GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

265TH MEETING

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

Marriott Plaza                        San Antonio, Texas

AUGUST 9-10, 2017

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Leann Bosarge ............................... Mississippi
Patrick Banks ............................... Louisiana
Doug Boyd .................................... Texas
Roy Crabtree ................................. NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
Pamela Dana .................................. Florida
Dale Diaz ..................................... Mississippi
Tom Frazer .................................... Florida
Johnny Greene ................................. Alabama
Martha Guyas (designee for Nick Wiley) .......... Florida
Campo Matens ................................ Louisiana
Paul Mickle (designee for Jamie Miller) .......... Mississippi
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John Sanchez ................................ Florida
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47 Michael Short ........................................ Galveston, TX
48 Line Check Charters ................................ Galveston, TX
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PAGE 90: Motion that the O&E Technical Committee allow the use of proxy attendees subject to the approval by council staff. The motion carried on page 91.

PAGE 91: Motion to direct staff to develop a plan that would create a data portal to collect public anecdotal information for council-managed species and bring that information back to the council. The motion carried on page 94.

PAGE 94: Motion to recommend that the O&E Technical Committee members be allowed to participate via webinar with approval by council staff. The motion carried on page 95.

PAGE 96: Motion to approve the budget as shown in Tab G, Number 4(a). The motion carried on page 96.

PAGE 97: Motion to modify the SOPPs so that council members must be physically present to motion or vote. The motion carried on page 101.

PAGE 103: Motion in Action 1 to make Alternative 2, Option a the preferred. Alternative 2 is set the ACL equal to the ABC recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee from 2018 through 2020-plus, based upon the SEDAR 33 update assessment (2016). This alternative is projected to rebuild the stock by 2027. Option a is apply the ACL/ACT control rule, landings from 2013 through 2016, to establish a 13 percent buffer to the commercial sector and a 17 percent buffer to the recreational sector. The motion carried on page 103.

PAGE 103: Motion in Action 2 to make Alternative 4 the preferred. Alternative 4 is modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 through June 30. The motion carried on page 105.

PAGE 106: Motion to approve the greater amberjack ACL and management measures and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate. The motion carried on page 108.

PAGE 109: Motion that the greater amberjack framework include
an action to change the fishing year for greater amberjack to begin on August 1 and that it contain two options: 1) change only the recreational fishing year; 2) change both the recreational and commercial fishing years. The motion carried on page 109.

PAGE 112: Motion that the recreational season for greater amberjack be open from August 1 through October 31, closed November 1 through March 31, and open the month of April, then closes from May 1 through July 31. The motion carried on page 113.

PAGE 114: Evaluate the following options for the recreational greater amberjack season: Open for the months of April, September, and October (closed January through March, May through August, and November through December); and open for the months of May, September, and October (closed January through April, June through August, November, and December). The motion carried on page 115.

PAGE 117: Motion to have staff develop a framework action for greater amberjack management measures dealing with seasons and develop a separate framework action dealing with vessel bag limits and commercial trip limits. The motion carried on page 122.

PAGE 113: Motion to select Alternative 2, Option b as the preferred alternative and option. Alternative 2 is restrict participation in the referendum to persons who have a valid or renewable federal reef fish for-hire permit issued to a landings history vessel and who have substantially fished for red snapper, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, red grouper, or gag based on landings submitted to the SRHS during the qualifying years. A vessel qualifies as a LHV if it has individual landings history recorded by the Southeast Region Headboat Survey by December 31, 2015. For-hire federal permit holders whose vessels landed an annual average of at least 100 fish of all species combined are considered as having substantially fished. Annual average landings are based on landings recorded by the SRHS between 2011 and 2015. Option b is each eligible permit will have one vote, regardless of the relative size of the vessel’s catch history. The motion carried on page 113.

PAGE 124: Motion to include in the Amendment 41 eligibility requirements an option that would create the voting interest by unique number of permit holders and also by a weighted option by unique permit holders and total permits held. The motion carried on page 124.
PAGE 127: Motion to ask the SSC to review the alternatives in the Framework Action to Modify the ACT for Red Snapper Federal For-Hire and Private Angler Components Document and provide their recommendations.  The motion carried on page 127.

PAGE 127: Motion to identify quota set asides to address and assist small participants and new entrants and to reduce discards.  The motion carried on page 128.

PAGE 128: Motion to combine Action 2.4 into Action 2.3.  The motion carried on page 128.

PAGE 128: Motion to add an option for accounts that become inactive in the future so that quota would automatically go into the quota bank.  The motion carried on page 129.

PAGE 129: Motion to remove Action 2.6, Allocation Caps, from the document.  The motion carried on page 131.

PAGE 135: Motion to form a new Joint Ad Hoc Red Snapper/Grouper Tilefish IFQ Advisory Panel.  The motion carried on page 138.

PAGE 139: Motion in Action 2 to remove Alternatives 3 and 4.  The motion carried on page 140.

PAGE 140: Motion in Action 1, to make Alternative 4 the preferred.  Alternative 4 is, for a state with an approved state management program, the state will choose whether to manage its private angling component only or to manage both its private angling and federal for-hire components.  The state must constrain landings to the state’s private angling component ACL and federal for-hire component ACL, as determined in Action 2.  For states without an approved state management program, separate fishing seasons based on the component ACTs for the federal for-hire and private angling components would be estimated using the remainder of the recreational sector ACL.  The state management plan would end when the separate private angling and federal for-hire ACLs end (currently 2022).  The motion carried on page 140.

PAGE 140: Motion to direct staff to construct allocation alternatives that reflect spatial patterns in biomass and recreational trips with options for weighting the two.  The motion carried on page 142.

PAGE 142: Motion to reconstruct the allocation tables and truncate the landing series through 2009.  The motion carried on
Motion that the allocation table include a formula that looks at the percentages, for the best ten years for each state, from the series 1986 through 2015 as the percentage of allocation. The motion carried on page 143.

Motion to remove Action 3 from the document. The motion carried on page 144.

Motion to begin two separate amendments for the state management of recreational red snapper for Florida and Texas. The motion carried on page 146.

Motion in Action 1 of the Louisiana State Document to make Alternative 2 the preferred for Louisiana. Alternative 2 is establish a management program that delegates some management authority in federal waters to Louisiana. Louisiana must establish the red snapper season structure and bag limit for the harvest of its assigned portion of the recreational sector annual catch limit. If Louisiana’s red snapper harvest plan is determined to be inconsistent with the requirements of delegation, the recreational harvest of red snapper in the federal waters adjacent to Louisiana would be subject to the default federal regulations for red snapper. The motion carried on page 153.

Motion to add a new alternative to the Florida and Texas documents that would delegate full management authority to the state related to harvest of recreational red snapper. The motion carried on page 159.

Motion to remove Action 2 from all five, three existing and two proposed, state management of recreational red snapper documents. The motion carried on page 161.

Motion in Action 3 of the Louisiana State Document to make Alternative 2, Option 2a the preferred. Alternative 2 is while red snapper are overfished, based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, if the combined Louisiana recreational landings exceed the Louisiana recreational ACL, then in the following year reduce Louisiana’s ACL by the amount of the ACL overage in the prior fishing year, unless the best scientific information available determines that a greater, lesser, or no overage adjustment is necessary. The Louisiana recreational ACT, or component ACTs, will be adjusted to reflect the previously established percent buffer. Option 2a is, if Louisiana has both a private-angling ACL and a federal
for-hire ACL, the reduction will be applied to the components that exceeded the applicable ACL. The motion carried on page 167.

PAGE 168: Motion to convene a joint meeting of the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter/For-Hire and the Ad Hoc Reef Fish Headboat Advisory Panels before the end of 2017. The motion carried on page 169.

PAGE 169: Motion to convene a joint meeting of the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter/For-Hire and the Ad Hoc Reef Fish Headboat Advisory Panels before the end of 2017. The motion carried on page 169.

PAGE 173: Motion to delay the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the terminal year. The motion failed on page 176.

PAGE 177: Motion to delay the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the terminal year. The motion failed on page 176.

PAGE 177: Motion to delay the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the terminal year. The motion failed on page 176.

PAGE 177: Motion to delay the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the terminal year. The motion failed on page 176.

PAGE 181: Motion to move the cobia stock assessment to 2019 with a terminal year of 2017. The motion carried on page 182.

PAGE 182: Motion to move the cobia stock assessment to 2019 with a terminal year of 2017. The motion carried on page 182.

PAGE 182: Motion to move the cobia stock assessment to 2019 with a terminal year of 2017. The motion carried on page 182.

PAGE 189: Motion to move forward with the document that approves the new turtle release gear and modifies our framework process to allow the specification of new release gears for turtles and other protected resources and to allow changes to the safe handling techniques. The motion carried on page 190.

PAGE 192: Motion to direct staff to continue development of the amendment to require descender-devices and venting tools onboard vessels possessing reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico. The motion carried on page 199.

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The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the Marriott Plaza, San Antonio, Texas, Wednesday morning, August 9, 2017, and was called to order by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTIONS

CHAIRMAN LEANN BOSARGE: Welcome to the 265th meeting of the Gulf Council. My name is Leann Bosarge, Chair of the Council. If you have a cell phone, pager, or similar device, we ask that you keep them on silent or vibrating mode during the meeting. Also, in order for all to be able to hear the proceedings, we ask that you have any private conversations outside.

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

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

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

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

MR. JOHNNY GREENE: Johnny Greene, Alabama.

MR. DAVID WALKER: David Walker, Alabama.

MR. KEVIN ANSON: Kevin Anson, Alabama.
MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Dave Donaldson, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

MR. ED SWINDELL: Ed Swindell, Louisiana.

MR. PATRICK BANKS: Patrick Banks, Louisiana.

MR. CAMPO MATENS: Camp Matens, Louisiana.

DR. TOM FRAZER: Tom Frazer, Florida.

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ: John Sanchez, Florida.

DR. PAMELA DANA: Pam Dana, Florida.

MS. MARTHA GUYAS: Martha Guyas, Florida.

MR. GLENN CONSTANT: Glenn Constant, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. CHESTER BREWER: Chester Brewer, South Atlantic liaison.

DR. ROY CRABTREE: Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. BONNIE PONWITH: Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA Fisheries.

MR. ROBIN RIECHERS: Robin Riechers, Texas.

MR. DOUG BOYD: Doug Boyd, Texas.

DR. GREG STUNZ: Greg Stunz, Texas.

DR. PAUL MICKLE: Paul Mickle, Mississippi.

MR. DALE DIAZ: Dale Diaz, Mississippi.

LCDR STACY MCNEER: Lieutenant Commander Stacy McNeer, U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. DOUGLAS GREGORY: Doug Gregory, council staff.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: The agenda for our meeting can be found under Tab A, Number 3. Are there any additions or revisions to the agenda as presented? Seeing none, the agenda is adopted as presented.
Our minutes from our last meeting can be found on Tab A, Number 4. Were there any amendments or revisions that needed to be made to those minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are approved. Exempted Fishing Permits are next on our agenda, and I will look to the National Marine Fisheries side of the house to see if we have any.

**EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT APPLICATIONS**

**DR. CRABTREE:** We do not.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. That brings us right into our presentations, and right on time. Is Captain Ruiz ready? Good afternoon, sir. I will turn the microphone over to you.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**CAPTAIN FRED RUIZ:** My name is Captain Ruiz, and I am a Captain with Texas Parks and Wildlife. I’m a game warden out of Galveston, and I’ve been a game warden for approximately fourteen years. Prior to that, I spent eight years in the Army, jumping out of airplanes, and so I’m glad to be here this morning. Typically, Brandi Reeder is usually here, and I’m in her stead. She’s on vacation, which is a good place to be.

I’m going to talk a little bit about our mission and some of the difficulties that we face. I will give a brief overview of 2017 and some of the cases and some of the other things that we are involved with.

Real simply, our mission is to provide a comprehensive, state-wide law enforcement program to protect Texas’s natural resources and environment and provide safe boating and recreational water safety on public waters, by ensuring compliance with the applicable state laws and regulations.

I take very seriously the concern that we have, in terms of our natural resources, and I think it’s extremely important that we protect those resources for not only this generation as well as our future generations. The game wardens of Texas are extremely dedicated to the people of the State of Texas and protecting those resources.

Just a brief overview about our division, we are a law enforcement division inside of a non-law enforcement agency, and so, at times, it’s a difficult thing to understand for a lot of
the game wardens, but we work well with our brothers and sisters in the various divisions. Parks and Wildlife has eleven divisions, and we are one of those eleven divisions.

Inside of that division, we have approximately 700 folks, of which 551 are sworn Texas peace officers. We have a seven-month academy that all game wardens go through. We typically have about 1,100 people apply every year for about forty slots, and we’ve gone through that process every year last for the last fifteen years.

If you look at the numbers, 551 game wardens, there is 270,000 square miles in Texas, and then you look at the distribution of those game wardens, and, when we talk about the enforcement of the joint enforcement agreement and various marine issues, we have about eighty on the water, and so just take that into perspective.

If you look in terms of populations and just sheer numbers, the five counties, including Harris County, which would encompass the Houston area, in those five counties, there is about four-million people, and so it is a tremendous task for us to be out there and everywhere, but we do our best.

There is a couple of things that I will cover that is relevant here. Typically, or every year, approximately around May 15, Texas closes its waters for shrimping out to 200 nautical miles. The Coast Guard helps us quite a bit, as well as National Marine Fisheries helps us enforce that closure. On July 15, it opens, and so we do a lot of heavy patrolling during that time period, from the Louisiana border all the way down to the U.S./Mexico border.

I have been working in this area for about fourteen years, in the Galveston/Houston area for about fourteen years, and I have seen a steady decline in terms of violations in regards to TEDs and just the overall violations, whether it’s at night, inside of five nautical miles, and a variety of violations.

Now, obviously, in 2005, Katrina put a hit on the shrimping industry, as well as, in 2009, so did Hurricane Ike, and so those are in there, but, specifically, this particular year, for us that have been out on the water and understand the time it takes to get out to board these boats and to check for TEDS and to do it in compliance with NOAA’s checklist, it’s a very time-consuming thing, and we checked about a hundred TEDS, and that was also with Dale Stevens from NOAA to check these TEDS.
We found no major violations, and so I think two things. One is I think that’s a result of good outreach with our partners in the commercial industry as well as time and effort of being out there and making sure that everybody understands that we’re out there to enforce these laws.

We do, however, come across some violations. This is one of the bigger ones that we had. One of our main checkpoints is the angle of the TEDs, and, every once in a while, and I can tell you that this is less and less an issue, and certainly the sewn-up TEDs are certainly less, but this is one of the atypical violations that we have had this year.

We continue to work with our biologists in other divisions in protecting our resources, such as the endangered species, the turtles and the marine mammals, as well as the red snapper. We did have -- In Texas, we don’t have it very cold, but occasionally we do, we do have these issues, and we assist our other divisions in protecting these resources.

The U.S./Mexico border presents a unique problem for us. Mexico has enough problems as it is, and protecting our natural resources is not very high on their list, but we do have these fishermen that come across. They will set these nets, and thousands of sharks get caught, as well as other fish, and we spend a tremendous amount of time collecting -- This was one mile.

I have seen them as far as six-mile nets, and so it’s a tremendous issue, and we continue to deal with it, and it’s almost impossible to catch them. By the time that you see them and you identify them and you come at them, they have already crossed back into Mexico, and, of course, we can’t enter another country.

These guys are extremely mobile and agile with these boats, the lanchas. When we’re able to board and arrest these individuals, we destroy the boats, and this is maybe six months’ worth, and so this is a constant problem.

We continue to patrol all up and down the coast in regards to red snapper and the violations. I will say it’s gotten a lot better in the fourteen years that I’ve been here, in regards to these violations, and they’re less and less. What we tend to see now are these violations are, in terms of the fishermen, less and less. We do find these pockets of big ones, and we do investigate those, and I will cover one of those here in a second.
We had a total of 137 red snapper violations this year. That number is a little deceiving, because of cases like this. This case happened on the evening before Easter in 2016. When I say 137 cases, a lot of the cases that we make are cases of this nature, where multiple citations were given.

This particular one, fifty-four were given, and, of course, the fifty-four didn’t -- That’s not this year, and so that’s not in that 137. We have had a couple of those this year. In this particular case, and I will just run this down without the specifics, in terms of names, but 642 red snapper were seized, and I want to say something about how law enforcement works.

We’re a brotherhood, and this is a good example of multiple agencies coming together and working together. Had it not been for the Coast Guard, this boat would have not been caught, and so the Coast Guard actually boarded and caught this boat. National Marine Fisheries, as well as Parks and Wildlife, worked together on this, in terms of the law enforcement action that was taken in regards to charges filed and this and that, and so this is a good case. We’ve had several more of those in the last year or so.

There were four main players in this case. The first two got federal felonies filed by National Marine Fisheries. The third actor on the vessel was charged with fifty-four counts, and he was charged $27,000 in fines. Then the fourth subject, which was the purchaser of these fish and a restaurant owner, was charged seventy citations, and that is pending right now.

This type of issue right here brought light to a lot of things. Number one was legislators got involved and understood that the penalties for some of these crimes don’t necessarily fit what they’re doing, and, in terms of just the sheer money involved here, the penalties didn’t mesh, and so we’re looking at getting some of that taken care of, and we’ve got movement from legislators, which is a very positive thing.

The other thing that I would like to add in regards to this is this opened the door, and we have pursued this very aggressively, and there are many more cases coming that look like this, in terms of restaurants, and we’re also talking about crossing state lines, and so that’s a whole other ballgame. This is an eye-opener for a lot of folks. This is egregious, and so this is the kind of stuff that we are working at trying to resolve in regards to this.
We have many other hats that we wear, and just the sheer numbers, in terms of square miles, the sheer number of people, and so we do a lot of other things. JEA is one of the things that we do, but it only represents 6 percent of our operating budget, and, to give you a look at that, RBS, recreational boating money, is 40 percent of our operating budget, and so, when you start looking and you start weighing a lot of things, those are things that we do.

In addition, we all understand that homeland security has become a huge thing. The Port of Houston is the second-largest port in the United States, in terms of tonnage, and then, when you start looking at petroleum and a variety of other things, it’s a huge thing. We spend a great amount of time augmenting the other agencies in that area, in terms of port security, and that’s Brownsville, that’s Corpus, Victoria, Freeport, and Houston, and so we spend a lot of time with that, and as well as the other fisheries, the oyster fishery, et cetera.

When you put eighty game wardens that are in charge of the marine enforcement, and then you put all of those other things, they’re tasked, and so we do the best that we can with those efforts.

In addition, being in Texas, we have 365 days a year that we are participating in Operation Secure Texas, and our department has diversified quite a bit. We have gunboats with 240 Golfs, which is a full machine gun, and we spend a lot of time right up on the border, and our mission there is the interdiction of contraband coming into the United States and into Texas as well as undocumented aliens, and so we spend a lot of time doing a lot of things.

Being the Captain in Galveston, I spend my share of time on the border. We all do, every game warden in the state, and I will tell you that I love the coast. I love what I do, and I take very seriously the enforcement of red snapper and fishing, all the commercial stuff as well as the recreational stuff. I will tell you that we have seen the success of the IFQ system. It has put a responsibility and accountability to the commercial fishermen, but it has also been an extremely useful tool for law enforcement.

I remember sleeping on the boats at the jetties, trying to find boats coming in over their limit or out of season, and the IFQ has provided -- A lot of that has gone away, and so we continue to work with other divisions, the Coastal Fisheries, Robin and his guys, in making sure that we have a consistent effort, and
so, for me, there is four components of that.

One is working with Coastal Fisheries and getting the good science involved with that, and two is our enforcement efforts, making sure that we’re putting the people in the right places to be effective. I can’t put people out there 24/7, but, if we can be smart about how we do it and use our money wisely, we can maximize that effort.

Three is the outreach. We have many communities here in Texas, and we have a Vietnamese community, and we have a large Hispanic community, and we have the white community, and we work very closely with all three communities, to make sure that we are providing the outreach that reaches them to make sure that they’re in compliance with TEDs and with a variety of the fisheries.

The last one is the administrative part, and that is making sure that we are in-step with the rule makers, in that we try to make sure that we are enforcing rules and enforcing rules that meet the intention of what the rules and the laws are, and so those are our goals. Barring any questions, that’s all I have. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Captain Ruiz, thank you for coming today, and thank you for your service as a peace officer and for your prior military service, and so thank you.

CAPTAIN RUIZ: Yes, sir.

MR. ANSON: I had a question about the slide that you were discussing with the seizure of the fish that were going through the restaurant. You said that it had opened doors, and I’m just curious. The open doors was in reference to some other cases that you mentioned, and was that directly involved with the case, or was that because members of the public were exposed to that and maybe you had some informants come out and maybe gave you some other -- Just if you can elaborate, please.

CAPTAIN RUIZ: Sure. With any of these cases, there is so many tentacles that end up coming out, and what we found is we started to investigate this, and we would find another name. Then we would investigate that, and then we would find another name, and then we would find another boat, and then we would find a variety of things. Then we would catch a boat, and then somehow that was entangled into this community, and so it has
spiraled in so many different directions.

We’re working multiple fronts with that. We’re also working with the Coast Guard investigators, and we’re working with National Marine Fisheries investigators, and, when people do things wrong, criminals don’t just -- They don’t enterprise in just one thing, and so you will find that we’ve got HPD involved, because there is a prostitution ring involved, and so multiple things come of this, but, yes, it just spirals out into different areas.

MR. ANSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Fred, I just want to say thank you, and thanks to your division. Obviously, as you suggested, we work closely with you all. You guys do a great job out there every day, and it’s a big task, from Brownsville to Port Arthur, and we know that, but thank you all for what you all do.

CAPTAIN RUIZ: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: I would just thank you as well. I appreciate all the hard work you’re doing, but I had a question here about this mile of gillnet. Did you catch the vessel? What size of vessel might it have been and so forth that launched this mile of gillnet?

CAPTAIN RUIZ: These individuals are extremely -- You talk about maximizing their resources, and it doesn’t -- They will go out and put parts of it together and then string it together, and they use these lanchas, and they’re extremely good at piloting a boat, for sure, but they are -- They’re constantly working.

They understand, and it’s part of their operation that they understand, that a certain part of it is going to get confiscated, and so they’re constantly working, and so we’re constantly finding them, and so, for me, I work Fish and Game, and so, when people set nets, they set them underneath the water. It’s not like we roll up and we see it.

They will have rebar, or a weight of some sort, and the net will be about three feet under the water, and so there’s certain things that we look for that would indicate where that net is, and, of course, intel, but there is miles and miles of it out
there.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. It was an excellent presentation, and David asked my question. I was wondering about that mile of net. I am also, since I come from the shrimp industry, excited to hear that you had no major TED violations. I am proud of my industry for that, and so I have to give them a kudos. Thank you for all the outreach and education that goes into that, because, as you said, it is extremely complicated to get a TED just right, so that you're in compliance. It's not an easy task, and so thank you, sir, and we appreciate all your efforts.

If there are no other questions for Captain Ruiz, I will recess us in just a moment. Before we go to lunch, I would like to recognize Mr. David Walker, if you will come upfront and see Doug and I, please, sir.

(Whereupon, Mr. Walker was recognized for his service on the council.)

**MR. WALKER:** Thank you. I appreciate it. I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the council as a member, and I will still be here. I may be in the audience, but I will still be around. Thank you.

**MR. GREGORY:** Don’t forget to tell us which APs you want to be on, either the ones we’ve got or the ones we’re going to create.

**MR. WALKER:** Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** All right. Now we will recess for lunch, and we are going to return at 1:30, where we will pick up with Public Comment. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on August 9, 2017.)

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August 9, 2017

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

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The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Marriott Plaza, San Antonio, Texas, Wednesday afternoon, August 9, 2017, and was called to order by
Chairman Leann Bosarge.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Good afternoon, everyone. On our agenda next is our Public Testimony, and it looks like we do have a lot of our stakeholders in the room, and I’m glad to see that. First, we will read our statement, and then we will commence.

Public input is a vital part of the council’s deliberative process, and comments, both oral and written, are accepted and considered by the council throughout the process.

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

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

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

Each speaker is allowed three minutes for their testimony. Please note the timer lights on the podium, as they will be green for the first two minutes and yellow for the final minute of testimony. At three minutes, the red light will blink, and a buzzer may be enacted. Time allowed to dignitaries providing testimony is extended at the discretion of the Chair. Thank you all for being here with us this afternoon. First up for public testimony, we’re going to have Ms. Pam Anderson, followed by Mr. Ken Haddad.

PUBLIC COMMENT

MS. PAM ANDERSON: Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Dr. Crabtree, and council members. I am Pam Anderson, Operations Manager of Captain Anderson’s Marina in Panama City Beach, celebrating our sixtieth anniversary there on the beach, and I am the fishery rep on the Bay County Chamber of Commerce.
First, I would like to say that we are still opposed to any catch share program in the recreational sectors. As far as commenting on the referendum eligibility for Amendment 42, we are one of the largest operators of headboats in the Gulf, and we believe each permit holder who has been in the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey who sells per person, by the head, to their customers should be included in this referendum’s criteria.

Those few who have not reported harvest need to be handled individually. Did they close their business, was their boat unable to run, did they have family issues that prevented them from operating? Large or small operators, they should have a say in their business’s future. This referendum should not be about winners and losers. For the referendum for Amendment 42, we prefer Alternative 2, Option b, if we are going to continue down that road.

I take exception to the statement on page 4 though, under business activity in the referendum, that basically says, if anglers don’t have opportunity to fish, that they will spend money elsewhere in the community. Some do, but many do not come to the coast unless their opportunity to fish is available. As we have experienced short or closed seasons, anglers, regular customers from all over the U.S., have canceled trips to Panama City if their access and opportunity to harvest fish has been closed.

Businesses in the Grand Lagoon area, hotels and large and small restaurants, and especially shops, all feel the negative economic impacts when opportunities to fish are reduced.

There seems to be an anomaly in the private rec harvest for amberjack on page 5 of the document that we have been looking at. It is two-and-a-half times more in 2016 than in 2015, but the charter and headboats are down. Most of our locals will not even venture out until mid-March, which is about when the season closed this year. Our charter guys really need a spring and fall season for amberjack.

Customers come to Panama City in the spring specifically to catch them. Because of the recent regulations, our guys have worked hard to offer amberjack in the spring and fall, in order to keep their customer base. You are taking away their ability to pay their bills.

Our seafood market processes the fish for customers. Their
staff triples in the spring, as the boats begin to fish. Those jobs, and others, would be detrimentally affected. Anglers bring their families down on spring break so the family can take advantage of other activities if the fishing opportunity is there.

The bottom line is every decision you make, whether MSST, OY, or just setting seasons in general, it affects tourism in Panama City one way or the other. It affects our ability to operate our businesses in a profitable manner, and we want healthy, robust fisheries. They are the bread-and-butter, but we must have fair seasons with species available that our customers want. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Ms. Pam. Next, we have Mr. Ken Haddad, followed by Mr. Jason Delacruz.

MR. KEN HADDAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’m Ken Haddad with the American Sportfishing Association, a trade organization for the sportfishing world. I am going to speak on the determination criteria and OY, briefly.

I think this is a hidden jewel for this council, and it needs to be looked at very tightly. I think it’s going to give the ability for the council to have a bit more flexibility than under what you’re currently operating, by giving you a wider range of standards to work within, and, with the OY, we encourage OY to be thought about separately from MSY.

It is where you’re allowed to bring in the social and economic and ecological thinking into your numbers, and it may not work for most reef fish, but there are species, such as king mackerel, that we think something, looking at OY for the recreational sector at least, should be revisited.

With that said, for Action 1, we think Alternative 2 or 3 will give additional flexibility for Action 2. Alternative 6, which is the 0.5 number that I know there was some debate about, but keeping in mind that this is not something you manage to. It’s something you manage away from, and it gives you the ability to do that, but more flexibility in how you do your management.

For Action 3, Alternative 2 or 3. We think MFMT should be looked at again for just about every species in the reef fish complex. For Action 4, we think the decision-making tool might be a good approach to take to look at Alternative 3, and so that’s comments on that.
The other is on state management. I think the discussion around allocation, of course, is the hairiest part of all of this, and I am not sure how the council process can work in this manner, but I would like to see the state folks locked in a room for as long as it takes to come up with an allocation across each state. I think they can figure it out, if given the right forum, even if it’s outside of the council meeting.

I know, the last time they attempted to do that, they got labeled as meeting behind closed doors and so forth, and so hopefully the council can give the states an opening on how to best work on their allocation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Jason Delacruz, followed by Mr. Steve Tomeny.

MR. JASON DELACRUZ: Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity. First, before I forget, I want to take the opportunity to thank our departing council members. Pam, one, for being an excellent council member. She would reach out to me when it was an issue that she thought was important to me, and she always looked for that, and that’s just the type of council member that we should have, and we’re going to miss you. I am very sorry to see you go.

David is a true commercial fisherman on this council, and I think that’s something that we always need, and hopefully we can get that addressed one day. We’re going to miss you desperately, man, and I’m sorry to see you leave.

I wanted to start off today with something just kind of simple. I am going to rattle off three or four names, and you guys probably don’t know who they are, but I think it’s useful. The Calvert Foundation, the Forge Foundation, the Phil Stephens Foundation, the Fink Family Foundation, and the Woodcock Foundation. These people actually have the same interest that you have, believe it or not.

They are interested in the next generation of fishermen and trying to help them. They are people that us, as a quota bank, have identified as people that can help transition some of our retiring fishermen and buy from them, and they want to help finance that. They are what they call impact investing groups, and so they are willing to finance, at a very low interest rate, knowing that the return is going to be minimal, but they can do good with it and put the quota and ownership of quota in young fishermen’s hands.
Unfortunately, they are very successful in -- Well, fortunately, they are successful in the scallop fishery in New England, but they won’t touch us, because of you guys, I’m sorry to say, because of the instability that you give to our IFQ. We have talked to these people, and they’re interested, but they won’t do it, because there is no certainty in what we do.

I think that’s really important, as we talk about 30B and what we’re going to do with 36B, in undermining the way this economic system works. I don’t really want to pound on this, but I think it’s important that you guys heard those names and kind of understand that, because we’ve started this process in our quota bank and really put energy in. Even last year, when we had Paul Parker, who has helped us do that, who has these relationships, and he came and gave a presentation to you, and so we are trying, as an industry, to solve this problem, and please don’t make it more complicated and far less effective.

Then one quick, short, personal note to me, and I would really like to see a commercial amberjack 500-pound trip limit, and, at about 75 percent of the catch, drop to 250. The guys that I do have, and myself personally, when I get to go spearfishing these days, it’s just those fish are never there, and my longline boats are consistently throwing 150 or 200 pounds a trip back for no reason. If we lowered the trip limit and just got it down to where we can keep that season open longer, it would make better sense. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Steve Tomeny, followed by Mr. Jim Zurbrick.

MR. STEVE TOMENY: Good afternoon. My name is Steve Tomeny. I operate two charter/headboats, private charter boats, out of Port Fourchon, Louisiana. We also commercial fish, and I’m an IFQ shareholder. I also wanted to thank David and Pam for your time and efforts. It’s been good to have you on the council.

I was just briefly going to hit a couple of things. The amberjack, we did not land one at all recreationally this year on our boats. By the time we started our charter season, the quota had been caught, and I mentioned this last time I was at one of the meetings, that I didn’t think we would, but we did not catch one. We caught some, but we just couldn’t bring them in.

I am hoping that we can move away from this January 1 season. It has turned into a quick derby, and those of us that don’t particularly want to fight the January weather off of Louisiana
would like to see them later in the year.

I also believe -- I personally have been okay with the spring openings. It has suited my needs more, but, every time we have these discussions, it was always that they spawn in March, April, and May, and we were closing the commercial season then. If this is what it’s got to take to rebuild these fish, let’s close them when they’re spawning, and let’s open it up after red snapper. I don’t think we’re going to have a very long season anyway, but let’s not have this January derby, where the western Gulf doesn’t get to have any fish.

I am also a very strong advocate for catch share programs, and this is a prime example of an allocation that could be passed on to the individual fishermen, and we wouldn’t have this race to catch them.

Saying that, I also would like to see the electronic logbooks that’s been passed by this council proceed as quickly as we can get that on the water. I think it’s really important to have this program implemented as quick as we can and get good data, better data, quicker, more timely. It’s a logical thing to do, and I know it’s in the works, but let’s just do everything we can to keep it moving.

The 36B Amendment that Jason was just talking about, there’s a lot of tough issues in there, and some of them don’t seem like big problems to me. I think an advisory panel down the line could straighten out some of that and come back to the council with some recommendations. Some of it is little thorny things that just don’t have a good answer, and let the guys that are in the business work it out and we’ll get back to it, and so thank you, and I will see you next time.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Jim Zurbrick, followed by Chad Haggert.

MR. JIM ZURBRICK: Thank you, council, for allowing me to be here today. I’m Jim Zurbrick from Steinhatchee, Florida. I’m an active reef fisherman, and I am one of the directors of Fish for America USA, and, like everybody is chiming in, we have two council members that did a great job, Pam and David. They’ve done a great job. Sitting back here, they didn’t draw a lot of lines in the sand. I think a lot of folks here could probably learn from the way they conducted their business while they were council members.

I want to talk about 36B and my story, my wife, Patty, and my
story, who many of you have met my wife, Patty, and I. She fishes with me for about half the year, and thank God for those guys that own snapper shares that lease them. If I didn’t have those relationships with those people to lease those snappers, and you can look at my records. If you’re able to open them up and look at my accounts, I lease around 25,000 pounds of snapper, and not to resell for profit to somebody else, but those are fish that I catch. I am glad to have them. I am making money.

If you were to restrict leasing to where somebody could not lease me those snappers, for one thing, what do I do about all of those snappers that I am catching? The other thing is you’re taking -- My business plan doesn’t work. I count on them. Grouper fishing has -- It’s got some problems. I think anyone who has been paying attention realizes that, and snapper has filled a void for the Zurbrick’s.

Also, this referendum, I don’t know what everybody is so scared about as far as this. All it is is it’s one aspect. It’s moving something forward. When you’re sitting back in this audience and you see how we can’t move anything forward, even a little incremental part of 41 and 42, moving it forward, is essential for public opinion, for one thing. It makes people believe in the process that something gets moved forward, and so I would ask that you would go forward.

The quota bank, I lease snapper, and so I don’t need the quota bank. I am fortunate, but, boy, they do a great job. I know three or four people who I have sent to them, and they cover their dead discards. It’s not a targeted quota bank, where you get snapper so you can go out and target them, but they are for the dead discards, the ones that you can net back up and put on the boat.

Unlike in the recreational fishery, where you can’t even have them, but, at least in the commercial fishery, we have made an allotment, so that we can pick up those dead ones if you have the quota. It was a great job, and, when they formulated the IFQ, it was a very important part. The leasing was the most important part of our IFQ, actually.

Amberjack, let’s not fool ourselves. Commercially, none of what you were talking about the other day had anything to do with commercial amberjack except for raising or lowering the quota. Let’s go to a 500-pound trip limit. It is a bycatch fishery for 90 percent of everybody who has a reef permit in the Gulf. There are a few people, but I have never seen somebody come up
here who is an amberjack fisherman and argue about that trip limit, where we went from anything to 2,000 to 1,500.

I would say let’s go to 500 and stretch this out so restaurants and fishermen, who might kill an amberjack while they’re trying to fish for other things, can retain them. That’s the best thing for the resource. Lastly, if I might --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Jim, are you just about done?

MR. ZURBRICK: Yes, and I just want to mention this. Regional management. You know how good things always rear their head again? Thank God that regional management is now coming up again, and thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. We have a question from Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Jim, for coming to the meeting. I was just going to ask you -- You mentioned the 500-pound trip limit of amberjack. How did this year’s amberjack season and other years, with the higher trip limit, how would a 500-pound trip limit -- What would it mean to your business?

MR. ZURBRICK: Well, I have to discard every -- After January or February, those are rough months to go fishing. You know, a lot of people at the dock, but, when we finally get to fish for amberjack again in June, maybe there is something left and maybe there isn’t.

This year, there were some weeks left, and it would impact me to where I think, personally, with a 500-pound, and it’s only my observation, having been in the business for almost thirty years, that we could probably go until October, where restaurants could trickle in a supply of amberjack, because there are many restaurants that serve amberjack, but the supply isn’t there, and so let’s best utilize that, plus the dead discards. It’s terrible to be snapper fishing and get an amberjack, and mostly they have a great ability to live, because most of them are on the surface if they grab bait, but at least I’m able to harvest them and do something with the resource.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Chad Haggert, followed by Mr. Clarence Seymour.

MR. CHAD HAGGERT: Good afternoon, council members. I’m Chad Haggert, owner and operator and general manager of our family fishing business headboats, the Double Eagle Fishing Fleet, in
Clearwater, Florida.

I am here mainly to speak on Amendments 41 and 42. Some of you here on the council know me. I haven’t been to a lot of meetings in the last couple of years, and so some of you might not be familiar, and so I will give you a little background on myself.

I took over the family headboat business in June of 2008. I wanted to become more involved with the process of managing the fishery, and I thought I had some good ideas, and I later found that there were several stakeholders in the industry that had similar or even better ideas than what I was thinking. I started attending these meetings in January of 2009, and I worked diligently with fellow charter and headboat captains and owners. We were trying to think outside the box and come up with ideas for a modern way to manage this shrinking fishery.

The council process was a bit overwhelming at first, but I have met a lot of great people during these years that are very passionate about this industry, me being one of them. We successfully got the headboat EFP to pass the council process, a very successful program. During the EFP, we took less fish than what we could have caught during the recreational season, and we stretched them out and used them throughout the year, at opportune times for our customers and our businesses.

This year, I harvested almost 2,000 red snapper. During the EFP, I had less than 800 for those two years, and I made that work and was very successful with it. The EFP provided overwhelming data that this type of management could not only be successful for our businesses, but also to accomplish what I believe the Magnuson Act requires and what I feel that this council is striving for, but now here we are postponing it again and kicking the can down the road.

It seems to me that there is an overwhelming sense that we need to wait for new council members. How many council members have we had during this eight-year process that we’ve been working on this, and are the next council appointees supposed to provide a more friendly decision for those that are opposed to these amendments? I am not sure of the answer to that.

With Amendment 42, we are offering a solution to have another fraction of fishery participants be 100 percent accountable and, therefore, easier to manage. You have that ability with the commercial sector, and let’s get the headboats and charter boats into this category.
The private recs need a better way to manage theirs and have more access, and I don’t know what the solutions are to provide this, but at least there seems to be some vigorous discussion on possibilities. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing to have 100 percent of all people fishing in this industry or in this fishery and be 100 percent accountable and be able to use the best science and data to manage our stocks instead of the best available that we’re using right now?

Maybe these amendments wouldn’t pass a referendum vote, and maybe they will. Either way, at least we know where we stand and we can move forward with perfecting these amendments or start from scratch yet again.

Your issues with amberjack going on now could be solved with a quota-based fishery. Boats that need them in the spring can catch them in the spring, and others that want them in the fall can have them, and so on with every other species. For example, I don’t need to have red snapper in June to make my business work. During the EFP, I used them in May, September, and October.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Haggert, are you just about done?

MR. HAGGERT: I am just about done. Yes, ma’am. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

MR. HAGGERT: I know the council had no part in the decision on this year’s extended season, but the concerns that this raises are staggering. A short or possible no season next year, after the charter/for-hire sector came in under quota three years in a row, is unacceptable. Please move forward with Amendments 41 and 42 and a much better way to manage an already accountable industry. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Clarence Seymour, followed by Mr. Tom Hilton.

