VOTING MEMBERS
Kevin Anson (designee for Chris Blankenship)..............Alabama
Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley)..................Florida
Leann Bosarge.........................................Mississippi
Doug Boyd...................................................Texas
Roy Crabtree............................................NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
Pamela Dana...............................................Florida
Myron Fischer (designee for Randy Pausina)..............Louisiana
Johnny Greene.............................................Alabama
Kelly Lucas (designee for Jamie Miller)......................Mississippi
Camilo Matens............................................Louisiana
Harlon Pearce............................................Louisiana
Corky Perret............................................Mississippi
Robin Riechers...........................................Texas
John Sanchez..............................................Florida
Greg Stunz.................................................Texas
David Walker..............................................Alabama
Roy Williams..............................................Florida

NON-VOTING MEMBERS
LCDR Jason Brand.............................................USCG
Glenn Constant...........................................USFWS
Dave Donaldson.........................................GSMFC

STAFF
Steven Atran................................................Senior Fishery Biologist
Assane Diagne..............................................Economist
John Froeschke.........................................Fishery Biologist
Doug Gregory..............................................Executive Director
Karen Hoak..............................................Administrative and Financial Assistant
Ava Lasseter............................................Anthropologist
Mara Levy...............................................NOAA General Counsel
Charlene Ponce........................................Public Information Officer
Ryan Rindone..............................................Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
Bernadine Roy...........................................Office Manager
Charlotte Schiaffo.............Research & Human Resource Librarian

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

Pam Anderson.........................Panama City Beach, FL
Billy Archer................................Seminole Wind, Panama City, FL
Jeff Barger..............................Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX
Randy Boggs..............................Orange Beach, AL
Susan Boggs..............................Orange Beach, AL
Zack Bowen................................SAFMC
Dick Brame........................................
Steve Branstetter........................NMFS
John Braswell............................Daphne, AL
Eric Brazer..............................Reef Fish Shareholder’s Alliance
JP Brooker..............................Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
Glen Brooks........................................GFA
James Bruce.................................Cutoff, LA
Gary Bryant..............................Fort Morgan, AL
Bill Butler.....................................Venice, LA
Shane Cantrell........................Galveston Charter Fleet, TX
Jim Clements.............................Carrabelle, FL
Bubba Cochrane........................Galveston, TX
Cliff Cox............................................Destin, FL
David Dekle.....................................Wilmer, AL
Jason Delacruz.........................Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance/Gulf Wild
Dewey Destin...............................Destin, FL
Michael Drexler........................St. Petersburg, FL
George Eller..............................Destin, FL
Mike Eller............................................Destin, FL
Maurice Fitzsimmons........................Daphne, AL
Troy Frady................................Orange Beach, AL
Jack Gaines, II............................Dauphin Island, AL
Jim Green............................................Destin, FL
Roger Griffis.................................NMFS
Buddy Guindon........................Galveston, TX
Ken Haddad..............................American Sportfishing Association
Chad Hanson..............................Pew Environmental Group
Ben Hartig........................................SAFMC
Scott Hickman..........................Galveston, TX
John Hollingshead.......................Pensacola, FL
Peter Hood.................................NMFS
Larry Huntley................................Pensacola, FL
Gary Jarvis........................................Destin, FL
Mike Jennings..............................Freeport, TX
Joe Jewell.......................................Mississippi
Bill Kelly............................................Marathon, FL
Bobby Kelly.................................Orange Beach, AL
Eric Mahoney..............................Clearwater, FL
TJ Marshall........................................
The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the Grand Hotel Marriott, Point Clear, Alabama, Wednesday afternoon, January 28, 2015, and was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chairman Kevin Anson.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

CHAIRMAN KEVIN ANSON: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the 251st meeting of the Gulf Council. My name is Kevin Anson, Chairman 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.

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 and with experience in various aspects of fisheries.

The membership also includes five state fishery managers and the Regional Administrator from NOAA 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.

The Sustainable Fisheries Act requires that all statements are to include a brief description of the background and interest of the persons 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. All written comments will be posted on the council’s website for viewing by council members and the public and will be maintained by the council as a part of the permanent record.

Knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the council is a violation of federal law. A digital recording is used for the public record and therefore, for the purpose of voice identification, each member is requested to identify himself or herself, starting on my left.

MR. ROY WILLIAMS: Roy Williams, Florida.

MR. CORKY PERRET: Corky Perret, Mississippi.

DR. KELLY LUCAS: Kelly Lucas, Mississippi.

MS. LEANN BOSARGE: Leann Bosarge, Mississippi.

MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Dave Donaldson, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

MR. MYRON FISCHER: Myron Fischer, Louisiana.

MR. CAMPO MATENS: Camp Matens, Louisiana.
MR. HARLON PEARCE: Harlon Pearce, Louisiana.

DR. PAMELA DANA: Pam Dana, Florida.

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ: John Sanchez, Florida.

MS. MARTHA BADEMAN: Martha Bademan, Florida.

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

MR. ZACK BOWEN: Zack Bowen, Georgia.

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

DR. ROY CRABTREE: Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. STEVE BRANSTETTER: Steve Branstetter, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. BONNIE PONWITH: Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. GREG STUNZ: Greg Stunz, Texas.

MR. ROBIN RIECHERS: Robin Riechers, Texas.

MR. DOUG BOYD: Doug Boyd, Texas.

MR. JOHNNY GREENE: Johnny Greene, Alabama.

MR. DAVID WALKER: David Walker, Alabama.

LCDR JASON BRAND: Lieutenant Commander Jason Brand, U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. DOUGLAS GREGORY: Douglas Gregory, council staff.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you and just for the record, Zack Bowen from Georgia is representing the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council here today. We have the council agenda, which is Tab A, Number 4. We have Adoption of the Agenda and does anyone have any changes to the agenda? Is there a motion to accept the agenda as written?

MR. PERRET: So moved.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do we have a second?
MR. WILLIAMS: Second.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s been seconded by Mr. Williams and is there any discussion? Is there any opposition to approving the motion as written? All right. The next item is Approval of the Minutes. The minutes are at Tab A, Number 4 and 5. Any changes to the minutes?

MS. LEVY: I just have a couple. On page 194, line 3, change “be” to “are” and then on page 198, line 19, remove the extra “at”. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Any other changes to the minutes? Is there a motion to accept the minutes as amended?

MR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Is there a second from anyone?

MR. PEARCE: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Pearce. Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the minutes are approved. That takes us to Item Number II, Red Drum Update, and, Mr. Rindone, were you going to give an update on red drum?

RED DRUM UPDATE

MR. RYAN RINDONE: I sure was. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The council had requested that the states each update the escapement rates for red drum following the meeting of the Special Red Drum Working Group and, to date, we have only received letters from Alabama and Florida with respect to their efforts to update those escapement rates.

Alabama is currently working on it and Florida plans to address it when they assess red drum again, which is this year. As far as the other states, we haven’t heard anything back yet and so we’re still waiting on that.

MR. RIECHERS: Ryan, when we discussed it at the meeting, at the time you had indicated that we had already updated from some other states.

MR. RINDONE: That is correct, Mr. Riechers. We had updated
escapement numbers for Texas. Mississippi had rerun some of their data and they were showing that they were perhaps under the escapement rate, but they were going to analyze those again and we haven’t heard anything from Louisiana, but I’m just talking about as far as letters back to the council in response to the request that was sent out. We have only heard from two of the states.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: What you’re saying, Ryan, though is that Texas has updated information and then Alabama and Florida you have received positive comments and even Louisiana you received comments that they are working on it, correct?

MR. RINDONE: Nothing from Louisiana. Texas has given us information through 2014 and so a response from them is kind of moot and then Mississippi is working on theirs. They had initially explored a new method of determining their escapement using a new model and so there is some testing that they were doing with that, but nothing from Louisiana.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Based on the communications you’ve received then, you should be getting something before the end of the year, within the next six months, and is that how you think things will shake out?

MR. RINDONE: From the remaining two states? I couldn’t tell you. I would only hope that that would be correct.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. Thank you. Any other information to add to the Red Drum Update, Ryan? Any other comments or questions? That will take us to Item Number IV, the Presentations, and the Briefing Regarding the NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy and is Dr. Griffis in the audience?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: We have Dr. Roger Griffis here from Headquarters to explain the climate strategy that NMFS and NOAA has developed. We got a copy of it last Wednesday and I emailed it to the full council.

The deadline for comments is before the beginning of our next council meeting and so what we’ll do is any comments you have here today I will take note of and start drafting a letter of comments from the council and then we will also go through the strategy during a committee meeting of the Sustainable Fisheries Committee at our March meeting and finish generating comments for National Marine Fisheries Service.

That’s the best game plan we have for meeting their deadline.
With that, thank you, Roger, for being here and I will turn it over to you.

PRESENTATIONS

BRIEFING REGARDING THE NOAA FISHERIES CLIMATE SCIENCE STRATEGY

DR. ROGER GRIFFIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Council, it’s a pleasure to be with you here today to talk about what we think is a very important effect to improve the Science Center prize, the National Marine Fisheries Service Science Center prize, to better deliver information to you all for making the decisions that you need to make in a changing world that includes changing oceans and changing climate.

What I have is a brief presentation describing the draft climate science strategy. As you heard, NOAA Fisheries Service released it for public comment last Wednesday, January 21. The Federal Register Notice posting was Friday, the 23rd.

You all were notified by the Fisheries Service in a number of different ways, but the bottom-line message is we are hoping that you all will take an opportunity to give us some feedback on this strategy. We really want to know what your science needs are, so that you can make your decisions in the best possible way with the best possible science, given the fact that our world is changing, our climate is changing, and that affects our oceans those resources.

I will proceed with a brief presentation and feel free to interrupt me if there are questions and I will hopefully have time at the end for questions, too.

The presentation basically has three parts: why did we develop this strategy; what’s the goal and some of the content of the strategy; and then I will end with the ask and that is the ask for input from you all. I will talk a little bit about that.

The first part of the presentation talks a little bit about why the rationale for developing this strategy. There are a number of reasons. At the largest level, the most recent intergovernmental panel on climate change report that came out the end of last year, in a series during last year, makes some pretty startling conclusions, based on the best available science, that climate-related changes, including ocean acidification, are profoundly altering ocean ecosystems.

Most importantly for us, interested in fishery resources, those -- They also conclude that there are some pretty significant
negative impacts expected for the world’s fisheries. Those negative impacts are particularly focused on particularly tropical-related areas, where there are expected to be major declines in the productivity and catch of fisheries, but potentially some very positive impacts for high-latitude fisheries, with warming oceans and expansion of cold-water species into the northern areas or southern areas, in the poles.

They conclude that obviously there are other stressors that -- That climate will exacerbate other stressors, impacting major resources. They do note very clearly that these changes will bring significant challenges for resource management in these changing conditions.

Closer to home, there really are five or six major issues in thinking about how climate affects the resources that we care about here in the United States, marine resources. There really are these kinds of issues that we’re thinking about and observing changes, changes in water, precipitation that affects drought. Most recently, I’m sure you’ve been reading about the drought affecting our colleagues on the west coast.

Thermal stress, increasing ocean temperatures, affecting many different areas, and I will talk more about that. Our colleagues in the Alaska region are dealing with changes in both temperature, but also in the coverage and timing of sea ice, which affects productivity of major fisheries in that region.

You all are thinking a lot about rising seas and inundation and the effect on habitats and people, coastal communities, and, of course, we’re all wondering what the effects of ocean acidification might be, really a major concern, but also a major question.

There is a strong body of science and we know that changing climate can dramatically affect ocean systems. The real question is how can we improve our knowledge of those changes and better understand what may be coming in the future and use that information, provide that to decision makers like yourselves to use that information, wisely in making decisions about resources.

This cartoon is meant to represent some of the ripple effects of changing climatic conditions and how it may ripple through the physical and chemical parts of our ocean system, from temperature to sea ice to fresh water and acidification, as I mentioned, but, of course, as you know well, the biological productivity and all the vital rates of fish stocks and other
species are directly related to and affected by those kinds of things, temperature of the water and chemistry, and so those kinds of changes can ripple through the system, through the biological impacts, and then potentially affecting those that depend on it, the social and economic impacts.

These changes have a number of implications for fisheries management, as you know well. Climate-driven changes in the ecosystems can have dramatic effects on productivity and species interactions and at the population level, it can affect vital rates that affect population abundance, things like growth and mortality and recruitment and those kinds of things, and obviously those bear on fishery management and management decisions, everything from biological reference points to distributions in allocations to recovery planning and those kinds of things.

We think this is a pretty important topic to be looking at. The purpose of the strategy is to identify what some of those key information requirements are and lay out a framework for filling the gaps that we think exist in our ability to provide the science to you and others to make informed decisions in a changing world.

These four panels represent kind of the big bins of those information requirements, as you might guess. The first one is understanding what’s changing now and what has already changed? What was the baseline and how has it changed? Why is it changing?

This one is pretty important, particularly for the next one, because if we can understand why changes in climate affect Species X or Recruitment Y, we can begin to better model and project and perhaps respond to those changes. This is an important process research area to inform the next one.

It will basically give us the power in our models and forecast so we can provide better information about how it will change in the future and what will these fish stocks look like and what will the ecosystem look like five, ten, twenty-five, or fifty years down the road?

Then the last one is how do we respond? How do we use this information to help reduce impacts and build resilience, both in the fish stocks and perhaps in the fisheries?

I am going to quickly -- Obviously there are a variety of impacts in U.S. ecosystems. Changing temperature is affecting
nearly all of them and then any given region -- You can just click through and a bunch of different things will pop up.

In the Alaska region, of course, they are dealing with warming temperatures and changing timing of sea ice and seasonality and we could pick any region here. My point here is that all of the regions are dealing with some common issues, but each region has a unique situation and so part of what this strategy lays out is a common framework and seven key core information goals, but it’s designed to be tailored to the needs of each region.

Here in the Gulf, as you know better than I do, you all are thinking about a number of climate-related changes in your system and when I talk about changes, I am talking about both the variability, the natural variability in the system, but also potentially changes in that system over time.

The kinds of things that you’re thinking about, of course, are increasing temperatures or perhaps increasing frequency or intensity of extreme storm events and what that might mean for winds, currents, and ocean circulation and potentially ocean acidification and, of course, that combination of things coming off the land, changing precipitation patterns and maybe affecting salinity of your estuaries and nutrient loading and perhaps hypoxia and obviously the big one here in the Gulf region is the rising sea level or changing inundation patterns.

We picked out just a few things to highlight here and there is a lot more information available on the kinds of changes that you’re seeing here in the Gulf region, but temperature was probably the one that is most well documented.

For example, there has been generally increasing, a slight increase, in temperature over the past twenty years or so, but there is a projected increase of two to three degrees Celsius down to quite a bit of depth, down to 200 meters. Obviously this has implications for productivity, vital rates, habitats.

If you haven’t seen or heard about some really interesting work going on by a team of scientists from the Fisheries Service and other places looking at climate-driven changes in the Gulf of Mexico, they have developed a very sophisticated regional ocean model that they can push with some of the climate projections and the reason they’re doing that is because they wanted to investigate the question of how climate-driven changes in the Gulf may affect the habitat for larval tuna and other pelagics. It’s really, I think, one of the state-of-the-art efforts underway across any of the regions and I would recommend it to
you.

Obviously there are other indicators of a warming Gulf of Mexico. That’s what that Atlantic Warm Pool Index goes to, but obviously the sea level rise is the other major factor that you all are thinking about that could have significant impacts, particularly on those species that are dependent on those near-shore habitats.

There is quite a bit of work and, again, you know better than I, looking at what those inundation levels would be and who would be affected. Obviously our fishing communities and sectors should be and I think are part of those analyses, but they’re also looking at what habitats would be affected and potential implications for the stocks that you all are interested in.

Here are some of the potential implications of some of these changes, both observed and the ones that are projected. Obviously there’s a lot of interest now in shifting distribution of species and the North Atlantic, for example, the Northeast folks are seeing massive shifts in their stocks up the eastern seaboard.

There is an interesting study that looked at shifting distributions in all the U.S. marine regions and evidence over the past forty or fifty years of shifting stocks in the Gulf and obviously they can’t go north, but actually the pattern has been shifting west and at depth and so one of the questions is will that continue and where will things go?

Obviously a major interest in how species productivity may change with increasing temperature and other changes and concern about hypoxia, the invasive species, with a warming Gulf and changing ocean conditions. Will that continue to lend itself to the spread of things like lionfish and others?

The ocean acidification question and when and how and if that will begin affecting the base of the food chain and, again, affect productivity and the coral bleaching issue that you all are familiar with, I am sure, the fact that the Florida Keys system has been seeing coral bleaching now for twenty years or so and a general degradation of that system and actually the lack of recruitment for most of the major corals, which is obviously a serious issue for the reef system.

What I tried to do is just frame some of the issues that you already know about. The changes in the Gulf, both observed and projected, are not nearly as dramatic as some of the other
ecosystems, but, nonetheless, one of the key questions, of course, is what are the implications not only for the marine resources, but also for the fishing sector and the fishing communities? Questions about what’s at risk and how should we prepare? How do we reduce those risks and then how can we increase the resilience of both the resources and the communities?

The goal of the strategy is to help build a science enterprise in the Fisheries Service that can better begin to answer some of these questions and provide you all with the information that we think you and we need to manage these resources in a changing climate and in a changing ocean.

The goal of the strategy is to do just that. It’s to increase the production, the delivery, and the use of climate-related information to support NOAA Fisheries and you all and our partners and stakeholders in their decision making.

The strategy identifies seven key objectives to meet those, our requirements, and our legal mandates, and basically advance the climate-ready decision making into the future and the intended use is just that, to help guide development of our science enterprise so that it can deliver the information that we think you all and other decision makers are going to need as the systems continue to change.

