

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

294TH MEETING

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

Courtyard Marriott

Gulfport, Mississippi

APRIL 5-6, 2023

VOTING MEMBERS

Greg Stunz.....Texas
 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
 Tom Frazer.....Florida
 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
 Bob Gill.....Florida
 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
 C.J. Sweetman.....Florida
 Troy Williamson.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
 LCDR Lisa Motoi.....USCG

STAFF

Assane Diagne.....Economist
 Matt Freeman.....Economist
 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

1 Billy Archer.....Panama City, FL
2 Charlie Bergmann.....MS
3 Idrissa Boube.....BOEM
4 Eric Brazer.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance
5 Catherine Bruger.....Ocean Conservancy
6 Rick Burris.....MS DNR
7 Laura Guzman Chicola.....
8 Jason Delacruz.....FL
9 Andy Egeland.....Venice, FL
10 Katie Fischer.....Matlacha, FL
11 Richard Fischer.....LA
12 Will Freeman.....MS OLE
13 Joe Georgia.....Seminole, FL
14 Brad Gorst.....
15 Jim Green.....Destin, FL
16 Buddy Guindon.....Galveston, TX
17 Ken Haddad.....ASA, FL
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19 Sean Heverin.....Madeira Beach, FL
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26 Brian Lewis.....
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34 Kelia Paul.....Panama City Beach, FL
35 Tom Roller.....SAFMC
36 Josh Sauls.....Panama City, FL
37 Eric Schmidt.....St. Petersburg, FL
38 Clarence Seymour.....
39 Randy Sobieraj.....
40 Casey Streeter.....FL
41 David Walker.....AL
42 Ed Walker.....FL
43 John Walter.....SEFSC
44 Garner Wetzel.....MS
45 Johnny Williams.....Galveston, TX
46 Dale Woodruff.....AL
47 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL
48 Jim Zurbrick.....Steinhatchee, FL
49

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1
2
3 Table of Motions.....4
4
5 Call to Order, Announcements, and Introductions.....7
6
7 Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes.....9
8
9 Presentations.....10
10 Update from BOEM on Wind Energy Development in the GOM.....10
11 NOAA Fisheries EEJ Strategy, Regional Implementation
12 Process, and Schedule.....15
13
14 Supporting Agencies Update.....25
15 South Atlantic Council Liaison.....25
16 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.....30
17 NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE).....30
18
19 In Memory of Captain Wayne Werner.....34
20
21 Public Comment.....36
22
23 Full Council Closed Session Report.....98
24
25 U.S. Coast Guard.....99
26
27 Committee Reports.....103
28 Mackerel Committee Report.....103
29 Data Collection Committee Report.....108
30 Shrimp Committee Report.....133
31
32 Mississippi Law Enforcement Efforts.....161
33
34 Committee Reports (cont.).....163
35 Reef Fish Committee Report.....163
36 Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report.....188
37
38 Other Business.....191
39 Discussion of Louisiana's Red Snapper Season.....191
40 Discussion of Recreational Permits.....192
41 Discussion on Recreational Fishing Initiative.....207
42
43 Adjournment.....212
44

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TABLE OF MOTIONS

1
2
3 [PAGE 105](#): Motion to approve Draft Framework Amendment 12:
4 Modifications to the Commercial Gulf King Mackerel Gillnet
5 Fishing Season and forward it to the Secretary of Commerce for
6 review and implementation and deem the codified text as
7 necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to
8 make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair
9 is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text
10 as necessary and appropriate. [The motion carried on page 106.](#)

11
12 [PAGE 107](#): Motion to remove the following from the GMFMC
13 Proposed Actions for 2023 because sale of recreationally caught
14 cobia is prohibited by the states: (line 22) Framework
15 Amendment: to prohibit the sale of recreationally-caught cobia.
16 [The motion carried on page 108.](#)

17
18 [PAGE 109](#): Motion to direct staff to initiate a document that
19 establishes a charter for hire data collection program to
20 replace the SEFHIER program. [The motion carried on page 119.](#)

21
22 [PAGE 120](#): Motion to direct council staff to work with industry
23 groups to determine what outreach and education would be
24 appropriate to the commercial participants. [The motion carried](#)
25 [on page 120.](#)

26
27 [PAGE 120](#): Motion to select Option 1 as the preferred in the
28 Modification to Commercial Coastal Logbook Reporting
29 Requirements document. [The motion carried on page 121.](#)

30
31 [PAGE 122](#): Motion to request that NMFS, GSMFC, and council staff
32 provide collaborative support to the five Gulf state fishery
33 agencies for the express purpose of developing a universal,
34 state managed, recreational saltwater angler landing permit
35 program, to provide more precise fishing effort for use in both
36 management and assessments. [The motion was tabled on page 132.](#)
37 [The motion was untabled on page 193.](#) [The motion carried on page](#)
38 [207.](#)

39
40 [PAGE 133](#): Motion to request that NMFS to continue with the
41 Texas federal closure in the coming year in conjunction with the
42 state of Texas closure in 2023. [The motion carried on page 133.](#)

43
44 [PAGE 135](#): Motion that the council recommends to bring the draft
45 Shrimp Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position
46 Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery
47 back to the council after NMFS has completed the side by side
48 testing of cELB units with the following cellular units and

1 other cellular units on a minimum of five shrimp vessels for the
2 full length of an average offshore trip and presents the results
3 after the raw data is run through the new NMFS shrimp effort
4 algorithm: 1)the Woods Hole NEMO unit that is hardwired to the
5 vessel; 2)the Atlantic Radio Telephone ZEN VMS LTE; 3) the
6 Nautic Alert Insight X3. [The motion carried on page 142.](#)

7
8 [PAGE 144](#): Motion to request the SEFSC develop effort estimates
9 for brown, white and pink shrimp using new shrimp effort model
10 estimation procedures. [The motion carried on page 144.](#)

11
12 [PAGE 148](#): Motion that the council recognizes the need to
13 continue the development and implementation of a new approved
14 electronic data collection framework soon. Accordingly, the
15 council directs staff to convene the Shrimp AP and appropriate
16 council members for a consultation with NMFS on the proposed
17 spend plan of Congressional funds for Gulf of Mexico shrimp
18 fishing effort. [The motion carried on page 154.](#)

19
20 [PAGE 154](#): Motion to modify Action 1, Alternatives 2 and 3 in
21 the draft framework action to the Shrimp FMP as follows:
22 Alternative 2: Implement a cellular vessel monitoring system
23 (VMS) requirement for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shrimp fishery
24 that provides archived position data compatible with the SEFSC's
25 shrimp algorithm. If selected by the Science and Research
26 Director (SRD), the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel with a
27 valid or renewable Gulf shrimp moratorium permit (SPGM) would be
28 required to install a type-approved VMS unit (50 CFR 600.1501)
29 that archives vessel position when on a shrimp fishing trip in
30 the Gulf and automatically transmits that data via cellular
31 service to NMFS. Alternative 3: Implement a cellular ELB
32 requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that provides archived
33 position data compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp algorithm. If
34 selected by the SRD, the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel
35 with a valid or renewable SPGM would be required to install a
36 NMFS-approved ELB that archives vessel position when on a shrimp
37 fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits those data
38 via cellular service to a non-OLE NMFS server. NMFS-approved
39 ELBs would not be type-approved based on regulations at 50 CFR
40 600.1501. [The motion carried on page 161.](#)

41
42 [PAGE 164](#): Motion in Action 1 to select Alternative 2 as the
43 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 164.](#)

44
45 [PAGE 165](#): Motion in Action 2 that Option 3b in Alternative 3 be
46 the preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 167.](#)

47
48 [PAGE 167](#): Motion in Sub-Action 3.1 of Action 3 to add a new

1 Alternative 3 to set the recreational ACT 20 percent below the
2 recreational ACL. [The motion carried on page 169.](#)
3
4 [PAGE 169:](#) Motion in Sub-Action 3.1 of Action 3 to make
5 Alternative 3 the preferred. [The motion carried on page 170.](#)
6
7 [PAGE 170:](#) Motion in Sub-Action 3.2 of Action 3 to make
8 Alternative 3 the preferred alternative. [The motion carried on](#)
9 [page 170.](#)
10
11 [PAGE 172:](#) Motion in Action 4 to select Alternative 3 as the
12 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 173.](#)
13
14 [PAGE 174:](#) Motion to take Draft Amendment 56: Modifications to
15 the Gag Grouper Catch Limits, Sector Allocations, and Fishing
16 Seasons out for public hearing. [The motion carried on page 174.](#)
17
18 [PAGE 175:](#) Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the
19 preferred alternative. [The motion carried on page 175.](#)
20
21 [PAGE 176:](#) Motion to direct staff to begin work on a plan
22 amendment to look at updating the states private recreational
23 red snapper allocation. [The motion carried on page 176.](#)
24
25 [PAGE 176:](#) Motion in Action 2 to make Alternative 3 the
26 preferred. [The motion carried on page 179.](#)
27
28 [PAGE 180:](#) Motion to ask staff to bring back the data to support
29 an evaluation as to whether wenchman require federal
30 conservation and management. [The motion carried on page 181.](#)
31
32 [PAGE 181:](#) Motion to direct staff to initiate a document that
33 addresses elimination of recreational red grouper overruns by
34 consideration of changes such as seasons, bag limits, size
35 constraints, and other measures. [The motion failed on page 186.](#)
36
37 [PAGE 190:](#) Motion to direct staff to begin development on a plan
38 amendment within the Reef Fish FMP to streamline regulatory
39 procedures. [The motion carried on page 190.](#)
40
41 [PAGE 190:](#) Motion to remove tripletail from further
42 consideration for conservation and management. [The motion](#)
43 [carried on page 191.](#)
44
45 [PAGE 209:](#) Motion to amend Item 7 in the recreational fisheries
46 management initiative to read as follows: 7. Exploration of
47 innovative new management strategies. [The motion carried on](#)
48 [page 210.](#)
49

1 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
2 Council convened at the Courtyard Marriott in Gulfport,
3 Mississippi on Wednesday morning, April 5, 2023, and was called
4 to order by Chairman Greg Stunz.

5
6 **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**
7

8 **CHAIRMAN GREG STUNZ:** If everyone is here, we'll get the Full
9 Council meeting started, with some of the agenda and some of the
10 other formalities, and then we'll get into the two presentations
11 that need to take place before lunch, and that's going to give a
12 little extra time, because I think we will need that, and so I
13 need to read a statement here, to get us going, since it's the
14 beginning of the council.

15
16 Welcome to the 294th meeting of the Gulf Council. My name is
17 Greg Stunz, chair of the council. If you have a cell phone or
18 similar device, we ask that you place it on silent or vibrant
19 mode during the meeting. Also, in order for all to be able to
20 hear the proceedings, we ask that you have any private
21 conversations outside. Please be advised that alcoholic
22 beverages are not permitted in the meeting room.

23
24 The Gulf Council is one of eight regional councils established
25 in 1976 by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, known
26 today as the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The council's purpose is to
27 serve as a deliberative body to advise the Secretary of Commerce
28 on fishery management measures in the federal waters of the Gulf
29 of Mexico. These measures help to ensure that fishery resources
30 in the Gulf are sustained, while providing the best overall
31 benefit for the nation.

32
33 The council has seventeen voting members, eleven of whom are
34 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and include individuals
35 from a range of geographical areas in the Gulf of Mexico with
36 experience in various aspects of fisheries. The membership also
37 includes the five state fishery managers from each Gulf state
38 and the Regional Administrator from NOAA's Southeast Fisheries
39 Service, as well as several non-voting members.

40
41 The public is a vital part of the council's deliberative
42 process, and comments, both oral and written, are accepted and
43 considered by the council throughout the process. We will
44 welcome public comments from in-person and virtual attendees.

45
46 Anyone joining us virtually who wishes to speak during the
47 public comment should register for comment online. Virtual
48 participants that are registered to comment should ensure that

1 they are registered for the webinar under the same name they
2 used to register to speak. In-person attendees wishing to speak
3 during the public comment should sign-in at the registration
4 kiosk located at the back of the room. We accept only one
5 registration per person.
6

7 A digital recording is used for the public record, and,
8 therefore, for the purpose of voice identification, we will call
9 attendance for the council members attending virtually first.
10 After this is completed, members in the room should identify
11 himself or herself, starting on my left. Before we do that,
12 just a reminder, before break, for those of you that might not
13 have arrived before, or are listening in, if you're planning to
14 give testimony, and not here in person, and, in-person, the
15 kiosk is in the back, but, if you're online virtually, please
16 register one hour before testimony begins, which we will be
17 starting promptly at 1:30 today, and so, by 12:30, you need to
18 register. With that, for voice recognition, starting on my
19 left, and, Tom, would you please start?
20

21 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Tom Frazer, Florida.
22

23 **DR. C.J. SWEETMAN:** C.J. Sweetman, Florida.
24

25 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** Phil Dyskow, Florida.
26

27 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Kevin Anson, Alabama.
28

29 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Susan Boggs, Alabama.
30

31 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** Chris Schieble, Louisiana.
32

33 **MR. BILLY BROUSSARD:** Billy Broussard, Louisiana.
34

35 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** J.D. Dugas, Louisiana.
36

37 **MR. TOM ROLLER:** Tom Roller, South Atlantic liaison.
38

39 **LCDR LISA MOTOI:** Lisa Motoi, Coast Guard.
40

41 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Mara Levy, NOAA Office of General Counsel.
42

43 **MR. PETER HOOD:** Peter Hood, NOAA Fisheries.
44

45 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Andy Strelcheck, NOAA Fisheries, Southeast
46 Regional Office, Regional Administrator.
47

48 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** John Walter, NOAA Fisheries, Southeast

1 Fisheries Science Center, Deputy Director for Science and
2 Council Services.
3
4 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Dave Donaldson, Gulf States Marine
5 Fisheries Commission.
6
7 **MR. MICHAEL MCDERMOTT:** Michael McDermott, Mississippi.
8
9 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Joe Spraggins, Mississippi.
10
11 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Dale Diaz, Mississippi.
12
13 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** Troy Williamson, Texas.
14
15 **MR. DAKUS GEESLIN:** Dakus Geeslin, Texas.
16
17 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Carrie Simmons, council
18 staff.
19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, council members. Our first
21 item of business is Adoption of the Agenda. Are there any edits
22 or anything anyone would like to add to the agenda? Andy.
23
24 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I would like to have a discussion of the
25 Recreational Fisheries Initiative.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Andy. We'll record
28 that, and we'll put that in Other Business. Any other items?
29 Mr. Schieble.
30
31 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I will probably be able to announce Louisiana's
32 red snapper season, effective after tomorrow. Our commission is
33 meeting, and so I don't know if that needs to be under Other
34 Business or just whatever, but I can give you that update.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll make sure that, at least by Other
37 Business, we get to that. Okay. Seeing no other suggestions
38 for the agenda, can I please get a motion to approve the agenda?
39 Motion by Dr. Frazer. It's seconded by Dakus Geeslin. Seeing
40 no opposition, we'll consider that agenda approved.
41
42 The next item of business is approval of our minutes. Are there
43 any edits to the minutes? Seeing none, would someone please
44 offer a motion to approve the minutes?
45
46 **MR. BROUSSARD:** So moved.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Broussard, and I guess Mr. Dugas seconds

1 that. All right. Seeing no other discussion regarding the
2 minutes, we'll consider that approved, and, with that, we'll
3 proceed on to the first part of our agenda this morning, and so
4 the first presentation we have is by Mr. Boubé, and it's going
5 to be an update from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management on
6 wind energy and development in the Gulf of Mexico. Mr. Boubé,
7 we're loading that presentation, and, if you're coming up to the
8 podium, whenever you're ready, just activate the microphone and
9 go ahead, please.

10
11 **PRESENTATIONS**

12 **UPDATE FROM BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT (BOEM) ON WIND**
13 **ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN THE GULF OF MEXICO**
14

15 **MR. IDRISSA BOUBE:** Good morning, everyone. My name is Idrissa
16 Boubé, and I'm the Gulf of Mexico Renewable Energy Coordinator
17 for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Thank you for having
18 me this morning. This morning, I will be talking about the
19 renewable energy leasing process in the Gulf of Mexico. I will
20 be talking about the renewable energy leasing process in the
21 Gulf of Mexico, the proposed sale notice, and the next steps for
22 the leasing processes.

23
24 This schematic that I have right here is the BOEM planning
25 process. You have the planning and analysis phases and the
26 leasing phases, and those phases take between two and two-and-a-
27 half years. First, what happened with the renewable energy
28 process in the Gulf of Mexico is the Governor of Louisiana has
29 asked BOEM to standup a taskforce, and so BOEM has funded a
30 regional taskforce, and the regional taskforce includes Alabama,
31 Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Florida was not part of the
32 Gulf of Mexico taskforce meeting.

33
34 After the taskforce, and we've had three of them so far, and,
35 next week, on Tuesday, we will have a fourth taskforce for the
36 renewable energy in the Gulf of Mexico. Then BOEM went ahead,
37 and went ahead with a big call area, what we call a call area, a
38 study area, for the whole entire Gulf of Mexico, and we call
39 that a request for information.

40
41 This is the first part that I was showing, and it's the request
42 for information that was sent out. After the request for
43 information, we have sent what we call for information. After
44 the call for information, we came up with an area ID, and the
45 area ID only identified two leases, two areas, that can be
46 leased in the Gulf of Mexico. Right now, we are in the phase of
47 the proposed sale notice, and that's where we are. We are
48 having a sixty-day comment period, and the comment period will

1 close on the 25th of April.

2
3 As I was saying earlier, BOEM has started with a big area, and
4 the planning area was the whole entire Gulf of Mexico, and then
5 we refined that area at the RFI stage. From the RFI stage, we
6 winnow it down again to the call area, and, from the call area,
7 we have done a planning analysis, a modeling exercise, with the
8 help of NOAA and NCOS, and we came up with the wind energy
9 areas. From those wind energy areas, BOEM was able to select
10 two of them to go forward for the lease areas, and it from those
11 two lease areas that we have a proposed sale notice right now.

12
13 In the proposed sale notice, as you can see, two areas were
14 selected, one off the Louisiana coast and one off the Texas
15 coast. The one off the Louisiana coast is 102,400 acres, and
16 all three lease areas are similar, and all those three lease
17 areas are able to power almost like 1.3 million homes in the
18 U.S.

19
20 As you can see, we have two lease areas proposed off the Texas
21 area, Galveston 1 and Galveston 2. With this proposed sale
22 notice, what BOEM is asking is should we go with just Galveston
23 1 or Galveston 2, because BOEM is intending only to go with two
24 leases for this auction that we will have this year, one off of
25 Louisiana and one off the coast of Texas, but, if we do have
26 enough comments to ask BOEM to consider all three lease areas,
27 BOEM will take that into consideration and plan for it.

28
29 What is in the PSN, in the proposed sale notice? In the
30 proposed sale notice, we show the area for leasing, and we will
31 have the fiscal terms in there. We will have the auction
32 details and auction format, the proposed lease terms, and it is
33 the last opportunity for companies to submit their
34 qualifications, and those qualifications have to be legal,
35 technical, and financial. We will take a look at them and
36 evaluate those qualification standards and advise the company if
37 they are able to be part of the auction for the renewable
38 energy. We did have an auction seminar for the bidders, and it
39 happened two weeks ago, and that auction seminar is online, on
40 the BOEM website.

41
42 In the proposed sale notice, there is two bidding credits that
43 are being offered in there for developers, or companies, and one
44 is the 20 percent bidding credit for workforce training and
45 supply chain development in the Gulf of Mexico, and the other
46 one is a 10 percent fishery compensation litigation fund that is
47 offered to the developer to be able to have 10 percent of the
48 bidding credit as a non-mandatory bidding credit to be put into

1 some fiduciary vehicle, in order to compensate fishermen that
2 will be affected in the area that the lease is being proposed.

3
4 After the proposed sale notice is done, BOEM will take all the
5 comments, and we will analyze them, and we will come up with a
6 final sale notice. At that final sale notice, we will have the
7 bid deposit that will be required at that time, and then, also,
8 we will list a list of the qualified bidders. We will have a
9 mock auction, and the auction will take place.

10
11 I am not going to go through all of these milestones that we
12 have gone through as of now, and I will tell you that the
13 proposed sale notice was published on February 24, and the
14 comment period will end on April 25, and we welcome all
15 comments, and BOEM will take into consideration those comments
16 for us to incorporate in the final sale notice. The next steps
17 will be finalizing the environmental assessment and finalizing
18 the final sale notice, and the proposed lease auction will take
19 place sometime this summer or early fall. I think that's it for
20 me for the presentation. Thank you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Any questions? Go ahead,
23 Tom.

24
25 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you for the presentation, and I was just
26 interested in the bidding credits, right, and so there's one
27 that's a 10 percent bidding credit for a fishery compensatory
28 mitigation fund, and who would that be administered by?

29
30 **MR. BOUBE:** Right now, since BOEM does not have jurisdiction to
31 administer those funds, we're still working on who will be --
32 Who will be administering these funds, and we haven't set up the
33 vehicle to do that yet, and I know, for the oil and gas, nobody
34 does it, but, for now, for the renewable energy, we don't know
35 yet, and there is an internal process going on right now to look
36 at that.

37
38 **DR. FRAZER:** A couple of follow-ups, and so, again, I don't know
39 how the process works necessarily, but so is this something that
40 would potentially there are contributions to on a regular basis,
41 annually, or does it have -- You know, I guess I'm trying to
42 figure out what the length of the sale terms are, right, and
43 that would be the first question, is so what's the length, and
44 are funds potentially distributed into that account annually,
45 and what might be the magnitude? What does 10 percent mean?

46
47 **MR. BOUBE:** The length of the lease is thirty-three years, and,
48 for now, the 10 percent is a non-mandatory bidding credit at the

1 beginning of the auction, and that's the auction price, when the
2 lease is awarded, and so, for now, that's what it is. It might
3 be changed later on, but, for now, this is how it is set up.
4

5 **DR. FRAZER:** Just a little more specifically, and so what is the
6 magnitude of the potential bids? Is there a range?
7

8 **MR. BOUBE:** I won't be able to give you any kind of range. I
9 will tell you that, in the New York Bight, where we had an
10 auction in the New York Bight, it was \$4 billion. In the
11 Carolinas, it was \$300 million. In the Pacific auctions, I'm
12 not sure, and I think it was over \$300 million, and so, really,
13 I won't be able to tell you what the Gulf of Mexico will be able
14 to generate.
15

16 **DR. FRAZER:** Great. Thank you.
17

18 **MR. BOUBE:** You're welcome.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Walter.
21

22 **DR. WALTER:** Thank you, Chair. Idrissa, thank you for coming to
23 present to us, and I think we're at a good place, starting big,
24 with thirty-million acres, and then using informed scientific
25 planning to get down to now 300 acres, and that really does seem
26 to mitigate many of the conflicts, and so I think it's a good
27 model to show how science can inform that process and how we can
28 work together with BOEM to bring the latest data to the table
29 for our fisheries, for our protected resources, for our natural
30 resources, and I think that sets a great standard, and so we
31 look forward to working together through this process, and we'll
32 be commenting on the proposed sale notice and attending the
33 taskforce meeting next week, and then we look forward to working
34 throughout the process, as these leases get sold off and then as
35 construction and operation plans start to get this in the water,
36 and so thanks for working with us, and we look forward to
37 continuing to work together.
38

39 **MR. BOUBE:** Thank you, Dr. Walter.
40

41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Are there other questions? If there's
42 no other questions, I have a question for you, and thanks for
43 the presentation. That was very informative, and I just wanted
44 to follow-up on Dr. Frazer's comment regarding this mitigation
45 offset, and so I guess that's not -- You're giving a credit, and
46 so it's not required, and that's just a credit that a bidder
47 would get, that a successful bidder would get, and so there's no
48 requirement, but my real question centers around the text here

1 singles out commercial fishing, which obviously makes sense,
2 because maybe there's fishing grounds taken away, or something
3 like that, and gear impacts, but I'm wondering why you also put
4 the for-hire in there, which is a component of the recreational
5 sector, but why isn't there consideration for just the pure
6 private recreational sector, because they would have very
7 similar impacts that the for-hire would, I imagine, and so I'm
8 wondering why all the sectors of the fishery aren't included in
9 that.

10
11 **MR. BOUBE:** So that question I will not be able to answer, and I
12 will have to refer to my economic divisions, and they did
13 recommend just those two sectors, and so I will follow-up with
14 that for you, sir.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, and that would be fine, and I think the
17 message, potentially, to take back within that fishery is
18 there's two, or really three, sectors, because one is divided,
19 and so you have the commercial, and then, on the recreational
20 side, you have the for-hire sector, and then you also have the
21 private recreational sector. Theoretically, all three of those
22 could be impacted by this, and certainly, I think, the private,
23 or probably all three sectors, are going to want access to these
24 structures, you know, in fishing close up to them, which would
25 lead to gear impacts and other things, and so, I guess, in other
26 words, you might be leaving out one component of the fishery
27 that you all should consider.

28
29 **MR. BOUBE:** So this is where I would encourage you also to
30 comment on the PSN, so that we'll be able to rectify it, if it's
31 something that needs to be rectified in the final sale notice,
32 because the proposed sale notice can always be rectified before
33 the final sale notice.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, I'm not seeing any other questions. Mr.
36 Boube, we appreciate you all coming to each of these meetings.
37 We've got one more, and so we appreciate you all coming and
38 keeping us closely informed, and we appreciate the open line of
39 communication we have through your office, and I wanted to get
40 that out before we end this discussion, but, Dr. Walter, go
41 ahead.

42
43 **DR. WALTER:** I have one more question, and I'm just curious
44 whether you've got any unsolicited lease requests for other
45 areas.

46
47 **MR. BOUBE:** Yes, we do have an unsolicited request for two
48 areas, and there is one off the Mississippi Sound here, and

1 there is one off of Louisiana, but, the one off of Louisiana, we
2 have contacted the company, and we're not talking to them right
3 now, but there is one unsolicited request proposed for the
4 Mississippi Sound here, but, right now, BOEM is not moving
5 forward with it, yet.

6
7 **DR. WALTER:** Thank you.

8
9 **MR. BOUBE:** You're welcome.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Well, thank you. I don't see any
12 other questions, and, with that, we'll move on. Thank you for
13 the presentation.

14
15 **MR. BOUBE:** You're welcome. Thank you for having me today.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Moving on, next is a presentation on
18 NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice, and I have down
19 that, Andy, and you and John were sort of both slated for that,
20 and I'm not sure who is going to be giving that.

21
22 **NOAA FISHERIES EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EEJ) STRATEGY,**
23 **REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS, AND SCHEDULE**

24
25 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Chairman. John and I drew straws, and
26 I'm going to give the presentation. We figured that was better
27 than maybe tag-teaming, but we'll leave time at the end for John
28 to make some additional comments, because this is a really good,
29 strong joint effort between the Southeast Regional Office and
30 the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

31
32 As you recall, we briefed you, at the August meeting, on our
33 equity and environmental justice strategy and the work that was
34 underway. This is a high priority of the current
35 administration, and you provided feedback on that draft
36 strategy, which we'll talk about today, as well as other
37 feedback that we received, and so we'll give you kind of an
38 overview of what the status of the strategy is, where we're at,
39 in terms of a regional implementation strategy, and some ongoing
40 work, and we'll share kind of the planned approach for
41 operationalizing it in the Southeast, going forward.

42
43 In addition to kind of our work right now in helping to finalize
44 the national EEJ strategy, we are preparing for regional
45 implementation, and one of the key steps in that process is
46 really building relationships and connections with underserved
47 communities, you know, people and communities that typically we
48 don't see at these meetings, or in other aspects of the work we

1 do at NOAA Fisheries, and so we have been doing some extensive
2 work, obviously, trying to develop those connections, and we're
3 also going to be holding working group meetings throughout the
4 Southeast in the coming months, meeting in communities, fishing
5 communities, along the coastline, going directly to have focused
6 discussions about how we can improve and enhance equity and
7 environmental justice goals and objectives.

8
9 We're also taking the opportunity to kind of amplify and advance
10 EEJ, and some of the things that you may be aware of, or may not
11 be aware of, and so, when the Gulf IFQ focus group met, one of
12 the things we did was write a letter to the council kind of
13 emphasizing factors, things, that we feel are important for that
14 focus group to address and consider as part of equity and
15 environmental justice, and we also have a substantial habitat
16 restoration grant program, and funds are being awarded through
17 that grant program.

18
19 The statistics I heard recently, some of the grants that were
20 awarded through that program to underserved communities, is we
21 have 55 percent, or greater, of new partners and applicants to
22 that process that we've never worked with before within NOAA
23 Fisheries Service, and so that's really important, in terms of
24 kind of identifying gaps in areas where we can work more closely
25 with people that we've never really worked before with.

26
27 We're also developing a lot of new tools and data, and we talk a
28 lot about, obviously, data needs with the council, but there is
29 a community environmental justice explorer tool that's under
30 development, and we have a regional crew survey, and we're also
31 enhancing tribal consultation guidance for NOAA Fisheries.

32
33 In terms of the objectives of the EEJ strategy, the first is to
34 broaden our research and monitoring work that we do to identify
35 and characterize underserved communities, and so we talked about
36 that already, but we need to better understand and address the
37 impacts of our decisions on those communities and their
38 livelihood and culture, and so that's, obviously, a main
39 objective of this strategy.

40
41 The second objective is to incorporate EEJ into our policies and
42 plans going forward, and so a good example of that is we are
43 working on our regional geographic strategic plan for the
44 Southeast, and that's kind of something that we're jointly
45 developing with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and, as
46 we develop that policy, incorporating EEJ considerations into
47 that plan is critical, obviously, for us over the next three
48 years, for the lifespan of that plan.

1
2 We're also wanting to, obviously, have inclusive governments
3 aimed to have stakeholders welcomed and engaged, obviously, in
4 the processes, and that can come in the form of sending letters
5 to the governors about who they nominate for the council
6 process, but also just mechanisms to make it more accessible and
7 easy for people to participate in policy and governance
8 decisions, right, and so lots of different ways that we can do
9 to enhance that and make people more a part of the process.

10
11 We also want to look at equitably distributing the benefits of
12 the work we do across stakeholders, and that could come in the
13 form of just increasing opportunities, and, oftentimes, habitat
14 restoration, and other activities, don't necessarily go to areas
15 of underserved communities, and they go in areas that,
16 obviously, can afford to have that work done, and that have
17 prioritized that work, and so working directly with those
18 communities is really critical, obviously, to expanding kind of
19 our reach, in terms of the mission that we do.

20
21 We also want to ensure communication and platforms are available
22 for outreach and engagement. We have many different
23 stakeholders that speak, you know, different languages, and so
24 being able to make it more accessible and reach them, and this
25 is particularly true in the Caribbean, but we have the
26 Vietnamese fleet, obviously, in the Gulf of Mexico, and other
27 areas where we can emphasize and increase, obviously, our
28 outreach and engagement to those communities that will make it
29 easier, obviously, for them to engage in the process.

30
31 Overall, obviously, these are all important objectives that
32 would create an empowering environment and ultimately help us to
33 identify priorities at all levels of our EEJ strategy.

34
35 We went out for feedback on the national EEJ strategy, and you
36 can see the distribution of feedback that we received, and the
37 Pacific Islands stands out, and I want to note that they
38 specifically went out and did public meetings and gathered input
39 directly from a lot of their stakeholders, but we did get input,
40 obviously, in the Southeast, and I will talk about some of those
41 comments specifically on the next slide, but, overall, we have
42 been working to address those comments and integrate them into
43 our national EEJ strategy.

44
45 The take-home is that, at least for the feedback that we
46 received, 80 percent supported the strategy, and there was
47 certainly some small opposition, but, overall, it was very
48 favorably received, and so that's, obviously, good, in terms of

1 the work that we're trying to do here to implement the strategy,
2 moving forward, and work to, obviously, addressing the comments
3 that we received.

4
5 Some of the key messages and take-aways are align NMFS' work
6 with local needs, and certainly, and I think this is a take-
7 home, you know, just working with the council process and the
8 states, and, obviously, you know, working closer with the
9 stakeholders is a key aspect, an important aspect, in terms of
10 improving relationships and ultimately how we can better engage
11 and work with communities.

12
13 Engaging with more diverse groups, right, and so kind of
14 stepping outside the normal groups that we work with and
15 ensuring that we have identified and are working with those
16 groups that maybe just we're less familiar with, but are
17 important stakeholders, obviously, in terms of the work we do.

18
19 I will skip down to the concerns that were expressed, and so
20 we've heard, around this table, some concerns about catch
21 shares, and that was evident with some of the things that we
22 heard about just adverse effects of consolidation on those that
23 participate in catch share programs, and there was also
24 stakeholders that indicated both support as well as opposition
25 to our aquaculture strategies, and some of the opposition
26 indicated kind of they felt that aquaculture was counter toward
27 the EEJ strategy overall, but, overall, I mean, the key was
28 communicate as early and often as we can with these
29 stakeholders, work with the council and other agencies, right,
30 and it can't just be NOAA Fisheries alone, and support the
31 capacity for expanded EEJ work.

32
33 Comments specific to the Southeast, so the council support
34 ranged from enthusiastic to measured. Data, data, data, and,
35 obviously, we've talked about that a lot here, but we always
36 want, obviously, more data, and the council's letter to us was
37 generally supportive with three overarching goals and six core
38 objectives, but you indicated that it kind of remained unclear
39 whether it would be successful at achieving the EEJ strategies
40 without proper funding, and I certainly agree with those
41 comments and support the fact that we need to put more funding
42 and support into this initiative.

43
44 The improvements that were also identified by some of our
45 stakeholders were accessibility to the Fisheries Finance
46 Program, which we've heard a lot from the focus group on, as
47 well as other federal funds, and then expanded training, and so
48 the Marine Resource Education Program I think is a very positive

1 light for us in the Southeast, but other programs, like the Gulf
2 Fishermen's Training Program, commercial training program.

3
4 There were concerns, obviously, about how council representation
5 is structured, and funding was, obviously, a key theme that we
6 were hearing from stakeholders on.

7
8 As I mentioned, I mean, this is a broad national strategy that
9 we're going to step-down into regional implementation plans,
10 right, and so we -- I kind of describe this to people that I
11 talk to is this is a cultural change for us, and we want this to
12 be integrated as part of kind of our daily activities and not a,
13 you know, separate strategy, but something that is really just
14 incorporated, in terms of the work we do, how we work with
15 stakeholders, how we engage with stakeholders, and the key to a
16 lot of this, in my view, is removing, you know, critical
17 barriers to achieve equity and environmental justice, and we
18 seek to promote it in everything that we're going to do going
19 forward, but we can't do that alone.

20
21 Here's the timeline, and we're in the spring of 2023, and we're
22 soliciting and receiving funding and rolling out our focus
23 groups, and I'll talk about that in a minute, but we are
24 continuing to analyze and finalize our EEJ national strategy.
25 In the summer months, we're going to be conducting focus groups
26 throughout the Southeast, and then we're going to take that data
27 and information and help it inform, obviously, our regional
28 implementation strategy, and, right now, that's due at the end
29 of the year, and we have twenty different focus groups that
30 we're trying to accomplish between now and then, and so it's a
31 heavy lift to not only do those meetings, but analyze the data
32 and information and input we receive, and so our goal is to try
33 to wrap this up by the end of the year, but it might extend into
34 2024.

35
36 The focus groups themselves, we are hiring a consultant and
37 working closely to collect data from local stakeholders, and we
38 have teams of people from both the Southeast Fisheries Science
39 Center and Southeast Regional Office that are taking the lead on
40 this and will be attending the meetings from both staffs.

41
42 Our goal is just to bring together a small group of people, in
43 order to really have these kind of topical-driven discussions
44 and questions that are moderated and designed to shed light on
45 equity and environmental justice issues, and so we'll include up
46 to fifteen stakeholders from underserved communities, and that
47 work is ongoing, to kind of identify those stakeholders and
48 define, refine, exactly where those meetings will take place and

1 how the information and input received during those meetings are
2 then going to help us to advance our national EEJ objectives in
3 the Gulf of Mexico, as well as throughout the Southeast region.

4
5 This is specific to the Gulf of Mexico. Right now, these are
6 tentatively planned for July and into August. As everyone
7 knows, we have hurricanes in the Southeast, and so our hope is
8 that we can have these happen without any disruptions, but you
9 can see the communities that we're focusing in on, and we
10 haven't identified, necessarily, a location for the Vietnamese-
11 only meeting, but we do want to meet directly with the
12 Vietnamese community in the Louisiana-Mississippi region, and
13 we're going to also, obviously, hold meetings in Texas and Tampa
14 and the Pensacola area, to gather further input.

15
16 Then, as I mentioned, we'll be going along the east coast of the
17 United States, from North Carolina to the Florida Keys,
18 including also the U.S. Caribbean, where we'll be holding
19 meetings in Puerto Rico and the USVI.

20
21 For the national strategy, and the regional implementation, I
22 mentioned earlier the importance of how we communicate out on
23 this, and there are Fishery Bulletins that are going to be in
24 multiple languages, and we're continuing to meet with all of the
25 councils, to brief you on our EEJ national strategy, and so we
26 have meetings for the Caribbean and South Atlantic Council
27 coming up in April and June, and then, as I mentioned on the
28 previous slide, the focus group meetings that are being
29 discussed throughout the Southeast region.

30
31 The Gulf Council is hosting the Council Coordination meeting in
32 Key West, and it will be a topic of discussion there, and we're
33 also going to be meeting with the Southeast Natural Resource
34 Leadership Group, which includes individuals like myself from
35 other natural resource organizations, to discuss this broader
36 strategy, and the EPA has done a tremendous amount of work in
37 this area, and we can learn from them, as well as any other
38 internal and external partners we'll be working with.

39
40 The basic needs, from my standpoint, or from our standpoint, is,
41 you know, once again, kind of reaching out into the communities,
42 and we have talked, obviously, within the Fisheries Service,
43 about the need for staff training time devoted to this, but also
44 how we can create community liaisons, that data collection
45 that's so important, obviously, to inform this strategy, going
46 forward, and then, you know, language translation services and
47 other activities that are needed for this, and we have used
48 those in the past, and we'll continue to use those going

1 forward.

2

3 I won't -- I will let you read this on your own time, because
4 it's in the briefing book, but these are some Southeast-specific
5 strategies that we are at least drafting and looking at that
6 range from the research and monitoring to inclusive governments
7 to creating that empowering government, or environment, and so
8 it's giving kind of the full spectrum of what we can do, as a
9 region, to help forward the EEJ strategy along.

10

11 We need your input, and we're looking for thoughts on the
12 tentative dates and locations of the focus groups. Are there
13 any gaps or, you know, things that we might have missed? Do you
14 have suggestions about the people that we should engage, or the
15 communities that we should engage with, and how can you also
16 help us inform this work, and how do you want to be a part of
17 this process, and how can we better collaborate in developing
18 our regional implementation plan, going forward between now and
19 the end of the year, and so I would ask that -- I think there
20 might be one or two more slides, but I would ask that we maybe
21 bring this back up at the end of the presentation.

22

23 One of the things that we heard a lot of from IFQ stakeholders
24 is the transparency in the marketplace, and so, in addition to
25 the focus groups that we're doing more broadly for the regional
26 EEJ strategy, we've also obtained some funding to get input on
27 kind of the IFQ marketplace, and we feel like this is a really
28 important step for the IFQ program that will help with market
29 transparency and effectiveness, in terms of kind of share and
30 allocation that could be identified or, ultimately, more
31 visible, with regard to stakeholders that participate in the
32 program.

33

34 We are looking, obviously, for tools, products, that we could
35 create this, and we want to get input, obviously, from the
36 industry and stakeholders on this, as we work to develop
37 something. Right now, we're anticipating those meetings in late
38 summer or early fall of 2023, but, based on the input and
39 information received, we see this as something that we can then
40 help to modify our existing electronic system for the IFQ
41 program and bring more transparency to the overall IFQ
42 marketplace, and so I think this is a great opportunity and
43 something that responds directly to input we're receiving from
44 stakeholders, and I think that's the last slide, and so, with
45 that, I'm going to look to Dr. Walter, to see if I missed
46 anything or if he wants to add anything. Thank you.

47

48 **DR. WALTER:** I will just weigh-in that I know that we have a lot

1 of staff who are motivated and worked really hard on both the
2 plan, the strategic plan this past year, as well the
3 implementation plan, and so they will be conducting these focus
4 groups, and they are very much looking forward to going out to
5 communities and identifying what the thoughts and views of our
6 stakeholders are and how we can implement EEJ in everything that
7 we do. Thank you.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy and John, for that. Are
10 there any questions? Mr. Schieble.

11
12 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I'm thinking about locations for your focus group
13 meetings, and, in particular, my question, and I probably missed
14 this as you went through it, and so maybe you can help me out,
15 but does it pertain to communities that only participate in
16 federal fisheries, or does it also include communities that are
17 state-only fisheries?

18
19 **MR. STRELCHECK:** It's more broad than that. I mean, it's
20 certainly where there's a federal nexus, and so don't think
21 about it just simply from a fisheries standpoint. For example,
22 habitat restoration, right, and grant funding, other
23 opportunities, but with that kind of federal nexus.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Chris.

26
27 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Okay. With that, I guess I will make a couple of
28 suggestions for locations. My first, obviously, would be the
29 Kenner area, where you typically have Gulf Council public
30 meetings, and that's probably good, and the second I would
31 suggest, maybe even considering the Vietnamese-only meeting,
32 maybe somewhere closer to the Venice area. There's a large
33 shrimp fleet down there that could use some help.

34
35 The third suggestion I would consider is Houma, if you don't
36 like Kenner, as the overall meeting from the New Orleans area,
37 because of the Pointe-aux-Chenes travel community, and it would
38 be closer in proximity to them as well to be able to
39 participate.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Chris. Well, I'm not seeing
42 any other hands raised on this, and so we'll move on to --
43 Susan, go ahead.

44
45 **MS. BOGGS:** I guess I would ask Andy, and what do you need from
46 the council, if anything?

47
48 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, I certainly wanted any sort of initial

1 reaction, input, to the working groups that are moving forward,
2 and the other aspect would be the regional implementation
3 strategy and so, you know, our intent would be to communicate
4 with Greg and Carrie, going forward, and, as that develops, we
5 want to bring that back to the council for further input and
6 discussion. We want to work with you.

7
8 I think the most important part is really your partnership on
9 this, right, to help us move this strategy along as it develops,
10 and it is -- I won't say an underfunded strategy at this point,
11 but, as John nicely put, we have a lot of motivated employees
12 that are working very diligently on this, and, the more you can
13 help us to contribute to moving this strategy along, it would be
14 helpful.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Dyskow.

17
18 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question for
19 Andy. Obviously, this is a very interesting presentation, and
20 the goals and objectives are clear, and I'm going to just
21 summarize, and it looks like we want to make an aggressive
22 effort towards allowing underserved communities an opportunity
23 to participate more actively in our fishery, but we have a very
24 finite fishery, and so is there room for everybody, without
25 putting ourselves in a dire situation as to overfishing? Have
26 you had any discussions on either people that have to exit the
27 fishery to make room for these underserved communities, and how
28 are you going to accomplish this?

29
30 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, going back to my comment to Chris, think
31 more broadly than just fisheries, right, and NOAA Fisheries does
32 a lot more than just manage fisheries, and we have habitat
33 programs, and we have protected resources, conservation, and
34 management, and so there's certainly a lot of people that engage
35 with NOAA Fisheries that are separate and distinct outside the
36 fisheries process.

37
38 In terms of, you know, your comments specifically to fisheries,
39 yes, we have mandates, obviously, in terms of we have to manage
40 and sustain fisheries for the benefit of the nation, achieve
41 maximum sustainable yield, prevent overfishing, and so, in the
42 context of that, right, we're not talking here about expanding
43 fisheries as much as how do we look for equity and access to the
44 fisheries themselves, as well as the fisheries process and
45 governance, right, and so we look around this table, or look in
46 the audience, and, you know, there's a lot of people that maybe
47 are missing from this process, because they can't afford to be
48 here, and they haven't -- They're not aware of the process, and

1 they don't know how to engage, and so how do we at least reach
2 out to those communities and figure out how to better engage
3 with them, and, ultimately, how do they contribute to the
4 process going forward? We're not necessarily talking here about
5 expansion of our fisheries as much as how do they better access
6 the fisheries and fishery process.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. I am not seeing any
9 more hands up, or questions, and, Andy, we'll look to you and
10 your office as guidance, and John as well, in terms of what you
11 all need from the council as you all move forward on those
12 initiatives.

13
14 A couple of things related to that, and there's two National
15 Academy of Sciences panels coming out, interestingly enough, one
16 on wind energy, and we just heard that presentation, and then
17 one on the EEJ stuff that we were just talking about here.
18 Fortunately, the council is engaged in that, and I hate to call
19 him out, but Dr. Steven Scyphers, who happens to be sitting in
20 the back, will be serving on those panels, and so they will be
21 certainly making some recommendations and things, and so we'll
22 be interested, and, in fact, Carrie, we'll probably want to get
23 some presentations, and I'm sure that Dr. Scyphers can guide us
24 on the timeline and all that, and it will certainly be a while
25 before we do that.

26
27 I also wanted to say that he brought his class here today, and
28 that's what I mainly wanted to mention as well, and we
29 appreciate that, Steven. All of you know that Steven is a
30 Standing SSC member, and so he brings his class to really see,
31 in terms of the next generation of scientists, things we can't
32 really convey in the classroom, and they get to really see how
33 this process works firsthand, and so thank you for doing that,
34 Steven. With that, we will move on, and we have about thirty
35 minutes, or not quite, here before lunch. Andy, go ahead.
36 Sorry. I didn't see you.

37
38 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just apologies, and one of the things, and I
39 was a huge oversight on my part, and so I do want to thank Ava,
40 and I think she might have left the meeting room, or there she
41 is, but we have been working well with Ava, and thank you for
42 all the input and information and collaboration that you're
43 providing this process as well.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Andy. Kevin.

46
47 **MR. ANSON:** Just one last comment, I guess, as far as outreach
48 to those -- I'm wondering, Andy, if you, or your staff, have

1 looked into maybe trying to get on the agenda of maybe a
2 regional, or a national, meeting on groups that are engaged in
3 this activity, and I know environmental justice is really wide
4 and encompassing and such, but at least maybe if there's some
5 opportunities for conferences and such that might be held in the
6 Gulf region, or nationally, and then you would be able to reach
7 a much broader audience, which might spark additional just
8 general outreach, and maybe you will get people to communicate
9 out in their world and come back and engage in our world, I
10 guess.

11
12 **MR. STRELCHECK:** To that point, I appreciate that, Kevin, and so
13 I mentioned the Southeast Natural Resource Leadership Group,
14 which is probably not something that most people are familiar
15 with, but it's approximately fifteen federal agencies that
16 partner and work with one another, and we have two meetings a
17 year. We have an upcoming meeting in May, and this is actually
18 a topic on our agenda. EPA and BOEM, Fish and Wildlife Service,
19 Army Corps, all are part of that, and so, yes, it's a large
20 federal family that's having discussions to figure out how to
21 move this forward.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Seeing no other hands up, we'll go
24 ahead and move forward, since we have a few minutes, and it will
25 save us a little time tomorrow, and I think we have a few
26 committee reports and that sort of thing that we can get through
27 here, and we'll see how far we get before lunch, but, Tom, Mr.
28 Roller, if you're ready, would you like to give the South
29 Atlantic update, please?

30
31 **SUPPORTING AGENCIES UPDATES**
32 **SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL LIAISON**
33

34 **MR. ROLLER:** I would be happy to. Thank you. If I may, I would
35 just introduce myself, really briefly. My name is Tom Roller,
36 and I'm a council member from North Carolina. I was appointed
37 in 2021, and so I'm in my first term. I'm a full-time for-hire
38 operator, in my real life, and I also serve on my state
39 rulemaking commission, the North Carolina Marine Fisheries
40 Commission, and so it's more accurate to say that I'm a part-
41 time fisherman and a full-time volunteer at this point.

42
43 What I'm going to do here is -- First of all, this is my first
44 Gulf meeting, and I just want to thank everybody here for being
45 so friendly and extending great hospitality, and I've learned so
46 much from you guys this week, and so thank you for that.

47
48 What I'm going to do here is just go over our report, and I'm

1 going to touch on some things briefly and go into a little bit
2 more depth on some things, and so we last met in March, the 6th
3 to 10th, of this year, in Jekyll Island, Georgia, and this is the
4 summary of our meeting.

5
6 The first thing, and it's something we've discussed a bit here,
7 was the commercial logbook amendment that's being done jointly
8 with the Gulf Council, and the big point about it is we reviewed
9 progress on the amendment and approved it for public hearings,
10 and the timeline was revised to have final approval in September
11 of 2023.

12
13 We had a bunch, obviously, with our snapper grouper amendments
14 and projects. The first one was our discard reduction in red
15 snapper catch levels amendment, Regulatory Amendment 35, and it
16 was initiated to revise red snapper catch levels, based on the
17 most acceptable biological catch recommendations from the SSC,
18 and reduce dead discards of snapper grouper species, in response
19 to concerns over impacts of dead discards on allowable catches
20 of snapper grouper species, most notably red snapper.

21
22 Staff presented the draft amendment, including a summary of
23 public comments and draft rationale for each action. NMFS SERO
24 discussed potential recreational opportunities for exempted
25 fishing permits for red snapper, and NMFS is developing a
26 request for EFP proposals, and that will be focused on reducing
27 discards of red snapper and testing potential management
28 strategies. A separate path for experimental commercial fishing
29 opportunities is being developed through internal funding, and
30 we approve the amendment for formal review.

31
32 If approved, the amendment will reduce red snapper catch levels,
33 based on the SSC's recommendation, and also prohibit the use of
34 more than one hook per line for all snapper grouper fishing in
35 the recreational sector in the South Atlantic EEZ.

36
37 The next item is Snapper Grouper Amendment 53 for gag and black
38 grouper. Amendment 53 proposes establishing a rebuilding plan
39 and adjusting catch levels for gag, in response to the most
40 recent stock assessment, SEDAR 71, and proposes management
41 measure modifications for gag and black grouper. The council
42 reviewed public hearing comments and approved modifications to
43 the purpose and need and reviewed rationale for each action, and
44 we approved the amendment for formal review.

45
46 The next item was a management strategy evaluation for the
47 snapper grouper fishery, and we're conducting an MSE to explore
48 long-term management strategies for the snapper grouper fishery,

1 as was mentioned today. The contractor, Blue Matter Science,
2 gave an in-depth presentation on this, and we provided a lot of
3 guidance on potential management options and some of the
4 uncertainties about it.

5
6 The next item is the private recreational permitting amendment,
7 Amendment 46, and it considers establishment of a private
8 recreational permit and education component for the South
9 Atlantic grouper snapper fishery. The council reviewed scoping
10 comments and provided guidance on the actions and alternatives
11 to develop for discussion in June of 2023. An important note on
12 that is we're still having the debate whether it's going to be a
13 vessel-based permit or an individual-based permit, and a lot of
14 the comments are in regard to hopefully the states will pick up
15 something and do it that way.

16
17 The next item is Amendment 55, scamp and yellowmouth grouper,
18 and the Science Center presented the results of SEDAR 68 for
19 scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and we provided an overview of
20 management changes that are needed to incorporate the results
21 from SEDAR 68 into management, and the council directed staff to
22 initiate work on the amendment. It is important to note that
23 they're not doing well.

24
25 Amendment 48 is wreckfish, and a review of the wreckfish ITQ
26 program was completed in 2019, and it included recommendations
27 for improvement, particularly with respect to confidentiality
28 and risk-related constraints, moving away from a paper-coupon-
29 based program to an electronic program, cost recovery, wreckfish
30 permit requirement, allocation issues, offloading sites and
31 times, and economic data collection.

32
33 Staff reviewed the amendment, and NMFS staff provided a
34 presentation on cost recovery in ITQ fisheries. The council
35 solicited public comment on the amendment during the public
36 comment session and will consider the amendment for formal
37 approval in September of 2023.

38
39 I am going to skip down to habitat, really quickly, and end with
40 the CMP projects, because I think that's the most relevant to
41 this discussion. Habitat projects, and the habitat blueprint,
42 in 2020, the council set out to restate and reevaluate its goals
43 and objectives pertaining to the essential fish habitat in the
44 South Atlantic region and relative to meeting mandates under the
45 Magnuson-Stevens Act.

46
47 The effort resulted in the habitat blueprint, which the council
48 intends to use as a guide to better focus activity that supports

1 these mandates in a coordinated and effective manner with
2 regional and state partner agencies. Work on the project was
3 interrupted by other priorities, but the council is reinitiating
4 it, with the intent of completing the blueprint in September of
5 2023. Council staff provided background on the development of
6 the blueprint and an overview of habitat blueprint workgroup
7 progress and anticipated work for 2023.