MR. CLARENCE SEYMOUR: Hello. I’m Clarence Seymour from Biloxi, Mississippi. I own the Charter Boat S Y L, and I’m here to basically represent some folks that asked me to come to applaud the council’s decision on Amendment 40, back a couple of years ago. It was for a climb of -- We’re probably up about 100 percent, and we’re adding more passenger rates, and the catch rate is still decently on our efficiency of the way we’re catching red snapper in Mississippi.
Last year’s numbers, with Mississippi’s Tails and Scales, gave me an estimate of somewhere around 8,400 pounds for the for-hire federally-permitted industry, and so, being that said, because I had discussions with some folks about the ACL at 70 percent, and 8,400 for for-hire, with sector separation, is fairly low numbers, which would give everybody -- There is still 10 percent of the fish on the table, and I guarantee you that we’re leaving at least 15 or 20 percent on the table in Mississippi, because of the way our effort goes.

We just don’t have that much effort with twenty-eight federally-permitted charter boats in Mississippi, and so it takes a lot of -- I understand the different regions have more effort than we do, but it’s still a special place.

One thing about sector separation is we went through Katrina and an oil spill, and so you go to -- They ask you how were you economically damaged like that, and we’ve got you in the same category as a beach vendor. Well, sector separation is the same thing. We’re not beach vendors. We take passengers for-hire, like taxi cabs, to the federal fishery.

We always get tangled up in some other category that’s not necessary, and our passengers is the ones that’s taking the brunt of not having any type of sector separation, and so they asked me to applaud the council for that decision a couple of years ago.

The other thing is 30B still affects us in Mississippi with the special season. I have guys that called us on Sunday, two weeks ago, and said, hey, you got any numbers for Fish Haven 13. Well, it’s past the nine-mile boundary. They’re not doing right. Plus, they’re supposed to be within the nine-mile boundary as a state guide, and so there’s a lot of issues going on right now with state guides and federal permits in our state, and we have a small area to fish, and so it’s not really like we’ve got an oil rigs left, because they’ve yanked half of them up, and so the fish have got to be somewhat jurisdictioned by the state guides somehow or another, and I hope the folks in our state can handle that, but that’s about all I’ve got. Thank you, all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Tom Hilton, followed by Mr. Steven Briggs.

MR. TOM HILTON: Hi, council. I’m Tom Hilton, and I’m a private rec, and I’m here to speak for myself and, more importantly, my
children and their fishing future, which I see at stake here with the proliferation of catch shares.

I am also on the board of a new 501(c)(3) called freedomtofish.org, and we’re here to help with the good fight on getting better access for all recreational fishermen, regardless of what platform that they’re fishing on.

I would like to thank Dr. Crabtree and this council on the decision to defer any vote on Amendment 41 and 42 until the next council meeting in Biloxi. It exposes the intent to push this vote through at this meeting by certain interests, even though it has not been properly vetted or reviewed.

I would recommend, at the next council, to allow Amendments 41 and 42 to die, as pushing for further privatization of our fish through IFQs and PFQs is unacceptable. You do not have the power to levy ownership to any individual or corporation of what we all own. Those fish are our public trust resources, and you simply do not have the power to give that away.

I would also like to know why this council has decided not to levy royalties on the IFQ shareholders when the Magnuson clearly states that that’s allowed to happen. Why are you allowing hundreds of millions of dollars to be diverted away from the nation’s treasury and/or our fisheries and left in private bank accounts? I want an answer to this very simple question.

I would like to see Amendment 30B rescinded, as well as allowing Amendment 40 to sunset later this year, if possible. There is no excuse for implementing rules that unfairly discriminate against recreational anglers based on arbitrary parameters such as where their feet are standing upon. A recreational angler is a recreational angler, regardless if he’s standing on a pier or on a jetty or on his own boat or on a charter boat. Enough is enough. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Steven Briggs, followed by Mr. Mike Osgood.

MR. STEVEN BRIGGS: Good afternoon, council. My name is Steven Briggs, and I too am a private recreational fisherman. I am new to the council. This is my first trip here, and I represent a lot of private recreational fishermen who do not have the time or the ability to come to these council meetings. They have work commitments and jobs. They are not full-time fishermen. They are not on a fluid employment base. Many of them have day jobs and they can’t go out, and so, again, I represent myself,
but I also feel like I represent those folks as well.

I would like to reiterate what Mr. Hilton said in supporting the decision to defer Amendments 41 and 42 to the next council meeting. Let the new council shape take place and get a fair look at that, to benefit the recreational fishermen.

I would also recommend, like Mr. Hilton did, to allow those amendments to die in the next council meeting, and so I’m happy that we are taking the step to move those to the next meeting, but I would also like to see those die.

Also, I just want to take and elaborate a little bit more from my perspective. I’m a fisherman, and I have a full-time job. I am not in the full-time industry of fishing. I fish because it’s a passion of mine, since I was a young child, and I suspect many people here in this room share that same sentiment.

I do not fish for economic gain or economic value. I never, ever fish based on poundage, and, to me, a recreational fishery should be managed in that manner. We are not an economic business, and, therefore, one of the things that I really am strongly passionate about is the purpose of the IFQ applying to the commercial fishery and not the recreational fishery.

I also agree that the recreational fishermen are recreational fishermen regardless of what platform they’re on. Whether I go with friends on mine on their charter boat or whether I’m on my own private boat, I’m a recreational fisherman, and so I just want to reiterate also that the enjoyment of those fish that are out there. They belong to all of us. They do not belong to special interests, and they do not belong to individuals who were gifted access to a fishery and were gifted an economic benefit to their personal gain.

Just like Theodore Roosevelt put up on the entrance to Yellowstone -- If you have ever been to the Yellowstone entrance, he has a big marquee right there that says for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. It’s not for the benefit and enjoyment of special interests or folks who are gifted access. It would be no different, from my perspective, that someone is given the access to Yellowstone and then turn around and sell it back to me, or, worse yet, prohibit me from entering it because that’s their park and not mine.

With that being said, again, I want to thank the council for this time. I am really looking forward to changes in the recreational fisheries, and let’s get this fixed, and so thank
you again for your time.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Mike Osgood, followed by Mr. John Graham.

**MR. MIKE OSGOOD:** Hi. I’m Mike Osgood, and I’m a recreational fisherman. I’ve been fishing the Gulf for about thirty years. I have no commercial interest, and I’m just a guy that likes to fish.

I would also like to recommend that the council allow the 41 and 42 amendments to die. Further privatization of our fish is not the answer. My dad is a retired Gulf shrimper, and he would love the opportunity to sit at home and collect royalties or collect basically a free gift of a quota from the government to supplement his retirement income, but he didn’t have that chance. I guess he should have took up snapper fishing.

To me, the data collection is at the heart of a lot of this. I mean, I have been fishing for thirty years, and I have never been surveyed, not one time, and I think we need to take another look at how the recreational data is collected and maybe consider some other alternatives, like a snapper stamp, with a meaningful fee attached that can help fund further data collection efforts, maybe mandatory iSnapper accountability, something like that system.

To me, the poundage quotas that are expressed as being caught on the recreational side are unrealistic. We got three days this year, and thankfully that was expanded to thirty-nine. I still think that’s inequitable. I mean, there’s a lot of days that we can’t fish, guys in small boats. I mean, we just -- There’s been a couple of days this year that -- I’ve actually only gone out a handful of days.

There has been a couple of days that I shouldn’t have been out there. I’m in a fairly small boat, and I think limiting the number of days in this manner, restricting the number of days, puts a lot of recreational fishermen in harm’s way.

Just looking at some of the social media out there, there’s been a lot of recreational guys that have lost their boats out there by just being out there in weather they shouldn’t have, but, just because they feel pushed that, if I’m going to fish for snapper, this is when I can go, and so, again, I would also like to see 30B rescinded and allow 40 to sunset as well.

One other thing that you may want to consider would be managing
the Gulf Coast by different ecosystems. To me, Texas fishermen
shouldn’t be held accountable for what’s going on in Florida and
vice versa. It’s a different ecosystem and different fish and
different environments, and you may want to look at that. Thank
you for your time.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. We have one question for
you, Mr. Mike. Mr. Swindell right here has a question for you.

MR. SWINDELL: Mike, I assume you own your own boat. Is that
correct?

MR. OSGOOD: Yes, sir.

MR. SWINDELL: Would you have any objection, as a recreational
fisherman, to be the reporting person for what is caught with
other fishermen on your boat? How many people do you take out
with you at a time?

MR. OSGOOD: Two or three people at a time.

MR. SWINDELL: Would you have any objection to you being the
responsible person to report on what you’ve caught, what the
boat caught, rather than just the individual fishermen having to
be surveyed?

MR. OSGOOD: I would absolutely enjoy that. Yes, I would be
happy to do that. Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next, we have Mr. John Graham, followed by
Captain Dylan Hubbard. Mr. John? All right. We will circle
back around to you at the end, sir, in case he is out of the
room. Next, we will have Captain Dylan Hubbard, followed by
Conner Cochrane.

MR. DYLAN HUBBARD: All right. My name is Captain Dylan
Hubbard, and I’m the vice president and co-owner of Hubbard’s
Marina, and also the offshore director for the Florida Guides
Association.

My family business, Hubbard’s Marina, has been fishing local
waters in central west Florida for nearly ninety years and four
generations. Today, we operate six federally-permitted vessels
made up of two six-pack charter boats, two multi-passenger U.S.
Coast Guard-inspected charter vessels, and then two fifty-plus-
passenger headboats, which are both in the headboat survey
process.
On top of these permits, I am also here today to represent the Florida Guides Association as their offshore director. At the Florida Guides Association, we have over 250 guide members, and a third of those hold federal permits. Also, the FGA is the largest organization inside NACO, or the National Association of Charterboat Operators, and one of our members is the president of that organization. Finally, I am also a CCA life member, and I’m active in the Pinellas County, Florida chapter.

As far as the final action for the framework for the amberjack ACL and management measures, we would have liked to see the council wait on amberjack final action until the next meeting in Biloxi. That is way more centrally located and easily reached by more anglers and more stakeholders, while allowing new members to weigh in, since this isn’t too much of a rushed issue.

However, we are happy to see the ACL set to the ABC recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. The season discussion for amberjack was a little worrisome, however. We feel a spring season would highly be recommended and appreciated and greatly needed. Many of the Gulf of Mexico anglers and traveling anglers enjoy visiting the Gulf of Mexico for amberjack fishing in the spring, and they have been made used to an amberjack fishery in the spring.

We feel, at the very least, a May season would be enough to ease this expectation, but, even better, April and May, or, at the worst, maybe mid-April through May. That would allow a short spring season while still allowing for a fall season that the western Gulf is pushing for.

The decision tool being used to make these season decisions is not taking into account the changes made to the ACL at this meeting. I would urge the council to direct staff to make changes to the decision tool before the October meeting. This would allow us to use a more complete and effective tool to make a decision, come the October meeting in Biloxi.

Also, in summary, the most important comment is that the spring season is mandatory, even if it ends up to be a brief thirty, forty, or fifty-day season in the spring, behind the spring spawning season. We understand the discussion and rationale for not having any open season in the spring, since it has to do with the alleged spawning season.

As we well know, these months were established as a closure for the commercial sector many years ago. Apparently there has been
little, if any, biomass benefit, due to the commercial closure in the spring, around the spawn, since it’s obviously not reflected in the stock assessments.

To project that it will make any difference closing the recreational season over this time is much like how, two years ago, moving to a thirty-four-inch minimum size limit would ensure a year-round fishing season. We all know how that worked out.

Once again, the commercial fishery is nothing similar to the recreational fishery, and it should never be managed as such. Finally, the most important and disturbing thing to address, before season decisions are made, is to reevaluate the spike in the MRIP survey in the 2016 landings.

A 135 percent spike in private recreational landings is definitely an anomaly to me. Being a simple fisherman and not a scientist, that spiked my eyebrows, and it definitely seems like a problem, and it needs to be addressed, especially before more decisions are made.

As far as Amendment 41 and 42, we still hold to the fact that we would demand not to see this type of allocation-based management in the for-hire sector in any way. It is overwhelmingly opposed by the nearly eighty federal permits I am here to represent, as we have stated in previous public comment.

We really need updated data for the for-hire and private recreational sector, charter/for-hire sector. We feel we could easily improve data collection in the charter/for-hire and private recreational sector by providing a Gulf of Mexico-wide accepted ELB app without VMS. That would make it possibly for all reef fish anglers patronizing the Gulf of Mexico to report their catch timely and accurately, and they would be held accountable by dockside intercepts.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Dylan, are you just about done?

MR. HUBBARD: Yes, just about.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

MR. HUBBARD: MRIP phone surveys are outdated, and the Senate has mandated it to be updated. It is time to do away with these phone surveys. No one even has a home phone anymore. I don’t, and I haven’t for many years. In 2017, we need to utilize the technology in our pockets and collect real-time, accountable
data, through something like the iSnapper app.

The IFQ and PFQ systems would be irresponsible and impossible to manage or do with in our companies or across the Gulf as a for-hire sector. We need longer seasons, by better data, and a lower buffer thanks to that better data, and I will wrap up there, even though I’ve got more to say.

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

MR. HUBBARD: Thank you, council.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Next, we have Mr. Conner Cochrane, followed by Mr. Bubba Cochrane. We are pretty light on our attendance today; hence, the reason I am letting you run over just a hair, but just try not to take advantage of me, okay? When I ask you if you’re almost done, try your best to wrap it up, but I want to give you as much time as I can, because I know you all come from a long, long way away, and three minutes is awful tough when you travel five states over, and so thanks.

MR. CONNER COCHRANE: Good afternoon, council members. I am Conner Cochrane, and I’m thirteen years old, from Galveston, Texas. My dad is a commercial red snapper fisherman, and I don’t only think of the commercial red snapper industry as a great job, but I think of it as a way of life, and I would love to see the industry keep going in a great way, so I can do it when I’m older. Getting to go to council meetings like this and go with my dad, it means the world to me to get to learn about this stuff and be involved in an industry that’s pretty much my dream job.

I would love to see the commercial red snapper industry keep going in a good way, so that one day I can follow in my father’s footsteps and be a successful commercial fisherman just like him. Thank you for your time, council members.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Bubba Cochrane, followed by Mr. Steven Rash.

MR. BUBBA COCHRANE: Thank you, council. I’m Bubba Cochrane from Galveston, Texas, commercial fisherman, and also charter boat fisherman. I believe the current IFQ is working fine. It seems that the leasing component is a big problem. I’m not sure why that is, but the ability for fishermen to lease snapper from shareholders was a key flexibility component of the IFQ
management system from the beginning.

The fishermen I know have already started businesses based on leasing quota. To restrict or eliminate that ability will put these fishermen out of business. I don’t lease out any of my quota. I catch it all on my boat, and I had planned on my son taking my place when I retire, as he just said.

The next generation of fishermen need to know that there is stability in the red snapper IFQ. The consistent threat of reallocation or getting rid of the IFQ system altogether makes it hard for new entrants to find ways to get loans to buy their own shares. I hope this council keeps this in mind when moving forward with Amendment 36B.

On Amendments 41 and 42, I hope the council will continue to work out details and let the charter/for-hire guys, through referendum, vote for what is best for their businesses. I also hope the council acts sooner than later on assessing the effects of the extended recreational season on the next stock assessment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Steven Rash, followed by Mr. David Krebs.

MR. STEVEN RASH: Hello. My name is Steven Rash, and I own Water Street Seafood in Apalachicola, Florida. I’ve been there for over thirty-four years in the commercial fishing and processing business. I am a member and director of Southeastern Fisheries, and I’m a member of GSI.

Commercial fishing is a very difficult, risky business, and, as staff said yesterday, it’s the second-most dangerous occupation in this country. In spite of these adversities, we provide our nation with a very valuable food source.

We do harvest a public resource, but that’s not uncommon. People harvest mining and timber and oil. The oil industry -- The co-founder of CCA made billions of dollars harvesting oil out of public lands in the Gulf of Mexico, and so it’s not unusual for people to do that. Who is going to provide the seafood if we don’t have fishermen to catch it?

Effort is actually declining in the commercial sector. We have been fishing responsibly and sustainably for years. The IFQ program is working. Please don’t mess with the IFQ program. It’s working. Commercial fishermen adapt to all kinds of situations. Unfortunately, extreme pressure from the
recreational sector has kind of paralyzed this council to develop accountability measures and fishery management plans that have to do with the recreational sector.

I am not against recreational fishing at all. I support recreational fishing. I think recreational fishermen should be able to catch more fish than what they’re allowed to catch now, but I do think that the management practices that we had in place should have been upheld. The federal government should preempt the state, and the federal government should manage the stock.

Standard 3 of the Magnuson-Stevens requires that stocks be managed over their entire range, and scientists had science, of the Southeast Science Center, among others, state that they can’t manage snapper based on state boundaries.

One of the biggest problems in the sector is recreational discard mortality. The recreational discard mortality is probably larger than the entire TAC is. We are probably killing more fish than what are being brought to the dock. It’s human nature. There are so many fish out there, and they’re so quick to catch and easy to catch. The little ones bite first, and the high-grading is the norm. It’s not the exception.

I hear stories of people catching twenty-five fish and throwing twenty-five fish back to keep one fish. A guy from Texas just told me the same thing here just a few minutes ago, and so, unless this council is ready to address that issue — It needs to address it at the federal level and address it Gulf-wide, and that’s the biggest issue there is, and so there is a lot of things that we can do to address recreational discards.

We have a quota system based on pounds, but the recreational keep two fish, and so they want to keep the two biggest fish. Why not let them keep a certain amount of fish, whether they’re little or big, and you could do it by measurement, by poundage. Three five-pound fish is as good as one fifteen-pound fish, if you’re taking some home to eat, and so there’s a lot of actions that can be taken that in the real world that work that the people that have experience, that know fishing and know fisheries, can help out with, and so, with that, I will wrap it up. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. I think we have a question for you from Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Steve, for coming and being part of the
public process.

MR. RASH: Thank you.

MR. WALKER: I’ve seen your trucks all over Alabama and the Panhandle, and I appreciate you getting seafood out to folks.

MR. RASH: Thank you.

MR. WALKER: Just kind of one question is, in the IFQ, how is that working in your area for discards?

MR. RASH: Luckily, the industry works together. I lease a lot of IFQ red snapper from David Krebs, who has a lot, and he leases those to me below market value so the boats that fish in my area that don’t have red snapper can -- I can, in turn, lease them to my boats. I don’t make any money on them. I don’t mark them up, but it’s so that they can keep red snapper and they’re not discarding red snapper.

I do the same thing to him with grouper, because he doesn’t have much grouper, and I have grouper, and so the industry works it out. We can solve some problems, and we don’t want to waste fish, and we don’t want to discard fish, and so we all work together on that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. David Krebs, followed by Mr. Russell Underwood.

MR. DAVID KREBS: Good afternoon, council. David Krebs, owner of Ariel Seafoods in Destin, Florida and Sebastian, Florida. I am buying seafood from Daytona all the way around to Louisiana. Sitting here yesterday and listening to the discussions about Amendment 36B, modifications to the IFQ, the fact that the discussion was led at the council level by Mr. Anson of Alabama, a recreational representative, and Mr. Riechers from Texas, a recreational representative, and some chiming in by other recreational representatives, I find appalling.

We didn’t ask for any modifications. The commercial industry has always been the first one to come to this council when we’ve had a problem, whether it was size limits, discards, closed seasons, open seasons. Anything that we felt that we were doing wrong, we have come right to you. Just like Mr. Rash said, we have a history of fighting it out amongst ourselves to find a solution.

One of the things that came up yesterday in the discussion I
heard was purpose and need. Well, if we can redistribute and
reallocate some of the red snapper IFQ, we could increase effort
and decrease discards. I’m sorry, but can anybody make sense
out of that? If you’re going to put more people on the water,
you’re going to have more interaction with fish you can’t keep,
regardless of how much snapper quota you give to somebody. Mr.
Walker stated that properly yesterday.

We’ve all been in the situation that -- My fish house, anybody’s
fish house, if I have a boat that comes to me and says, hey, I’m
a b-liner boat, and I need 5,000 pounds of snapper for the year,
the exact story that Mr. Walker said, because that boat, or
maybe one just like it, fishes for me. The first trip, I had a
problem and I caught my fish, and we have X amount of fish to
work with.

Now, if the council wants to double the quotas and give us more
fish to work with, we can address things differently, but to go
under the assumption that you can put more people into this
fishery, after all the fighting we did in the 1990s when you
told us to reduce our footprint and consolidate our fleet -- You
told us to do that.

Now you’re telling us, because everybody is running up against a
barrier, that we want to increase effort again, and that makes
no sense. Please keep your eye on the prize. What is the real
prize, recreational representatives? It’s how do you get
flexibility and a longer season for your private anglers, and
running a discard fishery is not the solution. Dr. Ponwith will
tell you that.

You can’t keep discarding fish at ten or fifteen or twenty to
one and expect to have a vibrant fishery in the future. Let’s
become accountable, and let’s quit pretending that we’re not on
the same team. We’re all benefiting from this resource, whether
you’re a commercial representative or a recreational
representative or a charter industry. We all live in the same
water. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Russell
Underwood, followed by Mr. Eric Brazer.

MR. RUSSELL UNDERWOOD: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am Russell
Underwood from Panama City, Florida. I have fished out of
Leesville, Louisiana, and I’ve been coming to these meetings for
about thirty-five years, and I’ve been fishing for about fifty.
The first thing I want to do is thank David, David Walker, and
Pam, Dr. Dana, for her time and her effort. These two people are the people that you all need to keep coming to these council meetings and working with. They have showed great respect to fellow fishermen, both commercial and recreational, and these two people are what they should be, representatives of the fishery council. Thank you.

In respect to fishing, the commercial sector is doing very well on the IFQ. It is a good program. I was part of that system ten years ago, and we worked real hard to get what we’ve got, and, as far as fishermen, I don’t quite remember that I have been given anything in my life. Thank the Lord that he’s been good to me, but I have always worked, worked and worked and worked, and I wound up being a good fisherman and a dad and all that, and so it’s been good for me.

The problems we have in the fishery, we can work these things out amongst ourselves. I am still waiting for somebody to complain about things in the IFQ system, like 36B. We need leasing. I listened the other day to the people up there talking to Washington, D.C., and I heard this gentleman talk about flexibility, and that man was Mr. Oliver, and here he is today sitting here listening to this council, and he was here yesterday hearing comments.

What we need is people like him to consider everybody in this fishery, commercial and recreational, and we all have some flexibility. Trying to talk about taking 36B and talking about reallocation on leasing and stop this on caps. We have caps, and so I think a lot of that stuff is uncalled for. We need to set up another committee, snapper and grouper ad hoc committee together, to work out some of these problems that people are so-called complaining about, and I think it’s a great program, this IFQ, and you all should pat yourselves on the back for bringing these red snapper back.

Now, the IFQ has been part of bringing this fishery and resource back, and so I appreciate the opportunity to speak, and I just want to -- I wish that we could continue having a good resource and a good fishery for both recreational and commercial. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Eric Brazer, followed by Mr. Johnny Williams.

MR. ERIC BRAZER: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My name is Eric Brazer, and I’m the Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity
I’m going to speak on two items today. Number one is the SEDAR process. Forgive me if I wax poetic for a second, but everything we do is built on the foundation of strong science, and, without data, assumptions need to be made. Sometimes they’re accurate and sometimes they’re not.

We, as a body, should prioritize real data whenever we can, and we think you have the opportunity to do this by making the terminal year in SEDAR 52 2017. Dr. Ponwith did a great job outlining the pros and cons the other day, and, to us, we feel that the benefits outweigh the risks.

Put it this way. If we wait a year and we’re wrong, we’re looking at a couple more years of status quo allocation. Yes, we may not get a bump, but we’re also probably not going to get a reduction, but, if we’re right, we could be facing a pivotal and potentially devastating event in the history of red snapper management, and we don’t want to regret missing this opportunity to get out in front of this. Waiting four or five years is pretty risky.

This is especially true because we already know that the eastern Gulf is sensitive to higher levels of discard mortality. We know this from the stock assessment process, and this conclusion was also drawn in the work of Jacob Tetzloff, who performed some alternative stock status projections using different assumptions about recreational mortality rates and size selectivity, and I believe that he submitted this to the SSC, but I don’t know if it made it in on time, at the last meeting.

He concluded that the last -- Excuse me. The last stock assessment assumed recreational discard mortality at 10 percent. Excuse me. The discard mortality rate was 10 percent, but there are a number of recent studies that estimate recreational discard mortality at more than 21 percent. He ran the projections at 21 percent, and he observed that, quote, the eastern Gulf stock is eventually fished to extinction when following the yield streams from the SEDAR 31 base model.

We would really love to see the SSC evaluate this at their next meeting, and, if they concur, ensure that this is incorporated into SEDAR 52 as well as the 2017 data.

I had a lot to say on Amendment 36B, but a number of the fishermen who came before me spoke pretty well on this. I guess all I’m going to say to you guys is -- It’s in the form of a
question. What do you want this fishery to look like in five years? What do you want this fishery to look like in ten years?

If you can’t answer that question, then 36B is going to be perpetual challenge, and so, please, kick this back to the AP, and let’s get this in front of the stakeholders that are being impacted by this, and let’s start to figure out a real solution for moving forward. Finally, thank you, Captain Walker, and thank you, Dr. Dana. We’re going to miss you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. I think we have a question from Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Eric. The quota bank has come up quite a bit, and I hate to put you on the spot here, but could you just kind of bring us a little short summary of how it’s going in the quota bank and so forth with the shareholders?

MR. BRAZER: Sure thing, and I think Ava mentioned that she would be happy to add the presentation that I made last year to the briefing book, but, just to remind you guys, the quota bank is a program that the Shareholders Alliance put together. Right now, we’re the only operational quota bank in the Gulf of Mexico.

What we’re talking about really is a community of fishermen coming together and using allocation to solve problems. The folks in Alaska have used it very well, and there is four or five quota banks in New England. We started this in the Gulf in 2015 to start to address the bycatch issue, the red snapper bycatch issue, in the grouper-tilefish fishery.

We have since started to expand the scope of the program, and we’re starting to look at how this could help the next-generation fishermen and young entrants into the fishery. We work with twenty to thirty fishermen each year with 50,000 to 60,000 pounds of red snapper allocation that we lease, that we have to go out into the open market and find and pay for and provide to the fishermen who are part of this program.

We are susceptible to a lot of the risk that is showing up in this fishery because of the instability here at the council. We find it’s a great model, and we’re looking for ways to expand it, and, if there are any specific questions, I’m happy to answer those, but that’s it, in a nutshell.

We also have a page up on our website that outlines it in a little more -- It shows our application process, our ops plan
process, and how we’re using this to reduce discards, but also
effect greater change in the fishery.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Eric.

MR. BRAZER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Banks has a question for you as well.

MR. BANKS: Thanks, Eric, for your comments. I am interested in
36B, mostly for my concern over how to make sure we enable new
entrants to come into the fishery. I hear a lot of complaints
about the IFQ system from the recreational side of things, and
the only part of it that really rings true to me is the claim
that it doesn’t allow for new entrants or there is people out
there that aren’t happy with the IFQ in the commercial fishery
because they can’t get into the system.

Can you explain to me how your scenario helps -- I heard you say
new entrants, and so it sparked the question of how do you help
folks get into the industry through your quota bank, or are you
largely leasing for discards for people already in the industry?

MR. BRAZER: It’s primarily focused on bycatch reduction, but we
do have a few young guys that we’re working with. These are the
fishermen that have either bought a reef fish permit or who are
leasing reef fish permits from existing fishermen, and they are
starting to capitalize their business, and they are starting to
find ways to go out and buy shares.

Many of them can’t afford to buy shares right up front, and so
the only way for them to enter this fishery is through the
leasing program, and so we provide them a small amount of
allocation that we lease to them in exchange for a better
understanding for what they are trying to do to improve their
businesses. We want to help them improve their businesses.

Down the road, our five-year plan includes education and
outreach for business planning, and it includes -- Maybe it
includes low-interest loans, if we can find access to capital
and make this happen, but to start to address, on an individual
level, some of the challenges we see, cost of entry and access
to allocation, but we’re doing this through the existing system,
and that’s an important point to make.

There are young fishermen out there that are getting in here,
getting into the fishery. You’re starting to see them come to
these meetings. It’s a challenge. It’s expensive. Nobody is
contesting that, but the irony is that, because the red snapper population is recovery so quickly and so effectively, that is what is making it expensive to join this fishery.

If you go up to New England -- I came from New England, and I can get you a million pounds of pollock quota at a third-of-a-cent a pound, because the quotas are set incorrectly and because it’s hard to catch pollock, and so the fact is that this fishery is being well-managed. There is a lot of red snapper out there, and there’s a success story here, and that is part of the reason why it’s challenging, but not impossible, for new entrants to enter this fishery.

MR. BANKS: One other question. When you help a new entrant, are you putting them together with somebody who is willing to lease, or are you guys the ones that are leasing it, or both?

MR. BRAZER: Actually, it’s both, primarily. At this point, we’re only able to lease a certain amount of allocation on the open market each year, and so we do what we can, and, if there are needs of the young fishermen that we can’t meet, then we’re going out and we’re looking for existing fishermen, older fishermen, older businesses, to partner them with.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. We have a question from the South Atlantic and Mr. Chester.

MR. BREWER: When we’re talking about the younger fishermen that you’re leasing quota to, or allocation, whichever, what is the going rate? What are you leasing it to them for, what price per pound?

MR. BRAZER: We lease it at fair market value. Other quota banks have approached it differently, but we’ve decided that, because our primary purpose is bycatch reduction, we take a look at what the fair market is, and we provide a good-faith estimate, and we lease it to them at the fair market.

MR. BREWER: What is fair market value, currently?

MR. BRAZER: I haven’t checked in the last few weeks, but somewhere between I would say $3.35 to $3.50 a pound. That’s my best guess, but the fishermen may know better.

MR. BREWER: Thank you.

MR. BRAZER: You’re welcome.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

MR. BRAZER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next, we have Mr. Johnny Williams, followed by Mr. Tom Wheatley.

MR. JOHNNY WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Johnny Williams from Williams Partyboats, Incorporated. I’m a third-generation partyboat operator out of Galveston, Texas. I want to welcome all of you all to Texas, and I want to tell you all a little bit about Texas history.

We had a gentleman that died last Saturday, and his name was Mark White, and he was a Governor of the great State of Texas in the early 1980s. Mark White was a Democrat. I’m a conservative, and so I tend to vote, about 99.9 percent of the time, for Republicans.

Mark White was elected. When he got into office, our school system was in very bad shape. The first thing that he did was initiate a no-pass-no-play rule, and this irritated a lot of people that had voted for him, because a lot of their children were no longer allowed to participate in sports or band or stuff like that at school, because their grades weren’t sufficient.

Then he came up with this program to require all the teachers to take a test to show that they were competent, and many of the teachers were upset, because they thought that it insulted their intelligence. Others were upset because they couldn’t pass the test. Needless to say, Mark White didn’t get reelected, because he had alienated his base.

Now, the way I’m trying to bring this into this fishery is Mark White did the right thing. He did the right thing, and he had courage. He had a backbone, and he did what was right, what he thought was right in his heart, even though it cost him his political career.

We’re faced right now with -- We’re at a breaking point here. We really need to get Amendment 42 and 41 going down the road. Now, I have heard the talk about delaying the vote on this until the next meeting for some new council members that are coming in. That’s unprecedented here. I have been around this council, dealing with you all, for thirty years, and I have never heard of anything like that. Maybe it was at one of the meetings that I didn’t know about, but, gee whiz, why are these people here if they’re not going to be able to vote on something
that’s so important to our industry?

The right thing to do is let the industry try to determine what’s right for themselves, and this program that we had worked very well in the pilot. It serves the Magnuson Act, and it serves the fishermen, and it serves the partyboat operators.

You heard today someone from the Parks and Wildlife, a gentleman from the Parks and Wildlife, that said that the IFQ system is very easy to regulate compared to what they had before. I mean, it’s a win-win for everybody, and so why aren’t we voting for this?

I mean, anybody can come up here and somebody makes a motion of, well, let’s have two fish and thirty-seven days next year or something like that. I mean, doggone, my eleven-year-old grandson could do that and vote for it, but this is an opportunity for you all to do something for the industry that is desperately needed. Please someone make a motion for the 42 referendum and somebody second it and you all vote on it. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Tom Wheatley, followed by Michael Short.

MR. TOM WHEATLEY: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Wheatley, and I’m with the Pew Charitable Trusts. I live, work, and fish out of Tampa, Florida. We want to thank the council for discussing the timing of the next red snapper stock assessment on Monday during the SEDAR Committee in a very informative and thorough way,

Dr. Ponwith shared both the pros and the cons for delaying the assessment versus continuing as scheduled. On balance, we believe the pros for holding off until the 2017 data is available outweigh the cons, for a couple of reasons.

First, the 2017 recreational season really is unprecedented. As described in the Federal Register notice for the extended red snapper season, it could lead to high overages, potentially exceeding the overfishing level, and delay the rebuilding plan for up to six years.

Although preliminary reporting from states indicates lower catch rates than projected, we do think it’s prudent to wait until the official data is available for the entire 2017 season, so it can be evaluated together with all the other information that goes into a full stock assessment.
Second, as noted during the committee discussion, delaying will allow recalibrated MRIP data to be included in this assessment, and we believe this creates a major efficiency in the system, as noted by Dr. Ponwith.

Doing an assessment this year, without the 2017 landings or recalibrated data, would likely require a rerun of the assessment very soon after it’s completed. Not only is that inefficient, but it wouldn’t provide a comprehensive snapshot of the health of the red snapper population, and so, weighing the pros and the cons, we do think that holding off the start of the red snapper assessment until next year does provide the best possible information to the public and also, obviously, to the council to make decisions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Michael Short, followed by Mr. Michael Regan.

MR. MICHAEL SHORT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. First off, I would like to thank Pam and David for you all’s service, and we need to move forward with the charter/for-hire referendum motion. Lower the charter/for-hire buffer. We have stayed under it since sector separation was implemented.

Open up the amberjack season August 1, and, as far as the electronic logbook goes, we’ve been doing a program with CLS, the pilot program, and it’s been working great. It’s easy to do, and we need to have a logbook program on the water as soon as possible, and, guys, you all are looking at the future of the charter/for-hire industry right here. Give them something to work with, and not just us, and them. That’s it. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Michael Regan, followed by Greg Ball.

MR. MICHAEL REGAN: Good afternoon. My name is Michael Regan, and I operate Line Check Charters out of Galveston, Texas. I am here in front of you today to hopefully keep our businesses growing and keep everything going in the right direction. Dr. Dana, I appreciate your service. Mr. David, same with you.

We’re having a big problem with some of these seasons, the way they’ve been laid out. I’m a young angler. Mr. Short has been in the business for a little while longer than I have, and it’s hard for us to get moving when we keep having these seasons get closed off before we get to get rolling.
The eastern Gulf and the western Gulf have two different areas we get to fish. They are ecologically different from each other. When we have the early seasons for these amberjack and then they get closed off, my seasons get shorter and shorter and shorter every year.

I have taken a leap of faith this year. I have quit my full-time job, and I have run for my dream. This is a big step, and I’ve got a lot invested in it, and, every time we turn around, we’re getting things taken away from us. It’s really hard to keep that growing when the future gets shorter and shorter when we’re looking forward.

We definitely need to move forward with a referendum. It’s been a long time coming, and let’s push it. We don’t need to wait. Delaying the vote is just going to delay the future, and let’s make the future now. Logbook programs are working. They are easy. You come in from your trip and, while a deckhand is cleaning the boat, you can sit back and say, hey, guys, we caught this and we caught this and we caught this. We get to show you how healthy this program is, and we get to show you how healthy the stocks are out there.

There is a lot of fish to be caught at the moment. The amberjack in the western Gulf, I have spots that I used to catch vermillion on and grouper. They’re gone. All I have now are amberjack, because we have no season to catch them, and so we’re affecting the ecology on our side by helping the eastern side. If we get a chance to get catch our fish again, we get to get the species back that we rely on when those other seasons are closed.

We get to offer our customers a greater availability of time on the water. If it’s not red snapper, we get to prove to them that, hey, the Gulf is full of amazing and tasty fish and let’s go get them. It’s not just what everybody has to sell you of, oh, man, this is the best fish and it’s the only thing that we can catch, but, if the seasons keep getting shorter or, as we try to save one species, if we’re pushing another species further out or into an area that we can’t get to on a normal basis, because of due to weather or distance traveled, that doesn’t really help anything.

You’re saving one and kicking one down the road, and that is really not a benefit either way, and so let’s go ahead and get this vote done, and let’s help the charter/for-hire fleet. The guys that don’t have boats, that need us to get on the water, let’s keep them coming to us, and let’s get them on the water,
helping everybody all at the same time. I appreciate you guys, and thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. I think we have a question for you, sir, from Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I was just interested -- You were talking about how easy the electronic logbook was when you get back to the dock. What kind of boat do you run? Are you in a cabin boat or are you --

MR. REGAN: I’ve got a thirty-six-foot center console.

MR. BANKS: Center console? Okay. Thank you.

MR. REGAN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Next, we have Mr. Greg Ball, followed by Ms. Lisa Schmidt.

MR. GREG BALL: Good evening. I am Greg Ball from Galveston, Texas. Thank you, all, for the opportunity to come and speak this evening. I want to thank you all for being here. We need to move forward with Amendments 41 and 42. It’s like the last few charter guys have said. I run a few charter boats out of Galveston, and two of them are permitted, but we’ve finally got a system that’s working.

The stocks are growing, and we’ve been under our catch target for ever since sector separation started, and so we need to move forward with 41 and 42. I would like to see an August opening for the amberjack and just have an August through December season, and I think that would work great for all of us.

Also, we need to get the electronic logbooks on the water as quick as we can. It’s working great. We haven’t had any problem with it. We’re in the pilot program as well, with CLS, and it’s a great program, and it works good. That’s really about all I have. I appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Ms. Lisa Schmidt, followed by Mr. Troy Frady.

MS. LISA SCHMIDT: Hi. My name is Lisa Schmidt, and I am the owner of the three commercial longline vessels in Madeira Beach. I also spearfish and hook-and-line redfish and snook recreationally.
First, I would like to speak to the discards. My boats are grouper boats, and we’re seeing more red snapper than we ever have in years, maybe ever, and thank you to National Marine Fisheries for rebuilding that fishery. We are working with the Shareholders Alliance quota bank to get the allocation to reduce our discards.

We’re trying to avoid red snapper as well, but I don’t think that the council should be taking red snapper from other fishermen to give to me. I am willing to pay for it, and I’m not expecting any kind of handouts.

Secondly, every time you change the IFQ program, it’s going to affect the fishermen who have already invested in it and also have a negative impact on the younger, new fishermen going into this industry. We’re all businessmen and businesswomen. Start talking about reallocating or restricting or redistributing, and you’re making it very hard to put together a business plan. Think about it. If you were wanting to go into the commercial fishing industry and you came to this meeting, would you want to go into the commercial fishing industry?

Third, give the stakeholders in this fishery a chance to work through Amendment 36B. I am not on the IFQ Advisory Panel, but I think these men and women who have the expertise needed to start to work through some of these ideas -- Please send this back to them for more feedback.

Finally, I want to show my appreciation for Dr. Pam Dana and Captain David Walker for their service. They have done a great job representing their constituencies on this council, and I have been very impressed with their commitment to, very importantly, fairness. Fairness, accountability, and sustainable fisheries. Thank you for your service.

I just finished the science class in the MREP program, and I learned so much about it. I have a lot of respect for all the science that goes into the fisheries. Nursing is my background, and I love science. I haven’t taken the management class, and I think that’s the frustrating part of this whole process. I hope Bubba Cochrane’s son has a chance to stay in the commercial fishing industry in the United States. I hope he has a chance to do that. Thank you for your service.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Ms. Lisa. Next, we have Mr. Troy Frady, followed by Mr. Blake Osgood.

