

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

4
5 The Lodge at Gulf State Park Gulf Shores, Alabama

6
7 April 6, 2022

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

- 10 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 12 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 13 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 14 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 15 Bob Gill.....Florida
- 16 Jessica McCawley.....Florida
- 17 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- 18 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 19 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 20 Troy Williamson.....Texas

21
22 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 23 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 24 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 25 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- 26 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 27 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 28 Bob Shipp.....Alabama
- 29 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi

30
31 **STAFF**

- 32 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 33 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 34 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 35 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 36 Karen Hoak.....Administrative & Financial Assistant
- 37 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 38 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 39 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 40 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 41 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 42 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- 43 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

44
45 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- 46 Richard Cody.....NMFS
- 47 Peter Hood.....NMFS
- 48 Michelle Masi.....NMFS
- 49 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS

1 Laurilee Thompson.....SAFMC
2 John Walter.....SEFSC
3
4 - - -
5

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TABLE OF MOTIONS

[PAGE 25](#): Motion to direct staff to develop an abbreviated framework document addressing the trip declaration requirements. [The motion carried on page 29.](#)

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1 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at The Lodge at Gulf State Park on
3 Wednesday morning, April 6, 2022, and was called to order by
4 Chairman Susan Boggs.

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

10 **CHAIRMAN SUSAN BOGGS:** I would like to call the Data Collection
11 Committee to order. Tab F, Number 1 is where you can find the
12 agenda. Item Number I is Adoption of the Agenda. May I have a
13 motion to approve or any changes to the agenda?
14

15 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** So moved.
16

17 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Second.
18

19 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, and I was remiss. I did not name
20 the members of the committee. It's myself, Susan Boggs, as
21 Chair, Greg Stunz as Vice Chair, Chris Schiele, Kevin Anson,
22 Leann Bosarge, Dave Donaldson, J.D. Dugas, Bog Gill, Jessica
23 McCawley, Peter Hood, and Troy Williamson. With that, we will
24 move to Item II, which is Tab F, Number 2, Approval of the
25 January 2022 Minutes.
26

27 I have a couple of changes, and does anyone else, before I do
28 that? Okay. Seeing none, on page 7, line 38, "on" should be
29 "one", and, on page 52, line 24, "moment" should be "movement".
30 If there is no other changes, may I have a motion to approve?
31

32 **DR. STUNZ:** So moved.
33

34 **MR. BOB GILL:** Seconded.
35

36 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you. Okay. We will move down to Number
37 III, Action Guide and Next Steps, Tab F, Number 3. Dr.
38 Hollensead, would you please take us through Items IV and V?
39

40 **DR. LISA HOLLENSSEAD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For Agenda Item
41 IV, we will be looking at the draft framework action, and this
42 is the modification to location reporting requirements for for-
43 hire vessels, should an unforeseen malfunction occur. As you
44 recall, at the January meeting, the committee selected
45 preferreds for this document, but we're going to have council
46 staff, Ms. Carly Somerset, provide an update on the IPT
47 discussions associated with this document and update the
48 committee with that.

1
2 Additionally, we will have Dr. Jessica Stephen from the
3 Southeast Regional Office provide a presentation update, and she
4 will be going over some of the technical aspects from their
5 staff and their office from implementation of this framework
6 action, and, sort of wrapping up our SEFHIER discussion, Agenda
7 Item V will be an update from Dr. Michelle Masi for the SEFHIER
8 program.

9
10 For Agenda Item IV, the committee can review what NMFS and
11 council staff has updated them with, and, if they would like to
12 move forward, council staff and NMFS staff will begin preparing
13 that document for final action at the next meeting.

14
15 For Agenda Item V, the committee should ask any questions of
16 SERO staff about the SEFHIER program. Additionally, now that
17 the program has begun being implemented, the committee should
18 consider whether they would like updates at every meeting, or
19 perhaps every other, depending, and so that's just something for
20 the committee to consider. Madam Chair.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Hollensead. All right, Ms.
23 Somerset, are you ready?

24
25 **MS. CARLY SOMERSET:** I am ready. Thank you, Madam Chair.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Proceed.

28
29 **DRAFT FRAMEWORK ACTION - MODIFICATION TO LOCATION REPORTING**
30 **REQUIREMENTS FOR FOR-HIRE VESSELS**
31 **DOCUMENT**

32
33 **MS. SOMERSET:** Bernie, if we could bring up the document. While
34 Bernie is doing that, I will just provide a bit of additional
35 information that Dr. Hollensead provided, and so, looking at the
36 modification to the location reporting requirements for for-hire
37 vessels, again, and you all saw this at the last meeting, and so
38 I'm just going to go over some of the additions that we made,
39 and they're pretty minor, and we do have some more that we need
40 to add to the document prior to it going final, which I think
41 the idea was to do that at this meeting, but it will be -- We
42 will try to do that at the next meeting, in June, because we
43 have a few things we need to add to Chapters 3 and 4.

44
45 If we go to Table 1.1.1, here, I just wanted to point out -- I
46 just wanted to make a note of a few things that have been added
47 since you last saw this document. There was an additional
48 cellular unit that has been type approved by NMFS, and so that

1 has been added to the table, and so now there are four cellular
2 units that are available for permit holders to use on their
3 vessel as a VMS unit.

4
5 Then, Bernie, if you could move to Chapter 2, I will just make a
6 note of, in Chapter 2, we have added the preferreds that you
7 picked at the last meeting, and so there is one action, and the
8 preferred alternative -- The first preferred alternative was
9 Preferred Alternative 2, and so that's creating an exemption to
10 the VMS requirement to address equipment failure and set a limit
11 on the number of calendar days that the NMFS-approved exemption
12 is valid for vessels with charter vessel or headboat permits for
13 reef fish and/or coastal migratory pelagics, and the preferred
14 option that was chosen was Preferred Option 2b, the exemption
15 will be valid for up to ten days from submittal date.

16
17 Then, also, Preferred Alternative 3 is create an exemption to
18 the VMS requirement to address equipment failure and set a limit
19 on the number of times a permit holder can request an exemption
20 each calendar year, per vessel, and the preferred option that
21 was chosen was 3b, the permit holder may not request more than
22 two exemptions per vessel per calendar year, and so that has
23 been added throughout the document, to make note of the
24 preferreds.

25
26 Additionally, at our IPT discussions after the council meeting
27 last time, we discussed some additional analyses that need to
28 occur before the document is finalized, specifically Chapters 3
29 and 4, and it's mostly economic, and that relates to the
30 administrative burden that will be put on NOAA with getting this
31 implemented on the backend, tracking all of it, and so we will
32 continue to work on that.

33
34 The last thing I wanted to note here is that, as part of the IPT
35 discussion, we also talked about the use of permit holder versus
36 vessel owner-operator, and so you see that quite a bit in the
37 document. Some of the discussion revolved around what is the
38 most appropriate use of either or both of those, and so, just to
39 let you all know, the discussion was based on whether permit
40 holder or vessel owner-operator was the best term to use
41 throughout the document.

42
43 Some of the ideas that were thrown around at the IPT is that, if
44 we use the permit holder, that could create an additional burden
45 on the vessel owner-operator. If they are the ones that find
46 the VMS fails, they would then have to contact the permit
47 holder, and so it would be an additional step. On the opposite
48 end, the permit holder is the one that is responsible for the

1 VMS units. They hold the permit. It is their vessel, and so
2 the onus should be on them to make sure that it is properly
3 working, even if they are not the captain of that vessel.
4

5 I just wanted to make note of that for all of you, if you wish
6 to discuss it or have any other questions about it, but, other
7 than that, that was the majority of the changes in the document,
8 and I'm happy to take any questions.
9

10 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Ms. Somerset. Does anyone have any
11 questions? I do have one. We discussed, I believe at the last
12 meeting, to maybe add language, and I don't remember where it
13 went, and I didn't see it in the minutes, about looking at this
14 document maybe in a year or two, to monitor the frequency of
15 failures or anything like that, and did we add that to the
16 document? I saw where we kind of clarified the stacking of
17 exemptions, but I didn't see this.
18

19 **MS. SOMERSET:** You're referring to having the updates on how the
20 program is going? That request was -- We discussed it at the
21 IPT, in that we could bring that up at council meetings, if it's
22 appropriate in looking at it, possibly over the course -- If it
23 doesn't need to be a year or longer, just to see how the program
24 goes, but that's definitely something that can happen.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Well, I certainly think we need to maybe look
27 at it at the end of this first year, of the vessel -- Of the VMS
28 units being in place, to see how frequently this is happening,
29 and so I would like to, you know, make that request, that we
30 look at it maybe again in January of next -- Well, I guess it
31 would be March, since it's only been on the water since March 5.
32 Any other questions for Ms. Somerset? All right. Seeing none,
33 Dr. Stephen, are you with us this morning?
34

35 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** I am. Can you hear me?
36

37 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Yes, ma'am. Please, whenever you're ready.
38

39 **EQUIPMENT FAILURE EXEMPTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**
40

41 **DR. STEPHEN:** All right. If you will bring up the presentation.
42 One of the reasons we wanted to give this presentation is that,
43 oftentimes, what the council and the stakeholders see is the end
44 product in that user interface behind any data collection, and
45 we wanted to kind of highlight all of the behind-the-scenes
46 decision points and work and requirements building that goes
47 into collecting data, even something as simple as the equipment
48 failure form.

1
2 The goals, when we were looking at the equipment failure
3 exemption, was we wanted to make sure that the process that we
4 developed was easy for the fishermen to understand, as well as
5 for council staff and NOAA staff to understand the process, and
6 we want to automate, to the extent possible, the process, so
7 that people are well aware that the power-down exemption gets
8 approved by NMFS OLE and that takes human involvement, and what
9 we were looking for here was to not have that human involvement
10 and have an automation, so that we could rapidly approve things
11 on off hours.

12
13 We were also looking to make sure that we have compliance and
14 enforcement integrity when we were working within creating the
15 exemption failure, and that would be a mechanism that fishermen
16 can show that they do have the approval for the exemption to law
17 enforcement, and that's an easy way to submit the documentation
18 of why that equipment failure occurred, and then, finally, what
19 we wanted to look at was also ensuring the data integrity, and
20 so, to Susan's point earlier, we wanted to be able to analyze
21 any of the exemptions and look at them in combination with
22 SEFHIER compliance and catch-and-effort estimates.

23
24 Last, but never least, is we wanted to make sure that we can
25 spread the awareness with equipment failure requirements through
26 a variety of different outreach efforts.

27
28 In order to go to this, we gathered various subject matter
29 experts, and we formed six different working groups to look at
30 different topics that were useful for that subject matter
31 expertise, and, in the next slide, I'll go into each of these
32 working groups.