8
9 Essential fish habitat policies and five-year review, the
10 council has undertaken revisions to existing essential fish
11 habitat policies and a review of current EFH designations, to
12 satisfy five-year review requirements, and work will be
13 conducted throughout 2023 and will be initially coordinated
14 through the Habitat and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory
15 Panel.

16
17 I will back up to the coastal migratory pelagic amendments and
18 projects, and so Atlantic Spanish mackerel. At our December
19 2020 meeting, the council expressed their frustration with the
20 Spanish mackerel assessment, SEDAR 78, and the importance of
21 having accurate catch level recommendations to move forward with
22 needed management discussions.

23
24 To that end, the council passed the motion directing the SSC to
25 provide catch level recommendations for Atlantic Spanish
26 mackerel at its April 2023 meeting, either from the updated
27 assessment or using a data-limited approach. Our SSC chair
28 updated the council on the January 2023 SSC meeting and
29 including the terms of reference developed by the Spanish
30 mackerel workgroup and discussion of alternative methods of
31 setting ABCs.

32
33 The council then received a letter from the Science Center
34 stating that the revisions to SEDAR 78 requested by the SSC in
35 January were exploratory in nature and would require extensive
36 rework. The Science Center recommended that the SSC develop its
37 ABC advice based on the assessment and supporting analyses
38 completed to-date.

39
40 The council discussed the potential for adding an Atlantic
41 Spanish mackerel research track assessment on the SEDAR
42 schedule, and the committee would like the research track
43 assessment to occur during the same time block as the greater
44 amberjack research track assessment, but it acknowledges that it
45 may present workload challenges and should be discussed at the
46 next SEDAR Steering Committee, and so we're in a little bit of a
47 holding pattern with this one.

1 This is the big note, because this involves -- It would
2 potentially involve the Gulf Council, and this has been a
3 priority of the advisory panel for a long time, and it's been
4 debated at the council, and that's to do port meetings for our
5 CMP, specifically to the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries,
6 and so, in December of 2022, the council directed staff to begin
7 working on a plan to conduct port meetings for king and Spanish
8 mackerel, to aid in revising the goals and objectives of the CMP
9 FMP and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the fisheries
10 to improve management efforts.

11
12 Council staff presented a planning document and received the
13 following guidance. Port meetings should focus on king and
14 Spanish mackerel fisheries, Gulf and Atlantic, and port meetings
15 will be open to all members of the public, commercial, for-hire,
16 recreational, and others, in discussing the king and Spanish
17 mackerel fisheries. As possible, port meetings should be
18 conducted in key communities throughout the Gulf of Mexico and
19 along the Atlantic, up to the southern end of Massachusetts. As
20 such, working with the Gulf of Mexico, the Mid-Atlantic, and New
21 England Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine
22 Fisheries Commission, and state agencies will be integral to the
23 success of port meetings.

24
25 This is the point, and this is really important, given the
26 nature of the CMP FMP and the need to concur with the Gulf
27 Council modifications to the FMP goals and objectives, because
28 that's been one of the discussions, and that will be one of the
29 main things we're talking about. After the port meetings have
30 been conducted, staff will develop a final report that includes
31 notes from all port meetings conducted in a thematic analysis
32 identifying patterns and themes.

33
34 You know, we've had a lot of discussion with staff over this,
35 and, you know, we know this is a big lift, and so we are hopeful
36 that the Gulf will choose to participate in this, and there's a
37 couple of points that I want to make. The council really wants
38 to do this right, and we know it's going to take a while, and
39 we're not going to start conducting meetings probably until late
40 this year, or even early 2024, and staff at the South Atlantic
41 is willing to work very closely with the Gulf staff, to make
42 sure that the timing for future meetings works with their
43 workload, workload and priorities, and so, with that, I conclude
44 my report, and I would be happy to take any questions.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Any questions for Tom? All right.
47 Seeing none, Tom, thank you for that thorough review and update.
48 We can move on to another -- I think, Dave, if you're ready, and

1 are you okay doing your update? Go ahead.

2
3 **GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**
4

5 **MR. DONALDSON:** Yes, and thank you, Mr. Chair. You will recall,
6 at the October meeting last year, Gregg Bray came and gave an
7 update on -- I believe it was the October meeting, but he gave
8 an update on the commission activities.
9

10 There wasn't -- There's not a whole lot more to report. I mean,
11 we continue working on those activities, and I will point out,
12 under our IJF program, that we just recently completed a red
13 drum fisheries profile, and I have requested that Carrie add
14 that to the agenda for the upcoming June meeting, just for Steve
15 VanderKooy, on our staff, to present that to the council, just
16 informational of what's in there and kind of what that document
17 provides, just for information, and so that's all I've got, Mr.
18 Chair.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dave. Any questions for Mr.
21 Donaldson? Seeing none, then we'll move on. Officer O'Malley,
22 would you be prepared to give the NOAA OLE report? We'll pull
23 up that, and I will remind you that you're right in front of
24 lunch, but take your time. I saw you didn't have that many
25 slides, and so --
26

27 **NOAA OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**
28

29 **MR. JOHN O'MALLEY:** You're lucky, and so I can be brief. All
30 right. Basically, one of the big things that we wanted to
31 remind everybody is, obviously, with the court ruling on SIMP,
32 that does not apply to the South Atlantic federal for-hire
33 permits, and they've still go to report weekly. There is no
34 change to the commercial reporting, and, in IFQ, they still have
35 to submit their pre-landing reports, and so nothing changed
36 there, and I just wanted to make sure that everybody knew that.
37

38 Again, we're consistently and constantly working with our
39 partners in the states, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi,
40 and Florida, and we also partner with the Coast Guard and the
41 Department of Homeland Security, basically pooling our resources
42 to get the job done, and we also provide training to our
43 cooperating enforcement partners, and we do joint patrols with
44 them.
45

46 Current spotlight, we're still looking into the unpermitted
47 charter operations, and it's a big thing. We have had a lot of
48 reports of state-permitted vessels conducting charters in

1 federal waters that have actually turned out to be legitimate,
2 in the fact that they were targeting non-federal species, and
3 we've seen a lot of that in Florida and Texas. When we look
4 into it, they're targeting say blackfin tuna, and, well, there's
5 no permit requirement to target blackfin tuna, and so we have
6 found that some of these allegations have been legitimate
7 operations, because they're not going after the reef fish,
8 coastal migratory pelagics, or the listed HMS species.

9
10 We're also looking at, continue looking at, TED violations, and
11 we do outreach. Our enforcement officers along the docks will
12 provide compliance assistance and inspections, and we also do it
13 on patrol. We also are doing trade monitoring, and a lot of
14 that is SIMP, and we're monitoring imports coming in at land-
15 based ports of entry, such as south Texas, along the Texas-
16 Mexico border, airports. Big, international airports tend to
17 see quite a few fish species coming in, and, also, of course,
18 water ports, Miami, Houston, Mobile, and all the ports we see
19 these species coming in, and so we're taking a more active role
20 in checking these imports and making sure that all the
21 documentation is there.

22
23 This is an operation that took place, and I don't know much
24 about it, and you guys caught me off-guard on this one, but it
25 was an operation at the Cincinnati airport, looking for IUU/SIMP
26 species. Cincinnati is a land-locked city, but places like
27 that, Cincinnati and Dallas, a lot of aquatic products tend to
28 come in via commercial air carrier, DHL and FedEx and other ways
29 it's shipped in, and so we have our inspectors there that are
30 checking on the SIMP species and making sure that all the chain
31 of custody and all the paperwork is correct.

32
33 Our outreach, we continue with that, and we did send out -- As
34 part of the observer program, a letter was sent out to the
35 entire shrimp fleet, basically a compliance assistance letter
36 informing them and letting them know that, if they're selected
37 for observer coverage, they need to participate in the program.
38 Our agent that's covering our observer program received a very
39 high number of calls from people in the shrimp industry, a lot
40 of questions, and a lot of folks just weren't quite sure how it
41 worked, and so a lot of information got passed back and forth
42 there.

43
44 Also out is our enforcement priorities that are open for public
45 comment through April 17, and those are also links for our OLE
46 annual report and our IUU partnership fact sheet. This is just
47 a listing of some of the OLE resources, and we have our website,
48 and we can learn more about law enforcement, and, also, if

1 anybody is interested in subscribing to the NOAA Fishery
2 bulletins, that is there, and then the very last one is our
3 Office of General Counsel enforcement actions, where people can
4 look and see what some of the cases that we've settled have
5 been, and I believe that's it. Any questions?
6

7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Any questions for OLE or Officer
8 O'Malley. I am not seeing any, but I do have a question for
9 you. The SIMP species, what does that stand for again?
10

11 **MR. O'MALLEY:** Seafood Import Monitoring Program. Right now,
12 there is thirteen species on there that require enhanced
13 documentation, kind of tracing it back to the vessel. It's
14 tuna, red snapper, shrimp, blue crabs, and those are some of the
15 ones on there.
16

17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Well, thank you for that update. I
18 am not seeing any questions. Perfect. We're right before noon,
19 and so all right, and, well, that is probably all the headway
20 that we can make on a few of these reports before lunch, and so
21 we'll break here in just a minute and return beginning promptly
22 at 1:30, since we have public testimony. If you all would come
23 back and be prepared for that, we'll start at 1:30. Other than
24 that, we'll break for a little while, and we'll see everyone
25 this afternoon.
26

27 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on April 5, 2023.)
28

29 - - -
30

31 April 5, 2023
32

33 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION
34

35 - - -
36

37 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
38 Council reconvened at the Courtyard Marriott in Gulfport,
39 Mississippi on Wednesday afternoon, April 5, 2023, and was
40 called to order by Chairman Greg Stunz.
41

42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Good afternoon, everyone. We'll get started
43 with public testimony here in just a minute, if all the council
44 members would like to take their seats, please. For the rest of
45 the day today, we will hear public testimony. I'm going to read
46 our statement for public testimony into the record here, and
47 instructions and that kind of thing, but, also, as you all -- As
48 many of you are aware, there are several, you know, sad events

1 that have transpired during the past few days, and so I've asked
2 Dr. Frazer to say a few words regarding that, and I believe that
3 David Walker will also mention a few things and has something to
4 recognize those individuals, and so we'll do that right after
5 reading this into the record. After that, then we'll commence
6 with public testimony.

7
8 Good afternoon, everyone. Public input is a vital part of the
9 council's deliberative process, and comments, both oral and
10 written, are accepted and considered by the council throughout
11 the process.

12
13 The Sustainable Fisheries Act requires that all statements
14 include a brief description of the background and interest of
15 the persons in the subject of the statement. All written
16 information shall include a statement of the source and date of
17 such information.

18
19 Oral or written communications provided to the council, its
20 members, or its staff that relate to matters within the
21 council's purview are public in nature. Please give any written
22 comments to the staff, as all written comments will be posted on
23 the council's website for viewing by council members and the
24 public and will be maintained by the council as part of the
25 permanent record.

26
27 Knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the
28 council is a violation of federal law. We will welcome public
29 comment from in-person and virtual attendees. Anyone joining us
30 virtually that wishes to speak during public comment should have
31 already registered online. Virtual participants that are
32 registered to comment should ensure that they are registered for
33 the webinar under the same name they used to register to speak.
34 In-person attendees wishing to speak during public comment
35 should sign-in at the registration kiosk located at the back of
36 the room. We accept only one registration per person.

37
38 Each speaker is allowed three minutes for their public
39 testimony. Please note the timer lights on the podium or on the
40 webinar. They will be green for the first two minutes and
41 yellow for the final minute of testimony. At three minutes, a
42 red light will blink, and a buzzer will be enacted. Time
43 allowed to dignitaries providing testimony is extended at the
44 discretion of the Chair.

45
46 If you have a cellphone or similar device, we ask that you keep
47 it on silent or vibrating mode during the meeting. Also, in
48 order for all to be able to hear the proceedings, we ask that

1 you have any private conversations outside, and please be
2 advised that alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the room.
3 Okay. We will commence with that in a minute, but now I want to
4 turn it over to Vice Chairman Dr. Frazer to say a few words.

5
6 **IN MEMORY OF CAPTAIN WAYNE WERNER**
7

8 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It was a rough week, you
9 know, and we lost a really good friend. Wayne Werner passed
10 away this past week, and I really wanted to take a few minutes
11 to say some words. You know, I think it's hard to put into
12 words the incredible contributions that Wayne made to our
13 fisheries over the course of his lifetime. He loved to fish,
14 and he devoted his life to building a successful career and
15 advocating fiercely for the resource and for his fellow
16 fishermen.

17
18 He was a friend and a mentor to many of us in this room, and his
19 contributions to the industry impacted people from all across
20 the Gulf coast and across the nation.

21
22 Wayne started commercial fishing when he was ten years old, and,
23 over the course of his life, he enjoyed every kind of fishing
24 possible. He was a true waterman, and, if you were honored,
25 over the years, to have heard some of the tales he told, you
26 would agree that Wayne's passing signifies an incredible loss of
27 knowledge and stewardship for our fisheries.

28
29 The richness of experience that he had in the Gulf is one shared
30 by only a few. He lived a full spectrum of highs and lows,
31 mostly from the deck of his boat. He rode out hurricanes, and
32 he was even onboard when a vessel sunk, but he also enjoyed some
33 of the best fishing days imaginable. You know, I really
34 appreciated the times that he shared many of those stories with
35 me.

36
37 He was an incredible advocate for sustainable fisheries and for
38 the commercial fishing industry. He served as a board member of
39 the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance and Fish for
40 America USA. He was instrumental in helping get relief money to
41 fishermen that were affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill,
42 and a lot of people really appreciated that.

43
44 Wayne attended his first council meeting in 1988, and he has
45 been a fixture in the council process ever since. He attended
46 well over a hundred council meetings, and he regularly served on
47 advisory panels and contributed to the stock assessment process.

1 Wayne also gained national recognition. He testified in front
2 of Congress, and he starred in the documentary, *Rancher, Farmer,*
3 *Fisherman*, and he was the recipient of the *National Fisherman*
4 *Magazine* Highliner of the Year Award in 2012.

5
6 I speak for all of us when I say that Wayne will be missed and
7 that the personal and professional contributions he made
8 improved the fishery for everyone. I am glad to say he was my
9 friend, and I know he was friends of everybody in this room, and
10 so I know that David Walker might say a few words as well.

11
12 We have some information regarding the services. If you want
13 that information, you can certainly contact either Erik Brazer
14 or Emily Muehlstein with the council, and they will be happy to
15 provide that to you, and, before David comes up, I just wanted
16 to say, also, that many of you knew Bill Teehan, and he's a
17 former FWC director and long-time council member, and we learned
18 yesterday that Bill passed away as well, and so, hopefully at
19 our June meeting, we'll take some time to say a few words about
20 Bill, but I just wanted to let people know that that happened as
21 well, and so it's been kind of a rough week. David, come on up.

22
23 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** Thank you. You nailed it. He was a good
24 man, Wayne was. Wayne Werner and I first met at a Gulf Council
25 meeting, and it was either the late 1980s or early 1990s, and he
26 had been attending meetings a little longer than I had, and I
27 remember Bob Zales, and Bob Zales was there, and Bob Shipp, and
28 there's a lot of folks not around anymore that were there back
29 in the early days.

30
31 Wayne and I had discussions of the FMP that we were in that was
32 known as a derby, and he made the comment that it has more
33 issues than *National Geographic*, but Wayne started -- He started
34 calling me about this new innovative FMP named the IFQs, and,
35 after a couple of commencing conversations, I recognized the
36 benefits.

37
38 I remember Wayne went to meet with Senator Trent Lott's office,
39 with Jim Sartucci, and Jim told me -- He said, Wayne, he said, I
40 will give you fifteen minutes to tell me about red snapper, what
41 I don't already know. Well over an hour later, he was still
42 telling the story, and so you remember Corky, and a lot of you
43 also probably remember Corky asking Wayne questions. He always
44 liked to ask Wayne a question, and he always had a good answer,
45 if it was about reef fish. I remember, one time, he asked him
46 about sharks, and he said, well, that's not a fish.

47
48 Again, during the BP oil spill, I remember that Wayne and myself

1 and others met with Senator Shelby in his office, and we had
2 discussions with Ken Feinberg, and, not long after, there was
3 \$20 billion set aside, and there was a lot of people that were
4 grateful.

5
6 I am grateful to remember Wayne, and he was a friend, and he
7 knew more about fishery management than anyone I had ever known
8 at the time. He used to say that I've heard you give testimony
9 before, and he said, I can remember when there was not anybody
10 at this council, but there wasn't any fish around, and, now that
11 there's fish around, there's a lot of people around.

12
13 To kind of get back to one of my first meetings, it was in
14 Orange Beach, Alabama, and we had all the council, all the
15 staff, and there were seven or eight folks out in the audience
16 giving testimony, and so it's come a long way.

17
18 Wayne Werner was a husband, father, uncle, good friend to
19 numerous folks, and he always spoke the truth. I will remember
20 him as a fishery management legend. Wayne loved to fish, but he
21 also loved to properly manage fishery resources, using real-
22 time, good data. Many of us were blessed to have known Wayne,
23 who may be gone, but he will never be forgotten. Cheers to
24 Wayne Werner and his service, and thank you for the opportunity
25 to speak today.

26
27 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, David. I appreciate you taking the time.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Tom, for doing that, and Captain
30 Walker, of course a former council member as well, and thank
31 you. With that, we will begin public testimony, and we will be
32 alternating back and forth from the virtual participants to the
33 in-person participants, and we'll go ahead and start with the
34 in-person participants. Larry Marino.

35
36 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

37
38 **MR. LAWRENCE MARINO:** Good afternoon. My name is Larry Marino,
39 and I'm here on behalf of Louisiana Attorney General Jeff
40 Landry. As to offshore recreational permits, useful data can be
41 obtained from such a program, not least a more accurate
42 assessment of the actual science of the offshore fishery, and so
43 we can get a more accurate assessment of the true extent of
44 recreational discards, but it would have to be done right.

45
46 Duplicative programs, much less conflicting ones, would not be
47 helpful, and the states have shown they can do this.
48 Louisiana's offshore permit is a great example. The permit

1 should be by angler rather than by the vessel. The anglers
2 catch the fish, and this doesn't dovetail with the federal
3 system, but it fits perfectly within the state systems, and the
4 goal would be for this to be the system for tracking offshore
5 angling.

6
7 As to blackballing regarding IFQ allocation, I haven't heard of
8 anything being done, or investigated, and I'm very hopeful that
9 some investigation is being done behind the scenes, because
10 blackballing is a critical problem, and it would be an even
11 bigger problem if the council and NMFS don't do anything about
12 it, and, more generally, as to reforming the IFQ program, Bob
13 was right. You have to start with the end in mind.

14
15 What do you want this fishery to look like, and Ava keeps trying
16 to ask that. So far, the discussion seems like wet leaves that
17 just can't catch fire. Deciding on goals literally is this
18 council's responsibility, and it's not something that can be
19 handed off to SERO or the staff. Suggesting ideas for how to
20 get there, analyzing the pros and cons, that's perfectly good
21 for staff to do, and that is their role, but deciding what the
22 priorities are -- That's for the council to do.

23
24 To get you started, just synthesizing some of the ideas that you
25 all have already raised, here's a suggestion. The purpose of
26 the IFQ program is to allocate the commercial quota among those
27 who can and do fish on an objective basis for a limited time and
28 in quantities sufficient for economic viability and stability,
29 targeted to address the current concerns of the fishery, as they
30 change from time to time, intending to reduce overcapacity, but
31 respecting the right of those who want to fish to do so.

32
33 The purpose, the goal, of fishery management should be fair
34 allocation of the fish, a public resource, and "fair" is the key
35 word in that, and it's defined by things like those I've just
36 listed. Reducing overcapacity is inappropriate as the sole
37 reason or primary purpose. It shouldn't be a goal of this body
38 to prevent people from working in the career that they choose.
39 Whether they make a good or bad financial decision to be a
40 fisherman, that's their affair, and it's not the council's.

41
42 Having described the purpose, then you need to come up with and
43 consider ideas for how to achieve it. Amendments 36B and C have
44 some ideas, and staff has suggested others, including in the
45 presentation yesterday. Others require share or allocation
46 holders to be individuals. They require active fishing in order
47 to hold shares or allocation. Define "active fishing" by the
48 majority of income being from actual harvest and holding a

1 permit.

2

3 Cap allocation that can be held cumulatively throughout the
4 year. Consider vessel caps. Limit resale of allocation to the
5 price paid. Eliminate shares entirely and just allocate the
6 allocation each year, and that would require divestiture over a
7 reasonable time, perhaps over enough years so that those who
8 bought their shares can recover their investment.

9

10 Other ideas are design an objective body to do those
11 allocations. To address bycatch, allocate some amount to total
12 reef fish landings, excluding the species being allocated.
13 Allocate a minimum amount to each permit that was used in the
14 past two or say three years. Allocate a small amount to new
15 entrants and define that as someone with a permit but no shares.
16 Let them get their feet wet.

17

18 Maybe allow the states to determine allocations, and perhaps
19 they can auction it, or charge something, if it's permissible to
20 avoid the problem that NMFS can't under Magnuson, but,
21 regardless, with caps as to how much any one person can buy.
22 Improve the tracking of beneficial ownership to realistically
23 enforce caps. Have a central transfer board, so that everyone
24 in the Gulf can access shares, or allocation, that's available,
25 instead of having to rely on friendship or word of mouth and
26 avoiding the blackball situation.

27

28 You and staff come up with other ideas, and you already have,
29 and you can consider them, the pros and cons, whether some of
30 these ideas are just too complicated to be worth any benefit
31 that they might get, whether they work together or conflict, but
32 you've got to get started, and I urge you to do that and start
33 tomorrow. Thank you.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Marino. Mr. Marino, we
36 do have a question for you from Andy Strelcheck.

37

38 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Larry, for your testimony. I think you
39 provided a lot of good ideas and a good synthesis of a lot of
40 things that we've been discussing around this table, and
41 certainly we'll take those into consideration. I noted that
42 you've come to the podium several times in the last few meetings
43 and focused heavily your comments on commercial fisheries, and
44 you've also been hearing, obviously, our conversations around
45 the challenges with recreational fisheries, and so I'm curious
46 if your office has any kind of position in terms of
47 improvements, changes, things that you would recommend the
48 council do with regard to recreational fisheries.

1
2 **MR. MARINO:** Well, I just spoke about the creation of an
3 offshore permit, and I think that does seem like a good idea, to
4 help track things. Is there anything in particular that you --
5

6 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No.
7

8 **MR. MARINO:** The commercial issues, with the IFQ, have been hot
9 and heavy, and of great concern, and we're not just concerned
10 with the recreational fishing in Louisiana, and we're concerned
11 with the commercial fishing. We don't have as many, obviously,
12 as Florida does, and thank you for trying to synthesize -- You
13 tried to get it going yesterday, and I very much appreciate your
14 efforts to do that.
15

16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Next, Bernie, if we're
17 ready, we'll go online, and up first, online, is Catherine
18 Bruger.
19

20 **MS. CATHERINE BRUGER:** Thank you so much. Good afternoon, and
21 thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Catherine Bruger. I'm a
22 native of St. Petersburg, Florida, and I'm Manager of Fish
23 Conservation for Ocean Conservancy. I am sorry that I couldn't
24 be there with you in-person today, and I'm grateful to the
25 council and staff for providing the option to testify virtually.
26

27 My comments today focus on the gag rebuilding plan and the
28 SEFHIER program. On gag, the council has made it evident that
29 it lacks the sufficient management certainty to ensure this plan
30 will result in rebuilding success. Importantly, the document
31 doesn't sufficiently address the two primary drivers of
32 mortality, recreational discards and environmental mortality.
33

34 Regarding discards, we urge the council to take meaningful
35 action to reduce recreational discards now. What are those
36 mechanisms? Spatial and temporal closures, bag limits,
37 modifications to the size limit, slot limits. The council
38 passed a number of options for consideration to reduce discards,
39 but proposed moving those to a trailing amendment. Future plans
40 to address the problem does not absolve the legal obligation of
41 the council to take meaningful action to reduce discards now.
42

43 Regarding environmental mortality, I applaud staff for including
44 a CVA analysis. Unfortunately, what these analyses show is that
45 gag has both high vulnerability and sensitivity to changes in
46 the environment, which are projected to increase. We urge the
47 council to add an environmental buffer. A simplified example is
48 in my written comments.

1
2 In addition to reducing these sources of mortality, I urge the
3 council to simplify the document. In each option in Action 2,
4 set catch levels as you did with greater amberjack. Set the
5 catch level equal to the baseline level in 2024, and wait for a
6 green light until tangible signs of stock improvement are shown,
7 through an interim assessment, before increasing catch levels.

8
9 In conclusion on gag, the management measures currently
10 considered in Amendment 56 have a low probability of ending
11 overfishing or rebuilding the stock. You have a legal
12 obligation to provide this certainty. I provide additional
13 comments in my written comment letter for your consideration.

14
15 On SEFHIER, we urge the council to take swift, meaningful action
16 to reinstate the SEFHIER program in a way that maximizes the
17 original intent and data components, including trip-level
18 reporting, hail-outs, and electronic data submission. Ocean
19 Conservancy supports the for-hire industry's efforts to quickly
20 redesign and reinstate the program.

21
22 Last, I want to send my thoughts and prayers to you who are
23 heavily grieving this week. My heart goes out to our fishing
24 community during this time of great loss. That's all I have.
25 Thank you for your time.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. We'll move to our in-person
28 participants. Ken Haddad.

29
30 **MR. KEN HADDAD:** Good afternoon, council members and Mr. Chair.
31 I appreciate the opportunity to be here. I'm Ken Haddad, with
32 the American Sportfishing Association, out of Monticello,
33 Florida. I will speak on a couple of issues.

34
35 Gag grouper, Amendment 56, we support the current preferred
36 options in the document that came out of committee, but I would
37 like to focus mainly on the recreational initiative that was
38 voted on at the last meeting. While we support the intent of
39 the initiative, we would like to see several changes upfront.

40
41 As you may know, there is a general lack of trust by the private
42 recreational community in federal fisheries management, and, in
43 my view, coupled with this, our community initiated a
44 facilitated process that also included for-hire and commercial
45 folks, about six years ago, that resulted in a report to the
46 council in 2017, and it was on alternative management
47 strategies, and it was largely ignored, or, actually, it was
48 completely ignored, even though the council had really asked for

1 the recreational community to come to the council with ideas,
2 and so I personally am a bit distrustful of this initiative, but
3 I support it.

4
5 We used a process to surface and assess management strategies,
6 but we did not upfront prescribe management strategies. This
7 initiative, in Number 7, essentially predetermines management
8 strategies, and it is too prescriptive, particularly in this
9 atmosphere of mistrust. We ask that, at this meeting, if you
10 can do it, and tomorrow, perhaps, in Other Business, look at
11 Number 7, simplify it. By not having predetermined strategies,
12 but focusing on assuring a process to develop, discuss, assess,
13 and evaluate the management strategies.

14
15 We would also like to see a reference to OY in Statement Number
16 1, and that's because OY is a high-level goal objective of
17 fisheries management, and it's been largely ignored in the
18 recreational perspective, and so, at this meeting, we hope you
19 will add this to your agenda for consideration and make the
20 changes, as it would help the recreational community move along
21 with this initiative, and I will make sure to send you all of
22 our report, prior to the next meeting, as it may help you think
23 about how to approach the initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Ken. Okay. Up next, going online,
26 is David Krebs.

27
28 **MR. DAVID KREBS:** Good afternoon, council. My name is David
29 Krebs. I'm sixty-six years old, and I'm the owner of Ariel
30 Seafood in Destin, Florida, Ariel Seafood in Sebastian, Florida,
31 and I've been in the wholesale fishing business since 1981. I
32 started fishing in 1969, and, as a commercial fisherman, it's
33 all I know.

34
35 Briefly, about Captain Werner, I was blessed and privileged to
36 have met Wayne in 1985, and he was fishing out of Louisiana. He
37 was unloading his boat into his own truck and hauling his fish
38 back down to near his hometown in Florida, and then he later
39 decided that maybe using fish houses was a more efficient way of
40 doing business.

41
42 Wayne comes from that long line of historical fishermen who gave
43 a shit, and excuse my language. You never heard Wayne come to
44 that podium and ask for one thing from the recreational
45 industry, other than accountability.

46
47 Mr. Marino said, a minute ago, that all these problems with the
48 IFQ, and that we don't need to worry about capacity. Well, that

1 comes from somebody who wasn't around in the 1980s, and wasn't
2 around in the 1990s, and doesn't understand where this fishery
3 was, and we know better than to try to turn the commercial
4 industry into the recreational industry. There will be no fish
5 left for anybody.

6
7 It was a hard pill to swallow, and the leaders of our industry
8 were Donnie Waters and Wayne Werner. Later on, we all joined
9 forces with them, Captain Walker and Captain Tucker and Captain
10 Underwood, Philip Horn from Clark Seafood in Mississippi,
11 historical fish houses, and Mr. Horn's fish house is coming up
12 on a hundred years pretty soon.

13
14 These gentlemen understood fishing. They understood what it
15 took to be viable in fishing, and they understood -- Wayne and
16 Donnie understood capacity. I was one of those guys that Mr.
17 Marino would have taken to dinner in the 1990s, because I beat
18 on that podium and said, by god, you can't make me be a snapper
19 fisherman or a mackerel fisherman or a beeliner fisherman, and
20 I'm a fisherman, and I have the right to put myself out of
21 business. Well, thank god there was people that were persistent
22 enough to say, Dave, we are going out of business. We can't
23 continue to do the things that we've done.

24
25 I urge this council -- This is 2023, and we've been talking
26 about recreational accountability for -- What are we in, twenty-
27 five or twenty-six years, and we just kick that can, where the
28 leadership of the commercial industry stood up and said we've
29 got a problem, and we're going to fix it.

30
31 It hurts my heart that you don't like to hear the historical
32 perspective of people that have been around that have been
33 around for their whole life, and that's all they've done, and I
34 know we have to have a path for new entrants, and we do. It's a
35 federal loan program. I've got a fisherman here in Destin that
36 has just applied to buy quota, but opening up the gate -- You
37 don't think about the fish houses and the economic impact to the
38 communities as you turn this fishery into everybody gets fifty
39 pounds.

40
41 I urge this council to remember, in Wayne's memory, the courage
42 that it takes to make the tough decisions that don't get you
43 popular favors with your friends, that you say, oh well, I'm
44 sorry, you recreational fishermen, and you only get to catch ten
45 fish this weekend, or whatever they come up with, but please --
46 I see my time is up, and I appreciate you guys, and I look
47 forward to hopefully serving on your Mackerel AP again and
48 seeing you in the future. Thank you for your time.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Up next is Charlie Bergmann.
3

4 **MR. CHARLIE BERGMANN:** Good afternoon. There's a lot of things
5 that everyone could say about Wayne, and we're all going to
6 dearly miss him. First of all, I would like to thank the
7 council for hopefully moving this gillnet, runaround gillnet,
8 fishery in Monroe County to their request and moving it ahead.
9

10 As far as the ITQ system, I think everyone has heard me,
11 numerous times, say I'm not a proponent of ITQs. I hate them.
12 However, the fishermen came to this council, and you all did
13 referendums, and you bought into the ITQ program. The people
14 that had historical catches of red snapper, historical catches
15 of the groupers, they were all issued somewhat of an allocation.
16 There were a lot of people that didn't have enough allocation
17 and elected to sell that to someone who was building their
18 fishery.
19

20 It's called rationalization, and that's what ITQs are designed
21 for. It's designed to reduce capitalization in the fishery.
22 Well, you're moving towards that goal, and now you're looking at
23 maybe expanding that fishery again, and I'm not sure that that's
24 the appropriate way to go.
25

26 The last thing I want to say is the council, and the agency,
27 seem to be dropping the ball on their small business entities
28 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act. When the FMPs go into SBA,
29 the small entities, or small businesses, are associated by a
30 fishing permit, by a vessel, and each one of those vessels, that
31 have four to six people that crew, each one of those members on
32 that deck are individual small businesses and need to be
33 accounted for, because, if they're not, then you're not
34 complying with the RFA. Thank you very much, and you all have a
35 great day.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Next, online, is Brian Lewis.
38

39 **MR. BRIAN LEWIS:** Good afternoon, council members. Thanks for
40 this opportunity to speak. Let me start off by wishing Wayne
41 Werner farewell, and rest in peace. I enjoyed listening to him
42 get up there and speak, and you guys have all heard, from many
43 people, and I'm sure there's many more to speak, about him.
44

45 Let's move on, and so we're talking about these IFQ programs,
46 and let me tell you that I feel like the IFQ program is the best
47 program that we could have ever come up with, and I was not a
48 proponent when it first came out, okay, and remember the

1 overcapacity issues that you keep having a problem with here,
2 it's already been very well defined, and so I recommend that all
3 council members look at some of the university studies, such as
4 Rhode Island, addressing the overcapacity definition.

5
6 The IFQ program took care of that already, and our fishing is
7 sustainable. We're not going over our quotas, and we haven't
8 been overfishing our quotas, okay, and we already know who the
9 real problem is in the fishery. The private recreational
10 fishery isn't an accountable system, and not by their own
11 definition, but by the management system we have in place. We
12 need to come up with a better plan, such as perhaps tag program,
13 vessel license, whatever, okay, but we need to try to get a
14 better grip on what is actually being truly landed here, guys.

15
16 I get it that we've made leaps and bounds with MRIP, and Tails
17 'n Scales, and everything else, but you can go to our IFQ system
18 and you can look at what we're catching in real-time, and I have
19 no clue what the recreational is catching, unless I go to
20 Facebook and different apps, but how do we know what they're
21 really catching, and I'm seeing big fish caught, and we count
22 numbers of fish and not by pounds, but we're regulated by
23 pounds, and so how much fish is really being extracted from the
24 Gulf of Mexico? That's a big mystery, isn't it?

25
26 You know what? You are going to take care of overcapacity, if
27 you keep taking away our IFQ quotas. You're just going to take
28 it away, and what's going to end up happening is the little guy,
29 like me, who keeps getting my allocations reduced, year after
30 year, because of this or that, and I'm going to be left with
31 nothing, and I'm going to have to give it up, okay, and so
32 you'll force me out.

33
34 I don't know if that's the solution either, but here we are
35 trying to bring new entrants, and I get it, but how are you
36 going to address that when the whole purpose of the IFQ program
37 was to reduce overcapacity, and here we want to reintroduce it,
38 and I don't get that.

39
40 I had to take \$250,000 of my IFQ, and I'm a new entrant. I've
41 been in it twenty years, and I consider myself a new entrant,
42 and I'm having to do the best I can, but, in closing, we need to
43 stop just attacking our commercial sector's quotas and shifting
44 it over to the recreational sector to account for the alleged
45 discards that they're catching, and we need to know what we're
46 really catching here, folks. Thank you for the time to speak,
47 and I'm open to any questions.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Up next is Ron
2 Chicola.
3
4 **MS. LAURA GUZMAN CHICOLA:** Good afternoon. I am taking my
5 husband's spot. As you can see, it's not him here. My name is
6 Laura Guzman Chicola. I am here to speak on behalf of many
7 fishermen that are in the same situation, that are blackballed.
8 They are scared to speak out, and that's the reason that many of
9 them aren't here at this meeting, and I don't blame them.
10
11 I had some texts from a big shareholder who leased me quota back
12 in December, and he clearly told me the conditions, and I will
13 read it and quote it: "My only comment to you is to stop
14 fighting the IFQ system." Of course, my answer was I won't.
15 His was, and I quote it, "I have heard your arguments, and there
16 are many ways to make a living. However, our company won't do
17 business, in the long run, with those trying to tear it down."
18
19 This is the proof of blackballing that I've been dealing with
20 for a long time. The difference, this time, is I have those
21 text messages to prove it. I believe they should be
22 investigated, or please do something about it. Thank you.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Ms. Chicola. Next, online, is Casey
25 Streeter.
26
27 **MS. BERNADINE ROY:** It appears that he's having a little bit of
28 trouble with the connection, and so let's come back to him.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Mr. Streeter, it appears we're having
31 some connection trouble, and we will come back to you in just a
32 second, and we'll move back to the next person in the room, Bob
33 Zales.
34
35 **MR. BOB ZALES, II:** Bob Zales, II, representing SOFA, NACO, and
36 Panama City Boatmen. In some of David's comments, he mentioned
37 about when he first came, and I was here, and, clearly, Donnie
38 and Wayne were always here, the two icons to this council,
39 because they were like Mutt and Jeff when they were here.
40
41 Back then, when I was giving testimony, I spoke pretty much as a
42 newbie, and I talked about the historical old-time fishermen
43 from Panama City and their experience in the fisheries, and I
44 turned seventy about three weeks ago, and so I guess that I'm
45 one of those old-timers now.
46
47 You're going to hear, and I'm going to beat this elephant in the
48 room, like everybody else, and the private recreational sector

1 is completely unaccountable, and, until this council, and the
2 Fisheries Service, gets a handle on the exorbitant discard
3 mortality of this sector, we're all suffering.

4
5 I lose fish, and the commercial guys lose fish, and the private
6 rec side loses fish, because the Fisheries Service adjusts the
7 quotas down to account for that exorbitant discard mortality.
8 In red grouper, it's a serious problem. In gag grouper, it's
9 fixing to become a serious problem, and you've got to fix it.
10 There's been suggestions on how to do it, but you need to figure
11 out a way to do it.

12
13 Most of the private rec people that we talk to on the water,
14 they want to -- They don't like being accused of all this stuff,
15 and so I would suggest that the majority of fishermen out there
16 want to see some kind of program.

17
18 I sent you all an email regarding the SEFHIER program, and I was
19 really surprised at the lack of discussion in the Data Committee
20 about that. The Fisheries Service, I guess they're trying to
21 decide whether or not they're going to take this to the highest
22 court in the land, and, until that time, we strongly suggest
23 that you all initiate either a new amendment or a framework or
24 something to get the SEFHIER program started again and put the
25 basic stuff in there.

26
27 A lot of the stuff that the court primarily harped on, the VMS
28 and the economic stuff, leave it out, but let us get back on our
29 app and do something. We're losing time, and, if you don't do
30 anything now, and we wait six or eight or ten months until the
31 Fisheries Service decides what they're going to do, we're just
32 that much further behind. We need to get on this, because the
33 program was beginning to work. The data that was going in there
34 was pretty good, and the Fisheries Service was working with us
35 and making changes, and so thank you. If you've got any
36 questions, I will be glad to answer them.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Zales, Andy Strelcheck.

39
40 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Bob, you and I talked about the recreational
41 season, and can you talk a little bit more to the council about
42 your concerns?

43
44 **MR. ZALES:** The recreational season?

45
46 **MR. STRELCHECK:** The for-hire season.

47
48 **MR. ZALES:** The for-hire season?

1
2 **MR. STRELCHECK:** For red snapper. You had suggested that you
3 wanted it open in June and July and then closed.
4

5 **MR. ZALES:** You're talking about for snapper, red snapper? Yes,
6 and the -- Clearly, from what we understand -- You increased the
7 quota, and so there's going to be some extra days. Last year,
8 in August, for us, in Panama City anyway, the fishery really
9 wasn't that good in August, and most of the guys there would
10 like to see the fishery end on July 31, take a break in August,
11 and, whatever extra days we get, add them to the fall, either
12 September or October or a weekend thing or something, but at
13 least give the fishery a rest and ease things up.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Zales.
16

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

19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We'll go back to virtual. Katie Fischer.
20

21 **MS. KATIE FISCHER:** I tell you that I'm in parent pickup line
22 every single time for these. Okay. I'm Katie Fischer from
23 Matlacha, Florida, fish house owner and also a vessel owner.
24 First, I want to say it's very sad to hear about Wayne. He was
25 actually always one of my favorite people to talk to on breaks,
26 and he always had something really cool and interesting to say,
27 and so rest in peace, Wayne, and fly high.
28

29 Okay. I want to talk on two points today, the first being the
30 IFQ discussion. It's very encouraging to hear this discussion
31 around the table about making desperately-needed changes. We
32 are in desperate need of a change, to ensure that we have a
33 future generation of fishermen for our fishery. The graying of
34 the fleet is a real issue.
35

36 Until profits get back into the hands of fishermen, and fishing
37 opportunity is easier to access, we will continue to struggle in
38 recruiting our next generation, and I would also like to make a
39 comment to kind of back-up the founding fishermen in our
40 program, and a comment was made that they were given fish, and
41 these fishermen were not given fish. A majority of them worked
42 really hard, through many, many hours and days on the water, to
43 earn their fish, but, with that said, I also feel like the
44 second generation of fishermen, the post-IFQ implementation,
45 deserve that same opportunity to earn their opportunity to fish.
46

47 Then the second point that I want to talk on is the
48 industrialization of our oceans. You know, at our meetings, you

1 know, the wind presentations are always like thrown in there at
2 the end, after something really important, and I don't think a
3 lot of people are paying attention, and I do feel a poor job has
4 been done educating our fishermen on the true impacts these will
5 have on their business and the ability to execute their
6 business.

7
8 These are not like oil rigs. These are vast areas, and they are
9 closed, and you will not be able to fish them. The sonar
10 exploration for these windmills is also very damaging to our
11 marine life, and also our fish stocks. The process of
12 installing these windmills destroys the ocean floor, and, often,
13 marine life does not come back, and, oftentimes, when it does,
14 for whatever reason, they are invasive species.

15
16 Each windmill contains 187 gallons of grease, forty gallons of
17 hydraulic oil, 106 gallons of gear oil, 1,585 gallons of diesel
18 electric fuel, 793 gallons of diesel, and 243 pounds of sulfur
19 hexafluoride. To give you an example, there are 3,900 of these
20 windmills off the coast of New Jersey, and each substation
21 contains 79,000 gallons of transformer oil, 52,000 gallons of
22 diesel fuel, 4,900 pounds of sulfur hexafluoride, and 317
23 gallons of hydraulic oil.

24
25 Seawater is pumped into these substations to cool these engines
26 and then pumped back out as a warmer temperature, oftentimes
27 causing higher water temperatures around the structures. I
28 think we all need to wake up to this and really start paying
29 attention. These are nowhere near where I live, and I don't
30 want them to be, but we need to really pay attention, as an
31 industry, to the effect that these are going to have. That's
32 all I've got to say, and thank you, guys, and it's been a great
33 meeting to listen to, and I'm hoping to be there in June. I'm
34 looking forward to the discussion on IFQ in June, for sure.
35 Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Up next is Eric Schmidt.

38
39 **MR. ERIC SCHMIDT:** Good afternoon. Captain Eric Schmidt, St.
40 Petersburg, Florida. You had to know this morning that you were
41 going to hear from me. There's over a thousand names on that
42 petition, not 600, and it was not a generic-Facebook-generated
43 petition. I met every one of those people in-person, and every
44 one of those people fish.

45
46 Not everyone can come to a meeting in the middle of the week,
47 travel 700 miles to speak for three minutes, and those are
48 people that I met at boat ramps, and those are people that fish

1 with me. Those are people that I spoke to at fishing clubs, and
2 I heard a comment that maybe the council shouldn't do anything
3 based on just 600 signatures.

4
5 Before any of you were sitting at this table, back in the 1990s,
6 I was at a council meeting, and there was testimony from a
7 gentleman from the Keys, and he got up, and he spoke for three
8 minutes, and he was a commercial spear fisherman, and he said
9 that he believed that jewfish were going extinct. The testimony
10 of one person closed an entire fishery at that meeting, one.
11 There is over a thousand names on that petition.

12
13 On that day in August, when you get sworn-in as a council
14 member, you have to take an oath, and part of your oath contains
15 the line "I commit myself to uphold the provisions, standards,
16 and requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation
17 and Management Act".

18
19 There was a presentation by Assane this morning, and there were
20 ten points to consider as to whether or not a fishery qualifies
21 for federal management. African pompano qualifies under eight
22 of those ten requirements. I have to say that I was very
23 disappointed in what I saw this morning. If you could not even
24 consider to have the council staff do a presentation to allow
25 you to consider managing a fish, based on a thousand signatures,
26 and I could have brought 2,500, and maybe I will just bus 2,500
27 people, or 250 people, to Alabama, and they all can come up here
28 and tell you the same thing, but the fact that you couldn't even
29 consider that is very, very disappointing.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Schmidt. We'll go
32 back online to the virtual folks, and, Casey Streeter, we'll try
33 that again. Casey, can you hear us, and are you there? Okay.
34 We'll let's go ahead and move on. We'll move him down and keep
35 trying. Okay. We'll go back in-person, and, up next, it looks
36 like Billy Archer.

37
38 **MR. BILLY ARCHER:** Good afternoon, you all. I brought my
39 Southeast For-Hire Electronic toolkit handbook with me for good
40 luck, because of everything we've got to do. My name is Captain
41 Billy Archer, and I'm a third-generation fishermen from Panama
42 City, Florida, the owner and operator of the Seminole Wind. I'm
43 a dual permit holder and the Vice President of the Charter
44 Fishermen's Association.

45
46 What I would like to do is take a minute to give you all a
47 snapshot of this past season and we lost, in terms of the
48 court's ruling against the SEFHIER program. I only offered

1 twelve-hour trips during the red snapper derby, and we had some
2 of the best weather in years, and I fished sixty-nine out of
3 seventy-seven days, and our average trip offshore was forty
4 miles. I carried 673 customers fishing, and we landed 1,346 red
5 snapper, 162 scamp, twenty-nine gags, and seven red grouper
6 during that time. My fuel burn was 11,040 gallons, and my
7 average fuel cost was \$5.45, and the total diesel cost was just
8 over \$60,000, and that's just one vessel, and so we lost a lot
9 when we lost this program.

10
11 How do we move on forward from here? CFA submitted what I like
12 to call a redemption plan for the for-hire data collection
13 program, which I support 100 percent. We have taken the current
14 5th Circuit ruling and applied common sense and thoughtfulness in
15 the redesign of SEFHIER, using tools such as geofencing or
16 transponders, providing whether the vessel has left the dock or
17 is in the harbor, using dockside intercepts for means of
18 validation, keeping trip reports, hail-outs, hail-ins, the
19 captain's name, the vessel, number of passengers, port, and the
20 time of return, which are most of the crucial elements of the
21 program. We want our discards to be counted, as well as the
22 fish we land, and not some part of an extrapolation program.

23
24 There is a misunderstanding, amongst some of these council
25 members, that only a few charter captains supported the SEFHIER
26 data collection program. Well, that's simply not true. While
27 the program wasn't perfect, the agency was working with the
28 industry to iron out those problems, and there is a small -- Or
29 there was a small portion of operators that were non-compliant.
30 However, four of the largest charter/for-hire industry groups
31 have sent in letters to you all, asking for help in revamping
32 this program to be compliant with the court's ruling and give
33 our industry the data collection the vast majority of charter
34 businesses want.

35
36 We need your help in getting this done, and please start a new
37 amendment to develop a for-hire data collection program as soon
38 as you can. If I've got just another second, I would like to
39 request that -- Go on record requesting you to open gag on
40 September 1 for the charter/for-hire, and I continue to support
41 a permit or decal system for the private recs that fish in the
42 EEZ, and my commercial ask is gag grouper, Action 2, Alternative
43 2, and, as far as the red snapper IFQ, there's just not enough
44 red snapper to go around, and so all this conversation about
45 being blackballed and all that -- If the fishermen are looking
46 for allocation, or shares, it has to come from somewhere else,
47 and there is plenty of folks making it work. I've built a
48 relationship and have a good business plan. Thank you very

1 much, and Happy Easter.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain Archer. We do have a
4 question for you from Ms. Boggs.

5

6 **MR. ARCHER:** Yes, ma'am.

7

8 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Captain Archer, for coming today, and so
9 I wanted to confirm the data that you gave us at the beginning
10 of your testimony, and where did that information come from?

11

12 **MR. ARCHER:** It came right off my iPad.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Let's move back online, and Jay Mullins
15 is up next.

16

17 **MR. JAY MULLINS:** My name is Jay Mullins, and I'm an eastern
18 Gulf longline owner and operator, one of a very select few
19 owner-operator longline vessel operators left in the eastern
20 Gulf. We had a premier chance to send in some very important
21 gag grouper data, and we reached out to everyone, me and a
22 multitude of people, and tried to find the gag grouper
23 allocation, so I could go get a spawning research data slip to
24 bring in and be presented to the council.

25

26 Nobody, absolutely nobody, would return the calls or messages
27 from me or any of my associates, but, furthermore, I guess we're
28 going to put -- We're going to blackball, or whatever, somebody
29 over conservation, and, well, that's good. I guess that's what
30 we want to do, some of us, but, furthermore, something that is
31 very much more important is, recently, I attended a gag grouper
32 meeting, and I was told, and I'm not going to mention the name,
33 that, Jay, we would love to have you do the gag grouper, the
34 research, and this come from one the highest, but,
35 unfortunately, unfortunately, we are very concerned about your
36 wellbeing to put your name around any gag grouper research.

37

38 If the highest up in management is very concerned about my
39 personal wellbeing, my physical wellbeing, is there other
40 members that are in management also concerned, and are they
41 receiving threats, political influence, or whatnot? When you
42 start making threats about a person's personal wellbeing, now we
43 have a more serious issue. Blackballing is one thing, but
44 threats are a whole different way of life.

45

46 I've been fishing a very long time here in the eastern Gulf,
47 long before the catch share program was ever implemented, and
48 the initial distribution of the allocation, I hate to say, was

1 done wrong. It went to the permit holders and not the actual
2 fishermen, because not everybody owned a permit that was a
3 captain of a vessel.

4
5 The initial distribution of shares, I think we need to go back
6 and look at it, just like somebody else said, and the captains
7 and the crews got overlooked big time, and the shares went to
8 only the permit holders, who, in return, when everyone says the
9 fishermen were the ones that voted for this program, that's not
10 necessarily the case. The permit owners are the ones that voted
11 for the program, and now look what we've got. We've taken off
12 the income qualifier, and now a fish house can own all the
13 allocation and give you a wish list of what you go out and
14 catch.

15
16 As fishermen that actually harvest the natural resource from the
17 water, shouldn't it be us deciding how we manage our fish for
18 the year, and not somebody else? I would like to thank this
19 group, the managers, for giving this serious look, but, when you
20 start hearing that we're afraid to come to meetings, and I have
21 to move my boat around, when somebody is concerned about my
22 personal wellbeing, I'm starting to take it personal myself.
23 There was some mention about mutton snapper.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Mullins, we have reached the end of your
26 time, if you could wrap it up really quickly, please.

27
28 **MR. MULLINS:** When we start doing research on the muttons, and
29 everybody knows what I can produce on mutton snapper in the
30 eastern Gulf, and we're in trouble. We're in trouble on the
31 mutton snapper and on our deepwater grouper. Thank you.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Mullins. Up next is Jim
34 Zurbrick.

35
36 **MR. JIM ZURBRICK:** Thank you, council, for allowing me to speak.
37 Three minutes usually isn't enough. Wayne, of everybody
38 probably I've met in the fishery, and I knew him for about
39 eighteen years, and rationale was always a big part of what
40 Wayne brought to the table, why do we do this, and why do we do
41 it, and he was very good, and, like I told Tom Frazer, he was
42 lucky that he was in his neighborhood, because he was able to go
43 to him for some of the rationale of how all those amendments got
44 passed through the 1990s and how we ever got to the point where
45 we're at with red snapper, with the IFQ.

46
47 Gag grouper, it's a management issue. You can track the science
48 and the data all you want, and, environmentally, there's

1 probably some reasons also, but it is recreational discards and
2 the fact that we didn't get a handle on catch restraints early
3 enough in this game. You guys have got the big shoulders, and
4 there are folks that are going to have to -- You've got to
5 accept the blame for it. It needs better management, or we're
6 not going to get a handle on it.

7
8 The SEFHIER, the five-to-five vote out of the committee the
9 other day was a shocker for me, because I thought we were here
10 to get the best data. Archer just got up, Billy did, and gave
11 you data, and I could show you what I've got, and I've got
12 cameras on my boat, catching data that -- When I do a discard
13 report, I never capture all the discards, on my visual
14 observation on a trip, because the camera has more than I do,
15 because I can't get them all, and so, using the SEFHIER, the
16 fact is that we were tracking, and possibly that's the only
17 component that we might lose, if we go forward with this, I
18 would think, but, if not, we've got to have the call-in and
19 call-out. You've got to know what the guys caught. We've got
20 to have that good data.