MR. TROY FRADY: Good afternoon. I am Troy Frady from Orange
Beach, Alabama. I’m a charter fisherman, and I’ve been in business for fifteen years over there. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I really want to start out by talking about business this year.

The economy has been kind of interesting, to say the least, in Baldwin County, Alabama, and we started off the spring and we had so much bad weather. For some reason, people weren’t spending a lot of money this year when they were starting off, and what we found out was a lot of the spring-breakers that we interviewed who were wanting to go deep-sea fishing just simply have not budgeted for spring deep-sea fishing.

They save their money for better weather in the summer, more predictable weather in the summer, and so, knowing that, when it comes down to setting the amberjack season this year, I am kind of torn here, because I know I want to have something to catch in the spring, and then I want to have something in the fall, because the fall tends to be a little bit more predictable weather for me, because that’s the dry season for us.

If we’re not having a tropical storm, it’s usually pretty nice out there, and we can all get out there and go, and depending on how the Southeastern Conference is doing in football, it really affects the participation, but a lot of people do have the amenities onboard where they can watch a football game and go reel in a fish.

I have been thinking a little bit about the amberjack season, and it’s come to my attention that there’s a possibility that we could try to appease more people than just one special group like myself who wants only the fall for amberjack, but I’m thinking about everybody. There are a lot of people that could use amberjack in the spring.

If there were a way to compromise and we were to get probably April for amberjack and still open amberjack up in September and October, and they were to remain open during those three months, I would say, yes, let’s go for it, but, if we can’t have something in the spring, then I would rather have amberjack in the fall, because, like I said, the predictability of the weather is a lot better for me, and the people have more budget for then. The spring-breakers, historically, like I said, just haven’t budgeted for it.

My biggest thing is we need as many fish to catch as we can during the summertime. That’s when I generate 90 percent of my revenue, between Memorial Day and Labor Day, and I need to be
able to continue to do that. I’ve had like eight days of weather. We got blown out last week, and I actually took two days off this week just so I could come here and talk to you, not because I really wanted to, but I needed to be generating some more revenue.

I guess what I’m saying is let’s show some compromise. Let’s get this council rolling on doing something, and let’s keep up with accountability with logbooks or anything we can do to make people feel a little bit more comfortable in their business model. Recreational, charter/for-hire, everybody needs access to these fish, but with accountability.

I also want to thank Dr. Dana for your years of service here. Mr. Walker, thank you. I want to welcome Mr. Oliver. Thank you, and welcome to the madhouse. Anyway, that’s pretty much it, and thank you so much for allowing me to speak. I appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a question for you from Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Hi, Troy. Thanks for being here. I appreciate your comments on amberjack, especially with trying to find some compromise there, and I hope you will make sure, when you go back to the dock, to let everyone know that I think the council commitment right now is to revisit the amberjack season at the October meeting and try to do just what you’re suggesting, which is find some sort of compromise, and then be able to get that in place in time for next year, and so it’s not done yet.

MR. FRADY: Dr. Crabtree, thank you so much, and I will tell them that, but the biggest thing that I’ve seen around this council in the past year is there has been so much -- What do you call that, the internet, the media, the mainstream media, and local media and social networks, and there is so many people doing so many harsh things on there and bashing each other in trying to talk about me, me, me, me and my plight to get access to fish.

I want what’s better for private recreational anglers and charter/for-hire anglers, but I want us to use commonsense and use some flexibility and some courtesy towards each other, and so thanks. I will tell them that. Thank you.

DR. CRABTREE: Thank you, Troy.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Blake Osgood, followed by Mr. David Brown.
MR. BLAKE OSGOOD: I would like to thank the council for giving me the ability to speak. I’m a private recreational fisherman, and I got started when my dad introduced me to offshore fishing at age twelve. Back then, we had so many more days that we could fish for not just snapper, but for -- You all know there is other species out there, and, each year that has gone by, we’ve gotten less and less days to fish, and it’s kind of getting unsafe, because we would like to be able to fish, because we bought a boat, and it’s just meant to go offshore, and it’s getting to the point where we can’t do that anymore, because the weather is usually rough in June, and, this year, we got three days, and we never went once, because there was -- I think they said five-footers every day and thunderstorms, and so I was thankful that we got an extra extension.

Like my dad said earlier, we’ve gone twice, and, one of those days, we had no business being out there, but we felt like we were being forced to do so, because we wanted to utilize our equipment.

It’s been said that recreational fishermen have a high mortality rate, but I would be more concerned with the commercial sector’s mortality rate. There has been pictures circulated on the internet of commercial boats being out there and hundreds of fish floating on the surface that died for no reason. I mean, it just seems like a shame, to me.

Recreational anglers support the economy in a lot of ways. We’ve got to buy bait, tackle, fuel, and equipment. It’s the same thing they have to buy, but I think there is lots more of us than there is of them.

These half-million-dollar yellowfin boats that are for sale, somebody has to buy them, and somebody has to keep them in business, and so the recreational sector, I feel, needs more days to fish and utilize the things we buy.

I would like to suggest maybe check-in stations instead of guessing how many fish we catch each year. Why not make check-in stations available to everyone and make it mandatory, so that we can show you exactly how many fish we’re catching, instead of guessing by poundage and numbers and all of that? It’s hard to guess, but it would be easy for us to self-report, and I think you all could come up with some pretty unique ways to give us the ability to show that.

What I’m worried about most, and I know it’s going to be a long
way away, but, when I have children, I want to be able to take them red snapper fishing too, just like my dad introduced me, but, at the same time, we’re getting less and less days, and I am pretty worried that I won’t have any days, when I’m older and have kids, to be able to take them, and so I guess that’s it. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. I think we have a question for you, Mr. Blake, from Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: Blake, thanks for your comments. I can’t say it’s something good to me after you made a comment that says -- When a fellow that young is talking about the good old days, you know we have a problem.

You were talking about reporting and how important that you felt reporting was, and I’m thrilled to hear that, and how willing you are to do it. Do you think a smartphone app and being required to report every time you go offshore, is that feasible for you or for your segment of the industry?

MR. B. OSGOOD: I believe so. Everybody I know that fishes offshore thinks that we need better data and better ways to collect the data, and they all agree that they would be more than willing to self-report and use the iPhone, like you said, and I think most people have them nowadays, and so I think that would be a very good idea.

MR. BANKS: Thank you.

MR. B. OSGOOD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. David Brown, followed by Mr. Donald Jackson.

MR. DAVID BROWN: My name is David Brown. Welcome to Texas. Texas is a good place for you all to be, because our Parks and Wildlife people know how to manage a resource. You see, we’re open seven days a week, 365 days a year, and our sportsmen can go out and take four snapper within the nine-mile limit whenever they want to, and we don’t have any problem at all, because we don’t have false numbers being fed to us by somebody.

Now, you guys, I understand you’re about to have your budget cut, and so it’s going to be important how you spend your money and getting resource counting. I assure you that they’re lying to you. Anybody here, any day of the week, that’s blowing less than twenty knots, I will take you out and show you more snapper
than you’ve ever seen, inshore or offshore. We can’t get to the bottom to fish for grouper, because the snapper tear us up on the way down.

Now, there is a reason why you all are here, and it’s not for the industry, it’s not for the recs, and it’s not for anybody. It’s for the public resource, and each and every one of you has the same vote, the same weight, as the person sitting next to you. It doesn’t matter if you have letters after your name or if you’re Dr. Brown, like myself, or Dr. Crabtree. You know what’s right, and the reason you’re here is to do the right thing. It’s not a hard thing to do, is it?

You represent the public. People have got to fish. People also ought to be able to go to Gaidos and buy a red snapper sandwich, shouldn’t they? It’s not hard if you have the proper data, and you are being fed a bill of goods on what the data is. I can show you. Any fisherman up and down the coast can show you.

If what they say is true, why can I take you out, 365 days a year, in Texas waters, and catch a snapper? Would you like to go this afternoon, Dr. Crabtree, or tomorrow, possibly? I would love for you to be my guest, and I can show you. Your own vote, your own vote.

Now, I heard Captain Williams a while ago trying to push a vote on something. I wonder why he’s so excited about having that vote now? Is somebody counting votes? Does that seem reasonable? I also saw this gentleman on the end, Mr. Brewer, and you asked a question a while ago of somebody, and they gave you a runaround. You said, how much is it worth, and they said, well, it’s the — What did he say it was? He didn’t give you a number at first.

MR. BREWER: His answer was market value.

MR. BROWN: Yes, and you had to push for that, right, and he finally told you, $3.30 or $3.50. Guys, you’re going to have to push and -- Pardon me?

UNIDENTIFIED: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. BROWN: Well, I do, too. I am a divorce lawyer. Can I be of service to anybody? Okay. You all want to go, (713)222-2500, and I will show you how you’re being lied to. Thank you, all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Donald
Jackson, followed by Mr. Joey Lenderman.

MR. DONALD JACKSON: Good afternoon. My name is Don Jackson, and I’m a retired judge from Harris County. I am here to speak for recreational fishermen. I fish out of Freeport, with Mr. Brown, by the way, and I fish out of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, with my brother, Dr. Jackson, and so I have two different aspects of this that I have looked at.

I have been listening to people talk about the industry, the industry, the industry, and it’s a public resource. You people are charged with the administration of a public resource, and it’s not for the benefit of somebody who makes a living catching fish. It’s for everybody, and the recreational fishermen should not be put at a disadvantage just because that’s what they are, that they don’t make a living catching fish.

Rules and regulations that impinge upon their ability to take their family out and fish are just manifestly wrong, and so I would ask you to keep in mind the recreational fishermen and the generations that follow and the kids that want to fish and catch snappers. They don’t want to have to live with the snapper depletion, whether it’s done by the dead bycatch or whatever we were talking about a minute ago, how many fish die.

I have witnessed pulling up on a big boat and seeing the fish floating away from it, and you don’t see that with recreational fishermen. I thank you for your time today.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Joey Lenderman, followed by Mr. Richard Fischer.

MR. JOEY LENDERMAN: Good afternoon, folks. I’m Joey Lenderman, and I’m from Richmond, Texas. I’m a recreational fisherman. I’m not here for myself, but I’m here for my family and my kids and my kids’ friends and my friends and co-workers, everybody else that loves to go fishing with us, along with all the other recreational guys that couldn’t make it today, thousands and thousands along the Gulf coast that don’t know about this meeting, can’t come, don’t have time to come, whatever it is.

I would like to thank the council for delaying their vote until the next meeting in Biloxi on Amendment 41 and 42, and, speaking of those, I would like to see them die at the next meeting. I don’t really see anything, long-term, good coming out of it for any of the groups involved, and that’s long-term. I know everybody sees it right now and thinks that one way or another is good, and I don’t know, and I don’t know that any of us know,
but I know that what’s going on right now is not working for the
majority.

I would also like to encourage the council to weigh the pros and
cons for some sort of royalty for the IFQ shareholders. There
is lots of money slipping through the fingers that could be put
back into the fishery, into reefing or some sort of educational
program or enforcement.

I would also like to see Amendment 30B rescinded as well as
allowing the Amendment 40 to sunset by the end of the year. I
just don’t see that it’s right for recreational fishermen,
depending on where they are, who they are, who they are fishing
with on a certain day, to judge whether they can keep fish or
what fish they can keep. I appreciate you all listening to me.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Richard
Fischer, followed by Ms. Susan Boggs.

MR. RICHARD FISCHER: Good afternoon, and thanks for having me
speak here today. I’m here representing the Louisiana Charter
Boat Association. I’m Richard Fischer, Communications Manager.
I’m going to address several topics here, and so I’m going to
kind of breeze through them, and, if you all have any questions
and you all would like me to elaborate on any of them, I would
be happy to go ahead and do so after.

I will begin with amberjack. I want to mention that our fleet
is almost entirely unanimously against fractional amberjack. We
don’t want fractional bag limits. I wish that I could come up
here and tell you all that our fleet wants the season to open in
the summer and then be closed all the way through the summer,
but, after polling our members, we do have quite a bunch of
members who really rely on that spring season, and so that’s
kind of a tough situation right there, where we think Louisiana
would bring in a greater harvest of amberjack if we waited until
the summer to be able to catch them, but we also have members
who want the spring season.

I think Martha brought up a really good point yesterday, a
really good idea, that I would like you all to look into about
having not only a split season, but a split quota, too. That
seems like that could be a pretty good compromise here, where
you’re going to have both a spring and a summer season, and
maybe we’ll come back and see those numbers in October and not
like it whatsoever, but I do think it’s something that we all
should look into, and, also, thanks for closing the amberjack
season for January and February of next year.
I will move on to Amendment 41 now, the referendum. Our six-pack boats remain overwhelmingly against 41. We’re glad that it looks like nothing is going to get determined on that referendum this week.

In Biloxi, in two months, captains are going to have a better opportunity to not only be informed on what’s going on, but it’s not during the summer fishing season, and it’s closer to the coast, and so we expect to have much better input from captains at that meeting.

We want one vote per entity. One thing that we would like to say about this is you vote for mayor, you vote for governor, you vote for president, and you get one vote. It doesn’t matter if you’re Bill Gates or Billy Wells. You get one vote, and so we would like it if that was the procedure for that, and we absolutely do not want passenger capacity to be used, and we’re also going to ask that there’s a pretty close to date to control date, in the fear that some owners of multiple permits might take their permits and split them up among different people and then get multiple votes, when they really only should get one.

As for the Louisiana plan that was mentioned a couple of hours ago, our six-pack boats remain very much in favor of being included in that. By a ten-to-one margin, our six-pack boats are in favor of state management. Compromise is going to be the key word there. Everybody wants a little bit more allotment than they deserve, and I think we should all do what’s best for the entire industry. Let’s not let good be the enemy of great, and let’s come up with a fair allotment for everybody and just give us the state management that we desperately want.

The last thing, and I see I’m out of time, is this Louisiana plan actually has become much more important to us now that we’re seeing that the Gulf charter fleet has not been included in the Red Snapper Act of 2017 at the U.S. Congress, and so, now that we’re seeing that we’re not going to be included in that, and, of course, we’re trying to make our inroads to get that changed, but, seeing that we’re not in that, that makes this plan very, very important to us, and that’s all I’ve got for you all. Any questions?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. I think Mr. Sanchez has a question for you.

MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you. Thank you for coming. I’m not a fan of fractional bag limits either. Somebody is going to end up
with a fish head and somebody with a tail, and it’s not going to work, but, that said, what would you think -- I mean, do you have any thoughts on a vessel trip limit for amberjack that’s appropriate, with the mindset that we’re trying to stretch the season until this rebuilds and get more fishing days and what have you?

MR. FISCHER: The vast majority of the captains that I have spoke to, they are willing to have a slightly shorter season to not have to tell their customers that, well, you get to catch amberjack, but, sorry, you don’t. That, at least in Louisiana, is the opinion that I’ve been hearing, for the most part.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

MR. FISCHER: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next, we have Ms. Susan Boggs, followed by Mr. Jim Green.

MS. SUSAN BOGGS: Good afternoon. My name is Susan Boggs from Orange Beach, Alabama. I attended a tourism board retreat last year, and one of the questions the facilitator asked was what keeps you up at night, and my answer was, and still is, red snapper.

The charter/for-hire and headboat stakeholders, along with this council, have tools to allow small business owners like myself to sleep at night. In 2014 and 2015, a total of nineteen headboats had the opportunity to participate in the Gulf Headboat Collaborative EFP.

These owners invested their money in a VMS system, plus the monthly fee for monitoring. These owners and their operators faced much criticism from those docked around them. During this two-year EFP, these boats fished over 200,000 recreational anglers, of which over 120,000 fished for gag grouper and red snapper, from forty-eight states. Their discards were down by approximately half, and now there are referendum procedures before this council for approval for similar programs.

This EFP was widely viewed as a success, even by many of you. We have been asked for years to participate in this process to come up with solutions, and we found one that allows us to operate our businesses, while adding accountability and sustainability.

This winter, Reel Surprise Charters fished several hundred
recreational anglers, who we, finally, refer to as snowbirds. They are always upset that they cannot catch a red snapper, but they were even more upset to find out that they could not keep triggerfish this year.

Some of you might find these names of Steve Perkins, Jeff Cingari, Rusty Reardon, and Gary Bond familiar, and the reason is we printed business cards with the council’s information for them to contact you and become involved.

About three weeks ago, I was in a meeting with Herb Malone, the President and CEO of Gulf Shores/Orange Beach Tourism. He stated to me, and I am paraphrasing, that he had received a few emails from snowbirds who wanted to know, since the red snapper season was reopened for recreational anglers, if the season would be reopened for them. This is a valid question from these part-time residents, since the fishery is also theirs.

My husband, Randy, and I find ourselves in a peculiar situation this year. We own a charter booking service and a fuel dock. The thirty-nine-day extension of the red snapper season has confused many of our charter customers as to when the charter boats and headboats can fish for red snapper.

This year, one of our corporate customers cancelled one of three boats chartered, due to lack of sponsorship, because of the past several years and not being able to keep red snapper. Another corporate trip went from sixty passengers to thirty-four passengers, because they could not keep red snapper, and we had one corporate trip cancel altogether.

On the other hand, our fuel dock has been busy, especially on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but, if we have no red snapper season next year, due to the overfishing that will occur this year, both sides of our businesses will suffer.

I know that this council was not responsible for the thirty-nine-day extension of the red snapper season, but it is due partly to the lack of action on the part of this council that I believe led to it. What is shameful is to know that those of us who have been working through the council process these past several years to develop amendments, such as Amendment 41 and Amendment 42, will yet again be walking away and asking why have I wasted my time?

I ask this council to vote for the referendum for Amendment 42 up or down and not delay until the October council meeting. Our industry deserves this vote, and the recreational fishermen that
access the fishery through our small businesses deserve this vote. Do your job and have this vote.

I would also like for the council to know that I support Action 2, Alternative 5, for the modification of greater amberjack allowable harvest and rebuilding plan, and I have also spoken, or texted, in the last thirty minutes, six of our charter boat captains in Orange Beach that agree to this.

Lastly, I would like to thank Pam and David for their service on this council. You both will be greatly missed, as your both brought balance to this council, which is something that will be lost after this meeting. Madam Chair, thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Next, we have Captain Jim Green, followed by Mr. Mark Kelley.

MR. JIM GREEN: Hello. Thank you, Chairwoman and council members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Captain Jim Green. I’m the Vice President of the Destin Charter Boat Association and the Charter Fishermen’s Association. Today, I will be speaking on behalf of DCBA.

Concerning amberjack, we agree that it should not be reopened in January, but the DCBA does support a split season. Along with a split season, we would also like a reduction in catch, to extend angling opportunities. Our proposed catch reduction would be to keep it at a one-fish per person bag limit, but apply a four-fish vessel limit. Our preferred split season would be April through May and September and October, and, if there is more opportunity for harvest, then we would like to add March and August to that.

One thing we did not discuss in our meeting here recently was the size limit. We know that the thirty-four-inch attempt, while moved with good intentions, did not produce the desired result, leading us to catch our projected harvest in less than half the time. This was hard on our fleet, and it removed the access from the anglers that planned their trips around this and were counting on that access. It also proves to us that this fishery is in far better shape than the stock assessment shows.

One thing that I would like to see the council do is discuss removing the thirty-four-inch size limit and going back to a thirty or thirty-two-inch fish, providing more angling opportunity under the same amount of quota.

This is the Destin fleet’s preferred seasons and bag limits, and
it pertains to our port and our local economy. It is important to us to have the ability to offer a fish to harvest, and we’re willing to take reductions, such as vessel limits, to provide that access. These reductions do not just help our Gulf-wide charter fleet, but they also help the recreational sector.

Concerning Amendment 41 and 42, I feel it’s a bit disingenuous to delay these items. This is an official meeting, and, as for the members of the council that are departing, they still are active members of this body, and they should be allowed to continue their work and move forward the work that this council has done for the stakeholders.

If the new makeup of the council doesn’t want to move it forward, then that’s their prerogative, and that body can decide where to go from there at that time. The departing members should have the right to exercise their appointed powers respectively until their term is complete.

Yesterday, I heard some discussion on the position of voters during this referendum, and, at a minimum, it should be one vote per permit. To remove the position of a person or entity that owns multiple permits is wrong. Anyone that has invested into this fishery should have a vote, and anyone who has invested multiple times should have those votes. It’s not a fair decision to give someone that has acquired multiple positions in the fishery the same vote as someone who only holds one.

Concerning our Gulf for-hire red snapper season, the Gulf-wide charter fleet has the ability, for-hire fleet has the ability, to catch the sub-sector allocation of red snapper, but they’re only limited by the season set forth. Estimations of harvest are just that, and they continue to underestimate us, and our underestimation should be addressed.

We now have a pattern of overestimation, and extending our sub-sector season within a reasonable amount should be imperative. This is not a question of the ability to harvest, but more has to do with the time to do it within. Please extend our season and allow us to harvest our reduced historical level of quota that we accepted to have stability, and I’m going to wrap it up, Madam Chairwoman.

Electronic logbooks, that’s a decade-long desire of our industry, and we want to see it moved forward. Good, bad, or indifferent, we need this data, and I just want to thank Dr. Dana and Captain Walker for their service. We greatly appreciate the sacrifice and willingness to work with all
stakeholders and your fair representation through your terms.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. We have a couple of questions. Dr. Dana.

DR. Dana: Thank you, Chairwoman, and thank you for the kind words, Captain Green. Yesterday, when we were discussing the amberjack, and there was a lot of not necessarily pushback, but there was more support for a fall opening, or actually a July opening, going into the fall, and not having a spring season. The reason for that, of course, is the western Gulf not having the opportunity to fish.

There was brought up a motion for the staff to bring back in October not a full spring timeframe, but an April opening. I know the Destin fleet has voted on a March, April, and May and also a preferred reduction of the number of amberjack on the vessel, but how would -- Can you speak to an April only?

MR. Green: Like I said, what I described was our preferred. That’s what we would like to see. If we only get one month in the spring and we get a fall season, I don’t think that we would be extremely upset about it. I think, as long as you do something in some manner to ensure that we have that fall season and we can have that stability and tell our customers that this is when it’s going to be open, I think that’s something that -- That carries a lot of weight, just as much as having the access. It’s having the stability of it, and so I think -- What they said at our meeting was April and May and September and October are very imperative to us, and so, if they get all fall and April on top of that, then I would say that that’s better than what we’ve got right now.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Walker.

MR. Walker: My question was on amberjack too, and Pam covered most of it, and I think there was some discussion, and maybe it was Dr. Frazer or someone, that had brought up maybe the possibility of May, April and May, and maybe kind of find out a preference from your group for, if there is some kind of spring opening, would April or May work better, and May might work better, since it’s before snapper season, but just something to think about.

MR. Green: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Dana. You’re a popular man, Captain
Green.

**DR. DANA:** I wasn’t done before. Thanks, Captain Green. If there was a spring opening in April and May, or April, and if there was an overabundance of amberjack caught, and then it impacted the fall, obviously if there was no fall opening for anyone, is there a preference there then from --

**MR. GREEN:** I would say that we don’t want to jeopardize the rest of the Gulf fleet by doing that, by having a month season and, like I said, the stability, to us, is what’s important. That’s really why we want to add a vessel limit of some kind. They agreed on four, and we talked about two or three fish.

We talked about a fractional bag limit, and we felt that a vessel limit of some sort of will help reduce, in some manner, to where we don’t have -- If we do open in the spring, we wouldn’t have this huge harvest and it would affect the fall, and that was kind of the line of our thinking.

If they project that -- If they keep the bag limit the same as it is right now, and they open it up in April and project a detriment to the fall season, then I would just say, just speaking to what I would think that my fleet would say, it would be that they wouldn’t want to lose that.

September and October is very important in Destin. We have our 70th Annual Destin Fishing Rodeo, which is a month-long fishing tournament, and we haven’t been able to catch amberjacks in a couple of years in it, and that’s a really good time to catch them, and so we weren’t opposed to just a fall season, but, as far as business-wise goes, we would like to have that offering for our customers in the spring, and we feel that a reduced vessel limit would allow us to have the best of both worlds, was our thinking. Thank you, Dr. Dana.

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

**MR. GREEN:** Thank you, council.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Next, we have Mr. Mark Kelley, followed by Mr. Hughes Andry.

**MR. MARK KELLEY:** My name is Mark Kelley, and I’ve got two charter boats, and I’m from Panama City. Both boats can carry up to twenty passengers, and I am also dually-permitted on both vessels and highly invested in the IFQ system, and I am not one that’s been gifted. I have worked hard for everything I have,
and so I take a lot of offense when people get up here and say that everybody has been gifted. I have done what I have been asked to do, and I have fully invested my life into this business. I love what I do, and I am grateful that the Lord has given me the ability to do it.

My main concern today is, and I'm speaking for about half of Panama City, and I might be speaking for all of Panama City, is this amberjack, and so, in the committee yesterday, we said that everybody talked about putting it off until the fall. Well, maybe you talked about putting it off until the fall, but, from what Ava told, the majority of the letters sent in wanted a spring season, and so I got to looking, and we say that, the spring season, that all the fish are caught during the spawn, but, if you look at your chart, it spikes March 1.

That's kind of amazing to me, how we go from about 50,000 pounds in January and February and then we spike. Well, why do we spike? We spike because spring break starts. Everybody is not fishing in January and February, and the fleet starts fishing. It's the reason why it spikes, because we're out there. Then it gradually goes down and we have a fall season.

Do I want it all? No, but I do think, seeing how in history that Florida and Alabama has caught 90 percent of the jack quota, we are entitled to a spring season. Now, what is that? April and May or May or April, and I don't know what it is, but you're going to -- Just because half of the Gulf wants a fall season, you're going to take what it's taken us thirty-five years to build and we're going to throw it out the window.

If we're going to talk fair is fair, I think I could live with April and May. Could I live with May? I would have to think long and hard about it. How about April and May it's closed? We definitely don't need it in June and July. June and July, we have red snapper, and we need nothing else to go.

How about let's open it September and October? That would give the wave time to be evaluated, and we would know exactly what's been caught. Then we open the season and say, hey, you're going to get September and October and the first fifteen days of November. We don't overfish the quota, and we don't have no payback measures, and I think that would be a good thing.

Another thing that concerns me is the thirty-four-inch size limit that we was pushed into and promised all kinds of things. We were going to have a ten-month season and all, and the thirty-four-inch fish is not even considered in the equation at
the time, and so we do everything you ask, and we still get penalized.

Another thing that concerns me is on the chart of the landings. We have the charter boats that caught 200,000 pounds less of jacks, and the headboats caught 40,000 pounds less, but the recreational for-hire tripled or doubled. It was about double. It was two-and-a-half times, and that number gravely concerns me, because there is a reason we’re not out there catching them, and it’s because of the weather, but all of these boats that are smaller than us, they’re out there catching their limit every day, and I have a hard time with that. The fractional, I am not crazy about fractional, but, if that gets us more days, it’s about having something to sell. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. I think we have a question from Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: I hear you on fractional bag limits, but what do you all think about a vessel limit, and what do you think we should look at with that, if that’s something to look at? We’ve got four that somebody threw out here.

MR. KELLEY: The fractional, fractional works, in my opinion, better than a vessel limit, unless you’re going to give -- I mean, you’re going to group me in with a six-passenger boat, and I ain’t got nothing against six-passenger boats, but I do have more people on there, and so, if you’re putting me in the same category as a six-passenger boat, I might have problems with it.

Fractional probably works better, but, yesterday, they said that was a law enforcement issue, but, if a law enforcement guy can’t say there is six people on that boat and divide it in half and come up with three, he might need to find a new occupation. I mean, that’s pretty simple math, and he had to know a little bit of math to get there, and so that’s my feelings on that.

I am for anything that keeps us open. I can’t believe that I’m up here bargaining for a half of a fish for my industry, but, by God, we’ve got to have something to catch. I mean, this is terrible, what we’re under right now. I mean, we have nothing.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Pam and David. I appreciate you all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next, we have Mr. Hughes Andry, followed by Mr. Brad Gorst.
MR. HUGHES ANDRY: Good afternoon. I wanted to thank the council for having me here this afternoon. My name is Hughes Andry, and I with Sportco Marketing. We’re a sales and marketing agency that supplies fishing tackle to tackle stores and fishing dealers, fishing tackle dealers, all throughout the Gulf south.

I wasn’t able to make it to this meeting until earlier today, and so I missed yesterday’s meeting, but I did want to thank the council for deferring on 41 and 42 until the Biloxi meeting. I really wanted to share an observation with everybody here that I picked up on over the last four or six weeks in talking with fishing tackle dealers and store owners.

The last several years, certain categories of tackle sales have been really bad, and, due to economic problems this year, gas and oil, fishing tackle sales haven’t been very good at all. Well, what has occurred here, over the last thirty to forty days, is a spike in business, in certain categories, and we have seen dealers that are witnessing double-digit percentage increases due to this extended federal red snapper season.

Now, weather is always an issue, but, as I have talked to dealers from south Mississippi to Louisiana to Texas, all the way down to the valley, all of them are saying that our business is up double-digits because we have the extended days for our recreational community to fish.

I won’t take up too much more time, but I just wanted to urge the council to look for management processes that allow more access for the recreational community to get out on the water and enjoy the resource. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Brad Gorst, followed by Mr. Scott Hickman.

MR. BRAD GORST: Hello. My name is Brad Gorst, and I have come from Clearwater, Florida. I manage three federally-permitted boats, and two of them are dual-permitted. I would kind of like to say thank you to David and Pam for their service and the time that they’ve been here and their fairness and being able to see both sides of the arguments, and I hope that their replacements can fill their shoes.

With that being said, I would like to move on to -- Like I said, we’re a dual-permitted boat, and I would like to see 36B kicked back to the AP for review and to refine the amendment and clean
it up, to where it’s a little bit -- To where it doesn’t lose traction and it will move forward and go.

Commercial amberjack, Alternative 2, Option b, is the preferred alternative. Action 2, Alternative 5, maintain the January through July 1 closure and open on August 1, and the rationale being that the fish are going to be roed-up in the summertime. They are finishing their roe in July, and so why harvest them pre-spawn? Let them drop their eggs and then go get them. If you go beforehand, you’re killing a lot more fish than just what you harvested. You are actually killing your next harvest, and so you’re shooting yourself in the foot.

Include the 2017 data in the previous stock assessment to make good science, due to the special circumstances of this thirty-nine days. We’re already at August, and what’s another few more months? Let it ride.

Maintain the science as the leading source of all management decisions. You can’t have knee-jerk reactions and just say, well, I feel like this needs to happen or that needs to happen. The science staff and the council staff do a phenomenal job at what they do, and I’ve got to thank them, too.

Let’s keep the logbooks moving forward to the Secretary of Commerce to be signed off. The for-hire screams for accountability. As a charter/for-hire operator, we’re treated as second-class citizens, with the commercial having its catches counted after every trip, and the Beaufort survey on the headboats. We demand to be counted. It’s simple.

To stop the Amendments 41 and 42 progress is a travesty. We provide access to the majority of people of forty-five states. That’s their access. That’s what we supply, is their access, for forty-five states, to the minority of a few citizen that live in five Gulf states, and so forty-five versus five. I mean, come on. Really?

Privatization of the resource was brought up earlier, and the charter boats and commercial fishermen are exactly the opposite, being that people travel from out of town and do not put boats in their suitcase when they want to go fishing. They buy snapper in Kansas. Aunt Mary goes down to her local fish market in Ohio and wants a fresh fish, and that’s the commercial access. They’re not going to come drive to the coast and bring their boat just to get a fish, and so that’s that side of it.

By diminishing the charter boat and headboat access, you are
removing the majority of the population’s access, and I stress the word “access”. Once you do that, you’re jeopardizing small business, and that’s what the charter fleet and commercial operators are, is small business. Small enterprise. That’s what this country is about.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Brad, are you just about done?

MR. GORST: Yes, ma’am. The southeast Gulf -- My notes are done. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Scott Hickman, followed by Mr. Scott Robson.

MR. SCOTT HICKMAN: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and esteemed members of the Gulf Council, Shepherd Grimes. First off, I would like to thank Captain Walker and Dr. Dana on their service. It’s been a pleasure to work with you all over these last few years, and, David, good luck with your professional wrestling career after you leave the council.

The recreational extended season, I told Mr. Riechers the other day that I was going to eat a little crow on this, because I really thought that we would see a huge amount of effort in Texas. I hear that there’s a lot in Florida, but I have actually experienced less effort, and Shane and I were talking about that earlier, in Galveston. We haven’t seen the big push like we expected, and so we may be surprised in the western Gulf.

Greater amberjack opener, my guys back in Galveston, of course, they’re going to want an August 1 opener. They keep gobbling these fish up in the eastern Gulf, but, regardless of that, I have spent a lot of time in the last couple of years with researchers on my boat, and this body has done everything it could on amberjacks. Let’s raise the size limit to reach sexual maturity. They’ve got thirty-five or thirty-six inches to reach sexual maturity, and so it makes a lot of sense to not harvest these fish right prior to the spawn.

These fish that we’re getting in the Gulf during these research trips, I never knew what ripe and running meant, but I’ve seen a lot of that, and I have learned more about fish gonads than I ever wanted to know, but an August 1 opener, or a late July opener, would keep us from killing fish before they can at least replicate themselves in the fishery, and so think about the biological aspects of it before we start making these decisions on these fisheries.
I like that the council talked today about a biomass component to the fishery. That has needed to be talked about for a long time, especially in the western Gulf.

I would like to see the charter/for-hire buffer revisited. We are a defined universe now. For the first time in a long time, we have stayed below our quota every year, and we would like to be able to use that for the fishing public that accessing it through the charter boats.

I would like to see the Charter/For-Hire AP reconvened this year. Some other people have been talking about the commercial IFQ program today. I would like to make it real clear that the IFQ system is a privilege to harvest. It’s not ownership. In Alaska, they’ve got, I think, one species where you can own those shares.

I am a new shareholder in this fishery. It’s a great system. It’s a very accountable, conservation-based system that is working. I have a privilege to harvest those fish. I paid to be able to do that. I bought into it. I understand that those fish could be taken away. The program could fail. The fishery could collapse, but I paid for a privilege to be able to harvest. I don’t own those fish.

That is basically all I’ve got today, and the motion for the referendum requirement, I would agree with some of my captains from my homeport. You all have been working on this, and I don’t get why we have to move it to the next meeting. You all are the ones that know about it. You sit on this council. Take a vote. It’s not the final action. It’s not the final program. It’s a referendum requirement. That’s it. Thank you all very much, and have a good evening.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Scott Robson, followed by Mr. Tony Bess.

MR. SCOTT ROBSON: Good afternoon, Gulf Council. My name is Scott Robson, and I run a charter boat in Destin, Florida, and I have been in the fisheries for over forty years, and I represent thousands of fishermen.

I am here to talk about amberjacks today. Opportunity, opportunity, opportunity for fishermen. That’s what we’re looking for here, and that’s what we should be looking for as we should be achieving as the Gulf Council, science staff, and stakeholders. We should be achieving this all together, and we

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should come together.

I am afraid though what we’re looking at here, with a six-month closure and a July opening for a month or two, falls way short of this. This will do nothing more than direct effort into July, and then overfishing begins. It does nothing to control landings, and then back to overharvest and closed seasons for all recreational fishermen.

I also understand that a little bit of this has been based on the spring spawning, but I am a bit surprised that we’re basing this -- Because we opened red snapper during the peak of its spawning, and we have no concerns about that.

Another thing that I question is, if we’ve been overfished with amberjack in 2016 with a thirty-four-inch amberjack, by roughly a million pounds halfway through the spring season, I question whether this stock is in trouble or not.

I would like to present an option for a spring and fall season for the entire Gulf. One fish per two people will give us a 45 percent reduction in landings across the board, private, charter/for-hire, and headboat. A vessel limit of six fish will give us another 8 percent in charter and 39 percent in headboat. A season opening in April through May and August through October will give us some more reduction. With approximately a 60 percent reduction or greater in all, that should give us a season that all fishermen can count on and depend on.

I would also add that the increased size limit from thirty to thirty-four inches was a disaster. It did not extend the season in any way. It sent the fish into being overharvested with a payback, creating the first time ever of almost a complete season closure. I would suggest that we go back to a thirty-inch fish. Increasing the size limit is not always what is best for the fish and the anglers.

In closing, I hope the council moves forward in not opening the amberjacks in January and yet allow for some spring fishing, whatever it takes to have a dependable season for all fishermen, and, once again, I would like to thank Pam Dana and David Walker for all your hard work and representation on the council. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. We have a question from Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Scott, for coming and participating in
this process. In the discussion yesterday, because I won’t be on the council at the next meeting, but some of the discussion was maybe a one-month opening in the spring, and I didn’t know if you had a preference of April or May, but that’s just something to think about for the next meeting, or maybe you had some comments on it now.

MR. ROBSON: Right, and, here again, I guess, if I had a preference, it would be May, but, here again, my point here, and I don’t want to go too much, is just this little moving these seasons into a fall, and you have done nothing about a thirty-four-inch fish. You’re not taking into consideration much on vessel limits, and that would help a little bit, but, really and truly, and I have heard some comments of how do you do fractional, but, to me, that’s the biggest thing that’s going to give us a reduction.

If this fleet, or this fishery, wants to see any recovery and really see a season, because you’re just moving it into July, what a spike in effort then. If you don’t think that April and May was, open it up in July, or even August. It shows on the graph that there’s a big percentage caught then, and you’re just going to move everything down the road. Then, in 2018, or 2019, we’ll be having a closed season again and let’s start all over again, and where do we go from here?

That’s why I think bag limit reductions, and I know it’s down to one, and the only other option is one per two people, but it gives you such a good reduction that there’s a chance for a longer season that will benefit all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Hi, Scott. Jim Green, I think, mentioned a four-fish vessel limit.

MR. ROBSON: We did, when we were voting, and we would, but, when they took that vote -- First, we kind of voted on what I was presenting, and a lot of people liked it. Then somebody brought up of, well, what if you’re six-passenger boat. Then four would work better for me.

The only problem, if you do just the vessel limit reduction alone, at least according to the data that I’ve gotten, and this is in Amendment 35, in Table 2.1 and Table 2.1.2, it only gives you a 25 percent reduction in charter/for-hire and a 2 percent reduction, according to the graph, in private rec, and so, here again, we might get a 25 percent reduction, and I’m just
concerned -- Is 25 percent enough to give you a good, long season with this fish?

DR. CRABTREE: But, in terms of business, four fish per vessel wouldn’t hurt you?

MR. ROBSON: Yes, if you could get a complete season. The biggest fear is what we’re trying to stop from happening, and that’s your -- Let’s say we do open in May. Come August, there you go. The quota has been caught again, and I’m trying to look for an answer that you can have some spring and you can have some fall that should benefit everybody. Yes, there is going to be some give-and-take in it. How do you do two people and, if you’ve got two people on your boat, I guess you keep one fish.

The opportunity is there. They’re going to get to keep it, and it sure would be nice, is what we’re really looking for, is being allowed to -- At least when you go and fish, you’re able to take a couple of fish home. Nothing by law says that you have to take six in every day, but we’re just trying to break it down to what’s the best benefit to the fishery and to the fishermen.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, we’ll come back to it in October in Biloxi.

MR. ROBSON: I will be there.

DR. CRABTREE: We’ll look forward to hearing from you.

MR. ROBSON: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Any other questions? We have one more from Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: It’s more of a comment. Thanks. You have changed my view on fractional fish, and I really appreciate you going through the work and getting together with your group and trying to bring something right along the lines of, I think, what we’re looking at, because I think our goal is the same, to try to extend the season, keep it open as long as possible, and these are some of the things we’ve got to look at and put some analysis to, so we can hopefully move forward in October, and so thank you.

