

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 INTERIM COUNCIL MEETING

4
5 FULL COUNCIL SESSION

6
7 Via Webinar

8
9 May 12, 2020

10
11 **VOTING MEMBERS**

- 12 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 13 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
- 14 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 15 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- 16 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS
- 17 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 18 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 19 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- 20 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 21 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- 22 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 23 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 24 Bob Shipp.....Alabama
- 25 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 26 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 27 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
- 28 Troy Williamson.....Texas

29
30 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- 31 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 32 Lt. Nicholas Giancola.....USCG

33
34 **STAFF**

- 35 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 36 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 37 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 38 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director

39
40 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- 41 Eric Brazer.....Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance
- 42 Bob Zales.....SOFA, Panama City, FL

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PAGE 8: Motion that council members must be physically present at council meetings in order to present motions or vote, unless approved to do so remotely by a majority decision of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Executive Director. The motion carried on page 18.

PAGE 23: Motion to remove "present in the meeting room" from excerpt from Page 13-14: Section 3.2.2. Quorum and Roll Call Voting. The motion carried on page 23.

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1 The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
2 Council convened via webinar on Tuesday morning, May 12, 2019,
3 and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

4
5 **CALL TO ORDER, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTIONS**
6

7 **CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER:** Welcome to the 278th meeting of the Gulf
8 Council. My name is Tom Frazer, Chair of the council. The Gulf
9 Council is one of eight regional councils established in 1976 by
10 the Fishery Conservation and Management Act, known today as the
11 Magnuson-Stevens Act. The council's purpose is to serve as a
12 deliberative body to advise the Secretary of Commerce on fishery
13 management measures in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.
14 These measures help ensure that fishery resources in the Gulf
15 are sustained, while providing the best overall benefit to the
16 nation.

17
18 The council has seventeen voting members, eleven of whom are
19 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and include individuals
20 from a range of geographical areas in the Gulf of Mexico with
21 experience in various aspects of fisheries.

22
23 The membership also includes the five state fishery managers
24 from each Gulf state and the Regional Administrator from NOAA's
25 Southeast Fisheries Service, as well as several non-voting
26 members.

27
28 Public input is a vital part of the council's deliberative
29 process, and comments, both oral and written, are accepted and
30 considered by the council throughout the process. Anyone
31 wishing to speak during public comment for this meeting needs to
32 register on the council website by 11:00 on Tuesday, May 12. We
33 accept only one registration per person.

34
35 This webinar is open to the public and is being streamed live
36 and recorded. A summary of the meeting and verbatim minutes
37 will be produced and made available to the public via the
38 council's website. Please remember to mute yourself when you do
39 not wish to speak, so that background noise is limited during
40 presentations and discussions. Please remember to identify
41 yourself before speaking. For the purpose of voice
42 identification, I will ask each council member to introduce
43 themselves, beginning with Kevin Anson from Alabama.

44
45 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** This is Kevin Anson from Alabama.

46
47 **MR. PATRICK BANKS:** This is Patrick Banks from Louisiana.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Is Susan Boggs on the line? Okay. Moving
3 forward, Ms. Bosarge.
4
5 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** This is Leann Bosarge, present.
6
7 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** This is Roy Crabtree. I'm here.
8
9 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** Dale Diaz from Mississippi.
10
11 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** J.D. Dugas, Louisiana.
12
13 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** Phil Dyskow from Florida.
14
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Tom Frazer, Florida.
16
17 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Martha Guyas, Florida.
18
19 **MR. LANCE ROBINSON:** Lance Robinson, Texas.
20
21 **MR. JOHN SANCHEZ:** John Sanchez, Florida.
22
23 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** Bob Shipp, Alabama.
24
25 **MR. JOE SPRAGGINS:** Joe Spraggins, Mississippi.
26
27 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Greg Stunz, Texas.
28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Swindell, are you on the line?
30
31 **MR. ED SWINDELL:** Ed Swindell, Louisiana.
32
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Williamson, are you on the line?
34
35 **MR. TROY WILLIAMSON:** Troy Williamson, Texas.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so do we have any of the non-voting
38 council members on the line?
39
40 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Dave Donaldson, Gulf States Marine
41 Fisheries Commission, is here.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay.
44
45 **LT. NICHOLAS GIANCOLA:** Lieutenant Nicholas Giancola, U.S. Coast
46 Guard, is here.
47

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you. I just want to circle back, if I
2 can, for Ms. Boggs.

3
4 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Susan Boggs, Alabama.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have a relatively short agenda
7 today, but, before we get started, I want to go through a couple
8 of announcements. First of all, I would like to welcome
9 Lieutenant Nicholas Giancola as the Coast Guard representative
10 on the council. We're glad to have you here, Nicholas.

11
12 Also, as many of you know, Ms. Gerhart from SERO recently
13 retired, and, unfortunately, we didn't get to see her at our
14 last meeting, but she has moved on, and hopefully she is
15 enjoying retirement. Peter Hood has been named the Gulf Branch
16 Chief, and so, Peter, we're glad to have you as part of the
17 group, and so I'm sure we'll see you in person soon, and then,
18 finally, I would like to say congratulations, and I guess we
19 should all say congratulations to Ms. Leann Bosarge and her new
20 baby, Miss Eleanor Frances Foots. Congratulations, Leann.

21
22 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, sir.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** How are you doing, by the way?

25
26 **MS. BOSARGE:** I'm just so good that I don't know what to do. I
27 was up all night, and I'm here with you all this morning, and
28 I'm actually enjoying this.

29
30 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. We're going to just get moving,
33 and so the first order on the agenda here is the Adoption of the
34 Agenda. Are there any modifications to the agenda? Seeing
35 none, or hearing none, can I get a motion to adopt the agenda?

36
37 **MR. DIAZ:** Motion to adopt the agenda.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Motion by Mr. Diaz. Is there a second to that
40 motion?

41
42 **MR. BANKS:** Second.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Mr. Banks. Thank you,
45 Patrick. We will go ahead and work through the agenda. The
46 first item will be the Scope of Work. Dr. Simmons, would you
47 like to walk us through that?