21
22 Also, with the IFQ discussion, as far as the blackballing, I
23 don't know anything about that. We've helped everybody that we
24 can. If I find something -- You can have an opinion, but, if I
25 knew somebody that, because of race or religion or gender, and
26 you were blackballing somebody, that's different, but, if you
27 have a different opinion, or you feel threatened because of
28 people's -- When has that ever been wrong, to feel like, hey, I
29 would rather see my quota go somewhere else, and, by the way,
30 speaking of quota, we're catching it, and so, if we allow the
31 other 400 latent permits to start actively fishing, we're never
32 going to have enough quota for everybody, and so this
33 overcapacity is an issue, okay, and we are overcapitalized. We
34 definitely are.

35
36 Getting right down to it here, the jeopardy, and both of our
37 stocks are in jeopardy, and so, if we're going to finger point,
38 and I hate to do it, because it's not polite, right, but I am
39 looking at the group, and so thank you.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Zurbrick. Mr. Zurbrick, we
42 have a question from Ms. Boggs.

43
44 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Jim, for coming today, and I know it
45 takes a lot for you and Patty to tie your boat up to the dock
46 and come here and give us testimony and be a part of this
47 process, and so you give a lot of comment, and you're very
48 active. If you could, in thirty seconds or less, give us one

1 thing, the number-one thing you would do, with the IFQ program,
2 and what would you recommend?

3
4 **MR. ZURBRICK:** Well, you've got to get bang for your buck, okay,
5 and so I would, if I was -- I would have taken part of the
6 increase and used it for discard reduction. I would have taken
7 a percentage of it and allowed people with cameras on the boats,
8 who can prove their discards, or on observer trips, and I would
9 have started there with an IFQ change.

10
11 Now, there's so many caveats to the IFQ system, and there is so
12 many things that you might suggest, but one of them is the
13 overcapacity, also. The second thing is overcapacity. There's
14 guys getting into the fishery that, right now, we don't need
15 anymore. If you look at all of the landings, and I don't know
16 if you have, Susan, but the landings -- We've caught a third of
17 the snappers so far, and we're three months, and so we're on
18 pace. There is really not a need. There's a need for
19 replacement fishermen, but not a new entrant, additional
20 entrant, and so those are two things that I would do.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Mr. Zurbrick. Okay. We will go back
23 virtually, and maybe the third time is going to be a charm here,
24 but, Mr. Streeter, can you hear us? Are you available?

25
26 **MR. CASEY STREETER:** I apologize for all the difficulties. I'm
27 actually working on the water down here right now in southwest
28 Florida, the recovery effort. I'm sorry that I couldn't make
29 the meeting this week, and I'm sorry to hear about Wayne Werner.

30
31 I have listened in a little bit, and my wife has been listening
32 into the meeting over the last week, and I am encouraged with
33 the conversations of the IFQ changes and bouncing ideas and
34 trying to address and fix some of the issues that we're having.
35 For the first time, I've seen something that I've felt progress.
36 I look forward to being there in June, and I look forward to
37 coming back to the fishery and participating, as we recover and
38 we rebuild our shop.

39
40 I miss the fishery, and I miss selling fish, but I will say that
41 the one stress that I don't have is the worry of finding enough
42 fish to be in business and finding enough fish for my guys to be
43 in business, and that's one thing that I definitely don't miss
44 in this fishery, but I look forward to being there in June, and,
45 again, thank you for the time, and sorry for the difficulties.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Streeter. Up next is
48 H.D. Pappas.

1
2 **MR. H.D. PAPPAS:** Hello. Thank you, council and staff. It's
3 good to see some of the same faces here today, and I appreciate
4 the general work and thought that goes into this process. It is
5 a seriously time-consuming part of your life, and we spend a lot
6 of time away from our families to be here. My name is H.D.
7 Pappas, and I work for Pappas Restaurants in Houston, where we
8 self-distribute fish directly to over ninety restaurants which
9 serve seafood. I own quota for these reasons.

10
11 We've been participants in the IFQ since 2014, and I keep
12 hearing all this talk with changing the IFQ system, and do you
13 remember how it was before the IFQ? Do you remember -- Do we
14 remember what improvements happened after its implementation?
15 If you want to work on something, how about making the current
16 system more permanent? That way, we'll know that it will be
17 around and that we can count on that.

18
19 The great majority of seafood that Americans consume comes from
20 restaurants and groceries. As suppliers of kitchens of
21 restaurants and shelves of grocery stores, commercial fishermen
22 are the source of the seafood for our restaurant guests and
23 grocery store customers. The IFQ system that governs species of
24 fish, such as grouper and red snapper, are designed to protect
25 the future viability of the species. Prior to the advent of the
26 IFQ system, the fisheries were overfished and depleted.
27 Restaurants and grocery stores do not have the access to species
28 that they have today, and, therefore, neither did normal,
29 average Americans.

30
31 The IFQ system was not invented to inconvenience wealthy yacht
32 owners. It was created to build up stock, and it, in turn,
33 build up the commercial sector, which then gave the average
34 American access to better and more diverse seafood, at lower
35 prices, to restaurants like ours.

36
37 Secondly, the idea of a permit to own shares, and, while I've
38 thought about that, I think I have seen the results. The reef
39 permit that we purchased in about 2014 was for \$5,000, and now
40 they are about a minimum of \$30,000. They would be hoarded, and
41 that means less available and very hard to find, making it
42 harder to access the fish and harder to get fish for anyone,
43 particularly a new entrant. Those are all negative outcomes.

44
45 The imbalance of this council is playing out, and we have some
46 real concerns now on our hands about what direction everything
47 is going. My interest is always to protect the resource and the
48 interest of our guests and restaurants, average Americans who

1 want to have the chance to enjoy these fish as well. Thank you.
2 Have a nice day.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Pappas. We do have a question
5 for you from Ms. Boggs.

6
7 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Pappas, for being here today, and
8 this is a hard discussion that we're having with the IFQ
9 fishery, and part of it is economics and things, as such, and
10 I'm going to put you on the spot, and you can, or you don't have
11 to answer me, but I would be curious to know how many
12 restaurants do you all own, and about how many employees do you
13 employ? You're saying you take these fish off the boats, and
14 you use them in your restaurants directly, and so how many jobs
15 is that impacting off the water?

16
17 **MR. PAPPAS:** Yes, ma'am, and I think there's two questions. The
18 second one, I think, if I'm remembering here, we employ about
19 13,000 people at our company, roughly, and we buy a lot of fish,
20 a lot of different kinds of fish, and we like the domestic fish,
21 the wild-caught fish, for sure, and I deal with everybody here,
22 the wholesalers and the boats, and it's a great thing, and it's
23 just the system is very strong, I feel.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Pappas, I just wanted to say thank you. I
26 know you serve on some of our advisory panels and things, and
27 you provide a different perspective from the traditional
28 fishermen that we might hear about that are quota owners, and
29 actually doing the fishing, but, also, you all are quota owners
30 and doing the fishing, but, also, you know, providing it to your
31 restaurants, and so we appreciate that different perspective, so
32 we get the full picture of everyone that is engaged in this IFQ
33 program, and so thank you.

34
35 **MR. PAPPAS:** Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Up next, going back online, is
38 Trenton Knepp. Mr. Knepp, if you can hear us, you may be on
39 mute. Please unmute your line. Okay. Mr. Knepp, if you can
40 hear us, we'll come back to you. We're going to take someone
41 here in the room, and then we'll come back to you. Next is
42 Kelia Paul.

43
44 **MS. KELIA PAUL:** Good afternoon, council. Thank you for
45 allowing me to speak to you today. My name is Kelia Paul. My
46 wife and I own two dually-permitted vessels out of Panama City
47 Beach, and I want to start today by talking to you about
48 SEFHIER.

1
2 We were super disheartened when we found about the 5th Circuit's
3 ruling, and, unfortunately, the subsequent action that the
4 agency had to take. We want to see this stood back up as soon
5 as possible. We all want proper data collection to delineate
6 the charter/for-hire's true catches and discards. This is
7 paramount in our survival and continuation of our industry.

8
9 I was disappointed to see the motion to continue discussions on
10 this fail in committee, and I encourage this to be rectified in
11 Full Council. When these discussions continue, please ensure
12 that the appropriate challenges that were set forth are met, to
13 reduce the probability that we're in this situation again.

14
15 We're dually-permitted, and so we have no issues with the VMS.
16 It's hard for me to wrap my head around why charter/for-hire
17 location information is more proprietary than commercial. They
18 do it, and I don't see why we wouldn't, and there's also value
19 in having the safety of a VMS, and I won't go into the
20 specifics, for time's sake today, but it helped us save one of
21 our vessels, and so there is definitely something in that.

22
23 Then I don't -- You know, this program cannot turn out usable
24 and accurate data without proper accountability, and I don't
25 believe that increased dockside validation is going to be
26 sufficient for this.

27
28 As far as the economic requirements go, I do see the benefit in
29 it, but I am pragmatic, and I do not believe that it will fly
30 with the industry, which is why I spoke out against it from the
31 very beginning. We want this council to stand the program back
32 up, by ensuring it stays that way, and, if the economic portion
33 means the failure of the system, then it's not worth it. Our
34 suggestion for an alternative is that possibly make it a random
35 selection of a sample size, like we do in the commercial
36 industry.

37
38 We're so passionate about SEFHIER also because we want to see
39 continuing discussing, and possible action, on sector
40 separation, as this has worked extremely well with red snapper.
41 Please explore what this will look like for amberjack, gag
42 grouper, red grouper, and triggerfish. We haven't seen anything
43 on this since 2021, which was -- That was just our landings, and
44 then, by that time, the data was already old, and a lot of
45 management changes have happened since then.

46
47 For gag, we do want a June 1 start date, and we want to see the
48 20 percent buffer that the motion was passed, before we talk

1 about specifics on the alternatives, but we catch our fish in
2 those first two to three weeks of June, and we're going to
3 increase our discard mortality if we don't have that June 1
4 start date, while we're executing the red snapper fishery, and I
5 don't want to think of the damage we're going to do to the stock
6 if we have a fall season for the duration of the rebuilding
7 plan. We're willing to get fewer days, to reduce that discard
8 mortality, and I had some comments on the IFQ program, but I'm
9 out of time. Thank you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Ms. Paul. We do have a question for
12 you.

13
14 **DR. SWEETMAN:** I'm curious your thoughts on the IFQ program.

15
16 **MS. PAUL:** C.J., I won't say you're my favorite, but -- Okay,
17 and so I heard a lot of words yesterday, but nothing was truly
18 actually said in that discussion. There was a lot of talk
19 around capacity, and I don't know the answer to this question,
20 but is it truly an issue? What I did see was that, in 2021, 397
21 vessels landed red snapper, and what I would encourage you guys
22 to look at is how many of those lease the fish and how many of
23 those own those fish.

24
25 Then start with that. Start with the ones of us that are
26 leasing our quota. You know, it's hard to buy, and it's
27 expensive, and, yes, I know there's a government plan, but,
28 guys, it's a 6 percent interest rate right now, plus 2 percent
29 on top of that, it's not the greatest business decision in the
30 world, you know, and so it's one of those things.

31
32 We're not new entrants, and we're current entrants. We hold
33 permits to land these fish, and so start with that and then move
34 on, but what I would say is please keep the conversation going,
35 no matter what this council decides. Because of the way that
36 the lines are drawn for each side, you're going to upset
37 somebody, right, and somebody is going to be upset, no matter
38 what you guys decide, but that doesn't mean that the
39 conversation shouldn't continue. Thank you.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We have one more question from Ms. Boggs, and
42 another one from Mr. Anson after that.

43
44 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Ms. Paul, for being here today, and so my
45 question is, and I hadn't thought about it until just a few
46 minutes ago, but you're dual-permitted, and how difficult was it
47 for you to report to both the SEFHIER program and on commercial?
48 Do you use one?

1
2 **MS. PAUL:** Yes, we have one. We have CLS, the little tablet,
3 and everything is all there, and so we use one, and so it's
4 indifferent for us to use it for SEFHIER.

5
6 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Ms. Paul, for being here. You had
7 mentioned that you didn't have a lot of confidence, I guess, in
8 the dockside validation to verify the information, and that's
9 what I heard, I thought, and, if it wasn't, please let me know.
10 Is that -- Did I hear you correctly?

11
12 **MS. PAUL:** No, and there was some talk about increasing dockside
13 validation, the frequency of it, in lieu of the VMS, for the
14 accountability piece, and I don't think that's going to be
15 sufficient enough. You know, there is people in Panama City
16 that aren't at our major marinas that have never been validated,
17 and so I think the VMS is important. If we don't have some kind
18 of validation that says, yes, this vessel went fishing, we're
19 not going to get -- I don't think the hail-in and hail-out is
20 going to be enough, and we're not going to get the data that we
21 need, which is counterproductive to what we're trying to do, and
22 that's my point about that.

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

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Ms. Paul. Okay. We'll
27 go back to virtual with Josh Sauls.

28
29 **MR. JOSH SAULS:** Good afternoon. I'm a federally-permitted
30 charter boat owner and operator out of Panama City. I'm sorry
31 that I was unable to attend the meeting, but we had some trips
32 that I had to run. I would like to talk about SEFHIER. I fully
33 support reporting for the for-hire vessels.

34
35 My entire life, I've been going by the regulations, with
36 inaccurate data, and I have really viewed this as an opportunity
37 to change this, to provide real-time data, and, you know, I
38 dealt with some of the hassles regarding trip reports and
39 renewing my permits, and, as big of an inconvenience as it was,
40 I appreciated that someone was actually verifying the reports.
41 Ultimately, I was able to resolve all the issues, and I think
42 the communication between the apps and the logbook office could
43 use some improvement, and I'm sure those things come with time.

44
45 As far as the VMS, transponder, geofencing, I think that's a
46 great idea, because we're going to eliminate the, oh, well, I am
47 not going out today. You know, we have to actually verify. As
48 Kelia said, some people have never been validated dockside, and

1 I'm one of them. I mean, there's only two charter boats in the
2 marina that I run out of, and I've never been validated.

3
4 Either way, and, regarding the economic data, I could take it or
5 leave it. It doesn't matter to me either way. I am here to
6 support the fishery, and, if my economic data is part of that
7 package, so be it.

8
9 As far as concerns with the gag grouper issues, I fully
10 understand the need for conservation, but I would also like to
11 push for a June 1 opening. For-hire boats and recreational
12 fishermen will be out in full force this time of year. Despite
13 the efforts of multiple entities, for-hire, and most
14 recreational fishermen, still fail to properly handle and
15 release their fish, and I would rather see those gags caught and
16 harvested in June than throwing back with a death sentence.
17 With fewer anglers on the water in the fall, my hope would be
18 that this would reduce discards overall.

19
20 As far as sector separation, I am undecided, and I'm personally
21 open to the idea, depending on what each sector will actually
22 receive, and it seems to have worked well in the red snapper,
23 and I would like to see more information for that.

24
25 Some current regulation changes, over the last couple of years,
26 that have an effect on my business, the increase in red snapper
27 days, last year in August, didn't do me much good. I agree with
28 the other charter fisherman that spoke up, and I would like to
29 end the season on July 31 and add those days later in the fall,
30 whether it be weekends or something like that, and it would be a
31 good boost for business, and it keeps us from beating down those
32 fish so bad.

33
34 The other issue I had was with the red grouper closure, and that
35 really hurt my fall business. You know, we're catching a lot of
36 red groupers, coming over the rail, and we're unable to keep
37 them, and we throw them back, and we use the best methods we
38 can, and we use the descender device every single day, but I
39 wonder if, instead of -- If ending the season earlier, we might
40 lower the bag limit and allow the season to remain open a little
41 longer, and maybe that's an area where trip reporting will help
42 as well, because we could count the discards.

43
44 In closing, I only have two main objectives here. One, I want
45 to continue to make a living on the water, and, two, when I show
46 my son pictures from my father's fishing career, and my career,
47 I don't want to have -- I want my son to experience the things
48 that I've experienced, and I want him to be able to share it

1 with others in the way that I do. I appreciate the opportunity.
2 Thanks, guys.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sauls. Up next is Chris
5 Niquet.

6
7 **MR. CHRIS NIQUET:** Chris Niquet, Panama City, Florida. I'm here
8 for the commercial sector. On the question, or the subject, of
9 accessibility in quota and allocation, I got into the fishery by
10 making an investment, in cash, and I didn't get any, quote,
11 unquote, gifted to me. The same path exists today for those who
12 want to get into the fishery. They can go for the government
13 program or use their own funds or get somebody to finance their
14 quota for them. This stuff you hear of there's no quota
15 available, at any price, they're lying to you. If you want to
16 pay the price, the quota is available.

17
18 Next subject, the recreational, private rec, accountability.
19 Work on your document for the red snapper discards. The private
20 rec discards approximately nine-times as many fish as they keep,
21 and can you imagine any other animal where you only keep 10
22 percent of what you hook and pull up from pressure and blow up,
23 and 20 or 25 percent of those die? If you can, raise your hand,
24 and signify, or do something.

25
26 If they're going to have the seasons, like they have trigger
27 fishing, and then, later on, you've got red snapper open, all
28 that does is increase the mortality rate. The longer they're on
29 the water, the more discards you have, and it's very simple.

30
31 One last thing. If you really want to lower the price of
32 allocation and quota, just like with any other good or service,
33 you must increase the supply. With a decreased supply, the
34 price goes up. If you don't believe me, ask your economist over
35 here. Thank you very much for your time, and I will take any
36 questions that you have.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll go back to online, and up next is
39 Bill Kelly.

40
41 **MR. BILL KELLY:** Mr. Chairman and council members, Bill Kelly,
42 representing the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's
43 Association. First off, I would like to say rest in peace,
44 Wayne Werner. We're going to miss him.

45
46 Secondly, on behalf of the stakeholders in the kingfish gillnet
47 fishery, and the members of our association, I want to thank you
48 for giving final approval to Framework Amendment 12, modifying

1 rules and regulations to allow fishing on weekends and holidays.
2 Back in 2010, at a council meeting in Key West, Florida, I sat
3 down with Dr. Crabtree and Dr. Branstetter in order to build a
4 stronger working relationship with fisheries managers. It
5 worked, and we've accomplished a lot in these past thirteen
6 years.

7
8 First, we voluntarily provide real-time catch data in the
9 gillnet fishery, and we volunteered paybacks for our overages,
10 which, by the way, have totaled about 40,000 pounds over in the
11 past thirteen years, but 238,000 pounds under in the same
12 timeframe. We've raised trip limits to 45,000 pounds, which
13 virtually eliminates fines and increases fleet efficiency and
14 quality of harvest.

15
16 Now, allowing fishing on weekends and holidays takes us off a
17 four-day workweek and improves fleet efficiency and
18 significantly reduces changes of negative weather interactions.
19 If ever there was an example of stakeholders and fisheries
20 managers working together for the benefit of both the
21 stakeholders and the resource, this is it. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Kelly. Up next is Dale
24 Woodruff.

25
26 **MR. DALE WOODRUFF:** Good afternoon. Thanks for giving me the
27 opportunity to speak to the Gulf Council today. I'm Captain
28 Dale Woodruff, and I'm coming before you as the President of the
29 Alabama Charter Fishing Association, which I am representing the
30 members that are federal for-hire vessels located along the
31 coastal waters of Alabama.

32
33 For the recent court ruling that has been handed down to end the
34 federal for-hire sector reporting and accountable data
35 collection, or SEFHIER, in the program, the members of the ACFA
36 have decided to let the Gulf Council know now that there is a
37 failure in the system. The federal for-hire sector has no
38 accountability, as we did with the SEFHIER program, which gave
39 real-time, accurate, and validated landings.

40
41 We feel that, without accountability and data collection for the
42 for-hire sector, there will be a decline in our quota and days-
43 at-sea in which we are able to harvest the red snapper and other
44 species of federally-regulated fish, due to possibly
45 overfishing.

46
47 The five Gulf states, and the commercial sector, have their own
48 data collecting reporting program, and the ACFA, which is us,

1 are concerned with the opportunity of a fish quota grab, leaving
2 the entire sector with less quota, which means less days at sea.

3
4 The Alabama Charter Fishing Association's members have spent
5 thousands of dollars, documented over twelve years, equaling
6 hours of three-minute testimony, at numerous Gulf Council
7 meetings, along with the majority of other federally-permitted
8 vessels, in favor of an accountable data collection reporting
9 program. The ACFA, and its counterparts, asked for an
10 accountable program, and which the Gulf Council voted for,
11 passed, and implemented, hearing the majority of the federal-
12 for-hire-permitted sector in favor of an accountable program.

13
14 We want to be held accountable -- We wanted to be held
15 accountable, and the program, according to the ACFA, had met
16 those standards. ACFA does not hold the Gulf Council
17 responsible for the actions for a very small group that did not
18 make up the majority of the sector that ended the SEFHIER
19 program. The Gulf Council did their job, and you listened and
20 passed the program that was giving us more fish, more days at
21 sea, which created more value and revenue for our industry.

22
23 The ACFA is now asking the Gulf Council, and NMFS, to expedite a
24 revised data reporting collection program that will meet the
25 criteria of the majority, and also the few, with urgency. ACFA
26 has a fear of the for-hire sector being left behind. We have
27 been here before with the Gulf Council, for many years, and we
28 know the snail's pace process that it takes for a program to be
29 passed and implemented. We ask that a new program of data
30 collection and accountability measures for the for-hire sector
31 be passed and implemented without hesitation. The ACFA has also
32 approved and agreed to sign-on to full support of the CFA's
33 plans, which describe a data collection and reporting program
34 and accountability measures. The end.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Woodruff. Susan.

37
38 **MR. BOGGS:** Dale, thank you for being here today. I am going to
39 kind of put you on the spot, but we've heard some other reports,
40 or I heard earlier today, that there some people that didn't
41 really buy-in, and does anybody -- What I understood today is
42 that no one in ACFA has an issue with any type of reporting.

43
44 **MR. WOODRUFF:** Nobody has an issue with the reporting. I mean,
45 it was on the ground and running last year, and it was awesome.
46 There was maybe a technicality here or there, with people's
47 phones or whatever, themselves, but we loved the program.
48 Everybody in the industry, we -- What the program did is it

1 created value for our industry, and it created value for our
2 businesses. It gave us longer seasons, and it just created the
3 opportunity to do real-time reporting and accurate data, which
4 we've been asking for for years, and we had the opportunity to
5 do that, and that's what the program did.

6
7 If it has to be revised, let's get it revised, and let's get it
8 passed, and let's get it going. Let's get it back in our hands
9 again, and, that way, we can give the SSC and the science people
10 what they need to keep this thing going, to keep our industry
11 going.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Woodruff, I have a question, or really a
14 comment, maybe really directed at Andy, and, just to maybe
15 alleviate some of your concerns, I think what you're talking
16 about -- You know, the sector separation certainly gave you
17 those extra days and things, but, Andy, I don't believe the
18 SEFHIER was being used for any management advice at this point,
19 right, and so, right now, the SEFHIER, while it was being
20 implemented, and it's certainly a drawback to data collection
21 that that ruling went the way that it did, but that doesn't
22 affect what -- You know, it happened to you recently, and that
23 was the --

24
25 **MR. WOODRUFF:** You're right, and maybe I didn't speak properly,
26 like I should have, and I normally don't read when I come up
27 here, and I speak from the heart, and I hardly ever read
28 anything. I'm the president of the association, and so now I
29 guess I've got documents, buy, yes, you're right. The sector
30 separation, when the charter/for-hire industry got their own
31 sector, or their part, it did, it helped our industry out.

32
33 Now, the program that's been implemented, if that gets used, we
34 could see a greater implementation for our industry. You know,
35 we see our industry also even expanding to include new people,
36 too.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Moving back online, Andy Egeland.

39
40 **MR. ANDY EGELAND:** Hello. My name is Andy Egeland, and I'm a
41 commercial fisherman and a wholesale seafood dealer in Venice,
42 Florida. We established our business in 2012, with one permit,
43 and we currently manage two other vessels, and one of them is
44 dually-permitted and runs about a hundred charter trips a year,
45 as well as fishes maybe a half-a-dozen commercial trips.

46
47 The one commercial boat we have fishes about sixty trips a year,
48 and it's probably the smallest commercial vessel in the Gulf of

1 Mexico, but we have harvested probably an average of about
2 20,000 pounds of restricted species a year out of that little
3 boat, and I would probably say that the greatest challenge to
4 us, in our industry, and our business, since we began, has been
5 navigating the IFQ program and actually finding quota.

6
7 I am only in the industry ten years, and I'm probably still
8 considered a new entry. When we started, we just got online,
9 went on boats and quota, and we talked to everybody we could, to
10 try to find quota, to lease quota. At that point in our
11 business plan, we decided that it wasn't viable to take out a
12 big loan, or to purchase shares, and so we've been leasing quota
13 the entire time.

14
15 Currently, our quota cost is astronomical. We're paying over
16 five-dollars for red snapper a pound and around three-dollars
17 for red grouper a pound, which I think -- When we initiated this
18 program, I don't think that we intended on the shareholders to
19 just create revenue of upwards of \$40 million a year, and it's
20 not even accounted for in our industry, and, as fishermen, we
21 are the ones that suffer the loss.

22
23 Ten years ago, I made five-dollars a pound, when I was selling
24 my grouper, and it was great money. There was a lot of guys out
25 there that were only making four, and, this year, I made \$4.75,
26 because our quota price is so high that we no longer -- The fish
27 house is paying \$7.75, but we still are making \$4.75, because
28 our quota price is so high.

29
30 Unfortunately, in these meetings that we've attended over the
31 last few years, I really see a poor representation of actual
32 fishermen that are trying to get into the industry without
33 having large pockets, without taking out large loans, and
34 there's just almost no way to get into it anymore, and now I'm
35 hearing there's too many people in it anyway, and so, as a
36 fisherman, I hope that our council takes into consideration
37 changing the IFQ program to actually help the lease fishermen.

38
39 If you actually looked at my harvest over the last years, and
40 allocated me allocation for every year, then I wouldn't even
41 have to have the meeting and be in this conversation, and I
42 could provide for my family, and, unfortunately, this year, I
43 didn't even get quota the first three months, until I had
44 somebody approach me and ask me to go fishing for them, and so
45 we're trying to catch some fish, but the IFQ program is
46 completely flawed. It gets the rich richer, and it keeps the
47 fishermen down, and you're never going to get any new fishermen
48 in this industry, while the program exists the way it does.

1 Thank you for your time.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Egeland. Next will be
4 Brad Gorst.

5

6 **MR. BRAD GORST:** Hello. Thank you all for putting up with me
7 today and being able to hear my comments, and kudos to Wayne
8 Werner. He was a great guy, and I thoroughly enjoyed many
9 conversations with him.

10

11 The IFQ program, to me, it's a wonderful thing, and the system
12 works great. I'm one of those people that actually mortgaged my
13 house and went out and bought shares, because I didn't want to
14 have to lease fish. I said, if I'm going to lease fish, guess
15 who I'm going to lease them from? Myself, and so I went out and
16 borrowed the money and bought enough to sustain what I can do
17 for what I figure is a year, and that's what I am going to need,
18 and so I am not leasing mine anymore.

19

20 If I had extra this year, I might have, but, in lieu of all the
21 closures that are coming, I'm going to need those fish to catch
22 myself, and so, in effect, what's going on, it's going to dry up
23 the lease market, and so there's going to be a lot less fish to
24 lease, because the guys are going to fish and catch them
25 themselves, and so especially with a use-it-or-lose-it
26 provision.

27

28 Anyway, the gag season, personally, the start dates, as much as
29 I don't like it, for us in the Florida area, the best time for
30 us would be, let's see, from Thanksgiving to the end of the
31 year, because that's the greatest economic value for our area.
32 With the cooler waters nearshore, and the need to go to deep
33 water to catch red snapper, it's not a problem, and so we
34 eliminate the discards in that aspect.

35

36 If that's not possible, to add Thanksgiving to the end of the
37 year, which is even shorter than a lot of the alternatives, I'm
38 going to have to go with June 1 is my second choice, for the
39 fact that it's going to reduce the discards of the red snapper
40 in a September season, and it's also going to reduce the red
41 grouper discards, which is probably going to happen in a
42 September season, and so that's that.

43

44 There's no need to reallocate any gags away from an accountable
45 fishery, and they shouldn't be penalized for not exceeding their
46 ACL in the last ten years, whereas the rec sector has. Also,
47 the payback provision should be applied to any overages in the
48 rec sector.

1
2 Use due diligence in reactivating the SEFHIER as best as
3 possible. Use a SEFHIER reporting snapshot for the last year as
4 the beginning of splitting the for-hire data stream apart from
5 the private recreational component. Move forward with the white
6 paper on sector allocation from last year and address it sooner
7 than later.

8
9 I believe that the rec sector solution to overfishing is to
10 develop a tagging system, and I've had lots of my friends and
11 neighbors have asked me about that, and they say, think about
12 it. You get a tag, and you catch it, and turn it in, and you go
13 get one and you go again, and so the IFQ system is the best
14 thing, because it follows and uses the free-market system.

15
16 Overcapacity, there's a lot of have-nots wanting something from
17 those that have. There's nothing gifted for free, and those
18 initial participants were historical participants who were
19 already in the fishery, i.e., fishermen, those very same people
20 that you're trying to take away their work history, and so I
21 bought into the system myself. Any type of taking away of the
22 IFQ system and --

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Gorst, you will have to be wrapping it up
25 here pretty quick, please.

26
27 **MR. GORST:** Right on. Auction it off with the -- Just wealth
28 redistribution. Then, for red grouper, to change the calendar
29 year -- The calendar year starts on June 1, instead of December
30 31. Thank you.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll go back online to Dylan Hubbard.

33
34 **MR. DYLAN HUBBARD:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak
35 today. My thoughts and prayers are with Captain Werner's
36 family. We've lost an incredible asset to our fishery resource
37 in the Gulf of Mexico.

38
39 However, getting to my comments, I support a new amendment to be
40 developed as soon as humanly possible to replace the incredible
41 loss we faced when SEFHIER was set aside. Our industry has
42 developed yet another cohesive plan that incorporated input,
43 thoughts, and plans from across the Gulf of Mexico, in the form
44 of that plan forwarded to you by the president of the Charter
45 Fishermen's Association.

46
47 Since it seems that we cannot numerate our fleet economically, I
48 support removing economic data from the daily trip reports, but

1 I would still like to see trip-level reporting, with hail-outs,
2 reinstituted immediately. I want a data collection program that
3 has real validation. If we can't use vessel monitoring systems,
4 there is also plenty of other options. We need some sort of
5 real validation that will pass the muster of a peer review, to
6 allow this SEFHIER data to be input into a stock assessment and
7 used for real accountability and scientific information to
8 benefit the overall fishery resource.

9
10 I want our landings and discards recorded through census-based
11 daily electronic reporting and not survey-based, small sample
12 size extrapolations. I really want to implore this council to
13 take immediate action and start an amendment process on for-hire
14 data collection.

15
16 We heard a lot, at this meeting, about data collection issues,
17 discard issues, and other recreational data issues, throughout
18 this entire meeting, through multiple committees, yet we have
19 totally dropped the ball defending an industry-led, industry-
20 supported, and industry-innovating data collection program that
21 we have spent nearly my entire life, adult life, formulating.
22 The ball has been dropped in its defense, but that doesn't mean
23 that we can't create a new game on a new court.

24
25 We have to do this now. We cannot delay, and we cannot let our
26 fishery continue to go down the path of unaccountability. We
27 want to get into a place where we know what's being caught
28 without delay, what's being discarded, and how many trips are
29 being made in the EEZ. We want to improve our fishery, our
30 accountability and our natural resource access for the non-boat-
31 owning recreational fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico. Please
32 help us. Help our industry and help our fishery.

33
34 Also, I support a September 1 gag opening, and African pompano -
35 - Just ask the FWC to stop their state management in federal
36 waters. That's a much simpler solution to the African pompano
37 issue than starting a whole federal management framework
38 measure. Just if FWC would stop managing them in federal
39 waters, the problem would be solved. Also, please add a private
40 recreational license, or permit, to the EEZ. Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dylan. We have a question
43 from Mr. Dugas.

44
45 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Dylan. Can you repeat what you said
46 about pompano and FWC?

47
48 **MR. HUBBARD:** The major issue that we have in Florida with

1 African pompano is really, really simple. Back in the day,
2 Bonefish Tarpon Trust got all antsy about Florida pompano and
3 permit, and they wanted to protect them, protect them, protect
4 them, and, unfortunately, African pompano got thrown into the
5 mix, because it's part of the pompano family, and so they made
6 these really stringent laws in State of Florida state waters,
7 but, when the State of Florida makes state regulations for state
8 waters, and there is no federal waters regulations, the State of
9 Florida really has gone down a slippery slope of extending those
10 state regulations into federal waters. They have done it, most
11 recently, with flounder and blackfin tuna, but they it with
12 African pompano, and it totally, totally handicaps us.

13
14 If I go into federal waters and prosecute the fishery, I can
15 only keep two African pompano per boat, but, if I was to land
16 that same boat, same permit, in your state, J.D., I could keep
17 as many as I want, because there is no federal regulation, but,
18 in Florida, we're only allowed two per boat, because of this
19 silly state regulation that was extended into federal waters.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Dylan. We're going to
22 move back to the room, with Rachel Hisler.

23
24 **MS. RACHEL HISLER:** Good afternoon. I'm Rachel Hisler, from
25 Double Bayou, Texas, and I'm here today representing my
26 multigenerational family commercial seafood business, and I'm
27 going to speak on the national seafood strategies suggested by
28 NOAA, and those were recently released, and we were given the
29 ability to make public comment on those.

30
31 I believe, in order to build a strong and resilient domestic
32 seafood industry, we are advocating for a strong increase in
33 commercial seafood representation on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
34 Management Council. The national seafood strategies suggested
35 by NOAA have slim chances of being implemented by the council as
36 it exists today.

37
38 A strong majority is held by recreational fishing interests, who
39 have, whether intentionally or not, undermined the past
40 successes in our conservation efforts. As a result, commercial
41 fishing, and seafood businesses, are facing an uncertain future,
42 actions which may not be compliant with MSA regulations.
43 Fishing quotas are being frenetically reduced, or increased, and
44 people's access to this public resource is being more and more
45 constricted.

46
47 As a representative of the commercial fishing community, I
48 expect to have representation on this council. There is

1 currently one representative from the commercial fishing
2 industry on the entire board, and this is an unacceptable
3 imbalance, and I am hopeful that the Secretary of Commerce will
4 work together with the Gulf state governors to resolve this
5 disproportional representation on the council.
6

7 I am standing here in front of you as a person who is the next
8 generation in the commercial seafood industry, and, when you
9 talk about making these changes to the IFQ program, which has
10 stabilized things, made it safer for us, now we're having to
11 reevaluate what does our future look like, because we do have a
12 business plan and succession of my father-in-law, who is an
13 original shareholder, who did have to work his entire life to
14 build that historical landings, in order to qualify for the
15 initial IFQ allocation, and so I'm open to questions, if you
16 have any. Thank you.
17

18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. All right. Up next, virtually, is
19 Joe Georgia.
20

21 **MS. ROY:** Mr. Georgia, you will have to enter your audio PIN to
22 speak on your phone.
23

24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Mr. Georgia, you can work with staff
25 about getting that PIN entered, and we'll call on you again.
26 We'll go back to the room. Ed Walker.
27

28 **MR. ED WALKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's lots of things
29 that I would like to talk about, but, right now, I'm going to
30 focus on gag, which is dear to my heart, and, after yesterday's
31 gag discussions, I was really disappointed.
32

33 I realized that I'm losing my job as a gag fishing guide in the
34 fall season, for the last twenty-five years, and it was Mr.
35 Gill's breakdown of the pending gag ACT, and I ran the numbers
36 myself, when he said that, and he's right, as much as it hurts
37 me, and it comes out to about 700 fish a day are allowed to be
38 taken out of the Gulf, if we get the maximum seventy-day season,
39 which we're probably not going to get anyway, because of other
40 reasons, and so, you know, if you have 700 fish, divided by
41 10,000 anglers, there's not much there, and I really lost a lot
42 of hope in my gag fishing career yesterday, and I was pretty sad
43 about the whole thing.
44

45 Prior to that, I'm disappointed that we have to resort to
46 picking the worst month of the year in the document here, and
47 the worst month of the year for gag is September, and we're
48 going to have to look at that option to try and extend our

1 season, to make it longer, and, I mean, I kind of understand the
2 logic, the longer season, and a lot of people say that's better,
3 but, you know, that pretty much sucks, too. Take away the good
4 months, because you're going to catch too many, and take the
5 worst month, is hugely disappointing to me.

6
7 I am going to continue to request that we get a gag season in
8 the cooler months, and that's gag season where I live, and where
9 I live is the center of gag abundance, and so that's my opinion,
10 and I understand other people's opinion, but, if you ask Ed
11 Walker, I'm going to keep saying that, and I would like you to
12 consider, as the rebuilding plan moves along, and we get to add
13 more days, if we could move those -- I don't know if it's
14 mandatory, the way it is now, but if we could move those from
15 whenever we open, September or whatever, for December, as we get
16 more and more each year, and hopefully we would do that.

17
18 I would like to point out, as a bit of a gag expert, and I'm a
19 commercial gag guy, and I'm a rec gag guy, and I've done ten
20 years of gag research, and I was on the gag assessment, and I
21 don't think it's as bad as these extreme measures would
22 indicate. I've caught my limit on my charter boat in the fall,
23 every trip, for four years, except for one, and that was
24 hurricane related.

25
26 A more quantifiable metric of that would be there's been a 24
27 percent increase in commercial landings since the last gag
28 assessment, and that does not jibe with these crushing
29 regulations when the stock is plummeting. Two years in a row it
30 has increased, and it's up to 24 percent now, and so that -- I
31 would like to see you immediately, or as soon as possible, keep
32 this suggestion of an interim analysis for gag going, because I
33 think it's going to show you a remarkably fast recovery. I
34 think it's already recovering, because they're pretty safe out
35 there right now. Nobody is catching them. The commercial guys
36 are essentially not fishing, because of the quota reductions.
37 Anyway, thank you for your time.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Walker. We have a question from
40 Ms. Boggs.

41
42 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Captain Walker, for being here today.
43 Totally unrelated to gag, do you have an opinion on the SEFHIER
44 program?

45
46 **MR. WALKER:** Yes, ma'am, I do. I think it's kind of a sad day
47 for the charter boat industry. I had my issues with SEFHIER,
48 but they were more technical and overlapping, dual-permit

1 issues, and multiple hail-outs, and, you know, that kind of
2 stuff, and maybe we could have worked that out. I want to
3 report my catch and effort.

4
5 I didn't need economic reporting, and I didn't want to see the
6 program go away because of it, but I didn't agree to it in the
7 first place, and I was on all the committees that you were on,
8 back in the day, trying to iron out a system that worked good
9 for everybody.

10
11 I would definitely really like to see the charter boat guys,
12 and, as you've heard, most of them would, but count my catch and
13 effort, somehow, someway. I don't want to give a blank sheet
14 and say you can have -- I told Andy yesterday that how about I
15 give you five questions, and the first two have to be catch and
16 effort, and you get three more, and that's it. It's not open-
17 ended. I'm not agreeing to fourteen pages of reporting for all
18 the different sectors that I'm involved with, but, you know, the
19 charter boat guys want to count their catch, and the scientists
20 and biologists want more accurate data, and so I'm 100 percent
21 onboard with finding a way to count our catch and effort,
22 whatever that may be.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Mr. Gill.

25
26 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ed, for coming
27 and giving your testimony. You noted that you're a long-time
28 gag fisherman, and you've got a lot of expertise, a lot of time
29 on the water, and we have an upcoming seventy-one-day season for
30 gag in the interim rule, and we also recognize that we don't
31 have the data that can help us predict how long it's going to
32 actually last. Recognizing all that, what's your estimate on
33 when the ACL in the recreational sector for gag, during the
34 interim rule, will be met?

35
36 **MR. WALKER:** Mr. Gill, I appreciate that, and I have an answer
37 here. You were right that the current estimate -- You and Andy
38 touched on this yesterday, and, again, it hurts me to admit
39 this, but it's a fact. The current estimate of the number of
40 days you're going to get to fish do not factor in the derby
41 factor, and it factors in the fishing in the worst month of the
42 year, and there is going to be a derby like you have never seen
43 the day gag opens after nine months of being closed.

44
45 Everybody that goes gag fishing has a favorite rock out there in
46 the Gulf, and they can't wait to get to it on an opening day,
47 and so those estimates, as you mentioned yesterday, are unlikely
48 that -- They're probably -- Maybe you will be lucky to get half

1 that, because, if you look at the current data, you would think
2 June is the best month of the year, because the landings are the
3 biggest of the whole year, but that's not the best month of the
4 year. That's when it opens, and the same thing is going to
5 happen in September, but it's also going to happen in October or
6 November, and so I will take November and December. I am so
7 distraught over the whole thing, and it's going to be such a
8 pathetic, small season that I almost don't even care, at this
9 point, to be honest with you.

10
11 **MR. GILL:** Thank you.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Moving on -- Ms. Boggs.

14
15 **MS. BOGGS:** Ed, don't lose faith.

16
17 **MS. WALKER:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. I really need somebody to
18 pat me on the back and tell me it's going to be okay.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Online, we have Steve Papen.

21
22 **MR. STEVE PAPEN:** I wear a couple of different hats, and I
23 started my business in 1999. I've been dual-permitted the whole
24 time, both charter and commercial, although I do a lot more
25 charter fishing than commercial fishing these days.

26
27 I've got a couple of different points that I really wanted to
28 touch on today. One of them, for me, is it seemed like a no-
29 brainer, and I've been in this fishery for a long time, and I've
30 done a lot of -- Just like Ed has, and he turned me on to the
31 fine folks at the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and we've done a
32 ton of stuff with the gag studies, with the biologists, from
33 FWRI, for the last -- I'm in my fifth year now.

34
35 To me, looking from an angler, and looking from the scientific
36 side, of everything I've learned for the last five years, the
37 gag deal, to me, seems very simple. We have spawning closures,
38 and the spawning closures have been twisted and turned every
39 different way for the last -- Since IFQ started.

40
41 Pre-IFQ, everything was closed for everybody, commercial and
42 recreational, everything, and they were closed for spawning, all
43 grouper, all shallow-water grouper, for everybody, and the IFQ
44 came along and changed that. Then it was just closed simply for
45 recreational and charter, but open for commercial, and then it
46 changed again, years later, and they gave us the twenty-fathom
47 rule.

1 In twenty fathoms, in February and March, we can't catch gag
2 grouper, because they're closed, but we can catch red grouper.
3 Red grouper, we catch, and they're always -- Most likely, the
4 big ones -- We're still catching fish that are supposed to be
5 closed for that twenty-fathom rule.

6
7 I suggest a complete closure. Go back to the way it was and
8 close them for all commercial and recreational and have your
9 spawning closures, so those fish can actually spawn, and we can
10 put those fish in the water. If you do some real super-quick
11 math -- Things that I've learned from those biologists over
12 there have made me a little smarter, and one single female gag,
13 a ten or twelve-pounder, there are 50,000 or 60,000 eggs in her.
14 Now, just say that 1 percent of those eggs live, make it to
15 maturity, and that's a pile of fish, and you've got 500 head.

16
17 Then you've got a commercial boat out there, say myself, and we
18 catch fifty head of gags for the day, and we didn't kill fifty
19 head. We killed 250,000 head, and that's just using a 1 percent
20 survival. Now, if you extrapolate that over ten boats, you're
21 talking a quarter of a billion head, and that's a lot of fish
22 that you could put back in these waters by simply leaving them
23 unharvested during those months, and so just leave them alone.

24
25 The red grouper, we closed them early again, and it keeps
26 getting worse and worse and worse, and it's killing the charter
27 businesses. You know, you guys look at a lot of numbers, and
28 things like that, and we just follow along, but I can tell you,
29 after almost thirty years of me fishing in this fishery, I am
30 seeing the same numbers of fish in the same areas that I caught
31 thirty years ago.

32
33 Now, granted, the average size is a little bit smaller, but, for
34 the last bunch of years here, we've been seeing ten-inch,
35 twenty-inch, thirty-inch, I mean, all different sizes, in all
36 different depths, at all different times of the year, and that,
37 to me, says it's a healthy fishery, and I don't know why we're
38 looking at a six-month closure, which is going to absolutely
39 kill the charter fishing industry. I mean, it's horrible.

40
41 The other thing that I wanted to touch on was the -- I was
42 listening to bringing black grouper in with gag grouper, and, in
43 my area, we don't catch a lot of black grouper.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Papen, you are out of time, if you just
46 want to wrap it up, very quickly, please. Well, I hope we
47 didn't disconnect you, Mr. Papen, but, anyway, you had run out
48 of time, and so we needed to wrap it up anyway, and so next will

1 be Garner Wetzel.

2

3 **MR. GARNER WETZEL:** Good afternoon, council. My name is Garner
4 Wetzel, and I am a local recreational angler here on the
5 Mississippi Gulf coast. I have fished for the past thirty-five
6 years, exclusively recreationally, with my grandfather and my
7 father, and I hope to spend the next thirty-five years fishing
8 here recreationally with my six-year-old daughter.

9

10 I personally am pleased that the council selected Alternative 3b
11 in Action 2 in Amendment 56 concerning the gag grouper. The
12 council has discussed, several times, using older data and
13 collection methods to determine the allocation for a species,
14 while using newer data and collection methods to measure
15 landings to determine effort.

16

17 While the matter is complex, and not well understood by most
18 recreational anglers, the net effect is a reduction in
19 allocation to recreational anglers and an increase in allocation
20 to commercial fishermen. As the council incorporates new data
21 and collection methods into their fishery management plans, it
22 is imperative that they utilize one dataset and/or collection
23 methods for all aspects of the FMP, in order to keep the output
24 in the respective fisheries consistent with historically-
25 observed levels.

26

27 I also would be in favor of an offshore permit, if administered
28 by the states, and I think we already have like a Tails 'n
29 Scales app and Louisiana Recreational Offshore Landing Permit.
30 Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. We
31 appreciate what you've done.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Wetzel. We do have a question
34 for you from Ms. Boggs.

35

36 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you for coming today, Mr. Wetzel. Do you fish
37 and catch gag grouper off of the Mississippi coast?

38

39 **MR. WETZEL:** Sure, here on the shelf. That's correct. Sure.

40

41 **MS. BOGGS:** What depths of water is that?

42

43 **MR. WETZEL:** Anywhere from 150 to 350 feet.

44

45 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you.

46

47 **MR. WETZEL:** Yes, ma'am.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll go back online and see if we can't
2 reach Trenton Knepp. Trenton, go ahead.

3
4 **MR. TRENTON KNEPP:** My name is Trenton Knepp, and I'm a second-
5 generation fisherman from Florida. I'm a boat owner, dealer,
6 captain, and I'm the crew, and I'm the pretty much everything on
7 the boat. I do stone crabbing, and I do maintenance on my
8 parents' longline boats, when they come in.

9
10 On the whole IFQ deal, if everyone says it was intended to do --
11 If, by that, do they mean fishermen are making the same amount
12 of dollars, per pound, on snapper than they did thirty years
13 ago, and nothing costs what it did thirty years ago, not even
14 remotely close.

15
16 The red snapper -- I was talking to my seventy-three-year-old
17 dad this morning, and he said, when IFQ was handed out to us, he
18 said they gave us 300 pounds of IFQ for red snapper. He said we
19 couldn't even catch 100 pounds of that in a year, and now, if
20 they can't find the quota, they're discarding over 2,000 pounds
21 a trip on their longline vessels.

22
23 I was commercial rod-and-reel fishing the last two days, and I
24 can't tell you how many red snapper I threw overboard that were
25 over thirty inches, in as close as -- I was fishing 130 feet to
26 160 feet of water, and thirty-inch red snapper, one after
27 another, throwing them over, and I don't even want to tell you
28 how many of them floated off dead. I mean, it's just -- It's
29 sickening.

30
31 This is not what this program was intended for, and I thank you
32 for looking into, and I just hope the change comes. Something
33 has got to change, because I keep telling people that, as a
34 fisherman, I feel like I'm in a cot that I can't get out of,
35 because I keep thinking that things are going to change, things
36 are going to get better, and I just keep hanging in, and the
37 bottom line is I am working myself to death, for peanuts, so the
38 shareholders will make \$4.50 a pound on the snapper, and I
39 couldn't even make \$2.00 on it if I tried, before expenses.
40 That's all I've got. We just need help, and we're not looking
41 to get rich, but we just want to make a fair day's wages for a
42 fair day's work, and that's it. Thank you.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Knepp. We'll go next to Johnny
45 Williams.

46
47 **MR. JOHNNY WILLIAMS:** Johnny Williams, Williams Partyboats,
48 Galveston, Texas, third-generation partyboat operator out of

1 Galveston. I want to say something a little on the light side
2 first, concerning Wayne Werner, a little story about Wayne.

3
4 We were at a meeting, over in Orange Beach, Alabama, and,
5 afterwards, we had a little dinner, get-together, like a social,
6 like we used to have on the council, over across the street from
7 the Flora-Bama, and I was outside with my girlfriend and Wayne,
8 and she and he were both smoking, and she was a little bit
9 perturbed about she thought maybe I might be flirting with some
10 girl, and Wayne said, oh, he does that all the time. Well,
11 thanks a lot, good buddy. With friends like you, I don't need
12 enemies. We're going to miss you, Wayne. Love you, buddy.

13
14 More seriously now, I am concerned about the court ruling for
15 SEFHIER, and I certainly encourage the National Marine Fisheries
16 Service, and I hope that some of you all will get behind the
17 National Marine Fisheries Service and try to get them to appeal
18 the case. I think it has a lot of merit, and the appeal would
19 also help us get a handle on what's actually being caught out
20 there in the Gulf, and we could get a lot better idea of the
21 number of red snapper that are harvested. The more information
22 that we have, the better off we'll be.

23
24 I don't mean to be sounding pernicious, but the council is made
25 up of a lot of you folks here that are either in academia or
26 recreational fishermen that go out occasionally, or --
27 recreational fishermen that go out occasionally, and I would
28 certainly implore you all to go and talk to some of these folks
29 in my industry, that are on the water every day, and see what's
30 really going on in the industry, because I think you all are
31 hearing one of side of it, and you all really aren't getting a
32 very clear view on what's really occurring out there.

33
34 The other thing that really concerns me now is we've had quantum
35 leaps in the fishery that have led to increase in harvest, and
36 my grandfather, when he first started fishing, they used to use
37 lead lines, and then they got sounders, and that was a quantum
38 leap, and they got Loran-A, that helped out somewhat, and Loran-
39 C was a quantum leap, because it was so much more accurate than
40 Loran-A was, and so people that weren't really familiar with how
41 to locate fishing spots or something like that, if they were
42 given spots, the numbers of spots, through someone else that
43 could fish there, they could basically plug it into their Loran-
44 C, and it would take them there.

45
46 GPS refined that somewhat, and the next real quantum leap, that
47 you all need to be prepared for, is this bottom-shading
48 charting, and I don't know if you all are familiar with it or

1 not, but you all need to make yourselves familiar with it. You
2 know, we need to be one step ahead. Sorry. My time is already
3 up, but we need to be one step ahead, because this is going to
4 allow anybody to look at these charts, this bottom shading, and
5 have all the fishing spots out there in that area, and there
6 won't be anything that's not going to be common now, and, once a
7 spot becomes common, it's fished so hard that it's going to be
8 hard to restrain the catch. Thank you.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. We have a question from Ms. Boggs.

11
12 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Captain Williams, for coming today. You
13 mentioned the SEFHIER program, and you would like for us to
14 encourage the agency to appeal, but, as far as this body, would
15 you encourage us to move forward with some additional plans,
16 should something not come of the agency's either desire not to
17 appeal, or should -- I mean, do you want to wait for an appeal,
18 or would you like us to move forward with something, in case of
19 the --

20
21 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Well, I would like you all to move forward. I
22 mean, there's other options that maybe you all might look like,
23 such as the geofence and stuff like that. You know, I would
24 encourage you all to do everything you can to get a real good
25 grip on what's going on out there, because I think that -- I am
26 not trying to say that I'm pernicious, but I think some of you
27 all are kind of ignorant of what's really going on out in the
28 Gulf.

29
30 You all hear from the scientists, which the scientists haven't -
31 - The science hasn't always been good. I mean, this year, last
32 year, this last season, the red snapper fishing wasn't as good
33 as it was the year before that, and, the year prior to that, it
34 wasn't good as it was the year previous to that, and we're on a
35 downward spiral. The kingfish are gone, and I tried to tell you
36 all, back in 2019, that you all need to do something about king
37 mackerel, and you all haven't done a thing, and it's done,
38 pretty much.

