, in Action 5.2, we set  
46 preferred alternatives to match all of the South Atlantic  
47 preferred alternatives in this action. There are many, and so I  
48 would like to not read them all, but let's just leave it at



1 that.

2

3 **MR. DIAZ:** I will second that motion.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. We're getting the motion up on the  
6 board. We've got the motion on the board, and it's that suite  
7 of alternatives there. Quickly, I will actually -- It's the  
8 South Atlantic Preferred Alternative 2, 2a, 2b, 3, 3a, 4, and 4a  
9 that has been selected. Any other further discussion on the  
10 motion? Leann.

11

12 **MS. BOSARGE:** My question is, given what we just did with the  
13 bag limit for one fish versus two fish on recreational and  
14 commercial, in that last action, would we want to bless  
15 everything except 4, making Alternative 2, Sub-Option 2, the  
16 preferred?

17

18 I say that kind of to piggyback on what Kevin said earlier. We  
19 just changed it in the Gulf, so that, in federal waters in the  
20 Gulf, there is not a preferred right now for the one fish, and  
21 so would we want to keep that consistent in federal waters in  
22 the South Atlantic, which then, if Florida did -- If they wanted  
23 to change their regs, which I don't know if they want to or not,  
24 but, if they did, they would at least have the ability to change  
25 their regs and have everything match up for anglers on both  
26 sides of Florida, but I will throw that out there as food-for-  
27 thought, and I will let Martha weigh-in, if she wants, there.

28

29 **MS. GUYAS:** I would prefer as-is. I think it would be  
30 preferable to have consistent state and federal waters off the  
31 east -- State and federal regulations off the east coast of  
32 Florida, rather than try to be consistent with federal waters of  
33 the Gulf of Mexico, if that ends up being different, and I have  
34 a hard time thinking that the commission is going to want to  
35 make their regulations less restrictive, when we're having  
36 issues with this stock.

37

38 **MS. BOSARGE:** Understood. Thank you.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Any other discussion? Not seeing any  
41 hands up, unless I'm missing them, and, if so, somebody speak  
42 up. Okay. Hearing none then, I have a motion on the board. **Is**  
43 **there any opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the**  
44 **motion carries.** Natasha, back to you.

45

46 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moving on to Action  
47 6, which is to modify the Gulf group cobia minimum size limit,  
48 and so, currently, in Alternative 1, the no action would be to

1 retain the recreational and commercial minimum size limit of  
2 thirty-six inches fork length in the Gulf Zone and thirty-three  
3 inches fork length in the FLEC Zone.

4  
5 The remaining three alternatives would basically increase the  
6 size limit. Currently, the preferred alternative by both  
7 councils, and also recommended by the CMP AP, is to retain the  
8 thirty-six-inch fork length in the Gulf and increase the minimum  
9 size limit in the FLEC Zone from thirty-three to thirty-six  
10 inches, and basically have the same minimum size limit on both  
11 zones.

12  
13 Alternatives 3 and 4 would increase it to thirty-nine and forty-  
14 two, and it would allow the council, through the options, to  
15 apply these changes zone-specific, but under the recognition  
16 that increasing the size to something along the thirty-nine or  
17 forty-two, you would be targeting larger females. Therefore,  
18 you might be targeting reproductive females that are meant to  
19 bring back the stock, I guess.

20  
21 Right now, unfortunately, we don't have effects or a concrete  
22 number of how much landings have been reduced by increasing the  
23 size limit in the Gulf Zone from thirty-three to thirty-six, but  
24 the increase -- The predicted reduction, by making this change  
25 in the FLEC Zone comes out to be -- I believe it's about a 27  
26 percent reduction in fishing mortality by increasing from  
27 thirty-three to thirty-six in the FLEC Zone, and I will stop  
28 here for any questions.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** We have a question from Ms. Boggs, or a  
31 comment.

32  
33 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A question I have is did the  
34 South Atlantic have any discussion about increasing their size  
35 limit? When I read in the discussion, it was talking about  
36 possible illegal harvest of fish under thirty-three inches,  
37 because of the size, and they're so small, and they have to get  
38 them in the boat. Even though I know it's not a significant  
39 change in the catch, would that not at least eliminate some of  
40 this undersized harvest? I was just curious if they did  
41 consider changing that.