1
2 **SCOPE OF WORK**
3

4 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Yes, thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman. Good morning, everyone. The first agenda item is
6 Agenda Item IV, Discussion of the SOPPs, and that's Section 3.0
7 and 3.22.
8

9 The Gulf Council can hold virtual meetings or in-person
10 meetings. However, when the council meets in person, the SOPPs
11 currently state the council members must be physically present
12 at council meetings in order to present a motion or a vote, and
13 so the council may want to consider modifying this portion of
14 the SOPPs, since there's uncertainty with travel and holding
15 large meetings for the remaining part of this year. If the
16 council chooses to modify the SOPPs, a motion would be needed.
17

18 If the council moves forward with modifying that portion of the
19 SOPPs, they also may want to consider cleaning up Section 3.2.2,
20 Quorum and Roll Call Voting. The words "present in the meeting
21 room" would no longer apply if the council would allow virtual
22 meetings or in those in-person meetings, and so the council may
23 also want to consider this modification to the SOPPs.
24

25 The second agenda item is Agenda Item V, Discussion of the June
26 Council Meeting. We're going to provide some information, Dr.
27 Frazer and myself, on logistics and planning for the June
28 council meeting, and we would like to get some indication from
29 council members of high-priority items in fisheries and the
30 fishing industry that may be impacted from COVID-19, so that we
31 can be more prepared for these discussions during the June
32 council meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
33

34 **DISCUSSION OF SOPPS: SECTION 3.0-COUNCIL MEETINGS**
35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Simmons. If
37 everybody could look at Tab A, Number 4, this is Section 3.0
38 from the SOPPs, and what you will see is a highlighted area
39 here, and, as Dr. Simmons pointed out, we need to address this
40 issue.
41

42 Specifically, it has to do with physical presence at the
43 meetings, and so one option, in the short term, would be to
44 simply remove the highlighted phrase, or sentence, from Section
45 3.0, and so that section, for those of you who may not be able
46 to see the screen, reads: Council members must be physically
47 present at council meetings in order to present a motion or a

1 vote.

2
3 Again, because we're handling this particular meeting virtually,
4 it's a bit difficult to start these discussions, but I'm going
5 to suggest that one option, moving forward, would be to simply
6 remove that highlighted sentence from the SOPPs, and so, having
7 said that, I will open the floor for discussion.

8
9 **DR. SHIPP:** I move that we delete the highlighted section from
10 the SOPPs.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. So we've got a motion from Dr. Shipp
13 that we remove the sentence from Section 3.0 specific to council
14 meetings that reads: Council members must be physically present
15 at council meetings in order to present a motion or a vote. Do
16 we have a second to that motion?

17
18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would like to second that and chime in during
19 discussion.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, John. It's seconded by John
22 Sanchez. We'll get it up on the board, and then we'll get back
23 for discussion. We have a motion on the board by Bob Shipp,
24 seconded by John Sanchez, and we'll open it up for discussion,
25 and the first person on the list would be John Sanchez. Go
26 ahead, John.

27
28 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to support
29 this, so we can handle the matter, the task at hand today, which
30 is to be able to go through and revise our SOPPs as we agree as
31 a body, but I also would like to voice my support for how or
32 have some discussion on how we're going to handle perhaps a
33 hybrid meeting going forward, because my personal opinion is
34 that, at some point, the business of the council -- It works,
35 and it's transparent, and it does work because of the
36 interaction with the public, and so I don't like, going forward
37 for a potentially prolonged period of time, just with these
38 video-type meetings.

39
40 I would suggest, or hope, that, depending on how this COVID
41 virus unfolds, at some point we can elect to maybe have hybrid
42 meetings, where the part of the council that feels they need to
43 stay at home, and they're not comfortable traveling, they can do
44 so and participate by webinar, and the rest, that do feel
45 comfortable traveling, maybe can participate in this hybrid
46 fashion by physically attending a meeting and availing
47 themselves to the public.

1
2 I understand that there will be some limitations to this, being
3 hotel accommodations and extra distancing guidelines and all
4 this, but, if all of those things can be accomplished, at some
5 point I would like to see the business of the council proceed
6 with the public interaction. Thank you.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, John. Next on the list would be
9 Patrick Banks.

10
11 **MR. BANKS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the
12 sentiments that John was speaking of. For this particular
13 situation today, and maybe in June, I can see how this is
14 definitely an appropriate way to move forward, but I don't want
15 us to get into a situation where we just open council meetings
16 up to being half attended in-person, because I don't think, just
17 like John mentioned, that that serves the purpose to the public,
18 and so I feel like that we should have some sort of a review of
19 requests to not be at council meetings in person by maybe the
20 Administrative Committee or something like that, and have that
21 committee --

22
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Patrick, I think we might have lost you for
24 the time being, but I think we get the gist of your sentiments,
25 and we'll circle back with you if we can get you reestablished,
26 but, in the short term, we'll go ahead and move to Dr. Stunz.

27
28 **DR. STUNZ:** Thanks, Tom. Both John and Patrick I think captured
29 my thoughts well, but I just wanted to add to that. Obviously,
30 we needed to do this, and I support this motion, so we can carry
31 out our business, but I would go a little step further than I
32 think what Patrick was just mentioning, that, if we suspend
33 this, and, obviously, in a situation like this, it needs to be
34 rare, and I think it needs to be region, Gulf-region, wide, and
35 where it's affecting everyone in a very independent way.

36
37 Obviously, we don't want this to turn into I'm going on a ski
38 vacation and I want to make a motion from Colorado or something,
39 to where it's a very special circumstance that we're weighting
40 this, and so I don't know, Tom, and this would be a question to
41 you, what the next step would be. Do we go ahead and go through
42 this motion and then come back later and explain that this is
43 not a -- I wouldn't want to have a committee evaluate
44 everybody's personal requests, but these are very rare,
45 extenuating circumstances that we suspend the in-person rules.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Greg. I will go ahead and try to get

1 the comments from all of the council members at this point, and
2 then I will circle back and provide a little perspective on that
3 question. The next person will be Kevin Anson.

4
5 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. I certainly understand and agree that
6 there's a need to have a situation where we can allow members to
7 attend remotely, or conduct our meetings remotely, but I too, as
8 John had mentioned and Patrick had mentioned and Greg had
9 mentioned, am a little concerned about just removing that
10 requirement without some sort of a review process or if the
11 motion were to include some sort of date certain.