MR. ROBSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I think you’re free now, sir. Thank you. Next, we have Mr. B.J. Burkett, followed by Mr. Jason
Klosterman.

UNIDENTIFIED: You skipped Tony.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I am so sorry. I checked him out earlier. Okay. Mr. Tony Bess, followed by Mr. B.J. Burkett. I apologize, Mr. Tony.

MR. TONY BESS: That’s all right. My name is Tony Bess, and I’m from Alvin, Texas. I am a recreational fisherman, and I’ve been fishing for forty-plus years. I, three years ago, moved my boat from the Galveston Yacht Basin down to Matagorda, to take advantage of the near-shore Texas red snapper. It has worked out great for me and my family.

I have seen it when it was really, really good fishing, to when it was not so good fishing, and now somebody has referred to it as the biomass is just out of this world, as far as I am concerned. I can’t hardly get a bait down to catch an amberjack or a grouper, and I am not really complaining too much about the amberjacks, but I would like to catch a grouper now and then.

Currently, here in Texas, we’re allocated three days in June again, and that, historically, is our windiest month. I am physically handicapped, and I couldn’t justify jeopardizing my safety or my boat to go out for the three days.

TP&W and the rest of the Gulf states got together and talked about extended seasons, and I was only okay giving up my state days to be able to participate in more federal days. I can catch fish in Texas waters all year long, as somebody else has said.

I disagree with the federal government, and I hate to use the word, and a gentleman was here speaking about it earlier, but generally the word used is “gifting” the snapper to a select few groups, corporations, or individuals resources that belong to all of us in the United States.

I appreciate the tabling, which it appears to be a tabling, on the Amendment 41 and 42 until the new council members take their seats. I would like to see Amendment 30B rescinded as well as allowing Amendment 40 to sunset by the end of the year.

I totally disagree with a comment that I’ve heard several times about the mortality rate that recreational fishermen come up with. I have heard somebody say twenty-to-one that we’re upgrading our fish, and that don’t happen on my boat, and it
don’t happen on a lot of my friends’ boats. We get what we get. If it’s sixteen inches, then we’re going to go with it.

I have been behind headboats, and I have seen a lot of floaties, and that just becomes -- That’s a waste for everybody, and that just becomes porpoise and shark bait, and so, as I said, I disagree with that.

I think the data is suspect and outdated, and I would like to see that improved on, so we could get a better idea of what we actually have out there in the Gulf, and I would prefer my state to handle its own fish. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. B.J. Burkett, followed by Mr. Jason Klosterman.

MR. B.J. BURKETT: My name is B.J. Burkett, owner and operator of Hook’em Up Charters in Panama City Beach, Florida. I have been in business for thirteen years. Also, a dual-permitted and an IFQ holder and a commercial fishing boat based out of Apalachicola.

The charter fishing, for us, in our area, has been the worst I have ever seen. Like I said, for thirteen years, this season was the absolute worst for the spring, mainly because of amberjack. The carpet got pulled out from under us, and we lost a pile of trips because of it.

I have a hard time with the fall season. I know there’s a big westerly push for it. It really bothers me, because, historically, all the fish have come from the eastern Gulf, by you all’s records, from what you all show in all of these papers you all put out. It’s not just close. It’s way off. It’s like 90/10, and that’s a very close guess on that.

A harvest shift for these jacks is not going to change the overfishing problem you all have. A few years back, you all failed us, when you all promised us ten months and a two-month closure if we went to thirty-four inches. You miserably failed on that one. I mean, the fish are bigger than we’ve ever seen, and our customers can’t hardly catch them now, they’re so big, and the smaller fish will do fine. Going back to a thirty-inch size limit would work way better. There would be a lot more fish for everybody to catch.

That graph you all have in the handout, on page 100, I would appreciate the council looking at that graph a little bit closer. It shows a massive harvest in June and July, when it’s
been closed for the last several years in June and July, and how
can we harvest a massive amount of fish when it’s closed, and so
please reevaluate that, if you all will.

We need a spring season. April 1 would be a good opening for
us, April and May, and close it in June and July. We do not
need them in June and July. Then reopen it in the fall and let
it go as long as it will.

Everyone needs the opportunity. To keep my business afloat, I
need the opportunity. I don’t need a closed season. A closed
season is closed for business, and we need the opportunity, and
the spring is when we need our amberjacks. We have always
cought them in the spring.

Red snapper, the sector separation by itself has been working
pretty good. We have been staying in our guidelines, and there
is no need for an IFQ or a PFQ. Leave it alone. It’s working.
Just leave it alone. It’s working great right now. Each year,
we get more and more days. We can get closer to our buffers,
and let it ride.

Another thing that nobody has brought up, and I bring it up
every time I come up here, and it happened a year or two back,
is the red grouper IFQ. That has been -- It has hit me kind of
hard, because of the marine fisheries increased it 30 percent,
and the commercial sector hasn’t even come within 30 percent of
catching the initial quota, and why do we add more? That just
seems like a horrible way to conserve the fishery, and that’s
pretty much all I’ve got.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

MR. BURKETT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next, we have Mr. Jason Klosterman, followed
by Mr. Buddy Guindon.

MR. JASON KLOSTERMAN: Good afternoon, council. Thank you for
giving me the opportunity to speak in front of you all today.
My name is Jason Klosterman, and I’m a second-generation charter
fisherman from Destin, Florida, the owner and operator of a six-
pack charter service, and I would like to talk to you all
briefly about the amberjack season.

I do not see an August 1 opening for those of us on the Gulf
cost of Florida. I would like the council to consider other
options before making a ruling. I would be in support of a
reduction in the bag limit of one-fish per person or a four-fish per vessel limit, to allow an April and May season and a September through October fall season.

I would also like to see the council consider exploring lowering the size limit from thirty-four to thirty, or even thirty-two inches, so that we do not catch our quota as quickly.

For us, I see an amberjack spring season as important to our business. Summers for us, regardless of what we’re catching -- it seems to me, even when we had a nine-day snapper season, we catch -- we have a lot of customers during the summer. For us, spring and fall is a time where the fish that we can bring back seem to be more important to our customers that come that time of year.

We discussed this a lot at our last Destin Charter Boat Association meeting, and the one per person and four-fish per vessel limit was one of a popular choice, and there was also a one per every other person, six max, and that was somewhat more popular among our over-six charter operators. I think either or would be a good option for the council to consider to help us move forward on this.

Concerning Amendment 41, I would like to continue to see the council move forward with this. I certainly don’t want to see it die off, as some fishermen have mentioned here today. I think anything that is a value to us for our resource, especially for longevity and stability, and for somebody like me. I am twenty-nine years old, and I’ve been a charter captain for ten years, and I just purchased my own vessel about a month ago.

I can tell you, personally, that it’s not cheap to get into nowadays, but I would never invest less money in something that I felt was going to fail instead of investing more money in something that I thought was going to succeed, and so I definitely think that is very important for us to move forward on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Buddy Guindon, followed by Mr. Shane Cantrell.

MR. BUDDY GUINDON: Hello. I’m Buddy Guindon, a commercial fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico and many other things to many people. Pam, thanks for your service here. You’ve been a wonderful asset to this council. I hope the people that replace you can do the same thing.
The only commercial red snapper fisherman in the history of the council, that spends 90 percent of its time on red snapper, David Walker, thanks for your service. Sorry it was so short.

I have a question for Kevin, and I hope he will answer it at Full Council, on Amendment 36B. At what point did the goal of reducing capacity in the red snapper fishery get reached, because we’re talking about redistribution of quota to new entrants. If we are looking for new entrants, we must have reached this reduction of our capacity, and I would like to know what that number was, and then I would like to know what the number will be when we reach overcapacity again, so I understand the goal that Kevin has in the amendment that he brought up.

When you implement a market-based management system, it’s just that. It’s a market-based system. The market drives the pricing, and the new entrants coming in drive the market, because they’re the ones buying, and the older guys are selling.

When we attempt to do this, I hope that General Counsel fully examines that significant change to our management system and requires a referendum, so that we can vote on that, because it’s not what we signed up for. We signed up for a market-based system that was based on people coming in buying in and the people going out selling out, and I think that’s the fair way to look at it, not that I will ever sell out. I will die with mine, and my kids will get it, unless you can change that somehow.

Amendment 36, to me, it seems like a way to devalue the IFQ system. When we have a group of businessmen, fishermen, who are not up here at the podium complaining about leasing of fish and price the fish cost, I don’t understand why non-commercial-representing council members are worried about that. I think that what they should be worried about -- If you’re a commercial representative, you should be bringing up commercial points. If you’re a recreational representative, you should be working on the recreational problems in this fishery and trying to solve them.

I hope that, when David and Pam’s replacements come in, they can bring a new way of thinking to the council about maybe trying to solve those problems, rather than attacking a management system that’s working for the folks that are in it and it’s working for the public.

I think that, if you could get us down to a limit in amberjack
that eliminates a directed fishery, whether that be 1,000 pounds or 500 pounds or 750 pounds or 300, and I don’t know what it is, but we can then spread that catch out and reduce discard mortality in the amberjack fishery. See you at the party.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Shane Cantrell, followed by Mr. Mike Colby.

MR. SHANE CANTRELL: Good afternoon. I would first like to recognize a couple of members of this council. First, Dr. Dana, thank you for your years of service on this council, and we appreciate everything you’ve done. You’ve been a fair and balanced council member.

Second, Mr. Walker, we appreciate your short term here on the council. You’ve done an excellent job for commercial, and you’ve really been there for the other professional fishermen, as we’ve seen our industry come under attack.

The third person that I would like to recognize is Mr. Johnny Greene. You’re the last charter boat on this council, man. To my knowledge, you’re the last professional fisherman making a living on the water on this council. I’m seeing a lot of imbalance, and that really worries me, as somebody who has got a future in the charter boat industry and a future in the commercial fishing industry. We’re seeing the only commercial reef fish fisherman go away.

We don’t have a lot of professional fishermen on this council. We have a lot of recreational interest, and we have a lot of recreational advocates, and I feel like the charter boat voice is going away, and I feel like the commercial voice is also going away, and so that’s very troubling.

Electronic logbooks, to my knowledge, that has been passed by the council, and it has not been transmitted to the Secretary. This is something that the charter boats really need. This is desperately needed. We need to get this on the water and get this done and get this finished.

In terms of accountability, we need to be supporting science-based catch limits in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the charter/for-hire sector, sub-sector, has consistently stayed within its quota. This could be further cemented with electronic logbooks and also by adjusting the buffer appropriately, as we have seen with the successful implementation of Amendment 40.
I am concerned of the impact that a thirty-nine-day season could have on this resource. As Scott Hickman mentioned earlier, there is -- It’s an interesting dynamic of what I’ve seen on the water every day on the weekends out of Texas. I have different stories out of Florida, but that’s anecdotal evidence, and I am interested to see what this may have.

On amberjacks, I would like to see you finalize this ACL, and the January closure, so we can get this figured out. There is a lot of opportunities to get this worked on. I believe we can find something and a compromise and be able to move forward on this.

Amendment 41 and 42 offer a stable and flexible management plan, and it’s interesting to hear such harsh attacks now that the council balance is looking differently. It’s a very interesting dynamic there.

On SEDAR for red snapper, the council is approaching a dangerous situation. We just lowered the MSST significantly, which is increased opportunity for exploitation, and an unprecedented thirty-nine-day season for the only open access, uncapped sector, uncapped sub-sector of this, and to not incorporate this season data and landings data just seems reckless to me. That’s all I’ve got for today, and, if you all had any questions, I would feel free to answer them.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a question from Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Shane. I just had a question on amberjack and how you felt about maybe spring seasons and splitting and then the trip limits for commercial.

MR. CANTRELL: On the commercial trip limit, I use it as a bycatch on my trips. I caught two this year commercially, and I was pretty happy with that. I got one day of good weather, and I was really busy in the beginning of the year, and so I don’t make my living on amberjacks, but I don’t have a problem with the reduction in trip limit.

For recreationally and on the charter boats, there is some outside-the-box ideas that are going to be brought up, and it could be worked on in October. For my fleet in Galveston, a split season, at least to how we’ve seen it, is a closure for the western Gulf of Mexico.

A spring season, a January 1 opening, we’ve seen it close early, and we’ve watched it. That’s a split season. Open it in
January and close it for the spawning and open it back up and it
doesn’t open back up. At some point, these boats in the western
Gulf have got to be recognized. It’s like we need to do
something. We talk about compromise, and we need to find some
compromise. I am not seeing a compromise with a split yet. I
mean, I’m open to ideas, and I would like to talk about this
stuff, but that doesn’t show me a compromise yet.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: A question from Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: Shane, thank you for your testimony. You had
mentioned about using some quota that you had for commercial for
your bycatch, and you’re a fairly young man. One of the
concerns that I have expressed is trying to encourage new
entrants into this program and making sure that we modify the
program such that we encourage new entrants.

Can you explain a little bit about the existing program and how
it helped you come into the commercial industry or maybe, in a
way, really made it very difficult for you to come into the -- I
guess give us a little idea of how we can help encourage new
entrants, because I just don’t want this IFQ program to be
discouraging new entrants. Thank you.

MR. CANTRELL: The greatest benefits of the red snapper and
grouper-tilefish IFQ program are the stability and the certainty
that they’ve got, in terms of ability to go harvest and the time
of year that you get to do it. The flexibility that you’ve got
to go do this -- The benefits of the program are there.

That is the value of the program. The uncertainty around it
makes it harder for new entrants and not easier. Stuff like
Amendment 36B that are attacking the IFQ system and undermining
the successes are not helping new fishermen. They are hurting
new fishermen.

My personal story, I bought a boat, and I have invested in the
IFQ system, and I am now an IFQ shareholder. I’m a small
shareholder. I bought my first amount of shares here about a
month ago. I am investing in this fishery, and I have a future
in it, and I see a great opportunity. I lease a lot of fish.
The majority of my fish are leased, and, as I continue to run a
business and I continue to build into this fishery, and I intend
to have a future in it, I invest in my business.

That’s what you do when you run a business. You don’t wait for
somebody to gift it to you. I have all the gains to be made
from a cyclical redistribution standpoint, but that’s not the
solution. The guys that are in it built the system, and they worked so hard to protect it, and they worked to further it, and they put together a quota bank, and they’re doing the right thing for their industry, and we don’t need to make it harder for them, and we don’t need to make it harder for me. I am living the American dream to be able to do this, and I want to continue to do that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Mike Colby, followed by Mr. David Briggs.

MR. MIKE COLBY: Thank you, Council Chairwoman, and, Mr. Anson, I just couldn’t help myself. I just had to do it. The first comment, again, Dr. Dana and David, thank you. I am Mike Colby, the President of the Clearwater Marine Association out of Clearwater, Florida.

I always want to try to be helpful and give you something to chew on, and I think, last time I testified, I gave you some updates on ELB. We’re closer to getting some more units, in addition to about thirty or forty more training sessions, around the Gulf. Those were talked about last week, and this is the NFWF and CLS and Gulf Seafood Institute Program.

We have looked at some of the bumps in the road in it, and, in the last two or three weeks, we’ve identified simple things like more intercepts, and I don’t think there’s a state survey or any survey that wouldn’t benefit from more intercepts.

One of the more obvious things would be density of participation in some of the port locations, and that hopefully will solve that as we move forward with some additional units, and so I am kind of excited about that, and I will know a lot more about that even next week.

On a broader note, one of the previous speakers made an interesting statement that this 41 and 42 vote is an eligibility requirement. I mean, I think any council has the ability to move something forward or back-burner it, but it simply seems to me that this is really about making a determination on participants.

It’s not a final action, and it doesn’t necessarily mean the sky is falling, but it’s just simply trying to make an identification of how we determine what an eligible participant is, and I -- Oftentimes, when I think back on this Headboat Collaborative and what Amendment 41 and 42 propose to do, it’s very similar.
I have always got the idea that the alter that a fisheries scientist would like to worship at would be to have effort distributed evenly around the Gulf and, in some ways, in some fisheries, constrain harvest, and that gets you two things. That gets you a sustainable fishery, and it also gets you access for everybody, and I can still, under constraint of harvest, like you just heard a captain say an hour ago, his participation in the Headboat Collaborative -- They caught less fish, and they had a wider participation of recreational fishermen in it, because they offered it at a time that was beneficial for his fishery.

It’s kind of interesting that you can get as granular as you want to about why 41 or 42 would be bad or good, but, if you kind of step back a minute and look at it, it actually offers a platform that puts fishery managers kind of where they would like to be, where you can have a better determination of your landings, and you have a constraint on harvest. You have distributed your effort around, and, at least in terms of a for-hire fisherman, from Corpus Christi to Key West, Florida, that might be a really good thing. Thank you.

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

MR. ANSON: Hi, Mike. Thanks for providing your testimony, even though you kind of reneged on your deal earlier, but you mentioned the thirty to forty training sessions, and I assume those are going to be one-on-one training sessions associated with each of the units that you’re going to be installing, and is that correct?

MR. COLBY: The way they were put together a year-and-a-half ago was at different port locations and come one and come all, and so it’s a presentation. I think we generally got fifteen to thirty operators, and you bring in some PCs, and you set up a show, and everybody -- You have a tablet, and you walk through the process, and so it’s not one-on-one, but it’s a group of two or three people, the two engineers from CLS, a GSI representative, myself, and some others that are familiar with that platform.

MR. ANSON: We have had some issues, I think, in the Orange Beach area with some of the platforms, and so this is going to be an another open group training session, these, again, thirty or so training sessions that will be open to multiple captains, and I guess, from your perspective, if you can put the word out
to certainly encourage captains to attend, because some captains
-- I think they think that they’re reporting the right way, but
I don’t know if that’s quite happening 100 percent of the time,
and so maybe a retraining session might be stressed for folks.
They might learn something new about the system and its
capabilities, and that might help them to come on out. Thank
you.

MR. COLBY: Kevin, I have seen that in our marine association in
Clearwater, where I have walked the dock, and I’ve been down in
St. Pete and other port locations, and, many times, you’re just
-- You’ve got to be an ambassador for what you’re doing, and
that’s going to help, particularly as we roll out a directive to
have the entire for-hire fleet report on electronic logbooks.
You’re going to need ambassadors.

There is no way that -- I mean, I don’t know that there is
enough training sessions without the help of captains that can
answer questions right there. I have gone up to boats where
it’s simply, well, my time and position froze on the tablet and
what do I do, and, well, let me show you how to reboot it and
re-pair it to your Wi-Fi or to your junction box. Ten minutes
later, they’re going, wow, and so you really get down to ground-
zero when you’re talking about using a new technology.

Like I have mentioned before, to be fair, there are some guys
out there in this federal for-hire fishery that still use flip
phones, and they’re just going to freak out, and so there’s got
to be a way to hand-carry and hold these people and give them
the care and attention they need to bring them into a different
reporting environment.

That’s a mouthful, but I think, with the ambassadors and other
captains that are fired up and get onboard and get the training
and understand the training -- They’re the ones that trickle
out, and they’re the ones that get the process moving.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. All right. Next, we have
Mr. David Briggs, followed by Mr. Michael Brown.

MR. DAVID BRIGGS: Thanks, council. I appreciate you guys
giving me the time to be here. It’s probably going to be a
little hard to speak, because I just flew in from Angola this
morning, and I’m a little bit sleep deprived, but I’m a
recreational fisherman, but, at the same time, I was a deckhand
on the charter boats, and I fished with some of the captains in
here back in the 1990s, putting myself through A&M.
We’ve got a mess on our hands, we really do, but, at the end of the day, it’s about money. Everybody is talking about the IFQ and they don’t pay any royalties. Well, I work for Exxon-Mobil, and we pay royalties, and why doesn’t everybody? That’s a sticky point.

I understand the charter guys. They’re just trying to make a living. I tried to do it, and it just wasn’t for me. Commercial fishermen, I learned my lesson on that one, but I give you guys all the best in world. It’s not easy. It’s not easy to hear both sides of the same story, and everybody just wants to go fishing. That’s all it’s about, is just going fishing.

When I signed on the dotted line and I went into the United States Army to serve this country, nobody asked me. Everybody said, go, go do it and take off. Okay. I tried to take my son fishing, and I can’t go. I can’t go because of this, and I can’t go because of that, and so that’s why I’m saying that it can’t be easy, and I’ve seen all three sides of it. I have lived it. I did it.

Back to the amendments. Now I’m a recreational fisherman, and I see postponing 40 and 41 and doing this with that and the IFQs and everything else, and I’m glad it’s you all and not me. I did my duty, and just do what you can for everybody. Everybody has got a dog in this fight, and it’s not easy, because some dogs are bigger and other dogs are smaller, and so I thank you, and I appreciate it, and good luck, guys.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Michael Brown, followed by Mr. Terrell Miller.

MR. MICHAEL BROWN: How are you all today? I’m a recreational guy, and I captain a charter boat on the side, and I run cattle for a living. I’m out of Port O’Connor, Texas, and we fish out of there quite a bit. The fishing is a little tougher now that all the rigs are disappearing. From the cattle business side of it, if you don’t have the pasture, you can’t have the cows, and it’s the same thing with the rigs. That’s kind of hurting us there.

I just really wanted to push that it’s scary going down to so many short days on the fishing, the same as the last guy said. It’s hard wanting to take your kids out and not being able to do it, because, if you get ten days, realistically, nine of those are too rough to actually go out. The ten-day season is hard to shoot for. It’s hard to plan it out so far ahead, and it’s
tough, but I do want to be able to say that, before it’s all said and done, that I did do something to be able to try to take my kids out later on. Thank you, all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Mr. Terrell Miller, and, if Mr. John Graham is in the room now, he’ll be last, but not least.

MR. TERRELL MILLER: Good afternoon, council. My name is Terrell Miller, and I’m a native of San Antonio. I live a far rifle shot from the Alamo. I am pretty heavily invested as a recreational fisherman in Port Aransas, Texas, and, these last few weekends, you would not believe the uptick in the boats leaving from the boat ramp.

My place is right there by the boat ramp, and you would not believe the gas and the bait that’s being bought there and the tackle. You can definitely notice the influx, and I would like to -- I guess I would like to thank the Secretary of Commerce for making that possible, and perhaps the new administration.

I would like to thank Dr. Crabtree and this Gulf Council for the decision to defer any vote on Amendments 41 and 42 until the next Gulf Council meeting in Biloxi. That exposed the intent to push this vote through at this meeting by commercial and enviro interests, even though it has not been properly vetted or reviewed.

I would also recommend that the next Gulf Council allow Amendments 41 and 42 to die, as pushing for further privatization of our fish, through IFQs or PFQs, is unacceptable. I would also like to see Amendment 30B rescinded, as well as allowing Amendment 40 to sunset by the end of this year.

There is really no excuse for implementing rules that unfairly discriminate against recreational anglers based on the platform that their feet are standing on. A recreational fisherman is a recreational fisherman, regardless of whether they stand on my boat, a jetty, a dock, another private boat, or a for-hire boat. Enough is enough. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Sir, we have a question for you from Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Hi, and thank you for coming. I wanted to ask you -- I have heard several times today to allow Amendment 40 to sunset within a year. Where is this year timeframe coming from?
Who came up with that?

MR. MILLER: I am not certain, to be honest with you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have one more.

MR. BANKS: I appreciate you being here and bringing your comments, and it’s going to be the same question that I’ve asked several of you. Your ideas on electronic reporting as a recreational angler, would you be willing and do you think that your friends and the folks that you know in the industry would be willing to do that on every trip?

MR. MILLER: Yes, sir. I’m a younger-generation fisherman, and we’ve got the iPhone or the Android stuff and any type of accountability. I don’t mind being accountable for what I catch, because I have got a full-time job, but, every once in a while, I do get to see the numbers that come out, and they do seem inflated to me, as far as the recreational side numbers.

I think that, if there was accountability for the recreational side, I think that you would find that those numbers are being overstated drastically. The weather down by us, it gets rougher, as you get down south to Brownsville, and, the three days that you all did give us, there was no way that I could go out in those seas and not endanger myself, my family, or my friends.

There is just no absolutely no way that I could have got out there, and so I do appreciate the opportunity to go out and catch some fish. Red snapper fishing is fun. Fishing is fun, and I enjoy it, and so that’s why I’m here, and you all want to sustain the fishery, and I applaud you all for that, and I appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. It’s 4:31. We’ve got some early flights on Thursday, and we’re going to knock one more easy thing out this afternoon. It won’t be too tough. We’re probably going to do one committee report, and you will still get out early, I promise, as long as you don’t ask too many questions. Mr. Swindell, if you’re ready, we’ll do our Outreach and Education Committee Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

MR. SWINDELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Outreach and Education Committee met yesterday. Staff provided a
presentation of communications analytics in the last three years, which is Tab O, Number 4. Next, staff reviewed a summary of the Outreach and Education Technical Committee meeting held on August 1, 2017 in Tampa, Florida, which is Tab O, Number 5.

The committee discussed the use of proxy attendees in place of named Technical Committee members that cannot attend meetings. **Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, that the O&E Technical Committee allow the use of proxy attendees subject to the approval by council staff.**

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. We have a committee motion. Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: I will start the questioning that you didn’t want.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: That’s all right. Go ahead.

MR. BOYD: I am little bit confused about this, because usually a proxy is a preassigned person, or someone who can stand in for you at a meeting. The states have people who can stand in, but they are pre-named. Is that what we’re saying here, is that each member is going to have a person who will stand in for them at that meeting as preapproved by staff, or are we just saying that anybody at any time can stand in for somebody?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory, we had a little discussion on this during the committee, and would you like to elaborate?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It will be on an as-needed basis. We won’t have designees named ahead of time and a list of them. It would be if the main person can’t make it from a state agency or a Sea Grant agency. Then they can have a colleague sit in for them, and the staff approval part was there to just kind of keep a handle on how it works and making sure that it doesn’t get out of line.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: The question was actually good. It gave us time to get the motion on the board. The motion is on the board, and this is a committee motion. Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Just one comment on this. I think this makes sense, and I will give you an example. We have a team, of course, that does our outreach and education and does all of our social media and all that stuff. Depending on what’s on the agenda, it may make sense to send one of our social media experts, as opposed to the people that are working at fishing shows, and so just to throw that out there as why this probably is a good thing.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Ms. Guyas. Any other discussion on the motion? All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries.

MR. SWINDELL: The Committee addressed the collection of anecdotal angler-reported data. The committee emphasized the importance of angler-reported information and agreed that data collection must be done intentionally and the information collected must be used and reported to the appropriate scientists.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to develop a data portal to collect public anecdotal information regarding council-managed species.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Camp.

MR. MATENS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I get this, and I see what’s going on, and I would be -- I am uncomfortable that a lot of this anecdotal information comes and you don’t know who it’s coming from. I am okay with this kind of stuff if you put your name and address, and I would like to see that somehow included in this, and I would support this.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Matens, and we’re going to wait just a second, until we get the current motion on the board, so we all know exactly what we’re voting on here. Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Do we have some sort of email inbox that’s questions and comments that comes for just general purpose stuff at the council, as opposed to for particular amendments, already?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I see Ms. Emily shaking her head, and I’m going to let her respond.

MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN: Yes, we do. Currently, we use gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org, and that’s kind of the catch-all, not only for question answering, but also where people send their general public comments.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Well, and I mean I’m looking at this, and I remember some of the discussion in committee, and I don’t know what we want to get out of this, is part of my issue, and, when
you set up something like this, it takes someone to manage it, and you’ve got to go out there and grab it at some point and try to summarize it in some way, if it’s going to be useful to you, and so I guess -- If it’s a place where people can go and make comments, I am kind of wondering if we already have that, number one, and, if it’s more than that, it seems to me that we need to maybe have someone come back with a plan of what that’s going to look like, and that’s just kind of my general thought at the moment.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I agree, and I think that was the discussion during committee, that staff would begin to flesh out what this would look like and then bring it back to us to vet it and tell them how to proceed forward and how to tweak it and such.

Mr. Matens, most definitely the name, what type of fishery, some location and gear types, all kinds of information like that. That would be helpful to the scientists to understand who gave them this information and where is it coming from, because it is designed to go to the scientists at some point. Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: This may be a question for Emily, and I see where Camp is going, and I agree to try to understand who is sending it in and if it’s legitimate or not, but I don’t know how you would -- Just because you make somebody put their name and address in there -- I mean, I can say that I’m John Q. Public from Bozeman, Montana, and how would you know? I guess that’s my point, and so I didn’t know if there was a way that we were able to make sure that it’s a legitimate person, or at least a legitimate email address. I don’t know.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Emily.

MS. MUEHLSTEIN: We don’t currently have a validation mechanism for any of our public comments or anything like that, and so the honest truth is I’m not sure how we would go about verifying that these people were actual people.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: When this first started, I really thought we were going down a citizen science road, where they were going to come in and report some specific sighting or something like that, and that was some of the examples I think that were used, and certainly most of our agencies have used those or have different aspects of those. I guess let me try to create a substitute motion, if you’re ready for that.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I think we have the actual original motion on
the board now, which is the correct one, and so, yes, sir, if
you would like to make a substitute.

MR. RIECHERS: I am going to say to direct staff to develop a
plan that would create a data portal to collect public anecdotal
information regarding council-managed species and bring that
back to the council for approval, so that we can see what kind
of resources we’re talking about here, because I mean this is
going to -- If it’s no more than the email box you already have,
then let’s not duplicate that again.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a substitute motion on the
board. Do we have a second for the substitute? It’s seconded
by Dr. Frazer. Is there discussion on the motion? Mr. Chester.

MR. BREWER: I have violated my rule twice today. The South
Atlantic Council is working on this right now and has made some
progress. I think we’ve gotten some funding in. Really, what
you’re looking for is that you’re not just getting random input,
but rather you’re getting directed input and the input that
you’re getting is in a format that is going to be useful to
Bonnie and her folks, and so that’s being worked on right now,
and it might well be -- I am not saying that the South Atlantic
Council is the be-all-end-all, but it might be that we can
intermesh and work together on doing that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Just to carry upon that thought that Chester just
brought up, and I briefly discussed it during the committee
meeting, the idea that was discussed at a prior council meeting
regarding MREP and that someone, in order to supply comments,
would have to go through some sort of similar program, an
abbreviated program, so that you can, you know, kind of educate
the person that we want to get the information from, and I know
that might be outside the bounds of what the technical committee
had thought of, but, you know, along the lines that we also
discussed, that Chester just brought up, was that you want to
probably ask specific questions that might be timed to an
assessment, so it provides the most utility, and maybe that
would help in the assessment process, as it goes through a data
review and workshops and such that they do, and so just, with
that in mind, I guess for the plan, and keep that in mind.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: That sounds good, and I think, if they bring
us back some sort of plan, it kind of -- It sounds like maybe I
had one idea for what kind of information I was hoping to garner
from the fishermen.

I am not trying to educate the fishermen. I am trying to have the fishermen educate us, right, educate the scientists, and have that direct communication with the scientists, but not on a trip-level basis. It’s not, hey, I see more red snapper than I’ve ever seen before, but something that maybe the scientists are not teasing out of the data, right, some things, like Dr. Dana mentioned, when we were in the committee, but, if we bring this plan back -- I mean, if you all are wanting to go to something that’s much broader than that, which is kind of what I’m hearing, and you want trip-level data from anglers, I guess we could go there, but whatever you want. I guess the plan can have some options.

MR. RIECHERS: I don’t think we’re wanting more trip-level data. I think, and I would be interested in seeing it, and certainly our staff should probably talk with the South Atlantic, since they’ve already gone down this road a little bit, but I will be interested to see what headway they’ve made and how they’re trying to frame that to come back to the science folks, but we have already got different trip-level systems in place, and we don’t need to recreate that wheel either. We need people to remember to go report, but we don’t need to create another place they need to go report.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any further discussion on the motion? All right. Seeing none, all in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all opposed, same sign. The motion carries.

MR. SWINDELL: Finally, the committee discussed allowing Outreach and Education Technical Committee members to participate in meetings via webinar, if necessary.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, that the O&E Technical Committee members be allowed to participate via webinar, with approval by council staff.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a committee motion on the board. Is there discussion on the motion? Mr. Matens.

MR. MATENS: I am just curious. How many members of this committee are there?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Thirteen.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thirteen, Mr. Gregory says.
MR. MATENS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is there further discussion on the motion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I will add that’s a perfect size.

MR. MATENS: It depends on what you’re doing.

MR. SWINDELL: That concludes my report, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We were just on the idea of the data and the portal and such as that, and I just wanted to take a second. For several meetings, probably for several years now, I have heard the recreational anglers, and you see it in everything. You can see it in the bills going through Congress and such. They don’t have the faith in the data at all that’s being used to manage them, and there seems to be a willingness to report, and I hope that, one day in the future, this council will look at that as something that we may want to take up. I realize that we have some state initiatives, and you know that I’m excited and completely supportive of the state initiatives.

There is no doubt about that, but, if they want to report and it’s something that we can do, and have a mandatory reporting platform for them, I hope it’s something that we’ll entertain in the future, because I don’t know if they will ever trust their management system if they don’t trust their data, and I think it’s important for the fishermen to trust their management system and their data, and so that’s my two-cents for that.

Now, I saw some people perked up to do one more committee report, which I was surprised about, but, if you all want to continue on, we can. I see some thumbs-up. All right. We’re going to go to the Administrative/Budget Committee Report. Mr. Riechers, I will turn it over to you.

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

MR. RIECHERS: The Administrative/Budget Committee Report will follow. Our meeting was called to order on August 7, 2017, and all members were present. The committee adopted the agenda and minutes of the June 2017 Administrative/Budget Committee meeting as written.
Council staff then reviewed the 2017 proposed budget, with expenditures through June, Tab G Number 4(a). Staff stated they were notified in July that the final funding for 2017 should be $3,681,000 for the administrative award.

Staff provided a revised 2018 and 2019 budget that included carryover projections through the end of the five-year grant. The 2018 and 2019 projections are estimated based on a possible 1 percent increase in funding each year.

The final budgets will be impacted by likely increases in health insurance costs, meeting activities, and the necessary relocation of the council office space. Relocation of the council office in Tampa was unexpected, but will be needed before July 2018, because the building has changed ownership.

The new owners have proposed a rent increase at the lease renewal of over $140,000 per year, which is approximately an 82 percent increase. The committee requested an update on the office space search at the October meeting and revision of the 2018-2019 projections as more information is available.

By a unanimous vote, the committee recommends, and I so move, to approve the budget as shown in Tab G, Number 4(a), and remember that was the budget for the year 2017.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. We have a committee motion on the board. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. RIECHERS: Next, we moved on to staff requesting clarification of verbiage in our SOPPs, Statement of Organization Policies and Practices, relating to advisory panel appointments and whether the verbiage in the SOPPs should indicate if violations associated with reporting requirements are to be considered serious enough to disqualify an AP applicant and if the violations to be considered for AP appointments include species managed, and there are three categories of only by a regional fishery management council; all federally-managed species, and that would include HMS species; and then both state and federally-managed marine species.

No committee motions relevant to this request were made. Consequently, the status quo of considering violations on Item b would remain in effect, and Item b there is all federally-managed species, and that would include HMS. That will be considered when we’re considering AP applications.
Under Other Business, staff requested guidance from the committee on specific verbiage in the SOPPs in Sections 3.2.2, and that’s on pages 12 and 13, regarding council Members participating or voting at meetings via webinar.

The committee recommends, and I so move, to modify the SOPPs so that council members must be physically present to participate, motion, or vote.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a motion on the board. Is there discussion on the motion? Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Yes, ma’am. Thank you, Madam Chair. I thought about this while the discussion was going on, and I wasn’t on the committee, and I thought that Mr. Walker made a good point. The state representatives, you all have back-ups, but the rest of the council members do not have back-ups. If, for some reason, we can’t make a council meeting, then nobody is voting or making motions or participating in our place.

I’m okay if the council doesn’t want people to vote. It would not bother me if somebody participated via phone or webinar, for sure participated. If you’re a council members and you’re not here, especially for a family emergency. A couple of years ago, I had a death in the family, and I couldn’t make a meeting. At that time, I was a state rep, and I had a back-up, and so it wasn’t a big problem, and we discussed what was going on, and nothing skipped a beat.

Where I sit now, that’s not the case. If there’s something that is important to me, and I might have some vital information that might influence some people and how they think about something, under this motion, I can’t even participate, and I just think that’s too harsh.

I would be willing to make a substitute motion, and I would like the substitute motion to be to modify the SOPPs so that council members must be physically present to vote.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a substitute motion on the board. Do we have a second for the substitute? It’s seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Is there discussion on the motion? Mr. Grimes.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to clarify one thing that I raised in committee, that you’re always free, as any member of the public is, to submit information to the council via writing or email or however you want, and so, if you do have that vital piece of information, anyone can submit that
in, and it would be before the body as part of the written
record of the meeting and whatever subsequent decision.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Right, and I agree with what Mr. Grimes is saying,
and I do understand that, but I mean, the people that are
sitting around this table, the governors took the time to
recommend these people to the Secretary of Commerce, and we were
put on this council. We are deeply involved in these issues,
and we keep up on them, and I don’t think anybody is going to
use this unless there is an emergency, and there is -- I just
would hate to see people not be able to participate at a pretty
high level if there is an emergency, and I just think this is
too harsh.

There was another topic that was brought up in committee, which
I don’t really care about one way or the other, whether or not
to pay council members if they’re participating, and that
doesn’t bother me however we handle that, and so the part I am
concerned about is being able to at least participate in the
meeting. Thank you, ma’am.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Just as part of the discussion on this, I agree.
If you’re an appointed person and these issues -- You’re here
for a reason, and these are important issues to you and to the
public, and, if some unforeseen reason presents itself, where
you can’t be here, I think you should be able to participate,
but with the exception of voting, and I get that.

While we’re on that subject, for discussion, maybe you shouldn’t
make motions either and then not be able to vote on them, but
you certainly should be able to chime in and give your comments
and this and that, having been a part of this process.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: I can’t support this motion as it is, because I don’t
feel that, if you’re not present, that you should be able to
make motions. Dale, if you -- I do feel that you could
participate. I don’t have any problem with that at all. If you
could modify your motion to have to be physically present to
motion or vote, I could support it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is there further discussion? Mr. Diaz.
MR. DIAZ: Mr. Boyd, I kind of went back and forth on that, and, if this motion fails, I might make another motion to that. That’s not a good way to handle council business, is it? I do understand the vote thing, but, I mean, I don’t see a reason why a person couldn’t make a motion from a webinar.

If I happen to have a good idea that might be something that would lead the council in a good direction, I don’t know why we would stop somebody from doing that on a webinar. We’re all legitimate council members, and so I would rather proceed like it’s written, but thank you for the comment.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Swindell.

MR. SWINDELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. Doug, I see that, if you’re online talking and so forth, all you have to do is ask if someone will make a motion to so-and-so, and one of us probably would do it. I mean, I don’t see a real big problem with that, making a motion, and it’s really up to the rest of the council whether to vote on it or now, and so I don’t think that’s a big deal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Matens.

MR. MATENS: In the spirit of compromise, let me offer a second substitute motion to modify the SOPPs so that council members must be physically present to motion or vote.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a substitute motion on the board. Do we have a second for the motion? It’s seconded by Mr. Boyd. Mr. Swindell.