42  
43 Of course, my only other comment, and I'm not suggesting  
44 anything, but, if it's that difficult, then do we need to look  
45 at a larger size limit, if people are having such a hard time  
46 determining the size of the fish and having to gaff them and  
47 kill them to make that determination? Thank you.

48

1 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I don't recall, from listening to their  
2 meeting, any discussions about undersized cobia. What I have  
3 seen, or heard, in both their council meeting and our AP, were  
4 discussions related to gaffing and how fishing mortality might  
5 increase as you're gaffing these large fish coming into the  
6 boat.

7  
8 Some of the AP members even commented on sometimes having to  
9 gaff fish that were undersized, and, therefore, that also having  
10 an effect on the stock, but, at this point, both councils have  
11 agreed on keeping the Preferred Alternative 2, and some of these  
12 discussions were also had in Framework Amendment 7, and, at that  
13 time, the FLEC Zone decided not to move forward with it until  
14 the results from the updated stock assessment were released, and  
15 so that's why we're looking at that change now.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any other comments regarding this one? Go  
18 ahead, Dale.

19  
20 **MR. DIAZ:** I just wanted to mention that the AP -- Dr. Ferrer  
21 might have already said this, but the AP did also recommend the  
22 current preferred that changed it to thirty-six, where it's  
23 thirty-six in the Gulf and in the FLEC Zone, but they did  
24 mention, several times, and they were going back and forth on  
25 what Dr. Ferrer mentioned a minute ago, but we raised to thirty-  
26 six inches last year, and we really don't know what that's done  
27 so far, and it might be a little while before we figure that  
28 out, and that's one of the complicating factors of trying to  
29 figure out how far we need to go here.

30  
31 It's obvious that the fishery is in trouble, but we did make a  
32 change already that's not reflected, because the stock  
33 assessment terminal year was 2018, and so it is one of the  
34 difficult things that we've got to figure out, is how far to go  
35 with each one of these options, and I just wanted to make sure  
36 you all know that the AP discussed that at-length. Thank you.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** I appreciate that, Dale. This was the  
39 preferred alternative, and, as I recall, we added this, and now  
40 the South Atlantic has at least reviewed it and either  
41 concurred, or at least didn't try to change it, at this point in  
42 time.

43  
44 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** That's correct. Both councils have  
45 approved, so far, Alternative 2.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Any other discussion on this item? I  
48 am not seeing hands go up, and so, Natasha, you can move on.

1  
2 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Moving on to the last action, Action 7, and  
3 so Action 7, I guess -- I know it is a little bit confusing,  
4 just because of the way that this is kind of listed, but the  
5 items that are highlighted in Alternative 1 in yellow are the  
6 ones that are being modified in Alternative 2, but we don't have  
7 preferreds here yet.

8  
9 The AP did have some discussion regarding this alternative, but,  
10 in the end, they deferred to receiving more feedback from the  
11 council, but what I do want to bring up is the modifications  
12 included here would allow the South Atlantic Council to  
13 independently approve measures that affect fishing within their  
14 jurisdiction, things like size limits, bag limits, seasons, trip  
15 and vessel limits.

16  
17 As you see here in 1a, right now, the South Atlantic can only  
18 set vessel trip limits, closed seasons or areas, or gear  
19 restrictions, and so, on their own, they would not be able to  
20 change the size limit of say cobia in the FLEC Zone, which is  
21 the area that they manage. This is kind of allowing them a  
22 little bit more freedom on how to manage the fish that are  
23 within their jurisdiction.

24  
25 As we look back into some of the previous discussions that were  
26 had through other AP meetings, it seems like the group had been  
27 under that impression, that the South Atlantic had a little bit  
28 more freedom, but what this is not changing is giving the South  
29 Atlantic the opportunity to make changes such as the  
30 apportionment between the zones or updating catch limits or  
31 allocations, and these things that affect both councils.

32  
33 We would still need both councils to vote on that, and I'm  
34 hoping that this kind of answers some of the questions about  
35 what this action is intending to do, and, those things that can  
36 be addressed through the framework procedures, the South  
37 Atlantic would be able to do those framework amendments on their  
38 own, to make those changes.