39
40 I talk to people all up and down the coast, and Kelly Owens,
41 down in Port Aransas, said the fishing is not like it used to
42 be. In Panama City, Bob Zales, there's no kingfish. Off of
43 Orange Beach, where I spend a lot of time, and Tom Ard, and
44 there's no kingfish off of Galveston.

45
46 With red snapper, I've been here almost half of my life, dealing
47 with the council and the recovery that started from 2000, to now
48 it's down to 2032, and don't let it go backward and end up in

1 2060 or something, and let's try to do something and be
2 proactive, and, like I said, this bottom shading concerns me,
3 and you all really need to take a good look at that. If anyone
4 wants to see what I'm talking about, I would be happy to show
5 them on my cellphone. You can just pull it up on your
6 cellphone, and you've got all the spots in the area. Thank you.
7

8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll go back online and see if Joe
9 Georgia is available. Joe, are you there?
10

11 **MR. JOE GEORGIA:** Hi. My name is Joe Georgia, and I'm the store
12 manager here at Dogfish Tackle and Marine in Seminole, Florida.
13 I'm an avid fisherman as well as a conservationist and a father
14 of two, both a boy and a little girl that I bring both hunting
15 and fishing.
16

17 Right now, hearing the council's consideration for closing red
18 grouper down for a six-month timespan, it's just -- It's very
19 confusing, seeing as how, right now, we're having some of the
20 best red grouper fishing that we've seen in years and years, and
21 I'm both hearing that from the charter guys as well as my
22 recreational anglers that we continue to sell product to over
23 the past years, and it's been phenomenal.
24

25 You know, I have just a lot of different feelings about it, and
26 it really stinks, when you come to think about the economic
27 impact on closing down red grouper for a six-month timespan.
28 It's not just, you know, tackle stores, such as mine, that will
29 feel the impact of that, and, I mean, that will be detrimental
30 to us, but you're looking at hotels, marinas, fuel docks, boat
31 repair and servicing, et cetera, and it's not just -- It's just
32 a major economic impact that we're looking at.
33

34 I know it's not you guys' job to only look at economic impact,
35 and it's to look at the fisheries management, and I keep hearing
36 a lot, you know, about this discard accountability. You know,
37 20 percent of the anglers catch 80 percent of the fish, and, the
38 way that everybody seems to keep talking on this phone call, you
39 would almost imagine that, if I went out on the weekend, with
40 all the recreational anglers going out there, that it would look
41 like a red tide had happened, or there would be thousands of
42 fish floating off.
43

44 The only time we ever see fish floating is when we have red
45 tide, and I don't see tons of fish, and we have tons of
46 recreational anglers, and everybody seems to be pretty much pro-
47 science, when it comes to it, and we had a Piney Point -- You
48 know, a big disaster with red tide, and it sure seemed like, you

1 know, when FWC wanted to open up snook after that catastrophe,
2 and, you know, all the recreational kind of joined together and
3 said, hey, look, we don't want to open up snook, and like they
4 took a beating, that let's not open them up, but FWC decided to
5 do it anyhow.

6
7 You know, that wouldn't have been us, and it's just hard to, you
8 know, have faith in the science, when we see such a good fishery
9 going on right now, and then hearing that we want to close it
10 for six months.

11
12 Also, I would like to touch on what Steve had brought up as
13 well, Steve Papen, and it's kind of disheartening, when we hear
14 about the gag closure as well, and we -- You know, we closed
15 down gag fishing, for the recreational anglers, when those fish
16 are spawning, but yet we have -- You are constantly seeing
17 bucketloads, garbage can loads, full of gags that are being
18 commercially harvested during their spawn, and it doesn't really
19 quite add up, and all we're wanting is -- You know, at the end
20 of day, we want stuff to make sense, and it's really hard for us
21 to lean on that.

22
23 I will end with one thing, and, you know, I have family members
24 that are in the medical field, and, when someone goes into the
25 ER, the first thing that they do is try to stabilize a person
26 and triage. If red grouper is in such peril, why are we trying
27 to stabilize the fishery by closing it, while still letting
28 longlining continue to maintain, which is 100 percent mortality
29 rate, and that's just a hard pill to swallow, when you have that
30 going on, and I keep hearing about the recreational
31 accountability, the recreational accountability, and I just go
32 back to the 80/20 thing.

33
34 At the end of the day, I have thousands of customers, and these
35 guys aren't filling up their boats with boatloads of fish. It
36 just doesn't happen. I wish that it did, because we would sell
37 a heck of a lot more product, but it just doesn't, you know, and
38 they can make that up all they want, but it just doesn't. I
39 appreciate you guys' time, and thank you so much for having me.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Georgia. Up next is Eric
42 Brazer.

43
44 **MR. ERIC BRAZER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Eric Brazer,
45 Deputy Director of Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholder's
46 Alliance. I want to start out, first, with a sincere thank you
47 for the chance to remember Wayne. It really means a lot to be
48 able to celebrate him.

1
2 You know where we stand on gag. I laid that out in our comment
3 letter. On IFQs, Ava asked the question of what do you want the
4 IFQ system to look like. When we think about this, a few things
5 come to mind, and this isn't an inclusive list. A mix of small,
6 medium, and large businesses, and we get there by fostering a
7 stable business environment, and we have fishing capacity that
8 tracks with the capacity of the fishery itself.

9
10 We have opportunities for training and business planning,
11 because the business of fishing today is different than it was
12 twenty years ago, and opportunities for business growth. We
13 have a stable business-planning environment, and we get there by
14 avoiding rapid and large changes in the system and improving
15 access to capital, including NOAA's Fishery Finance Program,
16 which is becoming more accessible, and thank you, and through
17 private lenders.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Eric, I don't know where you want to pick back
20 up, and now I've lost track of time, but go ahead.

21
22 **MR. BRAZER:** All right. I was talking about a stable business-
23 planning environment, and then I started talking about a stable
24 market for fish, where you have a steady supply, and the steady
25 supply produces steady prices. We get there by minimizing wild
26 swings in quotas, too.

27
28 We want the future of the IFQ program to have a functioning
29 marketplace, where you minimize artificial restraints, and
30 you've got a public platform, where people can go to buy or sell
31 or lease shares or allocation, but you've also got data systems
32 in place to understand the impacts on the marketplace, and these
33 could be regulatory impacts that you guys make, or it could be
34 biological and ecosystem changes that the marketplace picks up
35 before the surveys do. You've probably heard Jason Delacruz
36 talk about this for gag.

37
38 Community access, how do we get community access? You support
39 ends to provide this access, and that can be access around the
40 geographic community, how fish houses, like observers, and help
41 provide access to their community of boats, or how some quota
42 banks in other regions purchase quota and actually bring it into
43 their community, or it could be access around an issue, like how
44 the reef fish quota bank, which is a program that's been running
45 for almost a decade now, is helping a community of fishermen
46 reduce discards, supporting a community of next-generation
47 fishermen, and working with a community of small, next-
48 generation owner-operators to find access to small amounts of

1 shares.

2
3 In short, I honestly think that most of the responses to the
4 concerns that we hear aren't necessarily regulatory responses,
5 and they're biological. Hey, let's rebuild the stocks and get
6 more fish for everybody. They're economic. Let's provide
7 access to capital and business-planning opportunities, and they
8 are social. Let's create opportunities for communities of
9 fishermen to come together and network, and they are scientific,
10 and so let's work towards annual stock assessments, a process
11 that evens out the wild swings of quota and reflects what these
12 guys are seeing on the water.

13
14 I had more time than I thought I would, and my final comments
15 are on logbooks. We're ready whenever the Science Center is
16 ready, and then, on the charter side of things, we think the CFA
17 plan has a lot of merit, and we just encourage you guys to move
18 forward as quickly as possible. Thank you for your time.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, and sorry about that, Eric.
21 You've just got to love the new technology, but you have a
22 question from Mr. Anson.

23
24 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. Thank you, Eric, for your testimony. I
25 appreciate it, and it's nice seeing you here. We talked about
26 the concept of optimum yield in the recreational fishery, and I
27 wonder, and do you have any comments on whether or not that is
28 similar, or can be applied similarly, to the commercial sector?

29
30 **MR. BRAZER:** Well, that was a softball question, Kevin. I am
31 going to have to think. It is a good question, and I don't have
32 an answer, and I'm going to have to think about it and get back
33 to you.

34
35 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Next is Bud Miller.

38
39 **MR. BUD MILLER:** Good afternoon. Bud Miller, charter boat and
40 headboat captain out of Destin, Florida, recreational fisherman
41 out of Destin, Florida, and the inventor and patent holder of a
42 fishing scale weigh system for recreational anglers.

43
44 First, I would like to talk to you about the VMS logbooks. I
45 hope that, for the for-hire sector and SEFHIER, that you come
46 together with an idea to continue the logbook, via the internet
47 and your phone, and it's a great idea, but drop the tracking of
48 vessels.

1
2 I saw this firsthand, and I run a corporate boat, a company
3 boat, and we put VMS on the boat, and the CEO came down and
4 said, hey, man, come up here and look at my computer, and I will
5 show you where you fished today, and I was an active -- I used
6 to be very active in building reefs, and I didn't want people to
7 see that. Needless to say, I don't build them anymore, and so
8 it doesn't bother me as bad, but, ten years ago, I would have
9 ripped that thing off the boat, and so take the tracking devices
10 off the boats.

11
12 Simplify the logbooks, and make it easier and faster for us to
13 do it. Sometimes you'll get greater grain and results from
14 smaller questions, and less questions. The recreational permit,
15 as an outdoorsman, and a for-hire fisherman, we carry federal
16 fisheries permits, and we carry state licenses. As an
17 outdoorsman, I carry a hunting and fishing license for Florida,
18 Alabama, and Mississippi, and I carry a federal hunting and
19 fishing license for Eglin Air Force Base. How many more permits
20 do I need as an outdoorsman? I just don't need it. We've got
21 that, and we've got all the different phone apps and all the
22 other things through the states, and that's enough.

23
24 Six years ago, I brought out a scale system that was designed
25 for dockside surveys. It allowed recreational anglers to hang
26 their fish and weigh them. We went back and we redesigned it,
27 and we came back to where it took pictures of their fish, and,
28 if you don't believe that weighing fish works, look at what
29 happened to the commercial fishermen at the last meeting. They
30 weighed their fish, and they asked for more, and they got more,
31 and so recreational anglers, for-hire, and private, weigh their
32 fish, or we're just not going to get anywhere. You can count
33 all the discards, and you can do all that, but everything is
34 done by weights.

35
36 One other thing about the permits is, every August, the Gulf
37 Marine Fisheries Commission puts out how many fishing licenses
38 were bought in each and every state, and it's a thirty-six-page
39 -- I didn't print all thirty-six pages, but you've got thirty-
40 six pages of the number of fishing licenses and the number of
41 dockside surveys. Just take a look every August. Thank you.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Miller. We have a question from
44 Mr. Schieble.

45
46 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Captain Miller, thank you for coming over. I am
47 just curious, and what is the name of this fish scale reporting
48 system that you're talking about?

1
2 **MR. MILLER:** Fish and Game Scales.
3
4 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Fish and Game Scales is the name of it?
5
6 **MR. MILLER:** Yes.
7
8 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** It weighs and measures fish and takes a picture?
9
10 **MR. MILLER:** It doesn't measure them. It weighs them.
11 Everything is driven by weight. They walk up, and they enter
12 their fishing ID, or their license number, and it asks them how
13 many fish, what style of fish, red snapper, gag grouper,
14 amberjack, or triggerfish, anything else that you want to put on
15 there. You hang your fish on a basket, or a stringer, and you
16 tell it to weigh your fish, and it snaps two pictures, one from
17 the top and one from the side, and it weighs the fish, and then
18 it immediately assumes -- When you hit "finish", it sends an
19 email to whoever -- What organization you want it to send it to,
20 it sends an email, with the pictures, to that organization.
21
22 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** So this is like an automated dockside intercept
23 system?
24
25 **MR. MILLER:** Yes, sir. It's an aluminum box with a scale on it.
26
27 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I'm never heard of it, but I'm curious. Thank
28 you.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Miller, I don't see any other questions,
31 and I have a brief question for you, regarding what you said
32 when you were introducing yourself, and so you're a corporate
33 captain, or you work for a corporation?
34
35 **MR. MILLER:** I work for a company that has two vessels.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I see.
38
39 **MR. MILLER:** We had to put a VMS on the boat, and, the day we
40 put the new VMS on, we went fishing and came back, and the CEO
41 came down and said, hey, man, how did it work, and I said, I
42 guess it worked fine, and he said, yes, it did, and let me show
43 you where you fished.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, and, I mean, you're chartering private
46 clients through your business?
47
48 **MR. MILLER:** Yes.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you.

3
4 **MR. MILLER:** Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Up next is Jason Delacruz.

7
8 **MR. JASON DELACRUZ:** Good afternoon, everybody. How are you
9 guys doing today? Pretty good? All right. I am going to go
10 back, and I see to be the historical guy, and I don't know, and
11 I hope I'm not taking Wayne's place, but it feels like it a lot,
12 and so, just so -- We had a little conversation already about
13 trying to close commercial gag in an IFQ during certain times of
14 the year, and I want to remind some people that weren't aware
15 that, originally, in 2011, or, actually, in 2010, we agreed to
16 close The Edges, and we did it from January 1 all the way to May
17 1, and the primary reason we did it is because all the
18 scientists told us that we really don't know for sure when the
19 fish spawn.

20
21 They spawn at different times, year-round, and we can't really
22 predict when that's going to happen, and so we accepted this
23 longer closure, in an area that was known for being the most
24 prolific gag area, in the acceptance of we're going to go ahead
25 and do away with the closed season, because that's also the most
26 valuable time of the year so that we can make a living selling
27 fish.

28
29 That's the biggest reason that that happened, and that was what
30 we agreed to, and we thought that was a better change, because
31 it hit a longer timeframe and actually did the job better.
32 That's just to remind people that have forgotten all those sort
33 of things.

34
35 The other thing is it kind of drove me crazy a little bit too
36 how easily we made an argument to take 5 percent of the gags
37 away from the commercial fishery to give it to the recreational
38 fishery, in the guise of, oh, well, it would be a de facto
39 reallocation, but yet you're going to give this incredibly small
40 percentage to a group of people that may get a quarter of a
41 fish, on such a small TAC, but you're absolutely going to kill
42 people that work for me, that actually make a living on these
43 fish.

44
45 To me, that -- To do it so flippantly, I was just blown away,
46 and the only people that benefit from this are the companies
47 that make boats and motors and things like that, the massively-
48 large corporations, and I would hate to think that, at least as

1 small as this body is, we can't try to stay not like our
2 government is and protect the smaller parts of this fishery, the
3 smaller individuals. That drives me a little crazy.

4
5 As far as the IFQ goes, you've heard people talk today, in all
6 different diverse sides of it, and you guys all know where I
7 stand, and there's no point in me talking about that, but I
8 think it might be interesting to think about, and one fellow
9 said that he had been doing this for ten years, and he had a
10 chance to buy, but he didn't think that worked for him, and
11 another fellow just complained and said he wasn't making enough
12 money, and he didn't want to lease, and he didn't like that, but
13 let's talk about Wayne.

14
15 Wayne was a really good guy, and he was a really good
16 trendsetter, and Wayne made a point to make a relationship with
17 his nephew and build that out, and his nephew bought that boat
18 from him, and he bought that permit from him, and he had bought
19 5,000 pounds of shares from him, and he was whittling it away.
20 He was buying it, and so now he's the one that's going to be
21 affected, and so you're going to hurt the little guy by giving
22 people these fish that they don't necessarily -- They don't want
23 to spend the money on, and we just want the money, and so let's
24 -- For the sake of Wayne, and how he thought this fishery should
25 operate, let's not upset the apple cart and just turn the whole
26 system upside down, when you have a lot of people accessing this
27 fishery in different places.

28
29 His son, his nephew, Marshall, is an example of how to do this,
30 and, because we have good examples and bad examples, let's just
31 not look at the bad examples and say, oh, that's what we're
32 going to manage to. Let's protect the good examples, too.
33 Thank you.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you. Up next is Jim Green.

36
37 **MR. JIM GREEN:** Hello. Captain Jim Green, President of the
38 Destin Charter Boat Association and the Charter Fishermen's
39 Association. The DCBA and the CFA supports the September 1
40 opening of gag grouper. We feel that's a compromise. The
41 northern Gulf is still fishing, and, as the fishery rebuilds, it
42 gets the desired dates for central and south Florida, and, also,
43 we believe that the quota should remain at its current level, or
44 the allocation, and I apologize.

45
46 I hope that all of you have had a chance to look over the CFA
47 data collection proposal. As you know, our industry has
48 constantly pushed and worked for a more accountable, sustainable

1 way of managing our sector. We know there is still time for
2 legal action to be taken, but, with the agency vacating the
3 program, and our industry left with nothing in hand, we have
4 created an initiative, and have had other associations sign-on
5 and support our effort.

6
7 There was a lot of great things about SEFHIER, and there were
8 also things that gave a lot of concern with the program, and so
9 we feel that it's important to build on the good things and
10 revamp the sections struck down by the ruling and make them
11 better. In the CFA proposal, we highlighted those things that
12 we needed and offered some solutions that the ruling took
13 exception to.

14
15 The most important element in any data collection program is
16 validation. Data collection takes effort and buy-in from those
17 providing it, and we do not want those efforts to be lost in
18 uncertainty. Good, bad, or indifferent, we want our data to be
19 solid and stand on its own feet. Effort validation in our
20 industry was a very key part of the development of SEFHIER, and,
21 while some feel the VMS was a bit too much of a burdensome
22 approach to achieving that, there are other ways to elevate
23 validation and put the concern in the minds of those willing and
24 eager to provide the data for better management.

25
26 With that, we feel the economic data should be done in another
27 forum, on a different platform from our electronic logbook. Our
28 industry understands why we're collecting the economic data is
29 important, and it understands the intent of collecting it, but a
30 notable amount of industry feels the way it was being collected
31 could open them up for scrutiny, if the data were used for other
32 purposes in the future. This also was not the focus of the
33 industry when we asked and worked hard for an electronic logbook
34 program.

35
36 The agency has other methods to collect this information, and we
37 prefer it not to be included in the trip reports. We want our
38 data program to focus on the fish.

39
40 It is our request that the Gulf Council, at this meeting, direct
41 staff to begin the amendment process to develop a for-hire data
42 collection program for the federally-permitted vessels of the
43 Gulf. If the agency determines that they will take legal action
44 further, it could be years before that is decided, and, in the
45 end, it doesn't guarantee that we will have a program for our
46 industry.

47
48 As the council, you are in the driver's seat. You decide the

1 direction of the staff, and, in the end, you will have the final
2 say whether it's approved and implemented. All we're asking is
3 for the opportunity to develop a data program for our fleet
4 again, and so please support us in that effort. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. We've got a question from Mr.
7 Schieble.

8
9 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Captain Green. I appreciate it.
10 Earlier, we heard from Captain Paul about how -- That perhaps
11 more dockside intercepts aren't going to cover things, and can
12 you speculate on how we can modify, or go forward, with the
13 SEFHIER program, especially -- I am thinking from a point of
14 view in Louisiana, and we have pretty good saturation of
15 coverage of dockside intercepts, right, and so what benefits can
16 we have with that program, if we did go forward with the --

17
18 **MR. GREEN:** Well, also, in Florida, we also, like Louisiana,
19 have a pretty good coverage of that, you know, but other states
20 don't, and other states are more spread out, and I'm not sure
21 about central or south Florida, but, where me and Ms. Paul is
22 from, we have very big ports, and it's really easy to capture
23 that data, where, in the rest of the state, you have a lot of --
24 Everybody is spread out, and there is multiple accesses to the
25 Gulf.

26
27 I think, really, some form of electronic effort monitoring is
28 really what we need. When you validate -- Those dockside
29 samplings I think are important, but I think, really and truly,
30 effort was really what we were trying to get a grip on, when
31 SEFHIER was being developed.

32
33 I think more intercepts could help, but I don't think that only
34 dockside intercepts is a way of validating. We have 800 boats
35 with reimbursed equipment that's onboard. Geofencing, even if
36 it's -- You know, if it's optional, or if it's one option that
37 we could have for effort validation, and there's a lot of people
38 that have this equipment on their boat, and, by using a
39 geofence, and it just clicking when you go in and out of the
40 geofence, you still have freedom of movement, and you don't have
41 proprietary information, like Mr. Miller was talking about, or
42 that information is actually yours, and it doesn't get
43 transmitted to the agency, and you have effort monitoring in
44 that, and, to me -- There's a lot of talk about 24/7/365
45 tracking in that ruling, and it didn't say that VMS was bad, but
46 it just said that that tracking, and that requirement, was the
47 problem.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Green, we probably need to move on here
2 just a little bit, so we can get more, because I know Mr.
3 Strelcheck has a question for you as well, and so if you could
4 wrap up.

5
6 **MR. GREEN:** You get the point. Sorry. Yes, sir.

7
8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I am not going to ask about optimum yield, and
9 so you're safe there. No, but I just wanted to actually say
10 thank you. You were one of the first people to reach out after
11 the lawsuit, with, obviously, several other leaders in the
12 industry, to talk to me, and others, about the implications of
13 the lawsuit. You guys have come up with a proposal, right,
14 while we're in limbo with, obviously, a legal decision, and I'm
15 just appreciative of the industry seeing the value in the
16 program and also seeing that changes can be made, and we can
17 move forward with the program, and so thank you for your kind of
18 forward thinking and continuing to work on the program.

19
20 **MR. GREEN:** Well, thank you, but it wasn't just me, even though
21 I signed that, and it took a village. It was a village of
22 people putting input. See, I did better there.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** You're going to get more time here. Ms. Boggs.

25
26 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, I am not going to ask you about geofencing,
27 but, just real quickly, Jim, and, again, I appreciate you being
28 here today, and I've seen your proposal, and I just wanted to
29 confirm, and has that been sent to the entire council, so they
30 have an opportunity to look at it tomorrow when we discuss data
31 collection?

32
33 **MR. GREEN:** Yes, ma'am. This weekend, it was sent around. I
34 sent it to Andy, and the agency there, in the beginning of the
35 week, and I got it out, and I was fishing. Because of spring
36 break, it's been real busy, but I got it out to a few people on
37 Friday, and I got the rest sent out this past weekend, and so
38 everybody should have it, and, if you don't, please flag me
39 down, and I would be happy to make sure you get it. Thank you
40 so much.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Next is Randy Sobieraj.

43
44 **MR. RANDY SOBIERAJ:** How are you doing? My name is Randy
45 Sobieraj, owner and operator of a commercial fishing vessel. I
46 believe that accountability on every sector should be important,
47 based on the science to judge what we should do with the
48 fishery, and, also, if you look around in the room, I am one of

1 the youngest ones that come to these meetings, you know, and
2 very few people come into this industry.

3
4 I am doing it for a living, to support my family, to support
5 everything that I do, and, if there's nothing that is done about
6 that, to bring new fishermen, new entrants, into the fishery,
7 what are we managing? That's all I have to say, and I
8 appreciate it.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Sean Heverin.

11
12 **MR. SEAN HEVERIN:** Okay. I would like to say something about
13 Wayne Werner. When I first went to Louisiana, he was probably
14 one of the first people that I met, besides Archie, that owned
15 the fish house, and I really looked up to Wayne. I learned
16 something new every time I talked to him, asking him questions
17 about different fishing areas or techniques or boat maintenance
18 questions, and so he was really a good mentor and somebody to
19 look up to in our fishery, not just at the dock, but also in the
20 fishery management sector.

21
22 I am in Madeira Beach, but also I offload boats in Louisiana,
23 and we've been seeing a lot of pompano, African pompano, and the
24 regs weren't really clear. I mean, I fish for these out of
25 Jacksonville, on the east coast, and in the Carolinas, and, you
26 know, we look at the federal regs, and there's no regs, and so
27 we just keep whatever, and then, you know, we just found out
28 that there's a two-fish-per-vessel limit, and so it's kind of
29 confusing.

30
31 When you look at the federal regs and the state regs, it's like
32 which one do you follow, and so I would like to have more of a
33 clear idea on what the regs are, and I think two fish is very
34 low of a trip limit, and I feel like that needs to be increased
35 tremendously in Florida, I mean, whether it's up to twenty or
36 thirty fish a trip, and I think it's pretty reasonable, or even
37 a poundage limit or something, or maybe establish federal regs
38 for pompano, but we've landed quite a bit of pompano this year,
39 in a lot of different vessels. We've got three dive vessels,
40 tank divers, and we've got rod-and-reel guys, and we've got
41 longliners who are bringing these in pretty regular.

42
43 The gag grouper, it's also a big issue in our area, and I don't
44 support the gag reallocation to the recreational sector, to take
45 5 percent away from the commercial, and I feel like we should
46 keep that with the commercial side, because that's a much
47 greater impact to the few commercial fishermen, compared to
48 thousands, and millions, of recreational anglers.

1
2 If we're looking at bycatch discards within our commercial
3 sector -- A guy that I leased some quota from this year, and a
4 longline endorsement, he used to be a trap fisherman, and it was
5 Thomas Hagen, and it developed a trap that would allow gag
6 grouper to escape from the trap, and bigger -- Sorry. The
7 bigger red grouper, or bigger gags, couldn't get into the trap,
8 and they also allow the smaller red grouper from escaping the
9 trap as well, but, from what I've learned, is that they've
10 banned the traps in the eastern Gulf fishery, but that could be
11 a solution to gag discards, or undersized red grouper discards,
12 for maybe the longline sector, or even some of the rod-and-reel
13 fishermen.

14
15 Also, the stable business plan that Eric had mentioned earlier,
16 and so I'm kind of in that mode where I'm trying to get some
17 capital together to buy into the IFQ shares, and I've been able
18 to buy a little bit, but there's a lot of doubt into is this
19 going to be around for a while, when you're looking at an
20 investment into the fishery, as a fisherman, and so I would like
21 to get something kind of stabilized, so that the guys that are
22 looking to buy into the fishery, and grow our businesses, will
23 have kind of a general idea on what we're going to be looking at
24 with the IFQ program, and so it would suck to go invest a bunch
25 of money into buying IFQ shares for your fishing boat and then
26 they just take it all away, and so we need to get something more
27 concrete, so there's not a lot of doubt whether we should invest
28 in IFQs or not. That's it.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Up next is Clarence Seymour.

31
32 **MR. CLARENCE SEYMOUR:** How are you all doing? Thanks for having
33 me today. Clarence Seymour, captain of the Charter Boat SYL,
34 Biloxi, Mississippi, federally permitted, and I live here in
35 Biloxi, and I'm glad that you're all enjoying the coast this
36 week, and I know we've got some good food here.

37
38 The SEFHIER program, we all struggled with it, and so I get
39 things, and I get high-fived by the group that won, and I say,
40 look, what matters is the data collection, and we cannot go back
41 to the day of a nine-day season or a three-day season. We
42 started from scratch, with the group of fishermen from Texas all
43 the way to the Keys, and data collection, and we asked for it,
44 and we asked for it, and we've done it, and we've done it.

45
46 All right, and we tried trackers out, and so they tracked us all
47 over the Gulf, and so I've still got a tracker, but the tracker,
48 and the VESL app, was the most discouraging of all of it. When

1 you put down shark, or say law enforcement comes down and I have
2 a spinner shark, and it says shark, and there's no definition on
3 shark, but, anyway, a short story, and it was a lot of
4 collection that I think everybody was complaining about, and
5 then it's really --

6
7 In the State of Mississippi, for our federal fleet, really what
8 we need, in the EEZ, for our catch here, is cobia, king
9 mackerel, red snapper, during the snapper season, and mangos,
10 and very few jacks, and so we're trying to make a seven to ten
11 fleet, out of Mississippi, become what it might be like in
12 Florida or what have you, and that's what -- When we had the
13 data collection stuff going on, I told them, I said that my
14 fleet is small, and Mississippi is small, and the Louisiana guys
15 are going to be a little -- They're larger than us, and it
16 changed everything, the way data collection came through, on the
17 SEFHIER program.

18
19 I was like what in the world, and then you try and explain it
20 the fleet, and they were like this is way too much, and I'm like
21 just stick it out, guys, and we've got to be able to make the
22 summertime fleet, and we're going to get our summer in, and
23 we've got to somehow figure out how to maintain our businesses,
24 if you're going to fish in the EEZ.

25
26 We're worked through it, and we got done with the court deal,
27 but the new CFA plan, without all of that, can work. We can do
28 it again. We have done it once, and we can do it again. I know
29 that we're waiting on litigation and all to finish up, and we
30 don't really have to kick the can down the road, because we've
31 already got the -- To compare SEFHIER with our Tails 'n Scales
32 out of Mississippi, they ask for discards, how many people, what
33 I threw back, and when I'm going back out, and so it's a pretty
34 simple thing, but thank you all for you all's time today.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. We've got a question from Ms.
37 Boggs.

38
39 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you for being here today, and so, aside from
40 some of the heartaches with the plan initially, the Mississippi
41 charter fleet -- They're onboard with the data collection, and
42 do you all want to see this council -- Did I understand move
43 forward with some kind of data collection plan that maybe
44 doesn't include the VMS and the socioeconomic questioning?

45
46 **MR. SEYMOUR:** Well, I reached out to probably five captains so
47 far, and everybody is onboard, but, yes, drop the economic, and
48 let's just -- We already know the phone app will work, and we

1 have a lot of validation on the docks in Biloxi. As long as the
2 observer program, and we do get MRIP there constantly, and so
3 our folks, in Mississippi, are working hard to make -- We've got
4 good data collection, and, like I tell the guys, so maybe you
5 don't want to tell them to look at your fish, and I said, it's
6 best for science, right now, that we let them go ahead and do
7 it, and I know it's a pain in the butt, and they need to get off
8 the table, but it's best for them, but, yes, so far, but I
9 haven't reached out to everybody, but I've been working over
10 here in Gulfport, and so I haven't seen everybody just yet, but
11 I will get with it, and we can discuss it later. Thank you.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Up next is Buddy Guindon.

14

15 **MR. BUDDY GUINDON:** Wayne Werner, to me, was a leader, a mentor,
16 and a friend, and he'll be dearly missed by me and the
17 fishermen. I started fishing in the late 1970s, with an open-
18 access fishery, and I worked hard, and I saved my money.

19

20 They changed the rules and went to a limited-access privilege
21 program, where we had endorsements. I got a 2,000-pound
22 endorsement. The first part of that three years was ninety
23 days, seventy to ninety days, straight. The rest of the year,
24 we had to learn how to do something else to be in the fishery,
25 and so I went grouper and tilefish fishing for the first time,
26 and I didn't even know what they looked like, but I was just
27 told, by one of the old fishermen, to go out to 300 feet of
28 water and put your gear in, and so that's what I did. I worked
29 hard, and I saved my money.

30

31 Then we went to the fifteen-day season, and that was the first
32 year that I had Katie's Seafood. I worked hard and saved my
33 money, and that's how I got Katie's Seafood. I continued to do
34 that, through the ten-day seasons, and then we came to the IFQ.
35 I voted against it, and I've said that many times here, but I
36 also saved my money, and invested it, because it's what I had.
37 It's what I had to work with, and I continued to invest in my
38 business, the whole time I've been in business, since I was out
39 of the Marine Corps at twenty-two.

40

41 The reason I'm telling you this is because we're losing
42 infrastructure around the Gulf of Mexico for commercial fishing,
43 and, without strong businesses, like Katie's Seafood is in
44 Galveston, where we have a community of fishermen who work
45 together and support a fish house that has a chance of being
46 there, and, otherwise, the economics of the coastal communities
47 will make us disappear.

48

1 When we talk about things like redistribution of wealth, or
2 capping a young fisherman who does very well, you're changing
3 the economics of the fishery, and the unintended consequences
4 could be eliminating infrastructure at the shoreside, that
5 supports our fishing community, our access to fresh seafood, and
6 so, as you move forward, and I know you will move forward,
7 consider all aspects and not just the screaming mimi's that are
8 up here saying I didn't get any, and I want some, and they're
9 still in the fishery though.

10
11 You've got to kind of wonder, and, if they're not making any
12 money, how are they still here, because lease prices are high,
13 and they're high because there is too many fishermen trying to
14 get too small of an amount of fish, and that's what it was
15 designed for, reducing capacity. I don't think you should kick
16 people out of the fishery, and I also don't think you should
17 build a system that supports people that are against the system.
18 Thanks for your time.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We've got a question from Mr. Anson.

21
22 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Buddy, for being here. The concept of
23 optimum yield has been discussed here, and it's been primarily
24 focused on the recreational fishery, but I'm wondering if that
25 applies to the commercial sector as well.

26
27 **MR. GUINDON:** You just talked to the smartest guy I know, and he
28 said he would get back with you later, and I think that's what I
29 am going to have to say, because I am not the smartest guy you
30 know.

31
32 **MR. ANSON:** All right. Thank you.

33
34 **MR. GUINDON:** I am a fisherman though. I'm a real commercial
35 fisherman.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan.

38
39 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Buddy, for being
40 here, and so I'm trying to put another perspective to the
41 commercial fishery, and so you started commercial fishing, and
42 you now have Katie's Fish House, or Katie's Seafood, and then I
43 also believe you have a restaurant, and so, over the time,
44 building all that, how many employees do you employ that benefit
45 from the commercial fishing business that you have built, and,
46 even though it's not commercial fishing, but you've built the
47 fish house, and you've built the restaurant, and I'm sure you
48 use your fish in that restaurant.

1
2 **MR. GUINDON:** Well, it is -- Thank you. I am shocked to be able
3 to tell you that it's about 220 people. When I started, it was
4 me and three other guys, and so it's been an amazing journey,
5 but I did it because I worked hard and saved my money. I didn't
6 ask anybody for anything, and I didn't ask to take anything away
7 from anyone else. I worked hard and saved my money, and I
8 bought what I have, and I would like for you to consider that as
9 you move forward. Thank you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Up next is Sepp Haukebo.

12
13 **MR. SEPP HAUKEBO:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, council. My
14 name is Sepp Haukebo, and I'm with The Environmental Defense
15 Fund. I'm a recreational angler and a frequent charter
16 customer.

17
18 From the conservation community perspective, I want to encourage
19 the council to continue making progress on the SEFHIER program.
20 Some of these council members were around when that was in its
21 inception, and some of the council members are new, and there's
22 a lot to be learned there about the history of that program. You
23 can tell, today, from these comments, that there's a lot of
24 support from that industry, and, perhaps most importantly,
25 there's willingness from the industry to work on that, and
26 that's a hard thing to find around the world.

27
28 The council, and the agency, are constantly looking for better
29 data to manage this fishery, and that will become increasingly
30 important with climate change, shifting stocks, larger red
31 tides, more intense and more frequent storms, larger dead zones,
32 you name it.

33
34 The SEFHIER program can add a critical component to that data,
35 from all corners of the Gulf. You can talk to any commercial --
36 Sorry. Any charter fisherman from around the Gulf, and they've
37 got you covered from Brownsville to Key West, and they fish,
38 collectively, 365 days a year. Around the world, we work a lot
39 in fisheries management, and I can tell you right now that good
40 data collection is key to sustainability of those fisheries.
41 Let's embrace this opportunity.

42
43 I will shift real quick, and I wanted to say a few words in
44 memory of Wayne. Anybody that shook Wayne's hand, or some
45 people might call it a paw, knows how hardworking he was, maybe
46 one of the hardest fishermen in the Gulf, or maybe even the U.S.
47 He was passionate about this fishery, and he would take anybody
48 on his boat that wanted to improve management and conservation

1 of the fishery.

2

3 Anybody that wants to hear Wayne's voice, maybe one more time,
4 can watch a great documentary called *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman*,
5 and it's a story about the people that feed our country and
6 believe in long-term conservation, even when it may cost them an
7 economic opportunity in the short-term.

8

9 Lastly, we heard some good stories about Wayne, but one of my
10 favorite things about him is that he didn't really know how to
11 whisper. Anybody that talked to Wayne in the back of this room,
12 the entire council could hear everything that Wayne was saying,
13 and I loved that about Wayne, and I will just say that we still
14 hear you, Wayne, and keep guiding us through this process.
15 Thank you.

16

17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and last up is Richard Fischer.

18

19 **MR. RICHARD FISCHER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the
20 council. I will begin also by echoing those thoughts about our
21 deepest sympathies for losing Wayne. He was a great guy, and he
22 always had great ideas. Every time I talked to him, I always
23 learned something, and I always laughed.

24

25 I will start out by talking about amberjack. As I kind of
26 alluded to in yesterday's Q&A session, we were kind of hoping
27 that amberjack would come up at this meeting, but we, of course,
28 hope it comes up at the next meeting.

29

30 You know, I heard, earlier today, that charter has no
31 accountability, now that SEFHIER is gone, and, you know,
32 relating it back to amberjack, we just lost half of our season,
33 due to the extreme short notice last year, and that resulted in
34 tons of trip cancellations, and that decision had nothing to do
35 with SEFHIER, and so, you know, that sounds, to me, like there's
36 at least some level of accountability, as it pertains to
37 amberjack for the charter sector, and that is accountability
38 across-the-board, and that hits both the western Gulf and the
39 eastern Gulf the same, which is hard for us to accept in the
40 western Gulf, when we catch less and have more to catch.

41

42 From our perspective in Louisiana, which I understand doesn't
43 speak for the entire Gulf, it feels like we're held overly
44 accountable, as it pertains to amberjack, and that's why we
45 fight so hard for state or regional management, and so we would
46 like to see those thoughts and options come up for discussion at
47 the next meeting, and, you know, let's go ahead and get that
48 going.

1
2 You know, we understand that there's a great amberjack count,
3 and that may go a long way in determining allocations, but let's
4 get it started, and let's lay out the framework and see what it
5 would look like, in advance of that data coming out to determine
6 those percentages.

7
8 On the logbooks, we look forward to information coming out from
9 NOAA about whether individuals can get paid back for the units
10 that they currently can't use anymore, and that came up during
11 the Q&A as well, and so we'll look forward to that information.
12 As for whether the document should come back up, I say let's do
13 a poll.

14
15 You know, I won't use the word "referendum", because that might
16 be too official, and too costly, and take too long, but a Survey
17 Monkey poll would do the trick, to find out if the majority of
18 the offshore fleet really does want logbooks back. You know, I
19 see a lot of familiar faces in this room, and names online, and
20 there's a lot of captains who don't attend these meetings, and
21 their opinion is every bit as important, and, if you all recall
22 going back a few years, Emily did a little roadshow, where she
23 went around the Gulf and met with captains to discuss the
24 logbook program, and she came back and reported that about half
25 the captains there didn't want any part of logbooks.

26
27 Now, I know that it's not apples-to-apples, because you had your
28 economic data back then, and you had the tracking back then, but
29 let's go ahead and do a poll, and let's see if it's favorable or
30 not favorable for bringing logbooks back, and, you know, if I'm
31 wrong, I will go ahead and eat my words, and we can go ahead and
32 move forward with that document. I'm wrong all the time, and
33 I'm used to it. I see that I'm out of time, and so thank you
34 all very much, and I'm happy to take your questions.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I think Mr. Schieble has a question for
37 you.

38
39 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Richard. I appreciate you coming here
40 and speaking today, and so, as you know, with LA Creel, we get
41 pretty intensive sampling at dockside, and your group, your
42 charter boat association, does many surveys, as you just spoke
43 about, polls and surveys, and do you have any speculation as to
44 if the Louisiana captains would be in favor of a SEFHIER program
45 reinstatement if it did not include the -- You know, basically,
46 the economic survey component of it, as well as the VMS
47 component of it?

48

1 **MR. FISCHER:** We can certainly put out a poll, and I would be
2 happy to do so before the next meeting, and, you know, that
3 would just be the Louisiana captains, and not everybody in
4 general, but I will certainly come back and let you all know
5 what the results of that poll are.

6
7 You know, we've gotten a lot of -- In some of the limited
8 conversations that I've had, there has been some noticing the
9 positive benefits of what you can get with added data and not
10 having some of the more overbearing things as well, and, if it
11 did come back up, you know, we would hope that it would open up
12 the conversation for other pieces to the program that we would
13 like to see differently, maybe weekly reporting instead of daily
14 reporting. If it's good enough for the South Atlantic, weekly,
15 why wouldn't weekly be good enough for the Gulf, and so that's
16 one thing that, if the document comes back up, we would like to
17 see as well, you know, and so we'll definitely get back to you
18 and let you know. Thanks, Chris.

19
20 **FULL COUNCIL CLOSED SESSION REPORT**

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. I don't see any other
23 questions. All right. Well, that will bring us to the end here
24 with our public testimony. We have thirty minutes, and, as all
25 of you may have been watching, some weather is moving in, and
26 maybe we'll finish a little early tomorrow, if possible, and I
27 know we have a lot of ground to cover, and we could get through
28 just a quick report or something here, and I think what we'll
29 do, if it's okay with everyone, is I can give the Full Council
30 closed session report, and that's very quick, and then we'll see
31 where we are after that. Does that sound good to everyone? All
32 right. There's a lot of nods around the table, and so this is
33 the Full Council -- Before I get going, Lieutenant Commander, we
34 might have time to squeeze in your report as well, just to kind
35 of put you on-deck there.

36
37 This is the Full Council closed session for April 3, 2023, and
38 we met in closed session. There was the selection of the
39 Coastal Migratory Pelagic Advisory Panel members. The Full
40 Council was convened to review applicants for the Coastal
41 Migratory Pelagic Advisory Panel. The council discussed the
42 applicants and made preliminary appointments for the advisory
43 panel. Appointees will be announced at the June 2023 council
44 meeting in Mobile, Alabama, after completion of background
45 checks for fishery violations.

46
47 Next was the Selection of the 2022 Law Enforcement Officer/Team
48 of the Year. The council reviewed the nominations received and

1 recommendations from the Law Enforcement Technical Committee.
2 The council selected the Alabama Department of Marine Resources
3 nominee, Office Chancellor (Chance) Mancuso for the 2022 Law
4 Enforcement Officer of the Year. Officer Mancuso will be
5 honored at the June 2023 council meeting in Mobile, Alabama, and
6 I don't know, Mr. Burris, if you're good, or if you would like
7 to say anything about that, coming from your state. Okay, and,
8 of course, that's fine, and we'll hear more about that certainly
9 in Mobile, in a few months.

10
11 Next was the Selection of Standing Scientific and Statistical
12 Committee Member. The council also reviewed the applicants to
13 fill the recently vacated economist position on the Standing
14 Scientific and Statistical Committee, the SSC, and appointed Dr.
15 Daniel Petrolia to the SSC. He will serve on the Standing SSC,
16 effective immediately, until 2024, when the council will be
17 considering all the Standing and Special SSC members
18 appointments. This concludes my report. Any question regarding
19 that? If not, we will move on. Kevin, I neglected that that
20 was the Alabama department, and I didn't know if you might want
21 to say -- Sorry about that. If I could understand my --

22
23 **MR. ANSON:** I was looking forward to Rick's response.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, I was wondering why it was not making
26 sense. Maybe if the Chair could understand what's he reading,
27 and so, anyway, Kevin, and I don't know if you would like to say
28 anything or reserve that, and you're more than welcome to.

29
30 **MR. ANSON:** Well, thank you for the opportunity. Chance is a
31 young and really energetic and passionate enforcement officer,
32 and he did accomplish a lot of things in the last year, and
33 certainly we appreciate the recognition from the council for his
34 efforts in trying to manage our fisheries, and so thank you.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kevin, and, to give myself credit,
37 it was supposed to be General Spraggins, and I linked it up to
38 Mississippi, and whatever. I messed that one up, but okay.
39 Moving on, Lieutenant Commander Motoi, if you wouldn't mind, and
40 we have a little time to go through your report today, and that
41 would be great. Whenever you're ready.

42
43 **U.S. COAST GUARD SUPPORTING AGENCY UPDATE**

44
45 **LCDR MOTOI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon, Mr.
46 Chairman and members of the council. I'm Lieutenant Commander
47 Lisa Motoi from Coast Guard District VIII in New Orleans.
48 Today's agenda, I will talk about Fiscal Year 2023, Quarter 2

1 domestic fisheries and lanchas, and then I will just highlight
2 some recent operations.

3
4 Before I start, here is an overview of District VIII, and, as
5 you can see, there is four coastal sectors that operate in the
6 Gulf of Mexico, and so, for domestic fisheries in Quarter 2, the
7 Coast Guard -- We conducted eighty-eight vessels across the
8 Gulf, and eighteen vessels received one or more safety
9 violations, and there were two vessels with one or more LMR
10 violations.

11
12 The picture shown is from the boarding of an eighty-two-foot
13 shrimp trawler, the Captain Phillip in the vicinity of the Gulf
14 Intracoastal Waterway East, that resulted in a total of thirteen
15 violations, five of them being LMR or violations with turtle
16 exclusion devices.

17
18 The top-right chart is a breakdown of boardings by species, and
19 so, for coastal migratory pelagics, there were one, reef fish is
20 forty-eight, and shrimp is thirty-nine, and then the bottom
21 chart depicts the breakdown of boardings by state, and so
22 Alabama is fifteen, Florida is twenty-seven, Louisiana is six,
23 Mississippi is two, and Texas is thirty-eight.

24
25 Here is recent highlights, this quarter, and so on the left is
26 an illegal charter vessel, and so the Coast Guard imposed a
27 civil penalty on February 6 for \$98,364, and the vessel was
28 boarded on multiple occasions by the Coast Guard and Okaloosa
29 County Sheriff's Office, over the past year, and there was an
30 extensive investigation, and the vessel continually failed to
31 provide a certificate of inspection, while carrying more than
32 six passengers for-hire, and so this was a pretty significant
33 penalty that we had.

34
35 On the top-right, and so this is just to touch on the search and
36 rescue aspect, but, on the top-right, this was a case involving
37 a ninety-foot Commercial Fishing Vessel, the Lady Lily, that ran
38 around on shoal water at the west end of Dauphin Island,
39 Alabama, and the Coast Guard worked with the Alabama Marine
40 Resources to rescue the four people onboard, and they were all
41 hoisted by a helicopter, and then three of them were transferred
42 to the Alabama Marine Unit, and then the captain of the vessel
43 was suffering from unrelated medical issues, and he was
44 immediately taken ashore.

45
46 Then, on the bottom-right, there was a fire onboard the sixty-
47 two-foot Commercial Fishing Vessel, the Tu Thao, off of Texas
48 City, Texas, and there were two people onboard. They couldn't

1 extinguish the fire, and the smoke buildup was too much, that
2 they were forced to jump overboard, and then a nearby good
3 Samaritan rescued them, and so that vessel ended up sinking a
4 few days later.

5
6 Then, for lanchas, for the Mexican lanchas, for this quarter, we
7 had ninety-four detections, thirty-three interceptions, and
8 seventeen interdictions. As you see, it's broken down by month,
9 and so, at the last council meeting, I briefly mentioned the new
10 employment of an aerostat that's being used down in South Padre
11 Island, and it's Customs and Border Protection contracted, and
12 so it's now in effect, and it's really making a big difference
13 in combating the illegal fishing, and so you can see like our
14 Quarter 2 detections are almost double, compared to historical
15 averages, and there is a picture of the aerostat, and it's
16 similar to that. It's actually tethered to land, and so it's
17 not like a blimp flying, and it's tethered, and so it will go
18 between 3,000 and 5,000 feet, depending on weather, wind, cloud
19 coverage, and it's not up 24/7 though, but it has been really
20 helpful.

21
22 Then, looking ahead, and so a few highlights that I just wanted
23 to touch on as far as what Mexico is doing to combat the illegal
24 lanchas, and they're working to establish their own fisheries
25 council and then establishing inspection and verification points
26 at Baghdad Beach, which is a prime spot for lancha camps, and
27 then modifying their fisheries laws, and that also includes
28 repeat offenders, because repeat offenders are just huge. Like,
29 on average, each individual has been like repatriated back to
30 Mexico like thirteen times, and so it's a huge -- It's a huge
31 issue, but the next meeting with Mexico will be at the end of
32 April, and that concludes my brief, Mr. Chairman, pending any
33 questions.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. Any questions? Well, seeing
36 none, thank you for that report. I think we're getting just
37 about as far as we can get with this, because the rest of the
38 things require a little bit of discussion.

39
40 The one item, Chris, not to put you on the spot, but you had
41 mentioned, in Other Business, that you might be prepared for the
42 season, but you're not? Tomorrow? That's what I was wondering.
43 We could have done that, but, if you're not ready, that's fine.
44 Okay. Well, Andy, go ahead.

45
46 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Do you think we could go through Mackerel now?
47 Do you think that will require much discussion? It seems like
48 that one is straightforward.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, that's what I would need to check, Andy,
3 because I wasn't sure how many motions and things we made in
4 Mackerel. If you all maybe hold on just for a second.

5
6 I would like to move forward, but we're going to do some voting
7 things, Andy, and other things that's going to take them a
8 little while, and you know what will happen is we'll pass out
9 the clickers, and then, all of a sudden, there will be a
10 question, and so let's go ahead, and we'll conclude there for
11 the day. Because of the weather, and I know people maybe
12 hopefully can get out, and not be in a rush during all of that,
13 we'll start again promptly at 8:00, and, at that point, we will
14 take up the Mackerel Committee.

15
16 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 5, 2023.)

17
18 - - -

19
20 April 6, 2023

21
22 THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

23
24 - - -

25
26 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
27 Council reconvened at the Courtyard Marriott in Gulfport,
28 Mississippi on Thursday morning, April 6, 2023, and was called
29 to order by Chairman Greg Stunz.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome back. If
32 everyone wants to take their seats, we'll pick up here with
33 Mackerel in just a minute. We have a few announcements, kind of
34 before we get going here, and the good news is we've heard from
35 Bob Shipp, and he's out of the hospital and back home, and so
36 that's good news. Unfortunately, I don't believe that he will
37 be able to join us today, but well wishes to him to get better
38 soon.

39
40 All of you probably surely noticed that you have your little
41 remote clickers in front of you today, and we're going to be
42 testing that again during Full Council. I think what I will do,
43 if there's -- We'll do that on votes where there is likely to
44 be, you not, not consensus, or not a unanimous kind of thing,
45 and we'll see how that goes, and so I'll ask for opposition. If
46 there is some, then we'll carry out a vote, and, so everyone
47 knows, these will be considered roll call votes, because,
48 obviously, all our names will be up there with the vote that we

1 made.

2
3 A couple of other things, and you all know we've been talking
4 about the two CCC, the Council Coordinating Committees, that
5 it's our turn, as the Gulf Council, to host the one coming up
6 here next month, and so there's, obviously, a lot on the council
7 staff's plate, and we're doing a pretty good job of adding a lot
8 more stuff, and I think you'll see, after the meeting today,
9 there will be even more stuff on their plates, and so I was
10 talking with Carrie, and, obviously, they're sensitive about
11 returning things in a timely way, and good products and that
12 kind of thing, and we're going to have to probably talk
13 internally, I'll get with Tom and Carrie and look at
14 prioritization, because, obviously, they can't work on all of
15 these things as efficiently, and get it done, and so, if you all
16 would be somewhat patient and bear with us, I will report-out,
17 at the next meeting, kind of where we are, and so, that way, if
18 anybody is not happy with that prioritization or whatever, we can
19 have that discussion, but they will need to go through that
20 process, so they can produce what we need in a timely manner.

21
22 So, with that, if there's no questions or anything before we get
23 going this morning, we'll kick it off with the Mackerel
24 Committee, and, Mr. Anson, if you're ready to start with that,
25 go ahead.

26
27 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
28 **MACKEREL COMMITTEE REPORT**
29

30 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, sir, Mr. Chair. Thank you. The Mackerel
31 Committee met on April 3. The committee adopted the agenda, Tab
32 C, Number 1, and approved the minutes, Tab C, Number 2, of the
33 October 2022 meeting as written.

34
35 Review of Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) Landings, Tab C,
36 Number 4, Mr. Peter Hood, from the NMFS Southeast Regional
37 Office, and Ms. Kelli O'Donnell reviewed the recent coastal
38 migratory pelagic (CMP) landings for the Gulf migratory groups
39 of cobia, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel.

40
41 A committee member noted the Florida East Coast (FLEC) Zone's
42 landings in relation to that zone's annual catch limit (ACL) and
43 asked about any accountability measures (AM). The FLEC Zone has
44 a post-season AM, such that when the FLEC zone stock ACL is
45 exceeded in one year, then, in the following year, the
46 recreational season will close when the FLEC Zone recreational
47 ACT is projected to be met. Council staff noted that CMP
48 Amendment 32 analyses predicted the potential for a recreational

1 closure in the FLEC Zone. The committee member also commented
2 on the lack of cobia landings in Orange Beach, Alabama and that
3 something else may be happening with the stock.