We designed the strategy and this strategy was developed over the past year with a team that looked at all of the NOAA Fisheries Service mission areas and looked at that process by which we collect information, use that information to create products, and then provide that information to you in one or more forms of management advice.

Along that blue line is basically the observations or the research, the modeling, the information review, and then the assessments or other things that we provide to you and with you.

The strategy was, as I said, designed to address the information needs across the NOAA Fisheries mission and so it includes not just fishery management, but also our endangered species mission, our marine mammal conservation mandates, our habitat mandates, et cetera.

The seven objectives of the strategy, the seven core steps that the strategy calls for, are the common needs across those mission areas. The strategy basically identifies those areas as if we did that, we would be able to provide much of the
information that’s needed for all of our mission areas.

The seven key objectives are there in the little pyramid and I will just step through each bin of them. The first three, the top there, really are very much in your wheelhouse. The first one is to be able to provide climate-informed biological reference points and you all know you use biological reference points, but similar reference points are used in our work on marine mammals and other species.

The first objective is to provide those climate-informed reference points and the second one is to provide robust management strategies, so that we evaluate different management strategies with you and other decision makers, to consider which one might best meet our goals under different climate or ocean conditions.

The third is having an adaptive management process that enables us to do that and to circle back and ensure that those are working well.

Objectives 4 and 5 are to provide the information to allow Objective 1, 2, and 3 to go forward. I should have said that these objectives are interdependent and that one depends on another and we’re cascading here and so Objective 4 is to identify the likely future states to plan for.

We need to be much better, and the science is at a point where I think we can now do this much more effectively, but to be able to forecast and project what those future conditions might be and how our oceans are changing and what might happen to the resources.

Objective 5 is to identify the mechanisms of that change. If we better understand why a change in temperature affects change in recruitment or reproduction, we can build that into both stock assessments and other mechanisms.

Objective 6 is critical. It’s basically to have the observations so that we can track the pulse of change in the system and provide early warnings, so that we can react and not be surprised, and Objective 7 is to have the science infrastructure to support the rest of this. We can’t do any of this if we are continuing to have problems with ships or ship time or other infrastructure.

Each of these objectives has a series of actions or recommendations and there were three of those. The strategy
pulls out three of those as immediate actions, highly recommended.

The first is to conduct a climate vulnerability analyses for living marine resources and the second is to maintain and develop ecosystem status reports to track change and provide those early warnings and the third is to increase the capacity to do informed management strategy evaluations and basically, be better able to assess what our options are as things change.

We have got good progress on the first two, but more needs to be done. Each of the objectives then has a series of actions and recommendations and I am going to highlight just a few here that were flagged as short-term important actions.

One of those is to complete regional-level action plans and that is to take this strategy and have each region assess its strengths and weaknesses and its priorities to implement the strategy and provide this information.

The second is to strengthen the science capability nationwide and the third is to increase resources for that mechanistic process research and the fourth is to establish climate-ready terms of reference so that we know when and where and how to use this information effectively.

The last part of the presentation is the request to you all. We very much hope that you will be interested and take time to look at the strategy and give us some feedback. We need your input to strengthen this call to action. We need your input to make sure that it’s addressing the needs that you feel are here in your region.

There are two asks here. The first one is give us input on this draft climate science strategy. This is the national framework, from which we will then develop the regional scale implementation plans.

The public comment period is through March 31, as was said. Your input is vitally important to us and so we will tweak that deadline as needed, if you let us know, to be able to accommodate whatever schedule you have.

The second request, down the road, would be to be engaged in development of the regional action plan to implement this strategy in the Gulf region, so that what comes in the next two years or so, over the next two to five years, we’re building the Science Center prize that will support you all in your decision
making as the Gulf of Mexico and its systems begin to change further. Thank you very much and I would be happy to answer any questions.

MR. PERRET: Thank you, Roger. That was a most interesting presentation and I have a couple of questions. Sea level rise, in the last 135 years, eight-inch rise, but the projection by the year 2100, in eighty-five years, is one to four feet. I hope it’s more like one rather than four, but why the accelerated sea level rise in a shorter period of time?

DR. GRIFFIS: Thank you for the question and I think the last part of it, why the acceleration in the coming interim, I am not an expert in the sea level rise, but the experts tell me that there are really two reasons for that.

One is the physics of water and changing temperature. Most of the sea level rise to date, or the change in the rise, is largely due to the warming of the planet. Of course, you know what happens to water as it warms. It expands and so a significant portion of the sea level rise to date is physics and the warming ocean.

The ocean, as you know, is absorbing over 50 percent of the increased heat that’s been trapped by the increased CO2 around the planet and so if you put a CO2 blanket around the planet and we’ve trapped more heat and the oceans have been saving our -- Because they’ve been absorbing all that heat, that heat expands and warms the ocean.

The second piece of it is the accelerated, and this is where many of the models, even as of two years ago, were not adequately able to model the impact of the melting massive ice sheets, both in Greenland and in the Arctic. The more recent models, in my understanding, have been able to take that into account and this is becoming increasingly a key contributor to that acceleration.

MR. PERRET: My second question is under recommendations and immediate action, Number 2 was ecosystem status reports. At least my primary interest is the Gulf of Mexico and how has your group defined the ecosystem for the Gulf? Is it one ecosystem or has it been broken down into smaller units?

DR. GRIFFIS: Thank you for the question. I would defer to Bonnie or others on how you all are defining the ecosystem. The vision there is that each region or each ecosystem would have a set of indicators that they would use to track changes in the
condition.

My understanding is that such a set of indicators and an initial ecosystem status report has been developed for the Southeast and, Bonnie, you can tell me if the Gulf is part of that, but the goal here, and the Fisheries Service has been putting some resources into it and trying to help, is to have each of our major ecosystem regions, the Gulf of Mexico being one, have a core set of indicators that we’re tracking regularly so that we can understand and give you to you all regular reports that indicate whether the system is cruising along just the same or if there are changes up or down and particularly the power of these, if we do it right, is that they can provide early warnings for potentially major changes that are happening very quickly.

We have seen this used up in the Northeast, where things seem to be changing very quickly. I would say that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Alaska Ecosystem Report is probably the most mature, the most advanced, and they’ve been using it for a number of years.

MR. PERRET: I just have one more comment, if I may. We know one of the problems we’ve got in the Gulf is hypoxia and we know the source of our problem and so anything you and your group can do to help us with the problem from the Midwest and agriculture and nutrients and all that coming down the great Mississippi River system, we would certainly solicit your assistance in that. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other questions?

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Dr. Griffis. A couple of times early on, you talked about building resilience and what did you mean by that?

DR. GRIFFIS: Thank you for the question. I think that is one of the most challenging questions right now that many people are asking. Resilience is usually defined as the ability to -- I will just lump this in, but the ability to perhaps resist stress, but if when knocked down by stress, be able to come back quickly to a state similar to what you were in the beginning and so resilience, being able to get back up after a major stress-type event, say a storm or something like that.

Given that the kinds of changes that are anticipated or expected with climate-related shifts in our systems are more extreme events or perhaps trends in warming and the idea is to build --
Ideally, how can we manage these systems so that the resources we care about are able to do just that?

They’re able to resist or at least bounce back from devastating stressors and perhaps be resilient over time, as say temperature or other things continue to change, say in a warming condition.

The same is being thought about for communities, coastal communities, and how can we help communities from a hazards perspective or a storm response perspective? How can we have them better prepared to bounce back from storm events, for example?

Similarly, one can apply the same kind of series of questions to say a fish stock and think about what are the characteristics that would lend itself to having a stock be more resilient to certain stressors or changes and, in fact, as you know, one could think about certain fisheries or fishing communities and ask a similar question.

Some of this work that I’m most familiar with is happening in the Gulf of Maine, where they are seeing and expecting fairly large-scale rapid changes in the oceanography that could have dramatic effects on the resources that those communities are dependent on.

There are a number of efforts, led by NMFS and other partners and universities and Sea Grant, engaging the fishery-dependent communities in conversations about what are they dependent on and what are some of the risks and how can they reduce those risks and help lead them to some discussion about perhaps diversification of their fisheries, to make them perhaps more resilient if any one of them begins changing over time.

The resiliency could be applied to either the resource and how would we manage say Fish Stock X to make it better able to resist change, but able to bounce back? One can think about some age structure scenarios, but also the fishery and perhaps the fishing communities.

DR. PONWITH: Thanks very much, Roger, for the presentation. I really appreciate it and you touched a little bit on the question that I was going to ask, but I will frame it up anyway. That is that I see this as the great interdisciplinary problem, because it’s a problem that’s big enough and sweeping enough that you can’t rely on just physics to touch and you can’t rely on just biology to touch.
In fact, you’ve talked a little bit about the importance of understanding those physical processes to understand changes in rate and in sea level rise and some of the uncertainty we have associated with ocean acidification. There is a lot of work that needs to happen there and being able to link that physics into the biology and understand what those responses are going to be for those fish stocks.

My real question -- That’s actually the place where I reside, that I’m the most comfortable, is sort of dancing on the interface of those two areas, but I think the really happening place in this continuum and the place where the council is going to be really valuable in lending those extra set of eyes and those additional viewpoints that we’re so eager to get is going from the biology to the socioeconomic and understanding if a stock’s distribution is going to move, what options exist for the social implications of that.

My question to you is do you feel as though that science and the planning for that science and the steps that need to be taken to translate those other two disciplines into the information we need for making critical social decisions exists? Are we giving that emphasis we need to be able to translate that into usable products for decision support?

**DR. GRIFFIS:** I think the answer is no. I think that’s probably the weakest link in that cascade, our ability to anticipate or understand the social and economic implications, Bonnie. My caveat is that there is some great work going on. The Fisheries Service, with partners, has developed a series of fishing community vulnerability indices and so, again, being able to have some indicators to help communities assess their risk and that’s now nationwide and so I think there’s a tremendous now baseline of information that could be used to begin asking those questions.

I think it’s also the weakest link in our chain because one has to -- It involves a whole other set of assumptions and uncertainties about how people will react and one can explore their options, but not necessarily about which ones they will take.

Again, there is some really interesting work, both in the Alaska region and the Northeast, looking at, over the past forty years, as many of their fish stocks have shifted pole-ward, or deeper, how have the fleets -- Have the fleets shifted and where have the landings shifted?
I think there is data and information that can be gleaned. I think we’re not using what we have as effectively as we could, but it also is perhaps the most difficult of the cascade and in the modeling efforts. Thank you, Bonnie.

**DR. CRABTREE:** Roger, thanks for being here and I’m glad we could get you away from the snow and cold up north for a little bit. We spent a good part of yesterday discussing fishery reference points, particularly for red snapper, and I noted that one of the things highlighted in your presentation were climate-informed reference points and I wonder if you could expand a little more on what you mean by that.

**DR. GRIFFIS:** Here again, I need to clarify that I am not a fishery biologist and there is tremendous talent in that area, but from what I understand from the experts is the setting of those reference points and the calculation of those reference points, whether it be in fisheries or deciding how many gray whales to allow to be taken by incidental take, often involves some consideration of what the existing conditions are.

There is a tremendous amount of work going on on some stocks, as you know, particularly in places where the systems are changing quickly, that suggests in some cases, with changing temperature or other oceanographic characteristics, one may need to readjust, certainly relook at and readjust, some of those reference points, because they may no longer be appropriate if the system has changed enough and if we keep them as is, we may be setting ourselves up to try and get to targets that no longer exist.

I would defer to the great knowledge and expertise of the fishery biologists and I would be happy to point you to some really interesting work recently on that. Thank you.

**LCDR BRAND:** Thanks for your presentation. I sit on the Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary Council and I am just curious. You mentioned the bleaching of the Keys coral in that Sanctuary, but have you seen any reports or impacts on the salt domes or the Flower Garden Banks?

**DR. GRIFFIS:** Thank you for the question. I haven’t followed the Flower Garden stuff. When I was doing coral reef conservation a number of years ago, and it was almost a decade ago now, we were having reports of bleaching even in some of those top areas, but I haven’t followed it since then.
MR. PEARCE: Thank you and I’ve got a couple of points, Dr. Griffis, and thank you for your presentation. The first one is fairly simple. I live on a lake, Lake Pontchartrain, and all the sea level rise, as you’re talking about, made me consider what I may need to do. The sea level rise is going to be a lot greater now than it was in the last eighty or ninety years and so in consultation with my investment counselor, we decided to get a reverse mortgage very quickly.

All kidding aside, I think that there are many indicator species that we need to look at in our fisheries, whether we’re managed by the council or within our states.

One that comes to mind right away is our oyster crop in the State of Louisiana that we’re having a very difficult situation bringing it back from -- We go back to whether it was Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, or the oil spill, but quite possibly maybe that’s not what it is, to where our spat set is not working like it should be and we’re looking at some huge hatcheries to try and redevelop that spat set better than it is on the east side of the river.

A lot of that is because we’re getting heavy saltwater and then heavy freshwater, but not back and forth like we normally used to get, to where it was a constant flow of salt and fresh back. We have too much of one or too much of the other now and so it may be some of these things that we can look at that can help you guys understand or help us understand what our problems really are.

We are very perplexed about how to solve it, because Louisiana is the most profound oyster factory in the world and we’re losing it and we’re not quite sure why, but indicator species like that and indicator species that we manage in the Gulf here, we need to consider those and think what those are and see what -- It could be forage fish and there’s no telling what it could be, but as they change, we need to be very cognizant of the fact that it might be because of what you’re talking about here today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other comments to Dr. Griffis?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Thank you very much and I realize it’s probably too early in the development of the strategy and I haven’t read the strategy that came out last Wednesday, but is there a timeline for getting some of this information that NOAA has to the stock assessment people so we can have those indicator species?
For instance, in the Gulf, we are seeing evidence of reduced recruitment in the last few years and we have no idea if it’s related to the oil spill or not, but if there’s data, if there’s oceanographic information out there, that could help inform the stock assessments, that would be very helpful to us in the short term. I am hoping the strategy within NOAA is to get some of this stuff down to the stock assessment level as soon as possible.

**DR. GRIFFIS:** I think that is the goal. We are trying to move very quickly. We don’t want to sit on a national strategy and say that we’re done. We are trying to move quickly into having you all and having the Science Center, with our partners, lead an effort that identifies the priorities here in this region and each region. It would be very helpful if you all want to articulate some of those needs, some of those priorities.

One of the things I hear in every region, wherever I go on this topic, is similar to what you’ve said, is where is the information that we can use now? I think there is information out there that is perhaps not as accessible as it could be.

In our internet age, there is too much information and it’s not that anyone is hiding it, but it’s that it’s often hard to find. I think part of the goal when we highlight this in the strategy is making this information much more accessible on a region-by-region basis, decision-maker-to-decision-maker basis.

That is part of the goal of the strategy and I would be happy to talk with you and I’m sure Bonnie has a team at the Science Center and we could talk with you about some of the key products and tools that we just rolled out a couple or three weeks ago that might be useful to you, that handful that might be really useful to you right now. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** I would just like to add -- I was going to ask you, Dr. Ponwith, offline, but inasmuch as now that there is the need and there is the process that’s going to be developed here for trying to synthesize the data and have some products developed, as far as the information pipeline, if there is a suite of data that’s minimum elements, if you will, or those key priority species, at least from the state I represent, we might be interested in trying to pass on the data that would help in the information and so having a format for how the data is collected and all the variable structure and all that in advance, we might be able to streamline that end of the process to help to get more information into the decision making
DR. PONWITH: In direct response to that, we are working right now on our response to an Executive Order that makes all federal data readily accessible to the general public in an electronic format. The data that we have in electronic format will be accessible to the states, to academic researchers, to whomever would have a use for it.

That is a monumental task, because imagine your own data holdings, whether it’s your household budget or whether you’re an academic or a state person, it’s a massive undertaking, but, philosophically, it is the right thing to do, because what it does is greases that pipeline for getting that information into the hands of people who can use it to help develop those value-added products quickly.

I know that’s something that we’re all waiting for and to Mr. Gregory’s point, a lot of times it’s not the raw data that are going to be the tool that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council needs. It’s derived products from those raw data that requires a physical oceanographer and a stock assessment expert to be collaborating on to develop the tool that we need to answer those questions and so when we talk about needing to support research being done in the Science Center, this is the kind of thing that we’re talking about.

We are talking about getting those stock assessment scientists who are as familiar as anybody with the basic biology and life history of that animal and the population dynamics and to be able to add a brand new facet into those stock assessments that would be these physical signals, the cycles and the trends that we’re seeing in the physical oceanography that forms the habitat for these animals, to make sure that we’re refining our ability to answer the question of what will happen if.

I agree that we need to get the data and we need to get those products into the hands of the users as quickly as possible and we are certainly committed to that.

DR. GRIFFIS: I just wanted to say thank you again for letting me be here with you all and also to clarify the task. We welcome input from any of you, any of the members, with your institutional hats on. We are looking for broad input and your comment made me think about this. We welcome input both from the council as a body, but also the individual organizations.

I also wanted to flag that I think just before the holidays we
were notified by the General Accounting Office, which, as you know, is the research arm of the U.S. Congress, that the Senate had asked them to look into the question of what the Fisheries Service has been doing to prepare for and respond to climate change, but, in particular, they referenced the councils and what have the councils received or are interested in and what are the challenges therein.

I say that simply to, perhaps, if you haven’t been notified, let you know that I think that you may soon get a call from the folks at the GAO asking some of these very same questions, where do you see the challenges and where do you see the needs. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Dr. Griffis. That was a very good presentation and a good discussion and thank you. That takes us to the next item under Presentations and that would be Dr. Ponwith discussing Council Member SEDAR Workshop for June 2015 Meeting.