12
13 I know we're in uncertain times here to possibly do that, but
14 that's what I would look to, because there is the value in
15 having folks there present at the meetings and for the public to
16 attend and be able to talk to them directly, and so I don't know
17 -- I am still debating whether or not to support this motion as
18 it's written, but certainly I would be interested in maybe some
19 further discussion about some language that would include,
20 again, some sort of date certain or some idea of the committee
21 to review after a certain date, and that's what I would be in
22 favor of, but I look forward to hearing further discussion.
23 Thank you.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Kevin. The next person on the line
26 would be Roy Crabtree.

27
28 **DR. CRABTREE:** Thanks, Tom. It sounds like what we're looking
29 for is some sort of a process to allow us to deal with this, and
30 I'm going to suggest some language that actually comes out of
31 the South Atlantic Council's handbook, and I will read it to
32 you.

33
34 It says: The council welcomes the use of webinar meetings to
35 increase transparency and efficiency, while reducing costs of
36 conducting meetings in-person. The council prefers in-person
37 meetings with the ability to freely discuss and exchange
38 information. However, budget and time constraints may require
39 more use of webinar meetings. The council supports the
40 continued use of webinar meetings for council meetings and
41 committee meetings, if needed, primarily to address specific
42 issues that are time sensitive. The council supports a limited
43 exception for council members to participate and vote during an
44 in-person meeting if they are participating via webinar. The
45 Council Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Director will evaluate
46 requests for an exemption for council members to participate and
47 vote during an in-person meeting if they are participating via

1 webinar.

2
3 I think we're good today, because it's a virtual meeting where
4 we're conducting it remotely, but, the way things are, it is
5 easy for me to conceive of a meeting where some council members
6 may not feel comfortable attending, for various reasons, and
7 they might want to participate remotely, and this kind of gives
8 a way to go about that, and so I would suggest that for your
9 consideration.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Next on the line
12 would be Ms. Levy.

13
14 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Thank you. I was just going to reiterate what
15 Roy said, and so you don't need to take this language out for
16 the purpose of conducting a webinar meeting. We might want to
17 clean it up a bit, because it's not clear from the express
18 language that this only applies to the meetings that are
19 physical meetings.

20
21 When you put this in the SOPPs, there was a lot of discussion
22 about it, and it was very clear from that discussion that this
23 was talking about when the council has a physical meeting that
24 people need to be there to present a motion or vote. If you
25 have a webinar meeting, if you're all participating by webinar,
26 that's perfectly fine.

27
28 I am not sure that you just want to take it out and put nothing
29 in its place, because that's how it was before, and then we had
30 a lot of situations where you would have in-person meetings and
31 someone wouldn't be able to attend, and you would have to talk
32 about whether they should be allowed to vote or make motions,
33 and there was a lot of debate about that, and so I would suggest
34 that you at least have some kind of process, if you want to, for
35 deciding when people can participate remotely if there actually
36 is an in-person meeting, and the South Atlantic Council's
37 language is one way to do that. Thank you.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Levy. The next person would be
40 Mr. Diaz.

41
42 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought the language that
43 Roy just read makes a lot of sense, and I support the way the
44 South Atlantic has it. For a substantial amount of time, I
45 think people that are potentially compromised may feel
46 uncomfortable coming to meetings, and there could be a decision
47 process that the Chair, the Vice Chair, and the Executive

1 Director could review that and make a decision on allowing it,
2 and so I like moving in that direction, and I don't know that we
3 have to move that far today, and it might be something for us to
4 take up at a committee meeting in the future and try to hammer
5 it out, but I do like the language that Roy read. Thank you,
6 Mr. Chair.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. I am going to circle
9 back right now to Patrick Banks, just to make sure that you were
10 able to finish your thoughts.

11
12 **MR. BANKS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I'm fine. I was
13 listening to all of the conversation, once I got back on the
14 line, and pretty much the thoughts of most of the speakers
15 covered what I was saying to apparently nobody.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** You're all good. Is there anybody else out
18 there at this point who would like to contribute to the
19 discussion?

20
21 **MR. SPRAGGINS:** I was trying to put my hand up, but I guess I'm
22 not doing it correctly.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** You're up now. Go ahead, General.

25
26 **MR. SPRAGGINS:** I agree with what Roy said. I think that is a
27 great idea, and I think being able to put that in some form, if
28 not exactly the way it's written by the Atlantic area, but also
29 just being able to adopt something that says pretty much exactly
30 what they're talking about, because it does -- There are going
31 to be times that we're going to -- We don't know what's going to
32 happen in the near future, and, because of what's going to
33 happen, we could have a second wave of this, and, if that's the
34 case, we might get started back and then have to come back to
35 doing this.

36
37 I think it would give us an opportunity for me to be able to,
38 and maybe yourself and the Vice Chairman, to be able to approve
39 someone to be by webinar, and I just think that would be a
40 perfect way to do it, and I like the idea of making it you have
41 to come if you can, but, if there's a circumstance that it makes
42 it awkward, to be able to do it.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Susan.

45
46 **MS. BOGGS:** I agree with what Dale said. I would like to see --
47 I know the agenda has already been put out for the June meeting,

1 but, if there's a way that we could get this on the June meeting
2 agenda, where we could discuss and look at what the Atlantic
3 Council has done -- As Mara said, clean up this language and,
4 you know, if it's not necessary to remove this language, I don't
5 know if I will support or not support the motion, but I think
6 it's important that, at the June meeting, that we try to do
7 something that is a little more clear, again with all the
8 uncertainties that we're facing. Thank you.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Ms. Bosarge.

11
12 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Frazer. I was going to pretty much
13 say what Susan said. I think I'm going to support the motion
14 that's on the board to remove this for now, because I sort of
15 disagree with Mara. I was under the impression that we could
16 not have a webinar meeting and all make motions and vote, based
17 on how our SOPPs currently reads, to me.