4
5 The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is planning to
6 host a series of port meetings to gather feedback from the
7 mackerel fishing community, given concerns about lower CMP
8 landings. Council staff reminded the committee of the various
9 CMP-centric projects that are underway, which include the
10 upcoming Gulf Spanish mackerel stock assessment, the release of
11 the Fishermen Feedback tool for Gulf Spanish mackerel, and the
12 effort looking into an interim analysis approach for Gulf king
13 mackerel.

14
15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If we could
16 just pause for a second here, just to talk a little bit about
17 the port meetings, and I think the South Atlantic Council, and I
18 believe the Mid-Atlantic Council, is very interested in us
19 getting engaged with those, and I think you're going to spend
20 some more time in June talking about those, and so what I was
21 thinking is we're getting our Spanish assessment in July, and it
22 will come back to the council in August, and we could work with
23 the staff at the South Atlantic Council and get some more
24 information about those port meetings, come up with a plan, and
25 present that in August, when we have a Mackerel Committee and
26 get the Spanish mackerel assessment to the council, if that's
27 agreeable to the council.

28
29 **MR. ANSON:** That sounds good, and I guess -- I mean, that works
30 within their timeline, I guess?

31
32 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** I would ask Mr. Roller, but I
33 believe so, because you're going to discuss it more in June, and
34 then potentially go out to these in the fall, and is that
35 correct?

36
37 **MR. ROLLER:** Yes, absolutely, and I spoke with our staff
38 yesterday, and we don't plan to start any port meetings until
39 late this year, at the earliest, and we can take them into next
40 year as well, and so it's sounding like your timeline will fit
41 in very well, potentially, and staff has told me that they are
42 willing and ready to work with you guys on work for those.

43
44 **MR. ANSON:** Final Action: Draft Framework Amendment 12:
45 Modifications to the Commercial Gulf King Mackerel Gillnet
46 Fishing Season, Tab C, Number 5, council staff reviewed the
47 option to remove the prohibition on fishing on weekends and
48 federal holidays for the commercial gillnet component of the

1 Gulf king mackerel fishery, which operates off southwest
2 Florida.

3
4 The committee affirmed its preference to remove this
5 prohibition, as it no longer serves its intended purpose. NOAA
6 General Counsel described the changes to the codified text that
7 would go into effect with the proposed regulations.

8
9 **The motion is to recommend the council approve Draft Framework**
10 **Amendment 12: Modifications to the Commercial Gulf King Mackerel**
11 **Gillnet Fishing Season and forward it to the Secretary of**
12 **Commerce for review and implementation and deem the codified**
13 **text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial**
14 **license to make the necessary changes in the document. The**
15 **Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the**
16 **codified text as necessary and appropriate.**

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Kevin. We'll stop
19 there, and there's obviously a committee motion coming out of
20 that, with our usual motion for draft framework and taking final
21 action on Amendment 12, and so this, in committee, carried
22 without opposition. Is there any opposition to this motion?

23
24 **DR. FRAZER:** I think you need a roll call.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Wait. We will need a roll call. Never mind,
27 and so get your clickers ready, and I will give everyone a
28 minute, and, Bernie, when you all are ready for us to start
29 voting, let me know.

30

C.5.1 Final Action Approve Draft Amendment 12 Modifications to the Commercial Gulf King Mackerel Gillnet Fishing Season			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	Yes	
Susan	Boggs	Yes	
Billy	Broussard	Yes	
Dale	Diaz	Yes	
J.D.	Dugas	Yes	
Phil	Dyskow	Yes	
Tom	Frazer	Yes	
Dakus	Geeslin	Yes	
Bob	Gill	Yes	
Michael	McDermott	Yes	
Chris	Schieble	Yes	
Joe	Spraggins	Yes	

Andy	Strelcheck	Yes	
Greg	Stunz	Yes	
C.J.	Sweetman	Yes	
Troy	Williamson	Yes	
Yes (16)	No (0)	Abstain (0)	

1
2 I think what we'll want to do, because this is new, and, I mean,
3 this obviously is kind of a no-brainer one here, but, when we
4 get to one where there might be some opposition, we'll take some
5 time and make sure that everybody is very comfortable with this
6 and make sure their vote is registered the way we intended it
7 before we actually for a vote, but, at this point, if you ladies
8 are good with all of that -- Okay. **If everyone is happy with**
9 **their vote, it looks like this motion carried unanimously, with**
10 **one absent.** All right. Mr. Schieble.

11
12 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** This is just a housekeeping question, and so,
13 since this seems to work, and we've used it a few times, can we
14 move forward with using it more often, the clicker, and so,
15 instead of Ms. Susan having to ask for a roll call vote during
16 committee, could we have these things out here or not?

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, essentially, this will be a roll call
19 vote every time, obviously, and I would look to you all, as the
20 committee. I mean, I wasn't maybe prepared to have this
21 discussion right here in Mackerel, and maybe, if you all want to
22 think about it, and we can take it up in Other Business and
23 decide is this the way we want to move forward, and I don't
24 know, Carrie, if we'll need a motion for that or we can just --
25 Before we count our chickens, so to speak, let's get through
26 these votes today and see. So far, that was pretty easy. Mara.

27
28 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. Just to this, I have a question, and so,
29 for the votes that require a roll call vote, right, like these
30 final action votes, do you plan to put the actual roll call vote
31 into the minutes? The reason I ask is I understand that they're
32 all roll call votes, and I don't know that you plan to do that
33 for everything, but, for the ones that require it, it would be
34 nice to have it embedded, so you don't have to go looking for
35 it.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, we've discussed that, and, Carrie, go
38 ahead, if you want to answer that.

39
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so our
41 plan is all votes that are roll call would be put into the
42 minutes, right now, but that certainly can be up for discussion

1 when we revisit this in Other Business.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** So you all think about that, and, when we get
4 to Other Business, we'll have that discussion, Chris, and figure
5 out how we want to move forward. Okay. Seeing no hands on
6 that, Kevin, if you want to continue with the rest of your
7 report.

8
9 **MR. ANSON:** All right. Recommendations from the CMP Advisory
10 Panel (AP) December 2022 Meeting, Tab C, Number 6. Council
11 staff presented the remaining recommendations from the CMP AP
12 meeting from December 2022.

13
14 The committee discussed the potential sale of recreationally-
15 caught fish, which is prohibited by each of the Gulf states.
16 Some committee members did not see how developing this type of
17 document would further reduce the practice, as each Gulf state
18 already has regulations in place. The Committee also heard a
19 law enforcement perspective and how the states may not devote
20 resources to monitoring this type of infrequent violation.

21
22 Given the concerns regarding the practice of selling
23 recreationally-caught fish, the committee recommends the Law
24 Enforcement Technical Committee discuss this topic at a future
25 meeting. Instead of developing a document, as stated in the
26 action schedule, committee members suggested focusing on
27 outreach efforts to educate recreational anglers and seafood
28 dealers of state restrictions and strive to reduce the
29 occurrence of violations.

30
31 **The committee motion is to remove the following from the Gulf of**
32 **Mexico Fishery Management Council proposed actions for 2023, the**
33 **action schedule, because sale of recreationally-caught cobia is**
34 **prohibited by the states. That would be line 22 of the**
35 **framework amendment: to prohibit the sale of recreationally-**
36 **caught cobia.**

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kevin. Let's dispense with this
39 motion. We have a committee motion. We'll go ahead -- There
40 was some opposition in committee, and so we'll go ahead and do
41 another vote with our remote, and so, ladies, if you're ready,
42 if you want to pull that up. All right. Let's go ahead and
43 begin voting on that.

C.6.1 Remove Line 22 from GMFMC Proposed Actions for 2023 (sale of recreationally-caught cobia)			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	Yes	

Susan	Boggs	No	
Billy	Broussard	Yes	
Dale	Diaz	Yes	
J.D.	Dugas	Yes	
Phil	Dyskow	Yes	
Tom	Frazer	Yes	
Dakus	Geeslin	Yes	
Bob	Gill	Yes	
Michael	McDermott	Yes	
Chris	Schieble	Yes	
Joe	Spraggins	Yes	
Andy	Strelcheck	Yes	
Greg	Stunz	Abstain	
C.J.	Sweetman	Yes	
Troy	Williamson	Yes	
Yes (14)	No (1)	Abstain (1)	

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** If everyone is happy with the way that their
3 vote registered, we're going to -- Unless I see any hands, we're
4 going to close the vote for that. Okay. **The voting is closed,**
5 **and that motion carries fourteen to one with one absent and one**
6 **abstention.**

7
8 That brings the end to Mackerel. If there's not anything else
9 that needs to come before the committee, we will move on. Thank
10 you, Kevin. Okay, and so, moving on, up next is the Data
11 Collection Committee, and, Ms. Boggs, are you ready to go?

12
13 **DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

14
15 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, sir. Good morning, everyone. The Data
16 Collection Committee Report from April 3, 2023, the committee
17 adopted the agenda, Tab F, Number 1, and approved the minutes of
18 the January 2023 meeting as amended, Tab F, Number 2.

19
20 Update on Southeast For-Hire Integrated Reporting Program, Tab
21 F, Number 4, NOAA General Counsel provided a verbal update on a
22 recent ruling by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals regarding the
23 SEFHIER program. The court ruled for the plaintiffs and set
24 aside the final rule. NMFS has until April 10, 2023 to file a
25 motion for rehearing within the 5th Circuit and until the end of
26 May to file an appeal to the Supreme Court. The agency has not
27 yet determined whether or not it will appeal the ruling.

28
29 A committee member asked if the court's decision could result in

1 challenges to vessel monitoring system requirements in other
2 programs. General Counsel responded that lawsuits could be
3 filed. However, the court's ruling was focused on the for-hire
4 industry and the record developed to support the Gulf SEFHIER
5 program.

6
7 A council member asked what criteria the court used to determine
8 that the commercial sector was a highly-regulated industry, but
9 the for-hire sector was not. General Counsel stated that the
10 court did not address the commercial sector in detail, but, with
11 respect to the for-hire industry, concluded there was no
12 evidence in the record of a history of warrantless searches and
13 no evidence that for-hire fishing poses an overfishing risk,
14 because it accounts for such a small percentage of the fishing
15 in the Gulf.

16
17 The committee discussed possible next steps for the program.
18 Several committee members expressed support for a modified data
19 collection program for the for-hire industry that addresses the
20 issues identified in the SEFHIER program. However, it is
21 unclear, from the results of the court ruling, exactly which
22 program components or other monitoring approaches may be
23 appropriate at this time. I would like to pause.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bob Gill.

26
27 **MR. GILL:** We heard, in public testimony yesterday, almost
28 unanimous support for beginning work on a replacement program
29 for the SEFHIER program, and I believe, if I recollect
30 correctly, there was only one that expressed concern about it,
31 but all the others were enthusiastically supporting getting
32 going on a program to replace the SEFHIER program, and so,
33 Bernie, if you would pull up my Data Collection motion.

34
35 I would like to introduce that as a motion for putting back in
36 the queue, and recognizing that it's going to be different than
37 the SEFHIER program, because of the court decision, but that we
38 proceed with utilizing the parts of the program that we had,
39 that are still usable, considering, for example, Jim Green's
40 suggestion for a data collection program, but get to work on it,
41 and not wait, as we discussed in committee, for a decision by
42 the agency and/or courts, but to get going and comply with the
43 wishes of the stakeholders who gave us the testimony. Thank
44 you.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** You're seconding this motion, or do you have a
47 question? Okay. We have a second by Ms. Boggs. Any discussion
48 on the motion? Ms. Boggs.

1
2 **MS. BOGGS:** Certainly I support this, but, to make it maybe a
3 little easier for staff, I would like to ask a question. Can
4 the council request that we bring that modification to the for-
5 hire reporting back and just tweak that amendment, modification,
6 as opposed to starting an entirely new document, meaning we can
7 take -- We can take the VMS out, and we can take the
8 socioeconomic out, but this is developing a whole new document,
9 and so I'm just trying to see what would be easier for staff.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Gill.

12
13 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I share that concern, and I
14 originally was thinking as you were suggesting, but then I
15 realized that it's really a cut-and-paste, right, and it's
16 taking the document parts that still were viable and sticking
17 them in a new file, and so, effectively, it's not different, but
18 whatever is easiest for staff, however they want to work it, and
19 that's fine.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Mara and then --

22
23 **MS. LEVY:** Well, just to that point, so, I mean, you can take
24 the parts of it that you would like and put it in a new
25 document, but it's going to be a different program, depending on
26 how you develop it, right, and so we're going to have to develop
27 a record for why we're including what we're including, what it's
28 going to get us, and all that other stuff, and so you can take
29 those pieces, but it's going to be a new thing.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Diaz.

32
33 **MR. DIAZ:** Yes, and so I heard, loud and clear, from the people
34 in the room yesterday that they would like us to start a new
35 document, start a new program. However, I do also agree that we
36 should do what's most efficient for the staff, but I envision a
37 new program looking substantially different than the old one.

38
39 We didn't put up guardrails, and the other one got to where they
40 asked way too many questions, and people don't like the economic
41 data, and I don't know why we would go back with that, and, I
42 mean, a couple of the captains mentioned that it should be
43 simple, and one said five questions max, and I kind of agree
44 with that. Get catch and effort, but let's just get what we
45 need. I think this thing got to the point where everybody
46 wanted to get what they wanted, and we need to get what we need
47 to manage the fishery and nothing else. It needs to be simple,
48 as simple as humanly possible, and that's not where we really

1 ended up with this.

2
3 This thing got to where it had a lot of fields, and it just was
4 too much, and so I am going to support starting a new document,
5 because I do think we need another data collection program, but,
6 in my view, it needs to be drastically different than the last
7 one. Only what we need, period.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dale. Up next was Susan.

10
11 **MS. BOGGS:** That's fine. I mean, what we have is not difficult,
12 and I'm just saying. I do it all day, or, well, not all day,
13 but I do it every single day. I did it today, and I did it two
14 days ago, and it takes three minutes. That aside, I want to
15 know, from Dr. Simmons, how quickly can we make this happen,
16 because the other document took forever, and we don't need a
17 five-year delay in data collection for the charter/for-hire
18 industry. We need something, I mean, like on the books for, in
19 my mind, 2024, and I don't know if that's a viable option, but
20 we cannot drag our feet on this. We just can't.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Carrie, did you want to comment to that, and
23 then Chris is next, and then Kevin.

24
25 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to
26 reiterate what Dale said, and I agree with simplifying this. We
27 have to not go down the same path we did with this program to
28 start with, and I think it just -- It got too convoluted, and it
29 asked for too much, and I remember these conversations
30 internally, in our state discussions, with the early inception
31 of LA Creel, where the whole point of it was to simplify the
32 survey to get what we absolutely needed to manage the fishery
33 and make it easier on the anglers, so we don't get these, you
34 know, higher levels of rejection, or survey fatigue, of the
35 dockside intercepts, and I think the same thing here.

36
37 We need to make this program as straightforward as possible and
38 get the information we need and make it easier for the
39 charter/for-hire industry also, and, I mean, the whole idea is
40 to go from, you know, data acquisition, on a long duration, into
41 something that's electronic and easier to follow, and not more
42 complicated, and so I will speak in support of it, but I think
43 simplifying should be a priority.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Kevin is next, and then Andy.

46
47 **MR. ANSON:** I thought that Carrie was going to say something.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Carrie, did you want to --

2
3 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
4 don't think that we could get anything in place in 2024. I will
5 look over at the Regional Office, but, I guess, from our
6 standpoint, I don't clear understand, from the court's decision,
7 what we can do and not do right now, and I think we need to have
8 that internal conversation, and then, with what we can do, how
9 is that going to improve and be able to be QA/QC'd and used in
10 management, based on the VMS no longer being allowed, and so I
11 think we need to have a lot of internal conversations still
12 about what can we do in this fishery, and I'm still not
13 completely sure that I understand, based on the court's ruling.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Carrie. Kevin.

16
17 **MR. ANSON:** A couple of points. I mean, overall, I'm
18 supportive, and, obviously, we've heard lots of desire, from the
19 for-hire community, to have this program in place, but that's a
20 concern I have as well, is what are the boundaries, and I just -
21 - You know, the document, if it's voted to go forward, you know,
22 there needs to be some, you know, significant communication and
23 outreach, which we normally do, but, you know, to kind of get to
24 where we got in that process and then end up with a lawsuit, I
25 guess, was a little deflating to me, and I just want to make
26 sure that we don't repeat that.

27
28 Then I have a question for Mr. Strelcheck about if -- If a
29 program were to go forward, and just thinking of timing and
30 getting something in place, and thinking of something that is
31 pretty barebones, but has some sort of QA/QC -- I mean, is this
32 something that the agency could absorb in their budget, or would
33 they need additional funding, and, I mean, I know there was kind
34 of an initial funding to help get it off the ground, and that
35 type of thing, but, I mean, long-term, is that something that,
36 you know, the agency might be able to handle?

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, you were up next anyway, and so if you
39 want to address that as well.

40
41 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and, I mean, good question, Kevin, and I
42 think there's a lot of uncertainty around that, because we had
43 funding dedicated by Congress for this program, and we received
44 that this year. Based on the program being set aside, I don't
45 know what will happen next year at this point, or years to come,
46 but Congress was at least supporting the program, and, if
47 there's continued support for it, then, yes, we would support
48 the program, moving forward.

1
2 A few things, and so, first, I'm going to say that I'm in
3 support of this motion, even though the agency decision is still
4 pending, and I think this is fine to go ahead and direct staff,
5 knowing that, once that decision is known, you know, whatever
6 direction we're going, that they may either need to stand-down
7 working on this or move forward with working on this, and
8 there's no time commitment.

9
10 In terms of timing -- You know, for 2024, whatever timeframe
11 within 2024, I think the only way we could make that happen is,
12 one, this is a huge priority of the council, and, two, you
13 pattern it very closely after what you already had in place,
14 minus some of the changes that the court has essentially
15 indicated, right, and so VMS and the economic questions would be
16 the two, I think, major sticking points.

17
18 Otherwise, I think the framework for the program is still really
19 strong, in terms of the logbooks, the hail-in and hail-out
20 requirements, some of the other provisions.

21
22 One thing I'm a little concerned with is we're already kind of
23 getting out ahead of the conversation, and I appreciate the
24 comments about simplifying the program, and I also want to
25 comment this council, previously, of kind of creating the gold
26 standard for what I think was probably the best electronic
27 logbook program built around the country, and so I want you to
28 keep that in mind, because, in the South Atlantic, we don't have
29 anything close to this, and, even with the changes that we're
30 talking about in the Gulf, it's still going to be far superior
31 to what I have in the South Atlantic right now, and so there's a
32 balance there, in terms of the impacts and burden on fishermen
33 and what we're trying to achieve in terms of improvements in
34 data collection, and so I think all of us should just keep that
35 in mind as we work on any sort of revisions to the program.
36 Thanks.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Andy. Susan, did you still have a
39 comment?

40
41 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, I do, and I think I've answered my question,
42 but I'm going to put Mr. Strelcheck on the spot. There is no
43 way -- I know it set aside the final rule, and, in the headboat,
44 the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey, when the announcement
45 came out, within moments, the fields were gone that required us
46 to do the -- The fields were gone that were set aside in the
47 ruling were off of our app too, to fill out, and I don't know
48 how to say it, and I'm sorry that I'm fumbling my words.

1
2 Is there any value, and I was hoping that Andrew Peterson was
3 here, but I don't see him, that you could go into the VESL app,
4 and the eTRIPS app, and you could take those socioeconomic
5 questions away, and, you know, everybody shut off their VMS, and
6 allow those fishermen to continue to capture that data, and is
7 there any value in that, if they wanted to voluntarily continue
8 that, because a lot of them have told me that we'll keep
9 submitting our data, but, if there's no value in it, then I
10 suppose there's no reason to do it.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, to that point?

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** We talked about this some in committee, and so
15 there's -- If it's not being sent to the agency, that would
16 potentially address the confidentiality issue, but then it has
17 to be housed someplace else, right, and, in terms of the value
18 of the data, the hard part is, if it's not a random selection of
19 vessels, right, we don't know if it's representative of the
20 fishery, and we only have a subset then of the catch, and, I
21 mean, our goal was to get as close to a census as possible, with
22 some adjustments in the catch data for misreporting and
23 underreporting. That's, to me, the huge limitation of any sort
24 of self-reported, voluntary program.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. J.D.

27
28 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In committee, I spoke in
29 opposition to this, and I thought we were getting ahead of
30 ourselves, and I think Dr. Simmons just made some of that clear,
31 because she doesn't know what staff can do and not do at this
32 point, and I'm not going to -- I am not going to vote in
33 opposition of the motion, but my question is someone raised
34 yesterday, in public comment, and can we simply do a poll,
35 across the Gulf, for all the charter fleet, and see who is
36 interested in this program and who is not? I was going to talk
37 to Emily, and then I realized that she wasn't here.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Diaz.

40
41 **MR. DIAZ:** I've got the same concern as J.D. does, and so Dr.
42 Simmons makes a really good point, and, at this point, we're not
43 sure if the data can be used, with the limitations of the court,
44 and so we are starting a document, and I'm going back and forth
45 on whether to support it too, but I would like to know, and
46 maybe we won't know until we start a document, and I don't know,
47 but I think the fishermen that spoke yesterday, that want a
48 program, they want a program that we can use it, that it's going

1 to be important to stock assessments, and it's going to help
2 manage the fishery, and that's what they want, and so, I mean,
3 we've got to make sure --
4

5 To that point, I see where Andy says that we're getting ahead of
6 ourselves, and I disagree that we're getting ahead of ourselves
7 by talking about simplifying the program. I do think we had the
8 gold standard, but we had a hard time getting people to accept
9 the gold standard. It was slow for people to come onboard with
10 it, and they were starting to warm up to it, as it got knocked
11 down by the court. Anyway, I am rambling a little bit, but Dr.
12 Simmons' points are very good ones, and we do have to make sure
13 that this is usable.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. McDermott.
16

17 **MR. MCDERMOTT:** I reached out to about nine guys last night,
18 after the public comment, because it did appear, from the public
19 comment, that there was unanimous support for continuing the
20 program, and, of those nine guys, and one of them is classified
21 as a headboat, and so he's had to report for quite some time,
22 and one of them was in favor of it, and the other eight -- They
23 don't mind giving the data, but they're confused as to what the
24 data is going to be used for.
25

26 You know, a lot of these guys raised the point to me, and they
27 said, you know, we've got a tremendous number of guys that hold
28 federal permits in Mississippi that don't land fish in
29 Mississippi, and they land fish in Louisiana, and they raised
30 the question of, every time I come in and land fish, there's a
31 biologist from the state there, and they ask us, you know, all
32 the questions, and we're happy to answer them, and so, you know,
33 what's the point of getting all this data? I mean, they were
34 all in favor of getting more data, but they're concerned about
35 what it's going to be used for.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Michael. I have Susan and
38 Mara up next.
39

40 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've had this conversation
41 several times, and I believe, when the program -- The agency can
42 correct me if I'm wrong, but, when the program went into effect,
43 we knew that we were going to have to be collecting data for
44 about three years, run it side-by-side, before the data would be
45 able to be used, just like any data collection program that I've
46 ever seen, and you have to give it time to build the data, and
47 so a lot of people said that we've been doing this for a year,
48 and the VMS has been in place for a year, but the actual

1 electronic logbooks have been in place for two years, and so, I
2 mean, we had quite a history, and now we're getting ready to
3 lose all that, which sets us back even further in what the
4 charter fleet worked on for -- I think, for ten years, I came to
5 that podium asking for this program.

6
7 The data is important, and it will be used. It will help us
8 with our discard information, and it helps us to know what we're
9 catching, so you can parse out another piece of this fishery, to
10 say, okay, we know what they're catching. Just like the
11 commercial fishery, we know what those people are catching, but,
12 unfortunately, we can't start the program today and have the
13 data reflect tomorrow, and it's a building process.

14
15 You can't just -- I mean, I would like for it to, trust me, and,
16 for headboats, we've been reporting for twenty-plus years, and I
17 guess I'm immune to it, because I've been doing it for so long,
18 and it's not that difficult, and I understand, and I heard some
19 comments yesterday, and I need to do some outreach, and I can
20 help some of these guys, because you can set your top fish, if
21 those are the only ones you ever see, and it's very easy to do,
22 and there's things to do this, and so I think, to get to the
23 crux of some of the pushback on this, there needs to be a little
24 more outreach and education, and maybe I'm the one that needs to
25 do it, and I failed at that, but the data is very important.

26
27 It's very important for what the charter/for-hire fleet is
28 trying to do with sector separation and things like that, so
29 they can get -- They know what they're catching, and they can
30 set their season, and they can make business decisions, and
31 that's what that data is for. That's my opinion of what the
32 data is for.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mara.

35
36 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you, and so just a couple of points. I think
37 we're getting way ahead of ourselves about what's allowed and
38 what's not allowed. I mean, maybe I wasn't clear, but, to me,
39 everything is on the table. The issue is building the record to
40 support it, why you need it. You know, the economic questions,
41 that is not off the table.

42
43 Now, if you don't want to collect economic questions, okay, but
44 that's a policy call, and that's not a court decision call. The
45 court only said that we didn't give proper notice in the
46 rulemaking under the Administrative Procedures Act, and they did
47 not say that asking economic questions was unlawful, and so I
48 kind of want to get away from that.

1
2 In order to start to decide how you want the program to look,
3 and build the record for it, you need to start something, I
4 guess is my point, and I would also keep in mind that you have
5 the South Atlantic program, and, at the time they were
6 implemented together, the logbooks were the same, and they were
7 the same for a reason. Number one was because you have vessels
8 who had South Atlantic and Gulf permits, and you wanted them to
9 be able to fill out one logbook, and the South Atlantic's
10 program basically said that there is -- That the South Atlantic
11 vessels can comply with the requirement that they're reporting
12 to another reporting system that is basically just as robust or
13 more robust.

14
15 If you simplify the logbook too much in the Gulf, the South
16 Atlantic and Gulf permit holders are going to be filling out two
17 logbooks, one for each program, but, again, all of this stuff is
18 stuff that you've got to hash out, and it's just not going to
19 happen, in my opinion, sitting here, right, and like we're way
20 ahead of the process, which is trying to start looking at it.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We're probably going to need to move on
23 and dispense with this motion, but, if anyone has got a pressing
24 desire, and, J.D., I saw your hand was up, and I'm not seeing
25 any others, and so, J.D., we'll take your comment and then move
26 with this motion.

27
28 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so, with Mara's comments,
29 and Dr. Simmons' comments, if we pass this motion today, what
30 are we accomplishing today, because it sounds, to me, like this
31 is going to get buried at the bottom of the list, for quite some
32 time, until the agency knows what they're doing, what the ruling
33 on that is, and so I'm not against it, Bob, but, if we pass it
34 today, what's the benefit today? We can simply bring this back
35 up in June, or August, and am I -- I am getting lost.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. A couple more. Andy, go ahead.

38
39 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, just to J.D.'s point, it's not going to
40 get buried at the bottom of the list. You will know, I think by
41 May, whether the agency has appealed this decision or not. If
42 it's appealed, right, then you're not working on it. If it's
43 not appealed, it comes to the council, and we move on it as
44 quickly as the council wants to move on it.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** J.D., it is a good example, when I kicked off
47 the meeting, about, you know, there's a lot of things -- You
48 know, speaking from the council staff, and council chair

1 position, and not necessarily just this motion in particular,
2 but there is a lot of work, and this will have to be prioritized
3 in that.

4
5 I am concerned about, in general, Andy, getting a program we
6 really want, that there's really buy-in from the industry, and
7 certainly we don't want to go through all of this again and then
8 have it challenged, at the last minute, and it's all for
9 nothing, and, you know, so I am -- Kind of to Dale's point, and
10 J.D.'s and others, and Michael's, about are there components of
11 the fleet out there that really don't want this, that we're just
12 not hearing from here, and so I think, if this was to start, we
13 want to make sure that we understand what that looks like, and
14 that sort of thing, and so I have Susan and then Andy, and then,
15 at that point, we're going to call it.

16
17 **MS. BOGGS:** Andy said exactly what I was going to.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, last word.

20
21 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I will say, if we manage based on what everyone
22 wants to do, or doesn't want to do, we're not going to get a lot
23 accomplished around this table, and so I think we need to think
24 about what's the purpose of the data collection, why are we
25 requiring it, and why is it important, and I think that's
26 getting lost in this conversation, because people are saying
27 they don't want the program. Do we want the program, and why do
28 we want the program, and there was a major purpose to get this
29 program in place, and that was to greatly improve data
30 collection of the for-hire industry, and so let's not lose sight
31 of that. Thank you.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That's certainly a fair point, to make sure,
34 you know, we're not challenged into this process and back to
35 where we started. With that, we'll call a vote on this motion,
36 and we'll just the electronic methods, and so we'll wait here
37 for the ladies to pull that up. While we won't call a vote as
38 normal, please vote.

39

F.4.1 To direct staff to initiate a document for CFH data collection program to replace SEFHIER			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	Yes	
Susan	Boggs	Yes	
Billy	Broussard	No	
Dale	Diaz	Yes	
J.D.	Dugas	Yes	

Phil	Dyskow	Yes	
Tom	Frazer	Yes	
Dakus	Geeslin	No	
Bob	Gill	Yes	
Michael	McDermott	No	
Chris	Schieble	Yes	
Joe	Spraggins	Yes	
Andy	Strelcheck	Yes	
Greg	Stunz	Abstain	
C.J.	Sweetman	Yes	
Troy	Williamson	No	
Yes (11)	No (4)	Abstain (1)	

1
2 Okay. Before I close the voting, has everybody looked on the
3 screen, at your name, and is that information accurate? I want
4 to close the vote, but is that towards that? Go ahead, Mr.
5 Schieble.

6
7 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** This is just a suggestion, but, when we vote, can
8 we make that pop-up screen a little bigger, so everybody can see
9 it, because this camera over here, or whatever you call it,
10 projector, is blurry.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Much better, and so, if we could do that from
13 now on, and maybe we could adjust the camera, or the projector,
14 over here too, if it's a little bit blurry. Okay. Well, if
15 there's no -- Are we good? Okay. **The motion carries eleven to**
16 **four with one absent and one abstention.** Okay. Moving on, if
17 we want to pick back up with the report, please.

18
19 **MS. BOGGS:** Modification to Commercial Coastal Logbook Reporting
20 Requirements and AP Recommendations, Tab F, Number 5(a) and (b),
21 council staff reviewed the revised amendment, the Data
22 Collection AP motions, provided an update from the March South
23 Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting, and presented a
24 modified timeline for final approval.

25
26 Captain Troy Frady, the AP chair, reported that the AP had
27 recommended some level of beta testing for program participants
28 be made available before implementation of electronic
29 submission.

30
31 A committee member asked if the Southeast Fishery Science Center
32 database infrastructure would be ready to begin receiving these
33 data from the Gulf and South Atlantic, once the modification was
34 implemented. Southeast Fishery Science Center staff replied

1 that work was continuing to prepare for electronic reporting
2 submissions. The committee discussed the importance of
3 involving the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and
4 stakeholders early on in the process of considering modifying
5 program reporting.
6

7 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct council staff**
8 **to work with industry groups to determine what outreach and**
9 **education would be appropriate to the commercial participants.**

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Susan. We have another
12 committee motion, if everyone wants to read that motion on the
13 board. In committee, there was no opposition. Is there any
14 further discussion on this motion? **Seeing none, is there any**
15 **opposition to this motion?** All right. **Seeing none, the motion**
16 **carries with no opposition. Susan.**
17

18 **MS. BOGGS:** The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has
19 approved the document for public hearing and will consider the
20 document for final action at its September 2023 meeting.
21 Similarly, the council could consider selecting preferred Option
22 1, so staff can prepare the mailout and public hearing
23 materials. With that, Mr. Chair, I think we do need to talk
24 about picking a preferred for this document, so that we can take
25 it out for public hearing.
26

27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dr. Hollensead is going to lead us
28 through that one. Go ahead.
29

30 **DR. LISA HOLLENSEAD:** Sure, and so, in the document, as you
31 recall, it's an amendment with a categorical exclusion, which
32 means it just has the one option, and so the option would be
33 either status quo, to remain with the paper document, or the
34 Option 1 is move towards the electronic submission, and so
35 there's only one decision point there in the document, but just
36 to clarify for everyone on what they're talking about picking.
37

38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and so then do we need a motion to pick
39 that preferred one, Susan? Is that what you're asking?
40

41 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, and I don't know if -- I mean, since we're in
42 Full Committee, I guess I can make that motion to --
43

44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, please, Susan.
45

46 **MS. BOGGS:** **To select Option 1 --** I'm sorry, and the documents
47 are different, and it's not written the same, but select Option
48 1 as the preferred.

1
2 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** Yes, ma'am. It would be Option 1 as the
3 preferred.
4
5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and so, Dr. Hollensead, if you would help
6 with that motion, and make sure it meshes with the document.
7
8 **DR. HOLLENSEAD:** It would be to select Option 1 as the preferred
9 in that commercial electronic logbook amendment.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We will need -- Susan, when you're happy
12 with that, we will need a second for that motion.
13
14 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, I'm fine with that.
15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Is there a second for that motion from
17 someone? Mr. Gill.
18
19 **MR. GILL:** I will second it, but we need to put in there what
20 document we're talking about.
21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes. Give us just a second to put that up
23 there. Okay. Susan and Bob, if you want to look over that one
24 more time, just to make sure we've got everything straight.
25
26 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** It's good? Okay. We have a motion and a
29 second. Is there any discussion on this motion? Susan, do you
30 maybe want to go ahead and read that in, since we have a little
31 bit of confusion?
32
33 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, sir. I will be happy to. **The motion is to**
34 **select Option 1 as the preferred in the Modification to**
35 **Commercial Coastal Logbook Reporting Requirements document.**
36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Susan. **Is there any**
38 **opposition to this motion?** Okay. **Seeing none, the motion**
39 **carries with no opposition.** Okay, Susan. Proceed, please.
40
41 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Discussion on Private Angler
42 Licensing Requirements and AP Recommendations, Tab F, Number 6
43 and 5(b), Remaining Data Collection AP Summary Items, Tab F,
44 Number 5(b), Dr. Richard Cody from the Office of Science and
45 Technology provided an overview of private recreational data
46 collection from a federal perspective. He also outlined some
47 challenges associated with quantifying private recreational
48 effort data in federal waters.

1
2 A council member expressed concern and indicated there are
3 likely not enough federal resources to tackle these issues and
4 that the state agencies may be better equipped to explore
5 private recreational management approaches.
6

7 The AP spoke similarly in a motion to the council, which
8 recommended collaboration between NMFS, the Gulf States Marine
9 Fisheries Commission, and the council to better define the
10 universe of federal private anglers. Southeast Regional Office
11 staff elaborated that more direction of management goals and
12 objectives would be needed before proceeding. The committee
13 agreed that the issues being discussed in committee were of
14 broad interest and decided to further discuss these topics at
15 Full Council. Staff provided an overview of the remaining items
16 discussed during the Data Collection AP meeting. Mr. Chair,
17 this concludes my report, but I don't know if we want to go back
18 and discuss the private angler licensing requirements.
19

20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think so, Ms. Boggs, and I see Mr. Dyskow.
21 Go ahead.
22

23 **MR. DYSKOW:** We've been talking about this issue ad nauseum, and
24 we've had a lot of good ideas, but I think it's time to come up
25 with something specific as to how we do this, who is involved in
26 doing it, what the goals and objectives are, and craft it in a
27 motion, which is what I've done.
28

29 Now, before we put the motion up on the board, I started this
30 last night, or actually this morning, around 4:00 a.m., and I
31 have three paragraphs, and it's easy to cram a lot into this
32 motion, but this process is going to involve NMFS, the council
33 staff, Dave Donaldson's office, as well as the five states, and
34 so I want to start as broadly as possible, with as few pieces of
35 boilerplate as possible, because we need them to collaboratively
36 come up with a process that works for everyone, and so if you
37 could put the motion up on the board right now. Thank you.
38

39 **For those of that have difficulty reading, the motion reads:**
40 **Request that NMFS and council staff provide collaborative**
41 **support to the five Gulf state fishery services for the express**
42 **purpose of developing a universal state-managed recreational**
43 **fishing license program for the primary grouper snapper species**
44 **in federal waters. At a minimum, this license will provide**
45 **information on fishing effort, catch, and discards.**
46

47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Dyskow.
48

1 **MR. GILL:** Seconded.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. It's seconded by Mr. Gill. Is there
4 discussion? Mr. Dugas and then Mr. Gill.
5
6 **MR. DUGAS:** This may be a question for Chris, and I don't want
7 to put you on the spot, but how does this compare to what we
8 already have? We already have this in Louisiana, and so
9 wouldn't it be easier for the Department of Wildlife and
10 Fisheries to just hand over to NMFS the information collected
11 already?
12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Chris, would you like to comment to that?
14
15 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I am still assimilating this motion here, but my
16 initial thought is that we're talking about a license here and
17 not a user permit, right, and so it's a license program, which
18 could be duplicative, maybe, but it identifies the grouper
19 snapper complex, which, to J.D.'s point, we have under our
20 landing permit, which is not a license, and it's a user-defined
21 permit, right, and we have a saltwater fishing license that you
22 have to have, but then we also have a separate landing permit,
23 and so I'm not quite sure how this fits in yet exactly, but it
24 does seem duplicative, yes.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think Mr. Dyskow has a comment to that point,
27 and then, Bob, I've got you on the list.
28
29 **MR. DYSKOW:** I understand there is going to be that, which is a
30 good point, and many others that we need to work through, but
31 the people that need to work through it are you all, NMFS, and
32 council staff, and so I want to stay as general as possible in
33 this motion, realizing that everything you bring up is valid and
34 will have to be worked out.
35
36 Whether it's a license or a permit, I'm not smart enough to
37 figure that out, but I know we do need to figure it out before
38 we go forward, and, if you wanted to add species, take species
39 away, there's going to be lots of good ideas, but I think we
40 need to start with something and work from there, and that's my
41 point, and so I'm not disrespecting your comments, and you're
42 exactly right, but, at this point, we need to get something that
43 we can start with.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Gill.
46
47 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so two points. I guess
48 I would like to talk about the license versus permit part,

1 because, if we define what we want as a license, that's the path
2 we go down, and changing that motion will be difficult, and that
3 may be what Andy was fixing to talk about, but, if you, Phil,
4 would like to discuss why you chose grouper snapper species, as
5 opposed to all species, or some other mechanism, I think that
6 would be helpful.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Phil, please.

9
10 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Bob, it's an excellent
11 question, and I've got all sorts of things on paper, but what I
12 wanted to do is say what would be something that would be
13 achievable, and where do we have the biggest problems right now.
14 If I listen to the people that come up to that podium, all of
15 the -- Not all, but the majority of the frustrating issues are
16 in the reef fisheries, the snapper grouper category
17 specifically.

18
19 If they want to make it broader, I'm fine with that, and I hope
20 it doesn't get any narrower than that, but, if we can bite off
21 one piece of this, and we bite off grouper snapper, it's a
22 pretty good walk for us, and it accomplished the majority of --
23 It accomplishes a lot of improvement in the area where we're
24 having the biggest challenges, but, if the people that are
25 smarter than me can come up with a better terminology, I would
26 be okay with that.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I've got quite the list here. Ms. Boggs,
29 you're next, and then General Spraggins, and then Andy
30 Strelcheck, and I've got you on the list.

31
32 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Dyskow, I appreciate the
33 motion, but it would seem to me like this council needs to, kind
34 of like with the data collection, come up with a program, and
35 you kind of specified, at a minimum, what we need to look at,
36 but I think we need to prioritize what we would like to see in
37 the program and then allow the council to work with NMFS and the
38 five states, but this, to me, is asking them to develop the
39 program, and that's kind of like passing the buck, and I don't
40 think that's what we need to do. I think this council needs to
41 take the responsibility, because we're the ones that are looking
42 for the program, and we need to set out what we would like in
43 the program and then discuss how we get the program, whether
44 it's a license or a permit.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Dyskow, for clarity, and maybe for part of
47 Susan's question, and, when you say that these groups work with
48 the council staff, are you suggesting that then they bring that

1 back to this committee to deliberate and debate, which might
2 curb some concerns?

3
4 **MR. DYSKOW:** Absolutely. I am respectful of Susan's comments,
5 and I had the same comments, but, at some point, the people that
6 are going to implement this are going to have to get their hands
7 around this and go forward, discuss it amongst themselves, at
8 the state level, at the council staff level, at the NMFS level,
9 bring it back to us, and then we can provide that input, but I
10 don't think we, at this table, are qualified to develop this
11 system, because it involves so many moving parts, particularly
12 at the state level, and they're the ones that have to do it, and
13 so I would like to have that level of discussion after we get
14 going on this, and then we can provide some input, rather than
15 ask for a bunch of things that they're not able to do, but I
16 agree with what Susan said. I'm just -- Perhaps the timing
17 would be better served if we get started on this first.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. General.

20
21 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am about as
22 confused as I can be of what we're really trying to do here.
23 You know, each one of the states, I think except for
24 Mississippi, pretty much has this data, to a point, and I think
25 you all have some form of it, and I know Louisiana does, to
26 where they can report some of this, and others, and I thought
27 that Alabama and Florida did, but maybe I'm wrong.

28
29 The point is -- Is this something -- Are you trying to get --
30 You know, if we used all reef fish, if we just said we want to
31 use all reef fish, then it was something that we were talking
32 about last night, and the conversation, sitting there, was a
33 possibility of a way of Mississippi -- Of getting a way to where
34 our data is more accurate and is having something on our own
35 license, as a permit, that says do you fish offshore, and this
36 is what you have to do to do it.

37
38 I mean, I'm trying to figure out where we're going with this,
39 and how we're going to get it to work, and I'm not against it.
40 I just don't know how we're going to make it any simpler, unless
41 we let the states do it themselves, and then they could turn
42 around and give them that data.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, General, and, Phil, maybe if we
45 could -- Let me get a couple of comments, and maybe you can
46 address them as we go, because I've got a long list, and,
47 instead of sort of the back-and-forth, maybe we can be a little
48 more efficient. Okay. I will get all of you all on the list.

1 Keep your hands up. Next was Andy.

2
3 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Phil, I really appreciate the intent here, and
4 I think this has been a struggle for us, in terms of what are we
5 trying to accomplish with a permit, and kind of the goals and
6 objectives of that, and I have a number of comments here. I am
7 struggling with the motion, in that we really can't dictate to
8 the states what they do. We can certainly work with them, and,
9 if they're willingly want to come onboard to create this
10 universal license program, then that would certainly be the end
11 goal that I think you're trying to accomplish.

12
13 We don't universally collect this data currently, and there's
14 differences, in terms of the license programs for each state,
15 and then Texas, I don't think, has a snapper-grouper-related
16 specific permit, and so I see a lot of challenges with being
17 able to even kind of accomplish this, but certainly I'm
18 interested in kind of trying.

19
20 The South Atlantic approached this from a little bit different
21 angle, in that they set up a technical working group with the
22 council, and brought in the state experts and others from MRIP
23 S&T to help with their federal permit, you know, process. The
24 difference, over there, is that, with the exception of the State
25 of Florida, there's not these specific snapper grouper license
26 programs, and so there's definitely some differences.

27
28 Then the last comment I will make is just simply that the
29 license itself does not provide fishing effort, catch, or
30 discards, and so I'm a little confused with that sentence, and
31 it almost seems to imply that that would be more of like a state
32 data collection program for all these species, but the license
33 is kind of more the means to the end, in that it would help us
34 to define the universe of anglers and target them for estimating
35 effort, and then the catch and discards would have to be
36 collected through a logbook or some other sampling intercept
37 survey.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Chris.

40
41 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** So I'm just going to make some, I guess, out-loud
42 comments on possibly editing this, for Mr. Dyskow, and you can
43 consider those if you would like. I think, in the beginning of
44 the motion, I would modify it to say something like request
45 council staff develop a white paper to look into developing a
46 universal state-managed offshore landing permit program, and get
47 rid of "recreational fishing license program", because the
48 states already have that.

1
2 I am not making a substitute motion, and I'm just making some
3 out-loud edits that Mr. Dyskow can consider or not, because I
4 think we need a lot of work on this before we go forward, and
5 so, in the current form, I would not vote in favor of this, even
6 though I am in favor of a landing permit for the Gulf, because
7 we need to better identify the user group, and everybody in this
8 room knows that, right, and the effort is the main situation, or
9 think we're trying to solve here, and so, at the end, you don't
10 need to have information on fishing effort, catch, and discards.

11
12 We already have catch and discards from the state reporting
13 systems that are in place. It's the effort that we need to
14 better define in the EEZ for certain species. The snapper
15 grouper complex, that's fine to start with, but I would also
16 suggest that we consider including other species that we think
17 effort may necessarily not be correct, right, and so that's
18 where I'm at, Mr. Dyskow. We could think of other ways to do
19 this, too.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, Mr. Dyskow, since a lot of these -- If
22 you want to head that off, and --

23
24 **MR. DYSKOW:** Personally, I'm amenable to any changes that
25 anybody wants, as long as we keep this simple and meaningful.
26 Let's remember though that we're not creating this information
27 for Louisiana or Alabama or California. It's for NMFS. They
28 need to have this data so that they can manage these fisheries
29 in federal waters, and not necessarily red snapper, but all of
30 the bottom species, all of the reef fisheries, and I'm sorry,
31 and so I know doing this at the state level has meaning, and
32 value, but how do we collaboratively get that information
33 together and put it in a format that NMFS can access, analyze,
34 and use for decision-making processes?

35
36 I won't say it doesn't matter if we have the data at the state
37 level, but we really need to have it at the federal level, at
38 least with these specific species in federal waters, and I don't
39 object to the term "white paper", other than my experience of
40 white papers is they end up in presentations, as opposed to
41 action steps, and so I would prefer that we have a motion that
42 says we want to do this, we're going to do this, here are the
43 people involved, and here are the outcomes that we're looking
44 for.

45
46 If people feel differently, I am amenable to any changes, but
47 that's why I wrote it the way I did, because I put a lot of
48 words in here initially, and I ended up taking them out, but I

1 certainly respect your comments, because they're valid.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, Phil, and, Susan, I've got you on the
4 list, and I've got six others on the list that want to comment
5 to that, and so I'm getting to you. What I'm thinking here,
6 Phil, and I don't want to guide your thoughts at all, but Tom
7 had mentioned this me, and, you know, we have another business
8 coming up, with Andy's motion, where this might actually fit
9 within that recreational motion, Andy, but I don't know, and I
10 don't want to speak for you either, and so there may be an
11 option here, Phil, to think about this a little bit, because I'm
12 getting the consensus that there is support for this, and it's
13 just quite formed yet, and so we might have a little time to do
14 that between now and Other Business, but, also, I want to get to
15 these other folks on the list, and just consider that.

16
17 I don't -- I mean, if people are for this, but the motion is not
18 conveying really what everyone can really get behind, but
19 they're generally for it, you know, we want to get it right, and
20 so, anyway, with that, I will move on to the other people.
21 Dale, go ahead.

22
23 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Dyskow, for bringing this up. I
24 appreciate you starting this discussion, and I agree with a lot
25 of the comments that Chris had, and so I think, if we massage
26 this some, we could get to the point where folks could support
27 it. I support the effort to do it, and I think Chris is exactly
28 right that effort is what we need. The other stuff, we can
29 pretty much get with our methods we've got now and do a pretty
30 good job with.

31
32 The only other point that I want to make about this is I support
33 this concept, and I think most of the states are getting it now,
34 and if we could standardize it amongst the states, where it
35 could be packaged and acceptable, but, before we make the leap
36 to actually do it, I want to get some commitments that, at the
37 end of the day, this data is going to be used, and so I don't
38 want to -- I do like this idea, and I think it's needed, but I
39 want to make sure that we've got some commitments that we're
40 going to use, because I could see trying to use it, at the end
41 of the day, a tough thing, because, basically, right now, we
42 don't know the universe out there, and so we've got to figure
43 out, if we narrow this universe down, are we actually going to
44 poll these people, and use this information, rather than the
45 information that we're using right now, and so that's way far
46 down the road, but I would not support actually implementing
47 anything without a commitment to use it.

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dale, and so I have Susan, Kevin,
2 and Dakus, is the order. Susan, go ahead.

3
4 **MS. BOGGS:** I am going to pass. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kevin.

7
8 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, and so Dale captured much of what I was
9 going to say, was, you know, in terms of universal -- You know,
10 although the states have various data collection programs, and I
11 certainly agree that they cover either all of the reef species,
12 including, of course, grouper snapper, or some portion of them,
13 and, you know, we are -- States have not been successful in
14 being able to have that data utilized in any of the upcoming
15 assessments, outside of state-centric species like grouper and
16 gag, and so that would be certainly something that we would be
17 interested in making sure that, you know, we go through this
18 effort and that it would be used, because this is going to be a
19 heavy lift for this to get done.

20
21 You know, in certain instances, a state would have to -- If the
22 state is going to, you know -- If it's going to be left up to
23 the state to create a license, they have to create a license,
24 and that's a process in and of itself, within each of the
25 states, and so, you know, at least for commercial and the for-
26 hire industry, those are federally permitted, and so the federal
27 government, you know, should pick up a lot of the cost, but, in
28 this case, you know, the fishermen are buying state licenses,
29 and so states might have to pick up some of the cost, and,
30 again, that goes to your point, Dale, about, you know, there
31 needs to be some guarantees that this data is going to be used,
32 because the states are going to have to invest some resources,
33 and those are limited.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kevin. Also, Carrie, and, Dakus,
36 you're next, but Carrie mentioned that the AP made a motion that
37 might help with some of this discussion here, and, in fact,
38 they're pulling it up right now, but just you may want to be
39 looking at that on the board, and, Dakus, go ahead.

40
41 **MR. GEESLIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've got to speak in
42 opposition, as it's currently written, and I am not convinced
43 that we can't get there by some massaging and work, but, as it's
44 currently written, just establishing a licensing program, to
45 Andy's point, and he made this point very well, that
46 establishing a licensing program, in and of itself, doesn't get
47 us to effort, catch, and discards.

1 Now, the states, in and of themselves, are already estimating
2 effort, and we're already estimating landings, and I think this
3 could get us down the road, where we have yet another landings
4 estimate to compare to, and that becomes problematic for us.
5 You know, Texas has been estimating the same way, in the same
6 method, in the same currency, that our allocation was made, and
7 so we do have a little -- There's a rub there for us especially,
8 and, in the spirit of the motion, we're not opposed to a
9 licensing program, identifying the angler universe, but I think
10 there's a misconception that simplifying identifying the angling
11 universe gets you to effort.

12
13 It doesn't, and I'm not convinced that we've fully exhausted the
14 angler registry to the true intent that it was developed. I
15 think there's a way we can continue to work within the angler
16 registry to form up that sampling framework, to ask some
17 screening questions within the survey to identify those folks
18 that are actually fishing for reef fish and use the current
19 tools and resources we have available, without creating yet
20 another mechanism for a technical fix trying to solve a problem.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dakus. We've had certainly a
23 lot of discussion on this item, Mr. Dyskow, and, quite frankly,
24 I'm not sure where we want to go with this, because, you know, I
25 think there's general consensus, but maybe it needs a little
26 massaging, and I don't know, and what is your thoughts, Phil?

27
28 **MR. DYSKOW:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we had some
29 excellent comments here, and I think everybody's input is valid,
30 and it's clear, to me, that a lot of wordsmithing needs to take
31 place to get a, you know, valuable result, and the key here,
32 from my perspective, and, again, I'm not a fishery management
33 expert, and so forgive me, but, over and over and over again, at
34 this meeting, we hear people come to the podium and say
35 recreational fishing is unaccountable.

36
37 Recreational fishing wants to be accountable, and the
38 information that people say we don't provide, or don't have
39 access to in a format that is useful, particularly at the NMFS
40 level, is effort, catch, and discards, and so I want to make
41 sure that we're capturing information that addresses those
42 concerns, because almost every person that comes to that podium
43 is concerned about those three things.

44
45 As I said as a preamble at the beginning, I am not a fishery
46 management expert, and so clearly people that are need to
47 wordsmith this, so we get it in a format that makes sense, and
48 we've had a lot of good information here, and so, to answer your

1 question, and I'm not trying to just digress into nonsense,
2 although it may sound that way, we can either have that
3 discussion now, to adjust, craft, this motion into a meaningful
4 manner, or we can table it and come back at some further stage,
5 where we can do that, but the problem is I don't think we should
6 continue to kick this can down the road.