DISCUSS COUNCIL MEMBER SEDAR WORKSHOP FOR JUNE 2015 MEETING

DR. PONWITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, we had a discussion and that was a discussion about how important it is that the council members are familiar with the SEDAR process and that is not how do you do a stock assessment as much as how do we manage the decision process of what stock assessments are going to get done and when they’re going to get done and how those decisions are made, to make that as open and transparent a deliberation as possible and also make sure that all the considerations in those choices are made as well, given the way that the SEDAR Steering Committee is structured.

We had originally talked about doing kind of a SEDAR 101 at this meeting to do that, but opted instead to introduce this idea to you and propose that we do this in June at the joint council meeting, so that we can benefit from having both of the councils together, having John Carmichael there, and the presentation would be led by John.

Again, the idea is that I know we talk about stock assessments and the SEDAR process in the orientation for new council members, but this really represents a unique opportunity to just kind of push the reset button and get everybody together and talk about the SEDAR Steering Committee and that decision making process.
It gives us a chance to talk about the roles of the SSC and how the SSCs for the individual councils serve those councils in providing scientific advice to the councils for their consideration, but also then the other things that the councils would weigh in addition to the scientific aspects of that decision, the management and the social implications, to help guide how those decisions are made, and then talk a little bit about how SEDAR looks across its full range, because I know that the Gulf Council views SEDAR from a Gulf Council lens, which is appropriate, but the process spans into the South Atlantic and into the Caribbean as well.

If you can understand sort of the lay of the land across the range of where this system is used, it, I think, equips all of us to function as efficiently as possible in making those decisions and so I just wanted to talk with you a little bit about that and get any feedback that you might have on things you can envision that would be helpful for you to include in that discussion in June and then, after that, and once we’ve finished our discussion on that, I will talk about something the influences the SEDAR process and that is the outcome of the peer review that we conducted in 2014 on our stock assessment programs in the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. I will stop there and see if there are any questions or comments.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Anyone have any questions or comments? I look forward to the presentation, Bonnie. My first experience at the SEDAR Committee meeting was this last October and so I went into the meeting with not a lot of background and as I found during our discussions, there wasn’t a lot of background written that could help guide a council member, whether it be a Chair or a Vice Chair or anything, through that committee and that process and so we discussed it at that time and I’m looking forward to something that I think would be helpful for us in the near term, but potentially in the long term, too.

We talked about it being more of a kind of an educational document for the public, for that matter, and for council members, something that we can refer to from time to time, and it would be helpful, I think, in serving our needs to give some feedback on SEDAR and these prioritizations that we make relative to species and assessments.

**MR. RIECHERS:** The only other thing, Kevin, is in the earlier discussion today, I think you had mentioned that maybe at that meeting that you all, as a SEDAR Committee, had requested of the Science Center some notion of the number of assessments, the number of scientists, and how those assignments are being made,
the number that you think you could produce each year so that there basically is a matching up of kind of the assets of the agency with the work that needs to be done.

I would hope maybe by the time we get together, or even before then, at our March meeting, that we could see some of that, because that certainly would help with that understanding.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes and as I envisioned and talked to Bonnie on a couple of occasions here, it’s kind of akin to a matrix. You have one staff scientist and that staff scientist has a budget of 20 percent of their time goes to this and 50 percent to that and such and so if you expand that out by ten staff stock assessment scientists and you look under the column of stock assessments and add all of that up, then you can kind of come to a kind of a general idea as to what the production would be at that staff level and so yes, that’s what I envision and that’s what I think Bonnie is going to be presenting. Any other questions or comments to Dr. Ponwith on SEDAR Committee? Very good.

DR. PONWITH: What I would like to do is bring to your attention the slide that’s on the screen right now. As you know, we have embarked upon a cycle of programmatic peer reviews in the Southeast Fisheries Science Center that’s mirrored in each of the six fishery science centers around the coast.

Our first peer review in 2013 was focused on the data collections that we do that feed stock assessments for stocks that are managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This year, in 2014, or last year now, but in 2014, the peer review focused on that stock assessment process, the programs themselves.

The results from our peer review, the individual peer review panelist reports, are now posted to the website that’s up there and also to my website at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, but this is sort of the master one, so you can see all of them. Then the Center response to those individual peer review reports is also posted there and then there’s a national overview.

Basically, by conducting a peer review program that’s in sync across all of the six fishery science centers, it enables us to look not only within each science center, to know what’s working and what needs work, but it allows us to look across them and look for emerging findings that bubble up at a national scale and give us an opportunity to make course corrections and improvements at a national scale.
What you will see there at that website is the peer review, individual peer review, reports for each of the six science centers and a summary and response report from each of the six science center directors for their specific and then you will see a national overview that was prepared by the Office of Science and Technology and our Chief Science Advisor, Dr. Richard Merrick.

I know those reports will be of interest to you, because it certainly influences the way the SEDAR process functions and then also how we will be functioning in the future when we make some of these improvements to the program based on the feedback that we got.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bonnie. That takes us to Recess and we will begin Public Comment at three o’clock and so please be prompt. It’s almost quarter to. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We will begin public testimony. For those in the audience that wish to continue their conversations, if you could do so outside, please, in deference to our folks that would like to provide testimony.

Just as a reminder, for those that it might be their first time here, providing public comments -- In knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the council is a violation of federal law and a digital recording is used for the public record.

To instruct those that may be new, we have a green light, yellow light, and red light there at the podium and each person will have three minutes to provide their comments. I will read out a name and that will be the person that’s up at the podium and then a second name and if that person could kind of be waiting, standing off to the side, to come up to the podium once the person is done speaking, that would help speed up things.

We have about forty-five cards and so it should take us out to our full two-and-a-half hours of public testimony time. That being said, the first person to speak is J.P. Brooker, followed by Dewey Destin.

PUBLIC COMMENT

MR. J.P. BROOKER: Thank you, Chairman Anson, and thank you to
the council for the opportunity to give comment. My name is J.P. Brooker and I’m with the Ocean Conservancy, based in St. Petersburg. I am also a recreational fisherman, born and raised in Cocoa Beach, and I’ve been fishing throughout Florida my whole life.

I would like to offer two brief comments to the council on behalf of the Ocean Conservancy’s 120,000 members. First, with respect to gag grouper, Ocean Conservancy commends the council on taking into account ecosystem factors such as the recent red tide event.

Seeking out possible ecosystem effects and analyzing their impacts on managed stocks leads to strong management decisions with strong scientific underpinnings. Although the council is now faced with the prospect of nearly doubling ACLs for gag, the Ocean Conservancy recommends that the council take a precautionary approach. Acting conservatively now, when setting catch limits for gag, would alleviate concerns among the fishing public about the accuracy of the gag stock assessment and it would allow for more time to ensure that the stock is actually rebuilt.

Among other conservative approaches, the council should consider using the previously established ACLs for 2015, as this would still mark an increase in catch levels, while also taking into account uncertainty regarding the stock assessment.

Ocean Conservancy also urges the council to undertake an analysis as to why gag landings have fallen short of the catch limits in 2014 and in previous seasons and take this information into account when setting catch limits for 2015 and onward.

Second, if the decision is made to go forward with a plan amendment that would adjust the SPR for red snapper, Ocean Conservancy recommends the council consider a broad range of possible options, including alternatives that would increase the SPR above 26 percent, up to levels of 30 to 40 percent, as is consistent with the biology of the stock. We also remind the council that the SSC has already made past motions to maintain SPR at 26 percent.

Given the council’s interest in setting constant catch levels, lowering the SPR is likely to have the opposite effect, creating a less resilient stock with variable catch levels into the future. Accordingly, Ocean Conservancy urges the council to fully explore and understand the risks associated with changing SPR levels. Again, thanks for the opportunity to give comment.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, J.P. We have Dewey Destin, followed by John Braswell.

MR. DEWEY DESTIN: Thank you, council, for this opportunity to speak. I come today to speak in opposition to Amendment 28, which I think purports to reallocate some of the snapper quota from the commercial over to the recreational side. I speak in opposition to it for two reasons.

One of them is fairly simple and straightforward. I am in the restaurant business now and my restaurant and a number of restaurants in Destin serve fresh, local fish, primarily a lot of snapper, Harbor Docks, McGuire’s, Lulu’s, who is opening in Destin, and a number of others. The fresh fish that we serve is what makes us stand out from the chain restaurants. It’s what makes it possible for us to compete with them. Without those fresh, local fish, we will not be able to be economically viable.

We serve, I would guess, probably somewhere between 500,000 and a million, amongst us, fresh meals, seafood meals, each summer and the great majority of it is red snapper, our most popular fish. If we reduce and reallocate 400,000 pounds, or whatever the amount is, it can, at four-ounces, come out to around 750,000 meals at $15.00 a meal and if my Auburn math serves me correctly, that will be around $10 million. That’s a big, big hit for us and we need those fish.

The second reason I oppose it, which is more near and dear to my heart, is that my friends and family have made a living fishing for red snappers in Destin, Florida for over 175 years and many of them still do. I fear that this will be a feel-good, easy solution to the problems that face the economic viability of the recreational fishermen, whether it’s the bait shops that sell bait and tackle or the charter fishermen or the boat dealers. This I don’t want to be construed as a fix to this problem.

The problem of the economic viability of those entities is far more complex than a simple fix like this. I know it’s very hard to turn around a train that’s been on a track for thirty years, but tag and release for a deepwater reef fish does not work. We kill millions of fish every year and throw them back in the water.

This council is going to have to get out of the box and be innovative on how they address these problems. We need an aggregate reef fish bag limit and we need some recharge areas to
go along with that, so we can go back to the way fishing was before World War II and there were always areas where the fish were safe and they weren’t fished.

I urge all of you to do whatever is necessary so that you can come up with some ways that we can move away from a system that obviously can’t work. I looked at a congressional record from 1890 that had testimony in it that was on the live boat well fishing that was going on in the 1890s and they studied that even back in the 1890s and they understood that fish that were caught, I believe the number was out of eighty-feet of water, didn’t live in the wells more than two or three days. Thanks for this opportunity.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Dewey. We have a couple of questions for you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Dewey, it’s good to see you again. You say that what makes your restaurant unique -- I haven’t been to your restaurant. I did try to go one time a couple of years ago and maybe it was too early in the day and you weren’t open yet, but what makes you different than Red Lobster, I guess, is that you are serving all fresh fish or mostly fresh fish?

MR. DESTIN: Yes, we serve as much fresh fish as we possibly can that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico.

MR. WILLIAMS: Red snapper is your signature species?

MR. DESTIN: That’s the one that everybody comes to look for.

DR. DANA: Just a comment and I appreciate you being here, Dewey. For those who don’t know Dewey Destin, his family, great-grandfather, et cetera, is the namesake of Destin and their family has long been in the commercial fishing industry and it ebbs and flows positives and negatives and they have withstood it and Dewey’s restaurant -- I am sorry you haven’t been there, Roy, and make it a point to go. Their restaurants truly do drive tourism in our area, because of the focus that they place on local seafood. Thank you.

DR. DESTIN: Thank you and the point I want to make is that allocating a few hundred thousands pounds and giving the recreational guys a few more days won’t fix the problem. They need to be fishing four or five months out of the year and with some innovative, think-outside-of-the-box ideas, I think that you guys could fix it and really could be heroes. Thanks.
MR. PEARCE: Mr. Destin, one more quick question. I too share your opinion that reallocation is just a Band-Aid, a fix. Do you have any definitive ideas that would help or that we could help to solve the problem, any ideas that you could come up with right now? If not, when you do get them, please give them to us.

MR. DESTIN: One simple one was an aggregate bag of fish, reef fish. That way, we stop killing fish and throwing them away. I really think we need to get back to the way it was before electronic innovations allowed us to hunt every fish down and recharge areas, we would do them like the farmers do and rotate them, so we can be fair to all the communities up and down the coast.

I have talked to my law enforcement friends who are worried that it would be hard to enforce and vessel monitoring systems are now under $1,000 and if I thought I could fish two or three months out of the year if I bought one, I would buy one in a heartbeat, put the electronics on the boat. These boats all have advanced electronics and are worth much more now. That way, we would know if somebody was in the recharge area.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Dewey. John Braswell I heard was not here. Jim Braswell? Jim Clements, followed by Maurice Fitzsimons.

MR. JIM CLEMENTS: Good afternoon. Approval of Amendment 28 must be justified biologically, economically, and socially. Reallocation does not promote conservation and it does not stop recreational overharvesting. It is not supported by the best available information from your own scientists.

It penalizes commercial fishermen for living by the rules, which is not fair or equitable. It illegally justifies recreational quota overages and it does not give recreational fishermen a management plan that works for them.

I have been giving this council reasons why this is a bad amendment for over a year now. For those of you who still think that Amendment 28 is necessary, please consider this.

You start an amendment to solve a problem and the first thing you do is to identify the problem and the purpose and need. In this case, the purpose and need is to, quote increase the stability of red snapper fishing, particularly for the recreational sector.
I don’t know how many times Mr. Perret and other members of this council have pointed out that taking fish away from the commercial sector in order to reallocate fish to the recreational sector does not increase the stability of the recreational fishery. Your scientists have said this and everyone knows it, whether you want to admit it or not.

What is even more absurd is that on Monday, of all people, your legal counsel, which I’m kind of glad she’s not here -- Oh, there you are. You got me there. Your legal counsel said something to the effect that this council needs to go ahead with reallocation, but you may need to change the purpose and need of the amendment.

Those of you who feel that reallocation, any reallocation, will solve the problems in the recreational sector are grabbing at straws and now feel so strongly about the solution that you’re willing to change the problem to fit the solution.

If you are going to change the purpose and need, why don’t you call it what it is, a political fish grab for the recreational sector. Choosing no action as a preferred alternative is the only fair and legal decision that can be made for Amendment 28.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Jim. Next we have Maurice Fitzsimons, followed by David Riley.

MR. MAURICE FITZSIMONS: Thank you for the opportunity to express the situation of the possibility of going to one snapper for the charter sector. In my conversations with a lot of the boats, it would cause extreme problems. They deserve to have the same thing, a two snapper limit, as recreational.

It needs to be definitely two snapper and I’m speaking on the bigger charter boats, the older fellas that have been doing it a long time that I’ve talked to, but the biggest problem I have with that is we feel that the government has never, ever given anything back once they’ve taken it away and we see going to one as a terrible, terrible situation, period. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Maurice. David Riley, followed by Pam Anderson.

MR. DAVID RILEY: Good afternoon. My name is Dave Riley and I am a Vice Commander of the National Organization of Disabled American Veterans and we help ensure that veterans live a life with respect and dignity.
Locally, I run a program that takes disabled vets out fishing. We work with the owner of the Oyster House and he brings out veterans free of charge, disabled vets, and they are saving lives on these trips. These guys are coming back and they need somebody to connect with and on these trips, that happens.

Last year, we were only able to do a couple of trips, because of the short season. Out of nine days, we get maybe two or three days that we can take the guys out and I think that it would be better for the area and for the veterans involved if we could have a longer season and more than one snapper. It’s hard to get the people together and on the trips if there’s not some benefit more than what they’re not told they’re getting. Please keep in mind as you all move forward that longer seasons would be much better for the people involved and larger fish limits. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Riley. Mr. Riley, we have a question over here from Harlon.

MR. PEARCE: I just want to say God bless you for what you’re doing, sir. You’re doing a great job and I want to assure you that this council is working hard to get rid of a nine-day season and we’re trying to figure out a way to make it better for everyone in the Gulf, particularly the individuals like you that have served our country. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have Pam Anderson, followed by David Dekle.

MS. PAM ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Crabtree, and council members. I am Pam Anderson from Captain Anderson’s Marina in Panama City and Fisheries Rep for the Bay County Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts.

First, on Mr. Boyd’s motion to remove the red snapper SPR consideration from the status determination document, et cetera, I would ask that you consider adding requests in that document that spell out which measures will require the rebuilding plan timeline change and what that would look like compared to the current quotas.

When discussing increasing quotas and changing SPR, you discussed risk and let me remind you of a different risk that we have brought to this council numerous times and it is the risk of depleting other species due to the negative impact of an excessive number of aggressive red snapper on the reefs.
Has the council actually analyzed this issue and is this the cause of depletion or accessibility to other species, as anglers and divers have said? We would like to see the answer to that.

Split seasons for northwest Florida will only work equitably if all recreational anglers are given the same seasons, either Gulf-wide or regionally. Otherwise, different subsectors may, through no fault of their own, negatively impact the other and, of instance, eliminating a potential fall season for the for-hire component. It also causes much confusion for tourists and marketing and law enforcement.

Reallocation was initially addressed due to the analyses showing the recreational sector’s increasing economic benefits to the nation. That was the purpose and need and not as an accountability measure.

While it is important to provide the non-fishing public with product, it has been proven that it is better economically for the excess red snapper to be allocated to the recreational sector.

Bag limits for red snapper should stay at two per person. By adjusting bag limits down on a popular species, such as red snapper, you are shifting effort from longer, more lucrative, trips to many short ones, losing the balance of effort on the fishery. Any adjustments made for for-hire boats need to be contingent on the final approval of Amendment 40.

Electronic monitoring with VMS can only impact enforcement and not harvest data. They should be used for anyone caught breaking the rules or laws and not the general law-abiding operators. You have other, less expensive choices for the rest of us.

We still advocate for regional management and I have a list of choices, but I believe I am just about out of time, but, lastly, I just wanted to say that I did send a message to Senator Rubio’s office asking if they could address the section in the MSA that prevents the U.S. Coast Guard from arresting the lancha operators who are illegally fishing in our waters. They were unaware of this issue and will definitely look into it and I’m sure it will help if others contact the office. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mrs. Anderson. We have David Dekle, followed by Buddy Guindon.
MR. DAVID DEKLE: Thank you, guys, for letting me comment. I’m a recreational fisherman and I’ve been fishing out there since the 1970s. I take different groups of fishermen out. I take kids, inner-city kids, that otherwise would never get a chance to go out and even fish in the Gulf. I take Christian groups and I take youth groups. I have a program with the disabled veterans and I take those guys out all the time.