39  
40 Appendix A has the full list of all the management actions that  
41 can be addressed through a framework amendment, and we have  
42 included a table at the end of the discussion in this action to  
43 hopefully answer some of the questions that we have been hearing  
44 during the discussion of this action, and so I will stop here  
45 and see if the committee has any additional questions or  
46 concerns regarding this action.

47  
48 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Leann has her hand up, I believe.

1  
2 **MR. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the Gulf Council  
3 right now have the ability -- Let me back up. Every time I have  
4 ever done anything where it's one group of fish, and so the Gulf  
5 group cobia, albeit it goes on both sides of Florida, which is  
6 in the South Atlantic's jurisdiction, what they do affects us,  
7 because it's one stock of fish.

8  
9 If they get a little more lenient, and fishing pressure goes up  
10 or whatever, it will have ramifications for the fishermen in the  
11 Gulf, because we're fishing on the same stock, and so it's been  
12 my experience that, every time we do anything with a stock like  
13 that, it's always been in a joint amendment, and we always have  
14 to have our preferences for things like that match.

15  
16 You're telling me that, right now, the Gulf Council has the  
17 ability to change our vessel trip limits and all sorts of other  
18 things without consulting the South Atlantic, and so now they  
19 are wanting that same ability for the east coast side of Florida  
20 that they manage?

21  
22 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I don't think that is correct. I think the  
23 example would be Framework Amendment 7, where the Gulf Zone --  
24 So this would only pertain to the Gulf Zone, when we talk about  
25 unilateral changes. When we're looking at apportionments or  
26 ACLs, like what we're doing today, we would need the approval of  
27 both councils, because those are actions that affect both zones,  
28 that affect both councils, but, for example, in Framework  
29 Amendment 7, it was okay for the Gulf Council to just take  
30 action in changing the size limit at that time, because it only  
31 affected the Gulf Zone. In the case of the FLEC Zone, they  
32 wouldn't have been able to do their own framework amendment to  
33 increase the size limit of cobia, and it would need to be a  
34 joint framework amendment at that time.

35  
36 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. Thank you.

37  
38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Martha, do you have your hand up?

39  
40 **MS. GUYAS:** I think I get this more now than I did before, but  
41 what's confusing me, I guess, is the way 2 and 3 are written,  
42 because it's written like the South Atlantic still manages the  
43 Atlantic stock, where they don't, and they have given that over  
44 to Atlantic States, I think, because it's talking about each  
45 stock, but there's really only one that's managed by the  
46 councils now, and that's Gulf migratory.

47  
48 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** I guess the changes here would not just

1 apply to cobia. Some of the language does apply to cobia, and I  
2 guess that's where it can be confusing, because the CMP  
3 framework management procedure -- It's a list of management --  
4 The responsibilities for both councils in the management of all  
5 three of our CMP species, and so, when we talk about Atlantic  
6 migratory group, we're looking at the mackerels. In this case,  
7 the Gulf Council does not have any management jurisdictions on  
8 Atlantic cobia, because that is managed by the Atlantic  
9 Fisheries Commission.

10

11 **MS. GUYAS:** Okay. I get it now. Thank you.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Any other discussion or questions of Natasha  
14 on this one?

15

16 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Robin, unless there's any more discussion, I  
17 would like to make a motion.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Go ahead.

20

21 **MR. STRELCHECK:** That the council recommend selecting  
22 Alternative 2 under Action 7 as the preferred alternative.

23

24 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Do we have a second?

25

26 **MS. GUYAS:** I will second it.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Martha has seconded it. I do realize  
29 that the way the yellow and the strikeout here -- It's a little  
30 different in format than we sometimes see, and I think that has  
31 everyone kind of reading through them and making sure they  
32 understand exactly what it's doing, as we're talking through  
33 this, and so what I would say is make sure, everyone, before  
34 Full Council, take time to review that, as well as the appendix,  
35 just to make sure that everyone is in complete understanding of  
36 the changes here, even before we get to Full Council.