MR. SWINDELL: I assume then that this doesn’t prevent a council member who is attending by webinar from suggesting to someone. I mean, he can still do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: This cat is flat, and I don’t want to keep going with this, but, after thinking about it, really, I’m the one who brought it up, and, if you make a motion, it’s not a big deal, because, really, in the real world, I will text somebody and say, hey, could you do this for me, and they probably would.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: Let me make sure that I understand. This is for an extenuating circumstance, such as Dale mentioned of a death in
the family, or this is something that is absolutely unprecedented, or this is just for anytime that I don’t feel like going to a meeting and so I’m just going to call into a webinar? I mean, that’s two vastly different things, in my mind, and could someone speak to that, please?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: I will try to capture a little bit of the committee discussion. The committee discussion was surrounding the notion of it being an exceptional kind of event that came up or some situation that you really couldn’t predict in some way, as opposed to I don’t think I want to really spend my time going to Texas and I think I will stay here in Alabama and just call in.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: To that point, and I apologize for not keeping up very well in this committee. I was kind of doing some Reef Fish stuff at that time, and so my apologies, but would that require approval ahead of time?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, and we had that discussion during committee as well, that it would have to be approved by the Chair or Executive Director, and help me remember.

MR. RIECHERS: It was actually “and”, and I think that’s the formality, and the reason there was the “and” is because Doug then has to set up two different webinars, or two different systems. We have the webinar system for that public, but, if you’re going to allow someone to actually voice in, you’ve got make sure that you have the appropriate opportunity for that as well.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: That’s easy enough to do. It’s the category you put the person in on the webinar.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I just want to say that I have changed my mind, and I’m going to support the substitute motion. The wisdom of the council has twisted my arm.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any further discussion? The second substitute motion that we will vote on is to modify the SOPPs so that council members must be physically present to motion or vote. All those in favor, signify by raising your
hand; all those opposed, same sign. The motion carries.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It was sixteen to zero.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: It was sixteen to zero with one abstention.

MR. RIECHERS: Madam Chair, that concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. It’s five o’clock. Are you all wanting to continue on? Mr. Gregory does.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: At this point in time, I assume that whoever does this is eligible for salary pay. The criteria for salary pay is that the meeting or whatever you’re doing for the council prevents you from conducting your normal work. We’ll have the person fill out the form that confirms that they were not able to conduct their normal work, and so they will get paid the full salary.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Do you all want to make that decision today, or do you want to have this on an agenda for a later discussion? Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: I was just going to say that I think that’s more of a Shep question, because, if I remember correctly, when he read the regulations to us the other day, this particular motion we just passed wouldn’t allow you to get paid, if I remember right, but I don’t know if I do.

MR. RIECHERS: Shep will answer, but I think, when he read the regulations, that’s what’s led us to the first motion, because, under this motion — Doug, I think, according to how Shep read it before, you’re exactly correct.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. I am going to let Shep research that, and I’m going to let him get back to us on that. Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Could I finish my contributions to this discussion via webinar?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: No.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Grimes.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just note that the language in the statute, and I did read from the regulations earlier, but the statute says the voting members of each council who are not appointed — Let’s see. Shall receive compensation
at a specified rate when engaged in the actual performance of
duties for the council, and we discussed sort of issues with
that, but I think the substitute motion -- If you’re not
physically present and you’re not allowed to vote or make
motions, then that doesn’t sound like the actual performance of
the duties of the council members, because the rest of you are
doing just that, and I think I would be comfortable with that
position, the position being that you were not engaged in those
actual duties and didn’t need to receive the salary.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I concur, if it means anything.

MR. GRIMES: I sincerely appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. I was going to let you all out of
here early, and I just wanted you to know that. Are we done,
Mr. Gregory? Are you done?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I will let you go.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Don’t forget that we have a
social this evening at Southerly Restaurant, and it starts at
6:30. I am not sure how far away it is.

UNIDENTIFIED: Three-and-a-half miles.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Three-and-a-half miles. If you’re feeling
healthy, you can walk. See you all there.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on August 9, 2017.)

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August 10, 2017

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council reconvened at the Marriott Plaza, San Antonio, Texas,
Thursday morning, August 10, 2017, and was called to order by
Chairman Leann Bosarge.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Welcome back to the last day of our meeting.
I am glad to see everybody here, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed,
again. We are going to continue on with our committee reports
this morning. First on our agenda is our Reef Fish Committee
Report, and I believe it was just emailed out to everybody here
maybe ten minutes ago at the most. Thank you, staff, for
getting that edited and back out to everyone so quickly.
Chairman Greene, I am going to turn it back over to you, sir.

REEF FISH COMMITTEE REPORT

MR. GREENE: Thank you. Good morning. The Reef Fish Committee
Report of August 8 and 9, 2017. The agenda was approved as
written, and the minutes of the June 5 and 6, 2017 committee
meeting were approved as written.

Final Action, Framework Action, Greater Amberjack ACL Management
Measures, Tab B, Number 4a, the committee reviewed the draft
framework action that considers changes to greater amberjack
management measures. The committee reviewed alternatives in
Action 1 that would modify the greater amberjack rebuilding
time, annual catch limits, and annual catch targets.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in
Action 1, to make Alternative 2, Option a, the preferred
alternative. Alternative 2 is set the ACL equal to the ABC
recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee from
2018 through 2020-plus, based upon the Southeast Data,
Assessment, and Review 33 Update Assessment in 2016. This
alternative is projected to rebuild the stock by 2027. Option a
is apply the ACL/ACT Control Rule, landings from 2013 through
2016, to establish a 13 percent buffer to the commercial sector
and a 17 percent buffer to the recreational sector. The graph
is also included in here for your review.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. We have a committee motion. Is
there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, is there any
opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: The committee also discussed Action 2 that would
modify the fixed recreational closed season. The committee
discussed that modifying greater amberjack recreational season
could provide additionally flexibility to management, provide
additional protection during spawning, or improve access to
specific regions in the Gulf. However, the committee determined
that additional analyses and further consideration of the
alternatives are necessary, but did not wish to delay action on
adjusting the ACL to rebuild the stock.

As an interim decision, the committee passed the following
motion. Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so
move, in Action 2, to make Alternative 4 the preferred
alternative. Alternative 4 is modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 through June 30.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I just want to reiterate for people listening and whoever may look at the records that we’re putting this as sort of an interim step, and our plan is to come back at the October meeting and revisit the seasons for next year and take some sort of action then to decide what we want to do, but we’re trying to find some sort of way to balance the differing needs of the various regions in the Gulf, and I guess get to some grand compromise.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. Any further discussion? Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: I thought about this in great detail, and obviously amberjack is an important fishery to the northern Gulf of Mexico and several of the states that are in that region. We’ve had a lot of letters that have been emailed to us from a couple of specific areas up there, and so one of the things I’ve thought about that might be something to really consider is the fact that we have a lot of fisheries that seem like they open on January 1, and the fishing year runs from January 1 through December 31.

January and February are not ideal times of the year to fish in all areas throughout the Gulf, and so one thing that might be a very simple solution here would be to change the fishing year from January 1 through December 31 and have it open somewhere like August 1.

Then it would close the following year on July 31, and so, potentially, you could open a season in August, September, and October and then close it and have some time to assess some data and then potentially reopen like in April. If you have time to do that, and, in an ideal world, you could analyze the catch from August, September, and October. Then, if you have time to look at it and say, okay, we didn’t reach our quota and so let’s reopen in April, then potentially you could.

However, if you did reach your quota, then you would shut it down, and that fishery, the next year, would be closed throughout the peak spawning months, which is something that’s really huge to me.
I have to admit that I’m not real keen at this time on opening the fishery at all during the spring. It doesn’t seem like anything we do to this fishery makes it respond at all. Now, I don’t know that it really got a fair shake with thirty-four inches, and this past year was kind of an anomaly, because we had an overage from the year before, and we had an increased size limit, and we just had all of these things that just kind of was the perfect storm for amberjacks and kind of fell in there, and so, as we move into October, that’s something I really want you to consider.

Now, I could make that as a motion, to add that into the document, or I can just take this discussion and let them go with it, however you guys would prefer that to be.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. I think what we’ll do is we’ll vote this motion up or down, because I don’t think your discussion really changes this motion. This is speaking to something that would come back to us in October, and so we’ll vote this up or down, and, while we’re doing that, you’ll have about three seconds to figure out a motion. Then maybe somebody around the table can help you some, and then we will make that motion and have that discussion and vote that one, although in committee, when we threw out ideas to staff to give them seasons, I don’t think we made motions. We just tried to give them some options to bring back to us, and so let me think about it. All right.

The motion on the board is, in Action 2, to make Alternative 4 the preferred. Alternative 4 is modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 through June 30. Is there any further discussion on this motion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed, same sign. The motion carries.

Since we didn’t make motions in committee when we threw out ideas for staff to bring for us, is everyone comfortable with Johnny’s idea also going to staff without a motion? I feel comfortable with it, because it would be pretty long-winded.

MR. RIECHERS: I was approached with that notion as well, Johnny, by someone, and I think it bears looking at as we move forward, but the only way that works is, at some point, someone has to give up from January to August to make that work. That’s the kicker with that whole notion of, at some point when you make that switch, and if you’re going to start then, then what do you do with the previous eight months of landings that have occurred? Either you’ve got to keep it closed until then and
then start or you’ve got to figure out how to account for that somehow.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, I see what you’re saying, just during that first year, I guess. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: We have done a good bit of this in the South Atlantic, moving fishing years around, and what we usually do is, if the previous year’s quota is caught up, we start on the new quota when this is effective on August 1, and so what you’re really doing here is -- Right now, the way it’s set up, we have that seasonal closure, and we potentially have a spring season and a fall season, but the spring season is sort of given priority, because it’s first, and, if you run out of fish, that’s it. By making this change, you’re sort of giving the priority to the fall season if catch rates are higher than we think.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right, Chairman Greene, I will turn it back over to you.

MR. GREENE: The committee emphasized that this would be an interim decision that would allow the implementation of the new ACL while providing additional time to evaluate the recreational closed season. The council will evaluate alternatives to modify the recreational closed season and consider implementing vessel limits in a subsequent management action. The objectives of the additional recreational management measures are to constrain harvest to the management target and extend the fishing season.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to approve the Greater Amberjack ACL and Management Measures and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. We have a committee motion on the board. This will be a roll call vote, and so I will turn it over to Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Hold on.

MR. STEVEN ATRAN: I just wanted to let people know, if they didn’t notice it, that we did receive modified codified regulations yesterday, and so I haven’t looked them over, but they should reflect the preferred alternatives.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Yes again.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Captain Greene.

MR. GREENE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Stunz.

DR. STUNZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Dana.

DR. DANA: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Mickle.

DR. MICKLE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Frazer.
DR. FRAZER: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Swindell.

MR. SWINDELL: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Matens.

MR. MATENS: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ms. Bosarge.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Seventeen, and it’s unanimous.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I have one question, back to Johnny’s idea on the fishing year. Are you talking only changing the recreational, or would we change the commercial and recreational fishing years?

MR. GREENE: I didn’t think that far through it, Dr. Crabtree, to be honest with you. It seems like the commercial has a closure in place that kind of fits the spawn. I don’t know if there’s any market issues for them to change the season.

DR. CRABTREE: Let me suggest, Doug, that staff brings in an option to change it to August 1 just recreational and August 1 just commercial. We ought to think about does getting the fishing years offset, commercial one way and recreational
another way, is that going to create problems for us somehow or

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: We need to get this on the board in
writing, either as a motion or in writing for everybody to see
and agree.

DR. CRABTREE: All right. I would like to make a motion if I
could, Ms. Bosarge.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, sir. Go ahead.

DR. CRABTREE: That the amberjack framework that’s brought to us
at the October meeting include an action to change the fishing
year for greater amberjack to begin on August 1 and that it have
two options, 1) to only change the recreational fishing year and
2) to change both the recreational and commercial fishing year.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. I think your motion is just about on
the board. Your motion is the amberjack framework would include
an action to change the fishing year for greater amberjack to
begin on August 1 and that it contain two options: 1) change only
the recreational fishing year; 2) change both the recreational
and commercial fishing years. Is that your motion, Dr.
Crabtree?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right, and we have a second by Mr.
Greene. Any further discussion on the motion? All right. All
those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those
opposed same sign. The motion carries.

Since we put this in the form of a motion, Mr. Greene, does that
encompass everything that you were wanting to see in the
document concerning a change in the opening date of the season?
All right. Then I will turn it back over to you, sir. Mr.
Grimes.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Did the first motion
include the codified text? Sorry that I wasn’t --

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, it did.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you.

MR. GREENE: The committee requested additional options to
modify the recreational closed season and vessel limits that
would reduce recreational catch per trip below one fish per person per vessel per trip: modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 through March 31 and reopen August 1 and remain open until ACT is harvested; modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 through April 30 and reopen August 1 and remain open until ACT is harvested; modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 through April 30 and reopen September 1 and remain open until ACT is harvested.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory, did you have a question?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I just want to point out that the staff had different notes. Somebody suggested the September 1 reopening and then added or changed it to August 1, and so some of us have it as two different options. Others of us, staff, had it as a correction from September to August, and that’s why it’s important we get motions, to avoid confusion like this. Are these three correct of what people want, or was August 1 supposed to replace September 1 as an option?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: There was one that I brought up regarding just having it open for the month of April, and so that first one kind of captures that, but it looks like it also includes May, and May -- If you add May, as I recall, when I did the number crunching with the decision tool, it would kind of curtail a lot of the fall season, particularly if you had an August 1 opening, and so, you know, I realize that we want to try to push this through relatively quickly, and, if we have a whole bunch of things in there, it’s a lot of staff time, and it’s a lot to discuss, but I don’t know. I guess I will leave it up to the rest of the council members to weigh in.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: The options that are in this committee report are kind of confusing, because they identify the beginning closed season, January 1 through March 31, or at least first as an example, and then it -- It’s assuming, in that example, to open on April 1, and then it reopens August 1. It doesn’t explicitly say like how long it’s open, and so can we just like scratch these and start over?

I think, to throw out some ideas, I think some of the things that people seem to be rallying around yesterday is I heard May, and I heard April and May, or just April. Everybody kind of seemed to be on board with September and October, and so it seems
like we would want to evaluate one month in the spring, whether
it’s April or May, two months in the spring, April and May, and
then September and October. I will just put those out there as
options, and, if we need to, we can make them a motion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: What’s missing from these three
items is it’s only supposed to be open one month in the spring,
according to the discussion we have, and so the season would be
closed, in the first bullet, from May 1 through the end of July,
and, in the second and third bullets, the season would be closed
from June 1 through the end of July or the end of August. Those
phrases are missing from here.

Again, it points out the importance of having motions, but
that’s the understanding, is that these were supposed to be one-
month spring openings and not two months, but one-month spring
openings, with a closure during the summer and a reopening in
late summer.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I am going to get Dr. Froeschke real quick.
He’s been waiting.

DR. JOHN FROESCHKE: So, on my notes on this, the discussion was
that the months open -- The action is the months closed, and so
I tried to reconfigure that, and I think I may have done that
incorrectly, but one thing I think is confusing is were the
months that you discussed meant to be in addition to the
existing June/July closures or replace them, because it almost
seems like that was with the understanding that the current
June/July closure would remain in place.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. We’re going to need to put some
motions up on the board, and this is kind of strange, because we
want to have this document in October, and possibly take some
final action in October, and so for some alternatives that you
want to see in this document and some sort of brief analysis on
them, possibly, let’s get your motions on the board for what you
want to see. We have the one from Dr. Crabtree regarding a
change in the opening date of the season, generally speaking,
and what else do we want to see in this document? Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Just as a point of order then, are we assuming
these stay -- That the three bullets stay here, based on John’s
and Doug’s explanations, because, as I’m understanding -- Go
ahead.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: No, I want to see motions for what we want to
see in the document.
MR. RIECHERS: Okay, and so all of these are going away?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Those are in the committee report, but, no, they’re not going to be in the document until we make a motion, because I want to get them just right for staff, so there is no confusion.

MR. RIECHERS: Okay, because, as I understand it, that bullet one was one of the ones that Martha wanted, which was an April opening and then reopen the season in August, and it will go as long as it goes, but she had said August and September or September and October, but I am fine, but just so we know how we have to proceed and we don’t get ourselves tripped up.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Martha, if you want that to be one of the options in the document in October, we need to make that motion. Once Martha makes that motion, that’s going to two alternatives in the document, two options. We had a lot of discussion, and so what are the other options that you all want to see in that document?

MR. GREENE: Thank you, Madam Chair. They’re putting up the motion. Madam Chair, I would make a motion, whenever they’re ready.

DR. CARRIE SIMMONS: Staff was trying to assist with what we heard, and I started getting some stuff up on the board, if that helps. If it doesn’t, we’ll just take it down.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. No, Johnny has got his own motion that he is about to make, and so thank you.

MR. GREENE: In the spirit of what we talked about earlier of potentially moving the opening date, my motion would be that the recreational season for greater amberjack would be open from August 1 until October 31 and then closed until March 31, open the month of April, and then remain closed from May 1 until July 31.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right, Chairman Greene, is that your motion? Do we have a second for the motion? It’s seconded by Dr. Dana. Is there discussion on the motion? Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: I thought we had talked about a change of season coming forward and had a motion for that. Didn’t we, Doug? Okay. So that’s going to analyze the notion of the change of season, but, right now, the season is starting January 1, and
so, at least from my perspective, as we talk about what we’re seeing in October, since that’s not going to take effect until sometime after January 1, and we’re closed in that period, based on what we just did, but we still have to deal with that April and May, unless we’re going to say that’s closed now. Is that what you’re assuming here, Johnny?

MR. GREENE: It’s almost like we’re doing two different things at once here. We’re trying to say, okay, well, through the greater amberjack fishery, we’re going to change the fishing year, is what we’re considering, and it’s going to open August 1, and we’re going to look at these months of open and closures that we have laid out in this motion.

However, on the interim side, that we talked about earlier, we may have to have a separate motion that would just open the month of April and then close and then presume the start of the new year would be August 1. I think it’s going to have to be two different things, if that makes sense to you, Robin. I am trying. I am scratching, and I’m trying to find some compromise.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. I am going to read the motion on the board, to make sure that we do have it correct. The recreational season for greater amberjack be open from August 1 through October 31, closed November 1 through March 31, and then open the month of April, and then closes from May 1 through July 31. It’s a mouthful, but I think we understand it. All right. We did have a second for the motion. Is there any further discussion on the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries. Dr. Froeschke.

DR. FROESCHKE: If you did that for this calendar year, it would only be open three months, August through October. Is that --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I think that’s what Mr. Greene was just speaking to, that this has to do with that change in the opening date of the season, but then a separate issue that we’re going to have to look at in that document is what to do in the interim. Now, that’s assuming that we actually change the opening date of the season to August. Ms. Guyas, are you ready with your motion yet?

MS. GUYAS: Yes, and I just emailed some in, and they’re not quite structured the same way as Johnny’s, but hopefully they’re straightforward.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you very much.
MS. GUYAS: Let me read it. Evaluate the following options for the recreational greater amberjack season, and we’ve got a couple of bullets here. Number one is open for the months of April, September, and October, which would mean that it would be closed January through March, May through August, and November and December. I don’t know if that needs to be written here, but just for clarification. The other option would be open for the months of May, September, and October and closed January through April, June through August, and November and December. Johnny’s motion already had the August in there.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is that the end of your motion, Ms. Guyas? Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Before I second your motion, Martha, I just want to ask, if we have not caught the ACT by the end of October, would it remain closed?

MS. GUYAS: If we can run it later into the end of the year, that’s fine, but these seem to be the months that people prioritized for opening, and so I just wanted to be clear that those were evaluated, and so, if it turns out that we can extend farther into the fall, I think I would be fine with that.

MR. DIAZ: Based on Martha’s comments, I would like to second her motion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Is there further discussion on the motion? Captain Greene.

MR. GREENE: Again, to Ms. Guyas, your motion doesn’t specifically speak to the month of August being closed, because, in a previous motion, it talked about it being open, correct?

MS. GUYAS: Yes, August is closed here, and so it’s just another option to look at, because yours had August open, right?

MR. GREENE: Okay. I just wanted to make sure, for the record. Thank you, ma’am.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Froeschke.

DR. FROESCHKE: I just wanted to clarify if this motion is hinged upon changing the fishing year or not, because, if you change the fishing year, you would essentially extend the season into the spring, if you went over, or if you had remaining quota.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Mine is not hinged on changing the fishing year. I think we could try to figure out a way to make it work with the change in the fishing year, but, no matter what we do with the fishing year, I think this is what we need to look at.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I think you could probably just put some language in the document that gives the RA authority to let the fishery run longer if it’s determined there is quota leftover, and that would happen -- If you don’t change the fishing year, that would happen in the fall. If you do change the fishing year, then that would happen in the spring/summer, I guess, but it would happen at the end of the fishing year.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, by the way, Martha. All right. Any further discussion on this? Seeing none, all in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all opposed same sign. The motion carries.

Do we have everything in the form of a motion now that we want to see in the document? Okay.

MR. GREENE: Before we move on, we talked about going into October and having to do something on an interim for the coming season. I think everybody kind of understands what we’re doing, but, if we need to do something specific to the 2018 fishing season for the month of say April, then we can do that, in the form of a motion, but I think everybody kind of understands what we’re trying to do. I just wanted to make sure that everybody is kind of clear on that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Well, to the last, I guess, little discussion, and Dr. Crabtree brought it up, and Martha kind of alluded to it, in my mind, I guess, is Doug and staff clear on at least what the discussion will be related to the motion, or motions, that were passed relative to the season and the fishing year change, because you will need to write two -- At least in the discussion, describe, okay, if the normal January 1 to December 31 fishing year is retained, then this is how this is going to operate, and it will be, under that situation, the fall, as Dr. Crabtree alluded to, the fall would be where they would extend out, and then the spring would be a set date, whereas, if it was
the August 1 through July 31 fishing year, then it would be the spring that would be extended, potentially the extended, and so you would end up with kind of spring and a fall quota type situation, but it wouldn’t be based on quota. It would just be based on dates, and so just make sure that kind of that discussion is discussed, at least a little bit, and brought forward.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Right. Yes, we understand that, that the season will go until the quota is reached, and the different starting years have an impact, because, if you have an August 1 starting date, and you’re not catching the fish by the end of April, you’re allowing more fishing to occur in the spring, during the spawning season, and so that’s a negative for an August 1 opening date, and so we have that, and we’ll put that in the discussion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Froeschke.

DR. FROESCHKE: So, for 2018 only, if we went with Johnny’s motion, in April of 2018, are you anticipating the fishery would be open for that month or closed? To me, it would depend on -- If you left the fishing season as it is now, the motion, to me, would imply that it’s open, but, if you changed it to what Roy suggested, it implies that it would be closed, and, based on the decision tool, we would be quite a bit under the ACT for that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: My understanding of the three motions, or the two motions, from Captain Greene and Ms. Guyas are not dependent on a fishing year, but that’s a complicating factor that we can build into the discussion, as John is pointing out.

DR. FROESCHKE: I guess I’m just trying to figure out -- Since we’re going to try to bring this for final action in October, what do we want to do -- I am just trying to understand that April of 2018 and whether it would be open or closed, so we can estimate the landings and all that kind of stuff, and it really depends on what you do with the fishing year, and so I guess we’ll try to do it both ways, but is it clear, if you left the fishing year as it is now, that you would intend it to be open next April?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Certainly by the discussions about trying to find a way to have a spring and fall season yesterday, I’m assuming that, yes, that there would be some period of time in the spring
that we’re looking to have open.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I think our intent is that we will start a new fishing year on January 1. If we change the fishing year to August 1, then, when we get to August 1 of 2018, then we will then start a new fishing year, but we won’t retroactively back up the fishing year that way.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Good work, everybody. I’m glad we got all that clarified. I feel like we just wrote the document for October. I am going to let Chairman Greene continue.

MR. GREENE: Thank you, guys. The council previously considered vessel limits for greater amberjack in Amendment 30A that would have reduced recreational catch per trip below one fish per person per vessel per trip. Based on the analysis in that amendment, vessel limits could have reduced the rate of harvest, but may have had disproportionate effects on anglers fishing on headboats, charter boats, or private vessels.

Based on the previous analyses in Amendment 30A, a bag limit of one fish per three anglers, with no allowance for fewer anglers, would be required to reduce harvest by at least 32 percent. See summary table below, which is provided in the document for you.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to have staff develop a framework action for greater amberjack management measures dealing with seasons and vessel bag limits.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Yes, ma’am. I think this might be a good place. I was wanting to offer a motion, if I could, before we take this next vote, or should we take this vote?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Well, we have a motion on the board, and so I’m not sure what your motion is in reference to, but, if it would be suitable as a substitute motion, you could do that.

MR. DIAZ: No, it would add something to this document here. I want to add something to that management measure document that we’re fixing to vote on. I think it should go before this motion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: The motion on the board is to have staff develop a framework action for greater amberjack management
measures dealing with seasons and bag limits.

MR. DIAZ: I would like to add something to that document, and so, before people vote, we could vote my motion up or down, and then we could handle it all at one time.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Well, we have this one on the board, and so we need to vote this one up or down, but then you could have a motion that adds something into that document.

MR. DIAZ: Okay.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Will that work? I have no idea what your motion is, or what your subject is. Okay. Is there discussion on the motion? Dale, do you want to have some discussion?

MR. DIAZ: I will just let you know what I wanted to add in. There was public testimony yesterday from several commercial fishermen saying that a trip limit might be something that would be beneficial to the fishery, and I was just going to throw that out, based on public testimony yesterday.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Yes, I heard that as well, and I’m okay with adding that here, as long as we can continue moving forward with this in October by adding that. I don’t want to add too much to this document, so that it slows it down.

I also just wanted to throw out some of the vessel limit options that I heard yesterday that people seemed to be interested in. One was four fish per vessel and then another was six fish. That six fish was paired with a one fish per two people, but, I guess, if the analysis that occurred in 2005 or whenever this was, is still valid, then maybe that would not work, but we may need to rerun those numbers, and I don’t know.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I welcome staff to correct me, but my impression is that you’re asking us to write a framework action within the next eight weeks to bring back to you as a final document with all these actions in it. I don’t think that’s possible, and I mentioned this yesterday.

We can do two different framework actions, or we can do our best putting this together, but then you only have to divide it in October. It would be simpler, to me, if we said do two
framework actions, one to get the season done and get it done in October, and then another one for us to work on vessel limits and trip limits, and that may take a little longer.

I know we have a good staff, and I appreciate the faith and trust you all have in them, but, if we can get all this done for October, to take final action, I am welcome to be corrected, Carrie or John.

DR. FROESCHKE: I like that plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Okay. So I’m guessing right then.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Doug, that’s kind of where I was, and that was the reason for us to split those kind of two actions out, is to kind of address the seasons, because there is more of a need, or at least certainly we got a lot of testimony and emails from folks, to provide a little bit more relief and spread the fish out, and that this action, changing vessel limits, particularly when you start talking potentially fractional bag limits, which may apply just with the vessel limit, I think that would be a little bit more -- Much more -- I wouldn’t say contentious, but, you know, I think the angling public would need a little bit more time to digest that and, to try to put it on a fast track, I don’t think, would be very good, and I think it would kind of confuse the public a little bit more. Then, in regards to staff time, they would probably need a little bit more time to get that, you know, in a form that would be good for us to discuss.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Well, if that’s what we need to do, then I guess that’s what we need to do, but I think, when we come back and look at these vessel limits, we’re going to end up looking at the season again, because, again, the whole point of doing the vessel limit thing is to have a longer season, and so I just -- I feel like we’ll end up doing the same work twice, which, I guess if the tool is already built and we’re just adding vessel limits to it, then that’s fine, but, I mean, we need to do something in October, and so, if that is that we just tinker with the fishing year and the seasons again, then I guess that’s okay, but that’s what I have to say about that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: It’s going to be a long week next week, but I’m
going to just kind of go out on a limb here and say that I don’t think that we’re quite to the vessel limit stage yet. I think we’re kind of throwing a couple of tools out of the toolbox overboard at this point, and I don’t think we’re quite there.

I know we had public testimony for this, and I know there’s some people that want to do this, and I understand opportunity. It’s a very difficult thing when you’re sitting here realizing that, well, if we open up a season in April, that I could personally book every one of those days, but I’m going to tell you that the right thing to do is keep it closed. That’s a very difficult thing for anybody to do.

If you back up to the thing that I just read to you in the committee report, this kind of bothers me a little bit, and I’m going to reread that last sentence, and let’s think about this for a second. Based on previous analysis in Amendment 30A, a bag limit of one fish per three anglers, with no allowance for fewer anglers, would be required to reduce harvest by at least 32 percent.

Yes, it would. However, that means, if you’re on a center console outboard boat and there’s three people on a boat, you don’t get to keep one. That doesn’t make any sense, and so I appreciate the spirit of what we’re trying to do, and while this may not be an issue for the for-hire industry, I feel like it’s going to have a big impact on the recreational guys, and so I think that we need to do is let’s just stick to the season stuff right now.

If we don’t accomplish what we’re trying to do and we just can’t get enough open days, then we’ll come back at a subsequent meeting, somewhere down the road, hopefully when I’m gone and you guys are here, and you all can handle that, because that’s going to be a burdensome thing, and so just something for you to think about.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Some of those scenarios, like the one Johnny just brought up, if there are fewer than three onboard the boat that you can’t keep one, we’ll never do that, and so I hate to see us spin our wheels on things that I don’t think we would ever do, but splitting it is fine, and I get Martha’s thing about maybe it’s extra work, but it does seem to me that we have put ourselves in a position where we have to change the season thing in October, and, if staff can get something where we can deal with the bag limits, that’s great, but I think the priority has
to be able to take action on the seasons and do the best you can on the bag limit.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: If I may, like I said yesterday, we can do as much as we can get done, and, if we have the leeway of saying, well, the trip limit will have to wait for a second framework and advise you of that in October, let us make that decision, or, if the vessel limits -- We’ll bring whatever we can with that, because it’s understandable how that affects a potential season, and so we’ll do the best we can, and, if we need to shorten it so that you can take final action -- Because we understand the most important thing is to take final action on the season for next year, and that gives us another year to tweak it for the following years also.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. The question at hand is, because there’s a motion on the board to direct staff to develop a framework action for greater amberjack measures dealing with seasons and vessel bag limits.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: That’s fine.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So we can vote that motion up or down and leave everything in one document, or we can have a substitute motion that will develop two separate framework actions. You can take final action on the season document in October, and we’ll keep -- We could possibly see the other one in October, maybe, the bag limit document, but you could definitely take final action on seasons in October, and I am leaving it up to you all. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Okay. I offer a substitute motion to have staff develop a framework action for greater amberjack management measures dealing with seasons and a separate framework action dealing with vessel bag limits.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: In your second framework action, do you also want to see some commercial trip limits in there?

DR. CRABTREE: If that’s what folks want to see, yes. Bag limits and commercial trip limit for the second one. Does that get you what you want, Doug?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dale, I think that will encompass kind of the comments that you were making earlier. All right.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: At the end of the substitute motion, we can add “and commercial trip limits”?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, at the end, “and commercial trip limits”.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Now, again, if we get halfway through September and we think we can get it all done in one document and it’s clean and it’s something that you all can approve, we will bring it back that way, if we think it’s more efficient, but we can handle this in two separate documents just as easy.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. The motion has been seconded. Any further discussion on the motion? Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: I was just going to add that I think the most consistent testimony I heard yesterday for the commercial trip limit was 500 pounds, and then I did hear someone say 300, 500, and 1,000 or whatever, and they wanted a lower trip limit to address discards and extend the season.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Any further discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the substitute motion on the board to have staff develop a framework action for greater amberjack management measures dealing with seasons and develop a separate framework action dealing with vessel bag limits and commercial trip limits, all in favor signify by saying aye; all opposed same sign.

MS. GUYAS: Just real quick, before we leave amberjack, and so not a motion and just a question. A couple of folks yesterday brought this up, and I’ve gotten a few email messages asking about it, and so, if you look at page 5 of the document that has the landings, in 2016, there is a huge spike in I think the private angler portion of those landings. I guess for NOAA, do you all know what’s driving that? It just seems kind of out of -- It looks a little bit different than -- I can’t tell, and it’s by wave. I think this is annual, but, I mean, it was 1.4 million pounds of fish caught, which is more than double what was caught the year before, and if we just had any idea about what’s driving that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Can you give us the page number again, Martha?

MS. GUYAS: Page 5, the bottom of page 5.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: While they’re pulling that up, we’re going to
look to the NMFS side of the house here. Dr. Ponwith and Dr. Crabtree, do we have an answer to Martha’s question about the million-plus pounds? Martha, do you want to repeat your question, please?

MS. GUYAS: Yes, and, I mean, a bunch of people pointed this out, but, in 2016, the private angler portion of the fishery caught more than twice what they have caught in previous years, and I think it just has a lot of people scratching their heads and trying to understand why or what drove that. Any insight?

DR. CRABTREE: All I can tell you is it’s not unprecedented, if you look back in 2003 and 2004 and 2005. They caught a lot there, and, no, I have no explanation as to what caused that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. Anything else on amberjack? All right, Chairman Greene.

MR. GREENE: Amendment 42, Reef Fish Management for Headboat Survey Vessels, Tab B, Numbers 5(a) 5(b), staff summarized the referendum eligibility requirements for Reef Fish Amendment 42, Tab B, Number 5(b). Committee members discussed the alternative eligibility criteria for participation in the referendum and approved the following motion.

By voice vote without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to select Alternative 2, Option b as the preferred alternative and option.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion on the board to select Alternative 2, Option b as the preferred alternative and option. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.

MR. GREENE: Staff noted that approval of a referendum initiation letter would be needed. Roy Crabtree indicated that, if the council wanted to send referendum requirements to the Secretary, members could approve a motion to that effect. Dr. Crabtree recommended that the council postpone discussions relative to sending referendum requirements to the Secretary until October. A motion to send the referendum eligibility requirement to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation failed.

The committee requested that staff bring back the referendum eligibility requirements in October. Committee members requested staff expand the section on the Next Steps, Chapter 5, to detail all the steps included in the referendum process and
discuss the information provided to eligible voters before they
cast their referendum ballots.

Amendment 41, Allocation-Based Management for Federally
Permitted Charter Vessels, Tab B, Numbers 6(a) and (b), staff
gave an overview of the updates to Amendment 41 since the June
council meeting and noted the preferred alternatives selected at
that meeting.

Staff then noted the request made during the committee’s
discussion of Amendment 42’s referendum eligibility requirements
to update the Next Steps Section with a more detailed timeline
in the referendums for both Amendment 41 and 42.

Staff discussed the referendum eligibility requirements for
Amendment 41. The committee asked for additional information
regarding unique permit holders with multiple permits. Dr.
Stephen explained that, as currently written, unique permit
holders would have one vote for each permit held.

The committee then made the following motion. Without
opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to include
in the Amendment 41 eligibility requirements an option that
would create the voting interest by unique number of permit
holders and also by a weighted option by unique permit holders
and total permits held.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. We have a committee motion on the
board. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, is
there any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: Staff will present an updated referendum
eligibility requirements document at the October council
meeting. Review of For-hire Permit Moratorium and Transfers,
Tab B, Numbers 7(a) and (b), staff gave a presentation on the
review of the for-hire permit moratorium and transfers.

Staff noted that the limited-access program appears to have met
its objectives. Committee members expressed concern that some
for-hire reef-fish-permitted vessels may transfer permits on and
off a vessel to take advantage of state and federal red snapper
seasons. Staff indicated that the review of for-hire reef fish
permit transfers does not indicate unusual reef fish permit
transfer behavior.

Jessica Stephen added that, based on their examination of the
data, there appear to be only a handful of vessels with transfer
behavior that could potentially suggest attempts to take advantage of both seasons. Charles Tyre explained that law enforcement views a vessel as for-hire vessel once it is associated with a permit, even if that permit is removed later in the year. As such, the vessel cannot fish in state waters or possess red snapper outside the federal season.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: I am wondering -- Shep, were you able to find out any more information about that, the permit, when they sell the permit and it’s off the vessel and whether or not that vessel is still regarded as a charter boat?

MR. GRIMES: Well, so we had guidance from OLE during the committee session, and I have been going back and forth with people at home, and we will provide additional guidance, but I’m not ready to do it at this meeting. I want to get everybody together and talk about it.

I didn’t work on the sector separation stuff, and I’m not familiar enough with it, and I don’t want to do it on the fly here at the meeting, and so, once everybody gets together, we will provide guidance. I don’t think that should be a problem for you, because you don’t have anything pushing forward relative to this amendment, but I would rather make sure that we’ve got everybody that we needed together and gave you a well-conceived, definitive response.

MR. ANSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: One thing I brought up the other day, when we were in committee about this, and I know it was a long committee day and everything else that goes along with that, but, you know, although they talk about it’s not unusual, the number of transfers going back and forth and everything, there are -- It is something that is happening, and how those fish are counted, whether those -- If a charter boat takes a permit off and he fishes in state waters, does that count against the recreational quota or the for-hire quota?

One thing that does bother me is I have seen a number of private recreational individuals buy a permit and put it on their boat to take advantage of the charter boat season that are not aware of that. For example, once you’re designated as a charter boat, I can’t take my family out on a fishing trip on my boat. Once
you’re a charter boat, you’re a charter boat.

You have to carry all the turtle equipment, and there’s a lot of things that I don’t think that people understand that, once you’re designated as a charter boat, you give up a lot of things, and so, while maybe it’s not such a big deal about, well, these few snapper are being caught here instead of here and everything else, there is other implications that are out there, and I think that we need to move forward.

As Shep suggested, they will come back, I guess, at some point with some determination with that, and I don’t know that we really need to move forward on this document right now. I don’t want this document to just be pushed aside, because it’s something I feel like we need to look at and make sure that the word gets passed, so that people understand that, once you transfer this permit, this is -- From this point forward, this is where you are.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just put on the agenda for your next meeting some discussion of it, so the agency can come back to you and give you that guidance and you can discuss how you want to move forward, if at all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Will do.

MR. GREENE: Draft Framework Action to Modify the ACT for Red Snapper Federal For-Hire and Private Angler Components, Tab B, Number 8, staff reviewed the framework action to modify the recreational red snapper ACT buffers with the committee.

New alternatives were presented in a component-specific manner, as per the council’s previous request. Committee members stated that the federal for-hire component was regularly underfishing its ACL, which seemed to be more a function of the length of the season, as determined by National Marine Fisheries Service, rather than a lack of effort by that component.

Dr. Crabtree noted that Section 407(d) states that the recreational sector for red snapper must be managed using annual catch limits and refers to this requirement for the recreational sector as a whole. Further, increasing the buffer on the private angler component beyond 20 percent may eliminate the federal-water fishing season for recreational red snapper for that component, since approximately 80 percent of the landings of red snapper by private anglers come from state waters fishing
seasons. The committee determined that further clarification on the proposed alternatives was necessary.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to ask the SSC to review the alternatives in the Framework Action to Modify the ACT for Red Snapper Federal For-Hire and Private Angler Components document and provide their recommendations.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: Presentation on the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Five-Year Program Review, Tab B, Number 9, staff gave a presentation on the five-year review of the grouper-tilefish individual fishing quota program.

The presentation included an overview of the IFQ program and discussed several items. Items discussed included share and allocation ownership and transfers, the influence of the IFQ program on ex-vessel prices, technical efficiency and safety at sea.

Committee members discussed price fluctuations and noted the negative influence of the 2010 oil spill on the grouper-tilefish harvests and ex-vessel prices. Staff noted that a draft review document will be discussed by the SSC. Committee members inquired about providing the appropriate AP an opportunity to comment on the five-year review. Staff indicated that the five-year review will be presented to the appropriate AP.

Revised Options Paper, Amendment 36B, Modifications to Commercial IFQ Programs, Tab B, Number 10, staff noted that the legal determination previously requested by the council regarding auctions was under review and not yet available. Staff noted that the committee could provide new program goals and objectives to support the potential actions in the document. Staff then reviewed the options paper. The committee discussed their intended purpose for Action 2.3, quota redistribution or set-asides.