The limit of two snapper is at the very -- I mean that’s it as far as making it worthwhile going out even in the Gulf to enjoy a fishing trip. I am also a consumer and I charter boats sometimes too for different groups and I would never pay a charter boat guy to go out and catch one snapper. It’s just not worth it.

There is unintended consequences when people make these rules and not thinking of them of a one snapper limit. The unintended consequences are I won’t be able to take the disabled vets and I won’t be able to take these Christian groups and I won’t be able to take youth groups.

I am just one guy speaking for the group of people that I know and I don’t want those people to be deprived of a nice trip on the Gulf and they really look forward to it and on somebody sitting somewhere in the government and saying, make it one snapper and that’s fine. Well, there is unintended consequences and I hope you all think about those unintended consequences when you make these rules, because it does hurt people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. We have Buddy Guindon, followed by Jillian Williams.

MR. BUDDY GUINDON: Hi. I’m Buddy Guindon and I’m a, of course, a fisherman and Executive Director of the Reef Fish Shareholder’s Alliance. I own a commercial fishing business in Galveston.

I am here to reiterate the Amendment 28 flaws. We really need to -- I was amazed that Roy and staff asked the committee to come up with a few things and there was total silence. That’s amazing to me. I don’t know what the endgame is there, but I can’t wait to hear it.

We really need to get away from dragging these issues through the mud and down the road for many, many, many council sessions, because there’s a lot of other issues that need to be addressed. The rest of the reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico, where we’re
limiting the access to amberjack and we’re setting a season that keeps getting shorter and shorter so that the discard rate in the commercial fishery keeps getting higher and higher and the fact that vermilion snapper are being — The catch rates have gone to very low levels, even though there’s just a few people doing it.

We have a lot of work to do here and it would be great if some of our representatives could start moving things forward instead of just kind of acting on your own personal agenda and start getting some of the work that needs to be done for the Gulf of Mexico done and I especially speak to some of the state representatives that are coming in here and just lining up and making votes that aren’t in the best interest of the fishery and that are just in the best interests of what their personal feelings or their state feelings are.

I think we need to take and put upfront the future of the Gulf of Mexico and the things that can be done like a full retention fishery in the commercial fishery. It will leave more fish in the water for everybody and those things, because of the way we’re playing the game of council management and fisheries management, are delaying everything else in the Gulf that needs to be done and I hope you get your act together and start to move this forward. I know that Roy would like to see nothing more than the fishery get finished up and managed properly. Thanks for your time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Buddy. Jillian Williams, followed by Mike Jennings.

MS. JILLIAN WILLIAMS: Hello, everyone. I am Jillian Williams from Galveston. I’m a fourth-generation captain for Williams Partyboats and as you all probably know, we are in the Headboat Collaborative Program. It’s our second year in it and we had a wonderful season with it last year or I guess I should call it a year instead of a season.

It was so beneficial to us and our customers and it was just absolutely wonderful and I am hoping that we can push through to eventually do this kind of thing for everybody. It’s worked out so great for us and our neighbors, an opposing company that’s next door to us, they’re in the program this year too, because they saw how great it worked out for us.

Without it, with the season being only nine days, I don’t know how well we would have made it through the year. You have to consider, for example, we had an issue with an air conditioner
catch on fire in our wheelhouse this year and it only burned the air conditioner and it didn’t cause any kind of major damage, but in the process, we had to have the fire department come out and look at it and then the Coast Guard has to come out and look at it.

Then once we fix it, the Coast Guard has to come back out and look at it. If that had happened during our nine-day season that we would have ended up with last year, we would have missed every single day and with the program that we’re in, that wasn’t a big deal.

We would just take the people fishing the next week, after we get the problem solved. It’s been really great for us, as well as our customers. They don’t have to worry about battling for just the nine days and they can kind of come when it’s easier for them and things like that and so hopefully we can get something like that done in the future and it’s been working wonderfully for us.

As far as Amendment 28 goes, I don’t think reallocating or giving more fish to the recreational sector or taking fish out of an accountable program and putting it into a program where we don’t have a clue as to exactly what’s going on right now is not really the best idea, in my opinion.

As far as sector separation, I am pretty sure you all are passing that through and hopefully some good will come of that. We just need to make some changes and hopefully we’ll get something going for the best and thank you all very much for all your help.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Jillian. Mike Jennings, followed by Johnny Williams.

MR. MIKE JENNINGS: Hello and my name is Mike Jennings and I’m a charter boat owner and hunting outfitter out of Freeport, Texas. I’m also the President of the Charter Fishermen’s Association. From an association standpoint, we would like to thank this council and the individuals on it who stood up against some pretty stiff political pressure to do what we felt was the right thing and move Amendment 40 forward.

Now that we’ve done that and we’re going through the process of waiting on the Secretary of Commerce to sign this thing, I am hopeful that that’s what is going to happen and we would like to see this council continue to move forward with that. I am hoping that the plan is not just to sit back and say, well, we
did it and now let’s just let the sunset catch it and let’s start all over again. At least I’m hoping that’s not the plan.

We would like to also ask that the council remove the charter for-hire industry from Amendment 39 altogether. Regional management, if the states would like to move forward with it and try their hand at managing red snapper on the private recreational side, we have no reason to not support that, but we would like to have the charter for-hire industry removed from it and we would like to work under a different path of management.

We support Alternative 1, no action, in Amendment 28 and we would like the council to look at the thirty-four-inch fork length on amberjacks.

We would also like to ask the council to leave the red snapper at two fish per person. The one fish per person is not something that any one of our membership, from Florida to Texas, has supported in the least. There has been very, very few charter boat operators that support that. Some are kind of neutral, but the biggest majority are not in support of the one fish bag limit.

I would like to ask the council to move forward with the AP recommendation on that split season scenario, a short season for 2015, and then see what’s left, if anything is left, for a later fall season, with the importance there being placed on not going over the allocation versus the longest season that we can get.

I would like to urge the council to start moving forward with a comprehensive, accountable, and flexible charter for-hire management system focusing on beyond the 2015 season and we would like to ask the council to reconvene the Charter For-Hire Ad Hoc AP or the Charter For-Hire Management AP with that specific type charge and let’s see, once the Secretary signs Amendment 40, if we can move forward and make it useful, rather than just a feel-good move that we’re trying to chase a sunset provision. I appreciate it and thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mike. We have a couple of questions for you, Mike, from Harlon and then followed by Roy.

MR. PEARCE: Thank you, Mike. Mike, thanks for your comments, first off, and, secondly, you’re aware we’ve got a three-year sunset and your industry that we’ve got to concern ourselves with if we’re going to do our job correctly.

I think you realize that we’re trying to find money to get a VMS
and a validated program hopefully in 2015. Is your organization willing to start putting VMS on the boats for us and begin to collect real-time data for that program?

MR. JENNINGS: Yes, sir. Of course, with anything, just like with the commercial industry, when we were discussing the VMS, the first comment out of anybody is going to be where is this money going to come from and we know there’s been some money set aside for that and we know some of the work that you have done, Harlon, on that and we appreciate it, but for the most part, the consensus has been that we’ll do it if we have to.

If that’s what it takes to move forward, most of these businesses is what provides for these gentlemen’s families and their livelihood and as much as $3,000 or $2,500 or $1,700, depending on what kind of unit or what you’re looking at on price, it’s a lot of money to any one of us if it puts us to making three and four and five times that amount added to our income over the year because of our access to a fishery within biting the bullet and worrying about where the money is going to come from later and it’s just something we may have to do.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mike, thank you for coming and a question. When you said you wanted charter for-hire to be managed separately, are you talking about red snapper or are you talking about --

MR. JENNINGS: I would like to see it for all fish, but just not within that regional management concept. We just would rather work outside of it. Under Amendment 40, it gives us that ability and we would like to see the council move forward with it that way rather than planning on -- I suspect that the three-year sunset was literally set in there for that reason and that’s just guesswork on my part, that it was put there so that we would all be right back in the same management process under regional management at some future date and it’s just not something we’re interested in.

MR. WILLIAMS: You’re speaking for the Association?

MR. JENNINGS: I am speaking for the Charter Fishermen’s Association, 527 members.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thanks again, Mike. Johnny Williams, followed by Ken Haddad.

MR. JOHNNY WILLIAMS: Johnny Williams from Williams Partyboats, Incorporated, in Galveston. I’m a third-generation partyboat operator out of Galveston, Texas. My business was established
by my grandfather in 1946. First, I would like to thank everyone at this table for passing Amendment 40. It was truly the right thing to do and we’re very grateful that you did this.

However, we don’t want to drop the ball now. We had an ad hoc committee meeting for the for-hire sector where we got some stuff accomplished, but I think we need to reconvene the panel and, as a matter of a fact, my idea was to have two panels, one for partyboats and one for charter boats.

At our meeting, we decided that they probably are mutually exclusive and we actually voted to separate the partyboats from the for-hire sector and leave the two sectors, the partyboats and the charter boats. These panels could be made up of members that are on the partyboats on the party boat ad hoc committee and the charter boats on the charter boat ad hoc committee.

Like I said, I’ve been asking for sector separation since 1989 when I got involved with the council and most of you all weren’t around then. There are a couple of us that were here then and all I have to say is, man, I don’t know how you guys managed to stay so young while I got old over the years, but, anyway, you all have worked real hard with me on this and I appreciate your help, but let’s not drop the ball now. Let’s carry it over the goal line.

I want to tell you a couple of benefits to our program. I am in the program now where we have that pilot program where we can fish outside the normal red snapper season and just a few observations.

It’s a lot more beneficial for our patrons. If I had to fish during the nine-day season on the Captain John last year, there was only one Saturday there and a lot of my patrons like to go on a Saturday and if they would have gotten blown out on that Saturday, they would have been shut out for the year.

Now if they want to go on a Saturday, they can make reservations say for like this Saturday and we may not be able to go out and the weather forecast looks pretty bad right now. We’ve got just about a full boat ready to go this Saturday, but it’s no big deal and we can reschedule it for another day and so that helps them out.

This time of the year, the release mortality is much better when the water is colder. The fish don’t seem like they float off like they do in the summer months and so that’s a benefit. As far as safety at sea, if the weather is bad, the boats don’t
have to go out fishing. They can wait until the weather is better.

Also, we’re able to keep crews around. When we have such a short season, it’s hard to keep the crew through the wintertime and I see my time is out, but, once again, I want to thank you for passing Amendment 40, but let’s not drop the ball now. Let’s continue on and push it across the goal line. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Johnny. We have a question from Harlon.

MR. PEARCE: Johnny, thank you for your presentation and part of your ad hoc committee meeting, you recommended that you have a split season, 66 percent, and then a later season. You’re at risk of not getting that late season and I know you realize that, probably, but why did you all decide to do that?

MR. J. WILLIAMS: The reason we chose to do that is we want to be accountable. There’s the possibility that we may not be able to fish in the second season and our group as a whole wants to be accountable in this fishery.

We want to be stewards of the resource and we want to be upfront and we want to show that we’re just not out trying to be greedy or anything like that and we want to be accountable and we want to be responsible. That’s why we chose to do that, because if it turns out that we harvest more fish than we thought the first season and then we could take them off the second season, if we get a second season at all, but we just want to be accountable and be responsible. Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Williams. Ken Haddad, followed by Randy Boggs.

MR. KEN HADDAD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and council members. My name is Ken Haddad and I’m here on behalf of the American Sportfishing Association, which is the trade organization for the sportfishing industry.

In past meetings, you have heard our industry tell you that they’re being impacted by the conflicting management of red snapper and so please remember that in your deliberations, that there is an industry, ranging from bait and tackle shops to marinas and manufacturers, impacted by decisions you’re making.

Speaking to Amendment 28, we’ve heard a lot about the purpose and need and conflicts. To me, the key words are “fair and
equitable”, “increase”, “net benefits”, and “increased stability”. This does not state that these actions will fix or solve the recreational fishing issues in the snapper fishery. It’s not intended to. We know that. It will help, however.

We also believe that seemingly compelling arguments some have been presenting against a reallocation are invalid. First, allocation is not just about fixing the fishing issues. It’s about fair and equitable distribution of fish to the commercial and recreational sectors. To argue against any change because it does not completely fix the recreational issues is simply the wrong way to look at it.

Second, over quota concerns have been seemingly mitigated by the most recent AMs that, to date, have eliminated the overharvest issue and the recreational community gave up one-million pounds as a buffer to reach that point.

Third, the not so subtle arguments that portray the recreational sector as irresponsible and unaccountable and the reason for its problems is just not true. We follow the regulations that the council gives us and so please don’t use that as a reason not to help us.

Then, fourth and most important, you now have clear and compelling evidence, scientifically vetted by the SSC, that concludes a long-term underestimate of recreational landings. This has an impact.

The recalculation of allowable catch based on that underestimate has produced additional catch and that catch should be allocated to the recreational sector. It just is logical. How anyone with a sense of fairness can argue against this new information, it’s very discouraging and it’s just wrong.

Please add alternatives to Amendment 28, Action 1, that recognize the new and best scientific information now available and that recalculates allocation based on the underestimate of recreational catch and change in the sensitivity calculations. This would fit nicely in the current amendment, as it increases net benefits, increases stability, and reduces the likelihood of overharvest and now, more than ever, provides fair and equitable allocation.

Is this the final solution? No, but it helps and you’re going to have to think outside the box, and this is the second time you’ve heard this, to help us with an overall solution. Finally, we encourage the states to take control of Amendment 39
and work for us the way you always have and figure out a best path for implementation.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Ken, you’re going to have to wrap it up. You are a little over time.

MR. HADDAD: Sorry. We need someone to help sort out the confusion and conflicts created in the recreational fishery and we’re counting on you and the rest of the council to get us in a better place. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you and we have a couple of questions for you, Ken, from Harlon, followed by Roy.

MR. PEARCE: Thank you, Ken, for your comments, as always. I appreciate all of your comments and I, like you, believe that it’s not the private recreational’s fault that they overharvest. It’s the inability of this council to find a better way for them to stay within their allocation.

You keep intimating that we need different ideas and different thought processes outside the box other than allocation and do you have any that you can share with us today or anything you can help us with?

MR. HADDAD: Harlon, I think a number of ideas have been shared even today by some fishermen. The problem is when we share them, it doesn’t get vetted through the council and it’s just public comment and so, to me, there needs to be a better way to share our ideas, because this just isn’t the best way to do it.

MR. PEARCE: I agree with you. Thank you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Ken, would you be willing to change Amendment 28 into just recalibration and dump the rest of it, the MRFSS recalibration?

MR. HADDAD: Technically, I don’t know. I mean I think right now this new information is kind of a hit-you-in-the-face kind of information that whether it’s done -- I think it can be done within this amendment and not throw the amendment out, but just focus on that one part of it by adding the recalibration into it. I guess I can’t answer that, Roy. I mean I support moving forward with something that looks at this new evidence.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Ken. We have Randy Boggs, followed by Susan Boggs.
MR. RANDY BOGGS: Good morning, everybody, and thank you all for letting me speak. I appreciate you being here. I hear a lot of talk about new ideas and I came to the council about five years ago with a new idea and three years of work and we got it implemented a year ago, the Gulf Headboat Collaborative. We have electronic monitoring and we have fish receipts that go with the fish and we had a great year this year. We stayed within quota and we came in underweight on our fish and I’m very, very proud of where we’re at.

We’re going into our second year this year and I heard a lot of talk that the Headboat Collaborative would put a lot of people out of business and I didn’t see anybody around me go under this year and so we’ve got over half the fleet of headboats now clamoring to be in the program. We’ve had more applicants that we have spaces and we need to move forward with this.

We’ve got a good idea and it’s working. It seems to be going really, really well. Again, I would love to see us reallocate some commercial fish to the recreational side, but you can’t take fish away from a good steward and give them to a side that’s not doing anything.

When we get our own house in order, then maybe we can do something. The recreational fishermen are being good stewards of the resource and they’re not abusing it. They are leaving fish in the water and we’re making sure that the fish are landed like they should be.

The advisory panel voted to separate the headboats out. We’ve got our own landings and I would be really, really careful with the calibration workshop. I know how many fish we caught in 2011 and 2010 and with the headboat plan the way it is, the total allowable catch has doubled since then and the amount of fish that I caught then and what I’m allocated this year did not double. It came in quite a bit under that and so the calibration is close, but it’s not exactly right.

We’ve got real hard numbers to work with in the headboats. We have exact landings and know what we caught and if the total allowable catch doubles, then you would think that the number of fish that I harvested, based on this program, would have doubled and it didn’t and so we’ve got some work to do on the calibration workshop. That’s pretty much all I’ve got today, guys, and thank you all.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Randy. Susan Boggs, followed by Bill Butler.
**MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** Good afternoon. My name is Susan Boggs and
with my husband, Randy, he and I own two Gulf Headboat
Collaborative participating vessels, one charter-for-hire
vessel, a charter office that books for nine charter boats and
four inshore boats, and a dock store that sells fuel, bait, and
ice.

Currently, I do not support Amendment 28. I cautiously support
Amendment 39 and I have two concerns. First, the Secretary of
Commerce has not yet signed off on Amendment 40, which would
allow for separate allocations for private recreational anglers
and the charter-for-hire sector. Once Amendment 40 is in place,
then a move toward regional management would be favorable for
the private recreational angler.