7
8 We've had too many concerns raised for us to just say we'll
9 study this again, and I don't think we want to study this
10 anymore, and I think we want to start taking positive action
11 towards a favorable outcome, and so I will leave it at that.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, Phil, then I might suggest, and maybe
14 even this meeting -- Tom, you have your hand up, and do you want
15 to comment that we can proceed down that path, maybe even at
16 this meeting today, with a few breaks, considering this AP
17 motion that's up here, considering everyone's comments, and I
18 don't think it's a difficult lift to do that, to get it where it
19 needs to be, if you're agreeable to that, but, Tom, go ahead.

20
21 **DR. FRAZER:** Again, I appreciate the discussion, and I really
22 think it's a helpful one to have, and I see value in having some
23 type of a universal, or standardized, license, and,
24 particularly, that's a problem that we have right now with MRIP,
25 right, for example, but that we don't have all the five states,
26 you know, participating, but, nevertheless, I do think that this
27 falls under the umbrella of the recreational fisheries
28 initiative that Andy wanted to bring back as part of Other
29 Business, right, and so -- But it's a component part of this
30 bigger thing, right, and so my preference would be to table the
31 motion, right, until after we have that discussion as an Other
32 Business item, and then decide what we want to do with it, if
33 that's all right with you, Phil.

34
35 **MR. DYSKOW:** That's certainly all right with me. I'm happy that
36 I'm on the record, as a recreational fishing representative,
37 that says we're not the barrier to this. We want to do this,
38 and we want a favorable outcome, and we realize that we need a
39 lot of people together working on that, and, as long as they're
40 willing to do that, and it takes time, I'm fine with it.

41
42 **DR. FRAZER:** Then I will make a motion to table this motion
43 until we have that discussion in Other Business.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and so the motion to table. Mr.
46 Spraggins is going to -- Kevin, I know you had your --

47
48 **DR. FRAZER:** To table the motion above until we have a

1 discussion on the recreational fishery initiative, the proposed
2 recreational fishery initiative.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, did you want on the proposed recreational
5 initiative?

6
7 **DR. FRAZER:** Sorry. To table the motion above until discussion
8 on the proposed recreational fishery initiative in Other
9 Business.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** General Spraggins is the seconder of that
12 motion, and you're good with that? Okay. Do we have discussion
13 on that? Kevin, was your --

14
15 **MR. ANSON:** I would like to speak, but after we dispense with
16 this motion.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Good. Okay. Chris.

19
20 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** This is just a request, but can staff email us
21 that motion, and then we have it? Just send us an email with
22 that actual motion in it, so we have the language, so we can
23 help work on it.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes. Please, if we can, and that would help
26 craft that better. Okay. We have the motion that is seconded
27 to table this motion until the proposed recreational fishery
28 initiative in Other Business. Is there any opposition to that
29 motion? Okay. Seeing none, the motion carries with no
30 opposition, and so stand by. Before we wrap-up this committee,
31 I guess, Mr. Anson, you have another comment?

32
33 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, and I just wanted to bring up what Phil just
34 said a minute ago, that was brought up in public testimony, and
35 that is that, you know, the private recreational sector is not
36 accountable. They're accountable within the system that is
37 given to them, and, you know, the for-hire guys -- They're
38 accountable in the system that they have, and they wanted to
39 move to a different system, to be more accountable, and so, you
40 know, as we attempted to do, and, again, we may have put a
41 little bit more options on the vehicle than was needed, that,
42 you know, kind of made some people uncomfortable with it, but
43 that's the messaging, as we go forward, is that, you know, we're
44 trying to get to a better place, you know, as we develop a new
45 system, but they are accountable. We just want the
46 accountability to be more efficient, you know, and timeliness
47 and coverage, these types of issues, and so I just wanted to
48 bring that up, but, anyway, thank you.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kevin, and so, Ms. Boggs,
3 were you able to get through the last part of your report? I
4 don't recall. Okay, and so we're good. Okay. If there's no
5 other business that needs to come before the Data Collection
6 Committee report section here -- Seeing none, we'll move on to
7 the next one. It's 9:15, but we'll proceed just a little bit
8 and take a break here, since we're a little bit behind, and
9 we'll get started with the Shrimp Committee, and we'll break
10 when necessary there. Mr. Schieble, are you ready to go for the
11 Shrimp Committee?

12
13 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I am ready. Are you ready?

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead.

16
17 **SHRIMP COMMITTEE REPORT**

18
19 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** The committee adopted the agenda, Tab D, Number
20 1, and the committee then approved the minutes, Tab D, Number 2,
21 of the October 2022 meeting as written.

22
23 Biological Review of the Texas Closure, Tab D, Number 4, Dr.
24 Freeman presented information on the biological review of the
25 Texas closure and conveyed the Shrimp Advisory Panel's motion in
26 support of continuing the Texas Federal Closure in 2023, as seen
27 in Tab D, Number 4(a).

28
29 **The motion was the Committee recommends, and I so move, to**
30 **request that National Marine Fisheries Service continue with the**
31 **Texas federal closure in the coming year, in conjunction with**
32 **the State of Texas Closure in 2023.** That motion carried
33 unanimously.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We have a committee motion on the board,
36 if everyone wants to read that. Is there any discussion on the
37 motion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to that motion?**
38 **No opposition, and the motion carries.** Please proceed, Chris.

39
40 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Okay. The Report on Expanded Sampling of the
41 Fleet for Effort Monitoring in the Gulf Shrimp Fishery, Tab D,
42 Number 5, Dr. Putman, from LGL Ecological Research Associates,
43 presented the final results of the council-funded project
44 Expanded Sampling of the Fleet for Effort Monitoring in the Gulf
45 of Mexico Shrimp Industry, as seen in Tab D, Number 5(a).

46
47 The project concluded that P-Sea WindPlot cannot perform
48 according to requirements of the shrimp industry, council, or

1 NOAA Fisheries. LGL Ecological Research Associates do not
2 recommend further investment in P-Sea WindPlot as a method to
3 record and transmit shrimp vessel positions for calculating
4 effort, while adding that it remains a useful piece of software
5 for navigational purposes. A committee member inquired if a
6 cellular electronic logbook unit was not present with Tests
7 Number 8 through 10. Dr. Putman verified that a cELB unit was
8 not on those vessels.

9
10 Update on NMFS VMS Project, Tab D, Number 6, Mr. Wallace, from
11 the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, presented on the
12 National Marine Fisheries Service's side-by-side pilot testing
13 of cellular vessel monitoring system units and historical cELB
14 units for Gulf shrimp vessels, as seen in Tab D, Number 6.

15
16 The two brands of cVMS units that were tested were ZEN and NEMO,
17 with the NEMO unit being the solar-powered version placed on
18 five shrimp vessels in the second deployment and one unit that
19 was hardwired on a research vessel, also in the first
20 deployment.

21
22 A committee member commented that the NEMO cVMS units failed
23 multiple times and that the ZEN cVMS units did not receive
24 adequate testing, and so the list of pros on Slide 17 does not
25 fully reflect the reality of the National Marine Fisheries
26 Service testing. Mr. Wallace responded that the pros for the
27 NEMO cVMS units were specific to testing of a unit that was
28 plugged into the ship's power, rather than using solar power.

29
30 The committee member then inquired if a version of the NEMO cVMS
31 units, which can be hardwired to the vessel, is on the market.
32 Mr. Wallace responded that there is a version available on the
33 market that has an USB port for power. Another committee member
34 inquired what the advantage would be of moving VMS program
35 administration from the Office of Law Enforcement to National
36 Marine Fisheries Service Office of Science and Technology. Dr.
37 Walter, from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, responded
38 that National Marine Fisheries Service Science and Technology
39 might be better equipped to handle large data transfer and
40 administration, as would be needed for VMS application in the
41 Gulf shrimp industry.

42
43 The committee member then asked if there was a way to upgrade
44 the current cELB units to be compatible with current cellular
45 transmission avenues. Mr. Wallace responded that it was
46 uncertain, but that National Marine Fisheries Service was
47 exploring that feasibility with the company that developed them.
48 Dr. Walter noted that there is likely no manufacturer support if

1 the cELB units are upgraded in order to transmit data.

2
3 The committee then stated that additional information on side-
4 by-side unit testing would be helpful for committee members, for
5 comparison purposes. Dr. Walter noted that, if the cELB units
6 malfunction now, then there is no way to know that until the
7 secure digital cards are returned to National Marine Fisheries
8 Service, which would occur roughly six months after the return
9 of the cards.

10
11 A committee member stated that he understands the need for
12 additional testing, but has concerns over the range of devices
13 to be tested. He added that development of the draft framework
14 action should continue, with results of further testing
15 informing council decisions. He noted that the results of the
16 P-Sea WindPlot pilot study might necessitate removal of
17 Alternative 3.

18
19 Another committee member inquired how many replacement cELB
20 units are available for replacement of any units that may have
21 malfunctioned onboard vessels, in order to ensure that returned
22 SD cards have usable data. Dr. Walter responded that 899 cELB
23 units are available in storage. However, most of the units
24 would need to be programmed, in order to function.

25
26 The committee member then stated that National Marine Fisheries
27 Service needs to inform the council of the minimum number of
28 units to be placed on the fleet for effort monitoring as well as
29 for bycatch monitoring. Dr. Walter added that the random sample
30 of vessels carrying a cELB unit was always intended to be
31 redrawn, which has not occurred. He stated that 60 percent of
32 landings used to be captured by cELB coverage, and now roughly
33 40 percent of landings are captured.

34
35 A committee member commented that the process of having SD cards
36 sent to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission for data
37 processing was intended to be an interim plan, lasting only one
38 to two years. However, this endeavor is now over two years,
39 with it seeming likely that another two years may be needed.
40 The committee member stated that he could not guarantee that the
41 commission could continue this endeavor for that length of time.

42
43 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to suspend action on**
44 **the draft shrimp framework action until National Marine**
45 **Fisheries Service conducts side-by-side testing of cELB units**
46 **with the following cellular units and other cellular units on a**
47 **minimum of five shrimp vessels for the full length of an average**
48 **offshore trip and presents the results after the raw data is run**

1 through the new National Marine Fisheries Service shrimp effort
2 algorithm: 1)the Woods Hole NEMO unit that is hardwired to the
3 vessel; 2)the Atlantic Radio Telephone ZEN VMS LTE; and 3)the
4 Nautic Alert Insight X3. The motion carried with two in
5 opposition.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We'll stop there. Thank you, Mr.
8 Schieble. We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion
9 on this motion? Andy and then Susan.

10
11 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So I spoke, in committee, about my concerns
12 about suspending action on the draft framework, and I fully
13 recognize that we would not necessarily make significant
14 progress on this action during the testing phase, but I still
15 see value in keeping this open for staff to work on the
16 framework action, as this program develops and testing is done.

17
18 John Walter and I have spent quite a bit of time, over the last
19 couple of days, trying to think through some options,
20 communicating with industry about a possible phase-in of the new
21 program, and we're prepared to talk about that, and I think,
22 after this motion, as well as I have floated some ideas for the
23 actual alternatives in the amendment that I think would at least
24 address some of the industry's concerns, I can give us some
25 options to consider, and so my preference is not to suspend
26 action. I am fully supportive of the side-by-side testing
27 promoted in this alternative.
28

29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Ms. Boggs.

30
31 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, and that's what I was going to ask about, is
32 do we want to suspend the motion, or do we just want to --
33 Again, I mean, Andy said a lot of what I was about to say. If
34 we're going to do this testing, I don't think we want to suspend
35 the motion, if there's things that we can continue to be working
36 on, and then maybe they come together at the end, but I just
37 don't want it to get pushed to the bottom of the list, and I
38 would rather not suspend the action.
39

40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom.

41
42 **DR. FRAZER:** Again, what I think the concern was, and I'm not on
43 that committee, but I tried to listen, you know, and work
44 through it, and it's not necessarily that there's opposition to
45 continuing to work on the document, the background, but it's,
46 you know, bringing that information continually back to the
47 committee without significant progress, and so, to both Andy's
48 point and your point, I'm not sure you want to, you know, have a

1 direct action that says don't work on this document, and I do
2 think you want to work on it in the background, but I don't
3 think you want to spend an inordinate amount of time, in
4 committee or in Full Council, discussing something where you're
5 not going to make a ton of progress. There's still a lot of
6 work to do.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, to that point, Susan?

9

10 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, yes, and, to that point, I failed to mention
11 that I would like to hear what Andy and John Walter have been
12 working on over there, but, to your point, Tom, yes, I agree
13 that we don't need to see it at every council meeting, and I was
14 kind of waiting for the discussion to go around the table, and
15 so I don't know if we need to amend it in a way that is to allow
16 staff, if you will, to continue working on it, but the council
17 doesn't need to see it until -- Do we say -- You know, I don't
18 know how you would word it, if I made a substitute motion, which
19 would, you know, allow staff to continue working on it, with the
20 IPT, and then the council would like to see it once the side-by-
21 side testing has been completed, and I don't know how to frame
22 it. I just don't want the staff to have to just stop.

23

24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy and then Chris. Go ahead, Chris.

25

26 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** So, Andy, I was going to offer a friendly
27 amendment to the motion, but do you want to speak before I do
28 that?

29

30 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I don't think you can amend it. I think we
31 have to do a substitute motion.

32

33 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** All right. Then I will --

34

35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That's fine. However you want to do that, but,
36 Andy, did you --

37

38 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I was going to offer a substitute motion.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right.

41

42 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I will let you go first.

43

44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks for teeing it up. So just I would say -
45 - Let's see. **The committee recommends -- Well, I guess we**
46 **wouldn't have to recommend by the committee, and so the motion**
47 **would be the council recommends -- The council recommends, and**
48 **then grab all the text from above, starting with "NMFS conduct"**

1 and then all the way down, and grab the -- Then just take out
2 the "s" on "conducts", and, if I get a second, I can explain it.

3
4 **MR. GILL:** Seconded.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. It's seconded by Mr. Gill.

7
8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So this leaves it open-ended, like we were just
9 discussing, right, and we're not telling staff when to bring it
10 back, what to be working on at this point, and they can be free
11 to, obviously, continue working on the amendment, and I fully
12 agree with the comments that we don't need to have a Shrimp
13 Committee meeting unless there is substantial progress being
14 made on the actual amendment itself.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Any other comments or
17 discussion regarding the substitute motion? Also, just like all
18 the others, and not specific to this motion, but, as you can
19 see, we're quickly piling things up on the staff here, and so,
20 you know, even if it's not suspended, as it looks like where
21 we're going here, you know, when it gets -- When we get to it,
22 it's going to be something we're going to need to carefully
23 prioritize and bring back to you all, and so if there's no other
24 -- Chris, go ahead. You want to make a second substitute
25 motion? Okay. Go ahead.

26
27 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I would like to make a second substitute motion
28 that reads: The council recommends to continue action on the
29 draft shrimp framework action after NMFS fully conducts side-by-
30 side testing, and then you can copy the rest of it.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, Chris. Hold on. You may have to repeat
33 that again, Chris.

34
35 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** The council recommends --

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, hold on. They're trying to catch up
38 here. Hold on just a second.

39
40 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** So the council recommends to continue action on
41 the draft shrimp framework action after National Marine
42 Fisheries Service completes side-by-side testing, and then rest
43 of the document.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Hold on, Chris. I think we actually -- We're
46 getting some help here, Chris. Hold on. Chris, one more time,
47 please.

1 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** They've got it there, and so the council
2 recommends to continue action on the draft shrimp framework
3 action after National Marine Fisheries Service completes side-
4 by-side testing, and then copy all the rest. Completes, and not
5 conducts. Completes, and so, after the testing is done, then we
6 get it back. Then just copy "of cELB units" and the rest of the
7 way down. Once we get a second, I can further explain this.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Just one second, and we'll finish getting that
10 up there.

11
12 **MR. GILL:** A point of order, Mr. Chairman. If I read this
13 correctly, and correct me if I'm wrong, this is identical, with
14 different wording, to the original motion, and, therefore, it's
15 out of order. There's no difference, that I see, between the
16 original motion, to which Andy proposed a substitute, and this
17 motion, and we cannot duplicate that original motion.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Schieble, to that point?

20
21 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** My interpretation was the original one says to
22 suspend action on the document, which I'm asking to continue
23 action on the document, but on a certain time scale, which is
24 after side-by-side testing is completed, where the original
25 motion says, "until National Marine Fisheries Service conducts
26 the side-by-side testing", and it doesn't say completing it.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and so, Ms. Boggs, is it to this point of
29 order that we're discussing here? Is it to the motion, but Bob
30 called a point of order to -- Mara, I might turn to you, and is
31 it the chairman's role to decide if that is a valid question?
32 All right. Then I would say, yes, it's a valid second
33 substitute motion, Bob, and we can vote. If you're unhappy with
34 that, then we can vote that down, if there's enough substantive
35 change there to merit the second substitute motion.

36
37 **MR. GILL:** I have been wanting to do this forever, and so I
38 request that we -- I have forgotten what the wording is, but to
39 reconsider the chairman's decision. Now, that has come very
40 particular voting criteria that I don't recollect, and, Mara, if
41 you break out the book.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bob, I would remind everybody that we've got a
44 lot of ground to cover. J.D., is it to this point of order,
45 while Mara is pulling out her Roberts Rules book?

46
47 **MR. DUMAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's clear, to me, the
48 original motion says to suspend, and Chris's doesn't.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, J.D. Andy, to that point?
3
4 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, I don't know if this out of order, but do
5 we have a second, and can we speak to the motion at this point?
6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, no, and, yes, we do have a second. Mr.
8 Broussard seconded that.
9
10 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right. So, given that we're in limbo, in
11 terms of how we're proceeding, can we speak to it or no?
12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, we -- Technically, we have a point of
14 order on the table, and so we've got to suspend all discussion.
15
16 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Okay. Come back to me, if I can speak to it.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Actually, that's a great point, and I
19 guess can we take a break, during the point of order, while we
20 go through Roberts Rules? Well, I will take my chair's
21 prerogative to say that we take a break. It's 9:35, and we will
22 meet promptly at 9:50 to continue this discussion.
23
24 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We'll get going, and, if you recall, the point
27 of order and challenging the chair's decision here, and Mr. Gill
28 has something he would like to say, and so I will recognize you,
29 Mr. Gill.
30
31 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and apparently there's a
32 solution to the problem, and, to facilitate that, I would like
33 to withdraw my appeal of the ruling of the chair.
34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Gill. We'll discuss
36 why that is the way here, but, anyway, okay, and so then I
37 believe we have a valid second substitute motion. Tom, did you
38 have a comment to that?
39
40 **DR. FRAZER:** I think part of the reason we got into the
41 situation that we were in is because there was probably not
42 clarity on the second substitute motion, and so, Chris, if
43 you're amenable, maybe I can suggest a friendly alternative, or
44 a friendly amendment, to this, and so I sent it over to staff,
45 and so maybe we'll put it up on the board.
46
47 Let's make sure it's right, and so the council recommends to
48 bring the draft shrimp framework action essentially back to the

1 council after NMFS has completed the side-by-testing, and I
2 think that captured where you wanted to go, right, Chris?

3

4 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Yes.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Broussard, are you okay with that? Okay.
7 Any more discussion on this second substitute motion? Dr.
8 Walter.

9

10 **DR. WALTER:** Thanks, and I think we're converging on something
11 that is useful to us. One thing I wanted to note is that we do
12 have a document that we offered up, or a plan, that has a
13 specific timeframe for when we would get to new system, and
14 that's a two-year timeframe for testing, implementation, and
15 then actually installing vessels on volunteer vessels, and
16 that's part of an earlier -- But part of that two-year plan is
17 contingent on multiple moving parts actually happening, and, in
18 this case, the first step is this testing, and it's going to
19 really require substantial support from the industry to allow
20 those at least five vessels to get VMS on, and we also think
21 it's got to happen before the end of this year, in order for the
22 remaining parts to work on time.

23

24 I think the clock is ticking on getting a new system in place,
25 and we have some pretty clear mandates that require the agency
26 to do this, and I think it behooves this council to stick to a
27 fairly rigorous timeframe for it to happen, and the caveat I
28 will make is that, if this testing does not succeed, like if we
29 don't get all five vessels, or if it is inconclusive, I don't
30 think it can delay action by this council.

31

32 It certainly won't be -- The agency will have to do something,
33 and it may not delay action that the agency needs to take, and
34 so I think this council is going to have to be prepared that, if
35 it doesn't provide the data, or that the -- You have to take
36 management action with the best available information,
37 "availability" being key there, and so what I just want to make
38 sure that we're clear on is, one, that we're going to hopefully
39 get strong industry support to make this happen, that we get
40 this testing done before the end of this year, and that that
41 would allow for that plan of finding something new to be in
42 place by 2025. I think I just want that ambition to be realized
43 and shared by all of us, as part of it. Thanks.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, John. All right. I'm not seeing
46 any other discussion on the second substitute motion, and so --
47 **Well, let me just see first, and is there any opposition to this**
48 **motion?** Good. Well, maybe we got it right, Mr. Gill. Thank

1 you. Okay. **The motion carries with no opposition.** Okay. I
2 don't recall where we were in your report now, but let's see.
3 We'll find that and go ahead.

4
5 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** We should be up to the draft framework action.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, that's it.

8
9 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Is everyone ready? Okay. Draft Shrimp Framework
10 Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection
11 Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery, Tab D, Number 7,
12 Dr. Walter, from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center,
13 presented a brief verbal update on congressional funding for
14 shrimp vessel position data reporting.

15
16 National Marine Fisheries Service was provided \$850,000 that, in
17 consultation with the council and shrimp industry stakeholders,
18 is to be used to continue the development and implementation of
19 the newly approved ELB program that archives vessel position and
20 automatically transmits scientific shrimp fishing effort data
21 via cellular service to National Marine Fisheries Service. He
22 noted that 20 percent of those funds are directed to overhead
23 costs, leaving a remaining \$663,000. He stated that funds could
24 be used for early adoption of cellular VMS for roughly 200 Gulf
25 shrimp vessels.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Chris -- John, we'll -- I know John wants to
28 brief us on that, with a little more detail, in a short
29 presentation, but we'll take that up -- Let's go ahead and
30 finish this report, and then we'll do it there, John, but just
31 sort of a heads-up that that's coming.

32
33 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Roger that. Dr. Simmons inquired if additional
34 information for a proposed spending plan would be prepared for a
35 forthcoming Shrimp AP meeting in mid-May 2023. Dr. Walter
36 replied that National Marine Fisheries Service was looking for
37 feedback from the council, during this meeting, on whether an
38 early adoption of cellular VMS was a reasonable path forward
39 with those funds.

40
41 A committee member asked for more information on the timeline
42 for spending of these funds and about the source of funding for
43 additional testing of cVMS units on Gulf shrimp vessels. Dr.
44 Walter responded that the funds are allocated for use in Fiscal
45 Year 2023. He added that a component of cVMS testing could
46 potentially be folded into an early adoption program.

47
48 Another committee member inquired if National Marine Fisheries

1 Service could use funds to hire personnel to fill the role of
2 the commission in data processing of SD cards. Dr. Walter
3 responded that the main issue is having a server to store the
4 data and that those funds possibly could be used for that
5 purpose. However, National Marine Fisheries Service would need
6 to consider if that would constitute a duplicative use of funds.

7
8 Dr. Freeman then reviewed the purpose and need statements and
9 the alternatives in the draft shrimp framework action, as seen
10 in Tab D, Number 7(a)(ii), along with related motions from the
11 AP. A committee member inquired what types of devices would
12 fall under Alternative 3. Mr. Strelcheck responded that the
13 devices could be considered a cVMS, but not type-approved, as
14 would be the case under Alternative 2.

15
16 Another committee member inquired why a minimum number of
17 position fixes of 14,400 was set under Alternatives 2 and 3, as
18 that would represent 100 days of ten-minute pings. Dr. Freeman
19 responded that minimum storage of 100 days of ten-minute pings
20 would ensure that there was more than adequate memory to store
21 data for long trips prior to data transmission. Am I pausing
22 here for a report from Dr. Walter, or are we still going?

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Just if you would just go ahead and finish it
25 out, and then we'll go ahead at the end.

26
27 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Update on Shrimp Effort Estimation Model and 2021
28 Gulf Shrimp Fishery Effort, Tab D, Number 8, Mr. Dettloff, from
29 the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, provided an update on
30 the shrimp effort estimation model, as seen in Tab D, Number
31 8(a), and noted that his presentation incorporates feedback from
32 a workshop held in February 2023 and from both the council's
33 Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting and Shrimp AP
34 meeting in March 2023. A committee member asked for more
35 information on the effort scaling. Mr. Dettloff referred to
36 Appendix 2 in his presentation, where effort is grouped by
37 zones.

38
39 Dr. Nance, the SSC Chair, reviewed the SSC's feedback on the
40 shrimp effort estimation model, as seen in Tab B, Number 8(a).
41 Ms. Bosarge, the Shrimp AP Chair, reviewed the AP's feedback on
42 the shrimp effort estimation model, as seen in Tab D, Numbers
43 4(a) and 8(b). She noted that the AP expressed concerns over
44 the types of models which could be explored in Southeast Data,
45 Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) 87 if total effort is generated
46 as a combined function of brown, white, and pink shrimp and is
47 not also generated for each individual shrimp species.

1 Then we have the remaining items from the summary of the
2 November 15, 2022, Tab D, Number 8(b), and March 2023 Shrimp
3 Advisory Panel Meetings, Tab D, Number 4(a). Ms. Bosarge noted
4 that the AP recommended National Marine Fisheries Service
5 purchase a dedicated server for housing shrimp data within the
6 Southeast Fisheries Science Center, using the congressional
7 funds discussed earlier by Dr. Walter. She added that the AP
8 was appreciative of the presentation at its March 2023 meeting
9 from Dr. Rubino on NOAA Fisheries' draft National Seafood
10 Strategy and that the Gulf shrimp industry would be sending a
11 letter containing related concerns and recommendations on the
12 draft National Seafood Strategy. Mr. Chair, this concludes my
13 report.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Schieble. Mr. Anson.

16
17 **MR. ANSON:** It might have been a little bit more appropriate in
18 a previous section, and so I apologize, but I sent in a motion
19 to staff, and it pertains to the Gulf shrimp effort and the new
20 model. **The motion is to request the Southeast Fisheries Science
21 Center develop effort estimates for brown, white, and pink
22 shrimp, using new shrimp effort model estimation procedures.**

23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Kevin. Is there a second to
25 this motion? Mr. Schieble seconds. Is there discussion on this
26 motion? Kevin, do you want to --

27
28 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, and so Leann talked about it a little bit when
29 she came up to represent the AP's comments, but, essentially,
30 they are in the process of developing a new effort model to
31 estimate the effort, for multiple uses for the shrimp fishery,
32 but, seeing that it's a new model, there is some concern, maybe,
33 that it might not capture everything, and so potentially there
34 would be the benefit of developing individual estimates for each
35 of those remaining shrimp species.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kevin. Any other comments regarding
38 the motion, or discussion? Okay. We'll go ahead and take a
39 vote on this motion then. **Is there any opposition to this
40 motion? Seeing none, the motion carries with no opposition.**

41
42 Before we get to Dr. Walter's presentation here, is there any
43 other business that needs to come before this committee? Dr.
44 Freeman.

45
46 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did want to note
47 that there was an error in the second line up from the bottom of
48 page 1, where it says, "shrimp vessels in the first deployment",

1 and it should say "the second deployment". I will make that
2 correction and send it over to admin, so they're copied, and
3 then, if there are no other comments, I can introduce Dr.
4 Walter's document.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Is there any other comments? Andy.

7

8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I think it's appropriate after Dr. Walter
9 speaks, but I do have a motion for a suggested modification for
10 the language in Alternative 2 and 3 that I think will bring some
11 clarification, given the AP comments.

12

13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. So you want to bring that up after, and
14 so just remind me again when we get there, please. Before you
15 go, Dr. Freeman, John is prepared, and, you know, obviously,
16 there's a substantial amount of funds to spend, and they wanted
17 to get our advice and input. We haven't seen this yet, or had
18 time to do that, and so, obviously, John, we might need a little
19 bit of time to fully vet this, and maybe, before the next
20 council meeting, I might suggest that, if this needs to be
21 considered by our AP, that would be something that would be
22 probably of value to you as well, and so we'll think about all
23 of that as we move forward, but, Dr. Freeman, go ahead, if you
24 want to set the stage for that.

25

26 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the council
27 recalls, during the Shrimp Committee, there was further
28 discussion regarding the use of the congressional funds, in
29 terms of the timeline, as well as interest in seeing a proposed
30 spend plan, recognizing that the language referenced NMFS
31 working on that, in consultation with the council and industry
32 stakeholders, and so NMFS has prepared a brief document related
33 to that, and I believe it's been sent around to the council
34 members, and, Bernie, if you could also pull that up, as Dr.
35 Walter leads us through it. Thank you.

36

37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right, Dr. Walter. It looks like it's up
38 there whenever you're ready.

39

40 **DR. WALTER:** Okay. Thanks, and I just want to thank a number of
41 people who have helped out with this. I know our staff and
42 Andy's staff have been working on this a lot, to try to draft
43 it, and a number of other people, to put some eyes on it and
44 give some great comments, and it really is our intent to meet
45 the consultation with the council on this, as part of our FY23
46 omnibus mandate here, and we've got -- I put the three mandates,
47 of which are really the things that are the purpose and need
48 behind this, but I think also is lighting the fire a bit, in

1 terms of us having to get something in place and have a timeline
2 for how that's going to get in place, and I think it's really
3 important for this council to have a path forward, with a
4 timeline for when it's going to achieve that, because that sets
5 kind of the record that this is something that's going to
6 happen, and when, and I think that's important, I know from our
7 standpoint and the agency, and I think having clarity on that,
8 for everyone involved, is also something that will be helpful.

9
10 The proposal is to use the congressionally-allocated funds to
11 implement a three-part approach to achieve a modernized
12 electronic location reporting program to monitor shrimp trawling
13 effort in the Gulf of Mexico by 2025. We would like to be able
14 to get that in place, so that is then what is on the water by
15 2025.

16
17 There will be three initiatives here. The first would be a
18 phase-out of the 3G ELB system, and so we would keep it going
19 for the next two years, providing the additional support needed,
20 in terms of antennas, if there is new cords or cables that are
21 needed, and possibly some new reprogramming of units, if people
22 need to change units out, and there will be a minor amount of
23 that reprogramming, and we really wouldn't be able to reprogram
24 all 899 units.

25
26 This would be only a short-term fix, and it will be supported by
27 the industry boot-on-the-ground, to ensure that the chip return
28 rate stays high, as well as any necessary cables or antennas
29 that get replaced, and so that would basically mean that the
30 units that I held up would have a two-year remaining lifespan.

31
32 Then the second phase of it would be testing, which would be the
33 side-by-side testing of the VMS units outlined in the motion
34 that we just saw. The key thing here was that we would need
35 industry participation to ensure that it happens, and we need a
36 timeframe under which it would need to be completed, which would
37 be the end of 2023. That timeframe is necessary to support the
38 advancement of the rulemaking, because, right now, the
39 rulemaking is held up, because it needs that information, but we
40 can't hold up rulemaking forever.

41
42 However, if we get decent participation, we can probably get
43 these units on the vessels and test them. During this time
44 period, NMFS would pay for the installation of the devices and
45 the monthly fees for those vessels for the testing period, and
46 that would come out of some of the \$850,000.

47
48 Then the third phase would be the install phase, and this is the

1 early-adopter phase, where vessels could, following the testing
2 -- We would purchase, install, and deploy, NMFS would, VMS or
3 electronic logbook devices, and they're essentially synonymous,
4 but they would be the devices that were shown to work in the
5 testing.

6
7 Vessel owners could say, hey, sign us up, and we'll get one of
8 these, and NMFS will pay, and they would just start collecting
9 that data. That would start to backfill the declining number of
10 the 3G ELBs that we're getting and start to get the fleet into
11 what will eventually be the modernized data collection approach.
12 Right now, we could say we could probably do it on about 100 to
13 200 vessels. Originally, we said 200. However, we're going to
14 have to use some of the \$850,000 for the testing phase. We did
15 not originally anticipate that, and so it would really
16 essentially be we could outfit as many vessels as we can, up to
17 the money running out, and this would help us to meet the
18 mandates that we have, as well as start the process of the fleet
19 getting up to the modern system. We would pay for the
20 installation and monthly fees, up until 2025, or if the money
21 runs out.

22
23 How that actual installation process and the testing gets sorted
24 out, we're going to have to work the details out of whether we,
25 as NMFS, take that on or whether we have a contract, and
26 contract that, or we work with another partner, like Gulf
27 States, to potentially develop a contract for it, and sometimes
28 that winds up being a little more streamlined approach to being
29 able to do that, and we'll work those details out later.

30
31 This is some of the details of how this would work, and then it
32 should support the framework alternatives that Andy will -- The
33 revised potential one for 3 that will be as part of the
34 amendment, and it will support both of them, because we'll test
35 type-approved VMS units, and we'll also -- We could test
36 something else that might not be type-approved. The door is
37 open, if there is another electronic logbook advice that might
38 meet the soon-to-be-presented Alternative 3.

39
40 The major difference is really going to be how that data is
41 transmitted, whether it goes through the existing VMS system or
42 whether the data goes to the Science Center.

43
44 Now, for the time period of testing and installation, those two
45 phases, there, the data would go directly to the Science Center
46 from the VMS manufacturers, and that's a key distinction, in the
47 sense that we can handle a small amount of the data coming in,
48 and we can get it there, but that won't be a long-term solution

1 to large volumes of repeated data.

2
3 Then I think we can scroll down, and the last part is the
4 timeline, and I think that's a critical thing for this council
5 to see, and put that on the record, to at least tacitly say
6 that, yes, this timeline is achievable, and I think, as our
7 chair said, we will be bringing this towards the AP, to a
8 meeting with the AP, top meet our other condition of the omnibus
9 funding, which is to work with the industry, and then I think we
10 can bring back the final version of this to the June council
11 meeting.

12
13 We may need to proceed with some aspects of it prior to that, so
14 that we can ensure that we're motivating that funding, and that
15 just might be -- But it's good to get at least some feedback
16 here, and so that concludes my presentation here, and I'm happy
17 to take questions. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any questions for Dr. Walter? Dr.
20 Frazer, and Bob will be next.

21
22 **DR. FRAZER:** So I appreciate, again, that you guys have taken a
23 fair amount of time, over the last couple of days, to develop a
24 spend plan, and I also under the sensitivity, the time sensitive
25 nature, of kind of the actions that are involved there, and so
26 what I'm wondering, based on your last statement, or sentence,
27 was that you need to work with the industry, and that's part of
28 the mandate, or the charge, here, and we need to do that sooner
29 than later, and so does -- Carrie, do we need a motion to direct
30 staff, because I think what I see here is that there's a need to
31 engage the AP, the Shrimp AP, in short order, right, so that
32 they can actually review the spend plan, with some limited
33 council involvement, right, so you can move forward, and is that
34 correct?

35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John.

37
38 **DR. WALTER:** Well, one we need -- It would be very helpful, and
39 beneficial, for the council to say that they think that this
40 plan is something that they could endorse, and maybe you don't
41 need to formally endorse it now, but you could say, yes, we are
42 generally onboard and please work with our AP to flesh out the
43 final details.

44
45 **DR. FRAZER:** If that's the case, let's go -- I just sent a
46 motion to staff, and we'll pull it up, and we might modify it a
47 little bit, and so the motion, as it's written currently, is the
48 council directs staff to convene the Shrimp AP and appropriate

1 **council members for consultation with NMFS** -- Can you read that,
2 C.J., until I get my throat cleared up?

3
4 **DR. SWEETMAN:** The council directs staff to convene the Shrimp
5 AP and appropriate council members for a consultation with NMFS
6 on the proposed spend plan of congressional funds for the Gulf
7 of Mexico shrimp fishing effort.

8
9 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you. I'm better now.

10
11 **MR. GILL:** Seconded.

12
13 **DR. FRAZER:** So, but to John's point, right, I mean, I think the
14 record will reflect the fact, after perhaps some discussion
15 here, that the council sees this as a potentially-viable spend
16 plan, right, and they're discussing it through this mechanism,
17 or moving it forward, and would that suffice for you?

18
19 **DR. WALTER:** My one concern is that the AP was very strongly not
20 in favor of many of the actions and options in the spend plan
21 and that we could get back to the AP and find that the AP
22 rejects it outright, and I think that would not -- That would
23 put the brakes on it, and I think that's not a position that the
24 agency wants to get stalled in, and so I would like -- If there
25 was some direction from the council to their AP, in terms of
26 ensuring that there is a process forward for finding a solution,
27 and I think that's -- If there was a way to strengthen that, so
28 that we don't run and hit the brakes in the AP, and that's my
29 concern, given that we were at an impasse, leaving the AP
30 meeting.

31
32 **DR. FRAZER:** That's a tricky one, right, because we have to have
33 a transparent process, where all of the stakeholders are
34 engaged, and I don't think that anybody can say definitely,
35 right, that, if there was an impasse, you know, the agency can
36 just do what it wants to do, and I think that would not look
37 well, right, and so, I mean, the onus is on both groups,
38 obviously, to -- There's some negotiation that's going to go on
39 here, you know, and so I don't see a way, in this motion, to
40 direct the agency to continue with that spend plan without some
41 support from the AP and the industry group and the council, and
42 so, if you think you can word that, let me know, but go ahead,
43 Andy.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, go ahead.

46
47 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I guess, repeating a little bit of what John
48 said, I mean, to the extent that we get at least a thumbs-up or

1 thumbs-down today, and maybe not a full endorsement, recognizing
2 that you want the AP to consider this, that will be useful.

3
4 What I will emphasize, and I think where I am concerned with the
5 advisory panel discussion in March, is that the congressional
6 language is very explicit in saying begin the development and
7 implementation of the newly-approved electronic logbook program,
8 and some of the motions and recommendations that we were getting
9 from the advisory panel previously were kind of taking us back
10 to the existing ELB program, in some, you know, modified or
11 older fashion, and that is certainly not the direction that
12 we've been given by Congress in the mandate, and so we want to
13 ensure, obviously, that we're looking forward, and our intent
14 here is to open the door to help with the framework action, test
15 these cellular VMS devices, test any other cellular ELB device
16 that wouldn't be under that type-approval with the VMS, program,
17 and, obviously, bring those results back to you with approval,
18 but we need to consult with the AP, and I certainly appreciate
19 that we've got to negotiate, and navigate, that with them in an
20 upcoming meeting.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Andy. Carrie and then Chris.

23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so
25 I guess, in just looking at the motion the council just passed,
26 regarding recommending bringing the draft framework action back
27 after the side-by-side testing is being done, and looking at the
28 proposed timeline, John, that you all were talking about, I
29 don't know that it's practical to have this -- You propose that
30 it's going to be implemented in rulemaking in 2024, and I assume
31 that's late 2024, because we're waiting on the test results to
32 bring the document back, and that's likely to not occur until
33 2024, and then get going on the amendment, with the rulemaking
34 after that, and so I think we just need to think about that a
35 little bit more and make sure we have some flexibility there.

36
37 My other concern, and I was at the AP meeting, is I think we
38 need -- If we're going to have this meeting, we need the
39 appropriate leadership from the agency there that can clearly
40 speak on what are the AP's recommendations, yes or no, and they
41 spent a lot of time trying to think about how to use those
42 funds, and I'm not sure, because I haven't studied this as much
43 as I probably should have, but I'm not sure that it really
44 captures many of the recommendations that they made during that
45 meeting, and, if those aren't possible, I think we need to be
46 clear with them that those are not possible, and we didn't have
47 anybody, I don't think, at the AP meeting that was prepared to
48 do that, and so I think we need to have leadership at this

1 meeting that can speak and be clear on what we can do and not do
2 with this funding to the AP. Thank you.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** To that point, Andy, and, Chris, I've still got
5 you on the list.

6
7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Absolutely, and I'm, obviously, in St. Pete,
8 right across the water from you, and so, as long as you can
9 coordinate with my travel schedule, I will make sure that I'm
10 there and present at the meeting and work with John and his team
11 on who needs to be there.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Chris.

14
15 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I was just going to speak in support of,
16 obviously, moving this to the AP as well, and they're the
17 advisory panel for this council, and they can make
18 recommendations and comments, and possibly motions, to come back
19 to us, but it doesn't necessarily mean that this council will
20 vote in favor of whatever comes back, and it's an advisory
21 panel, and so it needs to be vetted to a portion of the
22 industry, but I don't necessarily feel like this council is
23 directed by the AP, and it's just an advisory panel.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Right. Exactly, Chris, and I wanted to bring
26 that up too, and they're certainly advising us, but the sort of
27 buck stops here, with this council, and, Andy, obviously, when
28 you read the omnibus language, it clearly says the council, you
29 know, and NMFS, but, you know, in partnership with those
30 stakeholders, and so, you know, we'll have to consider all of
31 that, and so, Bob, go ahead.

32
33 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so Tom did what I
34 originally wanted to do, but, at any rate, I'm in favor of the
35 motion, because I think we need to think about this a little bit
36 more, and, despite, John, your desire to get direction from the
37 council, I don't think we've had enough time to absorb this
38 proposal.

39
40 I think it's an interesting proposal, and I think it has merit,
41 but there's details in it that I have questions and concerns
42 about, and I just saw it yesterday, or this morning, actually,
43 and that's not enough time to reflect properly. Now, if it had
44 been in the briefing book, I would have been better prepared to
45 have that discussion, but I don't think the council, with that
46 kind of issue at-hand, can give you that thumbs-up or thumbs-
47 down at this meeting, without better consideration, and
48 certainly I can't, although I am favorably disposed, but I've

1 got some questions about how you've phrased some of this and
2 what that really means, before I am willing to buy-off on it,
3 and so I think this vetting, although it conflicts with the
4 desired timeline, is a very important part of this, to
5 understand it and the potential consequences and what it all
6 means, and we have to go through that, even though it may impact
7 the timeline that you're looking for.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Bob. Not seeing any other
10 hands up, we'll go ahead and take up this motion. John.

11
12 **DR. WALTER:** Here, what I'm hearing, and I'm cognizant that the
13 council needs more time with it, and we only presented this
14 today, and so it certainly hasn't had the time, and I outlined
15 the reasons for that, and why it really needs a lot more
16 discussion, part of which happened at this meeting, and during
17 it.

18
19 I would offer some friendly text here that gets to perhaps what
20 Tom had said of do you need more, and I will read it out, and
21 this weaves in the congressional omnibus language, and what I
22 would say is that this would get added to the beginning of the
23 motion. The council recognizes the need to continue the
24 development and implementation of a new approved electronic
25 collection framework soon. That puts a little bit of an
26 imperative, and it says the council recognizes that there is
27 this need to do this, and the council directs staff to convene
28 the AP. It gives the purpose and need and some imperative as to
29 why this motion exists. If there is some general support, I can
30 send that text to staff.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, I'm seeing some nods around the table,
33 and so if you want to send that, and then we can get that up on
34 the board. Kevin, while we're getting that on the board, go
35 ahead.

36
37 **MR. ANSON:** Just I know it was discussed during committee, but
38 refresh my memory, Dr. Walter, about the 2025 end date for
39 phasing out the 3G stuff, and I know you had units on the shelf,
40 like 800 or something, as I recall, and is that -- Am I thinking
41 the same thing, that the 2025 date was assuming that you would
42 have the other units in place and that it would just go away
43 after 2025, but could it be extended beyond 2025? Is there any
44 technical reasons or other?

45
46 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, there would be technical reasons. We, as the
47 agency, would have to support these units, with all of the tech
48 support, all of the reprogramming, and that is not what we see

1 as a long-term sustainable, or economical, strategy, and we want
2 to get a timeline for the phaseout, so that we can then motivate
3 the move towards the mandate, which is a new electronic location
4 reporting program. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, go ahead, and we've got the text up
7 there, and we'll need to take this up fairly soon.

8
9 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and a couple other things. We have, for
10 the \$850,000, a timeline that we need to be spending those
11 funds, right, and I would say just the timeline that we've laid
12 out is a generalized timeline, and it's contingent on a number
13 of factors, like John was saying, the testing being completed by
14 a time certain, the rulemaking being completed by a time
15 certain, allowing industry enough time for whatever those new
16 units are to get installed and operational on vessels.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy, and so we have Tom
19 modifying his motion here, and I don't remember who seconded
20 that motion. Bob did? Okay. Are you okay with the addition of
21 the -- Bob, you're good with that, the addition of that
22 language?

23
24 **MR. GILL:** Well, we probably ought to read it into the record
25 before we do that.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Tom, can you please read that into the record?

28
29 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and so we'll modify the motion to read: **The**
30 **council recognizes the need to continue the development and**
31 **implementation of a new approved electronic data collection**
32 **framework soon. Therefore, direct staff to convene the Shrimp**
33 **AP and appropriate council members for a consultation with NMFS**
34 **on the proposed spend plan of congressional funds for Gulf of**
35 **Mexico shrimp fishing effort.**

36
37 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Tom. I think there needs to
38 be just a little bit of grammar there. Maybe, after "soon", the
39 word "soon".

40
41 **DR. FRAZER:** How about this? **Bernie, just put a period after**
42 **"soon".**

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, that will work.

45
46 **DR. FRAZER:** **Then start off with a new word, to say,**
47 **"Accordingly, the council directs staff" -- There you go.**
48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** The maker of the motion has got that, and it's
2 read into the record, and the seconder is okay with that. I'm
3 not seeing any more discussion on this motion, and is there any
4 opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries with
5 no opposition. Andy, I believe you wanted -- You had a few
6 things you wanted to bring up. Go ahead.

7
8 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and if Bernie can bring up my motion that
9 I sent via email. Do I need to read it?

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, Andy. Please go ahead and read that into
12 the record.

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right. My motion is to modify Action 1,
15 Alternatives 2 and 3 in the draft framework action to the Shrimp
16 FMP as follows: Alternative 2 is implement a cellular vessel
17 monitoring system requirement for the Gulf of Mexico shrimp
18 fishery that provides archived position data compatible with the
19 Science Center's shrimp algorithm. If selected by the Science
20 and Research Director, the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel
21 with a valid or renewable Gulf shrimp moratorium permit would be
22 required to install a type-approved VMS unit (50 CFR 600.1501 of
23 the regulations) that archives vessel position when on a shrimp
24 fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits that data
25 via cellular service to NMFS. Alternative 3 is implement a
26 cellular ELB requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that
27 provides archived position data compatible with the Science
28 Center's shrimp algorithm. If selected by the Science and
29 Research Director, the owner or operator of a shrimp vessel with
30 a valid or renewable shrimp permit would be required to install
31 a NMFS-approved ELB that archives vessel position when on a
32 shrimp fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits
33 those data via cellular service to a non-OLE NMFS server. NMFS-
34 approved ELBs would not be type-approved based on regulations at
35 50 CFR 600.1501. If I can have a second, I will explain the
36 proposed revisions.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Is there a second to Andy's motion?

39
40 **MR. GILL:** I will second for discussion.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Gill. Go ahead, Andy.

43
44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So you don't necessarily have the side-by-side
45 in the framework action, but, in Alternative 2, the two primary
46 changes are the addition of the language that provides
47 compatible data with the Science Center's shrimp algorithm,
48 right, and so we originally were saying, well, it needs to have

1 type approval, but now we're seeing that, based on the testing,
2 it's also important that it produce commensurate data for
3 producing effort estimates.

4
5 The second change was just a clarification in Alternative 2 that
6 it would be a type-approved VMS unit and noting the regulatory
7 requirements that are already in effect under federal
8 regulations.

9
10 Alternative 3 is a little bit different than what is in the
11 framework action. The framework action does speak to the ELB.
12 I added the similar language with regard to incorporation of
13 data compatible with the Science Center's shrimp algorithm. The
14 main changes here are at the end of this alternative, that it's
15 explicitly talking about sending data to a non-Office of Law
16 Enforcement NMFS server and that any ELBs that would be approved
17 under this alternative would not be based on regulations for our
18 cellular VMS devices, to make a distinction between the two, and
19 the reason that's important is because, if it's not going
20 through our cellular VMS requirements, it's not going to go to
21 the -- It's not required to go to the Office of Law Enforcement,
22 but, also, it's not reimbursable under our VMS program.

23
24 I think this is a better distinction between kind of what I've
25 heard, and read from the AP, in terms of what they would hope to
26 accomplish, if we can find something that meets that need
27 relative to what Alternative 2 provides, and so I would offer
28 that for consideration, and I will let others speak to it.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Susan, go ahead, and,
31 Bob, you're next.

32
33 **MS. BOGGS:** So, Andy, help me understand, and you're saying,
34 with Alternative 3, the cELBs would not be type-approved, nor
35 reimbursable, and I don't know what regulation 50 CFR is, and I
36 don't have time to look it up, and so why -- I mean, because, in
37 the former charter boat program, I mean, we had type-approved
38 cELBs, and they were reimbursable.

39
40 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, they weren't -- They were essentially
41 cellular VMS devices, and so we're kind of splitting hairs, in
42 terms of terminology, but what the SEFHIER program had is
43 essentially Alternative 2. You had a cellular VMS that goes
44 through the OLE data system.

45
46 Alternative 3 essentially is a parallel system, right, and so it
47 would be NMFS-approved devices, but it wouldn't be type approval
48 under our VMS requirements, which are very specific

1 requirements, and there would have to be some other type-
2 approval process established, and I did not specify where the
3 data goes, other than it would not be going to law enforcement.

4
5 I think there some administrative challenges with Alternative 3,
6 but, in the interest of what I'm hearing from industry, and in
7 the interest of trying to move this action forward, I think it's
8 really important that we continue to work on this amendment,
9 look at the costs and benefits and the administrative impacts to
10 both the industry as well as the agency, and so I think this
11 makes enough of a distinction between the two to allow that to
12 happen.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Bob.

15
16 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so a clarification on
17 the point that Susan raised, and is the Alternative 3 available
18 for reimbursement or no?

19
20 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Under our regulations with the VMS
21 requirements, it would not be. If there is other mechanisms for
22 reimbursement, like Congress directs us, you know, to have a
23 reimbursement program for this, and provides the funding, then,
24 yes, there could be potential funding available.

25
26 **MR. GILL:** But there's nothing now, just for clarification,
27 because that sets a huge divide between Alternative 2 and 3,
28 does it not, and so, basically, it tilts the table to
29 Alternative 3, if money is the issue, and money is always the
30 issue.

31
32 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, I view Alternative 3 as a clarification
33 to what was previously in there, and Alternative 3 has never had
34 any sort of reimbursable funding associated with it. This just
35 puts a finer point in distinguishing that this would not fall
36 under our type-approval regulations for vessel monitoring
37 systems.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan.

40
41 **MS. BOGGS:** To that point, could some of the congressional
42 funding be used, if Alternative 2 were chosen, to help with that
43 purchasing of those cELBs?

44
45 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and, in fact, Alternative 3 -- Some of
46 that congressional funding could be used as well, if we can
47 identify devices that aren't falling under those VMS type-
48 approval requirements.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dale.
3
4 **MR. DIAZ:** Andy answered my question.
5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any other discussion on this motion?
7 Carrie.
8
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so, just
10 a procedural question, and I guess there were several other
11 proposed recommendations from the AP on the document, and I
12 think Dr. Freeman had to go through those very quickly, and I
13 understand that we're trying to get the meat-and-potatoes here
14 of the alternatives, but I feel like we're going to have to
15 regroup and come back with all of that information, and have the
16 IPT look at those recommendations, and then come forward with a
17 proposal, and so I just -- Is this premature, I guess, and I'm
18 just a little bit concerned about how we've passed this, and we
19 didn't really have time in committee, but now we're coming back
20 to it again, but I will leave it to the council.
21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bob.
23
24 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I share some of those
25 concerns, but, Andy, would you be willing to modify the wording
26 in both alternatives, as recommended by the Shrimp AP, to change
27 "when on a fishing trip" to "while shrimping"? If you
28 recollect, we've been chasing our tail on the definition of
29 "fishing trip" and all that for a long time, and, since the
30 whole purpose of all this is to define the shrimping trip, it
31 seems obvious that that suggestion makes sense, or at least it
32 does to me.
33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy.
35
36 **MR. STRELCHECK:** The language was -- What are you suggesting as
37 a modification?
38
39 **MR. GILL:** On the next-to-last sentence, I think it is on both
40 of them, it says, "when on a fishing trip", and the suggestion
41 is to replace that with "while shrimping".
42
43 **DR. FRAZER:** It's "actively shrimping", Bob.
44
45 **MR. GILL:** Actively shrimping.
46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy.
48

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I am amenable, but I -- The devil is always in
2 the details, and so when actively shrimping, can they can turn
3 it off then when they're not actively shrimping, on the same
4 trip, right, and so maybe we could say "when on a shrimping
5 trip" or -- I don't want it to be, you know, where they're
6 actively shrimping, because then they turn it off when they're
7 not actively shrimping, and then turn it back on, and, I mean,
8 there's potential for loopholes, and so I'm trying to figure out
9 how to word it, but I appreciate the intent of the Shrimp AP,
10 and I want to try to address that.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Freeman.