37

38 We do have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion  
39 surrounding the motion to make Alternative 2 as the preferred  
40 alternative here?

41

42 **MS. BOSARGE:** I have a question, Mr. Chairman.

43

44 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Go ahead.

45

46 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right, and so Alternative 2 replaces that  
47 language where the South Atlantic was given the ability to set  
48 vessel trip limits, closed seasons, areas, or gear restrictions

1 for the east coast of Florida for our Gulf fish, right, and it  
2 replaces it with the South Atlantic Council will have the  
3 responsibility to specify management measures that affect only  
4 the east coast of Florida, including the Atlantic side of the  
5 Florida Keys, for Gulf migratory group cobia. That gives them,  
6 obviously, a lot more flexibility, but is it a blank check? I  
7 mean, what can they -- I guess, what can they not do?  
8

9 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Natasha, you may want to answer that, but,  
10 as I'm understanding it, they can't do anything that is  
11 associated with the allocations and the splits on how that gets  
12 divided by those zones, but, Natasha, please.  
13

14 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, that is correct, Leann, and I guess,  
15 for the east coast of Florida, including the Atlantic side of  
16 the Florida Keys, it's basically the FLEC Zone, and so it's not  
17 like they would be able to make any changes that would affect  
18 the Gulf Zone. Changes that affect the Gulf Zone, this would be  
19 a joint document.  
20

21 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay, and so we, right now, apportion 37 percent  
22 to that FLEC Zone, which we have given the South Atlantic  
23 management over, and so, if they don't change the allocation,  
24 and they say, you know, we want to take that 37 percent and  
25 leave it on the books like it is, but we want to delegate  
26 management of that 37 percent to the Atlantic States, like we've  
27 done for the rest of the eastern seaboard, and do they have the  
28 ability to do that without asking us?  
29

30 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** No, they cannot do that. They absolutely  
31 cannot do that. That is something that affects the Gulf group  
32 cobia, and so that would mean involvement from the Gulf Council,  
33 and that is not something that the South Atlantic would be able  
34 to make any management changes on. They cannot say our FLEC  
35 Zone cobia are now going to be moved to the Atlantic Fisheries  
36 Commission. That cannot happen.  
37

38 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Any other hands? Any other  
39 questions? All right. Mara is going to weigh-in here, I think.  
40

41 **MS. LEVY:** Just to, again, reiterate that what the South  
42 Atlantic can do has to be something that the councils can do in  
43 a framework, and so the type of thing that you're talking about,  
44 Leann, which is totally removing a part of the stock, or a  
45 stock, from the FMP would have to be a plan amendment.  
46

47 I mean, I just want folks to just remember that this is dealing  
48 with things that can be done in a framework only, and then those

1 things that are done in a framework that only affect the Florida  
2 East Coast Zone.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. We've got a motion and a second.  
5 **If there's no further discussion, is there any opposition to the**  
6 **motion?**

7

8 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay.

11

12 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** **Two oppositions to the motion. The motion**  
15 **still carries.** With that, Natasha, it's back to you.

16

17 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** That concludes the discussion on this draft  
18 Amendment 32, and so we can move on to the next agenda item  
19 quickly, if there are no more questions.

20

21 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Yes, we will, definitely, though I am going  
22 to turn to our Chair here, just for a moment, because we are now  
23 at the thirty-minutes of extra time that we got. Mr. Chair, how  
24 do you want to proceed?

25

26 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Actually, I am looking here, and I would go  
27 ahead, and let's see if we can take a couple more minutes on  
28 this, fifteen minutes or so.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you. All right, Natasha. Any  
31 other AP recommendations, I guess is what you were fixing to go  
32 to.

33

34 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Robin, I wanted to go back, real quick, to my  
35 comments, and I guess have a quick discussion, with how the  
36 council wants to handle this. If you look at the appendices in  
37 the amendment, it indicates that the Gulf could close as early  
38 as August or September, and the Florida East Coast Zone could  
39 close in July or August.