Second, in three years, with the sunset provision in Amendment
40, the charter-for-hire sector could be thrown back into a
potentially unstable fishery. I believe the future for the
purely recreational fisherman is in regional management. Let me
cautions you to please be careful what you ask for and if this
passes, do it right. This could be a great move for all
parties, but, if done wrong, could lead to no season for
recreational fishermen.

The Gulf Headboat Collaborative is in the second year of its
two-year EFP. It is important for the council to move forward
with the plan for the headboats that can extend these benefits
to all Gulf headboats.

This has been a very successful program. It has benefited
recreational fishermen by giving them greater access and has
benefited the families of those who work in this industry. I
ask that you move to make this a permanent program and I thank
you for your time to comment.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you, Susan. Bill Butler, followed by
Scott Hickman.

**MR. BILL BUTLER:** Hi and thank you, all. My name is Bill Butler
and I am co-owner with my brother of the Venice Marina in
Venice, Louisiana. I want to thank the council for passing
Amendment 40. It’s a good thing. We have a big charter fleet
down in Venice and it’s good to see. We also have a lot of
recreational people come down there and I would also like to see
them remove the permitted charter boats from Amendment 39 and I
support Alternative 1.
I would like to see the amberjack size get a little bit bigger. That way, these guys can still have more fish and access to this resource. It would be kind of foolish for guys to go try to catch one red snapper. The guy is going to launch his boat and put gas in his boat and ice in his boat and bait in his boat to go catch one? It just doesn’t make a lot of sense.

Two nice fish, ten-pound aggregate, is what’s probably going around the Gulf and that’s twenty pounds and if you’ve got four guys and eighty or a hundred pounds of fish, that’s a good mess of fish. It will get a pot dirty.

There is better ways to handle this recreational fishery. You’ve got probably tens of millions of dollars of education sitting at that table and it’s a shame that we can’t come up with a system and I appreciate you for your time and hopefully you will make some right decisions.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Mr. Butler, we have a question or two.

DR. PONWITH: Thank you very much for your testimony. You said you would be interested in seeing the amberjack size increased a little bit and do you have a feel for what size you think would be the --

MR. BUTLER: Thirty-four to thirty-six inches.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I have Scott Hickman, followed by Gary Bryant.

MR. SCOTT HICKMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the Gulf Council. I would like to very much thank you for passing Amendment 40. I would like for the council to move forward with a flexible, accountable management system for the fleet and I would definitely like to see the council remove federally-permitted charterboats from Amendment 39, once and for all.

Amendment 28, as a new shareholder in the red snapper fishery, this system works. It’s great and instead of punishing these folks that have been doing it right and taking care of their fishery and becoming accountable and a good sustainable system, I think we should, instead of taking fish that are going to the American consumer, fix the recreational system and this will not fix the recreational system.

As far as amberjacks, a thirty-four-inch fork length makes a lot of sense, especially with the amount of biomass that could be increased over the years, and let those fish reach sexual maturity so they can reproduce.
I definitely support a two-fish bag limit for red snapper for the charter boat fleet. One fish is a hard trip to sell. I would like to thank Harlon for all the hard work he has done with the Data Collection Committee over the years and all the hard work that GSI has done in moving forward to getting some funding so we can get some electronic logbooks on these charter boats.

Speaking of VMS, I have heard some people talking negatively about VMS on some of these smaller boats. I’ve got a thirty-six-foot center console T-top-style boat with three engines on the back of it and I’ve got one of the new CLS America units that’s out and it’s fabulous and it takes the abuse.

I could mount that unit on a small canoe if I wanted to. It’s very nonintrusive and the only thing I probably think has been intrusive about it is my wife can now text me and email me when I’m offshore and so she gets mad at me if I don’t get back with her in forty-five minutes or so and so when I get home, I catch heck.

Other than that, I appreciate it and also, the Mexican fishing deal, I have been coming to this podium for years and talking about our guys in our association in south Texas saying how bad it is and the Coast Guard is right on. It’s a big problem and so whatever the council can do to write a letter to the IUU or somebody like that supporting maybe getting some more resources put at that problem, that would be great. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Scott. We have a question for you from Dr. Dana.

DR. DANA: Thank you, Scott. Just a question. You just were remarking on the VMS for the charter for-hire and are you still seeing -- Are you seeing a lot of those folks that aren’t federally permitted crossing the line and going from state to federal waters or I don’t know and what’s --

MR. HICKMAN: Where I’m at in Galveston, our state water guides don’t have federal permits and even the recreational fishermen on my dock are not concerned about the nine-mile limit. As far as law enforcement presence, there were a few tickets I think written last year in south Texas on people that were caught fishing in the EEZ for red snappers during the closed federal season, but people fishing in the EEZ, where I’m at in Galveston, if the weather is nice and it’s a weekend, there is lots and lots and lots of boats fishing in federal waters for
red snapper. It’s just common practice in Texas.

We have a very limited state water fishery on the upper Texas coast. You go on Facebook and see all these people posting all these red snappers behind their boats and they’re not catching them in state waters on the upper Texas coast and the people are pretty happy with the way things are. There is just not enough law enforcement resources to go out there and catch these folks and so the risk versus the reward is very, very low and so I think they’re pretty happy with the state water season in Texas.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Next we have Gary Bryant, followed by Tom Steber.

MR. GARY BRYANT: Gary Bryant, owner and operator of Red Eye Charters here in Fort Morgan, Alabama. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on these issues. Amberjack, we want the amberjack season to be as long as possible and if it’s take a thirty-four-inch or thirty-six-inch fish, we are just looking for more days to target them.

Amendment 28, I don’t think we should do any reallocation until our other sectors get accountable. Amendment 39, I think it’s a great choice for the private recreational, but I wouldn’t want to see Amendment 39 without sector separation. I think the charter for-hire needs to be ensured that we’ll be our own sector and not at the whims of state politics.

Amendment 40, in support of some of the things -- I was on the ad hoc committee and I support the split season and the reason we supported that is it was very important to us that we did not go over our quota. We want to prove that we can manage this fishery and be responsible stewards.

I also supported the one fish. For me, getting more days on the water will work with my business. It’s not an issue to stay at two, but, given the opportunity, I would like to have more days. Also, I would suggest you went ahead and you split out the headboats. They have twenty years of data and let them use their data to manage themselves.

My main concern is the timeline. It was pointed out to the ad hoc committee that to get a fishery management plan in place could take three years.

Roy elaborated yesterday in the round table that the fastest it could happen was two and please start the process to give the charter for-hire industry a fishery management plan. Our goal
is to get to a flexible system that allows flexibility and accountability and that’s our goal and we would appreciate you all starting that process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Gary. Tom Steber, followed by Dale Woodruff.

MR. TOM STEBER: I’m Tom Steber, representing the Alabama Charter Fishing Association as its President. Our charter for-hire industry across the Alabama Gulf Coast and its 200,000-plus recreational anglers that we take fishing each year are so thankful for the council’s decision at the last meeting to push forward with sector separation and hopefully we will get it through the Department of Commerce and we can get on down the road.

We support the charter for-hire twenty-day season and a two-fish bag limit. We do have member in our organization that like one and thirty-five days, but the vote was a twenty-day season and a two-fish bag limit.

The main thing is we don’t want to overfish and so if we come in and we’re underfished, then maybe we can have a few more days in October. We support a thirty-four-inch fork limit on amberjack and we definitely support the Headboat EFP and how it has worked. You are going to hear over and over again how well it has worked and let the headboats continue on and bring all the headboats into their own sector.

We are against Amendment 28. I don’t think it’s fair to penalize the industry that has taken care of itself and, most of all, we support the Charter Fishing Association’s industry management plan that you all have. It’s very simple and it’s very clean and we feel like it’s easy to manage and it will get us out of this derby fishing and let the charter for-hire manage its own business. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Tom. Dale Woodruff, followed by Steve Tomeny.

MR. DALE WOODRUFF: I’m Dale Woodruff from the Charter Boat Class Act in Orange Beach, Alabama. Thank you for passing Amendment 40. The charter for-hire industry needs to be completely separated from the true recreational fishermen and so we need to move forward with that. It takes two -- Roy said possibly two years and I heard three years on getting a fishery management plan or something for the charter for-hire. We need to start that process now and it doesn’t need to be delayed. It
needs to be started now.

The charter for-hire management AP needs to meet before the AP council and go ahead and let’s bring that back up and let’s have some more discussions for the flexible and accountable charter for-hire management plan. We really need this thing moving.

Amendment 28, Alternative 1, no action, or do away with Amendment 28 and take it off the board and pile it up and throw it in the garbage. All you’re doing is you’re penalizing somebody that is taking care of the fishery and it’s not going to help. You get two days and we’ve heard our council members, the ones with some commonsense, they know it’s not going to work and it’s dumb to move fish when the fish are just going to be used up and then they’re right back to where they are.

Thirty-four-inch amberjack, that’s fine with me. I heard the guy say the other day on the radio, because I was listening to it on my phone, that he really didn’t know whether a thirty-six or a thirty-four-inch amberjack or a thirty-inch amberjack right now would give more days or not and so it sounds like the science, which there is no science, but it sounds like he didn’t know and he needed more time, if I heard that correctly, but if a thirty-four-inch amberjack will give us more days, then I’m all for the thirty-four-inch amberjack.

As far as one fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish, I know some people that need the two fish and either way. One fish, I can live with that. Two fish would probably be better, but I just don’t want to go over, period. We can’t go over.

The CFH, charter for-hire industry, has gotten together and they said if anything happens, we do not want to go over, period. We do not want to go over and do you all hear that, council? We do not want to go over. Is this working? Hello? Okay. All right.

Now, our Congress has jumped on the science and our Gulf Council has jumped on the science, but I don’t think our science is hearing what they’re having to say. If I had somebody doing a job for me and I had to tell them that they needed to start going a little faster and get to moving a little -- I would either fire them and find somebody else to do that job and no excuses. Not when you’ve got people’s lives and families at stake. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Dale. I have Steve Tomeny, followed by James Bruce.
MR. STEVE TOMENY: How are you doing, council? I am Steve Tomeny and I’m an owner and operator of two large charter headboats in Port Fourchon, Louisiana. I am also a commercial red snapper fisherman and IFQ shareholder.

Of course, I want to thank everybody for Amendment 40. We have been asking for it for several years now and we’ve just go to get some progress made. I want to continue with the progress and get a framework action planned and moving down the pike. We need to get it done and we understand things move at the pace of the council and it’s never fast, but we need to get it rolling as quick as we can.

I never have liked the derby seasons and I’ve never been a big -- It’s just a hard way to run your business and so we feel like we have some plans that have been presented that are fairly simple and I think we’ve got good industry support and I see that as just a huge hurdle, if we can get most of the charter fleets to latch on to something that makes sense and is something we can all get along with that you will see it coalesce and come together real quick.

I would like to see also, with the headboat pilot, just move right on into its own plan that will include all the headboats that want to join. It’s time. We’ve got one more year in the pilot and so things have to start moving along to make that continue.

On Amendment 28, no action is my preferred result. On Amendment 39, I just don’t particularly see a place for my business in that. I’ve fished in federal waters since the late 1980s or even earlier than that.

I had charter boats and I never fished within three or nine miles, but only in bad weather and just something where you’re kind of trying to kill a trip off at the end of the day or something, but, for the most part, we don’t fish in state waters and we don’t really need to be regulated by anybody but the federal government that’s regulating us now and so if they want to do the private recs in Amendment 39, I have no problems with that.

I also think eventually, with all the head-banging on the wall and head-butting that you hear, I think you will end up with a tag system and I want to keep throwing it out there. I think you’re going to have to look at it and understand it and it is a way of constraining the large group that seems to be the numbers
of the private recreational anglers and our charter customers.

We have that problem, but we’re regulated by the amount of boats and the amount of folks that we can haul and so we want to keep ourselves accountable, but I think a tag system will finally be what you will see eventually in the private rec. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thanks, Steve. We have a question for you from Roy.

MR. WILLIAMS: You mentioned a tag system suitable for the private rec. What about you guys?

MR. TOMENY: Our plan has a carcass in the tag in the charter for-hire plan that’s going around. We’re not against it at all. It can be done as an allocation. I have no problem with clipping a tag onto a fish and so it gives us our little universe of fish that’s basically your quota on a plastic tag.

MR. WILLIAMS: So if we could set up a tagging system for you guys, where you were distributed tags and then the states managed red snapper harvest under Amendment 39, with or without a tag, depending on how they wanted to do it, would you be all right with that, Steve?

MR. TOMENY: Yes and I just have to keep throwing it out there. I hadn’t heard anybody come up with a really good way to get this whether it’s a half-million or a million people that are going fishing and we don’t know, but if it’s 250,000 people that make four trips a year, you are back up to this large number of people who if they land a couple of red snapper can really -- You can blow that quota number up pretty quick.

If the quota is out on plastic and plastic has to be attached to each fish, you’re going to not overfish and I think there leaves the room for some more growth in our overall TAC and we should be able to get those TAC numbers up and start helping people have a little more access.

We’re not trying to suggest to anybody -- I was a private recreational fisherman long before I got in the business and so I have all the sympathies with it, but I still -- We have this huge access of a large number of people that want to go and now we have a fish that they can catch readily and they’re big and they’re heavy and it adds up. You know the problem and so -- I will go with the thirty-four on the amberjack for us. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Steve. James Bruce, followed by Bill Staff.

MR. JAMES BRUCE: James Bruce from Cutoff, Louisiana. I’m a third-generation commercial fisherman and Amendment 28 has been around a while and I know it’s been a while since I’ve come to a meeting, but if you all passed 40 and you’re working with 38, what are we doing with 28? We never go over our quota and it’s not our fault and why should we get punished for somebody else’s no good? That’s like sending me to jail for somebody else that did something. It’s not right.

If you all could tell me why you all should take my fish that we got punished for for a long time and we rebuilt it and they’re there -- I don’t understand. Give them a tag system, like Mr. Steve said. It could be done. You all have just got to put you all’s heads together and get it done.

You all need to throw that away and that’s five years that we’ve been with 28. It’s a long time and you all have passed stuff quicker than that. You all did sector separation already and you need to get rid of 28. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Bruce. Bill Staff, followed by Jack Wilhite.

MR. BILL STAFF: Bill Staff from the Charter Boat Sea Spray, thirty-four years of fishing. Thanks for passing Amendment 40 or helping it get passed, we hope. The Secretary of Commerce will do what they need to do and I would like to help support it even further by putting a VMS on my boat or doing something like the commercial people have done and take a percent of a pound out of each or whatever I’ve got to do to pay for the program.

We have a little opposition and somebody didn’t think we would want to pay for it, but we’re willing to do anything we can and just like this week finding out that triggerfish is going to close on February 7. This Amendment 40 is dire. I mean it’s dire.

I support one snapper and some people support two and it’s another reason to let’s further this program, so maybe we can get tags. If I want to catch one per day, great. If they want to catch two per day, then great. Let’s please keep this progression going and have no delays. Just do not set a season that will put us over quota, whatever it takes.

I would like to see the federal permit boats left out of
Amendment 39, until they get a foolproof plan. I am on the ad hoc committee and I would like to ask the council for another meeting before May and I would also like to maybe give you a suggestion that next time you pick a committee, make it easier for the charge and don’t put battering rams up there on the committee and try to do something that will further the charge, please.

Amberjack, whatever size it takes to keep it open at least through October, thirty-four or thirty-six and it doesn’t matter. I am for no reallocation at this point, not until every group gets accountable. I would like to thank you all for the time to speak.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bill. Jack Wilhite, followed by Jim Green.

MR. JACK WILHITE: Hi and I’m Captain Jack Wilhite. I fish out of Orange Beach, Alabama and I’ve been doing that for some time now. I have a six-passenger charter boat and I would like to thank the council for their majority support in passing 40. That has moved us forward in an industry that’s long needed to be moved somewhere. We’ve been hurting for some time.

As far as what I would like to see, we’ve done a lot of work with the different people, different charter boats and different organizations, up and down the coast and I would like you to support our efforts. What we’re trying to do is reach a consensus, which is really hard to do, where everybody is benefitted by what we come up with in our program.

Right now, for next year, or this year, all we can look at is the two-thirds/one-third split and look at the two-thirds season. If we’re going over too much, don’t open the second part, because we do not want to run over.

As far as the electronic equipment, this last time I spent a little over $11,000 on my radar and my GPS unit and so if you’re looking at a $1,000 or $2,000 to put a system on the boat which will let me fish more, I am in and I don’t know who wouldn’t be.

Amendment 28, I would really like to see you all hold off on that until we are at a point where we understand where the fishery is going and we have some kind of a control over it and that’s all I have to say and thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Jack. Jim Green, followed by Chris Niquet.
MR. JIM GREEN: Hello and good afternoon, Chairman Anson and staff and committee members, and thank you for the chance to speak today. My name is Captain Jim Green and I am here today representing the DCBA.

With Amendment 40’s passage and the restoration of hope given to our industry, the DCBA wants to thank you. Whether you voted for Amendment 40 or not, you were part of the process that has given us this great opportunity.

We are confident that our industry can help develop a fisheries management plan that will continue our trade to the next generation and bring accountability to our newly-formed sector. The DCBA’s recommendation for the final framework is Action 1, Alternative 1, and on Proposed Action 2, Alternative 2.

Some fishermen in our fleet feel strongly that two fish is needed for their business. Those of us, like myself, that believe one fish would work are not willing to break up the unity of our sector over this change.

The DCBA is asking you to approve and adopt the recommendation for a split season. As an association, we feel this self-imposed buffer will not only protect our sector from creating overages, but it also shows that we are willing to make sacrifices to ensure accountability for our newly-formed responsibility.

When it comes to Amendment 28, the DCBA feels that this piece of regulatory pie is a measure for fine-tuning. We believe that it should only be part of the discussion once accountability is achieved. Allocation should be addressed, but if allocation was the problem, then doubling the TAC for the 2014 season would have been the silver bullet. It was not and started a fish race to see who could get the most for each state.