33
34 One of the first things was defining what an equipment failure
35 was, so that we're able to tell fishermen what is exactly an
36 equipment failure and what is not, and, in order to do this,
37 we're working with the different VMS vendors and gathering some
38 information about their different units and how different
39 protocols will be used to make sure that it is working right, as
40 well as gathering vendor information on their warranties and how
41 often they fail.

42
43 The next step after that was developing an online form, and so
44 we were looking to balance a collection of information that we
45 need from the fisherman submitting the form with what the
46 program needs in order to connect that information to other
47 existing data collection programs and to analyze that
48 information. This is a typical what we call Paperwork Reduction

1 Act, the burden balancing, to make sure that we can gather
2 enough information.

3
4 When we want to analyze that information, we do want to look at
5 tracking of the submissions, in order to make sure that people
6 are complying with regulations, and we will also want to look if
7 there are certain vendors or types of units that fail more
8 often, and so we want to be collecting information on the type
9 of VMS and then ways to look at annual summaries and patterns of
10 behavior for looking at this equipment failure down the road.

11
12 In order to start that online form collection, we did not start
13 from scratch. What we did is we looked at the power-down
14 exemption form and began with that as our template.

15
16 Some of the really behind-the-scenes things that are critical is
17 how the agency actually develops the structure to store that
18 data, in order to analyze it and collect it efficiently, and so
19 we worked with developers in order to look at those different
20 requirements and build it out. This is really critical,
21 because, if you don't gather the information and store it in the
22 correct way, that analysis, later on, may be impacted.

23
24 Some of the things we would need to connect to are the SEFHIER
25 compliance database, our permits system, and sharing information
26 with the various different enforcement data systems. Along the
27 lines of how we do that is, because we wanted to do this rapid
28 collection and turnaround of a conditional approval, we also
29 need to build in quite a lot of quality assurance validations
30 ahead of time, so that we can do that rapid initial confirmation
31 or denial of an equipment failure.

32
33 Just a few examples that I've listed here is we need to make
34 sure that the vessel being submitted actually exists within our
35 permit system, so we don't allow for typos or misidentification
36 of a vessel. We also need to look at whether it was dually
37 permitted with a reef fish vessel, which would create an
38 automatic denial, as a reef fish vessel is not allowed to work
39 under an equipment failure exemption.

40
41 Then, finally, looking at some of the different types of
42 exemptions, based on what the council would choose for
43 preferreds, to make sure that they have not gone over their
44 required amount of times to submit per year.

45
46 Also, along those lines of the development side was how do we do
47 this rapid confirmation or denial, and so we need to create a
48 process for online submission as well as a way to send that

1 information back to the submitter about either their
2 confirmation or denial, and we're going to work with an email
3 automation program to do that, and then, finally, the last kind
4 of working group we were looking at was defining what the
5 document failure is and the process to submit documentation for
6 the failure, and so this would be looking into the timeline to
7 later submit the documentation about the failure, and so we want
8 to approve rapidly, but we want to have that documentation
9 submitted at a later date.

10
11 Then a way to upload that information, a way to process that and
12 store it within the system, linking to the initial exemption,
13 and then also ways to give information to them about to
14 troubleshoot before thinking about applying for an exemption
15 failure, since they are limited annually.

16
17 We also recognize that we do need to think about how this may
18 affect the permit renewal and transfer process, if a vessel is
19 currently under equipment failure, while there is still a
20 requirement to show that the VMS is working, and so we are
21 working hand-in-hand with them and looking at how that would
22 affect the renewal transfer process and creating automated code,
23 so that that awareness is put through to the permit processor.

24
25 We also need to share that information with law enforcement, and
26 so we're looking for ways to take the equipment failure and have
27 it be shown within the VMS database system that officers and
28 agents look at, as well as a way for them query, on any day, the
29 vessels that are currently under an equipment failure.

30
31 In the end, what we also want to do is make sure that we develop
32 sufficient outreach materials, and we use some of our normal
33 processes, by developing FAQs that have certain scenarios within
34 them, give them information about how to submit that proof of
35 documentation of a failure, and then explanations of why there
36 is an automated approval or denial, as well as suggestions to
37 troubleshoot your unit.

38
39 Because of the rapid order of how we want to get this equipment
40 failure in here, because the VMS units are out there and
41 operational, and looking at the timeline of this amendment, what
42 NOAA is going to do is we're going to create a short-term
43 storage solution, in order to collect this information, and that
44 is going to be using a simplistic online form with our minimum
45 security requirements. That does require a little bit more
46 backend work, to merge that data with the other database systems
47 and share the information as necessary.

48

1 Simultaneously, we will be working on a long-term storage
2 solution for that. Part of the electronic technologies
3 implementation plan is to make sure that NOAA stops siloing
4 their data systems and use them together, and so our intention
5 is to build this into our permits system.

6
7 There is a lot of benefits to doing this. One is that the
8 amount of information that has to be entered by the stakeholder
9 can be great reduced, because that information is already
10 contained within permits, and they would simply select their
11 vessel.

12
13 Another thing would be to improve the QA/QC of the submitted
14 data, so that we know we have a one-to-one match of all the data
15 and that doesn't create errors later, in ensuring that the
16 approval was granted to the correct vessel, and, finally, the
17 data security for transmission and storage is much stronger
18 within our permits system.

19
20 As you all know, there's been a lot of increase in data security
21 over the last couple of years, and NOAA has been increasing what
22 those security measures are, and permits will meet any future
23 standards needed.

24
25 Then the last comment here would just be our short-term solution
26 may require us to update the regulations and PRA later, when
27 we're working within that permits solution, and we're hoping to
28 actually build it into the regulations to match the permits
29 system, but we may need changes later, when we push it into the
30 permits system.

31
32 I do just want to pause, and we've gotten a lot of emails about
33 confusion of power-down exemption and equipment failure
34 exemption, and so I wanted to leave up this slide here for the
35 council and for the fishermen to look at, to see the difference
36 of what is a power-down exemption, which is currently possible,
37 and what is an equipment failure.

38
39 In a power-down exemption, the vessel, once it is under a power-
40 down, cannot move on water, versus an equipment failure, and
41 they would be allowed to move on water for either the seven,
42 ten, or fourteen days that the council chooses. For a power-
43 down exemption, currently, you only can power off your unit
44 after you have received approval, and then it must remain
45 powered off for a minimum of seventy-two hours.

46
47 With an equipment failure, because of that automatic approval or
48 denial, you would be able to power off the unit once you get

1 that, and there is no minimum time limit for how long it stays
2 off, and it's until it gets fixed.

3
4 The submission process currently for a power-down was paper, and
5 we are working right now on moving to an online form that is
6 combining both the commercial and the for-hire. Keep in mind
7 that a power-down exemption will apply to both fisheries that
8 have that VMS requirement on the same vessel.

9
10 Then, with submission limitations, there is no limitations for
11 power-down exemptions throughout a year, whereas the equipment
12 failure would be limited to either one, two, or three times per
13 year, and the approval process works a little differently
14 between the two. Currently, power-down exemptions require a
15 manual double-check of them before they are approved, and that
16 means that, if you submit it on a Saturday, it might not be
17 looked at until a Monday.

18
19 We are working on ways to automate that currently, working with
20 our law enforcement group, whereas the equipment failure will
21 give you that conditional approval immediately and provide a
22 timeframe for you to later provide the documentation of that
23 failure. Likewise, in this documentation, power-down is just a
24 simplistic form, whereas equipment failure is both the initial
25 form and then the documentation, and I think that is my last
26 slide, and I'm happy to take any questions about the process.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Any questions for Dr. Stephen? Dr. Stephen, I
29 do have one thing that I don't think some people clearly
30 understand, and I don't know how we get the message out, other
31 than just sitting here having this conversation, but the dually-
32 permitted vessels cannot apply for an equipment failure
33 exemption, and is that correct?

34
35 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes, that is correct, because this is only
36 applying to the for-hire regulations. The reef fish regulations
37 still require that you must have a transmitting unit to move on
38 the water, and so, if you're dually-permitted, you would be
39 denied an equipment failure, because it's not -- It's for the
40 permit.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, and then I do have one other
43 question, and I think you touched on it and I didn't quite
44 understand, and is there anything in place -- Well, first of
45 all, have you all had any requests, because of failures,
46 equipment failures, and, if so, how have they been handled thus
47 far?

48

1 **DR. STEPHEN:** So far, the SEFHIER program has not received any
2 requests for an equipment failure, to date. We would probably
3 currently handle it on a case-by-case basis, with the
4 recommendation that you are required to have it, and so you
5 cannot move on the water without a functional unit.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Thank you. Any other questions from the
8 committee? Seeing none, thank you, Dr. Stephen. Next, we'll go
9 direct to --
10
11 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Ms. Boggs, you have J.D.
12
13 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I'm sorry, J.D. I didn't see you.
14
15 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I don't know if the
16 question is for Dr. Stephen, but we talked about the vessels
17 moving within the marina for fuel and bait and ice, and I don't
18 recall where we went with that. It seems like it's going to be
19 an issue still, and could someone clarify?
20
21 **DR. STEPHEN:** Michelle will be presenting next and will touch on
22 those topics.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. With that, Dr. Simmons.
25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had a
27 question, and I think this goes back to the document that Ms.
28 Somerset presented, and are you all looking for a recommendation
29 from the council regarding whether the equipment failure would
30 be tied to the permit holder or the vessel owner-operator,
31 because, right now, it's written kind of both ways in here, and
32 is that something that the agency is looking for from the
33 council, so we can kind of clean that up in the document?
34
35 **DR. STEPHEN:** We talked with some of our lawyers, and, because
36 it's an exemption to a permit, the agency feels that the permit
37 holder needs to be providing that exemption. Also, because it
38 is limited in scope, they need to be aware of it and providing
39 the --
40
41 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons.
42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Sorry, but, just to make sure I
44 understand, you're saying that decision has now been made and
45 the document will have to be updated with the permit holder, and
46 is that correct?
47
48 **DR. STEPHEN:** My understanding is that this is a NMFS agency

1 decision.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Any other questions? Okay. I think
4 we're clear now. Dr. Masi, are you ready?

5
6 **DR. MICHELLE MASI:** I am. Thank you, Madam Chair.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Whenever you're ready, please proceed.

9
10 **UPDATE ON SOUTHEAST FOR-HIRE INTEGRATED ELECTRONIC REPORTING**
11 **(SEFHIER) PROGRAM**
12

13 **DR. MASI:** Okay. Thank you so much, and so just a reminder that
14 I'm Dr. Michelle Masi, the SEFHIER Program Manager, and I just
15 wanted to note that I have actually revamped the SEFHIER
16 presentation that you guys have been kind of accustomed to
17 seeing for the last few meetings. Today, I wanted to focus more
18 on some of the --

19
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Michelle, can you please slow down
21 a little bit? We're having trouble hearing you across the
22 webinar.