18
19 I think I will support the motion to take this out, so that
20 that's clear that we can do that, but I very much like the
21 language that the South Atlantic has in their SOPPs, and I would
22 hate to vote on that today without really having a chance to
23 read through it and make sure we don't want to tweak it a
24 little, but I would support bringing that to the council during
25 our meeting in June, even if we need to add it to Other Business
26 in order to get it on the agenda, so that we could look at that
27 and go ahead and have that in place, because I do worry that, in
28 the future, we may be in a situation where we're going to have a
29 hybrid meeting, due to the fact that, currently, our healthcare
30 leadership in this country is saying, yes, it's okay for you to
31 go back to work, but, if you're in a high-risk category or a
32 high-risk demographic, and some of that's based on age, then you
33 need to try to stay at home still and work remotely, and I want
34 to make sure that we have something in place for anybody that
35 may fit into that demographic, where they don't feel like they
36 have to make a choice to come to that meeting and put themselves
37 at risk in order to be able to participate fully. Thank you.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Give me one second.
40 I just want to talk to staff for a second, and I will be right
41 with you. Okay. Great. I just was making sure that I
42 understood where we are with regarding to noticing the June
43 meeting, and so I feel that there is a fair amount of sentiment
44 from all the people that contributed to the discussion so far to
45 go ahead and consider adopting some new language that would
46 provide us greater flexibility moving forward that would, at the
47 same time, kind of embody the intent to have people around the

1 table for in-person meetings, but, again, allow some discretion
2 and flexibility, moving forward.

3
4 Having said that, I think that, because we have not noticed the
5 June meeting yet, we can add that to the agenda under the
6 Administrative and Budget Committee. We can work to do that,
7 and we can provide, as templated language, or example language,
8 that from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council as
9 meeting materials. I think that's a good plan, moving forward,
10 and thank you, Dr. Crabtree, for providing that example
11 language.

12
13 In the short-term, there is this discussion about whether or not
14 we would like to remove the highlighted language from our SOPPs.
15 I don't really see any disadvantage to doing that in the short-
16 term, because I do think, if there was something that happened
17 in the next month or so, we would have more flexibility, moving
18 forward, and so my suggestion, perhaps, would be that we
19 entertain the motion that's on the board, and we can vote that
20 up or down, but then move forward in June with a very specific
21 agenda item dealing with this issue in the SOPPs. Having said
22 that, I would ask if there is any further discussion on the
23 motion on the board.

24
25 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would like to chime in. As I mentioned earlier,
26 I was viewing this as an interim measure, so we could move
27 forward, given the present situation with this pandemic, but I
28 would want to go on record saying that I do feel strongly that -
29 - I don't know what the future brings, as far as resurgences of
30 pandemics and such, but I do feel strongly about being
31 physically present at council meetings, because of the
32 interaction with the public.

33
34 I would strongly try to support, given this uncertain, uncharted
35 waters that we're in, maybe addressing, in some fashion, where
36 we could have a hybrid meeting, so those that choose to attend,
37 for health reasons, considerations, can, and those that don't
38 can still participate remotely, but I don't want to maybe
39 potentially go to a series of just online meetings, where, to
40 me, it disenfranchises the public, and so I would like to find
41 some kind of -- In June, that we address that, to where
42 hopefully we can accommodate that concern of mine, and I do feel
43 very strongly about that, and thank you.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, John. Yes, I think there will be
46 plenty of opportunity at that June meeting to make sure that,
47 whatever language we adopt, that it's sensitive to those types

1 of concerns. Ms. Levy.

2

3 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. I don't have any objection to you
4 removing it. I'm just sort of -- I just don't want the reason
5 to be because it means that, as it's currently written, you
6 can't have webinar meetings, because, if that's true, then you
7 can't remove it through this meeting, and I know what it says,
8 but, if you look at the minutes when it was put in place, and I
9 think Shep was at that meeting, and it was very clear, during
10 that discussion, and I think he specifically said that this is
11 only going to apply to in-person meetings, and you could always
12 have a webinar meeting where everyone participates virtually.

13

14 That's really the only way it makes sense, and so, again, I
15 don't really have an objection to removing it, if that's what
16 you want to do, but I don't want the reason to be because it's
17 prohibiting you from actually having this meeting.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Point well taken, Mara. Dr. Crabtree.

20

21 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just along with what Mara said, I mean, I was at
22 the meeting and there when we did this, and it was specific to
23 circumstances surrounding an in-person meeting, but it's easy,
24 at least for the rest of this year, to envision circumstances
25 where we might have an in-person meeting, but it might be that
26 one of our members feels a need to quarantine themselves for
27 some reason, and I think we need to make that allowance.

28

29 Then we may also find ourselves, in the future, in a
30 circumstance where we need to have a meeting very quickly to
31 vote on an issue that has some urgency, in terms of timing, and
32 that may make it difficult for everyone to travel and everyone
33 to get there, and so I think that -- I think, to John's
34 comments, I think the language in the South Atlantic handbook
35 makes it clear that our preference is for in-person meetings
36 with everyone attending, and so I'm fine with removing this for
37 now, but, when we come back in June and have that language in
38 front of us, we can tweak it however you want, but I think it
39 grasps the gist of what we're trying to do.

40

41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Mr. Banks.

42

43 **MR. BANKS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. **Because of the concerns**
44 **that I had, and I think I've heard from several other folks,**
45 **including Mr. Sanchez, I sent a substitute motion to the staff**
46 **that just simply says that, in order to not be physically**
47 **present and present motions and vote, that you have to be**

1 approved to do so by the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Executive
2 Director, and I would like to have folks consider that as a
3 substitute motion, and maybe that would clean all of this up and
4 we wouldn't have to really go much further. If I can get a
5 second, I will talk some more about it.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, Patrick. We've got that up on the
8 board. John Sanchez, real quick.
9

10 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I would like to second that, to see where Patrick
11 is going with this.
12

13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. It's seconded by Mr. Sanchez. Let's
14 put it on the board. We have a substitute motion on the board.
15 **The motion reads: Council members must be physically present at**
16 **council meetings in order to present motions or vote, unless**
17 **approved to do so remotely by a unanimous decision of the**
18 **Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Executive Director.**
19

20 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Mr. Chairman, if I may I guess explore this a
21 little further with some comments.
22