As a for-hire fisherman, we understand the desperation for more access, but as time has proved, accountability is the true and consistent way to address an access problem. We believe that this is not only the cart before the horse, but the load of hay before the cart.

On amberjack, the DCBA believes that a thirty-four-inch size limit and a one fish bag limit per person is an acceptable jump to ensure the rebuilding of the stock.

I want to close my testimony on a personal note and I want to
get on the record about the headboat EFP and the future management of headboats. I operate a headboat business that was not in the EFP in Destin and I and the two headboat businesses I personally represent fully support a Gulf-wide headboat management plan that mirrors the current EFP.

I have seen the flexibility and accountability this management style provides and I desperately want to be a part of it and so please move forward on making this the Gulf headboat standard for management.

As Chairman of the AP, I want to thank all of you for the opportunity that was provided to our industry. Our meeting was productive and everyone put away their agendas and focused on what was best for our future. We urge you to push forward with the recommendations from the AP. Amendment 40 was a contentious topic and now that it’s behind us, we are moving forward with the development of a new management plan.

We as an industry will not let everyone’s hard work go to waste. We are prepared to do what’s necessary to ensure accountability and good stewardship of the resource. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Jim. We have a couple of questions here from Harlon.

MR. PEARCE: I just want to say thanks for your leadership on the AP. You all did a great job and came up with some really great ideas and they were forward thinking and that’s what we need. Thank you.

MR. GREEN: I appreciate it, Mr. Harlon, and, also, I heard you talking about VMS earlier and the DCBA’s stand is we want VMS and we want electronic logbooks and if we have to pay for them, we are onboard with that.

MS. BADEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jim, did the DCBA -- When you all were talking about amberjack, did you discuss any changes to the season or are you happy with what you have?

MR. GREEN: The seasons -- Of course, we would like to have access when more people are fishing for it, but if closing in June and July and raising the limit is what gives us a stability, to where we can tell our customers everything but June and July, then we’re onboard with that. Thank you all very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Jim. Chris Niquet, followed by Bart
Niquet.

**MR. CHRIS NIQUET:** Chris Niquet from Panama City, Florida. I am against Amendment 28. They’re going to have it as no action and I would like to speak about the reallocation. One of the problems with the true recreational sector is, if I’m reading this right, you have approximately three-million license holders, private license holders, and I don’t think anybody on this council or any statistician here can tell me how many of those three-million license holders goes fishing for red snapper.

There is not a tag and there’s not a permit and there is no little box you check. Roy alluded to it at the round table. There is no way to keep track.

What I’m suggesting is you give them the option and make them pay a three-dollar or two-dollar or five-dollar fee. That way, if they want to go catch them, you’ve got a number of people who are eligible to catch red snapper.

You can divide that number into the quota, the TAC, and see how many of these people or how many of these fish that each person can catch. If they can catch one fish, you send them a tag for one fish and when they’ve caught that fish, it’s over. Your season has been through, like they do with turkey and deer and several other species of game in the United States.

Now, the comment has been made by members of this council, and I think Dr. Crabtree made it and I think Mr. Harlon Pearce made it, that the true recreational sector, it doesn’t look like how many fish you give them, they go over and I think the reason is because we don’t have a real good accounting system to keep account of it and it just seems completely absurd with all the letters behind all of these names here. You’ve got doctors and lawyers and people in enforcement, but you can’t come up with some way to keep account of the people who are after this species and figure out a tagging system or permit system or some way.

I think the people in the charter for-hire sector should be given their own amount of fish to fish with them as they please, under certain guidelines, without this derby fishing. Thank you very much for your time.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you, Chris. Mr. Bart Niquet, followed by Billy Archer.
MR. BART NIQUET: Thank you. I’m Bart Niquet and I’ve been fishing since 1950 as a licensed operator, which is before some of you were born. I like the concept of this scoping hearing involving more than one fishery at a time. However, the personnel holding these meetings should record more than the number of people attending. Otherwise, you’re simply wasting time and money.

I am in favor of the for-hire and rec fisheries being separated. It sounds like you already have decided on the numbers that you’re going to use.

I am against five regional management areas. We already have enough confusion and manipulating of figures. If a state is found to be falsely reporting their statistics, that state should have no allocation for the next year or no voting privileges. I don’t believe the council should pass any amendments or bills without a comprehensive study. We don’t want to be compared to Nancy Pelosi.

Ten years ago, the council management plans were held up as an example nationwide as how to not manage a fishery and now the commercial plan is allowed as one of the best in the world and surely we are able to do something similar for the recreational fishery. Until you limit participation in the recreational red snapper fishery, your problems will only get worse.

I think Amendment 28 should be buried. It’s dead and we shouldn’t have to manage that part of it by a judge, which it looks like we’re going to have to do.

Incidentally, the hypoxic area, or what is commonly called the Dead Zone, produces over 70 percent of the red snapper and has done so for over forty years. Maybe it’s not so dead and I think that’s all I have and thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Niquet. We have a question for you from Robin.

MR. RIECHERS: Thank you, Mr. Niquet. I didn’t quite catch -- What were you saying? It was right at the beginning of your statements regarding scoping meetings and I just missed that.

MR. B. NIQUET: You brought up here the fact that you’re going to handle more than one fishery at a scoping meeting or talking about doing it and I am in favor of that. I think that it would save a lot of time and money.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: One more question, Mr. Niquet, from Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: You said, or I think you said, that in public hearings you would like to record more than just the numbers of persons attending and could you elaborate on that and what would you recommend?

MR. B. NIQUET: We had some meetings and I know of them was a scoping meeting in Panama City that was pretty involved and the only thing that was reported was the number of people attended and the one in Panama City and the one in Mississippi. It was just simply the number of people attended and it didn’t say whether they were for or against the proposal or anything else.

I think if you’re going to have a scoping meeting and you’ve got some questions you need answered or questions you posed to the public, you should have some idea of how they were voted, for or against them.

DR. DANA: Not a question, but a comment. I appreciate you bringing that up. We, as a council, also brought that up, that we wanted a little bit more information coming out of scoping meetings since you, the fishermen, have taken your time to come there and comment and I think the staff took that to heart and we’ve been getting a more robust follow-up from that.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Billy Archer, followed by Mr. Wayne Werner.

MR. BILLY ARCHER: Good afternoon, council and Mr. Chairman. First, let me start by thanking everybody for their work on Amendment 40. It really has brought hope to our industry. We worked hard at it and you all were very kind to pass it and I have just a few comments.

I’m going to echo a lot of what you all have heard, but, first, please move forward with a flexible and accountable charter for-hire management plan directing the Charter For-Hire Management AP to reconvene before the April council meeting, so that recommendations can be considered by the council.

Also, if the Gulf Council feels that they need to move forward with Amendment 39, I encourage you to do so, but I encourage you to remove the charter for-hire sector out of that amendment.

On Amendment 28, I support Alternative 1, no action. I want to thank all the commercial fishermen in this room here for their continued support on Amendment 40. The amberjack would be great, a thirty-four-inch fork length and we support that.
Lastly, please support a two fish bag limit with a split season, to avoid us going over our quota, and then also I want to thank Harlon and Johnny for you all’s help in the collection of data. We need that and you know we need it and it’s going to be our life-saving grace. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Billy. Wayne Werner, followed by Troy Frady.

MR. WAYNE WERNER: My name is Wayne Werner, owner and operator of the Fishing Vessel Sea Quest. This is probably my seventy-fifth time addressing this council and I don’t know why. I’ve got a lot better things to do, as Corky has been telling me all week.

As far as Amendment 28, this has gone on long enough and let’s get to a point and let’s see what happens. Vote it up or vote it down or pass it on and do what you’ve got to do. There has been no rationale and there has been no reason. If you want to call it exclusive affirmative action, you won’t need any justification and then pass it and let us deal with it from there. This has just gone on way too long.

As far as Number 36 here, now we’re looking at a nine-year review and so let’s get on with that, so we can figure out where we’re going to go from there. If we have any adjustments we’re going to make to this IFQ system, let’s get moving that way.

I don’t understand this dragging on and on. It was a five-year review and they called it an eight-year review last year and this year it’s a nine-year review and let’s get moving. Let’s get headed in the right direction, a positive direction.

I would like to make a comment about these Mexican fish. This is something that is really kind of a situation that needs to be addressed and we’re going to try to support you guys to try to get harsher laws about it. We will go to Washington and I know a bunch of people in this audience that will go to Washington and lobby for it. We would like to see you all put a letter in there to help back it up. I mean it’s time to get moving with progress here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Wayne. Troy Frady, followed by Gary Jarvis.

MR. TROY FRADY: Hi. I’m Troy Frady, a charter boat captain out of Orange Beach, Alabama. I would like to make a few comments. First of all, thank you for passing Amendment 40. It means a
lot to the charter fishing industry to see this council take the
next step in moving into a twenty-first century management
system.

I would like to recommend that the council develop a charter
for-hire management plan and continue moving forward with that.
I would like to support the use of electronic logbooks or VMS or
whatever other validation tools you see fit for our industry.

I would like to also see the council adopt a one fish bag limit.
Now, I’ve heard a lot of comments about which association
supports two overwhelmingly, but you know I sit on the AP for
the charter for-hire and it passed fifteen to five. There was
two dissenting states, which was Louisiana and Texas, who have a
different type of fishery than we have in Alabama.

Last year, I’m going to take you back a little bit, to where
right before or during our April meeting I asked for a one fish
bag limit. Because of the politics that was involved in the
fishery, you all kept trying to pass a buffer, a high enough
buffer, and you even got it up to -- One of the motions was a 30
percent buffer.

At the result of it, at a two fish bag limit, you all put us
down to nine days and if you had gone to one fish, I would have
had more days to fish and so you all created that hardship and
the only reason I’m asking for one fish is because, first, to
me, I am a little scared of what this council can do to
negatively change the outcome of this year, based upon state
noncompliance.

You know I’m trying to be as tender as I can be right there, but
this is serious. I mean I make my living taking customers
fishing and now, not all customers are the same. Everybody
talks about the number of fish and it’s just not worth my while
to go out there for just two fish and, well, I assure you that I
run 85 percent of my charters where we come in with one fish or
less or two fish.

The tourist industry does not have to have all these fish and so
please recognize that there are more people out there who don’t
need fish that come to our coastal communities, but also
recognize the fact that there are those people who need those
fish in other areas.

I want to see amberjacks left at thirty-four inches and whether
it’s one or two fish, set the charter for-hire season at 66
percent of the days that you have chosen. That way, we make
sure we come up under our quota. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Troy. Gary Jarvis, followed by Bob Zales.

MR. GARY JARVIS: Captain Gary Jarvis and you all know me and I don’t have to explain who I am. Add to my little feather in my cap and now I’m a part owner in three seafood restaurants to go along with the fact that I fish for a living in both the commercial and the charter for-hire fishery.

After seven years of hard work by committed charter for-hire fishermen, I want to thank you guys for passing Amendment 40. Now our industry looks forward to working with all of you to finish the framework action on Amendment 40 by supporting and instituting these recommendations.

Number one, we want to propose a conservative buffer for the 2015 season by a split season of twenty-one days starting June 1. Then after landing analyses and harvest rate estimates are established, have National Marine Fisheries set a fall season to fish any remaining allocation starting October 1.

I would like to institute a two fish bag limit and take action on the motions made by the Data Collection Charter For-Hire Fleet in June of 2014 and April of 2010 and institute the mandatory electronic logbooks by June 1. For speed of implementation, I recommend using the data collection system being used in the headboat EFP.

I hope this council will help our industry as we finish this framework action by making a motion and carrying it to start a scoping document to develop an actual charter for-hire FMP that will take into account some of the recommendations made by the charter for-hire ad hoc.

I ask that you reconvene that AP before April, again to focus specifically on alternative management ideas that will help the industry and the saltwater anglers who access the red snapper fishery to evaluate and recommend forms of management that will address regional, seasonal, and business differences amongst our industry that will improve and expand red snapper access to a broader demographic of public saltwater anglers.

I recommend the development of a subsector in the charter for-hire sector established for the headboat industry and to facilitate the development of an FMP for that portion of the charter for-hire sector. They have explored an alternative form
of management with the headboat EFP pilot program and many in that industry want to move towards an FMP using some, if not all, of the tenets of this pilot. It’s time to start to develop a scoping document towards this end.

Our fleet supports a thirty-four-inch fork limit, as recommended by the Reef Fish AP, to improve amberjack rebuilding timelines and increase the stocks and to keep the fishing season open for a longer timeline.

As a dual-permitted charter and commercial fisherman and part owner of three restaurants, I am against Amendment 28 and the stealing of my customers’ access to Gulf red snapper based on a disingenuous attempt to stabilize the recreational fishery. It’s a mere Band-Aid on a leaking dam that is about to break and an absurd action to placate a political agenda that has zero net benefits to the management of the red snapper species. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Gary, we have a couple of questions.

MR. GREENE: Thank you, Gary. I know that where you fish a lot that groupers are a pretty predominant fishery over that way and what are your thoughts about the groupers and the status of that? We’ve seen a little bit of information and the stock doesn’t seem to be working out so well and could you give me a very brief synopsis of what you’re seeing?

MR. JARVIS: I’m a member of the Reef Fish AP and we were subject to the information that the gag grouper had been rebuilt and that scientific morsel is not being made manifest in what we’re seeing in the Gulf of Mexico.

I have a hard time believing that the resource is rebuilt by what we see and what we catch. We had the concern of that huge red tide all last summer, virtually seven months of it, and so that’s why some of the recommendations that came out of the AP on red and gag grouper were so conservative, because of the unknown factor of what the red tide was going to do to the stock and what we were seeing.

Now, I’ve got friends and we have members that I talked to in Clearwater and they had a really, really good red grouper season this past summer and on into this winter and, in fact, all you’ve got to do is go on Facebook and see Captain Eric Mahoney and he is single-handedly trying to eradicate the allocation all by himself. He’s having a really good year, but they’re having a -- In places, they’re seeing some increase in the grouper
fishery, but in the northern Gulf, if the grouper is supposed to be rebuilt, you would assume that there would be some new improved range in their area and we are not seeing that. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Gary. We have Bob Zales, followed by the infamous Eric Mahoney.

MR. BOB ZALES, II: Bob Zales, II, Panama City, Florida. I am also on that ad hoc snapper AP and clearly you are seeing -- I mean because the AP was, what, fifteen to five for one fish, but you have heard some of the members say that they’re at two fish now.

I voted for the one fish and some of the others that are on that panel voted for the one fish, but I can tell you that apparently some of them have changed their minds and so you’re hearing a lot for two fish and so I don’t know where to go with this. I mean because one fish clearly gives you a few more days and two fish, you get less days. Depending on what the states are going to do, you’re going to end up with even less days.

From our experience last year in Panama City, I can tell you that the nine-day season -- You heard complaints that I’ve got to have red snapper. It affected a small number of people, but the vast majority of them pretty much fished any time they wanted to last year and not having snapper didn’t affect them.

I have said this in the past and especially with king mackerel. I have told you that if we didn’t have two fish or one fish or no fish that it was going to put us out of business and that was back in the late 1980s or early 1990s and I’m still here and it hasn’t put me out yet and so whatever you do with snapper eventually is not going to put me out either. I am going to keep fishing for something.

The split season, I keep hearing this stuff about accountability and my support and suggestion to look at, and not to do, but to look at a split season was to see if you could extend the fishery into some other months.

We also asked Andy, because of the floppy disk program that Mike Schirripa created many years ago, Andy played with some stuff with an Excel sheet recently and we asked him to look at what another split season to say move red snapper -- Because if red snapper is king, you’ve got to have red snapper to stay in business, then look at moving the snapper to like May and June and September or April and May and September and October,
because people are on vacation in the summer and they’re going 
to come down and they’re going to go fishing.

Andy is supposedly looking at this, to see what that would do, 
and so that’s kind of where all that went and clearly if you 
divide the season up into two-thirds versus one-third, you will 
get to see whether or not you’re going to meet your quota, but 
with the current buffer -- As far as I know, the data is not in, 
but from what I hear, we are going to be probably a good bit 
under quota for this year, because of the buffer that was there 
last year, regardless of the nine-day season or anything else. 
That’s kind of where that is.

The issue about the Mexican problem, and I’ve told some of you 
all this. Apparently there is 1,100 trips or so that the Coast 
Guard is recording on this and probably more. The boats are 
coming in with 1,500 to 2,000 pounds a trip and you’ve got 1,300 
permitted charterboats and probably 1,100 of them are actually 
fishing and you take what those Mexicans are catching and you 
give me the one slide that showed 2,500 fish -- If you give me 
2,500 red snapper, you won’t see me again. Any questions?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bob. We have a couple of questions 
from Harlon and Roy.

MR. PEARCE: Thanks, Bob, for your comments. Do you still have 
a federal permit? Are you still fishing under federal laws or 
what is going on?

MR. ZALES: Yes, I do. I’ve got two of them.

MR. PEARCE: Thank you for clearing that up. Thank you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Bob, I apologize, but I was talking when you were 
talking about the split season and were you favoring the split 
season?

MR. ZALES: I favored looking to see what it would do and where 
we would go with that and there are two scenarios. A lot of 
what we did at the AP was done with the knowledge of what you 
could implement this year.

I mean there’s a lot of things that we could have come up with 
that you can look at down the road, but there was an effort to 
try to see what we could suggest that might change things for 
this year. That has had a lot to do with the one fish 
suggestion, because it gives you a few more days, and it had to 
do with the split season and that possibly it might do the same
thing.

You might be able to fish some days in June and then once the information is in by August, you may be able to have a September or part of October fishery.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** Do you have any concern about, if you have a fall season, about Florida reopening your waters and the private boat fishery joining you out there?