23
24 **DR. MASI:** Yes. No problem. Is that better now or still bad?

25
26 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** No, that's a little better. Just, if you slow
27 down just a little bit, I think that might have been part of the
28 problem.

29
30 **DR. MASI:** Sure. No problem. On this slide, I wanted to
31 provide some program compliance metrics to the council. As of
32 March 25, we have 1,328 Gulf for-hire federally-permitted
33 vessels, and we have 951 VESL and eTRIPS reporting accounts that
34 have been set up by our Gulf for-hire permitted vessels.

35
36 We also have over 291,000 total trip reports that have been
37 received from Gulf and South-Atlantic-permitted vessels, to
38 date, and that's as of program inception, and so January 4, and
39 we have received over 35,000 logbooks and over 46,000
40 declarations from just Gulf for-hire-permitted vessels, and,
41 finally, we have received, or made, over 8,000 SEFHIER program
42 and compliance-related calls through our SEFHIER call center.

43
44 Regarding VMS updates, we currently have ten satellite and four
45 cellular VMS units that are type approved, and I know Carly just
46 showed those, but, if you want to access them on our website,
47 and we update those when anything gets type approved, and the
48 link is provided on the slide, and then bolded here is just a

1 reminder that the VMS requirement became effective as of March
2 1, and that third bullet is that we recently heard from a
3 constituent that there were supply chain issues, and so we
4 reached out to the VMS vendor, and they noted that there aren't
5 any ongoing issues. The particular issue in question was just
6 an isolated dealer issue, and that was quickly resolved.

7
8 Regarding the VMS compliance statistics, as of March 25, we have
9 over -- We currently have 178 dual commercial reef fish and for-
10 hire-permitted vessels that have a VMS, and there are over 600
11 Gulf only for-hire-permitted vessels that have a VMS unit.
12 However, as of March 25, we had about 727 vessels that still did
13 not have a VMS unit, noting though that the vessels that have
14 permits requiring a VMS are presently having permits withheld
15 during the application process, and so we are expecting to see
16 compliance improve over the coming months, and, also, I received
17 an update on these numbers on Monday, and that 727 is now down
18 to about 620, as of Monday.

19
20 I have a few updates here regarding the VMS reimbursement, and
21 so, first, SEFHIER reimbursement requests are being prioritized
22 through the end of this month, and then, after that, any
23 incoming reimbursement requests will be handled on a first-come-
24 first-served basis.

25
26 The second bullet is that the cellular VMS reimbursement maximum
27 has been decreased to \$950, and that was after analysis of the
28 cellular unit costs. For satellite VMS, the reimbursement
29 maximum is undergoing review, but, when a cellular VMS unit is
30 available to the fishery, which is the case for the for-hire
31 fishery, the max reimbursement will be \$950, unless the vessel
32 is dual-permitted for a fishery that only allows satellite VMS,
33 and then, finally, vessels that received the Triton VMS unit
34 from the NFWF grant will not be eligible for reimbursement, as
35 they already received a free unit.

36
37 Regarding VMS and federal permits, to start off, just a brief
38 permit refresher that federal permits are associated with
39 vessels and the permit holders listed on the permit, and so, if
40 there are any changes to the permit holder, or holders, and the
41 vessel associated with a specific permit, then this constitutes
42 a permit transfer. Also, any permits associated with a specific
43 vessel must have the same permit holder.

44
45 The VMS must be installed and activated in order to renew or
46 transfer the permit, and so, for transfers, the receiving permit
47 holder needs to have the VMS activated on the vessel that's
48 associated with the permit, and, once the VMS is activated, the

1 vessel may get a power-down exemption, or a PDE, noting that the
2 PDE is for the vessel under that permit, and it applies to any
3 VMS-required permit on that vessel, and so, for example, if you
4 are a dual commercial reef fish and Gulf-for-hire-permitted
5 vessel, then one PDE would cover both fisheries.

6
7 Regarding the power-down exemptions, or PDEs, the PDE form is
8 now available online, and I provided the link here on this
9 slide. You will just go to that link and then fill out the
10 form, and there's an example of what that looks like here, an
11 image provided, and you're going to need to have your vessel ID
12 and your permit number, and then you click "confirm" to submit
13 that. Again, this form can be used for both commercial and Gulf
14 for-hire PDE requests.

15
16 The final bullet here is just that, in vessels that show an
17 active VMS status in permits are going to be automatically
18 approved, and so, when you click "confirm", you will get an
19 automatic approval response back. If an active status isn't
20 listed in permits, then we're manually checking for an activated
21 VMS before the PDE request is approved, and, as of right now,
22 that isn't a long process, and you still should hear something
23 back within one business day.

24
25 On this slide, I wanted to show just some general SEFHIER
26 discussion items, and so first that we've updated our FAQs, in
27 order to support the industry's request for some clarification
28 on the purpose of the required trip fee and fuel price questions
29 that are in the logbook, and so, in order to best answer these
30 questions, we worked with the SERO economists, and we developed
31 the answers to the FAQs that I am showing here.

32
33 For trip fee, an accurate value is critical for cost-benefit and
34 economic impact analyses for providing reimbursement after a
35 disaster, and it's required for proposed regulatory changes.
36 Note that, for any charity trip, where you don't receive any
37 revenue, you should enter a trip fee of zero. For fuel price,
38 an accurate value is critical for representing economic
39 performance of the for-hire vessels and how or why it differs
40 between vessels, and so you should provide the best estimate of
41 the price paid for fuel on each trip.

42
43 On this slide, I have an update for the council on the
44 declaration burden issue that has been raised by our for-hire
45 constituents, and so, in listening to a variety of potential
46 solutions, we considered the simplest, easiest to implement, and
47 easiest to understand solution, and we found that the
48 regulations can be modified to require a declaration under the

1 following circumstances.
2
3 For a fishing trip, a declaration would always be required,
4 regardless of fishing trip type or duration. For a non-intended
5 fishing trip, if the intended trip duration is less than sixty
6 minutes, then a declaration would not be required, and so, for
7 example, if the vessel is moving to get fuel or ice, and the
8 sixty-minute timeframe was selected based on input from
9 enforcement about the feasibility of tracking and enforcing
10 this.
11
12 Regarding next steps, we would like feedback from the council
13 and our stakeholders at this meeting, noting that the regulation
14 change requires council action.
15
16 For the declaration burden associated with dual federal
17 commercial and for-hire permitted vessels, the request is to do
18 one declaration for these dual-permitted vessels. Some
19 challenges that we found are that these declarations for each
20 program collect different information fields and have different
21 means of submission, and so, for commercial, you can submit
22 declarations through the phone or VMS. For SEFHIER, you submit
23 it through the app or VMS.
24
25 Given that, the proposed solution would be that this would only
26 apply to those vessels that have a VMS unit that is type
27 approved for both programs, and remember that we currently have
28 ten satellite units that are approved in both sectors and have
29 forms. Also, you must use the VMS to submit the declaration,
30 and this would not apply to vessels in the Southeast Region
31 Headboat Survey, because that program requires declarations to
32 be submitted using the VESL app.
33
34 For applicable vessels, there would be a strict pathway for
35 submission, based on trip type, where any commercial or out-of-
36 fishery trips would be reported using the commercial
37 declaration, and any for-hire trips would be reported using the
38 for-hire declaration, because remember that requires the hail-in
39 information.
40
41 Regarding next steps, the regulations would need to be modified
42 to allow one declaration for both programs, but we believe that
43 this one can be handled administratively without council action.
44
45 Finally, I want to emphasize that we're standing by to assist
46 our constituents who have any questions about the program or are
47 confused about the reporting requirements. We're definitely
48 here to help you, and you can reach us at our customer service

1 number or the email that's listed at the bottom of this slide,
2 and, if you want to reach out to me specifically, my email
3 address is on the first slide, and, with that, I just want to
4 thank everyone for listening to our SEFHIER updates today, and I
5 will open the floor now.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Masi. Ms. Bosarge.

8
9 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Masi. You always give a
10 wonderful presentation. You give a lot of detail, and I
11 appreciate that. I did have a question about Slide 4, or two
12 questions, actually.

13
14 The first bullet says, after April 30, reimbursements will be
15 first-come-first-served for all requests, but that doesn't have
16 anything to do with not having enough money to cover all these
17 reimbursements, right, and you just mean that, obviously,
18 reimbursements may be coming out of New England, and they may be
19 coming out of Alaska, and they may be -- You know, all over the
20 country, and this program handles everybody's, and is that what
21 you mean, that the SEFHIER in the Gulf won't automatically jump
22 to the top of that list for processing, and it has nothing to do
23 with running out of money though, right?

24
25 **DR. MASI:** Hi, Ms. Bosarge. I'm going to actually ask that
26 Jessica answer this question, because she has a bit more of an
27 understanding about it.

28
29 **DR. STEPHEN:** Leann, for the first amount of time, the SEFHIER
30 reimbursements will be prioritized, and so you're correct on
31 that, and then, after that date, we would start prioritizing by
32 the first date received for any of the other nationwide VMS
33 programs. That said, funding for this is always subject to the
34 annual amount of money we're given and how much money we can put
35 into that grant, and so there is concern, with the number of
36 SEFHIER vessels, that this fund may be drawn down low this year,
37 with the amount of money being put into it.

38
39 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay, and so that kind of leads me into my second
40 question about this VMS reimbursement maximum, and so it says
41 the maximum for a cellular VMS is going to be \$950 that they
42 will be reimbursed. I'm guessing that's the cost of the most
43 expensive cellular VMS, but then we went on to say that, if
44 you're in SEFHIER, essentially that's your maximum period.
45 Although there is fourteen units that you can choose from, there
46 is only four that you can actually get fully reimbursed for, I'm
47 assuming.

48

1 I feel like we're changing the rules on these people after we
2 have implemented this. They went into this with the
3 understanding that, hey, don't worry, and you can get reimbursed
4 for the cost of your unit, and that won't be a financial burden
5 to you, and now we're saying, well -- You have all these options
6 to choose from, and you can do satellite or you can do the
7 cellular, but now we're telling them that, no, you actually only
8 have four units that you can choose from if you want to be
9 reimbursed, and even that is kind of iffy, because we might run
10 out of money. I don't know, and I just -- I feel like we're
11 fishtailing on our stakeholders here.

12
13 **DR. STEPHEN:** I will give a few comments to that, and so, one,
14 the VMS reimbursement program is a nationwide program not in
15 control of the Southeast Region, and so these are decisions
16 coming out of the nationwide program, based on a lot of cost
17 allocation policies that have been going on within electronic
18 technology programs as a whole.

