

Data Collection Committee Report
August 14, 2023
Ms. Susan Boggs, Chair

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab F, No. 1**) and approved the minutes (**Tab F, No. 2**) of the June 2023 meeting as written.

Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) Program Update and Next Steps (Tab F, No. 4)

Council staff provided a presentation outlining the SEFHIER program including some “lessons learned” as well as next steps for developing a new for-hire data collection program. The Committee discussed convening the Data Collection Advisory Panel (AP) after the October Council meeting. Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff stated that they were prepared to provide a presentation of the data collected during the operation of SEFHIER to inform the development of a new for-hire data collection program at the October Council meeting. This would support further discussion to develop goals and objectives for a revised for-hire program.

A Committee member expressed concern that there was no representative from Louisiana on the Data Collection AP. The Committee then discussed the merits of repopulating the AP and explored other potential approaches for creating an appropriate advisory group. Several Committee members maintained that quick action to replace SEFHIER was a chief consideration while others contended that a balanced representative advisory body was critical and worth the extra time to create. Another Committee member stated that the charge of the AP is broader than the SEFHIER program and that a group directly tasked with providing feedback on another for-hire program would be worthwhile. Several Committee members stated that the group would ideally be populated by a diverse group of for-hire stakeholders from throughout the Gulf. This group could be populated simultaneously with the initial development of the document.

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **To create an ad hoc charter for hire data collection AP.**

Motion carried with no opposition.

For full Council, staff recommended the Council generate a charge statement for the advisory group. Having a charge statement that can be disseminated during the advertising period would help perspective applicants understand what they are tasked to do and why the Council is forming this new group. Staff also requested that partnering law enforcement agencies be given advanced notice so they can complete required fishery violation background checks for applicants before they are reviewed and appointed by the Council in October.

Other business

Council staff provided a progress report on the virtual public hearings for the joint commercial electronic reporting amendment. Informational mailers with the three meeting dates and times have been sent to commercial permit holders. The South Atlantic held their virtual public hearings in July. The three Gulf hearings will be held at the end of August.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.