With one opposed, the committee recommends, and I so move, to identify quota set asides to address and assist small participants and new entrants and to reduce discards.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Dr. Crabtree.
DR. CRABTREE: There was some discussion in public testimony about the new entrants, and, if you look through the document, what it really talks about are next-generation participants and vessels and that kind of thing, and so it’s not like we’re trying to build up additional capacity in the fishery, but, as we all grow old, there has got to be some way for young folks to get in and participate, and so I think, by new entrants, that’s what we’re really talking about, is the next generation.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Like replacement fishermen. That’s a heck of a word, huh?

DR. CRABTREE: That seems a little harsh though.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I agree. Any further discussion on the motion? All right. Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.

MR. GREENE: The committee discussed Action 2.4, distributing shares from non-activated accounts, which was moved to this document from Amendment 36A. Noting the small amount of total quota held in the accounts, the committee expressed interest in adding this quota to the quota set-aside being considered in Action 2.3. With no opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, to combine Action 2.4 into Action 2.3.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? The motion carries. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Before we get away from this one, this is where we talked about quota banks, and one of the things was recall we have those inactive accounts that we got rid of in 36A, and it was putting those in it.

I would like to make a motion that we also put in there an option for accounts that become inactive in the future and that quota would automatically go into the quota bank and that the option look at how to define inactive accounts, for example, inactive for three years or inactive for five years or something like that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a motion on the board to add an option for accounts that become inactive in the future -- That quota would go automatically -- It would automatically go into the quota bank. Let me read it one more time. To add an option for accounts that become inactive in the future, so that quota would automatically go into the quota bank. Is that your
motion, sir?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, ma’am.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Do we have a second for the motion? It is seconded by Dr. Mickle. Any further discussion on the motion? Okay. Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: In Action 2.5, restrictions on share and allocation transfers, staff asked whether the committee’s intent of the action is addressed in other actions in the document. By consensus, the committee removed Section 2.5 from the document.

In Action 2.6, allocation caps, Dr. Crabtree asked the committee whether the action was necessary or should be removed. The committee decided to resume discussion after hearing public testimony.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Based on everything I have heard, I have not see no reason that we need allocation caps, and so I would like to make a motion to remove Action 2.6, Allocation Caps, from the document.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a motion on the board to remove Action 2.6, Allocation Caps, from the document. Is that your motion, Dr. Crabtree?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, ma’am.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Do we have a second for the motion? It’s seconded by Mr. Walker. Do we have discussion on the motion? No discussion on the motion? Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Well, if Dr. Crabtree can summarize his comments, and he made have brought it up or explained the detail yesterday, but rationale for the motion.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, and so we aren’t required to have allocation caps in red snapper, and I just don’t see that there’s a problem here that allocation caps -- I don’t see anything that makes me think that we need them, and so it seems to me just to be that it would just be an unnecessary constraint that we put on the fishery, and I am open if somebody can show me some problem that’s being caused by not having them, but, of all the issues and things and concerns I have heard raised over the last few
years about the fishery, this has never been one of them, and so I just don’t see a need for them.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Swindell.

MR. SWINDELL: I am reading in the document, and also remembering yesterday or whenever it was that we discussed this whole program, and we were searching for an advisory panel that maybe could address some of these issues. Do we not want to take it to the Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ Advisory Panel and let them give us some information? We have only had public testimony, and how about letting the AP come back and give us a recommendation of what to do? That’s why we have APs.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: That might be something to consider, and I think we would like to convene the AP that we find appropriate. You know, when I first heard about this discussion of allocation caps, I thought that it could probably potentially be a problem, but then remember that reduction of the fleet was one of the goals, and so the industry, for the most part, is not asking for any type of allocation cap, but I am sure -- There is always more discussion, and the advisory panel could be good as well.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Do we know when the advisory panel -- I mean, we still have to constitute it and things and so --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Well, that is coming further in this committee report, because we had that discussion a little bit during committee, but, yes, we will have to take some action there.

DR. CRABTREE: Ed, I guess, if the AP is convened and they come in saying, oh, man, we’ve really got to have allocation caps, then we’ll revive the action and put it back in, but I just haven’t heard it come up, and so I’m not expecting that is going to happen.

MR. SWINDELL: Madam Chair, I think that’s fine, just as long as we make sure that we ask this advisory panel to review that issue.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I think staff can go over that these are the
things that were in the amendment that the council has taken out, so they’re aware that we talked about them, and, if they disagree with it, then they can let us know.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Is there further discussion? That is the motion. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: The committee asked whether there is an existing advisory panel that includes representation by participants of both the red snapper and grouper-tilefish IFQ programs. There is currently an Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ AP, which was last convened in 2013. The committee decided to resume discussion on the appropriate AP to review this document following public testimony.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes, and we have a Reef Fish Advisory Panel, and then we have an Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ Panel. Then there was some discussion of maybe we should have a combined red snapper and grouper IFQ panel or a grouper IFQ panel, and so what I have done is -- Just to put it out there, my philosophy is that we create these AP panels, our regular AP panels, to be diverse and to provide us with input from the diverse group, and I am philosophically bothered by the ad hocs we’ve been creating, because what we’re doing is we’re subsetting the Reef Fish AP and creating the ad hocs, and the potential that we saw with the for-hire and the headboat is then they go off in different directions, and then they come back to us and we’ve got to reconcile them.

If they had all been discussed jointly in the AP, that might not have happened, and so I just want to put that out there, that I am bothered by creating ad hocs, and so here is what I found out.

The Red Snapper Ad Hoc IFQ has seventeen members, and the Reef Fish AP has twenty-two. Nine members are on both panels, and so half of the IFQ panel is on the Reef Fish AP panel. Then, on the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Panel, to get at do we need another IFQ panel or do we need to re-advertise, eleven out of the seventeen members of the current Red Snapper IFQ Panel have shares in both red snapper and grouper-tilefish.

To me, that seems like that panel, even though we call it the red snapper panel, is already diversified between the two fisheries, but, again, I am a lumper and not a splitter, and so
I’m just putting that up there.

On the Reef Fish AP, seven out of twenty-one members have shares in both fisheries, and so a third of our regular Reef Fish AP has shares in both fisheries, red snapper and grouper-tilefish. Two of the AP members only have snapper shares, and two only have grouper shares, and so, again, I would argue that the Reef Fish AP is sufficiently diversified and can provide us the input we need for these items, but I am just -- I’m not trying to lead the council too much, but that’s what we have, and so the question is do you want to create another ad hoc for grouper, or do you want to re-advertise -- Disband the red snapper and re-advertise and have a combined one, or just rename the Red Snapper IFQ Panel to be red snapper and grouper-tilefish, since eleven of the seventeen members have shares in both fisheries?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: I was just going to make the point that I think the Red Snapper IFQ Panel, as Doug mentioned, has both red snapper and grouper, and I think there’s enough grouper members on that panel that could probably serve both, and I think it would be more representative of the industry if you stuck with the ad hoc panel for the IFQ, and it’s mostly IFQ-related folks in the industry, with getting their input in, and so maybe -- I have heard a lot of people supporting that we just use the existing red snapper ad hoc panel, because it’s thought that there was a sufficient number of grouper IFQ holders on that panel as well, and so that’s what my recommendation would be, is just, maybe, as Doug said, rename the ad hoc, but I don’t think -- Doug, I disagree with you, for I think the first time in three years, but I don’t think it should -- I think it would be better to stick with the ad hoc panel for the IFQ.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, the one concern I would have is I would like to see some small participants and folks who maybe aren’t shareholders, but lease, on the panel. I don’t have the panel in front of me, but I wouldn’t want to see a panel that just was essentially made up of the high-liners. I think we need some of the -- Some folks that represent some of the small participants, and I can’t -- In just looking at that, I can’t tell you if that’s -- I mean, I know a lot of those names, and there are certainly some high-liners on there, but do we have any small participants on there and people who lease?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Based on the testimony we heard yesterday, I know of one person that is a lessee only.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: Just looking at the list, I see a few up there that are small shareholders, and they may be small in snapper, or they may be small in grouper, but some guys might be a little heavy in snapper, and some of the other guys might be a little heavy in grouper, and so there’s a pretty good representation.

One problem we had with the grouper IFQ panel when they developed it is I think everybody on the grouper panel was from the State of Florida. I don’t remember anybody from Alabama or Mississippi or Louisiana or Texas that was on that panel when they developed that profile, and so I see a lot of these folks are from all over, and I even see Troy Williamson, and Dean Cox is small. I just see a lot of smaller guys, like Mike Eller and Gary Jarvis.

Of course, you’ve got Jeff Barger, and he’s a very small shareholder. I don’t think he has any, but there’s some medium-sized folks, and there are some people who are vested in the industry, and I see Bob Gill. I think it’s a pretty good group of folks.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Martha.

MS. GUYAS: I think I agree with Roy here, and I think would lean towards doing -- I guess re-advertising for a joint IFQ AP. I would want to include some of the smaller folks, or just provide another opportunity for some of these people maybe that are focused on grouper to apply and get involved here, since they will be going through the five-year review of that as well. I think that one of the tasks that we were going to put before this group.

I appreciate, Doug, what you did in trying to maybe just go with the Reef Fish AP, but my concern with this particular issue is that, you know, with a large percentage of that group not engaged in the fishery, that maybe we wouldn’t be able to get the technical expertise that I would like to see from this group by using the Reef Fish AP.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Martha, that was my concern, too. It is a pretty complicated system. If we re-advertise, I think this ad hoc AP, if it was re-advertised, should be structured similar to
the private angler AP that we did, in the sense that you don’t have to be an IFQ shareholder, but you have to have some sort of commercial permits.

This really needs to be someone that understands the commercial system to tell us what we are missing as we look through the document and make choices and maybe what unintended consequences we’re not realizing are out there or maybe a better way to get about it, because they’re familiar with it. I think we do need that technical expertise, and so I would hope that that would be the way that it would be advertised, if we re-advertise. Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I just want to say that I remember reading a document that Dr. Keithly put together, and it’s been a long time since I read it, but he did -- I guess it was an economic analysis or a study or something, but he did this thing with small, medium, and large class holders, and I don’t remember what the dividing line, if we got official definitions for those, but, from reading that paper, definitely there was a difference in opinion on the system based on where those folks fell out, and so I definitely agree with the idea of having a diverse group on the panel.

Is there an official definition, and I don’t know off the top of my head, of small, medium, and large shareholders, because, sitting around the table, my perception of one or the other may be very different than other council members’ perceptions.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I assume that the Regional Office can provide us with a classification of applicants as to whether they are leasing or own shares or both. That would be the only way to identify those that just lease.

Now, that is one question, and the other thing that we have run into, with our public hearings and in talking to people, is, yes, the lessees may have a different opinion on how to manage this fishery, but they -- Some of them have told us that they’re afraid to speak out, and that concern may still exist in an AP, that they’re afraid to speak out or against something that the majority of the shareholders may like, because they’re afraid they may be cut out of getting shares.

How serious of a problem that is, from their perspective, I don’t know, but it’s possible that we could end up with a committee pretty much like we’ve got now. I think it’s worth a
try, particularly if we can identify the lessees from the applicants without them saying they are.

DR. CRABTREE: If I could, I think that we could provide you some sort of information that classifies folks in tiers somehow or another. I don’t know what to do -- If people don’t want to speak out, they’re presumably not going to apply to be on the AP, but I guess I would make a motion that we formulate a new ad hoc joint grouper/red snapper AP to work on this. If I get a second, I can --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Mr. Anson is going to second the motion that we’re working on getting on the board. Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Just ad hoc membership, they can be unlimited, and there’s no limit on those, correct, and it’s just on APs, and they’re limited, I believe, to two? Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: I was just going to add that when we spoke about people who were heavy or light in the industry, but, when we -- The original red snapper IFQ people, we had Class 1 and Class 2 permits at the time, and we had representation of the Class 1 permits who had participated, and we also had Class 2, and we also had I think what was called non-voting members.

We had an environmentalist on there, and we had a member on there that was from enforcement, and I thought it was a very good panel. Everyone listened to everyone’s ideas, and we all worked together, and so it was folks from small shareholders to large shareholders.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, and I’m kind of thinking along the lines that Leann brought up, that I want a diverse group here, but I think they should be participants in the fishery, basically.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: I have a question for Roy. Roy, do you want to go as far as defining the percentage by small, medium, large, and other, or do you just want to leave it open like this for staff to decide who is small, medium, and large?

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I mean, we’re going to have to come up with something to indicate how we would break that down and all,
whether you want to advertise it and then we look at the applicants and do something with it, and I leave that up to you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I’m thinking that’s something we may want to look after we get the applicant pool in, just because, even if you look at maybe some of the 36B documents, the way they defined different categories was a little different than what I thought, but it’s all dependent on that group of individuals and how it falls out, and so I think we better maybe wait and see what we’re working with before we try and define too much of that. Mr. Gregory, you’ve been waiting patiently, and go ahead.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I’ve never been accused of being patient. Based on what Roy said, and I want it to be clear for the whole council, the advertisement will be for participants in the commercial red snapper or grouper-tilefish IFQ fishery, so that we don’t get applicants from NGOs or private recreational anglers and mislead them that they might be eligible for the panel, and that would cut down on the potential number of applicants we get.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, that’s one way to do it. I was thinking if you hold a commercial permit, but I guess if you do it the way -- I wasn’t going to be specific to the commercial permit that you hold, but that would be another way of doing it, and that would probably narrow it down a little bit farther. You would essentially have to hold some sort of commercial reef fish permit, not necessarily have a share in anything, but at least hold a permit is what you’re saying? Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Well, you brought up another point, and so I will touch on that too, but the first thing that I wanted to make sure is, in the announcement that, yes, it’s people involved in the IFQ fishery for red snapper or grouper, but to make sure that it includes references to non-shareholders, lessees basically, and make sure that we get that in the language, so it is clear.

I don’t know about having a commercial reef fish permit, because, currently, we allow them to have shares and not have a reef fish permit, and so I don’t know if we want to go down that far.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Walker and then Ms. Guyas.

MR. WALKER: I was just going to add what I mentioned earlier. When it was a Class 1 and a Class 2 -- At one time, to qualify for a Class 1, there were numbers as high as you hand to land
25,000 or 30,000 pounds of snapper a year to be considered for Class 1, and then it was actually lowered to 5,000 pounds, which wasn’t a lot of fish, and so it was pretty lenient on someone who could qualify for a Class 1, and, like I said, we had Class 2, and I think Bob Zales was on the panel at the time, when he had some permits, and Bill Tucker.

We had a really good group of folks, and, just like it is with the state management, when it came to the allocation issue, it was the hardest thing to get through, but we worked together, and we got through it. It took a little time and a lot of hard work, but we got through, and so I would just try to get folks that are -- Keep in mind to get folks that are participants in this industry and are dependent upon this industry, because that was the problem we had. We had too many folks, and I think Leann said that her dad says too many hooks in the water at one time, and everyone was hurting. There was a lot of folks falling out, and it was hard to survive as a commercial fisherman at the time, and it was also very hard on the resource, and so we addressed a lot of our problems, and we had a really good group that helped develop those profiles.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Just a clarification thing. Can we get “IFQ” actually in the motion, and so “joint ad hoc red snapper/grouper IFQ advisory panel”? Thanks.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: That is exactly why I had my hand up. I would like that to be explicit in the motion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: The seconder is okay with that?

MR. ANSON: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Mr. Gregory, and then let’s vote this up or down.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: One last thing. We will notify the current members of the Red Snapper IFQ Advisory Panel that that advisory panel is being disbanded and we’re creating a new joint advisory panel and encourage them to reapply, just like we do with our regular advisory panels when we advertise.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Understood. Any further discussion on the motion? Dr. Frazer.
DR. FRAZER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just real quick, I just want to make sure that the participants might include people like seafood dealers, for example, that are participating in the industry. That wasn’t clear, based on Doug’s definition.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: If I may, many of them are shareholders or lessees of some extent. For example, a fish dealer -- Let’s say he’s not a shareholder, but he will lease shares that he can then turn around and give to his boats or provide for his boats to unload. I have heard that in the grouper fishery.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: I was just going to add one thing. I like that adding the fish dealers. A lot of this, when it began, there was a lot of fish dealers who didn’t like this. They were afraid that they were going to lose control of the fishermen, and they were arguing against it, and, later on, they were very apologetic about how it ended up, and it worked out really well and they were happy with it, and I think you heard a lot of testimony from fish dealers over the years about how successful it’s been in running their operation and allowing them to provide access for the nation’s seafood consumers year-round.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. All those in favor of the motion on the board, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries. Mr. Greene. Wait a minute. Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: If Mr. Greene was going to proceed to the next section, I just wanted to bring up one item. During public testimony yesterday, there was expressed some concerns about the direction of the council, and some of the concerns were directed at me, and so I will respond to those.

Personally, it’s not a vendetta that I have against the IFQ fishery. I believe the IFQ fishery has performed well, for red snapper particularly, and that it’s in the bounds of the council to look at all the programs that we oversee, and it’s within our authority and prerogative to make changes if this body deems that it’s time to make some change, and it may cause some disruption, and it may cause some angst amongst those that are actively engaged in the fishery and some uncertainty, and I think that’s part of what we do and just part of the process, if you will, and that this process will proceed as the votes will pan out for the specific motions, but, again, I just wanted to
make sure that it was stated that I don’t have any problems with it, but certainly there has been people that have expressed some concerns about how the fishery has progressed and that we have an opportunity, or an obligation, to at least review those and try to come to some consensus through the voting process, and that’s all. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Anson. Appreciate it. Mr. Greene.

MR. Greene: Options Paper, Status Determination Criteria and OY, Tab B, Numbers 11(a) and 11(b), staff presented a review of the biological reference points discussed in the options paper for setting status determination criteria and optimum yield for reef fish and red snapper.

Committee members asked if there were any issues with including red drum, which makes the amendment a joint Reef Fish/Red Drum FMP amendment. Staff responded that there were no issues with including red drum, other than there has been no recent red drum assessment.

A committee member asked is staff was coordinating with scientific agencies and other councils. Staff responded that it would seek guidance from the SSC. Staff noted that the South Atlantic Council had already addressed its status determination criteria issues. Other councils were not addressing these issues at this time.

For Action 2, MSST, staff asked for guidance on simplifying the range of alternatives. Staff suggested that Alternative 3, MSST equals one minus M times BMSY or 0.75 times BMSY, was unnecessarily complex. Also, Alternative 4, MSST equals 0.85 times BMSY, produced results similar to Alternative 2, MSST equals one minus M times BMSY, and did not appear to add anything. Removing these alternatives would still leave a full range of alternatives.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 2 to remove Alternatives 3 and 4.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Just because of the way this was worded, I want to clarify. I don’t think we meant to suggest that those alternatives didn’t add anything, but they were bounded by the other alternatives that were included in the document already,
and so that we don’t necessarily have to have those as alternatives, because we still have that range, if we chose to go select them for some reason.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. Any further discussion? Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.

MR. GREENE: Drafts, State Management of Recreational Red Snapper, Tag B, Numbers 12(a), 12(b), 12(c), and 12(d), staff explained the structure of the four documents. The State Management Program for Recreational Red Snapper Document contains actions that affect all states, regardless of participation in state management. Action 1 addresses the components of the recreational sector to include in state management programs.

By a voice vote with no opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 1, to make Alternative 4 the preferred alternative.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion on the board. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: In Action 2, the committee discussed the range of alternatives for apportioning the recreational sector ACL among the states. The committee would like to consider alternative approaches to allocating among the states and passed the following motions.

By a vote with one opposed, the committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to construct allocation alternatives that reflect spatial patterns in biomass and recreational trips with options for weighting the two.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Any discussion on the motion? Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Just one thing. I think Dr. Frazer brought up another idea that we discussed, but I don’t think it made it into a motion yesterday, and that was somehow looking at licensed anglers, and was that right? Is that something that you would want to intertwine into this motion or see separately or what do you envision?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: Thank you. I mean, if possible, if we could modify...
that motion there that says, “reflect spatial patterns in biomass and recreational trips and licensed anglers”, for example.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Well, we would have to do a substitute motion if you want to do that, or we can vote this up or down and then have a subsequent motion. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: We can get trips from the MRIP data source, but it’s just trips, and we won’t know if it -- I can’t tell you if -- I mean, in theory, they are licensed anglers, but it’s just trips. Now, we can ask for the trips to be EEZ trips, or we can have it broken down by wave, and then you could look at what you want to do, but maybe Dave can comment, but I don’t know if you can get into just who is licensed and who is not, because it’s just trips.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Mickle.

DR. MICKLE: Roy addressed it pretty much exactly what I was going to say. I was going to refer to Dave and see how difficult that is. I know, in my state, getting license information is in a sister agency within my state borders, and so it would be a three-step process to even get these data to address that, and so just the difficulty in it could take quite a bit of time, and that’s just to think about that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: As I understood it, it was just another thought of a weighting factor that, when you talk about -- You don’t know how many of them are EEZ anglers, but it does give you some reference point of total anglers. Certainly, from a Texas perspective, we can give you a time series of basically saltwater anglers, and so that’s not an issue.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. I have Dr. Frazer and then Dr. Ponwith.

DR. FRAZER: Thank you again. I think that data is available, actually, and I think you can get it from Census Bureau data, and there is some recent reports that were put out by a number of organizations that have that breakdown, and so I think the data are available. Whether or not we want to use it or not is another question.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Ponwith.
DR. PONWITH: Just two aspects on that. I think, based on what we have in hand, the recreational saltwater trips is a fairly firm number that then MRIP post-processes to a state level. For the spatial patterns in biomass, just to reiterate the most refined information that we have on biomass estimates is on an east-west basis, the east of the Mississippi and west of the Mississippi, and one methodology to get at further refinements from that is to prorate that coarse biomass across the finer-scale state-by-state.

There is a paper that is out that looks at productivity and distribution of red snapper relative to natural habitats and artificial reefs. That is kind of a comparison of those two types of habitats more than an actual quantitative analysis of the full habitat characterized across the Gulf of Mexico, in terms of densities of red snapper and productivity there. Those are a couple of ways to look at that, but, again, just getting at the most refined information we have, it’s an east-west split on the biomass.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I was just going to weigh in. I like the idea of using trips better, and my rationale for that is each state has their own specific laws on how to handle licensing in each state, and it’s not uniform across all states.

States typically want to get their license numbers up, because the volume of licenses that you have has some impact on getting some monies coming back to your state, and so it’s just not equal across the board.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a motion on the board. Any further discussion on this motion? All right. All those in favor, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries. Chairman Greene.

MR. GREENE: By a vote with four opposed, the committee recommends, and I so move, to reconstruct the allocation tables and truncate the landing series through 2009.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a committee motion on the board. Is there discussion on the motion? Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I just have a question, just for clarity. Was this in order to have an option for us to look at, or was it just to reconstruct the data tables?
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers, I think that was your motion. Do you want to speak to that?

MR. RIECHERS: Yes, and, I mean, I think in all of this, we were looking at options and alternatives, if they can get that far by October, but, if it can’t be in the true form of an alternative written in, at least have the data there, so that we can start looking at it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. I think this won’t truncate every table that we have in the document. This is for a specific option to be looked at. Okay. I think that’s the question. All right. Any further discussion on the motion? All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: By a vote with no opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, that the allocation table include a formula that looks at the percentages, for the best ten years for each state, from the series 1986 through 2015, as the percentage of allocation.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Captain Greene.

MR. GREENE: Just a question. In the past, we had used a series of 1986 through 2015, where we used some weighting of some years and of other years, and it seemed like we had used that, and it was pretty close to our allocation policy, and is that the intent of this motion, or is this just strictly the years from here to there?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: You are kind of looking at me, and I didn’t make this motion, but I will try to answer. What I understood it to be is, from 1986 to 2015, each state’s top ten will be chosen out of that timeframe. All of those will be added up, and you’ll end up with a new total across all the five states and a percentage thereof.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, and that’s my understanding of how I remembered it, too. I think David brought it up, and I thought it was a good suggestion, and it mirrors the way you did it back when we had to do that allocation decision when we were trying to develop a different program, and so any further discussion on the motion? All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries.
MR. GREENE: In Action 3, staff noted that an approved state management program would require the state to adopt a minimum size limit consistent with the federal minimum size limit. Therefore, staff asked if the committee was interested in changing the federal minimum size limit.

By a vote with no opposition, the committee recommends and I so move, to remove Action 3, Modify the Federal Recreational Minimum Size Limit from the document.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a committee motion. Any discussion on the motion? Seeing none, any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: Due to time constraints, staff will review the individual state amendments during Full Council.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Dr. Lasseter, that takes us back over to you.

DR. AVA LASSETTER: Thank you. Let’s take a look at Tab B, Number 12(b), and so we’re going to let Louisiana’s document come up. The three tabs, (b), (c), and (d), you have Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama as separate documents.

They are identical, except for the name of the state is replaced in each one, and so I’m using Louisiana’s right now, unless you feel the need to have state-specific discussions, which I think could still fall into this one document, we’ll just use this one, for the purpose of discussion.

Let’s take a look at the table of contents, and so we reviewed this in committee, the structure of the two documents, and so the IPT -- In identifying the actions that could go here, it was attempting to give the most flexibility to the individual states in determining which discussions could possibly vary by state, but, again, keep in mind that if your decision -- For a decision that might be different for each of the states, if at all that decision could be made through either your delegation or your CEP, which we’ll get to in a moment, it might be preferable to not have a council action for that, because, in order to modify it, it would require the council process again.

If at all possible, and I will get to that with the sunset provision, if it’s not something that the council is interested in restricting the states to, then it might be preferable to not have those as council actions.
Also, in the interest of time, because I am noticing that we have time constraints at Full Council as well, I think we’re going to spend the most time talking on the first action. Action 1 addresses the authority structure for state management, and then Action 2 is the sunset provision and Action 3 will be post-season accountability measures.

Let’s go to Action 1, and, by authority structure, we mean how would the federal regulations be changed to allow the states to manage -- I’m sorry. Just a moment.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Before we go into these actions, I want to make a motion, just to get things rolling here. That motion would be to start two separate amendments for state management of recreational red snapper off of Florida and Texas. It was emailed in.

MR. RIECHERS: Second.

MS. GUYAS: I am just trying to put these in a logical order, and that’s all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Let’s get your motion on the board.

MS. GUYAS: State management of recreational red snapper off of Florida and Texas, and I’m just trying to be efficient here. Robin seconded, and so I’m not trying to throw Texas into something they’re not ready for.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Should we call that Amendment 39?

MS. GUYAS: Well, I don’t know about that. Let me just explain why I’m putting this out there. Obviously the actions that are in the amendment we just went through will affect both of our states, and so it kind of just seems logical to have this, to look at doing state management in our states as well at this point, if we’re going to go down this road, but I will let Robin chime in.

MR. RIECHERS: I mean, I think we all knew this was coming. This should come as no shock to anyone, that, if any of this started to gain traction again, that we would be there with you all trying to move this forward, and, again, call it what you will, 12(a), 12(b), 12(c), and I don’t care, or 39. It doesn’t matter.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We have a motion on the board to begin two separate amendments for the state management of recreational red snapper for Florida and Texas. That would obviously be one amendment for Florida and one amendment for Texas. All right.

Do we have a second to the motion? Robin seconded it. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I am pondering making a substitute motion to start work on a new amendment that would be called the Move Forward with Flexible State Recreational Red Snapper Management Amendment and give it some new number, a lucky number, like 777, but do you all really want to keep these as five separate amendments, or do we want to bring them together into one, or do you want to just pass this motion and worry about that at the next meeting? I like that though, the Move Forward with Flexible State Recreational Red Snapper Management Amendment.

UNIDENTIFIED: What’s the acronym for that?

DR. CRABTREE: It’s obscene, and I can’t say it on the record.

MS. GUYAS: We may have to come up with the acronym first.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Well, I’m glad we all still have a sense of humor on Thursday. Not to state the obvious, but we haven’t actually been through the individual plans yet at all, and so we haven’t done that as a group yet.

Let’s vote on this motion, assuming it passes, and that’s great, but I think we probably do need to, at least one time, give them one pass through the three documents that staff created for us to review at this meeting, and then maybe we can make some decisions going forward. All right. Is there any further discussion on this motion? Seeing none, all those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries. Ms. Guyas, can we go through our documents now, are you good? Okay.

DR. LASSETER: Thank you. We will take a look at Action 1. This is the authority structure for state management. Of course, Alternative 1 is no action. Current federal regulations for management of recreational red snapper in federal waters is consistent across the Gulf, federal waters. Alternative 2 is one approach, delegation, and 3 and 4 are more similar, and that’s another approach, conservation equivalency, CEPs.

Let’s start with Alternative 2. Alternative 2 would use the
provision in the Magnuson-Steven Act for delegation, and so the
management program -- NMFS would delegate some management
authority, which would be specified in the regulations. Particular regulations would be removed, and that authority
would be delegated to the states, and it’s primarily bag limits
and seasons.

The state, and I’m going to be generic here, must establish the
red snapper season structure, therefore, and bag limit, because
those have been removed and now delegated to you, for the
harvest of the respective state’s assigned portion of the red
snapper ACL, recreational ACL.

The Appendix A in the document provides you the text, the
language, from the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the delegation
provision, and so there’s not as much information in the text
here as the remaining alternatives, because we have provided you
the entire delegation provision. Now, the important part about
delegation that is different from the other alternative for you
is that, to pass delegation, it requires a three-quarter
majority vote amongst the voting members of the council,
whereas, if you pursue the other avenue, a simple majority, and
so that is one thing to keep in mind. Let me pause there for a
moment.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I just want some clarity on the vote situation, and
so it would take three-quarters of a vote for anything to do
with delegation, and so including to make a preferred
alternative, to make that preferred, and then also a three-
quarter majority for the entire amendment, once we get to the
end, if it included a delegation preferred?

DR. LASSETER: I am going to request that NOAA GC provide a
definitive answer on that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We’re going to let Shep look that up,
and we’ll let Dr. Lasseter keep moving forward. Just let us
know when you’re ready, Shep.

DR. LASSETER: Okay. Thank you very much. Good question. Back
to my alternatives. Alternative 3 --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Martha has a question, before we move on.

MS. GUYAS: With Alternative 2, now that we have taken the size
limit option out of the previous document, it seems to me that
it would make sense to add the size limit in here, right, in Alternative 2? Otherwise, no one is setting the size limit, right?

DR. LASSETER: The alternatives are quite wordy and have some information that’s required, but there is, of course, additional requirements that is laid out more in the discussion, and it’s written in the discussion that, to have an approved management plan, you must adopt the size limit that’s consistent with the federal season, and, under both delegation and conservation equivalency, part of the requirement is that your plan, to be an approved state management plan, must be consistent with the FMP.

It’s slightly different language for each of them, and so I’m happy to add that, if you would like. However, the size limit has to be exactly the same as the federal, whereas you would have the freedom to establish your own bag limit and season structure.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: As I understood the size limit discussion yesterday, by removing it, we basically have taken away any need -- Well, we’re not establishing a complete consistent federal size limit by doing that, and each state is going to still have the option to do their own. Isn’t that what you were trying to do, Patrick, or am I confused with when you removed it?

MR. BANKS: No, when I -- As I understood it around the table, we were all okay with keeping the size limit at sixteen inches in federal waters. What was surrounding my discussion yesterday was I was wanting to make sure that it didn’t impede your ability to keep your state-water size limit at fifteen, and I don’t think it did, but Ava might need to clarify for us.

DR. LASSETER: As of yesterday, we did not have the motion for developing Florida and Texas state management documents, and so, at the time, with just the three central states, they were not concerned with changing the size limit.

In Amendment 39, because Texas was going to be participating in state management, that is why we had that action to modify the minimum size limit, and your preferred alternative at that time was to decrease it to fifteen inches, which would be consistent with Texas’s state water minimum size limit, and all of the states were going to agree to then adopt fifteen inches, and the federal minimum size limit would also be fifteen, and so then everything would have been consistent. I think, going forward,
if Texas is going to want to pursue state management, we may want to reconsider that action.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: We’re beyond that action today, and I think we’ve got bigger fish to fry, so to speak, as far as going forward, but I think we will need to come back to that at the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: One of the things that I’ve been talking with Stacy about is whether or not the Coast Guard will be able to enforce these regulations, and I was going to ask Shep -- I know Shep is busy, and I’m so sorry, Shep, but is there a particular alternative that leaves the Coast Guard in the loop for enforcement, and can you shed any light on that?

MR. GRIMES: I would say that you would have to ask the Coast Guard. I am not familiar enough with the issues to tell you.

MR. DIAZ: I’m not going to put him on the spot right now, but, at the next meeting, when we discuss this, I would like to get to the point of just to know, when we vote on which way, but I don’t want to slow this down. If it’s obvious the 75 percent benchmark can’t be had, that’s a big consideration too to consider on what to do with these different options here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So noted. Thank you, Dale. Any further discussion before Dr. Lasseter continues? Dr. Lasseter, go ahead.

DR. LASSETER: Okay. Thank you. Alternatives 3 and 4 both employ this conservation equivalency concept, and so Alternative 3, the difference is these plans, which I will describe, will go straight to NMFS, and Alternative 4 adds an additional step, where a review committee would address the plans first before forwarding to NMFS. That’s the only difference.

Alternative 3 is establish a management program in which the respective state will submit a plan to NMFS describing the conservation equivalency measures the state will adopt for the management of its portion of the recreational ACL. To be a conservation equivalency plan, and there is additional requirements further in the document, but the plan must be reasonably expected to limit the harvest of red snapper to the
state’s assigned portion of the recreational sector ACL, and, again, having to go through that review process, your state management could not be approved unless it has met all of the requirements.

If your plan is -- If your conservation equivalency requirements are not met, then the recreational harvest of red snapper in the federal waters adjacent to the respective state will be subject to the default federal regulations for red snapper. Now, that concept of default federal regulations refers to what we currently have, your sixteen-inch total length minimum size limit, two-fish bag limit, a season that starts on June 1 and ends, as estimated by NMFS, when the ACT is estimated to be met.

Alternative 4, before NMFS reviews that plan, those conservation equivalency plans, what we’re calling CEPs, a technical review committee reviews the plans.

Each state would submit it to this technical review committee, which approves or returns the plan to the state for revision, and it would come back to the technical review committee, and then it gets forwarded to NMFS again, and so you have an extra level of review. During 39, the council had determined that this technical review committee would be made up of a representative from each of the five Gulf states.

I have noted that the delegation provision is provided in the appendix, and so that’s really where the specifics are there, and a little more about the requirements of conservation equivalency are provided on pages 9 and 10.

Specifically, on page 10, we have a table, Table 2.1.1, which provides an outline, a timeline, for how the process would work. Then, at the bottom, there is a bulleted list of items and information that will need to be included as part of your plan. I am not wanting to, in the interest of time, not wanting to really read through all of this. I just really want to highlight that it’s here, and I think I’m just going to turn it over to questions.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Is there discussion? Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I would like to make a motion to have Alternative 2 be the preferred. I would just remind you guys that I’m from the government and I’m here to help, and so trust me.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We are in the Louisiana document right now.
MR. RIECHERS: Martha has a question, and then I will have a question about that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. So let me clarify that we are in the Louisiana document right now, and so, Patrick, you are making a motion in Action 1 of the Louisiana state document to have Louisiana’s preferred alternative -- To make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative for Louisiana’s state management. Okay. I wanted to be clear about that. All right. First, do we have a second to the motion? The motion is seconded by Mr. Matens. Is there discussion on the motion? I had Ms. Guyas’s hand.

MS. GUYAS: That was my question, was to just clarify that that was for Louisiana only.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Then Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: That’s why I’m trying think about efficiencies here around the table a little bit. Are we going to step through every plan, next Alabama and then next Mississippi, and do this, or is there a way we can be a little more efficient and either just say let’s make this -- Let’s make it Alternative 2 for the two other plans that you have before you today and the plans that will be coming before you in October.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I guess that depends on if we have that consensus or not. If it’s split down the middle, then I don’t know that you want to combine them all, but, if you all have a consensus, then that’s a little different. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I will start out by saying that I certainly think that delegation is the preferred way to go on this. We do have the overarching amendment that was put together, and, if we took this motion out of each specific state one and put it in the overarching, then we would make it for all of them. I actually think what we will ultimately end up with is pulling all of this into one amendment. I think it would be an overly cumbersome and difficult process to imagine if two states had delegations, but two states did it differently, and so I would much rather have it be consistent, and the other thing I would point out, of course, too is the delegation, when we actually vote to approve it, requires a three-quarters vote of the council to do it, and so we can come back and deal with where this goes at the next meeting, whatever you all want to do, but I certainly think our goal should be to work this out in a way that all the states are onboard with it.
and that we, I hope, could pass all of this with a unanimous vote of the council at some point and do it through a delegation.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: I agree with what Roy is suggesting, because the other thing that’s going to happen here, guys, if we keep them all separate, is, at the end of the day, we’re going to be making one gigantic motion sending them all to the Secretary of Commerce at the same time, unless you all want to use a reverse alphabetical system and let Texas go first, because I think we’re going to all want to get ours passed at the same time, if we were to try to go forward with these separately.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: In terms of trying to make this the preferred for all the states, I am not in favor of that at this time. I actually was going to offer a motion. There’s been some discussion of that, well, if everybody can rally around the same thing, but I’m not there with this one. I actually was going to offer another motion, which I will do after this, that provides another option, or another alternative, and so I just wanted to put that out there.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. It sounds like Louisiana, at this point, is in favor of delegation. What you’re saying, Martha, is that maybe Florida is not going the delegation route?

MS. GUYAS: Not as it is written in this document currently.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I guess that’s my hesitation about putting them all together, because then you put them all together and we lose the flexibility to let each state kind of -- I realize that may be a huge headache for NMFS, if some states go delegation and some want some sort of CEP.

The delegation seems like it would be the easiest, because you kind of set it and forget it, almost, but the CEP has to be -- It maybe provides a little more flexibility to some states that want to manage more under some bag limit situations and size limits, but we’ve got a motion on the board. That’s a discussion for another day. For right now, we’re voting to make the Louisiana preferred the delegation alternative, which is Alternative 2. Shep, do you have some insight for us, sir?

MR. GRIMES: I was going to answer your question from earlier.
The statute says that the delegation is an option only if the council approves the delegation of management authority, or management of the fishery, to a state by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting members of the council, and so I would say approval of the delegation -- a reasonable read of that is approval of the amendment at the time you submit it to the Secretary.

That being said, if you can’t get two-thirds majority to vote in support of that being your preferred alternative, then you’re probably not going to get that majority for submitting the amendment.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I just want to weigh in here for just a second. Patrick, I will probably support your motion, and I’m an optimist, and I feel like there’s some energy around the table, and I really hope we can keep going forward, but we’ve got a lot of tough issues to talk about before this is all over.

We’ve got five states out there, and we’ve got to come up with an allocation. We’ve got to figure out what to do with charter boats in each state. By going with this alternative, we’re setting it up for the 75 percent vote, which we might could get it today, but, after we talk through some of these tough issues that we’ve got to talk through for five separate states, I don’t know if we’ll be there.

I am going to support your motion, but, having been through Amendment 39 and some of these tough discussions, and I know they’re coming, and I just don’t know if we can get three-quarters vote, and that’s the only thing that bothers me. Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any further discussion? All right. Let’s see where we stand. All those in favor, signify by raising your hand. Get a good count, Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Seventeen.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. All those opposed same sign.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: The motion carries seventeen to zero. It’s slightly more than a three-quarters vote.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We should quit while we’re ahead, huh? All right. Ms. Guyas.
MS. GUYAS: I want to make a motion, and I want to at least do this for the Florida plan, and, if other states are interested in it for their plan, that’s fine, too. That motion would be --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Martha, let’s talk about it before you make a motion, because we don’t actually have a Florida plan yet in front of us.