**MR. ZALES:** I don’t. I suspect others do, but no, it doesn’t bother me.

**MR. RIECHERS:** Bob, thank you. When you’re saying you wanted to explore -- Are you suggesting -- Because if I am remembering the data correctly, both the catch rates earlier in the spring and certainly the catch rates in the fall are less than they are in that summer period and so, conceivably, you extend and you get more days by going in either direction, as opposed to starting on June 1. When you saying you wanted to explore that, to really look at those days, is that what you’re getting at?

**MR. ZALES:** I think that it would be that way, but clearly the data is not there, because we haven’t fished snapper in April and May. We have done September and October once or twice and so Andy really doesn’t have a lot to pick from, to see really where that is, and so he has to make a lot of assumptions.

When I talked to him privately about it, I am saying a ballpark number and you could probably use the headboat thing from last year and that would give you a gauge for those months for those type of boats that you maybe could apply that there.

What I’m looking to try to do is to extend a fishing season close to where we were to having the six-month season. I don’t necessarily think I have to have red snapper to get a full six-month season to have people come fish.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you, Bob. Eric Mahoney, followed by Carolyn Wood.

**MR. ERIC MAHONEY:** Thank you, Chairman and council members and staff. My name is Eric Mahoney, owner and operator of the Charter Boat Daisy May in Clearwater Beach, Florida. First, I would like to thank the council for voting for Amendment 40 at the last council meeting.

It’s very important for our industry to keep moving forward with
it and data collection is a big part of that. The council has voted, as early as 2010, to have data collection a priority for the for-hire industry and still we have seen nothing.

Five years is way too long to wait for something our industry has asked for and needs. With the sunset clause in Amendment 40, this kick-the-can-down-the-road management has to stop and every council member has received a copy of the CFA’s red snapper management plan.

This plan is fair and simple and has unprecedented support within our industry. I hope the council looks for ways to get this plan through in a timely manner.

As far as regional management goes, I am against states having any say in how the federally-permitted for-hire boats are managed. Our industry’s management should always remain at the council level. In my home state of Florida, its commission hasn’t shown me any sign that the federally-permitted charter industry is a priority and, in fact, it has shown just the opposite.

With Amendment 28, reallocation, I honestly can’t believe this is still on the table. Reallocation is a Band-Aid put on a much bigger problem. The recreational fishery in the Gulf has serious management issues and taking fish from the one sector that’s accountable doesn’t send a very good message. We need long-term management plans and ideas for our sector and not reallocation that has very little upside.

As far as the red snapper bag limit, I am fine with the status quo of two fish per person. We have some fishermen in the industry that need the two snappers to get trips and so I have no problem with keeping the status quo and the split season to avoid any overages.

Instead of fighting over one or two fish, I would rather focus on getting the CFA snapper plan through and that would solve this problem and many others. Thank you.


MS. CAROLYN WOOD: I am Carolyn Wood and I’m an IFQ shareholder and fortunately for everybody in the room, most everything I’ve had to say has been said and so I won’t take long. I am here and I am not in support of Amendment 28. Other than Alternative 1, all of the alternatives presented reduce the commercial
allocation substantially, in some cases over 1.1 million pounds, and it does not help stabilize the recreational fishery whatsoever.

Under the best case scenario presented with Amendment 28, which is Alternative 1, and other than that one, the commercial sector will be forced to cut back by a minimum of a quarter of a million pounds and take a loss of $0.7 million and how is this fair? How can you ask individuals, many of whom have worked in this industry before the inception of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, to bear the burden of this change?

This is unnecessary and unfair, to the point of being arbitrary and capricious. Based on the fishery allocation policy, allocation shall be fair and equitable to fishing sectors and any harvest restrictions or recovery benefits be allocated fairly and equitably among sectors. I just do not see how Amendment 28 fits this policy. I would ask that if you must push Amendment 28 through to please choose Alternative 1. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. We have Russell Underwood, followed by Bubba Cochrane.

MR. RUSSELL UNDERWOOD: I am Russell Underwood from Panama City, Florida. I have been fishing for about forty-five years, ten years in the charter boat industry, the headboat industry. The first thing is I would like to thank you all for letting me speak today. I have always been real concerned about the fishery and the commercial fishing and the recreational industry.

I think you all have got some compliments coming towards you all. I see a great movement moving forward in this Amendment 40. I commend these other fishermen in the audience, like Gary Jarvis and these other fellas that has fought hard, Billy Archer.

I was in their position about seven or eight or ten years ago when I fought hard for the IFQ and they have taken a lot of slack, but I think the majority of these people want this Amendment 40 and there is a thank-you coming from the people from Bay County, Florida. I am from Panama City, which is part of Bay County. They have been wanting something for a long time and I see the council is finally moving forward and that’s a good thing and so you all need to kind of pat yourselves on the back. I see a lot of good stuff moving forward.
I sincerely appreciate the IFQ program. It is a good program. It’s the best program that I’ve ever seen. I’ve been coming to these meetings for a long time and Doug Gregory knows this and I’ve educated Doug a lot on the fishery problems in the Gulf and I’ve been part of this process and so I’m proud of that.

On Amendment 28, I still believe that Amendment 28 is wrong morally and it’s wrong biologically and it’s just not a good thing. There have been a lot of people speaking ahead of me today and I have seen one person, one person, ask in favor of Amendment 28 and so that means a lot. You’ve got to look back and see and count the people that has begged and trying to steal a few amount of fish that ain’t going to solve no problems and so I’m certainly against that. Amendment 28 needs to be abolished and move on, move forward.

Another thing about the gag grouper. As a fisherman off of Florida for a long time, and I know everybody in the Gulf, this gag grouper situation is crazy.

I had four boats go out the other day and they caught one gag grouper in the western Gulf where I fish. I hear the same problem off of Panama City. If the stock is in such good shape, where are the gag grouper?

Me as a fisherman fishing for red snapper, I can catch 10,000 pounds a day if you’ve got the quota. I can do it. Well, I don’t think the resource is there for the gag grouper. You would be lucky if you catch 200 pounds a day, if you’re lucky, off of Florida.

Anyway, there is something really wrong about the situation, but I do want to thank you all for giving these charter boats a chance to make a better living and maybe have a better season and it’s going to be a great improvement for all involved to get everybody accountable and you all can pat yourselves on the back a little bit about what you all have done and I sincerely appreciate that and I’ve been glad to be part of this process, but we need to continue to move on and make positive decisions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. We have one question over here from Martha.

MS. BADEMAN: Thanks, Russell. One quick question. You fish amberjack, right?

MR. UNDERWOOD: Yes.
MS. BADEMAN: Do you have a recommendation for the trip limit?

MR. UNDERWOOD: The trip limit? 2,000 pounds.

MR. PEARCE: We had some conversation about gutted weight versus not gutted weight on amberjack and do you have any druthers?

MR. UNDERWOOD: It should be always gutted weight. I believe gutted weight.

MR. PEARCE: Because right now, you have to kind of take advantage of it with a lower poundage, right, like 1,920?

MR. UNDERWOOD: Yes, that’s right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Bubba Cochrane, followed by Mike Eller.

MR. BUBBA COCHRANE: Bubba Cochrane and I own and operate a commercial fishing boat and a charter fishing boat out of Galveston, Texas. I am also the President of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholder’s Alliance.

I don’t feel like Amendment 28 has anything to do with fishery management. Taking fish away from one sector and giving it to another sector is not going to give the recreational fishermen what they need. A few more fishing days is not going to solve anything and so, as usual, I am against Amendment 28 and would recommend no action, status quo.

I am glad to see the council moving forward with sector separation for the for-hire sector. This is truly a management plan that can give recreational fishermen a plan that they need for more fishing time and accountability and the access they need to red snapper.

I am not sure how regional management would work with the for-hire. I think regional management is more specific to the truly recreational fishermen and not the for-hire or the commercial. I think regional management can work. There are a lot of details to work out and all of the regions will have to agree to play by the same rules. This is something that we can’t even accomplish right now, in Texas in particular.

Also, I don’t see, from what I’ve been hearing about regional management, how that would stop the overharvest of the quota. I understand now we’re using buffers and that’s working as a
temporary solution, but I think the management plan for the regional needs to address the overharvest more than anything and not about who is going to get what and how they are going to decide that, but how we’re going to keep from going over.

As far as the IFQ, the IFQ is working really well right now. There are some changes that can be made, but I don’t think any major changes need to be made right now and it’s working really well. That’s it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bubba. Mike Eller, followed by Bill Tucker.

MR. MIKE ELLER: Mike Eller, hailing from the world’s luckiest fishing village of Destin, Florida. This is my thirty-third consecutive year. As far as Amendment 28 goes, I also would say no action.

You know for us to look at reallocation and to look at the way the demographics have changed and maybe look and ask questions about that, it’s a fair question, but to look at reallocation without having our ducks in a row is really just irresponsible and so it’s just a non-starter.

We get our ducks in a row and everybody has got a tag and everybody counts their fish and then we want to look at maybe something to the question of fairness or maybe the question of demographics have changed a little bit, that’s a legitimate thing to ask and to look at, but until we get our ducks in a row, it’s really just a non-starter.

Amendment 40 was a hard-fought battle, especially in our industry. We appreciate it and we need to move forward. We need to challenge and push our data collectors and we only need to count one species. There is only 1,200 or 1,300 boats in the fishery and they’re not all going to catch red snappers.

If we can’t do that -- They did parachute an electric car onto the surface of Mars and so we can do it. I mean give us the opportunity and I am going to count my fish no matter what and if nobody gives me a data collection system this year, we are still going to count our fish.

We finally are going to move to the point that we can actually count these stupid red snapper and then, when we’ve got three years -- As the truck-driver poet, Jerry Reed, said, we’ve got a long way to go and a short time to get there we’re going to do something they say can’t be done.
We’re going to do it. We are going to count our fish and we’re going to move forward and then when we get done and we get this thing working, then we’re going to reach out to that private boat sector and we’re going to help them get their act together. We are going to help them get their tag system going.

In Destin, Florida, we did a tag system under the exempted fishing permit and we worked very closely with the State of Florida. Those private boat guys were very happy to get their tags and they were very happy and when I hear them over and over again nowadays, they are ready to go to a tag system.

You might hear the management of the CCA talk about it, but that’s not the person that’s down there on the water. Those guys on the water, they want a system, because when they look at the commercial fishermen and they see us getting our act together, they will get as frustrated as we used to get.

They want a system too and so we’re going to be the microcosm and we’re going to get our system down pat and then we’re going to help them get their system down pat and we’re going to finally get rid of all this we don’t really know how many people are catching them and all that.

We can do it and we’re going to do it. For you all that wrote the minority report and sent it in, it’s time to put that behind that behind you and it’s time to move forward. If you want to keep rehashing what we’ve been rehashing for ten years, that’s your loss and we need to move forward.

A thirty-four-inch amberjack and a 1,000-pound trip limit, as far as I’m concerned, and a two fish bag limit. We personally, on my vessel, we could go with a one fish bag limit. My brothers and sisters in arms in Texas don’t want it and --

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Mike, if you could wrap it up.

MR. M. ELLER: If once we go to a tag system, it won’t matter two fish or one fish, because everybody can fish their fish however they want. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mike. We have Bill Tucker, followed by George Eller.

MR. BILL TUCKER: How are you? I’m Bill Tucker and I’m a commercial fisherman out of Dunedin, Florida. I would like to cover a couple of things: Amendment 40, the IUU fishing, and
Amendment 28.

Thank you for finally moving forward on sector separation. This will provide the charter for-hire sector the lifeline they need to properly run their businesses and the flexibility they need to develop plans that increase recreational fishing opportunities and increase accountability in the recreational sector. We need that.

I encourage you to take a hard stance against the foreign poaching that takes place in our waters. I mean if we can lock these guys up and let them make fish tags for the recreational sector, that might be a good step. If we could take some of those fish and give them to Bob Zales, II, as his introduction into catch share management, that would be awesome.

As far as Amendment 28 and reallocation, under the current recreational management system, I don’t support reallocation and reallocating more red snappers to the recreational sector. It’s not going to promote conservation and it only sends the wrong message by rewarding a failed management system of fish expropriated from a commercial management system that works.

If you desire to increase stability in the recreational sector, then develop a system that expands fishing opportunities for recreational fishermen. For example, explore a tag system that personalizes opportunities for individual fishermen according to their individual needs or emulate the innovative spirit that the charter for-hire and the commercial sectors have embraced.

By taking fish off the plates of the fishing public and out of the coolers of the cafes and restaurants, that only adds instability to our sector. These costs of reallocation exceed any purported benefits. Throwing more fish at an ineffective management system is just folly and so please support Alternative 1, no action, on Amendment 28. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bill. I have George Eller, followed by Eric Brazer.

MR. GEORGE ELLER: Mr. Chairman and members of the council, thank you so much for all of your hard work on Amendment 40. Dr. Crabtree, thank you for your professional leadership in this whole matter.

Amendment 28 has no -- The charter boat industry has no place in that. It sounds to me like the Robin Hood of the red snapper industry, take from the rich and give to the poor, but that
won’t work.

In my opinion, there are three basic things, three very, very important things, that has to go along with Amendment 40: accountability, accountability, and accountability.

Therefore, I support the idea of a split season, but moreover than that, I support data collection, real-time data collection. I don’t need anybody to buy me a VMS. I will buy one for each of my boats and I feel that way because real-time catch data eliminates the guesswork, just like the fish tags.

When you issue fish tags and you issue X number of fish tags, you know how many red snapper is going to get caught before the year is out. You already know and there won’t be no more red snappers caught by the for-hire industry than what you’ve issued fish tags for.

Amendment 39, I think you should just trash that. A thirty-four-inch amberjack is fine with me. I don’t commercial fish them and so I have no say-so on trip limits, but, again, we’ve got this Amendment 40 thing going down the road and for goodness sake, let’s do not get ourselves mired down in the mud and drag this thing out towards a sunset. Give us some form of real-time catch data and it will pay dividends. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you and you have a question from Harlon.

MR. PEARCE: Mr. Eller, thanks for your presentation and did I hear you say that you support accountability?

MR. G. ELLER: Absolutely. Accountability is the watch word and this is why we’re looking at the split season, because the last thing that we don’t want to do is overfish. We will do whatever it takes not to overfish.

MR. PEARCE: Thanks for your comments.

MR. G. ELLER: Yes, accountability.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Eller. Eric Brazer, followed by Larry Huntley.

MR. ERIC BRAZER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My name is Eric Brazer and I’m the Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholder’s Alliance. For those of you who don’t know, I actually live up on Cape Cod and so I am very happy to be here this week.
For Amendment 28, a lot of what I’m about to say is what I’ve said before. We still don’t believe it promotes conservation and it does not stop recreational harvesting and it’s not economically justified.

We have heard a little bit this week about the MRIP calibration results and how they may impact this discussion. There have been some concerns voiced about fairness and what I see when I look at the MRIP calibration results is that it actually shows that the violations that were the foundation of the lawsuit are even more egregious than we thought they were before and that’s unfair.

It shows that we could be looking at a much higher quota now than the thirteen-plus that we’re talking about, which would be better for all. It shows that the recreational sector actually exceeded their allocation, through no fault of their own, by eighteen-million pounds over time and that the commercial fishery was denied access to 51 percent of eighteen-million pounds, or just over nine-million pounds of allocation. It’s about $35 million. I would say that’s unfair.

I would point to page 20 of the calibration report, where it says that we recommend that the investigation continue on the remaining two methods and it’s possible that one of them will be determined to be better in the future and I would say that it’s not fair to make major, sweeping, policy changes with this much uncertainty.

By choosing any of the options but status quo, you are rewarding overharvesting and we’ve heard this all week. That’s unfair. The more time we spend talking about Amendment 28, the longer it takes to get a recreational private angler plan in place and the longer that the private anglers are subject to a plan that doesn’t work for them and that’s not fair and so we urge you to change the preferred alternative tomorrow to status quo and finish Amendment 28 and start working on a plan that works for the private anglers.

You are working on one for the charter fleet and that’s great and so we hope you listen to your AP and keep moving that forward. Let’s do the same thing for the private anglers.

In terms of red snapper ABC, we are encouraged to see it rebuilding, but we’re a little discouraged to see that it might drop off in the future. We urge the council to consider some conservative ABC options tomorrow that provide stable or
measured continual increases and we want to try to avoid declines in future yield, to the extent we can.

Gag, you’re hearing a lot of fishermen talk about how they’re not seeing them and they’re not out there. We think the assessment is overly optimistic and we urge you to have conservative options included in the April discussion and if I may have ten more seconds, I would like to end on a positive note.

The Coast Guard presentation that we saw yesterday was eye-opening and we want to thank the Coast Guard for their hard work. This impacts everybody in this room, whether you’re commercial, charter, private, or a seafood consumer, and we strongly recommend that the council take a strong position on this tomorrow and send a letter to Congress saying this is wrong and this needs to be stopped and to increase their support of the Coast Guard to let them do their job. Thank you very much for the extra time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Next we have Larry Huntley, followed by Bill Kelly.

MR. LARRY HUNTLEY: Good afternoon. I am Larry Huntley from Pensacola. I have been fishing in Florida’s Atlantic and Gulf waters since the 1950s and became interested in the science of fisheries management during the last ten or so years.

I took a fisheries management class from Dr. Patterson six or eight years ago and one of the first publications he recommended was Understanding Fisheries Management. The first topic in the introduction was titled “Whose Fish are They Anyway?”

Several statements from the paragraph have stayed with me. Fish living in public waters are a common property resource. The government has the responsibility of managing the fish for the benefit of all citizens, even those who do not fish and so who owns the fish? You do, along with 316 million citizens of the United States.