19
20 You got notice nearly as soon as we did, and we had a little bit
21 of back-and-forth and misunderstandings about whether it was
22 just the cellular units or the fishery as a whole, and, very
23 recently, VMS cleared up that it's the fishery as a whole, and
24 that was not something the Southeast Region had a say in at the
25 time.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Stephen, and, just real quickly,
28 I will comment to that. We got that notice on Monday, and so
29 Bob Gill.

30
31 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Dr. Masi, for
32 your presentation, and, on your first few slides, I note that we
33 have significant non-compliance in this program, which is
34 concerning, and so a two-part question. One is you have given
35 us considerable detail, and you've done considerable outreach,
36 in order to try to boost the compliance amongst the industry
37 relative to this program, and it seems like, at this point, it
38 hasn't been very effective, and so part one is what is your plan
39 relative to compliance going forward, and the second part is,
40 given that, after all this effort, there is still an amazing
41 amount of folks that are not part of the program, what's the --
42 If we don't do a whole lot better, and say we're asymptotic to
43 where we're going to be, what's the impact on the efficacy of
44 the program as a whole, in terms of the data collection and the
45 rationale for the program's existence, as it stands? Thank you.

46
47 **DR. MASI:** I will try to speak to that, Mr. Gill, and then, if
48 needed, Dr. Stephen can come on and fill in any gaps, and so how

1 we're handling is, of course, we've spent -- I started in July
2 of last year, and we've spent the duration, and, before that, we
3 were doing outreach and expanding outreach and trying to reach
4 our constituents as best we can, and so, at this point, we're
5 ready to turn on the compliance module in permits, which means
6 that, if a permit comes up for renewal, not only are they going
7 to be looking to see if they're VMS compliant, and so if they've
8 submitted their trip reports, and so I think, once that's turned
9 on, we'll start to see compliance improve.

10
11 We've been talking about turning it on for a long time now, and
12 we're at the point now we're ready to actually go ahead and turn
13 that on, and so hopefully, by the next time I come and present,
14 we'll see these numbers have improved substantially. I am going
15 to stop there and let Jessica fill in anything, if she wants to.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Stephen, do you have anything to add?

18
19 **DR. STEPHEN:** No, and the only thing I will mention is that the
20 logbook compliance, of course, is when the permit is renewed,
21 and permits are renewed on a revolving basis, and so I figure,
22 by the end of the year, we'll have the bulk of people having to
23 submit their logbooks or having their permit held back until
24 that submission is put through. Also, with the VMS, we'll be
25 able to better track people who are not submitting logbooks and
26 knowing that they are out at sea and need to be submitting them.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Thank you. Dr. Stunz.

29
30 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to follow-up with
31 a couple of things that both Leann and Bob said, because it
32 concerns me a little bit as well, and, by the way, thanks for
33 the presentation. That was very informative, but it has to do
34 mainly with the non-compliance, or really the efficiency, and we
35 had a lot of discussion around the table about buy-in, and
36 really getting the buy-in, and, for a successful program, we
37 really want the captains to embrace this program, and I think
38 that that's really important, that we really hand-hold and
39 nurture it along, especially during this formative stage, but I
40 wanted to deliver a message.

41
42 I know that a lot of the captains are listening here, because,
43 at least what I am hearing in the western Gulf, is there's a
44 little bit, or more than a little bit, of confusion, and they're
45 not really getting the support that they need, or at least
46 that's what I'm hearing, and so I'm kind of delivering this
47 message, but I wanted to make sure, since they're listening,
48 that we get it very clear on the record of who do they need to

1 reach out to to get their questions answered.

2
3 I think, by doing that, that would increase the compliance that
4 Bob is talking about and some of the issues that Leann -- Then
5 also curb issues right in the beginning, to make sure this is
6 going to be a successful program, but I just want to read this,
7 and, you know, I'm not accusing anyone or anything, but I just
8 want to -- But this is the kind of feedback that I get, and they
9 asked me to convey that the department, and, by the way, I don't
10 know who the department is, but the department answering the
11 phone line isn't actually giving any answers, and they keep
12 saying goodbye and hanging up on the fishermen, and the guys
13 keep -- Well, the guys tell me that they can't get any answers.

14
15 While that's just what someone is saying, and I'm sure that --
16 Who knows what really happened there, but it concerns me a
17 little bit when they're trying to reach out, and, in some cases,
18 they're not getting the right answers, and maybe they're calling
19 the wrong people, but I just want to make sure, while they're
20 listening here today, that it's very clear what they need to do
21 to get any questions answered. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Masi, would you mind -- I am not looking at
24 the slide, but you said the information was located on the first
25 slide, I believe, and maybe, for those listening, could you
26 state that information on the record, so that, if anybody needs
27 to refer back to it, they could?

28
29 **DR. MASI:** No problem. Thanks, Dr. Stunz, for that information.
30 On the very last slide is our SEFHIER customer service
31 information, and we're standing by there, and that's Eastern
32 Standard Time, but 8:00 to 4:30 every day, for non-federal
33 holidays, and, if they reach the line and there isn't a live
34 person to speak to, then, of course, they could leave a message,
35 and someone would get back to them within the next business day.

36
37 I will note that, for every phone call that we take, we write
38 down the information that was discussed, and I know for a fact
39 that nobody on our SEFHIER team is hanging up on anybody. I
40 regularly check those correspondence logs, and I read through
41 them, to see what the conversations are about.

42
43 Now, there might be another line that they were contacting, and
44 so I apologize if there was some line that they were contacting
45 and getting hung up on. We will certainly look into that and
46 try to take care of that. If at all else, if everything else
47 fails, my email address is on the first slide, and they can
48 reach out to me directly.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Go ahead, Dr. Stunz.
3
4 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you very much, and that's exactly what I
5 wanted to accomplish here, is to make sure they knew exactly and
6 ensure they were in fact calling the right number, because I
7 suspect that you guys would be very helpful, but I just wanted
8 to make sure that they're at the right place, where they need to
9 be, to get their questions answered.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Bosarge.
12
13 **MS. BOSARGE:** One more question, and so you're starting to
14 finally receive some data from these units, and it sounds like
15 you've got about -- Well, I would have to go back and look, and
16 I don't know if all six-hundred-and-something of them, or 700,
17 are actually pinging right now, but they should be pinging,
18 pretty soon, to law enforcement, and that's half the data that's
19 going to be going to OLE. How is that database handling that
20 over there?
21
22 I know that they -- When we were talking about shrimp and
23 bringing our 500 units online, if we went to VMS, that they were
24 going to have to increase their capacity to handle that data,
25 and so how's it going with you all? Have we heard anything on
26 that, Jessica?
27
28 **DR. STEPHEN:** When we started the SEFHIER program, we did hire
29 two additional VMS tech support that are specifically dedicated
30 to the SEFHIER program. They have access both to the SEFHIER
31 database and the VTrack database, and we are actively working at
32 the communications between the VTrack database and our SEFHIER
33 database, to import information into that.
34
35 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Bosarge.
36
37 **MS. BOSARGE:** No, I'm talking about the NOAA OLE database that
38 all that goes into, all those pings.
39
40 **DR. STEPHEN:** Yes, and that's the VTrack database system that
41 the Office of Law Enforcement runs, but the Southeast Region has
42 access to the information in that system. We just need to make
43 that database connection to our -- We hired techs, and we work
44 directly in that system, to see those pings.
45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** All right. Anybody else? Mr. Diaz.
47
48 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Dr. Stephen, and thank you, Dr. Masi. I

1 appreciate your presentations. I have a couple of questions,
2 and you all might have said this and I missed it, and I
3 apologize if so, but, of the 1,328, do we know how many of those
4 permits are latent permits and might just be out there for sale
5 or people just aren't using them?
6

7 **DR. MASI:** I can probably answer that one, and so we don't have
8 an exact measure of latent permits, and we have estimated it to
9 be about 20 to 30 percent. However, once we see better
10 compliance with the VMS, we'll know if that vessel is just
11 sitting there with the permit and not actively fishing, and so
12 we'll be able to better address that question probably in the
13 next year or so.
14

15 **MR. DIAZ:** Okay. Thank you, and I noticed that you mentioned
16 this reporting time, where they have to file a report, and you
17 all are throwing out that sixty minutes, and I actually think
18 that's a pretty good idea. I know folks have been talking about
19 having to report for just moving around to get ice and fuel and
20 things like that, and I think probably most of that could be
21 accomplished in sixty minutes, and I am curious to see if we'll
22 get any public testimony on that here. Have you all heard much
23 feedback so far from the for-hire community about that idea, and
24 I guess I would also pose that question to Ms. Boggs, also. Dr.
25 Masi.
26

27 **DR. MASI:** Thanks for the question, and so we did do some
28 outreach with some of our constituents on the timeframe, and we
29 had a few options, and lengthening to as much as possible was
30 recommended by our constituents. The reason for the sixty-
31 minute selection is we heard from them, and then we took that
32 back to OLE, and the sixty-minute was selected over the other
33 options, given that -- Over the longer option, given the fact
34 that the position occurs, for the VMS, every hour, and so, in
35 order to track that, it's easier for OLE to just do it based on
36 a one-hour position rate. Does that answer your question?
37

38 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Dr. Masi. Ms. Boggs.
39

40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Masi, and so I honestly have not
41 had the opportunity to talk to any of the captains about this,
42 and I think we'll hear a lot about it in public testimony, and
43 so I have a few questions, but, so we don't run out of time, Dr.
44 Masi, I understand that, on Slide 8, we need -- The council
45 needs to take action to make these changes to the declaration,
46 correct?
47

48 **DR. MASI:** That's correct, and I will probably open the floor to

1 Mara Levy, if she's on, to better address that, if that's okay.
2

3 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Yes, and so it's going to require council
4 action, because the amendment that put this in place said that,
5 every time you depart for a trip, you need to declare, and so,
6 if we're going to make an exception to that, the council is
7 going to need to do that, and it can probably be through an
8 abbreviated framework action, and, I mean, I know the agency is
9 recommending sixty minutes, and we'll probably look at a couple
10 of options, right, and so you're going to do an abbreviated
11 framework document, if the committee and the council make a
12 motion to do that.
13

14 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Any discussion on this possible change?
15 J.D.
16

17 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think sixty minutes
18 is enough. I know, in Louisiana, the marinas get jammed up in
19 the middle of the season, and pumping on 300 or 400 or 500
20 gallons of fuel at a time, and it's going to go over sixty
21 minutes, and so we might want to address that.
22

23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** As Ms. Levy stated, we might have to look at a
24 couple of options in the document. Does anybody want to make a
25 motion to start a document? Mr. Anson.
26

27 **MR. ANSON:** I will make that motion. I don't, obviously, have
28 it, but maybe it would be to direct staff to develop an
29 abbreviated framework document addressing the temporary
30 exclusion or --
31

32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** It would be trip declaration
33 requirements, I believe.
34

35 **MR. ANSON:** Okay. **Addressing trip declaration requirements.**
36 That's good enough, Dr. Simmons? Is that good enough?
37

38 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, and that's the way I
39 understand we're looking at changing regulations in that
40 section, and is that correct, Ms. Levy?
41

42 **MS. LEVY:** Yes. I think we understand what this is asking.
43

44 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Do we have a second?
45

46 **COUNCIL MEMBER:** Second.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay, and so we have a motion on the board to

1 **direct staff to develop an abbreviated framework document**
2 **addressing the trip declaration requirements.** Is there any
3 opposition to this motion? Mr. Donaldson.