23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, John.
24

25 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Thank you. What I'm trying to get at is obviously
26 I'm supporting a hybrid meeting, which accomplishes perhaps
27 this. Members that have a valid reason, as deemed by the
28 Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Executive Director, then certainly
29 they can participate remotely, but, every time I have filled out
30 a council application, they have always asked me, have you
31 missed any meetings, and so, apparently, it's real important to
32 be physically present, and I do feel strongly about that, and
33 so, if this substitute motion allows for these hybrid meetings
34 that I've been referring to, then I would be in full support of
35 it, if it gives a mechanism to accomplish that.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Sanchez. General Spraggins.
38

39 **MR. SPRAGGINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The only thing I have
40 with this is I support it, but the only word is "unanimous". I
41 think that, if something was to come up to a point to where the
42 Chairman or Vice Chairman or Executive Director wasn't available
43 to give them the information, is there a way that we could
44 change the wording just a little bit and take "unanimous" out of
45 it and have it to where it could be decided by the Chairman or
46 the Vice Chairman or the Executive Director, or two of the three
47 or something, because, if one of them was to be out of the

1 country or something, or anything could happen, and it could be
2 anything that could change, and I'm just curious about that, and
3 thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, General. I've got a couple of
6 other folks, and we're going to circle back to that. First, we
7 have Kevin Anson and then Patrick Banks. Go ahead, Kevin.

8
9 **MR. ANSON:** I kind of agree with the General's comments there,
10 and I would also agree with what John had said regarding
11 attendance and some threshold, whereby there would be a certain
12 number of meetings that the person couldn't attend, or would not
13 be able to attend physically, if the meetings were held such
14 that there was to be a physical presence.

15
16 I guess I would prefer this motion, substitute motion, before
17 the other one, but, as Mara said, if we keep the language in the
18 original SOPPs, or as it's currently written, it still gets us
19 to where I think we need to --

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Kevin, I think we've lost you, and we'll
22 circle back, if necessary. I am going to move on to Mr. Banks.

23
24 **MR. BANKS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'm fine with the
25 General's suggestion of removing "unanimous" and replacing it
26 with whatever word we need, like two of the three, but I just
27 don't want it to be one person, and a rotating one person,
28 saying yes, you council member, you can skip and do it remotely,
29 but this other council member can't.

30
31 I have a little bit of concern about that occurring, and so I
32 would like for it to be reviewed and approved by at least two of
33 the three, and the intent is exactly what Mr. Sanchez was
34 requesting, and the intent of my motion here is that it be clear
35 that we want people at the meetings, if at possible, but folks
36 who have legitimate concerns, and don't just have, oh, well, I
37 don't feel like making the trip to wherever, they can certainly
38 stay home, but still be present at the meeting and still vote
39 and all of that good stuff, but this just, I think, puts a
40 little bit of a sidebar on the situation. Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Patrick, and, again, we'll probably
43 have to circle back again to the wording in the substitute
44 motion, but I'm going to take a couple other comments, real
45 quick, and we'll first go to Mr. Diaz.

46
47 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with the General also,

1 and I would suggest adding the word "majority" before
2 "decision", if that's okay with the maker of the motion and the
3 seconder. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. Mr. Banks, is that --

6
7 **MR. BANKS:** I am certainly fine with that. Thank you, Mr. Diaz.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Sanchez.

10
11 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I'm fine with that, and, in fact, I was going to
12 suggest that very word. Thank you.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks to both of you. Moving back to Mr.
15 Anson.

16
17 **MR. ANSON:** I don't have anything else to say. Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thanks, Kevin. Mr. Swindell.

20
21 **MR. SWINDELL:** Mr. Chairman, I agree with the motion as it's
22 written. Having gone through the time of being unable to vote
23 or make a motion at the meeting, because I was ill and couldn't
24 make it, and Dr. Shipp was probably in the same position, and
25 Ms. Bosarge couldn't easily have been there, having a baby, and
26 so I support this motion for us to get it along, so that we can
27 at least participate more fully in the council meeting. Thank
28 you.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Swindell. Is there any further
31 discussion on the substitute motion? **Hearing none, is there any**
32 **opposition to this motion? Hearing none, the motion passes.**

33
34 We will go ahead and adopt the substitute motion, and it will be
35 reflected in the SOPPs, but we will, at the June meeting, put it
36 on the agenda as part of the Budget and Administrative
37 Committee. Okay. Now we're going to move on to Agenda Item
38 Number V, which is further discussion, I guess, of the June
39 council meeting, and I will go ahead and let Dr. Simmons take it
40 over.

41
42 **DISCUSSION OF JUNE COUNCIL MEETING**

43
44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we
45 sent around the draft agenda to everyone, and it was so noted by
46 Dr. Mickle that we did have the incorrect dates in there for
47 August, and so we've corrected that and re-posted it on the

1 website, and thank you for that, Dr. Mickle.

2

3 We are planning, as you all know, to hold a virtual meeting, a
4 webinar meeting, and we are looking at using webcams, and so
5 that's to be determined, and we'll be reaching out to all of you
6 to practice that and make sure you have the hardware and
7 software to do that.

8

9 We don't know exactly what platform we're going to use right
10 now, and we're looking at several, Cisco Webex, and also Adobe
11 Connect, and so that is to be determined, and we will work with
12 you on that before the June council meeting, but that is our
13 goal. We're going to have to do some changing around,
14 potentially, of that draft agenda, to add in an Admin/Budget
15 Committee, and so we'll make those changes and distribute it to
16 all the council members here in the next day or so and submit
17 the Federal Register notice for that.

18

19 One of the items, or a couple of items, on that agenda deal with
20 some of the impacts and discussion the council would want to
21 have in June regarding COVID-19 and the economic impacts to the
22 industry, and so, if there are certain items right now that
23 council members would like us to explore, perhaps bring more
24 information, and they may want to request an emergency rule or,
25 Dr. Crabtree, to maybe reopen various fisheries, if possible,
26 and, if we could get an idea of that beforehand, both for our
27 staff and the Regional Office staff, that would be wonderful. I
28 don't know, Dr. Frazer, how you want to handle that, but we're
29 looking for some feedback on that.

30

31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thanks, Dr. Simmons. I am just going
32 to go ahead and let Mr. Diaz -- His hand is up. Dale, do you
33 have something?