40

41 Now, that's not fully taking into account some of the reductions  
42 in harvest that might occur from the change in the size limits,  
43 as well as the change in the possession limits, and so I want to  
44 flag those, obviously, because we could run into a situation  
45 where we either have an in-season accountability measure or a  
46 post-season accountability measure to shorten the season, and  
47 whether or not the council wants to at least have staff explore  
48 fixed seasonal closures as additional options for reducing



1 harvest, to try to avoid some of those end-of-season closures.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Andy poses the question, and he had brought  
4 it up when he was having the discussion regarding the bag limits  
5 as well, and I think what he's looking for here is, at some  
6 point, and whether it's in committee or as we move to Full  
7 Council, if we want the staff to begin that exploration for an  
8 item, or for an alternative, and we would need to start  
9 developing that. I believe Martha's hand is up now.

10  
11 **MS. GUYAS:** I don't know that I'm ready to start adding actions  
12 for that, although it looks like we're going to have a closure  
13 one way or the other, but I think it would be nice to understand  
14 at least what the closure that, I guess, is predicted here and  
15 how that affects different parts of the Gulf.

16  
17 I guess, if we could look at like the MRIP landings by region,  
18 or something, just so that we can get a flavor of what's  
19 happening here, and I guess, if you're going to do that, it  
20 would be nice to just kind of see, for all waves, what's  
21 happening where throughout the Gulf, since this species is  
22 migratory, and different things are happening at different times  
23 in different places, and so, until we have that information in  
24 front of us, I think it's kind of hard to say what -- If we want  
25 to choose something other than close when the quota is met, what  
26 that should look like.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Ryan has his hand up. Ryan.

29  
30 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to touch on what  
31 Martha was saying, the last time that we really took an in-depth  
32 look at the stock identification for the Gulf and Atlantic  
33 migratory groups of cobia was the SEDAR 58, which looked at both  
34 stocks, and that helped to validate the current separation  
35 between those management units, but that also brought back up  
36 some past research done, I think primarily by Dr. Jim Franks,  
37 that showed the potential for small metapopulations of cobia  
38 throughout the Gulf of Mexico and the connectivity between  
39 those.

40  
41 If memory serves, there was one off of east Texas and west  
42 Louisiana, and there's one that occurs in the northern Gulf,  
43 around the mouth of the river, and another one in the Big Bend  
44 region, extending down towards Tampa Bay, and then there's like  
45 a transient group that runs in and around the Keys and up the  
46 east coast.

47  
48 There is migration between these different groups, but there is

1 also resident populations that hang around, according to the  
2 mark-recapture data, that hang around all year long, and so it's  
3 not quite like -- They don't quite behave like kingfish and  
4 Spanish in that respect, where fishing for kingfish starts to  
5 look more and more like a great idea in Texas in June and July,  
6 and the season, the commercial season anyway, opens in July, and  
7 then the fish move eastward across the Gulf.

8  
9 There is some movement of cobia, but there's also some that hang  
10 around, and so, as far as being able to tell how the closure is  
11 going to affect different areas at different times, I think that  
12 that that may prove more difficult, at least at first blush,  
13 than we might think.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Andy, basically, you've posed the question,  
16 and kind of how would we want to proceed, and it sounds as if  
17 Martha is indicating that certainly some data work to help us  
18 understand, given those current projections, how that might be  
19 impacting the different zones and across the fishery, or across  
20 the states, that might be useful, but it doesn't seem as if  
21 anyone is prepared to already start trying to think about  
22 closures or what closures could look like, is kind of what I'm  
23 hearing at this point. I think the question is, is that enough  
24 direction, for either staff or your team, to come back with at  
25 least some of that information at the next council meeting?

26  
27 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Robin. I mean, I'm fine with that. I  
28 just want to make sure there's no surprises here, obviously, and  
29 I know how much people don't like those in-season closures, when  
30 they occur, or even shortening of seasons after the fact, and so  
31 I wanted to raise this as an issue.

32  
33 We certainly can kind of look at this, from an analytical  
34 standpoint, and be prepared to discuss it if the projections,  
35 even with the preferred alternatives, result in those kind of  
36 late-season closures. Then, if the council wants to choose the  
37 actions and alternatives at the next meeting, depending on what  
38 they want to do, then we can do that in June.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** It sounds like trying to do that today,  
41 without any analysis, would probably be pretty difficult, and so  
42 I think that may be the approach we need to take, at least.