4
5 **MR. DONALDSON:** I don't have opposition, but I have a question.
6 We're creating a separate document than the framework action
7 that we're working on? It has to be a separate document, and we
8 can't -- I am just thinking of if we can be efficient and
9 include it in an already existing document, but I don't know.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Levy.

12
13 **MS. LEVY:** I mean, you can. I guess it depends on timing,
14 right, and like how fast we want to move. I don't know, and
15 maybe staff can talk about whether it would be more efficient to
16 put them together or not, and I don't know, in terms of where
17 are in the process. Are we supposed to take final action on the
18 -- That's why. Okay. You're supposed to take final action on
19 the other document.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Somerset and Dr. Simmons.

22
23 **MS. SOMERSET:** To Mara's point, it was supposed to be final
24 action at this meeting, but we have the additional mostly
25 economic analyses for gag, the administrative burden, and so it
26 is not complete yet, but it would slow it down just a bit, and I
27 think the idea was to go final at the next meeting.

28
29 **MR. DONALDSON:** Never mind.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons.

32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just
34 wanted to commend Dr. Masi and Dr. Stephen for helping us come
35 with solutions on these two issues, and I hope we can move it
36 through the process quickly. I did have a question about when -
37 - The council will develop this document, but do you all have a
38 good idea if the software will have to be modified with the
39 vendors to accommodate this change? Thanks.

40
41 **DR. MASI:** The answer to that is no, since we're changing the
42 regulations, which is why this was the preferred solution. Does
43 that answer your question?

44
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, ma'am.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Strelcheck.

48

1 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I recognize that the VMS requirements are
2 just newly implemented, and we haven't had any instances where
3 someone has requested an exemption for failure, but, given the
4 comments earlier, I would certainly lean toward if we could
5 delay that framework action until August and incorporate this
6 into the framework action, and let's get everything kind of
7 addressed all at once and take final action at the August
8 council meeting. Thanks.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** We have a motion on the board. Do we want to
11 incorporate it in with -- I mean, I understand what Andy is
12 saying, and I appreciate Dave's question. We haven't
13 experienced any failures, and it seems like the SEFHIER team has
14 been very helpful in addressing all of the issues, and I haven't
15 been able to comment, but, Dr. Masi, I really appreciated this
16 presentation, because you have addressed a lot of the questions,
17 and it appears that, as things come up, you all are addressing
18 them, and we're getting through without any disruption to the
19 fishermen, and we may have to hear some comment this afternoon,
20 and so what is the desire of the committee? Do you all want to
21 -- Do we need to go ahead and vote this motion up or down and
22 then come back and discuss it? Ms. Levy, what do I do?

23
24 **MS. LEVY:** Well, I mean, I guess, if you decide you want to
25 incorporate it into the current document, you could -- The
26 motion maker could change the motion, and you could amend it. I
27 mean, I don't -- It's up to you how you want to proceed, but
28 Carrie looks like she has something.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons and then Mr. Anson.

31
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and so I
33 guess, Andy, do you think that we could just leave this kind of
34 flexible and just put in the committee report that we could try
35 to incorporate this and take final action in August, because we
36 always think these things are easy, and then we get into the IPT
37 level, and we always get into hiccups, and I would hate to delay
38 the VMS equipment failure document too much longer, and so can
39 we have a little flexibility there and just put that into the
40 report as the intent of the council?

41
42 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, I'm certainly fine with that approach, and
43 I think the recommendation we brought forward is pretty
44 straightforward to consider, and I think the question is about
45 the timing, which has been some of the discussion today about
46 that, and we will need to work through that before the next
47 council meeting.

1 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Anson.

2
3 **MR. ANSON:** I guess I'm fine with a delay, if it's in August, if
4 we are going to incorporate this into the other document, and
5 it's just two more months, I guess, relative to if we were to
6 take final action in June, but, in deference to the comments and
7 concerns that the charter boat operators have brought to us,
8 that prompted us to develop the other document, and there could
9 be some potential for impacts to business, and so the two months
10 more --

11
12 You know, is it kind of a little bit of a Russian roulette here,
13 in my mind, as to whether or not -- So certainly, to the extent
14 that the agency has been very amendable, or sensitive, to those
15 types of issues, if maybe they can extend that window a little
16 bit more, if and when those circumstances occur, I guess is all
17 -- You know, if this were to go to August, and so that's all. I
18 mean, I can -- We can amend it, or we can just leave it as-is,
19 if staff is comfortable and everyone is comfortable with trying
20 to get it in for an August timeline.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Ms. Bosarge, I will recognize you, but I
23 want to ask a quick question to Kevin's point, and, Carrie or
24 Mara, and I'm not sure, but, when we vote on this motion and we
25 move forward, we note the flexibility, but, even if we go final
26 in June with the current document, it won't be on the books,
27 and, I mean, you're already going to be through summer, and
28 that's kind of my thinking, and so, if we just marry them, and
29 then we just get it all out there for the first of next year,
30 but let's hear what Ms. Bosarge has to say.

31
32 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, I think I would prefer to go final in June
33 with what we have, and then this part might not get -- Might not
34 be available for them until next year, but, if we go final in
35 June, and if the agency would give it some priority, that six-
36 month window, you might have it in place before the end of the
37 year, but, if we wait until August -- I don't know, and you know
38 how it goes around Thanksgiving and Christmas, when it comes to
39 trying to get anything done, and so I think we probably should
40 go --

41
42 These people are trying to get these on the boats and
43 functioning right now, and that's going to be the biggest burden
44 on the supply chain for these things, when they all rush in
45 there to get them, because we've only got half the fleet
46 outfitted right now. Then that leads to possible issues with,
47 you know, the functioning of the unit, and I don't -- I think it
48 needs to go faster, rather than slower, and I prefer June.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** All right, and so here we go. We have a motion
3 on the board to direct staff to develop an abbreviated framework
4 document addressing the trip declaration requirements. Is there
5 any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.
6 Ms. Somerset and then Mr. Anson.

7
8 **MS. SOMERSET:** Mr. Anson can go first. I have a question about
9 document clarification, and so I will hold.

10
11 **MR. ANSON:** Actually, mine is not related to this topic, and I
12 just wanted to -- Actually, I might bring it up under Other
13 Business. How's that?

14
15 **MS. SOMERSET:** All right, and so, just for my edification and
16 clarification for when I'm updating this document, and sorry to
17 go back, but I just wanted to ask one more thing about the
18 permit holder versus the vessel owner-operator, so that, when
19 I'm making these changes -- Most of the VMS regulations in Part
20 622 refer to the vessel owner-operator and not the permit
21 holder, and so I just wanted to clarify that this EFE, the
22 equipment failure exemption, would be permit holder, but a
23 majority of the others, including the power-down exemption are
24 the onus of the vessel owner-operator, and I understand that
25 several -- There are captains who are also the owners and the
26 permit holders, but the permit holder is not always the captain
27 or operator.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I will let Dr. Masi and Dr. Stephen speak to
30 this, but -- I am kind of asking this as a question, but I think
31 it needs to be consistent in all of the documents. Otherwise,
32 it could get a little messy, if you're trying to do different
33 things in different areas, and I thought, with Dr. Stephen's
34 presentation, that it said permit holder, and so I don't know
35 what you all have to do, the agencies, to get on the same page.

36
37 **MS. SOMERSET:** Right, Madam Chair, and that's why we wanted some
38 clarification, because it could cause some confusion, because
39 the other requirements point towards the vessel owner-operator,
40 and so I just wanted to point that out.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Thank you. Dr. Masi, does that take
43 care of what you needed us to take action on?

44
45 **DR. MASI:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Ms. Bosarge and then Mr. Diaz.
48

1 **MS. BOSARGE:** While we have Dr. Stephen on the phone, or the
2 webinar, I had one more question. That \$950 that you all came
3 up with as the maximum reimbursement that you can get -- I was
4 looking at some old paperwork that I had, but one of those
5 cellular units is just at \$2,000, and it's \$1,995, and it's
6 about twice what you're willing to reimburse for one of them,
7 and how did you come up with that maximum of \$950?

8
9 **DR. STEPHEN:** I reached out to VMS as well, when I saw the
10 dollar amount, and so their analysis is they took an average of
11 the units, and now that most expensive cellular unit is actually
12 a hybrid unit that is cellular and satellite, and so they
13 discounted it from their analysis.

14
15 **MS. BOSARGE:** So how many units can you actually get on the
16 cellular side, and, I mean, we have fourteen units, and it looks
17 like now we're down to three that you can actually get fully
18 reimbursed for, and are those three less than \$950, the last
19 three remaining?

20
21 **DR. STEPHEN:** I would have to look at their analysis again, but
22 I think at least three of those units that were strictly
23 cellular would have the reimbursement cover the full cost. Now,
24 if you choose a more expensive unit, you don't get reimbursed
25 for the full cost, but you do get reimbursed up to the \$950
26 amount.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Diaz.

29
30 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think most of us probably
31 received an email from one of the captains in Florida, and he
32 was talking about some of the fields on the app don't auto-
33 repopulate, and it might be just specific to certain units, and
34 so, in his email, he specifically talked about he returns to the
35 same dock every day, and he uses hook-and-line gear every day,
36 and he has the same number of crew virtually every day.

37
38 Anyway, he was making a comment about it would be good if they
39 could auto-populate, and so, Dr. Masi or Dr. Stephen, can you
40 all speak to that, about where we're at with that, or if that's
41 just with some units, or if there's any options there for the
42 future? Thank you.

43
44 **DR. MASI:** Thanks for that question, and so the reason we have
45 chosen not to allow certain fields to auto-fill is just for
46 scientific integrity. We hope to be able to use the data
47 someday, and we want to ensure that we're getting an accurate
48 representation of those values from the for-hire fishery.

1
2 If a field is always auto-filled, then you run into the
3 situation where if, in general, you do the same thing all the
4 time, but, in a rare instance, you happen to change something,
5 you might not remember to change that field, because it's
6 already filled in for you, and so we just want to try to
7 eliminate the potential to overlook it, if possible.