34

35 **DR. DIAZ:** Tom, let's finish this agenda item, but I do want to
36 circle back to the previous agenda item when we get done with
37 this, just to clarify something. Thank you.

38

39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think, Dale, I apologize, and I think we
40 might just -- We will circle back to it, and I see the mistake.
41 Sorry about that. In the short-term, with regard to this
42 particular agenda item, as Dr. Simmons pointed out, we just
43 would like to be prepared, moving into the June meeting, if
44 there are any particular types of issues that council members
45 want to have discussed that are related to any of the things
46 that are going on with regard to the pandemic, any emergency
47 orders, or changes in rules, et cetera, et cetera, and so,

1 again, I'm just going to see if there are any thoughts out there
2 before we circle back to Agenda Item Number IV.

3
4 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Given the fact that, obviously, this has had some
5 impacts to fishing seasons, recreational perhaps, charter/for-
6 hire, and perhaps commercial impacts, I would like to see if,
7 where appropriate, we can address maybe snapper season
8 extensions and what have you, as appropriate, given if they are
9 unable to fish or they're not catching the ACT, if we have
10 mechanisms that we can discuss to have in place to address such
11 an eventuality.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, John, for that suggestion. We'll kind
14 of add it to the list of things, so folks here in the office, as
15 well as SERO and other folks might be prepared to weigh-in on
16 that in June. Dr. Crabtree.

17
18 **DR. CRABTREE:** I have put a few things on the agenda, in some
19 discussions with Carrie, and some things, for example the for-
20 hire red snapper season that will start in June, we have
21 announced the closure date on that, but that can be changed, if
22 we have reason to believe the quota is not caught, and that
23 wouldn't require any sort of action by the council, because we
24 already have authority to reopen a fishery if we determine that
25 the quota hasn't been caught.

26
27 There are things to think about, and one that has come up has
28 been carryover in the IFQ fishery, if they're unable to catch up
29 their allocation, and I guess you could consider if it would
30 make sense to raise some trip limits, and I don't know that it
31 would, but, if fishing is going to be compressed into the second
32 half of the year, you might want to allow more fish to come in.

33
34 Then we also talked, and Carrie put on the agenda, about a
35 discussion of the private recreational fishery and season that
36 we have delegated to the states, but, right now, it's not clear
37 how many of the state catch estimation programs are functional.
38 The MRIP program is not fully functional at this time, and I
39 don't know for sure when it will be again, and so we're likely
40 going to have a gap in the catch estimates that we have for some
41 of these fisheries, and how are we going to deal with that?

42
43 We could speculate about what effort is doing, but it's hard to
44 know, and I have had discussions with the MRIP folks, and I
45 believe they have had discussions with the Gulf States
46 Commission about trying to get some more timely estimates of
47 overall for-hire effort, so that we can at least get some feel

1 for how many trips are going out relative to last year, and it
2 may be possible for us to get some idea where private
3 recreational effort is relative to past years, because the mail
4 survey is still taking place, but the dockside intercepts are
5 not.

6
7 Some of those kinds of things are on the agenda, and some don't
8 require any action by the council, and other things, for example
9 a carryover provision, would likely require an emergency rule of
10 some sort, and, if we wanted to make adjustments to any of the
11 trip limits, that would require some sort of emergency rule.
12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Is there any other
15 discussion out there? Okay. Seeing none, I think -- Excuse me.
16 Ms. Bosarge.

17
18 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you, Dr. Frazer. I was just going to
19 mention that, if we get into carryover -- I agree that we do
20 need to have that discussion, in case the markets don't unfreeze
21 on finfish and our guys are not able to land their fish, and we
22 need to have that discussion, but it seems to get complicated
23 really quickly when we talk about carryover, and so I just
24 wanted to throw something out there for staff now that I don't
25 think was in any of our previous documents.

26
27 We may need to look at doing something simple for the elephant
28 in the room, red snapper, anyway, and the IFQ participants that
29 allow, on December 31, whatever allocation is in those accounts,
30 and it could be allocation that was leased by somebody, and the
31 lessee, or lessor, and I don't know what the appropriate word
32 is, but, anyway, he has the fish in his account, and he has paid
33 to lease them.

34
35 On December 31, normally that would disappear for January 1, and
36 those fish need to reappear in that same account on January 1,
37 so that that individual can go catch the fish that he leased the
38 previous year, if we end up in a situation where he just wasn't
39 able to catch them, as opposed to I think most of our documents
40 right now, on January 1, whatever allocation there was, it would
41 go back to that shareholder.

42
43 We need to make sure that we have a mechanism that allows it to
44 go back in the account that it's currently in, even if that's
45 just somebody that purely leases, and I just wanted to throw
46 that out there.

47

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Dr. Crabtree.

2
3 **DR. CRABTREE:** Leann, that's an issue that I'm aware of, and
4 I've gotten some emails raising that issue, and I have had
5 discussions with Jessica Stephen and folks that are managing the
6 IFQ program about how we might do that, and it is more
7 complicated than it first seems, but we are looking at ways that
8 we might do that, and we can talk about those at the June
9 meeting and see where the council wanted to go with it, and then
10 maybe we could come in in August and decide whether we felt like
11 it was needed or not.

12
13 One thing I would ask for them to be prepared to present to us
14 in June would be to show us how far down are landings relative
15 to where they typically have been in past years, so that -- With
16 the IFQ, we can get a pretty real time idea of what's being
17 landed, and we can look at that again in August and decide if
18 there's really a need to do this, but it does require a lot of
19 reprogramming and a lot of thought, in order to make it happen,
20 but I'm aware that it's an issue that we do need to discuss.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Are there any other
23 folks wanting to weigh-in at this point? Okay. I am not seeing
24 anybody out there, and so I think we've had a number of topical
25 issues that need to be thought about prior to the June meeting,
26 and I think there are four on my list for sure, and Roy pointed
27 out that the for-hire red snapper season -- The closure date
28 could be modified, and that's probably fairly easy. That just
29 requires information to do that.

30
31 People should be prepared to talk about carryover in the IFQ
32 fishery, and Leann provided some good comment there, and Roy
33 contributed as well, and so I think we'll be in a good position
34 of getting some numbers from SERO to address that.