MS. GUYAS: Well, to be added to that plan that we’re making.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay, and so this is to be added to the amendment that we’ll come before us.

MS. GUYAS: Correct, and I’m not trying to make it a preferred, but just adding it in there.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. I just wanted to make sure that we’re all on the same page. Thanks.

MS. GUYAS: Add a new alternative that would delegate full management authority to the state, and so it would go beyond seasons and bag limits, but, of course, the council would still be setting the ACL.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Do you mind, in your motion -- Will you clarify what document that new alternative is going to be added to, just for future reference?

MS. GUYAS: Florida. You could say “Florida” there, but I just left it “state” in case other states wanted to -- If we wanted to do this across the board.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: We can have some discussion about that. All right. There is a motion on the board to add a new alternative to the Florida document that would delegate full management authority to the state. Do we have a second for the motion? It’s seconded for discussion by Mr. Anson. Is there discussion, Ms. Guyas?

MS. GUYAS: Yes, and so where I’m trying to go with this is providing a little bit more flexibility, but still under a delegation situation, so that, if a state sees some other way to effectively manage within their quota, other than just manipulating the bag limit and the season, this gives them a little bit more flexibility in doing that under a delegation situation. We started out with an option like this, I think in the original Amendment 39, and then it morphed into the motion
that we just discussed for Louisiana, and so trying to go back to that. The name of the game here is flexibility.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Crabtree.

**DR. CRABTREE:** Well, I’m okay with the concept, but I assume you’re still talking about just the recreational.

**MS. GUYAS:** Correct.

**DR. CRABTREE:** Full means that like all the permitting requirements of the charter boat permit moratorium would all go away, and all of the sea turtle release gear requirements and all of that, and I don’t really think that Florida wants all of that.

I think probably a better way to come at it is to be more specific about the things that Florida does want, rather than just saying everything, because there’s an awful lot of stuff in all the regulations that you may not want, and that would include like the charter boat reporting electronic logbooks and all of that, and so I think that’s just some things that you ought to think about.

**MS. GUYAS:** I guess we would think about that moving forward. For now, I would want to just pass this as is, and then we can refine that in the future, but just to kind of put our intent out there of where we would be trying to go, and that, of course, would depend on whether we would be managing private recreational and charter/for-hire. I guess, in a private recreational situation, it would be a little bit simpler with some of those requirements.

**DR. CRABTREE:** Yes, and then maybe, in October, come in with a more specific --

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Swindell.

**MR. SWINDELL:** I would think that management authority delegated out to the 200-mile limit by the state then also limits the enforceability of the Coast Guard, because management does include enforcement. You cannot have management without some enforcement. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Mr. Riechers.

**MR. RIECHERS:** What I think Martha is trying to do here is to delegate full fishery management, or fishery management actions
-- Well, unless you want to call it data collection and actions, and I’m not using the appropriate terms here, but basically put all the tools in the toolbox of just -- That you can work around to constrain your harvest and have the seasons and so forth in the timeframes that you need them, with leaving data collection alone.

Enforcement would stay the same, just like we have through current JEA agreements and that sort of stuff. Now, obviously, there has been some discussion about complications in enforcement, but that would stay the same, and so that’s the intent. With that intent, Martha, since we’ve been down this road before, I will be happy to also have that included in the Texas document as well, if you will accept that as a friendly amendment.

MS. GUYAS: Sure.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. We’re going to get that friendly amendment on the board, and then we’ll make sure that our seconder is okay with that. In the meantime, Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: Well, I was just going to say -- It would delegate full management authority related to harvest, and that might capture what you’re trying to do in the motion.

MS. GUYAS: Yes, that sounds good. Thanks, Dale.

MR. RIECHERS: If I may, Dale, thank you, because that at least helps with that intent as we come forward to the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, and I’m glad that we put some more clarification there, because “full” -- Yes, I think that’s better. Mr. Anson, I think you were the seconder, were you not? No, you were not the seconder. Who was the -- Mr. Riechers was the seconder. Are you okay with our friendly amendments? Yes, and you asked for one of them. All right. Is there further discussion? Dr. Dana.

DR. DANA: I just wanted to ask Roy something. Roy, as this motion is currently written, does this then -- Would this alleviate what you just brought up about the for-hire permitting and --

DR. CRABTREE: Well, yes, but I mean, obviously at some point, we’re going to have to define what “related to harvest” means, because you could argue that everything we have on the books is related to harvest, and so I’m okay with this, just as a concept
to move us forward, but understand, when we come back, we’re going to need to specifically identify what exactly we’re delegating.

Otherwise, the states aren’t going to be clear as to what they could do, and it would lead to confusion down the road, but at least, for right now, to direct our intentions of which way we’re heading, I don’t have a problem with it. I would be curious though whether Mississippi and Alabama and Louisiana want this for their states too or are we going to make five different motions?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Martha, can you -- Surely you must have a thought process, some sort of plan, in mind, some sort of structure, and maybe if you can elaborate a little on what Florida is possibly looking to do, and then we could make sure, when that document comes to you, that it looks like it would fit your needs.

MS. GUYAS: Our commission, when we were talking about Amendment 39 -- Right before we were about to get to the stage where we could take final action on that document, we presented the ins and outs of that document to our commissioners, and they felt like the options that were in that document, which are also reflected here, in terms of how this process would work, were a little bit restrictive, in terms of what they could do, and then also, particularly for the CEP options, they were very cumbersome compared to the process that we go through at the state level. It would be taking us years to implement changes to recreational red snapper regulations, whereas, now, they can do it in a meeting or two.

With delegation, they felt like they would like to have more options other than just playing with the season and the bag limit, if this is something that we seriously were going to move forward with. I mean, the way that they operate now, they have the flexibility to do pretty much anything, short of setting fees for licenses, in managing a fishery.

They have all the tools in the toolbox, and they felt like this was very limiting, and so this would obviously be a discussion that we would have at the state level and with our stakeholders, to figure out exactly what the best way to work within our quota is and manage so that we have a fishery that’s working for everybody.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.
MR. SANCHEZ: As a concept, I will support it, but, if it does get to, as it evolves, that it affects federal permits and moratoriums put in place and all of that, then I will bow out gracefully with my support.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Just to clarify, that’s not my intent here, to mess with those permits, and so that’s just to alleviate any fears about that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: My question would be what does it do to allocation? Any intentions there? I mean, do you intend to have full authority somehow over allocations between the two sectors?

MS. GUYAS: No, and allocation is set in that other document, right, and so --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have déjà vu, since this was the subject when I left. I just wanted to advise you, and I don’t really -- It’s not clear to me what stage we really are, and I’m sure that you’re going to talk about this again, but, in terms of analyzing it, you’re going to need much greater specificity as to what things are actually delegated, right?

Then, at some point -- The statute provides that the delegation is rescinded when management is no longer consistent with the FMP, and so what’s going to be retained in the FMP and what precisely is going to be delegated and then some consideration of how the Secretary might later determine that what you’re doing is or is not consistent with what is still in the FMP and controlling larger management. As we know from dealing with this before, this can get extremely complicated. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a motion on the board, and we’ve had some good, robust discussion. Captain Walker.

MR. WALKER: I know that it reads “recreational”, but I just want to confirm that we have no implications on the commercial industry.

MS. GUYAS: No.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those
opposed same sign. The motion carries. Are we ready for Dr. Lasseter to continue on? Okay.

DR. LASSETER: Okay. I guess we can move on from Action 1, if there’s not other states that are going to make preferred alternatives. Okay. Action 2 is on page 12, and so this is a sunset provision, if the council is interested in establishing a sunset provision on, currently, each of the respective states in separate amendments.

Alternative 1 would not establish a provision to sunset, in this case, Louisiana’s, but the respective state management program for each of the documents. Then Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 provide three different time series. Alternative 2 would have the sunset occur after ten calendar years of the program. Alternative 3 is five calendar years, and Alternative 4 is three calendar years. I will stop there and see if there is any discussion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. This is our sunset provision action item. Is there any discussion? Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I would make a motion to choose Alternative 1 as our preferred alternative, and I will give some rationale if I get a second.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. We have a motion to choose Alternative 1 as the preferred. It’s been seconded by Mr. Swindell. Mr. Banks, discussion?

MR. BANKS: Well, I’m going back to the discussion that we had with Roy about the referendum issue and me asking whether the next council could simply take a different action, make a different action, and it just seems like, to me, if that’s the case, then what is the use of having a sunset, if we could come back in three years and sunset it ourselves anyway?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any further discussion on the motion? Dr. Lasseter.

DR. LASSETER: This is the first time that you have seen these documents, and so, if the council is in agreement that you would not want to put a sunset on the states, the IPT would love to just have this action removed from the document.

MR. BANKS: I will make that motion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Well, we have a motion on the board.
MR. BANKS: I will make a substitute motion, please.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Let’s have a substitute motion by someone other than Mr. Banks. Do you want to make the motion, Mr. Boyd?

MR. BOYD: Sure, I would be happy to. Substitute motion to remove Action 2 from this document, from all of the state management documents. Do I need to list them all individually?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: No, you don’t need to list them individually. Is there a second to that motion, which is a little different than the first one? It’s seconded by Mr. Anson. Let’s have some discussion on the motion.

MR. BOYD: The intent of that is also to include Florida and Texas, since we don’t have those documents in front of us.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I am just trying to think through this. These plans have -- The way we’ve been talking about this up until now, there is an option to include charter and not to include charter, and we haven’t settled any allocations. People don’t know how this could affect their recreational fishing or their livelihood and their charter business.

I am a little reluctant to remove the sunset at this time. I don’t have a preferred in mind that I want to pick. I would prefer not to pick a preferred at all and leave it in there, but those things worry me a little bit.

I want these documents to move forward, and I want them to be successful, but I want people, whenever they examine this in the future, to decide if this is good or bad to be able to make a decision, and, if they’re worried about it, a sunset might give them some comfort and say, well, look, if it doesn’t go good, in X amount of years, we can sunset this thing and I can go back to making my living how I was making it under Amendment 40 or whatever the case might be, and so I’m just worried that we’re premature, and, as of right now, I will speak against the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: I can understand your concerns, Dale. I was thinking of it the other way around, and I think Patrick was getting to it previously. If we were to remove this action,
and, for whatever reason, a state, because of like you just described, Dale, that there might be some sector that may think that it’s not working out too well for them, we would have to come back and do a framework, I guess, for that particular state to then remove, change, dropout, whatever, and so it’s a little bit more cumbersome process.

I can see both sides of it, relative to the sunset and kind of the notion that it will end and then people will have some safety or some level of safety in knowing that, but, anyways, that’s all.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: I kind of agree with Dale, and I find it curiously interesting that you have always been a big supporter, Doug, of sunset provisions, and so, if we would consider down the road getting rid of the sunset for 40, then, hey, maybe I will see it differently, too.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right, and so we have a substitute motion on the board that will remove the sunset provision, in its entirety, from all five, and I’m glad we put that in there, and thank you, all five of the state management plans, and that’s the three that are our agenda today and the two that are coming in the future. All those in favor of this, signify by raising your hand.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Ten yes.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All those opposed same sign.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Six. The motion passes ten to six.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Any -- Well, we don’t have any further discussion on this action, because it’s gone. Dr. Lasseter, continue on.

DR. LASSETER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The final action in these documents is Action 3, and it begins on page 13, Post-Season Accountability Measures, and so, of course, Alternative 1, our no action, retains what we currently have, which is, while red snapper are overfished, based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, if the combined recreational landings exceed the recreational sector ACL, reduce the recreational sector ACL and the applicable component quota in the following year by the full amount of the overage, and then the rest of the qualifying language. Of course, the
component ACTs, through 2022, will be adjusted to reflect the established buffer.

Alternative 2 essentially is applying the overage adjustment to the respective state. Here, we’re talking Louisiana, if they exceed their portion of the ACL. This would only apply in the event that the entire recreational sector ACL is exceeded, and so an overage adjustment does not happen if only one state goes over, but the entire recreational sector ACL is not exceeded, if the landings are still below the entire ACL.

Alternative 2 is, while red snapper are overfished, if the combined Louisiana recreational landings exceed the Louisiana recreational ACL, or for the respective amendments, then, in following year, reduce Louisiana, or the respective states, ACLs by the amount of the ACL overage in the prior fishing year, and then here is our caveat, unless the best scientific information available determines otherwise.

Of course, then the ACT is also adjusted to reflect the buffer, and I have two options here, and it’s whether -- It also depends on which alternative is selected in the program amendment, which currently it is that you could choose to manage one or both of the components.

Option 2a is, if Louisiana has both the private angling and federal for-hire ACL, the reduction would be applied just to the component that exceeded the applicable ACL. If Louisiana, or the respective state, has, again, both of the ACLs, Option 2b would reduce it equally to both components. I will pause there for those alternatives and turn it over for discussion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Greene.

MR. GREENE: Well, I’m not going where you think I’m going, but I do have a question. Alternative 2, while red snapper are overfished, why does it matter if they’re overfished or not?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Lasseter.

DR. LASSETER: My understanding is that there is a requirement in Magnuson -- Sue is shaking her head. Maybe I should turn this over for NMFS staff to answer.

MS. GERHART: The council just has chosen, in the past, to have that overfished condition for the payback. You can have a payback even if it’s not overfished. That’s your choice.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I thought that, in the past, our document said if it’s in a rebuilding plan. Then, when that got codified into the regulations, somehow that was changed, and so I think the council’s position in the past has been, if it’s a rebuilding plan, there’s a payback, because, otherwise, if you overfish -- If you overshoot your quota, you don’t meet your rebuilding plan goals, and then you have to go back and revise rebuilding plans, and so I will open it up for discussion. That is one thing that I was going to ask.

The other question, while I’ve got the mic for a second here, is I was thinking about the ACT and ACL, the buffer, and I don’t know if this is doable or not, but a lot of our uncertainty in the past has to do with what the state season would be and trying to buffer to account for that with a federal season, and so, if we go down this route, and I don’t know if this would be something that’s actually in these alternatives or if this is just a separate discussion for a later point in time, a later document, but can that have some bearing on what the buffers are? If you’re going to have some certainty, and you would still maybe have uncertainties about catch rates for the first couple of years or something like that, but I would just open it up for thoughts. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, it seems to me, if we’re delegating this to the states, then it’s the states’ responsibility to stay below their catch level, and, if they can do it without a buffer, more power to them, but I suspect, in order for them to have assurance that it’s going to work, they will likely need a buffer, but I think that’s something that we could let them figure out, if that’s the path we’re going down.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Ponwith.

DR. PONWITH: Yes, and that makes good sense to me. I think the states would want to build that buffer commensurate with their level of confidence in the landings, basically the confidence intervals around their landings and their ability to be able to project what their landings can be and what management measures it takes to stay within them, and that number might be different from state to state, based on their understanding of their burn rate through that allocation.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Captain Greene.

MR. GREENE: In the past, we’ve had a 20 percent buffer that we’ve had to deal with, and so that buffer would come off the top, and then the remaining balance would be delegated to the
states, correct?

DR. CRABTREE: I would say that’s to be determined at this point. I am thinking that we tell each state that here’s what you have to stay under and then it’s their job to figure out how to do it. In that case, the states would figure out what their buffer needs to be, but I think, a lot of this, we’re going to see how the whole package develops and figure it out.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Matens.

MR. MATENS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Roy and Bonnie, I am with you on that. We think, in Louisiana, we have a pretty good system, but who knows what another couple of years brings. My personal preference would be to just give us the whole thing and let us live with it, and, if we don’t live up to it, we pay it back. When there is an appropriate time here, I would like to make a motion vis-a-vis a preferred option. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Given the discussion around the table, my first comment is this document -- I am not sure why it changed to overfished instead of rebuilding, maybe because the codified regulations got changed some years ago, but this council has always said, in our amendments that we approved, in a rebuilding plan.

That’s when the accountability measures and the paybacks kick in, and especially if we’re going to give the whole ACL over, and we just changed that overfishing, that MSST, to 50 percent of BMSY, which is where you get to fishing on the recruitment and you’re next to stock failure. This needs to say in a rebuilding plan. I don’t want to wait until we get it down to 50 percent of BMSY and have a real issue to start looking at accountability measures kicking in with paybacks. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I mean, what is in the regulations and what applies now is overfished, and those regulations were put in front of the council, and the council deemed them, and so I assume -- I don’t know why that inconsistency is there, and that is the way that I would prefer to keep it.

I don’t agree with you that it ought to be with a stock in a rebuilding plan, and I also don’t agree that it means that you won’t rebuild, because we do periodic assessments on all of these stocks, and we make course corrections and things to ensure that we do rebuild, but I think all of us, over the past years, have seen how difficult and disruptive paybacks can be.
I think, if we’re going to continue with paybacks, we need to put some constraints on how much and how big the payback can actually be, because it seems to me, in some cases, like gray triggerfish, where it leaves you in a situation where the fishery has been closed for the entire year, and I could be proven wrong, but I suspect, when we get the stock assessment, we’re going to see that we’ve had tremendous improvement in gray triggerfish, and so I think we need to be cautious about paybacks, because they tend to be very disruptive.

The way we are managing the fishery now, without any carry forward of underages, over a period of years -- If you look at the last few years, discounting this year with red snapper, we’ve had million-and-a-half-pound underages, but we didn’t do any carry forward of that, and so I just think we need to be cautious with it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to elaborate, notwithstanding I guess what you just heard, the National Standard Guidelines for National Standard 1 state that, for stocks or stock complexes in rebuilding plans, the AMs should include overage adjustments that reduce the ACLs in the next fishing year by the full amount of the overage unless the best scientific information available shows that a reduced overage adjustment or no adjustment is needed to mitigate the effects of the overage.

It is “should” and not “shall”. The regulations, earlier, state that “should” is used to indicate that an action or consideration is strongly recommended to fulfill the Secretary’s interpretation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I am just trying to prevent us from getting into a situation where we are now, where we have some overfishing and some overshooting of some quotas, and I am not sure what the incentives are not to at this point. There is not a payback.

If there was a payback, that would probably be an incentive not to do it, and so I just don’t want to get into a situation where there is really not a lot of teeth in overrunning something, and so we’ll leave it like it is for now, but it does not run -- It runs contrary to how we have written all of our other amendments, and so we can have some more discussion about it later. All right. Back to what is on the board. Do we want to have some discussion about specific alternatives and options in
here? Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify, in both of these alternatives, there is the best scientific information available kind of language, and I want to know -- Determined by who? I am assuming, because it relates to the ACL, that it's the council.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: That would normally be determined by the Secretary, who executes the AMs. That would be my read of it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Is there further discussion? Some things go probably all the way to the Secretary, but, a lot of times, our SSC hands us the best scientific information available.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, that’s true. It’s just normally we have to do Federal Register notices and put this in, and it may or may not be able to come back before the council, and so, by the time you get the landings in, so you know what has happened, you have to do something, because you’re already in the next fishing year, and there is just not time to go through all those processes to do it.

When I say the Secretary, I mean as delegated down to the Fisheries Service, from a practical standpoint, but you could set it up to have more procedural things to review it, but just remember that these things have to happen fairly quickly, or you get so far in the fishing year that it’s too late to make course corrections.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Matens.

MR. MATENS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I certainly don’t want to cut off any conversation about this, but it looks like we’ve kind of reached a dead-end. Accordingly, I make a motion that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2a.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a motion for Alternative 2, Option 2a, to be the preferred alternative, and we have a second by Mr. Banks. While staff is getting that motion on the board, is there any further discussion? Well, let’s back up. This is for the Louisiana only amendment. All right. Let’s be clear about that. Okay. Now, is there any further discussion on the motion?
We have a motion on the board, in Action 3 of the Louisiana state document, to make Alternative 2, Option 2a, the preferred. There is no further discussion? Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.

Any other discussion on this section by any of the other states for their respective state documents? All right. Dr. Lasseter, does that bring you to the end of the document?

DR. LASSETER: That is, but I just wanted to make sure that -- That was the Louisiana one. Did Mississippi or Alabama want anything specific or different in there? Are we good? Okay. That concludes me.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Mickle.

DR. MICKLE: At this stage, we have nothing further to add. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. The other two states that actually have real documents that are on the agenda at this point don’t have anything that they want to add to their document nor pick any preferreds at this time? I just want to make sure, before we move on in the committee report. All right. I see no motion in any direction, and so, Chairman Greene, I am going to turn it back over to you.

MR. GREENE: Other Business, Yellowtail Snapper, the council recently received a letter from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Chair, Michelle Duval, discussing ongoing issues due to the ACL closure of the commercial yellowtail snapper closures in the South Atlantic.

The letter asked for input on the development of a joint amendment to combine the jurisdictional ABCs and ACLs for yellowtail snapper. Doug Gregory explained that the letter arrived too late to include in the agenda for this meeting, but it would be on the agenda for the October council meeting.

Extension of state waters to nine nautical miles for reef fish management purposes, Roy Crabtree noted that the extension of state management jurisdiction for reef fish to nine nautical miles off Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama had originally been part of the 2016 budget act and had then been extended.

National Marine Fisheries Service has concluded that this extension is permanent. This will affect several fishing boundaries that are now inside the new state jurisdictional,
including the stressed area and longline boundary. National
Marine Fisheries Service is working with General Counsel to
determine whether they can modify the boundaries on their own
authority or whether council action is needed.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: Before we leave this committee, I just have a
question. I guess, in committee of the whole earlier, we had
discussed maybe convening the APs for the charter/for-hire and
headboat to discuss Amendment 41 and 42, and I just want
clarification as to is that going to happen before the end of
the year or do we need a motion or where are we at, if I can get
some instruction.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Why don’t you give us a motion? We were
trying to work on schedules, but, I mean, if you have a specific
time that you really want it done by, go ahead and give us a
motion, and we will look at it and try our best to make it
happen. If something goes wrong and we just can’t, we will have
to come back to the council, but, yes, we will do our best.

MR. SANCHEZ: All right. I appreciate that. That said, I will
make a motion that we convene the Joint Charter/For-Hire and
Headboat AP, and I will give you latitude as to when, as long as
I would like to see it, hopefully, done before the end of this
calendar year.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Is that your motion, Mr. Sanchez?

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Have we got a second for the motion?
Seconded by Dr. Dana. All right. The motion is to convene the
Joint Charter/For-Hire and Headboat Advisory Panels before the
end of 2017. I think you gave us enough latitude there that
surely we should be able to make that happen. We will try and
do it as expeditiously as possible, but giving us until the end of
the year gives us a little bit of leeway, and we appreciate
that. Mr. Gregory says he thinks we might even could get it
done after this meeting and before the next one, but we’ll just
have to look at those schedules. Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Just a point of clarification for staff and for
myself, at least. John, what is it specifically that they would
be discussing or meeting about?

MR. SANCHEZ: What I would like to see accomplished at this
meeting is for items that they have not already picked AP’s preferred for in these two documents, Amendment 41 and 42, to come back with preferreds picked for those two documents for us.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any further discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries. Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I lost my place a minute ago, but are we at the very end of Mr. Greene’s report? I have got two quick things that I would like to -- One is a question, and one is a little short discussion item.

I know we got our proposed action schedule that was sent out before the meeting, and we had talked just a little bit about the carryover document of harvest of uncaught quota, and we’re supposed to get a revised draft in October. Anyway, I think it’s important we move this document forward as quickly as we can, and I was hoping -- I guess I’m going to put Carrie on the spot a little bit, and maybe she can give us a timeline of what we actually could work through this document and get something where we could finish this document, and can you speak to that, Carrie?

DR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are you talking about the generic amendment to establish a carryover provision to the -- Okay. The SSC, we have asked them to review a simulation. We’ve asked the Science Center to do a simulation for us, and we’re waiting on that, and that’s going to go to the SSC, for them to discuss and review at their September meeting.

That will determine, I think, what goes into some of the document, and we’ll try to get that incorporated for the October council meeting. From there, it’s just going to be a revised draft, and so we’ll have a lot of work to do, I would say several more meetings, to get it finalized. It will be April or June, depending on other priorities and how quickly the council wants to move on it.

MR. DIAZ: If that got finalized in the middle of the year, would we have to deal with quotas, carryovers, that happen after that, or could we go retroactively back and deal with any carryovers that might happen this year?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is that a question for Dr. Crabtree? Ms. Gerhart, yes, ma’am.

MS. GERHART: Well, I would say that I think that we might be
able to do it retroactively, but we’ll look into that and have that.

MR. DIAZ: Thank you, Ms. Gerhart. The only other thing that I wanted to discuss is we generally get preliminary landings information before every meeting in our packet, and I appreciate that. I look at them every time.

At the next meeting, I was hoping that we could talk a little bit about preliminary landings, and it’s kind of an incomplete discussion if we don’t have a little bit of an idea on how Texas and Louisiana is coming along with their landings, but, anyway, I would like for us to, if you could, Madam Chair, on the agenda, just to have that as an agenda item and have a short discussion on landings at the next meeting. If Louisiana and Texas, if it’s possible to have anything to add to the conversation, that would be great. If it’s a lot of work, then I am not asking you to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, sir. Most certainly we will do that, and we’ll make a note to reach out to Louisiana and Texas and ask them if they have any preliminary landings that they could bring with them that that would be wonderful. Okay. Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I will encourage you guys to go to our website. We have weekly updates on our landings posted on our website. We usually post them about late Wednesday or early Thursday of every week.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Mr. Greene does still have one more paragraph in his committee report. I tried to cut him short.

MR. GREENE: Okay. Reconvene APs, committee members asked that several APs be reconvened, including the Private Recreational AP and the Ad Hoc Joint For-Hire AP. Staff noted that several AP meetings were under consideration, but, currently, only the Reef Fish AP was definitely planned. Staff and the Council Chair will evaluate budget and scheduling issues to determine if other APs can be scheduled. Madam Chair, this concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. I just want to clarify one more thing, because we did have some discussion around the table. As it stands right now, Doug, we’re bringing back five state documents next time, which, I guess at this point, it would have to be, because two of the documents are going to be a little different than the other three, and so we’ll have five state plans that come back to the council at the next meeting, plus the summary
document. Okay. Shep is raising his hand, and it’s like we have more than five states around the table, and so I was confused for a minute, and so that will be back on our agenda to look at again.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Right, and we’re waiting for the council to make some progress on the state plans to take back to the Private Angler AP, and so they will probably be held, if they’re held this year, it would be after the October meeting and not before.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: That makes sense, because you want to have the plan for all five states if you reconvene that. All right. That sounds great. Are you done with your committee report, Mr. Greene? Anything else before we leave Reef Fish, ladies and gentlemen? Dr. Simmons.

DR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I did confer with Sue Gerhart and Jessica about the umbrella plans regarding the state management, and we do have some concerns about being able to incorporate those new allocation alternatives that reflect the spatial patterns in biomass in the recreational trips.

We will do the best we can, but we don’t know if we can get that ready for the SSC, to have them look at that before it comes back to the council in October, and so we can definitely get those others options that you asked for in the amendment, but that one may be difficult to have ready by the October council meeting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So noted. Thank you. Next on our agenda -- Let’s see. What time is it? It’s 11:30. Is there anybody that needs to check-out real fast? Otherwise, we can cruise right through SEDAR and Sustainable Fisheries. If you need to check-out, it’s fine. Just tell me. We can take a quick, ten-minute break. Okay. We have at least one that needs to check-out. Let’s take a fifteen-minute break. You all get checked out, and we will pick back up with SEDAR.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE REPORT

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Expanded 2017 Red Snapper Season for Private Anglers, Dr. Crabtree summarized the Secretary of Commerce determination that extending the red snapper season for private recreational anglers would also extend the rebuilding timeline by as many as six years, or to 2038.
The extension would also result in a more modest pace of rebuilding. Despite these effects, the Secretary concluded that the costs of extending the private recreational angler season were outweighed by the benefits to the angling public.

State representatives from Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, and Mississippi commented on observed effort during the extended portion of the season, with most noting a decrease in CPUE per day during the extended portion of the season compared to the initial three-day season.

A committee member commented on input received by a commercial fisherman from Mississippi, who noted a drop in the catch rate of red snapper. In addition to seeing red snapper displaced by lane snapper, the fisherman also claimed to witness discards of legal-sized red snapper by private recreational vessels.

The committee member supported consistency in regulations, a need to resolve recreational data collection issues, and the fact that the circumvention of the council process by the Department of Commerce does not absolve the council from dealing with any potential effects of such decisions.

A council member asked NOAA General Counsel about the legal basis for the action taken by the Department of Commerce. The NOAA GC noted that the Federal Register notice announcing the expanded recreational red snapper fishing season for private anglers cites several provisions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The committee postulated on the basis for the decision to extend the season, including economic drivers, and noted that these alone could not form the basis of a fisheries management decision.

Staff from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center presented data on simulations used to estimate the effect of an extension of the recreational red snapper fishing season for private anglers if the three-day season was extended to forty-five days, which also assumed that commercial landings would be equivalent to approximately 99 percent of the commercial ACL.

The main points of the presentation were that a forty-five-day season was projected to land over 2.1 million fish, compared to over 800,000 in the three-day season. The forty-five-day season would land approximately 20.1 million pounds of red snapper across all sectors, or 8.3 million pounds more than the three-day season, and 6 million pounds more than the allowed yield in
the current rebuilding plan. The forty-five-day season would extend the rebuilding timeline by four years, to 2036.

Council members noted that a great deal of uncertainty is present in projections, especially those which are carried out fifteen years into the future. Further, the models presented represent landings estimates, and it was noted that incorporation of actual landings data are the best way to determine the effects of the season extension on the rebuilding plan for red snapper.

Staff added that a plan amendment may be necessary to address F rebuild, in order to make sure we rebuild by 2032, which is the maximum amount of time allowed for red snapper to rebuild, in accordance with the National Standard Guidelines.

Committee members discussed delaying the SEDAR 52 assessment of red snapper until 2018, in order for the 2017 harvest data to be incorporated in the SEDAR 52 standard assessment. Staff from the SEFSC noted costs in doing so, such as having to move other assessments, that data preparation was already underway, and that hotel cancellation costs would be likely.

Benefits may include incorporation of MRIP calibration updates, 2017 data, and more realistic projections. One council member expressed concern about constantly postponing the assessment to include more data and the delivery timeline for the completed assessment.

The committee recommends, and I so move, to delay the current red snapper standard assessment to 2018 and to make 2017 the terminal year. We have a committee motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not specific to the motion, but I just -- In the report, preceding that, I wanted to clarify that -- I know it’s a touchy subject, and so I want to make it clear, and I’m sure that minutes reflect this, but the Federal Register notice announcing the extended season does not cite several provisions of the statute. It just cites the statute generally as the source of authority. In committee, I said it does that, and obviously we all know that there are many provisions in the statute, and so thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So noted. Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I know that the board suggests, or it would like us to move the assessment to 2018,
but I think there is some value in keeping it on schedule. From my perspective, it’s already initiated, has been initiated, and there is an opportunity, after listening to Dr. Ponwith, to have a lite assessment, essentially, in 2018 and a possibility of following up with another standard assessment in 2019.

Having said all of that, the reason to move the assessment forward now is I, for one, would like to look at the data and the information that’s in the assessment that should be made available to the SSC in the spring some time, because, as these state management amendments move forward, they’re going to provide a fair amount of insight into how I might think about apportioning things like allocation, and so that’s my rationale.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: I think I’m on the same page with Dr. Frazer, and I think I would support moving forward and speak against this motion. I think it would be helpful to have an updated look about where we are, even though we know that there’s this other data out there that is not going to be available, but, based on the discussion that we had earlier this week, it sounds like we could follow up, after that, and get that information in there.

I’m also a little bit leery about holding off this assessment to get that MRIP calibration stuff in there. I just would hate, if we delayed and then it doesn’t become available again, when we go to do this assessment, and so, in my mind, I think we should just proceed and follow up and plug in the information that we’re missing.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. ANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just reiterate a point that was brought up during the committee meeting, in that, when it comes to data, we’re always, I guess, chasing the data tail and spinning around, because we can never get the most accurate or most complete and up-to-date data, but I think I’m leaning towards continuing on as well with the schedule, but trying to look at, particularly as it relates to the 2017 recreational season and the additional days that were added -- Dr. Ponwith, do you think there’s a possibility, and I know it might stretch out, this timeline, a little bit regarding the SSC review, but MRIP numbers, at least through October, preliminary ones, could be available mid-January, and could the assessment process go forward and all of the questions that might come up related to the data through 2016 be answered and addressed and basically the model ready to roll with just dropping in those
numbers, albeit preliminary, with an estimation of November and December landings included in that?

DR. PONWITH: No, that wouldn’t be possible. The inclusion of those data in the sort of organic estimate at the assessment process at that point really wouldn’t be wise. What we can do, which would be much more sound and much more reliable, is wait until those estimates really solidify and then incorporate them into the projections after the assessment is done.

We can look at that timing, but my sense is we’re often not very well served in dropping preliminary numbers in at a very late time in the development of the assessment. I think that’s the direction we would go, is to include them into the projections when the actual landings stabilize.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, and that was going to be my comment. I don’t know that you would gain much more by trying to somehow drop it into the assessment without any of the other information to go into it.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Ponwith, if we drop them in at the end, into the projections, do they have an effect on catch levels or not?

DR. PONWITH: Essentially, for the projections, the way that works is -- We do this for every stock assessment. We do the stock assessment and complete it with the terminal year, and then we say, well, what does that mean for our future, and what we do then is hold all the rest of the parameters stable and put the actual landings for a given year in and do those projections, so that we have one year of actual and then the rest of them are assumptions about what is being caught. Then, the next year, you can put your actuals and substitute those in for the assumed catch.

What that does is refine those projections to help you understand how well you’re doing on your rebuilding plan. The farther you get out from the terminal year, the more dangerous it is to make an assumption that absolutely everything stayed the same, because nothing ever stays the same.

The time that it’s the best and the strongest indicator is the first year, which would be our ideal circumstance for this situation, where we would do the assessment with a terminal year of 2016 and then drop those actuals for 2017 into the first year
of the projections, and that would give us a fairly robust --
It’s not as good as it being an organic part of the assessment, but a fairly robust understanding of the influence of those levels of landings on our pace toward rebuilding.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Banks.

MR. BANKS: I understand about the projections and then adding in the actual catch, but I guess my concern about not having those landings in the stock assessment is that we could be projecting out based on a stock status that maybe is not accurate, and is that true?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Ponwith.

DR. PONWITH: The stock status would be properly captured as of 2016.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Is there further discussion on the motion? We have a motion on the board. All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed, same sign. I think the opposition has it, and so the motion fails.

Dr. Ponwith, my next question -- I know you have to get on a call here, and so will you automatically incorporate the landings data, the preliminary 2017 landings data, into the projections, or do we have to pass a motion to ask you to do that? Okay. All right. That will happen automatically. Then we won’t essentially incorporate and have a new stock status determination until 2021, the way this schedule looks right now. That’s five years from now. Is there any willingness to move that up on the SEDAR schedule? Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: As was pointed out before, those are proposed schedules, right, and so there’s an opportunity to move a standard assessment for red snapper into the 2019 slot, and is that correct?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Right now, on our 2019 proposed, we have scamp in a research track, vermillion snapper standard, yellowedge grouper standard, tilefish standard, and Spanish mackerel standard. That’s on 2019. Red snapper is proposed for 2020, and so, essentially, if you want to move it up, we will need to take one of those species that I just called out and bump it down to 2020 and move red snapper up to 2019. Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: Well, you’re correct. However, the next motion
about cobia being moved from 2018 to 2019 is a complicating
factor.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Right. That’s right. I will tell you what.
Let’s address our cobia motion, and then we’ll talk more about
what we want to do with the schedule then. All right.

If we get back to our committee report, SEDAR Schedule, staff
reviewed the SEDAR schedule with the committee. The feasibility
of assessing cobia in 2018 was discussed and determined to be
unlikely, especially in light of the committee’s desire to move
the current red snapper assessment to 2018.

Further, a stock identification effort is underway for cobia,
from which the Gulf migratory group may benefit through the
inclusion of new data. The committee recommends, and I so move,
to move the cobia stock assessment to 2019 with a terminal year
of 2017.

There is that motion on the board. Is there any discussion on
the motion? Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion?
The motion carries.

That means that cobia moved from 2018 to 2019, and so does that
leave us an open spot in 2018, is my question. Let’s see. That
would leave us gray snapper, our MRIP calibration updates, king
mackerel research track, gray triggerfish standard, red grouper
standard in 2018. Then 2019 would be a scamp research track,
vermillion snapper standard, yellowedge grouper standard,
tilefish standard, Spanish mackerel standard, and cobia
standard. Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Don’t forget that we also have the
MRIP updates and calibrations that got postponed from 2017, and
I wouldn’t be surprised if there is more kind of difficulties
there, and so I don’t really think we have another slot in 2018.
We were trying to squeeze both cobia and red grouper into 2018.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: When we came to the council
originally, at the last meeting, we were asking the council to
choose between the two, and you chose both of them.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So we sort of had 2018 overbooked, trying to
be optimistic, essentially. Okay, and so it just looks more
realistic at this point. All right. Mr. Riechers.
MR. RIECHERS: Well, and I mean this is an ongoing discussion. I know different state directors continue to have conversations with the Center, in an ability to see how we try to get more frequent assessments overall.

We come here, and then we’re kind of bound by that discussion of what we can do, but I mean this is an ongoing discussion about how do we get more assessments and how do we get the resources to do that. Do we change the way we’re doing things a little bit, so that we get more assessments? I think it’s a part of a bigger discussion, but, Leann, it’s one we’re having not only here, but elsewhere as well.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay, but, for now, we have to, at some point or another, decide where we want red snapper to be assessed on that schedule, within the constraints that we have to work. We can discuss it further today, or we can put it on the agenda for our next -- As long as you’re not thinking about moving it to 2018, then we should be fine. 2019 and 2020 are proposed, and it’s up to you all. Do you want to make a motion to move it to 2019 or do you want to -- Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: If we move red snapper to 2019, we would need to move vermilion snapper to 2020, because the same analyst does both, and there is not enough time to do both in the same year.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: The other -- I mean, I hate to say this, and I hope it doesn’t happen, and I’m not trying to jinx the assessment, but rarely have we gotten an assessment at the exact timeframe that we thought we were going to get it, and so I think there is the opportunity here that we would just be getting the assessment and then we’re starting over on a new one, and that has caused us some issues in the past as well, if you tried to put it into the front of 2019. I’m just throwing that out there, because these things seem to get to us later than expected sometimes, and I’m not saying this one will, and I hope it doesn’t, but that could happen.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Right now, on the schedule, there is a year between -- I mean, you’re looking at we’re going to get the results of this one, the one that we have going on right now, that we just decided not to delay, and it started this year, and we’ll have it back in the spring of 2018, which I think I saw on the schedule that I think the SSC is going to look at it in February or March of this coming up year, and so we should have
it back for that following meeting. If we did another one in 2019, it would be a year later before they even start it. Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: Well, Ryan Rindone had said something the other day, whenever he called in, in regards to the MRIP calibration, and they were talking about doing the MRIP calibration as each species came available. As it’s listed now, it says MRIP calibration updates, and it has gag, greater amberjack, red grouper, Spanish mackerel, and cobia all listed.

The way I kind of understood is that we would get the -- In 2019, we would get all of those, but, the way it kind of sounded to me, the way Ryan laid it out, and, if he’s available, maybe we could ask him, but what I understood is that maybe it’s going to be the MRIP calibration will be rolled out as each of those species are brought forward in a stock assessment deal.