8
9 Now, there are some options, and we do allow vendors to take the
10 path of a favorite, and, in VESL, for instance, if you have a
11 field, the value that you most often fill in will be listed at
12 the top of the list, in bold, and so easy to select from all the
13 other options, and so you just hit that, and it will fill in for
14 you. The other app we have is eTRIPS, and we're currently
15 working with them right now on the auto-fill.

16
17 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Dr. Masi.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. I have two quick questions, or,
20 actually, I have three. Dr. Masi, the 8,000 compliance calls
21 that you referenced on Slide 2, could you very briefly, just
22 maybe a couple or three bullet points, and what are the
23 highlights, or what are the high-liners, that people are calling
24 in about, or what are the compliance issues?

25
26 **DR. MASI:** I can touch on that, and so, essentially, this
27 changes over time, right. When the program started, and so
28 remember this 8,000 is from January 4, 2021, and we, obviously,
29 had a lot of questions about how to get set up with the
30 different apps, how to set up an account, things like that.

31
32 Over time, we saw things like, and we would call out to people,
33 that you're missing a logbook, or you potentially had a field
34 filled in wrong, or you were missing a field, and so things like
35 that over time. More recently, of course, the calls have been
36 largely focused around either missing reports, but also a lot of
37 calls about VMS requirements and how to get set up with that and
38 how to get the reimbursement.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, and, as I said earlier, I'm going to
41 put on the record the telephone number that needs to be called,
42 and so, if anyone is listening, and they don't have that number,
43 and so to Greg's point of maybe they are calling the wrong phone
44 number. It's 1-833-707-1632, correct?

45
46 **DR. MASI:** That's correct. Thanks, Ms. Boggs.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. We do have a question for you, Dr. Masi,

1 and Dr. Stephen, for Other Business, and will you all remain on
2 the line, or do we need to go ahead and take care of that now?

3

4 **DR. MASI:** I can remain on the line.

5

6 **DR. STEPHEN:** I will be on the line as well.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Thank you. All right. Dr. Hollensead.

9

10 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for a little
11 housekeeping, SERO has been really good about these reports and
12 these updates on SEFHIER, and I just wanted to ask the committee
13 about the frequency of these reports. What would you all like
14 to do?

15

16 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Bob Gill.

17

18 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to weigh-in on
19 that one. We have a new program, and, everything else being
20 equal, my thinking is we don't need a report every meeting, but
21 this program has some hiccups at the get-go, the non-compliance,
22 in my mind, and so I'm thinking an appropriate frequency might
23 be every other meeting, to get an update on where we are and
24 where we're going, with an idea to broaden that out when things
25 seem to settle down.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I mean, I'm fine with that. I mean, I think
28 it's very important, until we get some of these issues resolved,
29 and as we continue to hear from the captains, and that might too
30 determine the frequency, and we're hearing a lot of issues, and
31 I will let Dr. Stunz weigh-in.

32

33 **DR. STUNZ:** I actually would like maybe to see it every meeting
34 for the initial beginning here, Bob, and I think for sure we
35 could back off once we feel like, okay, well, it seems to be,
36 you know, headed where we want it to be, but, with the
37 compliance, and the issues we just talked about about maybe not
38 getting all the information they need, for the next few
39 meetings, I would prefer --

40

41 It doesn't have to be that extensive, as we've discussed today,
42 but just a brief update about, you know, here's the users, and
43 here's the latent, the ones we know about, and here's non-
44 compliance or whatever, just so we kind of keep a close finger
45 on what's going on, and then back off, a little later down the
46 line, but I'm not going to fight that too hard, if it's not
47 possible.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Anson.

2
3 **MR. ANSON:** I would just add that, when the time is appropriate,
4 any, you know, kind of twenty-thousand or thirty-thousand-foot
5 level summary statistics of the analysis, any QA/QC issues or
6 something that has arisen, that we might be able to discuss here
7 at the council and be able to get back out to the community, if
8 there are certain things that are impacting the data, but no set
9 timeline that you have to bring anything back for the next
10 meeting, but just, at some point, it would be nice to see some
11 data start to populate, and then, if you do identify any issues
12 related to data collection, that the council might be a good
13 place to advertise those. Thank you.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Donaldson.

16
17 **MR. DONALDSON:** I just want to agree with Dr. Stunz, and I
18 think, initially, we probably should do it every meeting, and
19 then, as the program matures, we can adjust as necessary, but I
20 think, for right now, there's enough issues that a presentation
21 every meeting would be a good idea.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Hollensead, I would agree, until we kind of
24 get all of these issues worked out, because I think we're going
25 to continue to hear, especially through the summer, as it really
26 gets ramped up, and then maybe, Bob, next year, we get a
27 presentation in January and say, okay, we'll look at it again in
28 June, and so I would say every month from here. Okay. The next
29 item --

30
31 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Susan?

32
33 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** I'm sorry, Andy. Go ahead.

34
35 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I have my hand raised, but it's sometimes being
36 seen and sometimes not, and so I guess a question, based on the
37 comments that were just made, and, you know, I hear people,
38 obviously, talking about they want the presentation at every
39 meeting, and there was a mention of every other meeting, but the
40 discussion centered around because of all these issues and
41 compliance, but I guess what I'm struggling with is what is the
42 council -- What do we want to bring to the council, in terms of
43 decisions before the council?

44
45 This presentation was a very good one, in my opinion, because we
46 were being very reactive and responsive to feedback and
47 information we've heard and some key decision points that we
48 felt that we needed to lay back out to the council or convey to

1 fishermen.

2
3 If the information you're desiring, going forward, is kind of
4 similar to that, then I guess my argument would be that staff
5 would need to help decide at what point are there things that
6 the council needs to weigh-in on, versus just kind of summary
7 statistics and data, to kind of let you know these are the
8 changes that have taken place between meetings, and I don't see
9 that nearly as helpful and informative to the council as the
10 larger discussion that we've had around a lot of issues today,
11 and so I wanted to get some feedback, or reaction, to that from
12 those that have already weighed-in, and let's see if we can have
13 a little more flexibility in deciding like at what point do
14 things come back to the council, versus every meeting we have to
15 report-out, even if there's really not a lot of changes or
16 information that we would be bringing back to you, other than
17 some kind of updates on statistics.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Well, I will start that discussion. I mean, I
20 would certainly like to see -- We would have to go back to I
21 think it's Slide 2 or 3, where it gives us the statistics, how
22 many -- Because, I mean, this is something that the captains
23 asked for, and the council took a lot of time and worked through
24 this, and it's Slide 3.

25
26 Basically, in just a short -- I don't necessarily guess that we
27 have to have a presentation, but, you know, what is the
28 compliance, and is there any issue out there that -- I mean, I
29 understand that we made -- We took action on one specific issue
30 today, because it was requested, but just for us to understand
31 the compliance, and, if the compliance continues to be an issue,
32 then what is the reason? What needs -- Does the council need to
33 take action to help with that?

34
35 So I don't think it needs to be as elaborate as what we saw
36 today, but I think, until we get this at least through its first
37 full year, with both VMS and reporting, just a little update.
38 Thank you. Dr. Stunz.

39
40 **DR. STUNZ:** Susan, that's exactly it. Nothing extensive, Andy,
41 and I would -- The slide we're looking at right now is all I
42 would be looking for, kind of like how we do landings, something
43 really quick, because my concern is, if it's every other meeting
44 for now, in this initial phase, if something comes up and then
45 it's not time to address it at that meeting, and then it goes to
46 another -- You could be months down the line, and we're not
47 being probably nearly as adaptive, or responsive, as we need to
48 be, and hopefully everything goes fine and then we back off,

1 but, at least for now, I would prefer something just as simple
2 as this slide right here.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Gill.

5

6 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and so I am in the minority
7 here, I guess, but that's okay. I am thinking, Andy, along the
8 lines that you're thinking, and that is that the process is
9 going along, and our interaction is fairly limited and unlikely,
10 and I'm sure, if there's a problem that arises that needs
11 council attention, then you all are going to bring that to us,
12 whether we have a presentation or not, but I am satisfied that
13 you're going to be working the problem, like you have, and it's
14 going to move on, and so there's no action item that I see the
15 council really getting involved with that needs that frequency,
16 and I was thinking of the workload and what's the value, and so
17 I am still persuaded that I don't see a need for every meeting.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Another thing too, Bob, I think too is there is
20 several captains out there, when they see these numbers, they're
21 going to find those folks and find out why aren't you doing
22 this, because they want people to be compliant, and they want
23 this program to be successful, and I don't know, Dr. Hollensead,
24 if it's just something that SEFHIER can just send it and you
25 provide the update, just a very simple one-pager and here it is,
26 but I am like Greg, and I would like to see it monthly, at least
27 for now. Ms. Bosarge.

28

29 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and I think this is, you know, a big enough
30 program, and it's really light years ahead of the type of
31 reporting that you had before, and I think this is the true
32 implementation, right, and everything is finally mandatory, for,
33 what, thirty-five days now or something, and so we're not well
34 into this yet, and I think we need an update at each meeting.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Is that what you need, Dr. Hollensead?

37

38 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Yes, ma'am.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** All right. Well, then would you take us
41 through Action Item Number VI, please?

42

43 **NMFS-SERO USE OF COUNCIL FUNDING UTILIZED BY THE PERMITS OFFICE**

44

45 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Okay. Agenda Item VI, Mr. Strelcheck will give
46 a verbal update on the SERO's use of council funding utilized by
47 the Permits Office. If you recall, the council funded \$94,000
48 that have been applied to updating the SERO permits software

1 system, and this is informational for now, and no action needs
2 to be taken. As I understand it, Mr. Strelcheck will sort of
3 tee-off a more in-depth presentation from a representative from
4 the permits staff that will occur at the next meeting.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Strelcheck, whenever you're ready, sir.

7
8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Recall that, last year, I
9 approached the council about providing some funding for our
10 permits online system. This is a multi-million-dollar overhaul
11 of our permits system that had reached end-of-life. Previously,
12 you were only able to renew permits, with our old system, and we
13 have now built the system and expanded it for all types of
14 permit applications, and so it's still a work in progress, but
15 it's largely developed.

16
17 We rolled it out back in August of last year, and so the \$94,000
18 -- I can't say specifically what it went for, but what I can say
19 is that money has been well spent, and the system itself is
20 reducing the amount of time that it takes to renew a permit, and
21 it has almost cut that timeframe in half at this point, because
22 what is now happening is it's reducing the number of errors and
23 the back-and-forth that we have to have, in terms of sending
24 paperwork to and from permit applicants.