43  
44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes. That's reasonable.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Anybody else on this document, before we  
47 turn to the next couple of items on our agenda? I am not seeing  
48 any hands, and I don't see any being typed into the box, and so

1 now, Natasha, can we now move to the next couple of items?  
2

3 **REMAINING COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AP RECOMMENDATIONS**  
4

5 **DR. MENDEZ-FERRER:** Yes, and we can go through them I think  
6 fairly quickly, and so Agenda Item VII is the remaining CMP AP  
7 recommendations, and so, during the meeting, due to time  
8 constraints, we had to do some shuffling in the agenda.  
9

10 The discussion on the SEDAR 38 update on the Gulf of Mexico king  
11 mackerel had to be moved to a later meeting. The CMP AP also  
12 reviewed an upcoming joint CMP amendment, which would be  
13 Amendment 34, and that would update catch levels for Atlantic  
14 migratory group king mackerel, and so we're hoping to have  
15 someone from the South Atlantic present this at our June council  
16 meeting, to kind of give a scoping presentation to outline the  
17 actions and alternatives that they are considering.  
18

19 At this time, we're not doing an amendment to look at combining  
20 of Gulf king mackerel and Atlantic king mackerel in a single  
21 amendment, and the South Atlantic, at this point, is further  
22 along on their development of this amendment, but we still have  
23 it on our to-do list, and so it's there.  
24

25 Then the CMP AP -- We didn't have any specific motions on this  
26 item, but the CMP AP also heard a presentation related to the  
27 commercial electronic logbooks, and we do have a motion here,  
28 but I guess Dr. Hollensead will cover this item, along with the  
29 recommendations from the Reef Fish AP, during the Data  
30 Collection Committee.  
31

32 I think those are kind of like the big-ticket items that we had  
33 here. We got two public comments at the end of our meeting, and  
34 one of them was from a recreational angler in Mississippi that  
35 was in opposition of setting vessel limits for cobia, and then  
36 we had another comment saying that they were also in support of  
37 establishing trip limits of cobia, due to the decline in the  
38 landings throughout the Gulf states. I can stop here for any  
39 comments. Like I mentioned, we also have the chair of this  
40 committee available to answer any questions that you guys may  
41 have.  
42

43 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Natasha is stopping there, and, of course,  
44 Dale has helped with recalling some of the discussion there as  
45 well, and we have Martin Fisher on the phone as well, and so it  
46 looks like Martin has his hand up and would like to say  
47 something. Martin.  
48

1 **MR. MARTIN FISHER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks again for  
2 appointing me to the AP. I just wanted to make it really clear  
3 to your committee, and to the council, and that everybody on the  
4 AP, and every commercial fisherman I know, supports electronic  
5 logbooks. However, in this particular form, it doesn't make a  
6 lot of sense to us, and we've lost commonsense in this  
7 particular approach, and so I just wanted to make sure, and make  
8 it very, very clear that, just because we made the motion to  
9 reject this idea, it doesn't mean that we are against changing  
10 from paper to electronic logbooks. Thank you.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Thank you, Martin, for making that clear  
13 about what the intent of the motion is. We appreciate that.  
14 Anybody else on that item? If not, then, Natasha, thank you for  
15 the report and, Martin, your hard efforts and work on the  
16 committee, as well as all the AP members.

17  
18 Next on our agenda then is a discussion of the IFQ for Gulf king  
19 mackerel commercial southern gillnet zone, and that was going to  
20 be led by you, Mr. Sanchez. I know you will be somewhat  
21 cognizant of our timeframe here, but certainly I think we pushed  
22 this from the last meeting to this meeting, and so I want to  
23 give you an opportunity here.

24  
25 **DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL FISHING QUOTA FOR THE GULF KING**  
26 **MACKEREL COMMERCIAL SOUTHERN GILLNET ZONE**

27  
28 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I will be brief. I  
29 will give you a summary, and I'm assuming that everybody has  
30 before them a letter provided by Bill Kelly on behalf of the  
31 Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association.