13
14 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you. I suppose that one suggestion that I
15 may put forward to the council is, given that the AP had a
16 motion regarding the language of the two alternatives, as well
17 as to the purpose and need, would it be appropriate to consider
18 the motion as previously phrased and then request the IPT
19 consider the AP's motions regarding the purpose and need
20 statements and the alternatives, since the IPT has not reviewed
21 those yet, and so have a follow-up motion?

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy.

24
25 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I am going to just suggest adding "shrimp"
26 between "a" and "fishing", and so "when on a shrimp fishing
27 trip". That means you don't have to have it on when you're not
28 shrimping, and you don't have to have it on when you're doing
29 other, you know, work.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Ms. Boggs.

32
33 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay, and so I'm not a shrimp expert, but my
34 understanding is that the point of this is to basically capture
35 when they're trawling, correct, and not when they're traveling
36 to and from, and so, I mean, I think the AP's suggestion of
37 "actively shrimping" -- I understand that. I mean, to your
38 point, you don't care when they're headed out, when they're
39 headed home, and so how -- Because, when you say not on a shrimp
40 fishing trip, or not a shrimp trip, shrimping, and "shrimping
41 trip" is what I think it should say, or you're now saying you
42 want it on the entire time?

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Freeman.

45
46 **DR. FREEMAN:** Just to add to that, and it's in the document as
47 well, and it's a footnote, but I will read that very quickly.
48 In 50 CFR, a "trip" is defined as, quote, a fishing trip,

1 regardless of number of days duration that begins with departure
2 from the dock or beach or seawall or ramp and terminates with
3 return to the dock or beach or seawall or ramp, and so, again, I
4 believe, to Ms. Boggs' point, the AP's concern was, under that
5 definition of what a trip was, that was why they were interested
6 in clarifying, to say something along the lines of "actively
7 shrimping".

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan.

10
11 **MS. BOGGS:** I know this seems minor, but I would not support the
12 motion as it's currently written, because I think it needs to
13 say, "actively shrimping". Thank you.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We've got hands up, and we need to move
16 on, and so we'll go ahead. Andy, John, and Tom, and then we
17 need to take action on the motion. Go ahead, Andy.

18
19 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, John can correct me if I'm wrong, but the
20 way it's worded now is no different than how the 3G units
21 collect data, right, and so my concern is -- You're right,
22 Susan, that there's not, obviously, a lot of value for us to
23 necessarily get the data when they're transiting from port to
24 the shrimping grounds, but keep in mind they're starting and
25 stopping active shrimping throughout an entire trip, right, and
26 so, if we say "actively shrimping", right, that means a lot to
27 them, in terms of what they're doing throughout that entire
28 trip, and so I think this better captures that we're
29 distinguishing shrimping trips, relative to other activities.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, did you have a follow-up to that?

32
33 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and we need to know when they leave and return
34 to the dock, so that we can match it with the trip ticket
35 landings, and so it actually needs that start and stop, and the
36 current 3G is on all the time, and so we clearly get that
37 ingress and egress. Thanks.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Tom.

40
41 **DR. FRAZER:** I just want to remind folks, a couple of paragraphs
42 back in this committee report, we elected not to bring this
43 framework action to the council until after we've completed the
44 testing of the devices, and so I'm fine with this type of
45 discussion, and it clearly needs to go on, right, and maybe, Mr.
46 Chair, we might dispense with this motion, but clearly there is
47 some background work that needs to be done, and so, for this
48 reason, we've spent an inordinate amount of time on this

1 particular issue, and so that's up to you, of course, whether or
 2 not we want to dispense of this or not, but I suggest that we
 3 don't work on the document, the framework document, any more
 4 today.

5
 6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I agree, Tom, but I think what we want
 7 to do is dispense with this motion, and there's still
 8 opportunity to wordsmith this, you know, and get this where it
 9 needs to be, in light of everything else that has happened
 10 earlier, and so, with that, let's go ahead and vote on this
 11 motion, and it looks like we may need to -- Well, maybe I will
 12 see if we can get one here, and is there going to be any
 13 opposition to this motion? Okay. All right. Let's go ahead
 14 and -- Beth and Bernie, if you want to pull up our voting tool.
 15 Okay.

16
 17 While they are getting our voting program going, just to be
 18 clear, we're voting on the motion to modify Action 1,
 19 Alternatives 2 and 3, in the draft framework action to the
 20 Shrimp FMP as follows, and I am not going to read the rest of
 21 Andy's text there. Okay. I think we're ready now. Okay.
 22 Please vote, everyone.
 23

D.7.2 To Modify Action 1, Alternatives 2 and 3 in the draft framework action to the Shrimp FMP			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	Yes	
Susan	Boggs	No	
Billy	Broussard	No	
Dale	Diaz	Yes	
J.D.	Dugas	No	
Phil	Dyskow	Yes	
Tom	Frazer	Abstain	
Dakus	Geeslin	Yes	
Bob	Gill	Yes	
Michael	McDermott	Yes	
Chris	Schieble	No	
Joe	Spraggins	Yes	
Andy	Strelcheck	Yes	
Greg	Stunz	Abstain	
C.J.	Sweetman	Yes	
Troy	Williamson	Yes	
Yes (10)	No (4)	Abstain (2)	

24
 25 Okay. Before I close the voting, has everyone registered the

1 appropriate vote? Okay. **We'll close the voting, and it looks**
2 **like the motion passes ten to four with two abstentions.**

3
4 We have finished out that report, I believe, and so that will
5 just about move us into Reef Fish, but I want to move something
6 up that was further down in the agenda, and I had some hopeful
7 ideas that we were going to finish earlier today than we are,
8 and I asked the Mississippi Law Enforcement group to come in and
9 give their presentation earlier. Now that I've asked them to
10 come in earlier, I think we want to, obviously, wisely use our
11 enforcement resources, and so they have a short presentation,
12 and so, if you are ready for that presentation, let's just do
13 that now, so that you guys can get back to your important work,
14 and then, Tom, right after that, we'll pick up with Reef Fish.
15 If you want to introduce yourself as well, that would be great.

16 17 **MISSISSIPPI LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**

18
19 **CAPTAIN WILL FREEMAN:** Good morning. My name is Will Freeman,
20 and I'm the Captain of Investigations for the Office of Marine
21 Patrol.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain Freeman. They will be
24 pulling your presentation up here in just a minute.

25
26 **CAPTAIN FREEMAN:** This presentation gives you a brief snapshot
27 into our law enforcement efforts with regulated, federally-
28 regulated, managed species. Under our current JEA with NOAA
29 OLE, we are allocated 408 hours of at-sea patrols and sixty
30 hours of dockside patrols, and, under reef fish, you can see we
31 have 192 hours allocated for at-sea and forty-eight hours of
32 dockside patrol. Under IFQ, sixty hours of dockside
33 enforcement, and, under Lacey Act and IUU, our enforcement
34 allocation is 118 hours, and, under this particular priority,
35 we're working with our local, state, and federal partners on
36 monitoring the import and export markets, under this priority.

37
38 Our general enforcement hours, our allocation is 492, and 120 at
39 dockside. This is slightly different from our previous
40 contract, and we've adjusted our direct purchases, and so we
41 have a reduction in hours. That was a very brief snapshot. Are
42 there questions?

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain Freeman. That will
45 definitely get us back on track with our agenda today, and we
46 appreciate that.

47
48 **CAPTAIN FREEMAN:** Yes, sir.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** But Mr. Dyskow has a question for you.
3
4 **MR. DYSKOW:** I noticed that you said you have a significant
5 amount of time devoted to Lacey Act violations, and we had some
6 information, earlier in this meeting, that said that a lot of
7 stuff was coming into an inland port, and the specific reference
8 the Coast Guard made was Cincinnati, and where are these imports
9 coming from? Are they Mexican, or are they overseas, or where
10 are they --
11
12 **CAPTAIN FREEMAN:** Some are overseas, and some are
13 intercontinental. It varies, and some of our open cases are
14 open, and I'm really not at liberty to discuss those in a public
15 forum, and I hope you understand.
16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Captain. General Spraggins.
18
19 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Well, first off, thank you all for modifying
20 your schedule to come here early today, and I would also like
21 you to know that we have three other officers in the back here,
22 and our chief is back there with us, Chief Wilkerson, and so we
23 appreciate you coming here, but I also wanted to thank you all,
24 to thank you all so much, because you do a great job for the
25 Department of Marine Resources and the State of Mississippi, and
26 we appreciate your efforts every day, and this JEA that you work
27 with is a huge thing for us, and it does a lot for the
28 fisheries, and we appreciate all your efforts and everything
29 that you do, and I just wanted to recognize you.
30
31 **CAPTAIN FREEMAN:** Thank you for the kind words.
32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you for that, General, and, yes, thank
34 you. Obviously, a lot of the rules we make around this table
35 are contingent on you all being able to enforce that, and so we
36 really appreciate that.
37
38 **CAPTAIN FREEMAN:** Thank you.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Any other questions for Captain
41 Freeman? All right. Thank you, Captain.
42
43 **CAPTAIN FREEMAN:** Have a good morning.
44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Unless anyone needs a break, I think we'll just
46 kind of push through this and see how far we can get in the Reef
47 Fish Committee. Maybe, if you need a break, maybe go ahead and
48 take that individually, but we just took a break a little while

1 ago, and, that way, we can kind of see where we are and so
2 people can plan their travel around the end of the day, and so,
3 Tom, with that, if you want to take up Reef Fish, please.

4
5 **COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONT.)**
6 **REEF FISH COMMITTEE REPORT**
7

8 **DR. FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Reef Fish Committee
9 report, the committee adopted the agenda, Tab B, Number 1, after
10 adding an item under Tab B, Number 9 to discuss the allocation
11 review policy and a discussion on red grouper under Other
12 Business. The minutes, Tab B, Number 2, from the January 2023
13 meeting were approved as written.

14
15 Review of Recent Reef Fish, For-hire, and Individual Fishing
16 Quota Landings, Tab B, Number 4, Ms. Kelli O'Donnell, of the
17 NMFS Southeast Regional Office, reviewed the recent commercial
18 and recreational reef fish landings. These landings updates are
19 provided in April and October each year. State recreational
20 landings of red snapper from private vessels will be reviewed in
21 June 2023.

22
23 Public Hearing Draft: Draft Amendment 56: Modifications to the
24 Gag Grouper Catch Limits, Sector Allocations, and Fishing
25 Seasons, Tab B, Number 5, SERO staff reviewed the timeline for
26 implementation of the council's requested interim rule for gag
27 grouper, which is expected to be implemented in late spring
28 2023. Council staff began by reviewing Action 1 in Amendment
29 56.

30
31 **The committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 1, to select**
32 **Alternative 2 in Action 1 as the preferred alternative.**
33 **Alternative 2 is revise the SDC for gag based on the results of**
34 **the updated Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) 72**
35 **stock assessment, as reviewed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery**
36 **Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee in**
37 **July 2022. MSY is defined as the yield when fishing at a 40**
38 **percent spawning potential ratio (SPR), or F 40 percent SPR.**
39 **The MFMT is equal to the fishing mortality at the FMSY proxy,**
40 **for example F 40 percent SPR. The MSST is defined as 50 percent**
41 **of the biomass at MSY, or its proxy. The OY is defined as being**
42 **conditional on rebuilding plan, such that, if the stock is under**
43 **a rebuilding plan, OY is equal to the stock annual catch limit**
44 **(ACL). If the stock is not under a rebuilding plan, OY is equal**
45 **to 90 percent of MSY, or its proxy. That motion carried without**
46 **opposition.**

47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Tom. We have another committee

1 motion. Is there any discussion on this motion? **Seeing no**
2 **discussion on this motion, is there any opposition to this**
3 **motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries.** Go ahead,
4 Dr. Frazer.

5
6 **DR. FRAZER:** A committee member commented on the interim rule,
7 expressing concern about the recreational season duration of
8 seventy-one days, September 1 through November 10. The
9 committee member thought it was likely that the recreational
10 sector would exceed its annual catch limit in 2023, and a
11 subsequent payback could negate a 2024 fishing season.

12
13 Further, the committee member questioned the availability of the
14 data necessary to close the recreational fishing season in time
15 to avoid an overage of the recreational ACL. SERO replied that
16 it would use all data available, but acknowledged the limited
17 information available to adjust the fishing season in 2023. The
18 committee member stated that the data to project the fishing
19 season duration were based on the average daily catch rates,
20 which do not account for effort shifting due to changing the
21 fishing season start date. The committee member stated their
22 concern for continuing paybacks by the recreational sector, due
23 to the imprecision of the season duration projections.

24
25 Staff reviewed the alternatives in Action 2. A committee member
26 commented on the assumption that discards would be reduced
27 commensurate with reductions in catch, adding that if these
28 assumed reductions are not met, the pace of rebuilding would be
29 slowed. Increasing the buffers between the catch limits would
30 increase the probability of rebuilding, but assumptions about
31 angler behavior also need to be considered in these
32 calculations. The committee member thought it prudent to also
33 discuss potential variations in discard dynamics in greater
34 detail in Action 3.

35
36 Another Committee member thought it necessary to reallocate
37 using the new State Reef Fish Survey, or SRFS, landings data,
38 since those data will be used for monitoring the catch limits,
39 which would be reflected in the sector allocation scenario in
40 Alternative 3.

41
42 A committee member was concerned about the relationship between
43 the season duration afforded by each of the catch limit options
44 and the discards expected from those options. They thought
45 summer discards, especially in deeper waters, needed to be
46 considered at length. Another committee member thought that
47 modifying the sector allocation should not be considered at this
48 time, given that other large changes in the management of gag

1 are being considered in Amendment 56. A committee member
2 countered that changing data units is a valid treatment of
3 historical landings, based on the best scientific information
4 available.

5
6 The committee decided to bring up Tab B, Number 5(c) to review
7 the allocation review components for gag. Staff reviewed the
8 allocation review policy and the components required for
9 analysis when considering changes in the sector allocation and
10 where those components are within Amendment 56. A committee
11 member noted that updating the landings data alone is not
12 sufficient rationale for a change in the sector allocation.
13 They mentioned tables in the economic sections in Chapter 4 in
14 the document, which outline economic effects of changing the
15 sector allocation, and recommended discussion of those effects
16 before a decision is made.

17
18 Another committee member acknowledged the economic effects and
19 expressed further concern over the fraction of recreational
20 catch that is discarded. A committee member countered that
21 using the SRFS data acknowledged historic recreational fishing
22 effort and not considering that would result in a purposeful
23 reduction in that effort moving forward.

24
25 **The committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 2, that**
26 **Option 3b in Alternative 3 be the preferred alternative.**
27 **Alternative 3 is revise the catch limits for gag and establish a**
28 **rebuilding time for the gag stock. The OFL, ABC, and ACLs are**
29 **based on the FMSY proxy of the yield when fishing at F 40**
30 **percent SPR. The ABC is equal to the stock ACL, which equals**
31 **the combined total ACLs from both sectors. Revise the sector**
32 **allocation to 65 percent recreational and 35 percent commercial,**
33 **using average landings from 1986 through 2005, but using SRFS**
34 **recreational landings data for the private recreational vessel**
35 **fleet and MRIP-FES for all other recreational landings data.**
36 **The catch limits in pounds gutted weight are rounded down to the**
37 **nearest thousand pounds to ensure the sum of the sector ACLs**
38 **does not exceed the ABC. The recreational ACL is informed by**
39 **SRFS for private recreational vessels, by MRIP-FES data for the**
40 **for-hire and shore modes, and by the Southeast Region Headboat**
41 **Survey for headboats, and are as follows for each rebuilding**
42 **timeline option. There's a table, and Option 3b, which is shown**
43 **in the document, and that motion carried ten to three, with**
44 **three abstentions and one absent, by roll call vote.**

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Frazer, and so we've
47 got a committee motion that, in Action 2, that Option 3b in
48 Alternative 3 be the preferred alternative. Is there any

1 discussion on this motion? Susan.

2

3 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes, sir. Thank you, and I want to speak in
4 opposition to this motion. I am standing firm with what I did
5 with red grouper, and I think it's wrong to reallocate when
6 you're looking at a fishery that's in trouble. Neither stock,
7 or excuse me, neither user group, from what I have seen, has
8 exceeded the quota, because, if there's no fish to catch, you
9 don't catch the fish, and so I just -- I am going to speak in
10 opposition to the motion, and I want it on record why I was in
11 that, and I just don't feel like, when we're in a rebuilding
12 plan for a fishery, we need to look at reallocation. Thank you.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Susan. Dr. Sweetman.

15

16 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was going to say
17 essentially what Susan said there, and I continue to speak in
18 opposition to this. I am not necessarily opposed to the
19 rebuilding timeline, but, the way that the document is currently
20 structured, with these alternatives kind of being mixed in with
21 each other there, and it's the revised sector allocation that
22 I'm opposed to, when a fishery is undergoing overfishing and is
23 overfished.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** All right. Well, we will go ahead and vote for
26 this motion, if there's no other discussion, and we'll use the
27 remotes again. Give us a minute to pull that up. All right.
28 It looks like they're ready, and so please vote.

29

B.5.2 In public hearing Draft Amendment 56 to select Option 3b, Alternative 3 as preferred			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	Yes	
Susan	Boggs	No	
Billy	Broussard	Yes	
Dale	Diaz	Yes	
J.D.	Dugas	Yes	
Phil	Dyskow	Yes	
Tom	Frazer	Yes	
Dakus	Geeslin	Yes	
Bob	Gill	No	
Michael	McDermott	Yes	
Chris	Schieble	Yes	
Joe	Spraggins	Yes	
Andy	Strelcheck	Abstain	
Greg	Stunz	Abstain	

C.J.	Sweetman	No	
Troy	Williamson	Yes	
Yes (11)	No (3)	Abstain (2)	

1
2 All right. If everyone wants to take a look there and make sure
3 your vote was recorded correctly. If that's the case, I will be
4 closing the vote here, and I'm not seeing anything. All right.
5 **That vote is closed, and that vote carries eleven to three with**
6 **two abstentions.**

7
8 **DR. FRAZER:** All right, and so council staff reviewed the
9 options for modifying the sector annual catch targets (ACT) in
10 Action 3. A committee member revisited the issue of achieving
11 the necessary reduction in discards determined as necessary by
12 the yield projections from SEDAR 72. They thought it prudent to
13 include a larger buffer on the recreational ACL for
14 consideration, to account for the discards expected from that
15 sector, despite the reductions in the recreational landings
16 expected from Action 2. The committee member suggested 20
17 percent as an appropriate buffer.

18
19 A committee member asked how 20 percent was determined to be
20 worth considering. The proposing committee member replied that
21 it was a doubling of what the ACL/ACT Control Rule generated for
22 Alternative 2 in Sub-Action 3.1, and, thus, accounted for
23 additional uncertainty in the rate of landings against the
24 fishing season duration projections.

25
26 **The committee recommends, and I so move, in Sub-Action 3.1 of**
27 **Action 3, to add a new Alternative 3 to set the recreational ACT**
28 **at 20 percent below the recreational ACL.** That motion carried
29 without opposition.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We have a committee motion. Any
32 discussion on that motion? J.D.

33
34 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I question why we moved from
35 10 to 20 percent, and maybe it's for Andy to answer, but I wrote
36 down some notes after, and I also question that the difference
37 between the OFL and the ABC is over a million pounds, and then
38 there's also about 2.4 million pounds between the ABC and the
39 ACL, and so here we are extending this buffer, or expanding, but
40 there is all these millions of pounds still that I see as a
41 buffer, and so, Andy, can you maybe elaborate a little bit on
42 it?

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy.

1
2 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, a couple of things, and so we can have an
3 overfishing limit and the ABC that are set far apart when you've
4 having to rebuild a stock, because you have to set your fishing
5 mortality rate for rebuilding, in order to meet the rebuilding
6 plan, and so there is a larger buffer, in terms of the
7 overfishing limit, relative to the ABC, for that reason, because
8 we have to rebuild the stock in a time certain.

9
10 The buffer that I recommended is really for that management
11 uncertainty and the concerns that were being discussed during
12 committee about the potential for an overrun and the payback
13 provisions in our accountability measures, and so, by buffering
14 the ACT, we're to manage to the ACT for harvest, but, if we get
15 it wrong, or, if there's effort compression, and there's higher
16 catch rates than we expect, that will give us at least 20
17 percent more before we would exceed the catch limit and trigger
18 those accountability measures, and so I'm trying to account for
19 that management uncertainty, especially when we're shortening
20 the season by as much as possible, or not as much as possible,
21 but we're shortening the season considerably.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Rindone.

24
25 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a point of
26 clarification to something that J.D. had said. When you're
27 looking at the difference between the OFL and the catch limits,
28 since you guys just selected Option 3b in Alternative 3, to give
29 you an idea of what you're looking at with the difference
30 between the OFL and the ABC, in 2024, the OFL would be just
31 under 600,000 pounds, and the ABC would be about 424,000 pounds,
32 and so it's only about 155,000, or 160,000, pound difference,
33 and that buffer between the OFL and the ABC increases a little
34 bit as the catch limits increase, but the fraction remains about
35 the same. The number of pounds will increase some, but it's
36 just something to think about, in terms of, you know, what you
37 might presume the pace of landings to be by the different
38 fleets.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am not seeing any other -- Dr. Walter.

41
42 **DR. WALTER:** I think I will just add a little bit of
43 clarification to some of the key assumptions of the projections.
44 Right now, the projections assume that the landings are going to
45 have to drop by about 80 percent to achieve the rebuilding plan,
46 and there's also an implicit assumption that the discards are
47 going to reduce by about 80 percent, which is one of the
48 assumptions that may not be met if the effort is still out there

1 in the water, and just the fish that would have been kept are
 2 now discarded, and I think that's one of the concerns that was
 3 raised there, and how can the council address that, and that's
 4 really an implementation uncertainty, that we're right now
 5 assuming that all that effort is going to just redirect away
 6 from discarding gag, and, if it doesn't achieve all of that,
 7 then that would be implementation uncertainty, which is
 8 addressed through that buffer on the ACT to the ACL, and that's
 9 the appropriate way to address implementation uncertainty.
 10 Thanks.

11
 12 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Seeing no other comments, why don't we
 13 go ahead and pull up our voting for this one, please.
 14

B.5.3 In PH Draft Amendment 56 in Action 3, Sub-Action 3.1, to add a new Alternative 3 to set the recreational ACT 20 percent below the recreational ACL			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	Yes	
Susan	Boggs	Yes	
Billy	Broussard	Yes	
Dale	Diaz	Yes	
J.D.	Dugas	Yes	
Phil	Dyskow	Yes	
Tom	Frazer	Yes	
Dakus	Geeslin	Yes	
Bob	Gill	Yes	
Michael	McDermott	Yes	
Chris	Schieble	Yes	
Joe	Spraggins	Yes	
Andy	Stelcheck	Yes	
Greg	Stunz	Abstain	
C.J.	Sweetman	Yes	
Troy	Williamson	Yes	
Yes (15)	No (0)	Abstain (1)	

15
 16 Okay. Has everyone recorded their vote? I should have asked
 17 for no opposition, and I didn't read the room on that one very
 18 well. **That motion carries unanimously, fifteen to zero with one**
 19 **abstention.** Go ahead, C.J.

20
 21 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. **Since this passed, and we**
 22 **are trying to get this amendment out for public hearing, and we**
 23 **do not have a preferred selected under here, I would like to**
 24 **offer a motion to, in Sub-Section 3.1, Action 3, to make**

1 **Alternative 3 the preferred.**
2
3 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Second.
4
5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We have a second. Give us a second to
6 pull that up on the board. Dr. Sweetman, did you send that, or
7 do you want to reread it?
8
9 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Yes, I can certainly reread it.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Hang on just a second.
12
13 **DR. SWEETMAN:** **To make Alternative 3 the preferred.**
14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dr. Sweetman, is that complete? Andy
16 seconded that motion. Any discussion on the motion? **Seeing no**
17 **discussion on the motion, is there any opposition on the motion?**
18 **Seeing no opposition on the motion, the motion carries.** I
19 believe that someone else had their hand up, but I don't recall
20 who that was.
21
22 **DR. FRAZER:** It was Andy, and I think he was going to do the
23 same thing as C.J.
24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. All right. Then go ahead, Tom.
26
27 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay, and so council staff reviewed proposed
28 changes to the treatment of the commercial ACT and quota. A
29 committee member expressed reservations with reducing the buffer
30 for the commercial sector when reductions in discards are
31 necessary, acknowledging that the commercial sector was likely
32 adept, to some degree, at avoiding gag when it cannot be
33 retained.
34
35 **The committee recommends, and I so move, in Sub-Action 3.2 of**
36 **Action 3, to make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative.**
37 **Alternative 3 is set the commercial quota for the gag IFQ**
38 **program equal to the commercial ACT. The commercial ACT will be**
39 **fixed at 95 percent of the commercial ACL. The IFQ program**
40 **functions as the accountability measure for the commercial**
41 **sector for gag. That motion carried eleven to two with one**
42 **absent and three abstentions. Mr. Chair.**
43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We have another committee motion. Any
45 discussion on this motion? **Any opposition to this motion?**
46 **Seeing no opposition, the motion carries.**
47
48 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. The council staff reviewed Action 4, which

1 examines modifications to the recreational fishing season
2 duration and accountability measures (AMs). SERO clarified the
3 methods for conducting the recreational fishing season duration
4 projections. A committee member asked if the proposed option of
5 a 20 percent buffer between the recreational ACL and ACT would
6 be sufficient to constrain landings and discards to meet the
7 rebuilding timeline.

8
9 Another committee thought the proposed modifications to the AMs
10 were appropriate, but may be worth revising once the stock is in
11 better condition. They also preferred a September 1 start date
12 to the recreational fishing season. Further, they clarified
13 that SRFS can be used to estimate the number of directed trips
14 for gag and other SRFS-monitored species and asked that the
15 language in the document be updated to reflect this capability.

16
17 NOAA General Counsel noted that, as the catch limits increase
18 with time, the recreational fishing season durations predicted
19 for the alternatives in Action 4 are expected to change and that
20 the committee should review that information in the document.

21
22 Another committee member thought the fishing season duration
23 projections were optimistic, given the discards expected from
24 the recreational sector in the early part of the rebuilding
25 period, and encouraged consideration of additional effort and
26 removal reduction measures in the future. A committee member
27 asked that NOAA Fisheries describe how data collection and
28 precision on recreational discards might be improved in the
29 future at a subsequent meeting.

30
31 A committee member thought that many factors, like recent
32 recruitment and spatial and temporal variability in discards,
33 were not adequately captured in the current season duration
34 projections. They thought that a split season, beginning
35 September 1 and ending September 22, and based on the
36 recreational ACL, may allow for constraining the recreational
37 harvest to the ACL without an overage and allow a subsequent
38 fall season.

39
40 Council staff replied that the for-hire and shore component
41 landings for gag still rely on the Marine Recreational
42 Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES), for
43 which preliminary September landings would not be available
44 until December 15, at the earliest. This would not allow
45 sufficient time for NMFS to reopen the fishing season before the
46 fishing year ends on December 31.

47
48 Another committee member thought that the split season approach

1 necessitated a summer month start date to be operable. A
2 Committee member opposed the idea of a split season, due to
3 challenges associated with managing both fishing effort and
4 stakeholder expectations for a fall season that may not happen.
5 They were not opposed to a fixed end date to the recreational
6 fishing season.

7
8 A committee member asked about the possibility of a Friday to
9 Sunday recreational fishing season. Another committee member
10 responded that a weekends-only fishing season may create
11 substantial challenges on Florida's side of the rulemaking. A
12 committee member thought that a September 1 opening would most
13 likely result in consistency between state and federal
14 regulations. The committee recognized that SRFS was not
15 designed for in-season quota monitoring, especially for fishing
16 seasons on short time scales.

17
18 **The committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 4, to select**
19 **Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. Alternative 3 is**
20 **the federal recreational fishing season for Gulf gag would open**
21 **on 12:01 a.m. local time on September 1. Modify the AMs to**
22 **direct NMFS to prohibit harvest when the recreational ACT is**
23 **projected to be met. In addition, remove the provision that**
24 **requires NMFS to maintain the prior year's ACT if the ACL is**
25 **exceeded in the previous year.** That motion carried thirteen to
26 one with two abstentions and one absent. Mr. Chair.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We have a committee motion. Any discussion on
29 this committee motion? Ms. Boggs.

30
31 **MS. BOGGS:** So this question is probably for Ryan. On your
32 Table 2.4.1, I believe it is, document page 28, there's some
33 scenarios laid out here, and I guess it would be the very last
34 one on page, whatever I just said, 24, but there's nothing here
35 that analyzes the September 1 opening, and is that correct, or
36 am I looking at this totally wrong?

37
38 **MR. RINDONE:** If you scroll up a little bit, you will see the
39 column headings going across the top there, and the second
40 column from the right says, "Action 4, Alternative 3, a
41 September 1 opening", and so all of the alternatives in Action 4
42 are in fact analyzed within the table.

43
44 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay. I didn't -- I wasn't reading the table
45 correctly. Thank you.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy.

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I feel like we don't have any good options
2 here, and I do want to direct a question to Mr. Gill, but,
3 before I do that, what we heard in public testimony was this
4 divide between the Panhandle and concerns about discarding gag
5 during red snapper season versus, obviously, wanting a longer
6 season more in the core area of where gag occur, off the west
7 coast of Florida.

8
9 The irony, and the challenge and frustration, for me is we're
10 going to be discarding gag during the red snapper season, under
11 the preferred alternative, or we're going to going to be
12 discarding red snapper during the gag season, under the other
13 preferred alternative, and this is where I keep getting back to
14 we've really got to figure out how to deal with some of these
15 discards and the fact that we have multispecies fisheries, and
16 so I don't have a solution, and, obviously, one option provides
17 a much longer season than the other, and there are differences,
18 obviously, in kind of fishing practices and depth of fishing and
19 barotrauma that could occur in one area relative to another, and
20 so I see pros and cons to each, but just note this conundrum.

21
22 What I did want to ask Mr. Gill, because you had a really good
23 discussion, I thought, coming to the council with this idea of a
24 split season, and did you have any further thought on a split
25 season, given our discussion in committee?

26
27 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Strelcheck, and, yes, I took a look at
28 it, because I still like the concept, as the best alternative we
29 have before us to minimize the exceeding the ACL, but, when I
30 looked at the last two years of landings data, and the waves
31 associated, there was no month that you wouldn't have, into the
32 spawning season -- Daily catch rates of the months in those
33 years vary quite a bit, to my surprise, but, on average,
34 wouldn't allow much of a season at all on the frontend, and
35 then, when you get to where you split in two, you would have
36 virtually no season at all, and so it's great theoretically,
37 but, unfortunately, not workable and practical.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gill. **Seeing no other**
40 **hands up, is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing no**
41 **opposition, the motion carries.**

42
43 **DR. FRAZER:** Before we go on to the next section, Mr. Chair, I'm
44 wondering if we might need a motion to approve this moving
45 forward as a public hearing document, because we have public
46 hearing dates already scheduled.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Do we need that motion?

1
2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** That would be good.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Would you like to make that motion, please?
5
6 **DR. FRAZER:** Sure, and so to take the draft amendment out for
7 public hearing, Draft Amendment 56.
8
9 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Second.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** C.J. seconded, and we'll need a second to
12 finish getting that up here. **Seeing no hands up for discussion**
13 **on this motion, is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing**
14 **none, the motion carries.** All right.
15
16 **DR. FRAZER:** All right.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Wait. Sorry. One more. Dr. Simmons.
19
20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just so
21 everyone knows, I was getting some questions about where these
22 are going to be held and when, and we've posted those, even
23 though the Federal Register notice for the council hasn't gone
24 out yet, but those are scheduled. If you go to our website,
25 under Meetings and Public Hearings and Scoping Workshops, you
26 can find the dates and locations of those public hearings, and
27 thank you, council members, for staffing those. Thanks.
28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Okay, Tom. Please proceed.
30
31 **DR. FRAZER:** All right, and so IFQ Objectives, Tab B, Number 7,
32 staff reviewed the goals and objectives of other IFQ programs in
33 the U.S. and asked the committee about what they want the IFQ
34 programs to look like in the future. Committee members
35 discussed how to move forward with their review of the IFQ
36 programs' goals and objectives that is planned for the June
37 council meeting.
38
39 It was suggested for staff to prepare materials for the
40 committee's discussion that includes a list of potential new
41 goals and objectives pertaining to participation, equity,
42 access, and how to balance such new goals with reducing
43 capacity. Another suggested approach would be to define the
44 goal as optimizing net benefits, and the committee could discuss
45 what that looks like. Committee members were encouraged to
46 think about any additions to include in the discussion before
47 Full Council.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Gill.

2
3 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I'm not going to add
4 anything that wasn't discussed in committee, but I would
5 encourage that that discussion, providing that list, maintain a
6 focus on those goals for which we could start, and I'm not
7 suggesting prioritizing, but listing and providing thought about
8 the goals that may be appropriate, or the council decides not
9 appropriate, but we not get into the details of, as we discussed
10 in committee, of portions of how those goals might be
11 accomplished, and so that we keep the focus on a high level
12 goals and objectives focus, to allow us to find a starting
13 place, and we were not able to find a starting place in
14 committee, and the hope is that this work will allow us, next
15 time we discuss this, to have a start on a program. Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Seeing no other comments, Tom, I'm going
18 to have you go ahead and proceed.

19
20 **DR. FRAZER:** Okay. Draft Options: Recalibration of Red Snapper
21 Recreational Catch Limits and Modification of Gray Snapper Catch
22 Limits, Tab B, Number 9, staff reviewed the introduction,
23 purpose and need, and two actions considered in the document.
24 For Action 1, the committee agreed that updating red snapper
25 private recreational state calibration ratios for Mississippi,
26 Alabama, and Florida with more contemporary landings data was
27 warranted.

28
29 **The committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 1, to make**
30 **Alternative 2 the preferred alternative. Alternative 2 is**
31 **update state private recreational data calibration ratios of red**
32 **snapper for Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. ACLs are**
33 **modified based on the revised ratios. The ratios would be**
34 **applied to the federal state-specific ACLs that are in place. A**
35 **proposed rule, which, if implemented, would be effective by June**
36 **1, 2023, would change the catch limits as outlined in Table**
37 **2.1.2, as provided in the document. That motion carried without**
38 **opposition.**

39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. For this committee motion, is there any
41 discussion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition to this**
42 **motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries.**

43
44 **DR. FRAZER:** The committee discussed a state-by-state allocation
45 review for red snapper, in light of the new state calibrations.
46 Currently, this review is scheduled to begin in April 2024,
47 based on the allocation review policy timeline. Several
48 committee members supported the idea of beginning this review

1 earlier than originally scheduled and developing an associated
2 document.

3
4 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to**
5 **begin work on a plan amendment to look at updating the states'**
6 **private recreational red snapper allocation.** That motion
7 carried with one in opposition and one absent.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any discussion? C.J.

10
11 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I was obviously the
12 one vote in opposition to this, and so I figured I would give
13 some explanation here, and so the reason why I did that is
14 because Florida consistently has basically the shortest fishing
15 season out of all these states.

16
17 We have a very large number of anglers, and we're consistently
18 meeting, or nearly, our quota, and we, in fact, had a slight
19 overage in 2021. We do have a stock assessment coming up in
20 2024 that can help with this process here, but these are
21 extremely challenging discussions, and I can just kind of see
22 the writing on the walls for where ultimately the quota would
23 end up coming from, and so, for that reason, I'm in opposition
24 to this motion.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I am not seeing any other discussion, and we'll
27 call for a vote on this motion by a raise of hands, and we'll
28 see how that goes. **For those in opposition to this motion,**
29 **please raise your hand, one; those in favor of this motion. The**
30 **motion carries thirteen to one.**

31
32 I was kind of doing a test there to see, and I don't know what's
33 more efficient, with the clickers or not, but I don't know.
34 We'll see how that goes. Anyway, all right. We have both
35 options now, and we can see what we like best.

36
37 **DR. FRAZER:** All right. For Action 2, alternatives were
38 presented that would modify gray snapper catch limits based on
39 the results of a recent stock assessment that incorporates MRIP-
40 FES units. A committee member expressed concern with the
41 transition to MRIP-FES and its presumed effect on the catch
42 limit increase relative to the no action alternative. The
43 committee decided that any decision about selecting a preferred
44 alternative in Action 2 would be discussed during Full Council.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Ms. Boggs.

47
48 **MS. BOGGS:** So I would like to make a motion for Alternative 3

1 in Action 2 to be the preferred, and, if I get a second, I can
2 give some rationale.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Susan, give us a second to catch up,
5 real quick here, and get that motion on the board.
6
7 **MS. BOGGS:** To make Alternative 3 in Action 2 the preferred.
8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Everyone just bear with us for just a minute,
10 while we get that -- Okay. Do we need a little bit of clarity
11 exactly -- Susan, take a look at that amendment and make sure --
12
13 **MS. BOGGS:** I mean, we are talking about gray snapper, right,
14 and everybody is kind of looking around like --
15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That's what I'm making sure, that we're all on
17 the same page here.
18
19 **MS. BOGGS:** Yes. Action 2, Alternative 3 the preferred.
20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** It's seconded by Dr. Sweetman. Kay. For
22 discussion, Tom.
23
24 **DR. FRAZER:** I mean, in essence, it went for the constant catch
25 scenario, right? Okay. All good.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan.
28
29 **MS. BOGGS:** As I said in committee, you know, FES is so new to
30 us, and not knowing -- I talked to one of the staff, saying it's
31 kind of a perceived concept that, oh, we've got all these fish,
32 and maybe you've been conservative with what you've been
33 catching, and now this inflation of numbers, and, if you don't
34 understand what that inflation came from, I just -- I just feel
35 like a constant catch, until we really understand what FES
36 means, is a more conservative way to go, and it gives us room to
37 grow that fishery later, if we see that we're still underfishing
38 the quota. Thank you.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any other comments? We have the full motion up
41 on the board now and that particular alternative that it refers
42 to. Bob and then Kevin.
43
44 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I support this motion,
45 but we should recognize that a constant catch scenario, in this
46 version, frontloads the available catch rate, right, and it
47 takes it out of the backend, and so, if a conservative notion is
48 where you want to go, then I'm not sure this accomplishes that.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kevin.
3
4 **MR. ANSON:** I was going to make a comment sort of to that. I
5 mean, we tried -- We have used, you know, on many occasions, a
6 constant catch scenario, and that also provides some stability,
7 and this could work in the opposite direction, I guess, in this
8 case, but, you know, certainly, to the extent that you open the
9 doors and they do start catching, and, all of a sudden, you're
10 going to pull the rug out from under them in a few years, with
11 the lower ACL, and so I would support the motion that's on the
12 board.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Bob and then Susan.
15
16 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I would disagree with
17 that approach. The advantage of the constant catch concept is
18 that you know what the catch rate is at the beginning, and it
19 does not change, whereas the changing catch rate every year is
20 the problem that fishermen have, and particularly when it's a
21 declining yield stream, and so it provides advance notice, and
22 pulling the rug out I think mischaracterizes the reality.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Anson.
25
26 **MR. ANSON:** Well, only to the point that Susan brought up, that,
27 if, all of a sudden, we change, which we're not really going to
28 change much, as far as changing bag limits and size limits, but,
29 if we have some other peculiarity with the data, and, all of a
30 sudden, we start showing larger catches, then those larger
31 catches, if they exceed the ACL, would prompt us to go ahead and
32 impose bag limit and size limit changes that would keep us
33 within our ACL later on in the future, if we had a healthy
34 condition and, all of a sudden, it's because of a data issue now
35 that we don't have a healthy condition, and so that's all I was
36 saying.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan.
39
40 **MS. BOGGS:** To all those points, and, Bob, I do understand what
41 you're saying, but, at the same time, you're declining, and so
42 then everybody's like, well, there's this abundance of fish, and
43 why can't we catch them, and so it's kind of the catch-twenty-
44 two in everything that we do, and I looked at the landings, and
45 we've never come close to catching the quota, and so I felt
46 comfortable, and this is kind of the same thing that we did in
47 vermilion snapper.
48

1 It's not quite 75 percent between ABC and ACL, but it's four-
2 point -- But anyway, and that's beside the point, but it's close
3 enough that I'm comfortable, but, again, when you have -- The
4 declining is very -- So you're starting high, and then, if you
5 do have a problem, then you automatically have to come cut the
6 rug out from under them, and so this is kind of a middle-of-the-
7 road, and let's see where we get with this, and then, in a few
8 years, maybe we can adjust again. Thank you.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Mr. Gill.

11
12 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so don't forget that the
13 reason we've got a declining yield stream is we're off --
14 Because the stock biomass is above equilibrium biomass, and so
15 we've got plenty of extra fish out there, and we're trying to
16 get back down to an equilibrium point, and so the issue, in
17 terms of having a biological problem, is not there. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Seeing no other comments, is there any
20 opposition to this motion? Seeing none, the motion carries with
21 no opposition. Tom.

22
23 **DR. FRAZER:** All right, and so I guess we'll be prepared with
24 those preferreds, right, and this will be a final action item at
25 the next council meeting in June. All right.

26
27 SSC Summary Report from the March 2023 Meeting, Tab B, Number 8,
28 Dr. Jim Nance, the SSC Chair, presented the SSC's deliberations
29 and recommendations on several items from its January 2023
30 meeting in Tampa, Florida.

31
32 Dr. Nance reviewed updated projections for scamp and yellowmouth
33 grouper based on the SEDAR 68 stock assessment. A committee
34 member asked about the treatment of scamp and yellowmouth
35 grouper compared to black grouper and yellowfin grouper. The
36 SSC had thought it best to treat the pairings of species
37 independent of one another, since the latter two did not have a
38 stock assessment to inform their condition, and it was not
39 appropriate to assume their condition to be the same as scamp
40 and yellowmouth grouper.

41
42 Dr. Nance discussed the greater amberjack count, including
43 contemporary research on greater amberjack discard mortality.
44 The greater amberjack count is a regional collaborative research
45 project between state, federal, academic, and other partners to
46 estimate the absolute abundance of greater amberjack in the
47 Gulf.

48

1 Lastly, Dr. Nance discussed the SSC's evaluation of historical
2 wenchman landings in the northern Gulf trawl fisheries. These
3 data have confidentiality issues, and, as such, the SSC could
4 not recommend catch advice for wenchman. Dr. Nance noted that
5 wenchman is not presently caught along with the other three mid-
6 water snapper species and that the SSC recommends removing
7 wenchman from the mid-water snapper complex.

8
9 A committee member asked about the recent mean landings of the
10 remaining three species in the mid-water snapper complex
11 (blackfin snapper, queen snapper, and silk snapper), and what
12 catch limits for those species might look like. Council staff
13 described the landings in MRIP-FES data units and noted that the
14 SSC will evaluate these data in May 2023.

15
16 Another committee member asked about the merits of continued
17 federal management of wenchman. The committee discussed the
18 infrequency of wenchman landings and their co-occurrence with
19 butterfish landings, noting that those landings would still be
20 recorded by the states, regardless of federal management. NOAA
21 General Counsel stated that removing wenchman from the mid-water
22 snapper complex would need to be followed by a decision to
23 either manage wenchman separately or to remove it from the FMP.

24
25 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to ask staff to bring**
26 **back an evaluation as to whether wenchman require federal**
27 **conservation and management.** That motion carried without
28 opposition and with one absent. Mr. Chair.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. For this committee motion, it looks like
31 we have some discussion. Mr. Gill.

32
33 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I support the intent of
34 the motion, but I'm uncomfortable with the use of that term
35 "evaluation". You know, what I think is being asked here is
36 that we're asking staff to bring back the factors relative to
37 wenchman for us to evaluate conservation and management in the
38 federal sector, and so I would ask staff if they have concern
39 about that, and it's not a biggie, but I don't think it's
40 stating what we're really asking staff to do.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Gill, did you want to make a brief
43 modification, if Tom is okay with that?

44
45 **MR. GILL:** I would like to hear from staff whether it's a thing
46 worth fussing about.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Mr. Rindone.

1
2 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You guys could say
3 something like ask staff to bring back the data to support a
4 council evaluation as to whether wenchman, blah, blah, blah.
5
6 **MR. GILL:** I like that a whole lot better.
7
8 **MR. RINDONE:** That's essentially what we've done the last times,
9 and so -- To support an evaluation.
10
11 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just a point of order, and that has to be a
12 substitute motion.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Sorry. You're correct. That needs to be a
15 substitute motion. Sorry.
16
17 **DR. FRAZER:** Go, Bob, go.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Would you like to offer a substitute motion,
20 Bob, with that first --
21
22 **MR. GILL:** I would like to make a substitute motion, which I
23 believe is there.
24
25 **MR. DIAZ:** Second.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We've got a substitute motion on the
28 board. Did someone second that? Okay. Mr. Diaz seconds that.
29 Okay. **Moving on, any opposition to this motion?** All right.
30 **Seeing none, the motion carries.**
31
32 **DR. FRAZER:** All right. Other Business, red grouper, a
33 committee member thought that the recreational season duration
34 projections for red grouper were not doing a sufficient job of
35 constraining the recreational landings to the recreational ACL
36 and that additional management measures were necessary to better
37 ensure adherence to the recreational ACL in successive fishing
38 seasons.
39
40 Another committee member thought that urgency was not necessary
41 at this time and noted that a stock assessment is expected to be
42 completed in 2024. A committee member replied that the
43 recreational fishing season for red grouper has gone from a
44 year-round fishery in recent years to one which may close in
45 June or July in 2023, but acknowledged that a stock assessment
46 may provide a better indication of stock health.
47
48 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to**

1 initiate a document that addresses elimination of recreational
2 red grouper overruns by consideration of changes such as
3 seasons, bag limits, size constraints, and other measures. That
4 motion carried twelve to two with two abstentions and one
5 absent.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any discussion? Dr. Simmons.

8
9 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think,
10 during the Q&A, there was some questions and discussion about
11 this, and I don't know if the council has any priority on
12 looking at these, and is seasons a priority, or bag limits, or
13 size constraints, or is there a priority to this motion, if we
14 can't do it all, I guess would be my question, and, again, I
15 don't think any of this can be effective until 2024, and so I
16 think we need to make that clear to folks, that, unless it's an
17 emergency or interim rule, we can't do anything this year.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Sweetman.

20
21 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I'm going to
22 continue to oppose this motion. I, obviously, am concerned
23 about overruns, but, as I said before, we have a stock
24 assessment coming up, right at the end of this year here, and I
25 understand your point about management uncertainty, but the
26 science helps inform the management, and, therefore, that would
27 be a valuable tool for us to have. That is why I'm going to
28 continue to oppose this, and I just don't think it's the right
29 time to do this.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan.

32
33 **MS. BOGGS:** This answer is probably for Dr. Walter, and is the
34 assessment on track to be on time in 2024, because I know we
35 just got a notice that red snapper has been delayed, and I tend
36 to agree with Dr. Sweetman. I think we need to do something,
37 but, here again, we're going to react, and then we're going to
38 have a stock assessment, and then we're going to react again,
39 and it's time intensive on the staff, and most likely, by the
40 time we figure out what we want to do, we'll get the stock
41 assessment, and we'll be -- I mean, I want to help the anglers,
42 and I want to solve this problem. You know, if the stock
43 assessment were four years down the road, it would be different,
44 and so I would like to hear from the Science Center, please.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Susan.

47
48 **DR. WALTER:** I will have to -- Apologies, and I don't have the

1 red grouper timing, right off the top of my head, and so let me
2 get back to you. I'm sure that somebody else, another staff
3 member, might have that, but give me a couple of minutes.
4 Thanks.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Gill.

7

8 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, given the workload
9 that staff has, and the likelihood of this in progression, and,
10 as Dr. Simmons just pointed out, it's not going to get done this
11 year anyway, this is really a proactive motion, to try to get
12 ahead of the work that's needed. If, for example, this season,
13 we have another overage, we need to be moving, but, if we get
14 started on some kind of basis, we'll get ahead of the game
15 better, and it may well mesh with the assessment coming down the
16 road, and they can be dovetailed together, to be consistent, but
17 to not do this says we're basically putting our heads in the
18 sand and ignoring what appears to be a problem.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, to that point?

21

22 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, I had a similar comment to Mr. Gill, and
23 I appreciate C.J.'s position as well, in terms of the science
24 guiding us, but I think, from a timing standpoint, if we wait
25 for the science, we're probably a couple of years down the road
26 still before those catch limits and things actually are
27 implemented and inform the management, and so I think we need to
28 be proactive here.

29

30 Obviously, I'm faced with tough decisions, and I don't like
31 closing the fishery for an extended period of time, when the
32 catch limit is met, and, if there's options that we can do to
33 modify the season, or other management measures, I would like
34 the council to be considering that.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I have Dale and then Dr. Simmons.

37

38 **MR. DIAZ:** Part of my rationale for supporting the motion, when
39 it was made, is it was stated that, if we have an overrun two
40 out of four years, we're required to start some action, and that
41 was part of my rationale for supporting it. I hear the
42 opposition to it very clearly, and I tend to agree with a lot of
43 what they're saying, but I still think we need to at least start
44 the process, because we have had two overruns in four years.

45

46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dale. Ryan.

47

48 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just hoping to get a

1 little bit of additional clarification for staff, as we start
2 looking at an IPT to put this together. You know, there is one
3 thing that's made pretty clear here that you guys are trying to
4 do, which is, obviously, to eliminate overruns of the ACL, but
5 it would be our presumption that you would want to try to do
6 that while also say optimizing the available season duration,
7 depending on the options, and so just, I guess, an opportunity
8 for you guys to make that clear.

9
10 We heard a lot from Dr. Walter, and we've heard from like the
11 Section 102 Working Group about trying to identify what the goal
12 of the action is, and being very explicit about that, and that
13 helping direct whatever staff tries to present to you guys, and,
14 to that end, I would encourage you to think about how we've seen
15 some of these management measures affect things like season
16 duration in the past.

17
18 Like I'm sure many of you remember with red snapper, and, as the
19 mean weight of fish increased, it results in fewer fish that can
20 be harvested within the same amount of time, which results in
21 season truncation, and so things like increasing the minimum
22 size limit could result in a larger mean weight, which could
23 actually decrease the season duration further, and so just -- We
24 can demonstrate all those kinds of things to you, but just
25 things for you to think about.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Simmons.

28
29 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
30 appreciate, you know, the fact that we need to work on this, and
31 the other thing to keep in mind is this analysis, I believe,
32 will be in MRIP-FES units, and I believe that the operational
33 assessment that the council has asked for is going to be in the
34 State Reef Fish Survey units, if, you know, it's approved by the
35 SSC and all those types of things come together, and so I'm not
36 sure that any analysis we put together for this effort can so
37 easily be put in place after the stock assessment, and I think
38 it would be a complete rewriting, based on the State Reef Fish
39 Survey data, if that's approved going forward, and so I just
40 wanted to put that out there, so that people understand that.
41 Thanks.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Dr. Simmons. Ms. Boggs.