25
26 You're also seeing a growing number of people that are using the
27 system, which is going to make it more efficient and timely for
28 them to receive their permits and renewals and for us to process
29 those permits and renewals, and so we are spending a lot of time
30 now working on some outreach and education, and there is
31 certainly an emphasis, obviously, on trying to drive people
32 towards the permits online system and for them to utilize it
33 effectively, and so, at this stage, we are continuing to put
34 additional funding from NOAA Fisheries to support both the
35 operations and maintenance of the system, but the continued
36 development to enhance the system.

37
38 Kevin McIntosh, my Permits Branch Chief, I have talked with
39 Carrie Simmons about having him present at an upcoming council
40 meeting, and what he can do is provide a much more in-depth
41 presentation of how the system looks and some of the statistics
42 we're seeing and the outreach and education efforts that we're
43 doing for educating permit applicants, and so, with that, I will
44 answer any questions you have. Thanks.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Andy. I will say it works very
47 well. I've had a couple reach out to -- A couple of captains
48 reach out to me, and they've had issues, and Kevin has been very

1 responsive and has very quickly addressed the issues, and so I
2 think it's working well. Any other questions or comments for
3 Andy? All right. Seeing none, Dr. Hollensead, would you take
4 us through Agenda Item VII?

5
6 **UPDATE ON WORKSHOP TO EVALUATE STATE-FEDERAL RECREATIONAL SURVEY**
7 **DIFFERENCES**
8

9 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** For Agenda Item VII, we're going to have an
10 update on a workshop that was held at the end of February
11 looking at state-federal recreational survey differences. The
12 states had an opportunity to provide some of their data and
13 survey information to some consultants, who then got to provide
14 some feedback and then, at this workshop, sort of have a broader
15 discussion of those topics, and so Dr. Richard Cody, I believe,
16 is on the line to provide that update to you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you. Dr. Cody, are you with us this
19 morning?

20
21 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** Yes, I'm here. Can you hear me okay?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Yes, sir. Please go ahead.

24
25 **DR. CODY:** All right. As Dr. Hollensead mentioned, we had a
26 workshop in late February to address congressional mandates for
27 an independent review of the surveys and make improvements to
28 those surveys, but also to complete, or to start the process to
29 complete, the transition for the state surveys, and so,
30 basically, this was a two-and-a-half-day workshop, and it
31 focused on two approaches, or two dual approaches.

32
33 One was to develop the research needed to address the
34 congressional mandates, and, also, the second part was
35 completing the transition process, and the idea was that we had
36 to have both occurring at the same time, to make progress on the
37 transition, and we couldn't have one bottleneck any kind of
38 progress with the other.

39
40 The workshop basically outlined the plan that would be a dual
41 approach, as I mentioned, and, since then, there has been the
42 development of an outline of a transition plan, and, next week,
43 the transition team working group will meet to discuss the next
44 steps with the workshop and to flesh out who is responsible for
45 certain parts of the transition plan.

46
47 In the workshop, there was some discussion of the data
48 management aspects of the Gulf surveys, and, generally, the

1 approach taken there was, with the help of Gulf States, was to
2 have the Gulf States take charge of management, given that this
3 was going to take some time to develop, or it's getting to a
4 point where it was satisfactory in the long-term.

5
6 Then the other aspect that was mentioned in the workshop was the
7 communication related to the work of the transition team, and
8 so, right now, we're in the process of identifying members from
9 the different states and regional entities that will populate
10 this communications team.

11
12 As I mentioned, the working group will meet next Tuesday, and,
13 basically, the discussion will focus on some of the products
14 from the workshop. We have two main products that are expected,
15 and one is a report from the workshop chair, Paul Rago, and this
16 will basically summarize the workshop proceedings and hopefully
17 integrate some of the information from the consultants relative
18 to their research recommendations. Paul is still working on his
19 part of that, and so the workshop report, and what he has right
20 now is he has transcripts of the workshop, and he has notes
21 taken by staff members that recorded the workshop, and then,
22 also, he has the draft report from the consultants, which we
23 just received, that outlines some of the recommendations.

24
25 Those recommendations, I can say, are both broad and then
26 specific to the states as well, and so there are some broad
27 recommendations that focus on survey types and surveys that have
28 effort, separate effort and catch components, versus the
29 recapture methods, and then, also, they have some specific
30 recommendations relating to the actual states themselves, and so
31 directed more to the states, and so we will be sharing that with
32 the team on Tuesday, plus, right now, we are in the process of,
33 as I said, of finalizing that report that Paul will have for us
34 some time, we hope, later this month.

35
36 One other point to make is that, related to the transition
37 process, some specific -- I mention today probably the gag
38 calibrations related to the stock assessment for gag, and so we
39 were charged with developing specific TORs, terms of reference,
40 for inclusion of the gag calibrated estimates in the assessment
41 process.

42
43 We have received input from the Southeast Science Center, and
44 also from the consultants, and shared those with Florida, and so
45 Florida now is working to address those TORs, and we will be
46 having a meeting with some Florida representatives and Bev Sauls
47 to discuss -- Just to make sure we're on the same page, as far
48 as the expectations for those terms of reference.

1
2 I will mention, also, that related to some of the information
3 that was presented in the workshop, we have a meeting coming up
4 next month, and so with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
5 Fisheries, regarding their calibrations, and so we'll be
6 discussing that, and that's relative to the use of calibrated
7 estimates for the upcoming red snapper assessment.

8
9 I think that's basically where we are at this point. The
10 meeting next week will be, I think, pivotal, in that it will
11 determine kind of the next steps. Since we do have a draft of
12 the consultants' recommendations, the idea will be to focus on
13 how best to complete the resources needed to address those
14 recommendations. Thank you.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Cody. Are there any questions
17 for Dr. Cody? Mr. Gill.

18
19 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Dr. Cody. I
20 appreciate the update. Recognizing it's a work in progress, but
21 also recognizing the importance of that work in progress, and
22 following up on our discussions during the workshop, my concern
23 about the timeline comes up, and I would like to ask if you
24 could give a broad overview of what that timeline looks like,
25 and I'm not looking for specifics, but kind of how long it's
26 going to take before transition is complete or some indicator of
27 where we are and when we hope to end up. Thank you.

28
29 **DR. CODY:** I can address that, I think, broadly. Obviously, the
30 research components will address the need for some improvements
31 to each of the surveys, and the consultants have specific
32 recommendations related to non-sampling as well as sampling
33 error, and so those are going to take some time to complete.
34 However, that shouldn't, I think, be a bottleneck for the
35 transition plan, but they will still need to be accounted for in
36 that process.

37
38 I would say, realistically, the research plan is going to take,
39 depending on identification of funding and getting things
40 through the approval processes and so on, it could take between
41 two and five years, and so that's obviously an extended
42 timeline, but it doesn't probably help with transition or
43 anything, and so we're hoping that we can address and prioritize
44 those research interests over the coming months, in
45 conversations with the working group, and that will help us, I
46 think, identify the major things that we can address quickly and
47 put us in a position where we will have surveys that are --

48

1 I would say, as far as timelines are concerned, in the immediate
2 future, I think our primary concern would be the gag assessment
3 and having the review completed for the calibration, in time for
4 that, and so Florida is working with us and is expected -- They
5 expect a deadline of later this month for turning in their
6 documentation for review, and we'll work with them to make sure
7 that there is -- That we get that done.

8
9 Then it will pass to the consultants, and we expect to have that
10 completed -- I think, yesterday, in the Reef Fish Committee
11 meeting, a May 25 deadline was proposed there, and so we don't
12 see an issue with meeting that deadline. It does bump up
13 against some of the consultants, with their day-job work, but I
14 think that we should be able to get that done.

15
16 In the immediate future, that deadline shouldn't -- But I would
17 imagine that we should be able to identify, over the next few
18 weeks at least, given that we have the consultant report in-
19 hand, some manageable timeline, when it comes to transitioning
20 the surveys, and I would be focusing on trying to get that done
21 within the next two years, at the most, but at least have a plan
22 outlined.

23
24 We may not have all the pieces in place, such as the data
25 management aspects and things like that, but we'll be to a point
26 where we're functioning and can move forward, and so sort of a
27 non-answer, because I haven't given any specific dates, other
28 than the ones for gag, but I think we would be happy to provide
29 updates of the discussions that we'll be having with the
30 transition team, because there are many moving parts to this. I
31 mean, one is the big consideration of everyone's ability to
32 address the different components of transitioning.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you. General Spraggins.

35
36 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Dr. Cody, thank you so much. I just
37 wanted to tell you that we appreciate the efforts that NMFS has
38 made to address our differences in the surveys and all, and we
39 appreciate the workshop, and I can tell you that we are trying
40 to do something now, and we have a consultant that we're working
41 with, as I briefed yesterday, about the possibility of trying to
42 find improvements to our system and the way that we can work
43 better with data collection, and I look forward to working with
44 you all in the very near future, to make sure that we can make a
45 better effort with this. Thank you very much.

46
47 **DR. CODY:** Thank you, General Spraggins, and I will just add to
48 that that Trevor has been very upfront and forthcoming about

1 sharing information with us, and so we appreciate that, also.
2 Thank you.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Cody. I don't see any other --
5 I do. Never mind. Mr. Diaz.

6
7 **MR. DIAZ:** I also want to thank Dr. Cody for the efforts of
8 Science and Technology and the stuff that you all are working
9 on. I am very interested in hearing further updates on this
10 transition team regularly, and I think this is very important.
11 I do think that -- I know the State of Mississippi has been
12 working closely with your team, Dr. Cody, and I do think they've
13 made a -- They've presented some compelling evidence that there
14 is some real issue with low sample size and the numbers that we
15 get out of that, and so I'm very interested to hear what comes
16 out of this transition team and some of the recommendations that
17 are made on the sampling and non-sampling errors, and so I would
18 urge that we get regular updates on this transition team, at
19 least for the next few meetings, and see how this is going.
20 Thank you again, Dr. Cody.

21
22 **DR. CODY:** Thank you.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons.

25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank
27 you, Dr. Cody, for the update. I think, as you said, there's a
28 lot of moving parts here going on, and we don't have -- You said
29 the report is not yet available for this transition workshop.
30 When that report is complete, I think it would be imperative,
31 and I plan to ask for it at the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting
32 in May, that the document that was developed with your agency,
33 the Science Center, and the Southeast Regional Office, and that
34 document is "The Recommended Use of Current Gulf of Mexico
35 Surveys for Marine Recreational Fishing in Stock Assessments",
36 and I really think that document needs to be updated based on
37 the results of the transition team.

38
39 There is outdated dates in there regarding those options, and
40 any of the things that would occur, based on that workshop, it's
41 not clear how that will translate into the assessment and
42 management process, and so I would really urge all those folks
43 involved to please consider updating that when that report is
44 complete, and that is a document that we can look at at the
45 council level, and staff can look at, and the public can review
46 as an understanding of where we are in this process and how we
47 see it flowing through stock assessments and into management.
48 Thank you.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Cody, do you have any response to that?