32  
33 The genesis of that letter was, while there has been discussion  
34 prior, we had a meeting on February 10, in Marathon, and I  
35 attended, and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the  
36 possibility of pursuing an IFQ program for the gillnet fishery,  
37 for the reasons that we discussed before, which was pricing,  
38 spread it out and get away from the derby, let each guy  
39 prosecute their individual share, or percentage of quota, a  
40 little more efficiently, so they could be better utilized, from  
41 a fiscal perspective.

42  
43 There seemed to be a lot of support, going into it. Of course,  
44 then we entered into the, well, how are we going to divide these  
45 shares up, and that's where kind of things started to unravel,  
46 and the reason for the unraveling -- The reoccurring theme was,  
47 you know, we've been asking for additional quota, being that we  
48 fully utilize it, commercially speaking, for king mackerel, for

1 many, many years. I know that Bill Kelly has been on record  
2 asking for an increase in quota for many, many years, and we  
3 still haven't had that.

4  
5 The perception of the fleet was, you know, we're all multi-  
6 species fishermen, and we're prosecuting -- When the king  
7 mackerel become available to the gillnet, we're engaged in both  
8 lobstering and crabbing, and it takes a considerable amount of  
9 work to outfit the boat with the gillnet gear, to be able to  
10 prosecute that fishery, and then as well as get away from  
11 tending your productive lobster and crab gear.

12  
13 Their concern was, if we divided up those 575 pounds evenly,  
14 let's say, and that was one way to do it, amongst the fleet, the  
15 small amount of fish each boat would get -- It makes it very  
16 difficult to get away from the crabbing and the lobstering, and,  
17 if that's how it's going to go, unless there's an increase, and  
18 we would like to see the increase come before we start to look  
19 at this.

20  
21 Then, yes, we'll certainly look at ways to better our bottom  
22 line in this fishery, going to smaller strikes and waiting for  
23 the market to be better, not do it all in a week or two after  
24 Martin Luther King Day, and look at these things.

25  
26 As the discussion continued to evolve, the possibility came up,  
27 since there was a lot of dissention, for those very reasons, the  
28 lack of quota, we kind of thought, well, you know what, there's  
29 also this fear of the unknown in this, and then kind of had the  
30 thought and threw it out there of perhaps this would be a good  
31 fishery, down the road, should we get enough quota for that to  
32 entertain this, to do an EFP with a handful of them that would  
33 want to and strongly support the notion of IFQ, although the  
34 vast majority since then have become opposed to it, but do an  
35 EFP.

36  
37 That way, they can see how it works and see how those groups  
38 participating in that are benefiting, from a pricing  
39 perspective, from a flexibility perspective, from not being in a  
40 derby perspective, all of these pluses that we know happen with  
41 an IFQ, and then, those folks that are on the sidelines that  
42 year watching it -- That might spur the question of, oh my god,  
43 that guy got like two-dollars-and-X-cents a pound for his fish,  
44 instead of what I got, which was under a dollar, and all of  
45 these things.

46  
47 That might give everyone a chance to kick the tires on it, as  
48 well as do it in an open-ended fashion, where, if the EFP were

1 to take place for a couple or three years or five years,  
2 whatever is decided, as appropriate, then you leave it open-  
3 ended, and so, if you didn't opt in the first year, it would be  
4 open for you. If your interest, your curiosity, is aroused, you  
5 could opt in on the second or third year.

6  
7 Then, at the end of this experiment, this EFP, if they want to  
8 proceed with an IFQ, then let them have at it, and it will live  
9 or die by the rules of the referendum for the IFQ, and that's my  
10 summary, Mr. Chairman.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Any questions to John? Obviously,  
13 this has moved from a couple of meetings ago to a white paper  
14 wanting to discuss it to now, and it's kind of a -- I am using  
15 my terms and not yours, John, but a little bit of a pullback,  
16 with a notion of there is still some interest in it, but maybe  
17 how do we get some of the interested parties to think about it  
18 as a pilot down the road, in some sort of EFP fashion or  
19 something like that, which, of course, has to go through its own  
20 processes, if we were going to do that.

21  
22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** That would be correct, with the genesis being, if  
23 they were to get some more quota that they've been asking for,  
24 then maybe there's enough fish to make this work.