35
36 We'll also deal with the idea of potentially increasing some
37 trip limits, or at least what the problems might be surrounding
38 that, if we bring that up, and then, finally, we'll talk about
39 the private recreational fishery and some of the consequences of
40 limited effort data and catch estimates, and so we might think
41 about having the MRIP folks weigh-in as well, and so we'll
42 explore that here on the staff side of things. Is there any
43 other discussion on this particular agenda item? Dr. Crabtree.

44
45 **DR. CRABTREE:** I think it would be useful for the states to let
46 us know what the status of their state data programs are,
47 Snapper Check, Tails 'n Scales, Texas Parks and Wildlife, LA

1 Creel, and the GRES survey, if they're functional and how much
2 of a gap was there, and then sort of get some notion as to how
3 the states intend to deal with all this in the setting of their
4 seasons.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Roy. We had already planned, for
7 sure, for the states to contribute, but just kind of factoring
8 these things into the presentation would be helpful, and so
9 another good suggestion. I am not seeing anything else on this
10 particular agenda item, and so Dale wanted us to circle back to
11 Agenda Item IV, and that was discussion of the SOPPs, and I
12 think, Dale, if I'm not mistaken, we had some issue with the
13 language in Section 3.2.2, which was quorum and roll call
14 voting, and is that correct?

15
16 **MR. DIAZ:** That's correct, Tom. That's what I was referring to.
17 Thank you.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Again, related, and so you all have this Tab
20 A, Number 4, and it's up on the screen, and the suggestion there
21 was to simply strike the language at the end of the text there,
22 "present in the meeting room", and so let me read that sentence,
23 so people know what we're looking at here.

24
25 The last sentence reads: A vote may not be taken until the
26 motion before the council is recorded in written form visible to
27 each council member and the public present in the meeting room.
28 The suggestion is, again, to be consistent with the broader
29 language in Section 3.0, that we simply strike that language
30 "present in the meeting room". Can I get perhaps a motion to
31 strike that language?

32
33 **MR. DIAZ:** So moved, Mr. Chairman.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's moved by Mr. Diaz. Can I get a second?

36
37 **MR. SPRAGGINS:** Second.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Seconded by General Spraggins. Is there any
40 further discussion on the motion? **Seeing none, or hearing none,**
41 **is there any opposition to the motion? Hearing none, the motion**
42 **passes.**

43
44 I guess, at this point, I will go ahead and open up if there is
45 any other business. Hearing none, I think we will take just a
46 five-minute break, and then we will move into public testimony.
47 I will see you guys in five minutes.

1
2 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
3

4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Welcome back, everybody. We're about ready to
5 get started with the public testimony section, but I see that
6 Dr. Crabtree has his hand up, and so, Dr. Crabtree, do you have
7 something to add, real quick?
8

9 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just one other thing for you to think about that
10 we ought to talk about in June that has been brought up to me is
11 whether any of what's going on affects the timing of SEFHIER,
12 which is the electronic for-hire reporting, and our plan has
13 been to have mandatory reporting start on September 1, and I
14 think some discussion then as to whether you would entertain any
15 thoughts of postponing that or do you want to move forward with
16 would be good.
17

18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thank you, Roy. Dr. Simmons.
19

20 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do
21 have that on the agenda, Dr. Crabtree, and I think we're working
22 with your staff to get a presentation for the June council
23 meeting, so we can discuss those items.
24

25 **DR. CRABTREE:** Okay. Thank you.
26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We will move on into the public
28 testimony section, and so good morning, everyone. Public input
29 is a vital part of the council's deliberative process, and
30 comments, both oral and written, are accepted and considered by
31 the council throughout the process.
32

33 Oral or written communications provided to the council, its
34 members, or its staff that relate to matters within the
35 council's purview are public in nature. Knowingly and willfully
36 submitting false information to the council is a violation of
37 federal law. Written comments can be submitted by emailing
38 gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org, and written comments will be posted
39 on the council's website for viewing by council members and the
40 public and will be maintained by the council as part of the
41 permanent record.
42

43 Persons wishing to give public testimony need to register on the
44 council website by 11:30 a.m. this morning, and we accept only
45 one registration per person. Each speaker will have three
46 minutes, unless we have additional time constraints, which will
47 be determined by the Chair. Your name will appear on a

1 displayed list on the screen. When it's your turn to speak, we
2 will unmute you. Once we have established a successful
3 connection, your time will begin.

4
5 Please note the countdown timer on the screen. It will be green
6 first, yellow for the next forty-five seconds, and red for the
7 final seconds of testimony. The timer will end on zero and will
8 be read, indicating your time is up. Time allowed to
9 dignitaries providing testimony is extended at the discretion of
10 the Chair.

11
12 If you have any trouble during this commenting process, please
13 contact Emily by emailing gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org or by
14 calling (813)317-6220. Okay. With that said, we will open up
15 public testimony, and we will start with Captain Bob Zales. We
16 can't hear Bob Zales, and so we will move on to Eric Brazer.

17
18 **PUBLIC COMMENT**
19

20 **MR. ERIC BRAZER:** Thanks, Dr. Frazer. Eric Brazer, Deputy
21 Director, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance. Thank
22 you for the chance to participate. First and foremost, I hope
23 everybody is healthy and you and your families are doing well.

24
25 With regards to what you are discussing today, first, we support
26 the track you're taking regarding the SOPPs, and it's important
27 to us to maintain the ability for council members to not be
28 penalized for prioritizing their health and the health of
29 others, but, as you're probably aware, public participation and
30 the personal interaction with council members is a priority, and
31 it's critical for the public, and so we would like for you to
32 prioritize that, to the extent you can.

33
34 With regard to carryover, we support looking at it. We know
35 that it can be complicated, but we really would like the council
36 to consider it and discuss it as a relief mechanism for the
37 industry. Thank you for your time.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Eric. We're going to go back and
40 see if we can capture Bob Zales. Okay. We don't have any
41 additional registered speakers at this time, and so is there any
42 further business to come in front of the council today? Seeing
43 none, we're going to try one last time to try to get Captain
44 Zales.

45
46 **MR. SANCHEZ:** Mr. Chairman, while we wait for Mr. Zales, is
47 there anyone else from the public on the line?