3
4 **DR. CODY:** Well, I would say that I agree. We did identify some
5 exceptions in the workshop that I think need to be specifically
6 addressed. That said, I think, also, and I haven't had a chance
7 to do a deep dive into the consultant recommendations, but there
8 is some information there, I think, that is relevant to that
9 document and could be used to update it.

10
11 The other thing I will mention too is the consultants did make
12 some specific recommendations related to, as Dale pointed out,
13 sample size and rare-event species, and so there is some input
14 there, and I would be happy to provide updates as we continue
15 this work.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Cody. All right. Seeing no
18 other hands, we'll go to Other Business. Mr. Anson.

19
20 **OTHER BUSINESS**

21
22 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am a little hesitant
23 about bringing up this topic, because I don't want to alarm
24 anybody, but, since Dr. Masi and Dr. Stephen were here present
25 for this committee, this is an issue that kind of reared its
26 head at the Ecosystem Committee meeting, and it relates to the
27 FEP that we've been discussing relative to the notion of one of
28 the aspects, or one of the ideas, that was brought forward
29 during that committee regarding cooperative research.

30
31 I was just curious if Dr. Masi or Dr. Stephen could just provide
32 a simple answer as to this question I have, and that question is
33 if, in the future, it is decided that cooperative research could
34 be introduced through the for-hire sector, is the process that
35 was set up to establish SEFHIER -- Is that process in a position
36 where it could accommodate the addition of either a module that
37 would be created specifically to an ecosystem issue, a fishery
38 ecosystem issue, or additional questions that could be added to
39 the current suite of questions?

40
41 Again, I'm just trying to think ahead, and I'm not promoting it,
42 because, again, it's nothing that we decided at the Ecosystem,
43 but I'm just curious to see if that could be easily implemented
44 through what's been established through the SEFHIER program.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Masi or Dr. Stephen?

47
48 **DR. STEPHEN:** I'll take a stab at this one. Sorry, and I wasn't

1 in the Ecosystem meeting, and so I didn't hear how the
2 conversation went there, but if you're asking, if we add
3 additional questions to SEFHIER -- I will give you kind of a
4 layout of how that works.

5
6 We would need to get PRA approval, which is the approval we need
7 to add any questions to the system, and so that's kind of a
8 paperwork aspect to it, and it does need to be approved
9 throughout the process and have strong justification.

10
11 The next step then would be reaching out to the different
12 vendors and establishing a timeline for them to do the
13 development work, in order to add those questions to not only
14 their application, but we would also need to reach out and
15 establish the infrastructure within the data receiving systems,
16 in order to get that information as well, and so well within the
17 realm of possibility, and it's the timeline of it that I might
18 get a little bit concerned on, if it's expected to occur
19 rapidly.

20
21 Because these were all outside applications and not applications
22 owned by NMFS, we're a little bit limited in asking for them to
23 add additional questions, and that's just they need their
24 development time within their other businesses to do that
25 development. Did that answer what you were looking for?

26
27 **MR. ANSON:** It did. Thank you very much.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** That was a very good question, Kevin, and I
30 agree with you. I mean, that would be a way to gather
31 additional information. Any other business? Peter and then
32 John Walter.

33
34 **MR. HOOD:** I just wanted to mention that the South Atlantic
35 Council, at their meeting last month, has started working on an
36 electronic -- A commercial electronic logbook amendment, and
37 we're -- I know you'll be talking about this at the June
38 meeting, and I think Carrie had mentioned that it would be on
39 the agenda there, but we're recommending that that perhaps be a
40 joint amendment between both of the councils, because the
41 coastal logbooks are used by a variety of fisheries, both in the
42 Gulf and the South Atlantic. Again, it would be helpful, at
43 least when you get into that conversation, about thinking about
44 doing something jointly with the South Atlantic. Thanks.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** John Walter.

47
48 **DR. WALTER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to follow-up

1 on Mr. Anson's comment about how this could potentially
2 facilitate CRP work, and I think that it definitely could, and
3 perhaps some of the models are on how fishermen could help with
4 surveys, or how their data could be helped to inform things,
5 which we might not have very much information on, and I think we
6 talked about that in the fireside chat last night, in
7 particular, and there's a number of species for which there are
8 fisheries for, but we really either don't have surveys, and we
9 could perhaps develop indices based on their fishery-dependent
10 information, which this could really facilitate, and then, also,
11 in perhaps designed surveys that would utilize fishing vessels,
12 and I think, in that case, there is a good example, in the South
13 Atlantic, with a deepwater longline survey that's operating on
14 commercial longline vessels and actually getting us really good
15 data for a lot of the species that we previously didn't have
16 data for.

17
18 Cooperative research is something that I know is high on the
19 agency's list of priorities, in terms of being able to harness
20 the information and the expertise of our fishermen to support
21 the science. Thanks.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Walter. Anything else for this
24 committee?

25
26 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Susan, I do have something.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Okay. Go ahead, Andy.

29
30 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I just wanted to follow-up on Peter's comment,
31 and so, as he stated, the South Atlantic Council is moving
32 forward with a logbook action. They are going to look at an
33 options paper in June, and I think the goal is to try to take
34 final action as early as December of this year, and so I would
35 ask Carrie. Do you need a motion from the Gulf Council to
36 proceed at this point with a joint amendment with the South
37 Atlantic Council? I certainly recommend that, and I think it
38 would be prudent to go ahead and do so.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons.

41
42 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, and,
43 actually, we've been talking about this for a while, and I think
44 we had a motion from February of 2013, and so it's been on the
45 list for a while, and so we are planning for a joint amendment,
46 and I hope we can make it happen and there's no divorces, but
47 we'll have a discussion and try to get involved with the IPT and
48 the South Atlantic to bring, hopefully, draft options, if not a

1 presentation, in June.

2

3 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Great. Thanks.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Bosarge. Dr. Simmmons, we don't need a
6 motion, or Dr. Hollensead?

7

8 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** I think Carrie is indicating that no motion is
9 required, because it's been several years ago, but I actually
10 had a question, and maybe Mr. Strelcheck, or perhaps Mr. Hood,
11 can answer this for me. I know there has been -- We have
12 brought the commercial electronic logbook topic to the Reef Fish
13 AP and the CMP AP, and there has been interest from our APs
14 that, if the paper logbooks, as they exist, go to an electronic
15 framework, that there is strong support for that.

16

17 I guess my question is, and it seems like that perhaps could be
18 moved quickly, but, just for clarification, is that what the
19 South Atlantic is working on, or are they also talking about
20 adding other fields, reporting a hail-in before offload, because
21 those things, you know, our APs indicated they would want some
22 input on, and perhaps some workshops, and so that would take a
23 little bit longer, and so just some clarification on that would
24 be helpful.

25

26 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Andy.

27

28 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Certainly John Walter can weigh-in here, but my
29 understanding is that it's a kind of simple, streamlined action
30 that the South Atlantic Council was pursuing and that it would
31 be essentially just allowing for electronic submission of the
32 same variables and data that are submitted currently on the
33 paper-based forms, without expanding out the requirements.

34

35 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Thank you for that clarification. I appreciate
36 it.

37

38 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Ms. Bosarge.

39

40 **MS. BOSARGE:** So a different topic, if that's okay, if there's
41 no more feedback on that.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Yes, ma'am.

44

45 **MS. BOSARGE:** Okay. I was wondering, and this is for you, Dr.
46 Walter, and the wenchman -- We've had a discussion, and, since
47 Susan has got six more minutes in her committee, we might as
48 well use it, right, and we had a discussion about wenchman at

1 the fireside chat last night too, kind of going in line with
2 what you all were talking about on cooperative research and
3 getting information from the fishermen on some of these species
4 where maybe you don't have as much information.

5
6 We need to get that topic before the SSC, to really start moving
7 on that and doing anything with it, and it's my understanding
8 that the Science Center is going to provide, obviously, that
9 last stock assessment, that data-poor assessment, that we did I
10 believe, or tried to do, on using the mid-water snapper complex
11 and any other information that you may have, and what do you
12 think our timeframe has on you getting any and all wenchman data
13 that you all might have, mid-water snapper depth complex data
14 you might have, over to council staff, so they know when they
15 can put it on the SSC agenda?

16
17 **DR. WALTER:** Thanks for that question. I can't say what the
18 timeline would necessarily be, because I don't exactly know all
19 the information sources that we might be able to get that from,
20 but I can get back to you, and back to council staff, on when
21 that might be kind of a useful conversation that is seeded by
22 data for the SSC.

23
24 One thing that I will comment on is that, given that there are
25 funds available, through the competitive Cooperative Research
26 Program, which often the scientists take on, but they have to be
27 partnerships with the industry as well, so the industry can look
28 to trying to really target those particular topics of interest
29 and then find a scientific partner to go in on, and those can be
30 both within the agency as well as external, and so I think
31 that's a resource that we need to start to consider, because
32 that allows proactive -- It allows the industry to take the
33 action that they may want to take and find the partner to make
34 it happen and then bring that science and data, because, while I
35 would love to devote our resources, the Science Center
36 resources, to all of these, there are a number of pressing
37 resources, and we just can't get to all of them with the
38 attention that people may want.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** A follow-up, Ms. Bosarge?

41
42 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and that sounds excellent, and I like those
43 kind of ideas. All right. Well, if you -- Maybe by the
44 committee report during Full Council tomorrow, if you have any
45 feedback on the timeline for -- Because I think it's just stuff
46 you're going to pull, and it's not new things you will have to
47 do, but you're just going to have to find whatever data you have
48 and send it to staff, and so maybe if you can get us an update

1 by Full Council, and that will give me a better idea, before we
2 leave this meeting, of what SSC agenda that we'll see that topic
3 on. Thanks.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Dr. Simmons.

6

7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I know
8 you're trying to wrap up. Just along the cooperative research
9 idea, I mean, I do think that's a good idea, but, historically,
10 it's been quite competitive, and it's been not a lot of money,
11 and it's been only for one year, and so I think we have to think
12 about perhaps expectations with that.

13

14 You know, when you're trying to answer some of these difficult
15 questions offshore, it's not really possible to do it in that
16 amount of time with that little amount of money, and so perhaps
17 we should think about revamping some of those programs to meet
18 some of these needs, and then, on top of that, it would have to
19 flow through the priorities as well, to get some of this mid-
20 water and deepwater species to the top of the list. Thanks.

21

22 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Mr. Gill.

23

24 **MR. GILL:** Quickly, to that point, there's also the MARFIN
25 program that allows longer timeframes than the CRP program, and
26 typically is better funded, that might also be used.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN BOGGS:** Anything else to come before this committee?
29 Seeing none, that concludes our committee.

30

31 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 6, 2022.)

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