

**Law Enforcement Technical Committee Report**  
**January 29, 2024**  
**Mr. Dale Diaz, Chair**

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

*Summary of Law Enforcement Technical Committee (LETC) Discussion on Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Advanced Landings Notifications (Tab L, No. 4)*

Staff summarized the LETC discussion on red snapper individual fishing quota (IFQ) advanced landings notifications held during the October 2023 LETC meeting. Staff presented the Council motion requesting the LETC evaluate 2022 red snapper IFQ advanced landing notifications, the proportion of inspected to non-inspected red snapper IFQ landings, the subsequent proportion of amended landings reports, and the magnitude of adjustments in pounds.

LETC members indicated landings notifications do not appear to constitute a major issue and noted that data needed to fulfill the Council's request would be challenging to compile and would require resources and manpower that are not currently available. LETC members noted that shareholders tend to underestimate landings because it is administratively simpler to amend underestimated landings reports than to have already deducted IFQ annual allocation returned to one's account. An LETC member asked whether the presence of an officer during offload constituted a determining factor in the poundage adjustment. The LETC replied that the same reporting pattern was noted regardless of officer presence. The LETC unanimously approved the following resolution:

The LETC considered the Council's request and is unable to comply for various reasons, including a lack of standardization in reporting amongst the five Gulf States and NMFS, and the lack of manpower to perform the manual analysis the request would entail. Further, the LETC believes the information requested is unlikely to provide any useful information to law enforcement or the Council, and the information necessary for investigations is already being provided on a case-by-case basis when requested.

A Committee member noted the importance of transparency in IFQ programs and stated that if the data requested by the Council are not available, changes may be necessary. Mr. Strelcheck replied the data exist, just not in a way that is easy to compile. He further noted that although there are appropriate checks and balances in the IFQ system, NOAA will continue to look for improvements. Major Dean Aucoin (Louisiana) noted that data they collect or request from NOAA are specific to particular cases and ongoing investigations. A Committee member stated that the IFQ the system should encourage accurate landings reports. The Committee noted that because a dealer has up to fifteen days to amend a dealer report, enforcement should place particular attention on instances in which the dealer and the fisherman are the same entity. A Committee member noted it makes sense to underestimate landings because an overestimate could result in a transaction being flagged for insufficient allocation.

*Summary of Law Enforcement Technical Committee Discussions: Additional Topics (Tab L, No. 4)*

Staff summarized the LETC discussions on the sale of recreationally-caught fish and indicated that LETC members noted that Gulf states have appropriate regulations to address the issue. Staff noted that the LETC expressed satisfaction with the current nomination process for Officer or Team of the year. A Committee member inquired about the timeline for reviewing nominations. Staff replied that the Council will review LETC nominations during the April 2024 Council meeting.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.