1
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** There are a number of folks on the line, John,
3 and we're -- As you pointed out, public participation is
4 critical moving forward, and this is part of our challenge, and
5 so we will certainly have to revisit this in any discussion of
6 how we handle our web-based meetings moving forward, but we'll
7 talk about that in June, but we have Captain Zales on the line
8 now, and so we'll go ahead and hear what Captain Zales has to
9 say.

10
11 **MR. BOB ZALES, II:** This is Bob Zales, II, representing NACO and
12 SOFA. Basically, I just wanted to try to give you a brief
13 update on the status of the fishing industry, as I understand
14 it. On behalf of NACO and SOFA, I have been working with Eric
15 and the Shareholders and Gary Jarvis with CFA and several other
16 groups in the Gulf and across the country, Southeastern
17 Fisheries and the whole bit, on all this stuff during this
18 disaster time.

19
20 We have been working with Congress on a bunch of issues, and we
21 have gotten the CARES Act and gotten people included in the
22 CARES Act that weren't initially there. Unfortunately, with
23 some PPP loans, and that's based on payroll, most people in our
24 businesses don't have a lot of payroll, because most of them are
25 sole proprietors or self-employed people who use independent
26 contractors, and so we're working on trying to get that
27 rectified in the next round of legislation.

28
29 There is also, as you all know, an effort by several senators
30 and representatives across the country to provide a lot more
31 money to Commerce in this next round of legislation to help
32 fishermen. \$300 million is a help, but it's not near enough to
33 keep these fisheries viable.

34
35 The charter industry in the Gulf has been pretty much at a
36 standstill. Some areas are not fishing at all. In Florida,
37 we're fortunate to where some places in Florida they are allowed
38 to fish, and there is a limited number of charter trips
39 happening.

40
41 On the private rec side, in my area of Panama City, the past two
42 Saturdays, the private rec effort has been almost like a state
43 opening season for those two days, and it's just been a
44 phenomenal number of boats that's been out there for those few
45 days. The rest of the weeks have been almost non-existent, and
46 so you've got one or two days a week where people are fishing
47 and others they're not.

1
2 On the charter side, there's a handful of boats operating, and
3 we still don't have -- In Florida, hotels and restaurants and
4 condos and houses can't be rented, and so there's still limited
5 places for people to stay, even though restaurants have opened
6 up on a limited basis, which is helping out. We're beginning to
7 see -- With the beaches opening up, we're beginning to see more
8 people come out, and so we're hopeful that things are going to
9 improve over the next month or so, but, as all of you all know,
10 especially in the charter fishing business, it's seasonal.

11
12 Our season is pretty much -- We have missed the beginning of the
13 season, and our primary season is in July, and we don't know
14 what that's going to be, and our season -- We make our money in
15 five or six months out of the year to last all year long, and we
16 have lost two months already, and we may miss a substantial
17 amount of the next round, and so it's going to be a tough winter
18 for a lot of the charter guys across the Gulf of Mexico, and so
19 hopefully anything that comes up, which I'm sure you all will
20 support any effort you all can, but to help us financially, the
21 commercial side and the charter side and the processors and the
22 markets.

23
24 The guys that have been fishing just a little bit are providing
25 more, because the restaurants have begun to open up, and so
26 they've had a market to go to, but the markets are still
27 limited, and so everybody is having a tough time, and hopefully
28 most of us are going to survive this, but my fear is that some
29 are not, and so that's just kind of where we are, and so, if
30 anybody has any questions, I will be glad to try to answer them.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Captain Zales. We don't have any
33 other registered speakers, and I see that Mr. Diaz has his hand
34 up.

35
36 **MR. DIAZ:** Tom, while we're in the public comment section, I
37 just wanted to mention that I did have a call from a concerned
38 citizen, about a week-and-a-half ago, and they were very adamant
39 that it's very important for us to, in every way possible, have,
40 live, in-person meetings. They did not like the idea of
41 webinars, and they were really hoping that we could have the
42 June meeting as a live, in-person meeting, and I just wanted to
43 make sure and relay that, because that person made an effort to
44 call me. Thank you, Tom.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dale, for that input, and, again, I
47 think, listening to some of the sentiment around the virtual

1 table this morning, I think people all value public
2 participation and every effort to make sure that we include it
3 in the process, and I don't think that there's any intent to
4 move these council meetings to a virtual platform moving
5 forward, at least on a permanent basis, and so I appreciate the
6 concern from the citizen, and I think it's one that we all
7 share. Are there any other additional items to discuss, any
8 other business to be brought forward before the council? Mr.
9 Sanchez.

10

11 **MR. SANCHEZ:** If Bob Zales is still on the line, I would like to
12 see if it's possible to ask him a question.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** He is not on the line anymore, John, but, if
15 you want to ask the question, I can certainly get in touch with
16 Bob and figure out how best to get the answer to you.

17

18 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I know he does a lot of work with a lot of the
19 charter/for-hire associations throughout the Gulf, and I wanted
20 to see what would be the charter/for-hire's preference, an
21 increase in bag limit or an extension in seasons, because I am
22 inclined to think extension in seasons equals more charters,
23 rather than increasing the bag limit, which, again, they've been
24 hurt dramatically by this COVID virus, and I am thinking that I
25 would like for them to weigh-in. I appreciate that.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Sure. Thank you, Mr. Sanchez, and I believe,
28 when we get to those issues in the June meeting, that certainly
29 falls under factors that might influence both the for-hire
30 sector and the private recreational fishermen, and so we will
31 make sure that we bring that up in June. Dr. Crabtree.

32

33 **DR. CRABTREE:** Just bear in mind that extending the season we
34 could do without rulemaking, but I don't believe that a -- If
35 you wanted to change the bag limit, that would require an
36 emergency rule, and so that would take some time to put in
37 place, and so an increase in the bag limit, at best, would be in
38 place at the very tail-end of the season.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Roy. Okay. Are there any other
41 comments or thoughts out there before we move to adjourn the
42 meeting? Okay. Seeing none, we will go ahead and adjourn the
43 meeting, and I want to thank everybody for their patience as we
44 worked through the process, and I look forward to talking with
45 all of you in June. Thank you very much.

46

47 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on May 12, 2020.)