25  
26 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Well, any questions of John regarding  
27 the meeting? Of course, we'll have some opportunity to think  
28 about that a little bit too and ask him later, if we need to, or  
29 even offline, if we need to, or Bill Kelly as well, and so, I  
30 mean, there's plenty of people we can reach out to here.

31  
32 **MR. ANSON:** Robin, I've had my hand raised, and it hasn't shown  
33 up yet.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Go ahead, Kevin.

36  
37 **MR. ANSON:** John, this is an interesting proposal. Mackerel  
38 might be one of those fisheries primed for an EFP. It's been  
39 discussed before, and the council, I think, reviewed a document  
40 to try to look at that type of program, as far as least maybe  
41 some temporary transfer of allocation, but do you have an idea  
42 as to how much more quota the guys would need? You said you  
43 took the 500,000 pounds, 575,000 pounds, and divided it equally,  
44 and it wasn't enough. Did you get a sense as to how much is  
45 enough?

46  
47 **MR. SANCHEZ:** What I would suggest we do with that one is I'm  
48 sure you're going to hear from Bill Kelly this week, and ask

1 him, when he's giving his public testimony, but we've had some  
2 discussions before, and, in fact, we started an amendment,  
3 Amendment 33, to start to look at these things, and so I'm  
4 confident that, as a council, we can collectively have that  
5 discussion and perhaps flesh an appropriate and reasonable  
6 number out.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** All right. We've got one more, and I will  
9 take Andy. Then I think we're going to probably try to move on  
10 here, for the sake of time.

11  
12 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Robin. Thanks, John, for the  
13 presentation. I guess the one thing I would add, on the  
14 exempted fishing permit aspect here, is they're intended,  
15 obviously, for limited duration, and we have used them, in years  
16 past, to test the Headboat Collaborative, and also state  
17 regional management.

18  
19 The other aspect though is we really need to use them as a tool  
20 to actually -- What are we doing with the tool? Is it to learn  
21 something new, learn something different, how can we better  
22 manage a fishery, and so that's my main concern right now, John,  
23 is kind of the proposal for an EFP.

24  
25 It sounds like it would be more just to create buy-in with the  
26 industry, rather than something kind of new and innovative and  
27 different that we don't already kind of know, based on lessons  
28 learned and other information from the commercial IFQ program  
29 and the Headboat Collaborative pilot that we've done previously,  
30 and so I'm interested in kind of your reaction to that and if in  
31 fact there is something kind of new or novel that you could see  
32 down the road, if an EFP ever came about.

33  
34 **MR. SANCHEZ:** If I may respond to that.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Go ahead, John.

37  
38 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I think we would be foolish not to take advantage  
39 of an opportunity, and maybe piggyback something else of  
40 interest, because, on that note, I would like to thank Ms. Betsy  
41 Daniels, who has been real-time reporting the gillnet landings  
42 to the agency. As soon as they catch them, by the time they're  
43 at the dock, she's reporting them and keeping this thing  
44 together.

45  
46 We should certainly take advantage of something like this and  
47 explore some kind of real-time reporting mechanism, to get the  
48 monkey off of Ms. Daniels' back, and as well as I also want to

1 take this opportunity to thank Jessica Stephen, who was very  
2 helpful in numerous discussions with myself and Bill Kelly and  
3 the industry, as we were trying to explore the things that we  
4 could do, should we have gotten far enough along in this, on how  
5 to tailor this the way -- Not only that we kind of want it, but  
6 to have learned from some of the things we've seen in other IFQs  
7 that we didn't want, like leasing and people not actively  
8 fishing having access to these things. Our hope was to plan  
9 something that kind of addressed our experiences to date and  
10 hopefully build a little bit better mousetrap. Thank you.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN RIECHERS:** Okay. Thank you for the presentation, John.  
13 I think, with that, because this is kind of a looking-ahead kind  
14 of discussion we're having here, and I know that we're running  
15 past our time. Tom, I think, with that, if we don't have any  
16 other business that is outside of further discussion of the  
17 elements we've already discussed, we're going to turn this back  
18 over to you, Tom. Thanks, everybody.

19  
20 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 12, 2021.)

21  
22

- - -