If that’s the case, then there should be more room, because that MRIP calibration seems like it’s taking up a large portion of 2018, and it may buy us some time as well. Now, I know the king mackerel stock assessment had some information that was joint with Mexico, and I don’t know if that’s pending Mexico data or what, but I remember something about that, but, if we could get Ryan on the phone, I would like to ask him about that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: What’s going to happen is -- Let’s look at it. We’ve got now that we have added red grouper to 2018, and so red grouper calibration will happen as part of the assessment. Cobia won’t be done until 2019, and so the cobia calibration will still be done in 2018, as will the Spanish mackerel, greater amberjack, and gag, and so it had to do with the timing of when the assessment was scheduled, and so we can expect red grouper to be calibrated as part of the assessment, but the others will still be done in 2018, as planned.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: I just wanted to ask something. Every time we discuss SEDAR, it seems like we’re in the same predicament. We’re trading this assessment for that one, because of some inability from the Science Center to do these things, and it’s just been ongoing, logbooks for ELBs that we’re waiting on and things that are essential to us as fisheries managers trying to make decisions that we don’t either get in a timely manner or we’re having to pick and choose this one over that one. It doesn’t seem like a good way to conduct business.
What is being done to address this reoccurring issue over many, many years to improve the situation there? You don’t have -- One person is the person to do two species, and you’ve got pick one, and, I mean, that just doesn’t seem like a good way to do business.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, and I think we’ve all had some frustrations, and so it would be my preference, and this will be a discussion around this table, to assess red snapper in 2019, to bump it up from 2020 to 2019. Now, if we do that, one of those species is going to have to get kicked down a year, to 2020, and I would assume that it would either be vermilion or tilefish, and so we need to have that discussion. Dr. Mickle.

DR. MICKLE: I am thinking this out loud, but, if that is the choice of going to 2019, if it’s later in the year, then you capture 2018, and so, assuming that -- I’m about to make my point. When you build the model and you start finishing up and doing the projections, they do retrospective analyses and jitter analyses, and you’ve probably seen them at the SSC, when we talk about these things.

So, if you have this anomaly year and then you have somewhat of stream years on both sides of it, looking at that, when you do the retrospective analysis, you’re taking away the last year, and then you take away two years, and then three years, and you’re testing the strength of your model.

If you have an anomaly on the last year, the retrospective analysis is going to say the model is really bad, and so having somewhat normal years around the atypical year is going to give you a whole lot more information, and so capturing 2018 will be of large benefit. I just wanted to say that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.

MR. DIAZ: I think that’s wonderful information, and I’m glad we’ve got Dr. Mickle’s expertise to tell us stuff like that. It sounds to me like the person that does vermilion does red snapper, and so I think we’re going to have to bump vermilion.

When I voted a minute ago to go forward with the assessment as we’re going right now, it definitely was my intention for us to move snapper up as soon as possible, and it looks to me like 2019 is that time. I would like us to keep our minds on what Dr. Mickle just said and set it back far enough in the year to where we could use 2018 data.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Vermilion was scheduled in 2019, and it wouldn’t start until fall of 2019, which is the latter part of the year, as Dr. Mickle was stating, and so I think I am following everybody’s trajectory here, although stock assessments get deep quick. Dr. Frazer, did you have your hand up?

DR. FRAZER: I just have -- I am trying to understand this a little bit. In 2018, where you had red snapper identified and you’re removing it from there, it’s not entirely clear to me why we can’t move vermilion snapper back into that slot and just trade places with vermilion and red snapper between 2018 and 2019.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, I think that’s what we’re talking about. I think we’re on the same page, yes. If we want to do that though, we’re going to have to have a motion to do that, and we’re going to have to think about that terminal year and put that in the motion as well, probably. One more question from Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: This will be to Doug Gregory. Doug, when I went to the first stock assessment personally, as the council representative, you were there as part of the SSC at that time, and it was a yellowedge grouper/tilefish. On the schedule, it has two slots. Is it essentially one assessment, or are they run simultaneously, or do they have to be simultaneous, because it was being peer reviewed at that time as both.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Right, and I don’t think it has to be run simultaneously. It was then, and we normally have five slots, and what happened a year ago is the council said that we want a list of priorities, and our priorities greatly exceed five slots a year.

You see we’re trying to slip in more here, but I am not sure if they can be separated. They’re both just part of the same fishery, but I don’t see why they would be the same assessment. I’m just not sure.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: I am willing to make a motion, and the motion is to move -- Maybe to put a red snapper standard assessment in 2019, with a terminal year of 2019.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: That sounds good, and then we can follow that up with a separate motion, I’m assuming is your intention, to
move the vermilion to where it needs to go. Okay. All right. There is a motion on the board. Do we have a second to the motion? It’s seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Is there discussion on the motion? All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries. Dr. Frazer.

DR. FRAZER: The next motion would be to move the vermilion snapper standard assessment to 2018.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So we moved red snapper from 2020 to 2019, and vermilion snapper was in 2019, and so you’re saying bump it up to 2018?

DR. FRAZER: That’s correct, because there was originally a spot for red snapper in 2018, and we don’t have that any more, if we move forward with the assessment right now.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: The table should show -- You see gray snapper benchmark continued in 2018, and it should have the same thing for red snapper. Red snapper standard will be continued in 2018, because that won’t be finished until early spring. Then we might be running into the same problem of not being able to do vermilion in the same year that red snapper is tackled, and, granted, red snapper is extending over two years now, but we have a SEDAR meeting at the end of September.

2018 should be pretty well settled by then, but we can look at that. We can look at whether vermilion -- The SEDAR committee actually has the final say. The council is making recommendations to the SEDAR committee, and so you can make any recommendations you want, and the SEDAR committee negotiates with the Center as to what can be done where. We would need to be comfortable with what’s in 2019 at this time, and, if you want to move vermilion to 2018, you can go ahead and make that motion, but recognizing that it may not be possible.

MR. RYAN RINDone: Madam Chair, this is Ryan.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Go ahead.

MR. RINDone: I would not recommend moving vermilion to 2018, primarily because there hasn’t been any heads-up on that. Like, it hasn’t been on the schedule at all in 2018, and so none of the data prep has started for that species, and so that inherently hamstrings it into having problems.
With respect to the MRIP calibration updates, they do not have to be done as a group in 2018, like Captain Greene said. They can be done whenever those species come up, and keeping a little bit lighter than absolutely full load would do wonders to ensure that the other things that are being asked for actually happen.

Red snapper listed as a standard in 2018 was per the committee as a whole’s motion that was made on Tuesday, I believe, and so you guys have to remember that you moved cobia from 2018 to 2019 during committee, and you asked that red snapper be put in for 2018, and you have just passed a motion recently to move red snapper to 2019, and, from a scheduling standpoint, the best place for that to fall, to ensure that you get what you’re looking for for management advice, is where vermilion is sitting, because it’s timed the same.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. Now we understand the red snapper standard in 2018. That’s when we had our first motion in committee to delay the red snapper assessment to organically include the 2017 data. All right. I understand. Thank you, Mr. Rindone.

Let me try and read the list on 2018 of how it really stands right now, based on our motions. We still have a gray snapper benchmark, and we still have MRIP calibrations. We still have gray triggerfish standard, and we still have red grouper standard, and FWC still has a hogfish update. Then HMS is doing a king mackerel research track. Is that correct, Mr. Rindone?

MR. RINDONE: For 2018, you have gray snapper as a benchmark, you still have calibrations, you have gray snapper as a standard, red grouper as a standard, hogfish update, and kingfish research track.

There is still some kinks that are being worked out with the research track process that need to be resolved through the SEDAR Steering Committee, but, right now, king mackerel is listed as a research track.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Bernie, please email that to the Full Council. This is a new table that we haven’t seen before.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Rindone, my question is, do we have an open slot in 2018 or not?

MR. RINDONE: Yes, you do. Where the red snapper standard is currently listed, you could put something there, but the rub on
that is that 2018 is months away, and so whatever is put there
would likely have to start at the end of the year, to make sure
that there’s enough time to do ageing and all the initial data
analysis that’s required prior to doing any sort of assessment.
It doesn’t matter if it’s a standard or a benchmark or whatever.
Time is still needed on the frontend to prepare.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:  Okay. Could we be optimistic and put
vermilion snapper under 2018? We have a big SEDAR meeting
coming up in September, I think it is, Doug, where all the
powers that be get together and look at it.

If they cannot do that, they will tell us that in September, at
which point we’ll know that vermilion was the one in question,
and we’ll have to come back in October and figure out where to
slide vermilion in at. Is everybody comfortable with that?
Okay. So we’ll know that this vermilion was our wish list for
2018, but, if they can’t do it, we’ll step back and punt in
October.

All right, and so let’s get back to the motion on the board
then. It was seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Do we have any further
discussion on the motion? Seeing none, is there any opposition
to the motion? No opposition, and the motion carries.

That was going to conclude my report. Is there any other
business for the SEDAR Committee? We have Dr. Stunz and then
Mr. Greene.

DR. STUNZ:  Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to go back to a
point that John made that I thought was very good, and we kind
of didn’t really discuss it, because we were trying to handle
these scheduling details here, but I mean I think it’s very
important that -- Like John was saying, we just keep sort of
fitting into the system that we have, and it’s obviously not
working real well, and we have situations like this.

I am trying to remember, and I was a brand-new councilman at the
time, and we had some discussions on ways to improve this a
couple of years ago, or whenever that was, and I don’t know what
ever came of that discussion, and I don’t know if we need to
revamp that discussion again. It’s too bad that Bonnie is not
here to comment on that, but I’m just thinking that surely there
is some ways, whether it’s through these research tracks or
whatever, that we can facilitate this process along, or maybe
something we’re not thinking of.

I don’t know what the feeling is around the table, or if there’s
a motion needed to try to improve our ability to produce more and more timely assessments. I am open to that, and I am happy to make a motion, but I feel like we need do something to speed it up some.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Greene and then Mr. Matens.

MR. GREENE: If you remember at the last meeting, we kind of got into that deal, and I was like, look, we need six for this unit and we’re going to put six up there, and, if you can’t do it, then you’re just going to have to come back and tell us you can’t do it, and it was difficult to put someone on the spot and kind of throw them under the bus, as you watch them get run over, but obviously that’s what we need to have, and so I agree with you on this situation.

One thing that is very difficult for me is I don’t know which analyst does what assessments, and so, if this is an issue and we can’t do vermilion and red snapper at the same time, because it’s done by the same analyst, and we can’t do gray triggerfish and cobia, because they’re the same analyst, that would certainly help out those of us who do not know that industry very well. That would be something that would be extremely beneficial to me, personally.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory and then Mr. Matens.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: There has definitely been some confusion. The MRIP calibrations put things off in 2017, and then they got carried over to 2018. We were told that those calibrations would take so much staff time that they essentially took up a SEDAR slot for us and for the South Atlantic Council.

Then we’ve got the research track concept that we’ve talked about, that staff has never been favorable of, and I think, within the Center, there’s been some confusion around that, on how to handle the research track, and I think, at the Steering Committee, both the South Atlantic and us will pretty much try to do away with that, but the concept of the research track was to allow the Center scientists to do an in-depth assessment without worrying about providing management advice.

Then that in-depth assessment, call it a benchmark version II, or research track, would be the basis for annual updates, and so the promise was that we would be getting more regular updates once we got this system started.

It’s now been a couple of years, and the system hasn’t quite
gotten started, and so that has created some confusion, because that takes up a SEDAR slot as well, and we’re basically allocated five SEDAR slots a year.

Then red snapper, a couple of years ago, started being treated by the Center as two SEDAR slots instead of one, because, in essence, they do a western Gulf assessment and an eastern Gulf assessment and then combine them, because of the recruitment mechanisms that we know about are not separated.

We do seem to be losing some momentum here, and I would hope that it’s temporary, but those things have happened in the last two or three years, and I think the frustration is understandable, and we’re putting on the assessments as hard as we can, and then you had the issue of staff turnover in Miami, which is not our problem, but John can probably attest to how difficult it is to live and work in Miami.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: A quick follow-up?

DR. STUNZ: A quick follow-up, and I hear you, Doug, on that. I am thinking more at a higher level and what can be done. Is it a staff issue, is it money issues, or is there something that we can do as a council to fix this from a different level to get them whatever resources it happens to be?

I don’t think that we want to be micromanaging that situation in any way, but ensuring that they have the resources, whether it’s staff or whatever the question may be that’s hindering this, and so that’s what I guess sort of the frustration is, and I think maybe that’s what John was expressing as well.

It just seems like, if there’s something else that we can do, outside of just nit-picking what assessments are going where -- Because remember that we also have the whole data collection thing looming as well, and so I don’t see this getting a lot better, and so, anyway.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Let me go to Mr. Matens. He’s been patiently waiting.

MR. MATENS: Somebody said earlier, and I think it was Doug, that he’s never been accused of being patient, nor have I. I am really interested in this conversation. I am certainly not a scientist, and I really can’t speak to how important it is to get this stuff, but all of the scientists here around this table think that this is important.
All I hear is what you can’t do, what they can’t do, and, if this was a business, my two questions would be to staff, and one would be do we need a third party to look at this thing and tell us how we need to change it, or a task force, and two would be let’s ask the people in charge -- Let’s ask Bonnie and her group what they need to do what this council is asking them to do, and let’s see if we can help her get it. This is not the way to run a business.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I have Dr. Mickle and then Mr. Sanchez.

DR. MICKLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to share what I did last time. I am just going to say how we do it in my agency, just straight up. When we’re overwhelmed with stock assessments, we outsource, and I already know what Doug’s answer is going to be after I say this, that the funds aren’t there to do so, but you know it’s -- If it’s important enough and it takes up this much time of our meetings, I think it’s time to start talking about the business part of actually outsourcing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: To that point, Mr. Matens?

MR. MATENS: To that point, a cold answer to that would be, if outsourcing is more efficient, let’s get rid of some of the people we’ve got and use that money to outsource them.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Sanchez.

MR. SANCHEZ: I think, if we don’t really try to do something that actually happens, we’re going to have this same discussion, or somebody is, and I might not be here, three years from now. We’re going to be in this same situation of which assessment do we do, because this just clearly isn’t working, and, in my mind, we have brought it up, years ago, and it hasn’t gotten any better, and so something needs to change, or you’re revisiting this same old scenario.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I wish Dr. Ponwith was here for our conversation. It’s kind of a one-sided conversation at the moment. It’s hard to get much feedback that way. Ms. Gerhart.

MS. GERHART: I just want to point out that I’m not sure that Dr. Ponwith isn’t coming back. I think she had a call, and she may be coming back, and so maybe just postpone this for a little bit, until she gets back.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is there anything this committee wants to
work towards? I need you all to give me a little guidance.
Yes, if you were just wanting to put your comments on the
record, so that it would be heard, but, if you have an idea,
throw it out there. Dr. Stunz.

DR. STUNZ: I like Camp’s idea of a third-party thing, and I
know we -- Of course, we always have these discussions sort of
at the eleventh hour here, when everybody has got other stuff on
their minds, to get back home and things, but maybe, at a
minimum, put it for some more discussion coming up at the next
meeting.

Now, the issue is, of course, we’re at the Full Council now and
not all of us are on the SEDAR Committee, during that committee,
and so that’s kind of -- If there’s some way we could maybe
discuss this a little bit further and then come up with some
ideas and think about it between the next meeting, but I don’t
think we should just let it kind of go away, for what John says.
If we don’t keep it on the front burner, we’re going to be doing
this for several years.

MR. RINDONE: Madam Chair?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Rindone.

MR. RINDONE: To the point of the discussion, something that Dr.
Ponwith would likely remind you all of, with respect to how the
stock assessments are done, is that one of the main gatekeepers
of a lot of the fisheries-independent and fisheries-dependent
data is still the National Marine Fisheries Service, and so,
even if an outside party were to be responsible for the
analytical side of the assessment, a lot of the data would still
have to at least originate with NMFS, and so that would need to
be a consideration.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. Well, we will try our best to figure
out where and when to put this on the schedule and revisit our
discussion. It doesn’t necessarily have to come under the SEDAR
Committee, where there is only four people. We might can
discuss this as a general data collection type of issue, and I’m
not sure what our schedule is going to look like for the next
meeting, but I will do my best to, at some point here in the
future, get this on our agenda to continue this discussion.
Will that work for everybody? Okay. All right.

Is there anything else for the SEDAR Committee before we leave
that report? All right. That is going to take us into
Sustainable Fisheries, which is going to be our last committee
We don’t have any exempted fishing permits to discuss, and some of our liaisons have already left the building. They told me they had to leave early, and so we still have Chester. Don’t worry. We haven’t forgotten about you. Do you all want to keep pushing through? It’s 12:35. All right. Sustainable Fisheries and Captain Walker. Are you ready?

**SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE REPORT**

**MR. WALKER:** Yes, Madam Chair, and thank you. The Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report for August 7, 2017, the agenda was approved, with the addition of items under Other Business, and the minutes of the June 5, 2017 committee meeting were approved as written.

Protocol for Authorizing Sea Turtle Release Gear, Mr. Charlie Bergmann from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Pascagoula gave a presentation describing the protocols and procedures in use to protect sea turtles from interactions with the reef fishery.

He displayed two new devices that he felt should be approved for sea turtle releases, a collapsible hoop net that could be used in place of the current dip net and a de-hooking device. Staff summarized a discussion paper that could be developed into an amendment to authorize the new devices and modify the framework procedure to allow changes in release gear requirements to be implemented via the framework process.

Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move: To move forward with the document that approves the new turtle release gear and modifies our framework process to allow the specification of new release gears for turtles and other protected resources.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** We have a motion on the board, a committee motion on the board, to move forward with the document that approves the new turtle release gear and modifies our framework process to allow the specification of new release gears for turtles and other protected resources. Is there any discussion on that motion? Ms. Gerhart.

**MS. GERHART:** Just a request or a suggestion. In addition to changing the framework to allow the changes to the release gear, we would like to see also that the handling techniques, which are also part of that requirement -- There is specific handling
techniques, and, if we could do that through a framework too, that would be great. I don’t know if that needs to be added to the motion or if the council could just make that clear to staff.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Can you repeat that one more time what you want to also look at in there?

MS. GERHART: Sure. We’re looking to modify the framework procedures to allow changes to the gear. We also have requirements for particular handling techniques, and we would like to be able to make changes to those handling techniques as well through the framework procedure.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I think let’s be clear. If you want to make a substitute motion, it would be that same exact motion with those three or four extra words, and we will vote that up or down, so we don’t have any questions.

MS. GERHART: Okay. A substitute motion to move forward with a document that approves the new turtle release gear and modifies our framework procedure to allow the specification of new release gears for turtles and other protected resources and to allow changes to the safe handling techniques.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. We have a substitute motion on the board, and it has been seconded by Mr. Greene. Is there any discussion on the substitute motion? Seeing no discussion, is there any opposition to the motion? No opposition, and the motion carries. Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you. Lionfish Research Overview, Dr. Tom Frazer gave a presentation highlighting his research on lionfish off of the Cayman Islands. His studies found that there was a higher abundance of native reef fish in locations where lionfish were removed than in control areas where lionfish were not removed. However, he found no difference between the control and lionfish removal sites in species richness, species diversity, or evenness. He noted that groupers are starting to learn to eat lionfish.

Lionfish Actions by Federal and State Agencies, representatives from National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and each of the state management agencies gave a short presentation and discussion on agency actions to monitor or remediate lionfish.

National Marine Fisheries Service noted that they have received
applications for EFP and LOAs to evaluate various gear types and will hold a scientific workshop in August to inform study objectives and survey design.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife is primarily involved with coordination and funding of projects and is addressing lionfish through a National Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. Each of the state agencies has monitoring and outreach programs, and, in some cases, programs to promote the removal of lionfish. These programs are described in the state presentations in the briefing book, except for Alabama and Texas, which provided verbal reports.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: I just wanted to ask Martha a question, if that’s all right. Bill Kelly gave a presentation on using lionfish traps that he and his group have developed in the Keys. Have you had any report about whether he’s been successful or not successful?

MS. GUYAS: What I am hearing is he is still in the process, and I think he is trying to work with the sanctuary and maybe still with SERO, but he doesn’t have his exempted fishing permit, as far as I am aware, but maybe Roy has more insight into that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: No, that’s correct, and he’s been in discussions with the sanctuary in the Keys, because a lot of the places they wanted to work were within the sanctuary, and there were some leadership changes at the sanctuary that kind of delayed things.

MR. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right, Mr. Walker. Do you want to carry on?

MR. WALKER: Under Other Business, Ms. Bosarge stated that the council had previously reviewed an options paper on descending devices and venting tools, but provided no guidance to staff. She indicated that she would like to discuss this at Full Council.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is there any discussion at Full Council about our descending devices? Dr. Stunz.

DR. STUNZ: I would like to add something. Actually, I would like to offer a motion, and maybe I will go ahead and do that.
and then provide my rationale. I sent that motion to the staff earlier today, and I don’t know if they have it, or it’s pretty short, and I can just read it again.

While she is putting it up there, the motion is to direct the development of an amendment to require descending devices onboard vessels that are targeting reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico. If I get a second, I can explain some rationale of why.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Okay. We have a motion on the board. Do we have a second? Second for discussion by Mr. Matens. Go ahead, Dr. Stunz.

MR. MATENS: Several groups across the Gulf, and many other places, have really seen the advantage of using descending devices in reducing discard mortality. I mean, gosh, the Bycatch Reduction Program from NOAA and the MARFIN and NFWF. You name it, and a lot of people have put literally millions, and no telling how much, into this. I think their intent with that is that obviously they would like to see that incorporated into management in some way, obviously, and certainly that was contingent on whether the science was there and would anglers use them, which now we all know that they definitely work.

Some recent work and others have shown huge buy-in, surprisingly high buy-in, from the anglers using these, and it’s just, obviously, simply good conservation practice, and there is a lot of positive outreach opportunities among -- In other words, to me, this is just a good opportunity to help curb some of this discard issue, and so that’s why I am offering the motion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Is there further discussion? Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: Two things, and I think it came up in the Education Committee report from the technical committee, but one of the things that we’re doing at FWC is we’re working with anglers on trying to understand their barriers to using descending devices, and so, when that study is complete, we would be happy to share that information with the council, if we’re going to do this.

The other thing is I remember, the last time we talked about this, there was some discussion of, if we moved forward with this, that could halt the availability of some funds to distribute these devices to anglers, and I just wanted to see what’s going on with that.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Gregory.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes, and the RESTORE Program that was interested in that -- They need to show that they’re restoring some aspect of the Gulf, and they really want to help with the fisheries, and, if you think about it, restoring fisheries is our job, and we do that through management, and one of the -- Restoring habitat is easy. You fix it, and you put new mangroves or seagrass in or whatever.

In their mind, distributing barotrauma and venting tools was a restoration effort that they could do for fisheries, but they couldn’t do it if we have a regulation. Their money will be coming out and projects will be hitting the street in 2019. There was some discussion at the last meeting of, well, it takes a long time, and it’s been seven years already.

Well, the settlement has just occurred with BP, and so it’s taken this long to get the settlement, and now the money has got to go through the system, and NRDA, or whoever is doing this, is looking at various projects, and this is one of them, but they told us, at our council office, that they expect projects to start in 2019, and so that’s when that sort of distribution of gear would be done, and I suggested to them that they not only distribute the gear, but also do some follow-up as to how it’s being used and maybe even fund some science to say how effective it is at reducing barotrauma, so we can factor it into our stock assessments more easily.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. I have several people that want to talk. Dr. Stunz, to that point.

DR. STUNZ: To that point, Doug, as it relates to the motion, and I hear you. I wouldn’t want something like this to halt the ability to incorporate that into the fisheries from a restoration standpoint, but also, as we all well know around this table, this process is not fast, and, if we wait around to -- I am for moving this forward.

If that turns out that it develops and we put this on a hold, so it’s not an official requirement, and they still can do their things, that would be the preference that I go and not hinder that process in any way, but also not slow us down and to have something ready to go.

Also, just to follow up, the science is there. I am not going to argue that we don’t need more science, but we’re showing buy-in and they do work, and so we still need more to do, but we’ve got that.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. I have Mr. Matens and then Chester and then Dr. Mickle.

MR. MATENS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess where I’m coming from with this is we know they work. We have a high level of confidence that they work, and we know that, in varying depths of water, they can be more effective, and, in some cases, you don’t even need to use them.

As I understand this motion, it just requires them to be onboard, and the price for these things, as I’ve been told, spans from something very small to maybe as much as fifty-dollars. You know, the ice costs fifty-dollars, and I’m not really worried about -- Maybe I shouldn’t say this, but I’m not really worried about -- We’re not asking somebody to carry a five-thousand-dollar device onboard. If this is something that would affect the recovery of the species, I’m all for it.

Now, how the science gets the data to crank it into things like management tools, that is beyond my purview. I really can’t speak to that. I, quite frankly, would urge this council to move forward with this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next, I have Chester.

MR. BREWER: This was going to be -- At least my comments right now were going to be part of my liaison report, and so we’re doing double-duty here. The South Atlantic Council is very, very interested in this, and we spent almost half a day with regard to descending devices at our last meeting.

Some of the folks from the Harte Institute came and showed us a video of these things in use, with GoPro and whatnot, and so we are very, very interested in going forward with this, and we’re looking for funding sources. I don’t know that the sources that are available to the Gulf would be available to the South Atlantic, but we face a conundrum right now with regard to, of course, red snapper in the South Atlantic.

That is that the bycatch mortality that we’re being told is taking place while fishing for other species, and not red snapper, is exceeding our quota, and, therefore, we’re caught in a conundrum where, as the red snapper population recovers and there are more and more fish, people are encountering them more and more, and so we’re having a situation where our bycatch mortality continues to grow, even though the fishery is closed.
For that reason, we are going to be, I think, in the very near future, going forward with a plan with regard to descending devices, and I would like to see the Gulf and the South Atlantic working together, because you’ve got folks, at least in my state anyway, that fish on both coasts, and so I just think it’s critically important that this go forward in both councils.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Dr. Mickle.

DR. MICKLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree on that, and, getting back to the motion, from the angle of getting something funded for the recreational anglers, to give them something without them having to buy something, and that’s the understanding that I think we’re trying to discuss here, and getting back to that.

I love getting people things that they don’t have to pay for. It makes people like me, and I will take that in management. I will take it every time, but have we gotten -- I personally have not gotten feedback from my constituents in my state saying that they want it for free or they’re going to complain about the price. I haven’t gotten that yet, and I’m asking all of you. Have you heard that from your constituents, that they drastically wouldn’t do this unless it’s free?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: No, and this came up, I think, because the RESTORE group wanted some way of, quote, restoring fisheries, and this was an easy way for them to do it. It wasn’t a demand from constituents to anybody in particular. It was just, if you think about it, the funds have to be used for restoration, and how do you restore fisheries?

One project they funded was to pay swordfish longliners not to fish, and so I think their challenge is to find projects and ideas that, quote, restore fisheries, and this was one they found that is easy to wrap your head around, and I think that was the impetus of them coming to us and asking if we would develop a policy for this, rather than regulations. It’s pure and simple that, and, if we go this way, they have to find something else to do. It’s really been very challenging for them to find some way of, quote, restoring fisheries.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next on the list, I have -- Who said to that point? Dr. Mickle. Are you good? Then Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Greg, I had a question about having the descending devices onboard the vessels, to make it clear that, a lot of times, you may not need the descending device, but having it
available could be something that they could then -- Of course, in the commercial industry, a lot of guys use a venting tool when a fish looks like it needs it. We don’t vent them if he doesn’t look like he needs that, but that’s just something that I wanted to make sure was clear, that, if we get into an amendment, in the commercial industry, how it would work.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: To that point, sir?

DR. STUNZ: David, that’s an excellent point, and that’s why I put “onboard the vessel”, and I would hope that, during the discussion of this amendment, that a lot of that stuff would come out, as we form alternatives that sort of thing.

Madam Chair, just while have the microphone, staff did inform me that they made a recommendation that I might want to slightly change my motion some, and I don’t think that it would give anyone heartburn, and if my seconder would agree, but, whenever you’re ready to do that, and it’s just clarifying a few things here.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: You can clarify real quick.

DR. STUNZ: Carrie, do you want to help me out here, about what you were telling me about -- We kind of already have this in the schedule already, and we could just -- What you had recommended that we change to make this most efficient for you guys.

DR. SIMMONS: Sure, and thanks. I just wanted to bring up that we already started a document that was very rough. It was draft options, and we brought that to the council in June, and so, if you would like us to continue working on that, I would just suggest that we just change in the language. Instead of “begin development”, just to continue work on it, to require descending devices onboard vessels, and we had harvesting or possessing. We had “possessing” reef fish, I believe, before, instead of “targeting”, in the Gulf of Mexico. Then, if you would like it for the October meeting, we could try to get that, a revised draft for the October council meeting.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: So the main change would be the word “begin”, and that would change to “continue”, I’m assuming, “continue development”.

DR. SIMMONS: Yes, and I just wanted to note that we already had started work on some of this.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Now, Greg, are you okay with the change on
possessing? I am sure there can be some options in the document to figure that out.

DR. STUNZ: Yes, and I’m assuming we can meet that with options in the document, and I’m fine with that, if the seconder is good.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Is the seconder good with the change?

MR. MATENS: To that point. Do I infer that, if I go fishing and I have lost my descending device and I catch a snapper, that I’ve got to throw it back?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Or risk a ticket, yes.

DR. STUNZ: Then maybe I should modify that from “vessels harvesting” to -- Maybe I want to keep that as vessels harvesting reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: I don’t think we need to get too hung up on that word, because I think, in the document, you’re going to have these options. Do we want it to be in possession or targeting or whatever? We can get to that in the document. Next on my list, I have Dr. Dana.

DR. DANA: Thank you, Chairman Bosarge. I am glad that David brought up about the venting devices, because that’s the same case with the charter boats. We have the venting devices, and we use them. What concerns me is, just to be clear, if you were requiring the use of descender devices, rather than having it merely on the vessel.

If you required the use of it at all times, that’s a problem on a fast-paced charter boat. I will ask Johnny. In his case, and he’s an over-six-pack. On a fast-paced over-six-pack, in your situation, tell me -- I mean, it’s almost an unsafe situation, because then your mates are diverting their attention from the back deck. I mean, what do you think, Johnny?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: You can answer, but I’m pretty sure, in that document that we had before, that we did not require the use of it. It was only to have it onboard the vessel, but, yes, go ahead and speak to it.

MR. GREENE: As long as it’s just having it onboard. I mean, we certainly use it every opportunity we get, but, as Dr. Dana mentioned, there are times that it gets kind of hectic, and then you have to kind of make the decision of, well, is it better to
just get them back in the water as quick as you can, rather than
wait on one to descend and come back up, and so there is -- I
understand the situation, and Dr. Dana brings up a valid point,
but I think it just speaks to having it onboard the vessel.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: In the document too, there were some options
to do either the venting or the descending, both or one or the
other, and so I think we have plenty of flexibility in that
document, to make sure that we address each sector properly. I
think that crossed everybody off my list. Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: I know we passed some descender devices around one
time, but, Greg, how many different descender devices are
available?

DR. STUNZ: Another good question, David, and that’s something
that I would have to consider. There is a lot, but they range
in price from as simple as five-dollars, and that’s basically
reverse safety pin, to up to the fifty-dollar Cadillac version,
and so there is ten, at least, or maybe more.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Swindell.

MR. SWINDELL: One of the big problems we’re going to have with
any of this is the education of anglers, to make certain that
they have something onboard that is acceptable. I just recently
went fishing offshore for hopefully snapper. We didn’t catch
any, but the people that took me out had no idea about
descending devices, other than the milk crate, which has been
out for many, many years, and they didn’t have anything onboard
to do this.

They knew about the puncture and the release of air, but, as far
as knowing about what to do and what you should do, they didn’t
have any general idea, and so I’m telling you that one thing
that we’re going to have to do to really help this whole thing
is expand the whole program of educating people, and I will tell
you that the states, in the Outreach and Education Technical
Committee, the states and Sea Grant have huge programs trying to
reach people to tell them, and how much of it is getting
through, it doesn’t appear to be what it needs to be. Thank
you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Swindell. All right. Any
further discussion on the motion on the board? Captain Greene.

MR. GREENE: Is this recreational or recreational and
commercial, all vessels? I just want to make sure.
DR. STUNZ: I am intending all vessels with this motion.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Mr. Atran.

MR. ATRAN: Just a clarification. It sounds like, if this passes, you would want us to just bring back the options paper that we’ve been working on, which covered both descending and venting tools. This only talks about descending devices, and so you still want venting tools in there?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes. We want the document that we saw before to come back, because it had options for only descender, descender and venting, and only venting. Bring that document back to us and we’ll tweak it. All right. There is a motion on the board. All those in favor of the motion, signify by saying aye; all those opposed same sign. The motion carries.

MR. WALKER: Ms. Bosarge also noted that a recent newspaper article stated that this year’s dead zone off Louisiana is the largest ever. The size of this dead zone is primarily influenced by agricultural runoff from interior states. She asked if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could do anything to address this runoff issue. Glenn Constant responded that they could possibly address the issue through their Natural Resource Damage Assessment process. Ms. Bosarge asked that a presentation be given to the council on this at a future meeting, and I will stop there, if there’s any --

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Yes, and I did actually get to talk to Mr. Constant before he left, and he was going to follow up and just make some phone calls, both on lionfish and the dead zone that I brought up, and just kind of see if those were on anybody’s radar of funding projects or whatever, a schedule, whatever it may be, and get back with council staff, so that we could get some updates. If he needs a project that would actually restore the Gulf, I just laid one down for him that ought to keep him busy for years to come. All right. Does that conclude your report, sir?

MR. WALKER: Madam chair, this concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. That’s all of our committee reports. The vote on exempted fishing permit applications, we don’t have any, and we can check that off the list. Supporting Agencies Updates, I will go to Chester first, and I know you’ve already given us part of it, but go ahead, sir.
SUPPORTING AGENCIES UPDATES
SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL LIAISON

MR. BREWER: I already gave you a third, and, Madam Chair, my report is red snapper. That concludes my report, and thank you. We are, obviously, very concerned with red snapper. They’ve been closed in the South Atlantic for a number of years.

It’s gotten to the point now where we have a tremendously data-poor species, fishery. In fact, it’s gotten to the point that, when we asked the SSC for an ABC for 2018, they said they didn’t have enough data to give us a recommendation, much less any kind of projection.

That puts you in a really interesting position, because you’re supposed to manage using best available science, and we have no available, quote, science, other than what we hear about what’s going on on the water. Now, what we hear about what’s going on on the water is people are seeing more red snapper than they have ever seen, and a lot of the same things that you’ve heard. People are having trouble getting baits down, and people are having red snapper come up and hit trolled baits.

For 2018, we got started on what we call Amendment 43, which initially had several aspects in it, one of them being descending devices, but we determine that it was important enough to try to get a season in 2018 that we would strip everything out of that except a 2018 season.

We will be going into that at our next meeting, and it’s anticipated that we will be able to have at least a few days, maybe three or four weekends or something like that, and so we are proceeding with that.

A bit of a bombshell is, during this meeting actually, we’ve gotten word that we will be spending the first day of our next council meeting on establishing a 2017 season. Now, I will repeat that, 2017. How that’s going to work out, on an emergency basis, I have no idea. I guess I’m going to be learning as we move up towards that.

With regard to other, I think, important pushes, we’ve got a big push going on with regard to citizen science. We recognize that funding is very limited, and perhaps will be more limited even in the future, and so, with all of the different species that are managed by the South Atlantic, we need to find some way of getting more data that is in a useable format for Bonnie’s folks.
We have gone forward now with a citizen science approach, with the idea that that vehicle would be used for data collection, and we have assigned one member of our staff to this effort exclusively, which obviously took away from some other things, but it was thought important enough that we would exclusively assign a staff member.

We have put out a request, or a call, for volunteers, and the response was absolutely overwhelming. People are very interested in this. We have established five action teams out of those volunteers, and it’s a smaller subset of people that will be going forward in five different areas, things like education and outreach, funding, all of these different aspects, and that is underway.

One drawback that we had is with lack of funding, and so I have heard, and I have not seen, that a funding source has been found for what is one of the initial things that needs to be accomplished, and that is to develop a reporting program, something similar to iSnapper, but that is designed so that the data collected from the citizen scientists can go directly to the scientists in a format that is useful to the scientists.

It is my understanding that that process has yet to be developed, but that we do have a funding source for it, and so we’ve got a lot of interesting things going on at the South Atlantic Council. Leann, I think you’re going to be with us in September, and so you will learn about the same time I do about what in the world is going on with this 2017 season, and, Madam Chair, that concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir, and thank you for being here with us.

MR. BREWER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Next on our list is Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and Dave.

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

MR. DONALDSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’ve got one item that I wanted to let you guys know. NOAA Fisheries, ACCSP, GulfFIN, and Pacific RecFIN are hosting a discards workshop later this year, and I think it got mentioned at the last meeting. We didn’t really have any details, but it’s a national meeting, with participation from the Gulf, Atlantic, and Pacific coasts,
and the purpose is reviewing the need for and evaluating methods for recreational discards.

That’s a huge issue, and obviously something that is very important to everybody, and we don’t have specific dates for it, but it will be the week of November 6 in New Orleans, and it will either be Tuesday and Wednesday or Wednesday and Thursday. We’re nailing down hotels, but it should be an interesting meeting, and I just wanted to let you guys know.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. Mr. Riechers.

MR. RIECHERS: Dave, you said who was hosting it, but are you guys going to support state members getting there or how is that going to work, or is it invite only, or what’s the plan on kind of the meeting setup?

MR. DONALDSON: It is invite only, in terms of the travel, but we do have travel money to support members from the Gulf states, and I think Greg has been in contact with folks in your shop.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you. Next, we have U.S. Coast Guard. Lieutenant Commander, was there anything that you wanted to update us on, sir?

U.S. COAST GUARD

LCDR MCNEER: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I don’t have anything to report right now, but thank you all for the warm welcome. I’m happy to be here and be part of this council. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thanks for being with us. We appreciate it, sir, and we look forward to seeing you again. All right. The last thing on our agenda was some Other Business, Update and Next Steps for the Generic For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment, Dr. Froeschke and Ms. Gerhart. Which one of you would like to --

OTHER BUSINESS

UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS FOR GENERIC FOR-HIRE ELECTRONIC REPORTING AMENDMENT

DR. FROESCHKE: I will give it a go, and, if I leave out anything, you can chime in. Just a brief update on the process. As you recall, we took final action, as well as the South Atlantic, on electronic reporting amendments. We both have different requirements.
The good news is we have an implementation team and an acronym, and so the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting Implementation Team is what it’s called. We have started having meetings in July, and the specific goals of this, there are four of them.

It’s to determine system requirements, determine where the data collections will be housed, identify software needed, and establishing timelines for implementation, and five is to estimate the costs.

There are a lot of different groups and expertise and things, and so the way this team has been designed is there are various subgroups that can meet and address these priorities simultaneously, rather than sequentially, and so NMFS has hired a contractor, George LaPointe, to help sort of guide us through this, and so we have biweekly meetings scheduled through October. I hope, by then, that we’ll have a solid plan on how to implement this and we can begin down that process.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, sir. That is the last thing on our agenda, and our next meeting is October 2 through 6 at the Beau Rivage Resort in Biloxi, Mississippi. Anything else before we leave and eat? Mr. Walker.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to give some thanks. I would like to thank Governor Bentley for giving me the chance to be part of the council, and I would like to thank Chris Blankenship and Kevin Anson in supporting me and National Marine Fisheries Service and the great Gulf Council staff that we have. Doug, you run a really tight ship here, and it’s been good, and especially my wife. She’s been very patient and supportive, and I am a lucky man. It’s been an honor and a privilege to work with all of you, and thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Thank you, David. It’s been an honor to work with you, sir. (Applause) Kudos for remembering your wife. That makes all women feel special, I guarantee you. All right, guys. Until next time, we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 10, 2017.)