44
45 **MS. BOGGS:** Carrie kind of answered my question, and I'm not a
46 grouper expert, but -- This may or may not help, Ryan, but I'm
47 just going to ask kind of a generic question, and so, if we came
48 to you and said let's look at bag limits, because my

1 understanding is grouper, red grouper, is five fish per person
2 in the aggregate of the -- He's shaking his head, and what is --
3

4 **MR. RINDONE:** It's two red grouper per person within the four
5 per person aggregate.
6

7 **MS. BOGGS:** It's two, and it had been reduced, and I can't keep
8 up, and so, you know, sitting here thinking about that, what are
9 we going to accomplish? You know, the seasons, obviously, we're
10 going to have to look at a shorter season, based on what we're
11 doing, and just like the conversation we just had, and we're
12 going to put something in place, and then, you know, we may have
13 to come jerk the rug right back out from under them, and, just
14 based on what Carrie said -- I understand, Andy, that we need to
15 do something, but I don't -- We can't do something effectively
16 and in time, and I understand what Dale is saying, that we've
17 had these overruns, and, I mean, we're in a -- We need to get to
18 Andy's initiative, so we can kind of try to fix some of these
19 issues.
20

21 I think I'm going to speak in opposition to the motion, and I'm
22 sympathetic, and I agree that we need to do something, but I
23 don't know that this is going to result in what we think we can
24 accomplish. Thank you.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dale.
27

28 **MR. DIAZ:** Based on what Dr. Simmons just said, I'm going to
29 speak in opposition to this motion at this point. I am not
30 intending to intentionally not meet one of our requirements, but
31 it's the timing of it. By the time the staff does the work,
32 we're going to have the new stock assessment, and it's going to
33 be double work, and it's just doesn't make sense at this point,
34 and so I oppose the motion.
35

36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Geeslin.
37

38 **MR. GEESLIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I voted no on this in
39 committee, and I will vote no again today, for many of the
40 reasons that Dr. Sweetman articulated, but now understanding the
41 conundrum that we're in with the timing.
42

43 Also, you see those lines up and above our ACL continually, and
44 it has me thinking about an alternative interpretation that
45 maybe that line of the ACL is incorrect. The only way we fix
46 that and get a better idea, or a more accurate ACL, is with that
47 stock assessment, and so, for those reasons, and we've got the
48 stock assessment coming, and I'm just thinking there's more fish

1 out there that were continually caught, that were up and above
2 and exceeding the ACL, and maybe in fact that the ACL is
3 incorrect. I'm going to speak in opposition.
4

5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. I am not seeing any more comments, and
6 we'll finish strong with our voting tool here, with the last
7 one, and then we can -- If you all wouldn't mind pulling up our
8 voting tool.
9

B.10.1 To direct staff to initiate a document that addresses the elimination of recreational red grouper overruns			
First Name	Last Name		
Kevin	Anson	No	
Susan	Boggs	No	
Billy	Broussard	No	
Dale	Diaz	No	
J.D.	Dugas	No	
Phil	Dyskow	No	
Tom	Frazer	Yes	
Dakus	Geeslin	No	
Bob	Gill	Yes	
Michael	McDermott	No	
Chris	Schieble	No	
Joe	Spraggins	No	
Andy	Strelcheck	Yes	
Greg	Stunz	Abstain	
C.J.	Sweetman	No	
Troy	Williamson	No	
Yes (3)	No (12)	Abstain (1)	

10
11 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Has everyone registered their vote, and
12 it's appropriate? Okay. **The motion fails three to twelve with**
13 **one abstention.** Andy, go ahead.
14

15 **MR. STRELCHECK:** We kind of cruised by it, but scamp and
16 yellowmouth, and so we're still waiting on some information from
17 the SSC, and, at this point, we don't need to make a motion to
18 take any formal action, correct?
19

20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Simmons.
21

22 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so you
23 already made a motion to start an amendment to work on them, but
24 we're waiting to look at the black grouper and the yellowfin

1 grouper landings estimates, to recreate that and come up with a
2 method to add it to the scamp and yellowmouth assessment for the
3 council.
4

5 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dr. Frazer, I think you've got five more
6 words to go, or six, and I can't count.
7

8 **DR. FRAZER:** Mr. Chair, this concludes my report, at 11:59.
9

10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you. Well, that must be some kind of
11 record, with the number of motions, and I don't know, or it felt
12 like it at least. I do have one question for you all, and I
13 didn't want to push it, and I didn't want to crash the system,
14 but the small button at the top, that looks like the little
15 paper airplane, what does that do?
16

17 **MS. BETH HAGER:** That reconnects your clicker to the system, and
18 so, if it's not looking like your vote is registering on your
19 actual little screen there, it will say, hey, I'm here to this
20 little stick that's in my computer over here.
21

22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay.
23

24 **MS. HAGER:** You can change your votes until we close, just in
25 case somebody clicks the wrong thing and accidentally meant yes
26 instead of no, just as a reminder. You can totally change them
27 until you say no more. Then we close them.
28

29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Well, you all think about that and how
30 that went. I mean, we've got a few more committees to go and
31 things, and so I was hoping to finish and not have to take a
32 lunch today, but it's looking like that's not going to be the
33 case, and we are right up against noon. I don't know that we
34 can go anywhere here in an hour, and so let's go ahead and just
35 meet back at 1:30, ready to take up Sustainable Fisheries, and
36 we do have a little bit of a heavier than normal lift in Other
37 Business, and so hopefully we'll finish that out in time for
38 everyone to wrap-up, and so we'll see everyone after lunch.
39

40 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on April 6, 2023.)
41

42 - - -
43

44 April 6, 2023
45

46 THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION
47

48 - - -

1
2 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
3 Council reconvened at the Courtyard Marriott in Gulfport,
4 Mississippi on Thursday afternoon, April 6, 2023, and was called
5 to order by Chairman Greg Stunz.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Well, I'll call the meeting back to
8 order, and it looks like we've pretty much got everyone, or just
9 about have everyone here, and, as I mentioned, and just to -- We
10 did get through all these agency reports, and that's great, but
11 we do have a little bit of a lift in Other Business, but we're
12 going to start though with Sustainable Fisheries, and so, Dr.
13 Sweetman, if you're ready with that, and go ahead when you're
14 ready.
15

16 **SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE REPORT**

17

18 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, and so
19 the Sustainable Fisheries Committee report. The committee
20 adopted the agenda, Tab E, Number 1, and approved the minutes,
21 Tab E, Number 2, of the January 2023 meeting as written.
22

23 A brief introduction on how management strategy evaluation can
24 address key challenges before the council, Tab E, Number 4, Dr.
25 John Walter, of the Southeast Fisheries Science Center,
26 presented a brief introduction on how management strategy
27 evaluations (MSEs) can address key issues before the council.
28

29 MSEs may allow the council to test management decisions, before
30 implementing them, to better understand how those decisions may
31 affect stocks managed by the council. Dr. Walter discussed the
32 possible roles of the council's Scientific and Statistical
33 Committee (SSC), stakeholders, modelers, and the council. He
34 further noted that the collaborative process can be time-
35 consuming, but, if approached deliberatively and objectively,
36 can yield substantial gains in efficiency and efficacy of
37 management decisions. D r. Walter reiterated the need to apply
38 the right tool for the job and recommended consideration of MSE
39 as part of the upcoming fisheries ecosystem initiatives.
40

41 A committee member asked about the incorporation of human
42 behavior into the development and testing of MSEs and management
43 procedures. Dr. Walter described the need for consideration of
44 social and economic sciences when evaluating the performance of
45 these products and thought there was definitely room for these
46 disciplines to be involved in the development of these products.
47

48 Another committee member asked how Dr. Walter envisioned

1 regulatory streamlining working in concert with management
2 procedures to modify catch advice. Dr. Walter replied that the
3 regulatory streamlining would set the recipe for the
4 consideration of the updated catch advice, and then the
5 management procedure would be applied at a predetermined
6 interval followed by SSC review.

7
8 The Southeast Regional Office (SERO) added that there are
9 authorities that can be delegated or specified for the Regional
10 Administrator to proceed with implementing such advice, so long
11 as it follows the management procedure as defined for that
12 fishery management plan.

13
14 A committee member asked whether the individual fishing quota
15 (IFQ) program, or the recreational management initiatives, could
16 benefit from the MSE approach. Dr. Walter replied that intended
17 outcome of either process needs to be clearly defined. In
18 situations where either the conceptual or operational management
19 objectives are unclear, or undefined, this can be part of the
20 initial phases of MSE.

21
22 For the recreational management initiatives, Dr Walter
23 referenced the ongoing South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
24 reef fish MSE as part of a process which is developing a
25 structured framework to evaluate management actions that affect
26 a multispecies reef fish complex. He also noted that there will
27 be a presentation on a Gulf of Mexico multispecies framework
28 case study at the full day devoted to MSE in the upcoming May
29 SSC meeting.

30
31 Overview of Potential Options for Regulatory Streamlining, and
32 this should be Tab E, and not Tab B, Number 5, council staff
33 presented a draft white paper on potential options for
34 regulatory streamlining and synthesized recent regulatory
35 actions from 2017 through 2021.

36
37 Staff proposed that the committee consider developing a Reef
38 Fish FMP amendment that includes a framework for establishing
39 catch advice for a limited number of species that have a
40 successful interim analysis, with proposed catch advice vetted
41 by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and reviewed and
42 approved by the council's SSC. NOAA General Counsel clarified
43 that some of the estimated times to implement these types of
44 framework actions after the amendment is implemented need to be
45 modified to represent the agency's clearance process. A
46 committee member requested that the document include more than
47 just catch advice. After discussion, the committee made the
48 following motion.

1
2 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to**
3 **begin development on a plan amendment within the Reef Fish FMP**
4 **to streamline regulatory procedures.** This motion carried with
5 no opposition.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Sweetman. Any discussion
8 on the motion? **Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the**
9 **motion carries with no opposition.**

10
11 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Factors to Consider for the Inclusion of Species
12 in Federal Management, Tab E, Number 6, council staff presented
13 factors to consider when determining whether a species is in
14 need of federal conservation and management.
15

16 Staff presented the criteria listed in the National Standard
17 Guidelines and reviewed current state regulations for tripletail
18 and African pompano. Tripletail are predominantly caught in
19 state waters, while African pompano are mainly caught in federal
20 waters. Florida private anglers account for most tripletail and
21 African pompano landed in the Gulf.
22

23 Staff noted that a formal process for evaluating whether species
24 need federal conservation and management was not found among
25 regional fishery management councils. The evaluations could
26 follow the usual council deliberative process. Key
27 considerations while examining factors for including species in
28 federal management include the evaluation of landings by state,
29 area, mode, and the coordination with states where most landings
30 occur.
31

32 The committee noted that consistency between the approaches
33 followed for African pompano and tripletail would be helpful.
34 The committee inquired about catch limits for African pompano or
35 tripletail. Florida and Alabama representatives indicated that
36 their states have no catch limits for these species.
37

38 The committee asked about the management perspectives from
39 Florida and Alabama, which land most tripletail and African
40 pompano in the Gulf. Alabama doesn't have additional
41 information outside of landings, and Florida has implemented
42 conservation-oriented regulations. Committee members indicated
43 that there is no strong need to include tripletail in federal
44 management and approved the following motion.
45

46 **The committee recommends, and I so move, to remove tripletail**
47 **from further consideration for conservation and management.**
48 This motion carried with no opposition.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We have another committee motion. Any
3 discussion on that motion? **Seeing no discussion, is there any**
4 **opposition to that motion? Seeing none, the motion carries with**
5 **no opposition.**
6

7 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Okay. SSC Recommendations, SSC Report on
8 Allocation Approaches Presentation, Tab B, Number 8(a), Dr. Jim
9 Nance, the SSC Chair, summarized comments and recommendations
10 provided by the SSC following Dr. John Ward's presentation on an
11 allocation approach based on a simulation model that could
12 include economic, biological, social, and ecological factors.
13

14 Dr. Nance noted that the SSC thought that more information,
15 including model documentation, was needed to develop a clearer
16 understanding of the approach presented. A committee member
17 suggested that the approach presented could be further explored.
18 Dr. Nance concurred and noted that the model needs further
19 development and more information is required to fully evaluate
20 the model. The committee noted that the transition from the
21 theoretical model presented to the real-world applications would
22 be challenging. A committee member stated that Dr. Ward would
23 plan a real-world application of the model using a Gulf species.
24 Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Dr. Sweetman. Good, and that was
27 efficient. If there is no other business for Sustainable
28 Fisheries, we will move on. Seeing none, all right, and, well,
29 that brings us to Other Business, and there's a few things
30 there, and I think I will address a few relatively quick, easy
31 ones first, and one of those first ones, Chris, Mr. Schieble, is
32 you were going to -- Are you ready to discuss your season
33 lengths?
34

35 **OTHER BUSINESS**
36 **DISCUSSION OF LOUISIANA'S RED SNAPPER SEASON**
37

38 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Yes, and it's easy, and the news release has
39 already gone out, and so some of you probably have seen it, and
40 our private recreational red snapper season in Louisiana will
41 start on the Friday before Memorial Day, which is Friday, May
42 26, and it will open that Friday for seven days a week, with
43 three fish per angler as the bag limit.
44

45 We were directed by the commission to withhold enough allocation
46 to make sure that the season goes through Labor Day, and so
47 there may be an in-season closure somewhere in the middle of the
48 summer, and then we'll hold off until close to Labor Day weekend

1 and reopen, if needed.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Chris. All right. Then I think
4 what I want to do now is, if you all recall -- Hold on one
5 second. We need to fix one small problem with the report. Go
6 ahead, Dr. Sweetman.

7
8 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Okay, and so it was brought to my attention that
9 there is some inaccuracies in the committee report here, under
10 the factors considered for inclusion of a species in federal
11 management, and so the line, in particular, is in the second
12 paragraph, the third sentence, where it says, "Florida and
13 Alabama representatives indicated that their states have no
14 catch limits for those species", and that is the part that is
15 inaccurate, because Florida does have catch limits for those
16 species, and so I just wanted to make that clear.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. If we have captured that well enough for
19 the record, then we'll move on. All right. Back to Other
20 Business then, and so we are left with Mr. Dyskow's motion, and
21 we were kind of wordsmithing that, and massaging it a little
22 bit, and we were going to bring that up, and I think that the
23 way to do this is to address that first, and I know, Andy, it
24 probably falls under this larger recreational motion that you
25 have, and that's fine, and we can talk about how that would fit
26 in, but I want to move -- Since we started with this one first,
27 and so, Phil, I believe that you sent a new, revised motion, and
28 I understand there may be others that might have a few comments,
29 or maybe suggestions, or improvements, but I think maybe let's
30 get your motion.

31
32 **DISCUSSION OF RECREATIONAL PERMITS**

33
34 **MR. DYSKOW:** Let me read the latest version, to make sure it
35 matches what's up there, and I also understand that there's a
36 very --

37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Phil, hold on for just a second. We need to
39 have a motion to untable first, and do that formality, and,
40 Susan, that was your -- So we need that motion, and then we can
41 proceed.

42
43 **MR. DYSKOW:** Okay.

44
45 **DR. FRAZER:** I will make the motion to untable the motion.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Is there a second to that motion?
48

1 **UNIDENTIFIED:** Second.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Any discussion regarding untabling that motion?
4 All right. **Seeing none, any opposition to untabling the motion?**
5 Okay. Now, Mr. Dyskow, go ahead.

6
7 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have never been untabled
8 before. I have fallen off of a table, but that's different.
9 Since that motion that I proposed, regarding recreational
10 fishing, and I was the first to admit that I am not an expert on
11 that, but I had an opportunity to work collaboratively with some
12 people that are, and they have done a better job of wordsmithing
13 than I could have done, and I'm assuming that's what up on the
14 board, but let me just read it, to make sure it's accurate.

15
16 **Request that NMFS, the council, and the Gulf States Marine**
17 **Fisheries Commission collaborate with the five Gulf states to**
18 **evaluate how the existing state recreational permit/data**
19 **collection programs may be refined to achieve compatible data on**
20 **reef fish catch, effort, and discards, such that NMFS will use**
21 **the state data for both management and assessment purposes.**
22 That is the revised amendment, and there's also a very good
23 substitute motion that I like, that I just read.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Dyskow. A couple of just
26 procedural things, and I don't recall who seconded that original
27 motion.

28
29 **MR. DYSKOW:** It was never seconded, and so we need a second.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** So do we have a second for Mr. Dyskow's motion?
32 Mr. Broussard seconds that motion. Thank you. Now if you had
33 some additional discussion that you wanted to add.

34
35 **MR. DYSKOW:** Again, I am not a fishery expert, and I know that
36 there's a substitute motion forthcoming from someone that is,
37 and I'm very comfortable with that as well, and so I don't know
38 how you want to proceed, whether you want to discuss this or
39 have the substitute motion introduced and discuss that, and I'm
40 comfortable either way.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, maybe -- What I'm hearing you say is the
43 substitute motion might be a new and improved or something, and
44 is that person willing to make that substitute motion?

45
46 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I sent everybody around the table a motion
47 earlier, before we went to lunch, and if we could put that up
48 and take a look at it, as a substitute, I guess.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Yes, if we want to go ahead and pull
3 that motion up, please. Andy, was your comment to that, while
4 they're pulling that up?

5
6 **MR. STRELCHECK:** My comment was to Phil's motion, and so I will
7 wait for the substitute.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay.

10
11 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I replied to the email that Bernie sent out with
12 Phil's original motion that we just got rid of, and I sent it to
13 that email.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** It's up on the board now, and I think it's
16 relatively short, if you all want to read that, and there may
17 have been some question whether you received an email or not.
18 Mr. Schieble, if you want to read that into the record, please.

19
20 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** This is for us to discuss, and it doesn't
21 necessarily have to be like this in the modifications and
22 friendly amendments, but, based on previous discussion, I
23 thought this would fit well in our conversation here and go
24 forward.

25
26 **The substitute motion is to request that National Marine**
27 **Fisheries Service and council staff provide collaborative**
28 **support to the five Gulf state fishery agencies for the express**
29 **purpose of developing a universal, state managed recreational**
30 **saltwater angler landing permit program to provide more precise**
31 **fishing effort when landing the following species in federal**
32 **waters, and I listed amberjack, groupers, snappers, cobia, gray**
33 **triggerfish, and dolphinfish.**

34
35 That list can, obviously, be expanded or contracted, and it was
36 a suggested group of species, because, in the email I sent, I
37 also detailed that it doesn't really make sense to do this, to
38 proffer the license frame, because you could have, for example,
39 a saltwater-licensed angler who exclusively targets spotted
40 seatrout, and goes seatrout fishing, and they don't need to have
41 their effort included in offshore landings, and so we have to
42 define that user group, and a better definition of that user
43 group is having some sort of landing permit to define that
44 group, and then target the effort around that group, and not
45 somebody who has got a saltwater license, but never goes
46 offshore fishing, if that makes sense, and so I'm open to answer
47 any questions.

1 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Before we have discussion, we need a
2 second for that motion. Mr. Broussard seconds that motion.
3 Okay. Is there discussion? Dr. Sweetman and then Susan.
4
5 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Just a quick question, specific on dolphinfish,
6 and it's not a fishery that we manage, and I'm curious of your
7 thought process for inclusion there.
8
9 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I included it because it's on our list for our
10 landing permit in Louisiana, but also is wahoo, which I did not
11 include on here, because we don't deal with it, and so we could
12 remove that, if you wanted.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Ms. Boggs and then Kevin.
15
16 **MS. BOGGS:** That was my exact question.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kevin.
19
20 **MR. ANSON:** The same here on the dolphinfish, but also
21 amberjack, and I would assume that's greater amberjack?
22
23 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Yes, and so, in Louisiana, it's amberjacks,
24 plural, and we do lesser and greater, but, here, obviously,
25 around this room, it would be just greater amberjack, and so we
26 can do friendly amendments and correct those.
27
28 **MR. ANSON:** I am just looking for clarity, I guess, and so cobia
29 is also then included in your offshore permit?
30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Just for the record, an "s" was added onto the
32 end of "amberjack" there, if that's okay, if that's okay with
33 Mr. Broussard, and that will build in the amberjack complex.
34 Mr. Dyskow and then Mr. Dugas.
35
36 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would certainly support
37 the substitute motion, and I would like to respectfully suggest
38 that we include some verbiage such that, when it's all said and
39 done, this state data can be used by NMFS for both management
40 and assessment. We're not doing this for our own benefit.
41 We're doing it so that they can use this, in an action-oriented
42 way, to provide better oversight of recreational fishing.
43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Dyskow. I've got a
45 couple more, and I've got you on the list, Dale, and, yes, to
46 Dale's points about, you know, making sure, as we move forward,
47 these are being used for meaningful input in informing the
48 management process, and so I have J.D. and then Andy and then

1 Dale.

2

3 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm in support of the
4 substitute motion, and just a question for Chris, and, you know,
5 the word "universal", and I'm trying to wrap my mind around what
6 "universal" means.

7

8 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Chair, do you want me to answer? "Universal"
9 would mean that it will be used among all five states, right,
10 universal to the five states, and, also, I would like to note,
11 since we're talking about this, in the language, that the
12 recreational saltwater angler landing permit and not a vessel
13 landing permit, specifically.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Andy.

16

17 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So, specific to the motion, what I like about
18 this is there's an express purpose, right, and we're wanting to
19 provide more precise fishing effort, which I think is what we've
20 been struggling with, what the goal and objective is, and so I
21 appreciate you laying that out.

22

23 You know, what I'm hearing from you, Chris, is you're kind of
24 patterning this after what you already have, right, and that's
25 fair, coming from Louisiana, and I tend to prefer motions like
26 this to be a little less prescriptive upfront, rather than
27 defining the species, and let the collaborative process play
28 out, working with the states to figure out what those species
29 might be.

30

31 The other thing I keep hearing is, well, ensure we can use this
32 data for federal management and stock assessments, and we've
33 just gone through, over the last couple of years, a whole
34 transition plan development process, working with the states,
35 for that very issue, and so we have a transition plan, looking
36 at it with the express intent to figure out how to use that data
37 in stock assessments going forward, but it's not as simple as
38 just you produce the data and you plug it into a stock
39 assessment, and I feel like it's being oversimplified, and so I
40 just want to be very clear that I think there's a separate
41 transition plan that the council needs to be engaged with, but
42 it's already going down the process, and there's intent behind
43 that to, obviously, figure out how to incorporate the state-
44 level data going forward.

45

46 This would focus more specifically on how we use that license
47 data for generating better effort estimates and then, in turn,
48 better catch estimates.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, Andy, and we have Dale there, but to that
3 point, Chris.
4

5 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** To your point, Andy, I agree with you, and I
6 think that's why I did not include landings and discards,
7 because we already have that from the state systems that are
8 already in place, that we just approved calibration updates for,
9 for three states, and that's coming from that, and we went to
10 the transition workshop groups for that whole process, and so
11 this is specific to a better defined effort, right, and that's
12 what I'm trying to make that known here, is we're looking for a
13 better target on effort.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Chris, and I've got you, Dr.
16 Sweetman, but Dale first.
17

18 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can get behind either one
19 of these motions, but, in your motion, Chris, there's two things
20 that's in the first motion that I kind of wish were in yours. I
21 like the idea of Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
22 participating, and they've got some pretty good data experts,
23 and I think they probably could add a little bit to this effort,
24 if they were included to participate, and I do like the last
25 sentence of the first motion, where it's clear that we're trying
26 to develop this data to where it will be used for management and
27 assessment, and so I will get behind either one of them, but I
28 do like those two aspects of the first motion, if there's any
29 way to incorporate those in. Thank you.
30

31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. To that point, Mr. Schieble?
32

33 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I am open to both of those suggestions. I didn't
34 intentionally exclude Gulf States, and I didn't -- I just kept
35 it as simple as possible, but we could put that back in there
36 very easily. I was trying to not complicate things, and I'm
37 fine if NMFS staff feel that inclusion of management and
38 assessment is okay to have in here, and I would be open to
39 adding that as well.
40

41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** So, just to be clear, Chris, are you suggesting
42 that you want to put, you know, the comma before "council
43 staff", and then say, "and Gulf States"? Okay. We can include
44 that in the motion. Hold on just a second, and let us get that.
45 General Spraggins, you were next. Then Mr. Anson had his hand
46 up.
47

48 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Mine is just a clarification, and I think

1 it's something that we might be able to look at, but, where it
2 says in there, in the second one, the second motion there, the
3 substitute, when it says "precise fishing effort when landing
4 the following species in federal waters", and we don't land fish
5 in federal waters, right, and so maybe we need to put it as
6 "landing the following species from federal waters", and does
7 that make sense?
8

9 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Good catch, General. Kevin, you're up next.

10
11 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** Do I need to repeat it?
12

13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** No, and I --
14

15 **MR. ANSON:** I understand what we're trying to do here and
16 everything, and the first motion says evaluate how they could be
17 refined, these permit data collection programs can be refined to
18 achieve the goal, and the other is to develop, and so I just
19 don't know, I mean, because there are some -- You know, there's
20 some hurdles here that have to be overcome, and so I just -- The
21 expectation, I guess, and I'm just trying to make sure that, you
22 know --
23

24 "Develop" might be a little bit aggressive, I guess, in the
25 expectation part of that, between the two motions, is all, and,
26 I mean, I'm supportive of it, you know, looking at it, trying to
27 figure out how we might be able to do this, but there are some
28 significant challenges that need to be overcome for it to be
29 actually developed and put in an implementation phase, and
30 that's all. Thank you.
31

32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, Kevin. Dr. Sweetman.
33

34 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thanks. I am in favor of the intent of the
35 motion here, but I kind of agree with what Andy was saying about
36 not being too prescriptive here, and so, while Louisiana might
37 include dolphinfish and cobia in their landings, Florida does
38 not, and so the other states probably don't either, and so I
39 think maybe not defining which species here, and allowing this
40 process to develop, to see which species we actually want to
41 include, rather than being too prescriptive here.
42

43 Another component to this here too is the angler-based versus a
44 vessel-based, and I'm not sure if all the states are in complete
45 agreement there too, along those lines too, and I think that's
46 kind of an important component here as well.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Susan, you're up next, or, Chris, was it to

1 that point?

2

3 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Real quick, and so I included species in the list
4 because I think we need to develop a list of species that this
5 will apply for, right, and you're not just going to have a user
6 group that's out there fishing for whatever they have on their
7 saltwater license, and it has to be more specific to define that
8 effort, I think, to specifically reef fish, for example, right,
9 and you may have snappers and groupers, and so, however we want
10 to do that, that's -- I am open to those suggestions of doing
11 that, but I don't think we can just have an open-ended when
12 you're saltwater fishing, right, or offshore fishing. That may
13 not be prescriptive enough.

14

15 Also, to the vessel versus angler universe, I think it's harder
16 to define the effort if it's at a vessel level, especially if
17 you have vessel-level reporting, and so you're doing dockside
18 intercepts of the individual anglers or you're doing dockside
19 intercepts of vessels, and that's what is going to have to be
20 figured out here, because, if you're doing dockside intercepts
21 of individual anglers, but you're doing effort estimates based
22 on vessels, that doesn't work.

23

24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Back to you, Susan.

25

26 **MS. BOGGS:** I remember when the five Gulf states were working on
27 their plans, and I mentioned to a NMFS staff person, and I said,
28 man, if we could just take all this money, and everybody come
29 together and create one permit, so we're talking on the same
30 level, and I was told that that made sense, and we're not going
31 to do it, and so here we are.

32

33 I agree with Dr. Sweetman, because every state does it
34 different, and now here we are trying to add yet another layer,
35 and I understand the intent, and I know this needs to be done,
36 but here we are, and you've got five state programs, and you've
37 got FES, and I don't know how we find the commonality.

38

39 Now, this may not be the right time to ask this question, and
40 I'm going to ask it, and I'm not going to propose it, but, once
41 the council, this council, passes a motion, and hopefully we get
42 there, to move forward with something like this, would it be
43 appropriate, at that time, to maybe set up a technical committee
44 that can help work us through this and work with all the -- I
45 mean, we've got to set the path for them, and I understand that,
46 and I'm not trying to pass the buck to them, but, as everyone
47 says, people way smarter than I am, and, you know, you can get
48 the five state -- The five Gulf states and everyone to come

1 together, and so I'm just offering that as a suggestion, when we
2 get a little further down the road, but I just -- You know,
3 angler versus vessel, the species, and it's -- I don't know
4 where we're going to get with this.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Mr. Dyskow.

7
8 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would suggest,
9 respectfully, that we do make it angler-based, and it's more
10 meaningful. I would like to, respectfully, suggest that we
11 consider discards, discards and -- Primarily that, because we
12 don't have it -- I think, if you look at what -- I will leave it
13 at that, but my logic is that all we ever hear about is rec
14 anglers are unaccountable, and we want to make them accountable,
15 and, within that accountability that we always hear, there's
16 this thing about discards, there's too many discards, and we
17 don't even know what the discards are. It's an estimate based
18 on a guess, and let's get discard data into this package, if at
19 all possible.

20
21 I am very respectful of the Gulf States, and, if they say no, so
22 be it, but I think it would be a good idea, and the other issue
23 that's not in here, that I am hopeful that we could somehow
24 clarify, is we want to provide data that would be useful, and
25 implementable, in the NMFS decision-making process. If they're
26 not going to use this, it is a waste of time, and so hopefully
27 we can get some direction as to whether this is useful to NMFS,
28 and actionable, or not. If it's something that they don't want,
29 then we shouldn't do it, but my guess is that it would be
30 helpful.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Dr. Frazer.

33
34 **DR. FRAZER:** I understand the intent behind the motion, and I
35 want to get back to something that Andy said earlier, and I
36 believe it was Andy, and so there is a transition team in place,
37 right, that is working with state representatives to figure a
38 way to take advantage of state-generated data for the good of
39 the region, right, and, as part of that transition team, there's
40 also a research planning team, trying to figure out what the
41 priorities are, moving forward, and I am thinking that, rather
42 than try to just ignore what's going on in that space and say we
43 want somebody else to do this independently, that the motion --
44 You might consider rephrasing it in a way that suggests that the
45 research planning team, right, as part of this transition
46 effort, consider the merits of, you know, a universal saltwater
47 angler landing permit program.

48

1 I am just worried that there's multiple duplicative efforts out
2 there, and I'm not sure that we have enough understanding and
3 appreciation of that other process right now, and so, if I
4 could, maybe I could ask Richard to just give a quick overview
5 of how that transition team is structured, right, and what the
6 planning, research planning, exercise looks like, if that would
7 be all right.

8
9 **DR. RICHARD CODY:** Thanks, Tom. The research planning team is a
10 subgroup within the transition planning process for the Gulf
11 state surveys, and it contains individuals that run the surveys
12 at the state level as well as representatives from National
13 Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Science and Technology, and
14 the Southeast Science Center, and the Regional Office, and so
15 there are those individuals present as well, but we also have,
16 as the chair, Tom Frazer, and the co-chair is Gregg Bray from
17 the Gulf States Commission.

18
19 The focus of that group, originally, is to look at non-sampling
20 error, and so that's error that affects each of the surveys, and
21 there are a number of different ongoing and planned research
22 initiatives that we have just finished an inventory of, and at
23 the state level as well as at the federal level, and the idea,
24 for this group, is to identify the research priorities that will
25 address those non-sampling error, or potential sources of non-
26 sampling error, in as efficient of a manner as we can, given
27 that we want to complete this transition process by 2026.

28
29 Non-sampling error, you know, as I said, it impacts all of the
30 surveys, but the goal is to get the survey estimates to a point
31 where there is improved compatibility between the different
32 surveys. Right now, we have estimates that the scaling
33 differences between them are very high, and so there are
34 different things that can be done, with the different surveys,
35 to sort of look into the reasons why those surveys produce very
36 different estimates, and so that's the plan right now.

37
38 The motion here that talks about looking at let's say the role
39 of a universal permit could come into play, because, basically,
40 for all the players in the room, they're familiar with their
41 licensing structure, legislative as well as logistic constraints
42 that go along with changing exemptions and things like that, and
43 I think that part of the outcome of this research group would be
44 a consideration of better ways to produce a sample frame or a
45 reporting -- Or a frame that could be used for reporting
46 purposes as well, and so I think it's -- It is to be expected
47 that we would visit this as a potential we'll say factor in some
48 of the research that we have planned.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Cody. Next, we -- Andy,
3 you've had your hand up for a while, I know, and if you're ready
4 to go, and just I want to say something that I think is captured
5 in the motion here, but -- Sorry, Dr. Cody.
6

7 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** This is just a -- I am making you run. Sorry,
8 but this is a quick question for Dr. Cody, just to point out a
9 major, or large, example of non-sampling error is the private
10 docks, right, and so private docks that aren't intercepted with
11 dockside intercepts, for example, private, you know,
12 subdivisions with homes with docks, and boats go back to the
13 private dock, and so my thought process is having this type of a
14 defined permit would be included in those anglers, right, and
15 they would be within that universe of effort, even though the
16 dockside intercepts are not in the current system, because
17 they're reporting back to a private launch, instead of public
18 access, correct?
19

20 **DR. CODY:** Yes, and, right now, for -- At least for the FES,
21 those anglers are -- That effort would be included, but not
22 identified explicitly, and so having a permit could allow us an
23 opportunity to look at differences between private access versus
24 public access, like you said.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** To that point, Kevin?
27

28 **MR. ANSON:** It's to Dr. Cody's discussion.
29

30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Go ahead.
31

32 **MR. ANSON:** Richard, I appreciate that the transition, the
33 research portion of the transition, team would probably be, you
34 know, people that would be able to do the job, and they have,
35 you know, knowledge of their respective states, and, of course,
36 on the federal side, but I guess, to the extent that that group
37 would be able to take on this, because I see this as --
38 Ultimately, if they take it from start to somewhat midway, it's
39 a bigger -- It could be a bigger task, I guess, and, you know,
40 relative to, you know, what we've been able to accomplish so far
41 -- I mean, it's a relatively new group, but, you know, trying to
42 fit this in, whether or not this will then supersede all the
43 other projects that are planned, or if this is in addition to,
44 and I'm just worried about the throughput, I guess, of the
45 group, in order to try to do all of these things, you know, and
46 just wonder how that --
47

48 Tom, you're head of the team, but, you know, that's just a

1 concern that I would have and whether or not, seeing that it is
2 a focus here, at least of our stakeholders that come to the
3 meetings, and certainly from folks around the table, as to
4 whether or not the time schedule of putting it through the
5 research team would be able to kind of meet that time schedule,
6 perceived time schedule, that might not match up with what the
7 available resources end up being.

8
9 **DR. FRAZER:** Real quick, I would just say -- I mean, so the
10 issue has already been broached within the group, right, and I
11 think that they recognize that there is a need to adequately
12 capture that frame, which is essential to get to the upper
13 piece, right, and so, but knowing how you might do that, right,
14 helps guide, or inform, some of these other efforts that Richard
15 alluded to that deal with the non-sampling error types of
16 things, right, and so I just -- There's a lot of effort expended
17 on all of this, and we always know, or hear, that we don't have
18 enough time, and we don't have enough resources, and I certainly
19 do not want to duplicate it.

20
21 If we can recognize what the intent is here, and the council is
22 making a strong suggestion that we look at this issue that's
23 related to the frame, I think we're better off now to be able to
24 incorporate it into the thinking in the planning process, so
25 there's some compatibility, or some synergies, moving forward.
26 I am afraid, if we did it independently, we might find ourselves
27 struggling down the road again.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We probably need to move on in this, and
30 I still have Andy and Bob Gill on our list, and certainly I
31 think we're getting a little beyond the motion here. I mean,
32 it's all important information, but these sort of things will be
33 vetted, and we've got a lot of expertise, and probably more that
34 we're not even thinking about here, to bring to bear as we get
35 going, and so we'll hear a lot more on this, but, Andy, since
36 you've had your hand up for way too long, and we haven't
37 recognized you, and Bob Gill, and you two can have the last
38 words, and then we'll take up these motions, and so go ahead.

39
40 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I'm not sure that I remember what I was going
41 to say.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Even better. Should I move on?

44
45 **MR. STRELCHECK:** No, and I think I raised my hand right after
46 Tom spoke, and I really like what Tom had to say, and I know
47 there's concerns about, you know, the bandwidth of the
48 transition team, but, to me, it plays nicely into that

1 transition team work, and, if Clay were here -- We all know
2 we've just gone through the Great Red Snapper Count that Greg
3 and his team led, but Clay would emphasize that we need a great
4 angler count, right, and that's really kind of the impetus for a
5 lot of the research that we want to focus on in the near-term,
6 and I think that plays nicely with what we're trying to kind of
7 figure out here, is how do we better identify that universe of
8 anglers, and I see the transition team is kind of well suited to
9 tackle that, without having to set up a separate process.

10
11 The other comment I will make, and I know you can read motions
12 whatever way you want, but it says for the staff to provide
13 collaborative support to the five Gulf states. Well, who is
14 leading the effort? Is the five Gulf states leading the effort,
15 and we're providing the support for them, or are we supposed to
16 stand it up, and then, you know, they're going to participate in
17 the support we're providing, right, and so I think there's
18 nuances here, in terms of how this process would work, and I
19 would just rather try to take advantage of the transition team
20 that's already stood up and involving the states in that
21 process.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Andy. Bob, last word here.

24
25 **MR. GILL:** I don't know if my input warrants the last word, Mr.
26 Chairman, but I am a little confused about the procedural
27 aspects here. I interpreted what the discussion was about on
28 recommendations that were being made for friendly amendments to
29 the motion, and some of them were changed on the board, and some
30 of them were not, but I did not get a sense of the ones that
31 were not were rejected by the motion makers, and so some of
32 those that have been made I agreed were needed, and they have
33 not been implemented in a change on the board, and so my
34 interpretation is that the motion maker does not agree with
35 them, but that leads me to, although I agreed entirely with the
36 intent of the motion, if it remains as it is on the board, which
37 I am not sure is what the intent was, I can't support it.

38
39 I don't know whether I'm the only one in the room like that, but
40 I am having difficulty understanding where we collaboratively
41 got to, on what I perceived as friendly amendments, is in fact
42 what we were doing, getting to the endpoint that we were trying
43 to get to.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you for pointing out that, Mr. Gill, and
46 we want to make sure that we get this right and do procedurally
47 what we need to do, and so I guess the first question here is,
48 Mr. Schieble, are you okay with that, and I was just

1 interpreting these as friendly amendments, as we were jointly
2 trying to get this where we wanted it to be, and certainly, as
3 the motion maker, if you're not happy with that, now is the time
4 to speak up, and let's get it where it needs to be.

5
6 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I believe I said that I agreed to the friendly
7 amendments that were starting with Dale and General Spraggins,
8 and we went through, and the only thing that I notice on here
9 that someone made mention to that is not included is taking out
10 the dolphinfish species from the list, which I'm open to. Other
11 than that, I don't recall any of the other friendly amendments,
12 and I am open to those.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Carrie was mentioning -- Go ahead, Carrie, and
15 do you want to explain it?

16
17 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thought
18 I heard someone say something about adding the management and
19 assessment into that motion, and did that get captured, Chris?

20
21 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I didn't recall that, but we can put it in there.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Andy, while we're waiting for that, go ahead.

24
25 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Well, I don't really like the motion as it
26 stands, but, if we're trying to wordsmith it, a friendly
27 amendment, for me, would be to provide more precise fishing
28 effort for use in both management and science, or management and
29 assessments, and then leave the list of species out, and let the
30 collaborative process do its work to define those species going
31 forward.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Schieble.

34
35 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I'm fine with that, and I think that goes along
36 with what C.J. mentioned, that he does not prefer the species
37 list entirely, and so that's okay, if Billy is all right with
38 that.

39
40 **MR. BROUSSARD:** Yes.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, Mr. Schieble. If you're good with your
43 motion, and, Mr. Broussard, if you're fine, as the seconder of
44 that motion, and sorry, Mr. Schieble, if I didn't pick up on
45 that. There was a lot of dynamics, but I want to make sure that
46 you feel good before I move on, and I guess that Dr. Frazer has
47 his hand up to add one more layer of complexity to this.

1 **DR. FRAZER:** I mean, I just want to make sure that my
2 interpretation of how this might actually be implemented is
3 consistent with everybody's around the table, right, and so what
4 I was advocating for is consideration of this universal permit
5 be adopted as part of this transition team process and be
6 considered by the research planning team. By nature, that group
7 is already represented by all of those entities, right, and so,
8 as long as we are in agreement there, I'm okay with this motion.
9 It's not going to be a separate process, and we'll hand this off
10 and make it known to the transition team that this is a strong
11 interest, and a priority, of the council for them to consider.
12 If that's the case, I don't have to make a substitute motion.

13
14 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I agree, and I've been part of the transition
15 process, with our staff, and going through it, and I think I
16 agree with you that it can be included in that, as long as we're
17 trying to better define the user group for effort estimation in
18 the Gulf.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, and one thing, just to be clear, for Mr.
21 Gill's point, there was some discussion about, after the words
22 "management and assessments", that it would end there, versus
23 specifying, but I don't know, Chris, if that's what you wanted
24 or not, and that was -- What's highlighted there would
25 essentially go away, if that's what you wanted, or not, if that
26 was part of the discussion, just to make sure, and then I think
27 we've captured everything that was around the table, but that's
28 up to you, whether you wanted to keep that.

29
30 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Yes, we can -- C.J. talked about removing the
31 species list, I believe, and so, if we remove that, and
32 everybody is happy with, and the seconder agrees, I'm fine with
33 removing the list for now, but I think we need to develop the
34 list eventually, because it helps to define that user group, and
35 not as open-ended, and, if that's not appropriate today, that's
36 fine, and apparently I need to go back to motion class training
37 and for council training, and I might need to sign up again.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, you can blame it on your leadership up
40 here, but this is a complicated thing, and we want to get it
41 right, and so, Mr. Dyskow, since you started all this, why don't
42 you end this, with the last word, and we'll call it at that
43 point.

44
45 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you. I am usually very respectful, and very
46 attentive, to what Dr. Frazer says, and I am now, but I am just
47 saying this is important. This is an important activity, and
48 I'm concerned that, number one, if we do what you suggest, that

1 it's going to get buried, and it's going to get watered down,
2 and it's going to get delayed, and we won't be able to meet the
3 needs of all of these stakeholder groups that come to this
4 meeting every month, or every time we have a meeting, five times
5 a year, I guess, and they tell us how bad we are, because we
6 don't do this. It's important, and I think it merits a stand-
7 alone approach, but I will bow to the experts, if they feel
8 differently.

9
10 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes, and I understand that it's a priority, right,
11 and, in fact, the last -- A couple of days ago, we had this
12 meeting, and it was a major topic for us, and it came out of my
13 mouth, right, to kind of get to what Clay would have said, you
14 know, and we need to know what the angler universe is like out
15 there, and so this is just, in my mind -- We're building this
16 record here, right, and saying we would like the transition team
17 to recognize this as a priority issue for the council, and, by
18 doing so, I don't think it's going to get buried, Phil.

19
20 You know, I'm happy to report back to this group in June and say
21 where does it sit, and did it get buried or not, right, and so I
22 understand where you're coming from, but I just think that it
23 would be inefficient and duplicative to move it through another
24 process.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** With that, we will move forward to dispense
27 with this motion, starting with the substitute motion. I will
28 see -- **Is there any opposition to the substitute motion? Seeing**
29 **no opposition, the substitute motion carries.**

30
31 With that, moving on to I think what will be the last -- Other
32 than one little brief thing or two, but the last major thing
33 here, under Other Business, is Andy, and that was the discussion
34 regarding your motion you made over, I guess -- I don't know
35 what we're calling this motion, but Andy's rec fish motion, but
36 we probably need to give a little better name, Andy, but if you
37 would like to start that discussion, go ahead.

38
39 **DISCUSSION ON RECREATIONAL FISHING INITIATIVE**

40
41 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and I had mentioned to Susan, on our way
42 out from lunch, that I don't want it to be referred to as Andy's
43 motion, since thirteen people voted for it, and so I hope that
44 it can be a council motion, right, that everyone just agreed
45 with, and so, with that said, I know that I surprised a lot of
46 people, at the last council meeting, with the rec fish
47 initiative, but I thought there was, you know, an opportunity
48 there to bring that forward, based on everything that was being

1 discussed around this table over the last couple of years, as
2 I've sat here as the Regional Administrator.

3
4 I've had some really good conversations with industry groups
5 since the meeting, and there has certainly been some concerns
6 expressed, in terms of the motion itself, but, overall, I think
7 it's been generally favorably received, with the exception of
8 Number 7, and I am wanting to, I think, modify Number 7, for the
9 betterment of the process, just to provide some more buy-in and
10 support initially, and so what I was going to suggest -- I don't
11 know if we can -- Well, I will just read it.

12
13 Number 7 of the initiative says: "Exploration of innovative new
14 management strategies, including, but not limited to, regional
15 management, sector separation, a bottom fishing season, effort
16 rationalization, and management approaches for reducing discards
17 and discard mortality".

18
19 All of that, I think, is appropriate and viable and something
20 that we should explore, but, at this point, because it's giving
21 some people some heartburn and pause, in terms of it just being
22 included, what I would like to do is just modify the initiative
23 to read: "exploration of innovative new management strategies.",
24 right, and that leaves it still very open-ended for us to come
25 in and look at a whole variety of different options.

26
27 Then the other component of this, and I had a call with Dr.
28 Stunz and Dr. Frazer and others before this meeting, and there
29 has definitely been good input and feedback with regard to how
30 the process be orchestrated, and, you know, stakeholders that
31 I've talked to have talked about having possibly facilitated
32 meetings, something different than just an advisory panel or SSC
33 or council process, and so I don't necessarily think that needs
34 to be specified in the initiative here, but I do think it would
35 be good for us to talk about how we want this to proceed, and
36 then also kind of the sequencing of some of these activities, in
37 terms of prioritization of discussions going forward.

38
39 I just wanted to offer that, and I can certainly offer a motion
40 for changing the initiative, for Number 7, but I wanted to kind
41 of lead with that and get some feedback and reaction and input
42 from everyone.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Any feedback for Andy on that? Ms.
45 Boggs.

46
47 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, since I seconded the motion originally, I am
48 fine with that, and it doesn't exclude anything, and so I don't

1 know how we -- Do we need to make a motion to amend the motion?
2 I don't know how you do that.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, that's what I'm wondering about, how,
5 procedurally, we do this. I think, Andy, just -- You know, my
6 concern here just, you know, is representing the council, and we
7 want to get everyone onboard with this, and there's a lot of
8 good things in there, and we don't want it not to go because of
9 some little minor -- Well, it's not minor, but, you know, one
10 thing that rubs people the wrong way that will definitely be
11 vetted, and it's going to take some time, and so I would
12 recommend that we handle this with another motion.

13
14 I am trying to think, procedurally, how we do this, because
15 someone who prevailed on that side would have to, I guess -- How
16 does that -- Or just make another motion, and, Andy, would you
17 mind doing that, and I think that would clean it up.

18
19 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just as long as I don't have to read it again.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. You've got a deal. It's late in the
22 day, but -- That's the full motion from the last time, and so
23 how would you like to modify that motion?

24
25 **MR. STRELCHECK:** To amend Item 7 in the rec fisheries initiative
26 to read as follows: **Exploration of innovative new management**
27 **strategies."**

28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Is that it? Are there any other
30 changes, Andy? Okay, and so this is a new motion, and we'll
31 need a second for that motion. Ms. Boggs, you're seconding that
32 motion? Okay. You're seconding, but you also have a --

33
34 **MS. BOGGS:** I will second the motion. **The only thing I would**
35 **suggest is that we keep it consistent with the previous and say,**
36 **"recreational fisheries management initiative, to read as**
37 **follows".**

38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** We have a motion on the board, and a second,
40 and it's up for discussion. Mr. Gill.

41
42 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so it's important to
43 note here, I believe, that, as Andy prefaced this thing at the
44 last meeting, there's nothing off the table. At this point,
45 everything is on the table, and we ought to keep that in mind.
46 It may not be explicitly noted in the motion that we have, but
47 the whole purpose is to rethink this whole process, on whatever
48 angle is important and agreed to, relative to making it better.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you, Bob. Any other discussion
3 points or comments? If not, I will call for a vote for this.
4 **Is there any opposition for this motion? Seeing none, the**
5 **motion carries unanimously.** Andy.
6

7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** So I guess, with kind of the timing and
8 sequencing of this, you know, I think we do need to decide to
9 put this on a future agenda, and I don't want to say what
10 agenda, right, and talk about, you know, the steps we're going
11 to take, kind of how we want to walk through this, and my
12 initial thoughts on this were Items 2 and 3 would provide some
13 background information for the council, and so those might be
14 something that we could lead with, and kind of bring back to the
15 council at a time certain, working with Carrie and the team to
16 do that, but I think we also would want to spend some time, as I
17 mentioned, figuring out kind of how we want to engage
18 recreational stakeholders, for-hire captains, others in this
19 process, and what that would look like, and if it is going to be
20 something different than advisory panels, and so I don't think
21 we're prepared to do that today, but I just want to set the
22 stage for that, and certainly, with Items 2 and 3, I think they
23 can provide some helpful background for the council overall.
24

25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, all good points, Andy, because we want to
26 get people thinking about this. I will also just add, and we
27 sort of had some discussion of this the last time, but with some
28 of the work that Ken Haddad led with that advisory panel, and a
29 lot of work in Russ Dunn's office, and just other things we've
30 done, and we've got a pretty good start on a lot of these, I
31 think, and so we definitely want to review those documents and
32 not necessarily reinvent the wheel and just improve those where
33 we can.
34

35 Certainly this falls into the category that we led in with,
36 about a lot of things on the council staff plate right now, and,
37 of course, this is a huge one, and how this will materialize and
38 develop, you know, who knows, but we need to start having those
39 discussions fairly quickly, and so I will work to get on that
40 agenda, and I will also work to begin to prioritize these things
41 in some way, or at least bring back to the council some options
42 of, okay, here's everything on the table, and which -- We can't
43 work on all of them simultaneously, and how are we going to do
44 this, but I'm sure this one will rise to the top. With that,
45 Kevin, go ahead.
46

47 **MR. ANSON:** Then, as you're creating that agenda for us to
48 review the items for prioritization, I guess the other thing is

1 to what Andy had mentioned earlier, is what venue would this be
2 served at, as far as these items, and would it just be a
3 council-centric discussion, or would it be some discussion
4 outside of the council and that type of thing, and so just -- It
5 doesn't need to be answered right now, but I'm just saying, as
6 you're thinking of the agenda, to make sure that that is part of
7 the agenda items that we discuss, is how to proceed with, you
8 know, getting the feedback or having this in an --

9
10 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, Kevin, and we definitely want that input,
11 I think almost even right now, and we've got to put something
12 together, just so we have something to talk about this at this
13 point, and, you know, there's so much there, and so I think
14 we'll do that, without, you know, setting anything in stone,
15 maybe make some recommendations and bring that back to the
16 council, and we'll figure out where we need to go from there,
17 and so it's a pretty big challenge, and I'm sure the staff is
18 concerned, you know, in trying to make sure that they deliver on
19 everything we're requesting of them in a timely manner. Okay.

20
21 Bear with me for one minute here, and I want to ask Carrie
22 something about an email regarding voting, and I think we're
23 just about to wrap this up here, and so you all bear with me.

24
25 Okay. The council staff just wants to make sure, based on our
26 previous motion, that we're moving forward with the right intent
27 here, and a year ago, in Gulf Shores, when we had the motions
28 concerning this electronic voting, and it seemed, at least in my
29 mind, to work pretty well today, and the motion was to pilot an
30 electronic voting system for council and council committee
31 motions.

32
33 The committee motions are a little more difficult, because, as
34 you might imagine, having to put everyone's name up and change
35 that really quickly, as you're going through all these
36 committees, can be quite the challenge, versus doing it in Full
37 Council. That was one of the things, but we feel like we've met
38 the intent of that motion to pilot that, and so what I would
39 recommend is you all be thinking about that, if you think it
40 worked, if you just want to use it in Full Council, for this
41 roll call type votes, or even if we had to go into committees,
42 which would probably create more work than maybe it saves, is at
43 least my understanding right now, and we could do that, but
44 we'll bring that back to the next meeting, and maybe try to get
45 a thumbs-up or thumbs-down, and is this something that helps
46 improve our efficiency and do we want to move forward with it,
47 and so anyway, is there any other business that needs to --
48 Susan.

1
2 **MS. BOGGS:** So I would just add, since the Reef Fish Committee
3 is a committee-of-the-whole, probably use it there, because
4 that's where the most contentious committee votes are, and,
5 otherwise, I'm going to ask for roll call votes.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, that's a great suggestion, Susan, since
8 that is a committee-of-the-whole, and that would be pretty easy
9 to do. Mr. Schieble.
10
11 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Real quick, maybe, at the next meeting, we could
12 hear back from staff over there which they prefer, and it
13 doesn't have to be right now, and think about it, and do you
14 prefer it in certain situations over others and --
15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Right, because we want this to be a net gain.
17 If they're having to work so hard back there that it's slowing
18 some other bit of the process, well, then, you know -- So we
19 want to make it a win-win thing. Susan.
20
21 **MS. BOGGS:** I had one other thing that I wanted to ask, but it
22 doesn't pertain to this, and so, if I need to wait, I can.
23
24 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, and I don't think there's anything
25 else on the voting.
26
27 **MS. BOGGS:** So, several, several meetings back, we were asked
28 about a survey at the end of the meeting about the
29 accommodations where we were staying, and are we still doing
30 that, because I would really recommend it after this stay.
31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, Ms. Boggs, let's just say we're
33 definitely getting some more options for the next time we visit
34 here, and that's for sure, but I don't know about the survey.
35 All right. Any other business? Dr. Frazer.
36
37 **DR. FRAZER:** I just have -- It's not a business item, but just a
38 comment, and I just wanted to congratulate you, Greg, Dr. Stunz,
39 on accepting the Senior Executive Director position at the Harte
40 Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies. Well done, man.
41
42 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thank you, all. One more thing on my plate,
43 and the good news is I only have one more meeting here, and so
44 plenty of time. Thank you, everyone, and I will see everyone in
45 Mobile, Alabama in June, or almost everyone. All right. Safe
46 travels, everyone.
47
48 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 6, 2023.)