A few years ago, I did a little informal research to determine how many Floridians had saltwater fishing licenses and were capable of catching their own red snapper. I came up with approximately 17 percent. 83 percent depended on commercial fishermen. The data used was before the most recent saltwater licensing requirement.

I have a very small commercial red snapper quota and sell to
Maria’s in Pensacola, a relatively small fish market, but when I provide them with red snapper, they are sold in short order and they commonly call me to ask when I’m going out again and their clientele are generally average wage earners and they want access to fresh, Gulf-caught red snapper. The large snapper are sold to local restaurants and marketed as fresh catch of the day.

Amendment 28, Preferred Alternative 5, would transfer some of the commercial quota to the recreational sector. In fact, it would reduce my quota by approximately 9 percent. The non-fishing public would have access to nine fish instead of the present ten.

I guess my concerns are who is looking out for the vast majority of the Americans who do not fish, but enjoy access to those fresh-caught red snapper and why can’t the recreational sector develop an effective management plan? In the last several days, I have heard that the current allocation is not economically efficient and a shift would increase the stability of the recreational sector, but let’s look briefly at the current management plan.

The recreational sector’s 2014 ACL was 5,390,000 pounds. A buffer of 20 percent was applied to ensure no overfishing and the ACT was 4,320,000 pounds. Recreational caught was 3,660,227 pounds, or 32 percent less than their ACL.

Under the current allocation, or Alternative 1, the recreational could have increased their catch by 32 percent, 1,722,733 pounds, if they had a more efficient and effective fishery management plan.

I have three recommendations. Please take into account the vast number of Americans who do not fish, but enjoy fresh-caught red snapper, work with the recreational sector to develop a plan that allows them to catch the current 49 percent of their ACL, and support Alternative 1 to Amendment 28. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Huntley. Bill Kelly, followed by Chad Wilbanks.

MR. BILL KELLY: Bill Kelly, Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen’s Association. Mr. Chairman and members of the council, I just want to thank you very much for your prompt response to our request to address issues in the king mackerel gillnet fishery, including a workshop and the opportunity for me to join in the discussion this morning. I appreciate that, Dr. Dana.
We’ve made some substantial strides here in just a very short period of time. Over the past couple of years, we have managed to get 20B passed with that transit provision that increases the efficiency of the operations and it also improves the quality of the product that we harvest and so the lines of communication have opened greatly with National Marine Fisheries Service and with Dr. Branstetter and Sue Gerhart. We are most appreciative of that. We have new actions in play for the upcoming season, which is going to start in just about seven days here. Again, thank you very much on that.

I want to give you an indication of some problems though, just to put things in context for you. Just recently, one of our stakeholders was fined. He returned to the dock with his 25,000-pound trip limit and he was 2,200 pounds over. He was fined $6,750 for that overage and it’s the first resource violation that he’s had and he’s been fishing for over thirty-five years and he hasn’t had one since.

We had another stakeholder that was over and rather than leave fish out there, he called the legal department that he was advised to contact regarding his overage and so forth and he said, what do I do? Am I going to cut my net and leave it out there? I can’t do that and it would be the end of the fishery.

If I throw them over, that’s against the law and what if I am throwing them over and a law enforcement boat comes up? He was told by that particular advisor -- He says, you don’t have too many choices. He said you’ve got to get rid of the fish or you’re going to get fined and he said just to try not to get caught. That’s not appropriate.

Anyway, that kind of puts things in context. We are really appreciative though of the response that you’ve given us and because it’s Super Bowl weekend, I want to talk football with you real quick and that is considering the size of these meeting stadiums that we have now, can we get one of those wide screens down on the fifty-yard line so that the cheap seats can read what’s going on? That would help and, also, Mr. Bowen, thank you for being here from the South Atlantic Council.

You can see how effective and utilized this system is and if we take this back to the South Atlantic Council, the power strips and so forth really reduce the need and burden of carrying so much paper product and stuff like that and we would surely like to see that over on the east coast.
MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Bill, for your comment and I’m going to take more than that back to the South Atlantic Council.

MR. KELLY: I bet you will. Unfortunately, I won’t be here tomorrow and if anyone has any last-minute questions regarding our gillnet issues, I would be happy to answer them and if not, thank you so very much.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bill. Chad Wilbanks, followed by Shane Cantrell.

MR. CHAD WILBANKS: Thank you. I am Chad Wilbanks and I’m with the Gulf Coast Leadership Conference based in Austin, Texas and I wanted to address you all a little bit about the severity of illegal fishing by foreign fishermen.

Before I go much further, Lieutenant Commander Brand, your team has done an outstanding job of bringing this issue to the forefront and I think we ought to really congratulate the Coast Guard, who are, in many ways, endangering their lives protecting our sovereign waters out there, but let’s take it into a little bit of perspective.

We started this conference a little over a year ago to address specifically illegal fishing by foreign vessels. In August, we had a conference in Galveston and Harlon Pearce spoke at it and Buddy Guindon was also there and Will Ward was one of our presenters, as well as Captain Scott Hickman.

We had Chamber executives from Florida through Texas and we had law enforcement from Florida through Texas and what we have and what we’re seeing is there is two main problems with illegal fishing by foreign vessels. Number one, it damages our natural resources.

Number two, it damages our economy and so the five Gulf Coast States represents about $13.7 billion that the fisheries provide. It supports 168,000 jobs and so what we have now is we’re playing by the rules and they’re not.

Congressman Randy Weber spoke at our conference and he said this: We’ve got to level the playing field. They are taking advantage of our waters and they’re taking advantage of our resources and the only way that we are going to win is to shut them down.

The council asked yesterday, specifically to the Lieutenant Commander, what is it that we can do and I don’t think
resources, throwing money, will solve the problem. They would like to have more resources, but what we need to have is stronger legislation. We need to have new legislation in Congress.

I would encourage the council, if you want a plan of action, is to direct staff to come up with a resolution calling on tougher laws. Otherwise, we’re going to have the same problem that we’re seeing now. They are going to come across our border, our coastal borders, and they’re going to fish our fish and we’re going to slap them on the wrist and we’re going to feed them and we’re going to house them and we’re going to put them in a nice car and take them across the border and we’re going to do it again and again and again.

With that being said, I want to thank you all for your time and I thank you for the opportunity to be here and I am happy to take any questions in the last thirty seconds that I have.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Chad. We do have some questions.

MR. PEARCE: Thanks for your comments and just in sort of answer to your questions, I met with Tracy from National Marine Fisheries Service yesterday and they’re going to meet with the enforcement people with the Coast Guard and come back to this council at the next meeting of what we as a council can do to help solve those problems with the fish that’s being thrown away and with the gear that’s being destroyed and hopefully a way to prosecute with U.S. law the fishermen that we catch in U.S. waters and so we’re already beginning to work that process and hopefully they will come back to us at the next meeting and Tracy will let us know what we can or can’t do as a council.

MR. WILBANKS: Mr. Pearce, I appreciate those comments. Thank you. Thanks, council members.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Chad. Shane Cantrell, followed by Chad Hanson.

MR. SHANE CANTRELL: Good afternoon. I am Shane Cantrell, the Executive Director of the Charter Fishermen’s Association. I want to echo what Mr. Wilbanks just said. This illegal fishing is a serious problem, especially off of Texas.

A lot of our members have been discussing this and bringing it to our attention and we’ve brought it to the council a few times and I’m glad to see that the Coast Guard is taking action on this and we’ve got some traction.
Just like Chad said, it’s an issue that needs to be handled in Congress and with the support of the council, this is something that everybody can get behind. There’s not a lot of arguments that this is a serious problem and so I would like to see you all put some language together and get that moving up the chain so we can get that enforcement. Like he said, resources will be helpful, but the most important part is the legislation.

I thank the council for moving forward with Amendment 40. It’s taken us a long time to get there and we’ve got a comment period open now and I’m looking forward to ending that and getting on to the next step, which would be moving forward with the charter for-hire management plan.

I am a member of the charter for-hire management AP. It’s a very vast group of stakeholders there from the charter boat industry. I am rather impressed that we were able to agree on as many things as we did. It’s a very, very diverse group and I was impressed with the motions that came out of it and the ideas that we did agree on and decided to move forward with. I would like to see the council reconvene that AP as soon as possible and move forward with recommendations from that AP, specifically developing a charter for-hire management plan with the options agreed upon by that AP.

I would like to see the federally-permitted charter boats removed completely from Amendment 39. This seems like a dead end, especially for the charter boats. I don’t see how the charter boats fit into this anymore. This has become a real issue in the state water fisheries and each independent state really places a burden on our industry with 30B in place.

We have federal permits and we need to continue under federal management. The private anglers seem well suited for regional management and the states are best equipped to deal with their private anglers.

For Amendment 28, I support Alternative 1, no action. We have revisited this allocation issue and it’s time to put it to rest and move forward with some real-time data collection and real solutions for the charter boat industry.

I prefer a thirty-four-inch fork length for greater amberjack and getting the ball rolling in this charter for-hire management plan. We’ve got to get it done now. We are facing a sunset and this is the time to act.

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CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Shane. Shane, we have one question for you from Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: Shane, I don’t think I can quote you, but I think you said something like the states should not have any jurisdiction over the charter for-hire fleet and take it out of Amendment 39?

MR. CANTRELL: I would like to see the federally-permitted charter vessels removed from Amendment 39. I feel like where we are federally-permitted vessels that we should be dealing with the federally-managed system.

The private anglers, there is a vast number of them and they could be handled in many different ways. I think it’s something -- Some data collection system, similar to iSnapper, from Dr. Stunz, would be excellent to equip them.

MR. BOYD: I have a question for you. The private recreational fisherman buys a license in a state to go fishing and your boat is registered in the state. All of them are. You are moored in the state.

MR. CANTRELL: Yes, sir.

MR. BOYD: They climb on your boat in a state.

MR. CANTRELL: Yes, sir.

MR. BOYD: You traverse out to federal waters and then you come back and you land in a state.

MR. CANTRELL: Yes, sir.

MR. BOYD: You moor in a state that night and you go home in a state that night and why wouldn’t the state have some reason to think that they have influence over your business in some way?

MR. CANTRELL: Because I am addressing five states that have time and again taken action against the charter boat industry. Every time you open a state water season, it pulls fish away from the charter boat industry.

We’ve got a great example with the triggerfish and we can talk about something other than red snapper for a change. Triggerfish season, the State of Florida is open 365 days a year and we’re shutting it down on February 7, if I’m not mistaken. That causes a lot of outcry and it just becomes an issue here.
When we go to a state water season in the State of Texas, it
doesn’t cost a lot of days, but it costs days and those are days
that just go to the private anglers. We are playing favorites
here in our management that we’re doing a state water execution
of our fisheries and blaming the federal government for it and
that’s no way to be addressing our fisheries.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have Chad Hanson, followed by Bobby Kelly.

MR. CHAD HANSON: Good afternoon, council members and Chairman
Anson. My name is Chad Hanson with the Pew Charitable Trust and
thanks for the opportunity today to speak to you about gag and
red snapper.

Thanks to the hard work of many in this room, the red snapper
population continues to recover, as evidenced by the most recent
stock assessment. However, recreational management strategies
need to better match effort and participation to the
availability of a growing red snapper stock.

We support the efforts to improve tracking and accountability of
each component of this fishery while staying the course to fully
rebuild the species and to ensure its long-term sustainability.
To that end, we encourage the council to keep these goals front
and center as you continue to explore regional management of the
private recreational component through Amendment 39.

New data programs run by the states and through MRIP aim to
improve red snapper catch and effort estimates and though we
would like to see more uniformity in these programs, they have
the potential to provide useful information to facilitate
private recreational and regional management of red snapper with
stronger monitoring and accountability.

We also support initiation of a plan amendment to develop
management strategies in line with the recommendations of the Ad
Hoc Red Snapper Advisory Panel established at your October
meeting. This AP also recommended moving forward with an
electronic monitoring and reporting program for the charter for-
hire fishermen.

Similarly, we support the development of an amendment that would
require electronic logbooks for the charter for-hire vessels and
this amendment should incorporate the recommendations made by
the joint technical committee in their recently released report.

However, we have serious concerns with the proposal to change
the rebuilding goal for the red snapper population. If you are
going to move the goal post, if you will, for what it means to restore a species that has suffered from decades of overfishing, it is imperative that it’s based upon solid scientific rationale.

Twice you have requested the SSC weigh in on this idea and both times they have clearly recommended that you maintain the rebuilding goal you have. If changes are to be made, the SSC suggested you also consider increasing the spawning potential ratio and manage red snapper more conservatively, as is done for many other long-lived species in the region.

Not only is this in line with the recommendations made by your science advisors, it is also required in order to comply with federal law, by analyzing a full range of options.

We would also like to discuss gag management for a second. The recent stock assessment had a great deal of uncertainty and showed the population was only just above a threshold at which it would be deemed overfished.

The percentage of males in the population remains at a historically low level, which likely limits gag’s reproductive capacity. In addition, the recruitment of juvenile gag was at record lows in recent years and for all these reasons, we urge the council to set catch limits close to or at the current level, to ensure this population can weather all these threats and maintain a sustainable fishery for the years to come.

I also want to point out we are encouraged that an ecosystem model developed by scientists at FWRI was used to reexamine the impact of red tide on the gag population and resulted in a more informed SSC decision on ABC recommendations.

In this case, factoring in the ecosystem considerations could allow for increased fishing opportunities. We recommend the council to continue pursuing the use of these types of tools to build towards an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and one way to continue moving in this direction is to reconvene the SSC working group that was established at the August meeting, to finalize their work on goals and objectives that can guide the council progress towards this end. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Chad. Next up, we have Bobby Kelly, followed by Skipper Thierry.

MR. BOBBY KELLY: My name is Bobby Kelly and I own and operate
two charter boats out of Orange Beach, Alabama. I want to thank
the ladies and gentlemen of the Gulf Council for allowing me
this opportunity to address you once again.

First off, I would like to thank you for passing Amendment 40,
or at least ten of you anyway. This was not an easy task and
myself and others realize the hard work that went into its
passing and with that being said, there’s been a lot of talk
about implementing the FMP and two to three years is not an
acceptable timeline to implement an FMP for the charter for-hire
fleet.

The CFA management plan that you have before you outlines our
needs and I urge you to approve it. Our hardworking men on the
Advisory Panel for Red Snapper are more than willing to put in
the hard work into the process and have already shown their
forward-thinking and I ask you to give these fishermen a chance
to reconvene sooner rather than later.

I am in no way in favor of Amendment 28 and I feel that the
council should not waste any more of their precious time in
discussing this. You will be wasting these fish by taking them
from an accountable fishery and throwing them into a bottomless
pit.

I feel that the amberjack size limit should not be anything more
than thirty-four inches and even this increase is detrimental to
our inshore fishery, but we realize it’s a change that must be
made.

I encourage the council in making progress on Amendment 39.
However, I do not believe that the charter for-hire fleet is --
I do believe that the charter for-hire fleet is already well
ahead on implementing the FMP and, therefore, I feel like they
should be left out of any state management plan.

I want to apologize to the Gulf Council wholeheartedly. I had a
charter on January 6 and I had nine people onboard my vessel and
we caught eighteen triggerfish and apparently we caught the
entire TAC. Thanks, guys.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Bobby. Skipper Thierry, followed by
Mike Thierry.

MR. SKIPPER THIERRY: Good afternoon. I am Skipper Thierry and
I have a headboat out of Dauphin Island, Alabama. I’ve been
there for about ten years with The Escape and I would like to
thank you all for the passage of Amendment 40. It was a huge
step for us and it’s given us hope and we just look forward to moving ahead in our industry.

I was in the Headboat Collaborative last year and I’m excited to be in it again in 2015. The main problem with the Collaborative is that the EFP expires at the end of this year. To my knowledge, all the Collaborative has met and exceeded all expectations.

Our reporting was timely and accurate and we stayed within our quota and we were able to maximize our days at sea. I myself, I imposed a one fish bag limit on my boat, to stretch my fish out to make them last longer. Some operators did not. That was their choice and we were each able to tailor the trips to meet our individual needs.

Again, if there has been a down side to the Collaborative, I’m not aware of it. The system works for the headboats and I would ask this council to begin the process of making this a fisheries management plan instead of just an EFP.

Why reinvent the wheel when this is proven? Moving ahead with this plan can make our industry stable and scrapping it will leave us floundering for several more years, unable to make business plans or investments in our boats or equipment.

Also, please move forward with a charter for-hire management plan, a fair and equitable plan among all permit holders. There shouldn’t occur, but I really believe that derby fishing could end. Charter for-hire could be 100 percent accountable. The CFA plan I’m sure is not perfect, but it seems like something we could really build on and move forward with.

The time is now. Everybody has talked about the timeline of two to three years and we don’t have time. Let’s not make this politics and let’s do what’s best for the fish and for the guys that count on them year in and year out.

I am against any reallocation from a sector that’s accountable and stable to a sector whose future is so uncertain. Also, I am for a thirty-four-inch size limit, if that maximizes our season and is the best thing for the fish, to let them spawn a few times. I would like to see the council create an advisory panel of headboat operators to assist in moving forward with a headboat management plan. Thanks for your time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Skipper. Mike Thierry, followed by
Jason Delacruz.

MR. MIKE THIERRY: Thank you, all. I am Captain Mike Thierry from Dauphin Island, Alabama. I’ve been charter fishing for over forty-five years from that port and I would like to thank the council for passing Amendment 40.

I feel very strongly that Amendment 40 is a step in the right direction for the charter industry and the red snapper fishery as a whole. For the first time in a long time, I feel positive about our industry and I feel like we’re finally going somewhere, instead of backing up, like we’ve done for so many years.

This amendment will ensure our industry and the many recreational fishermen who fish on our boats continued access to this fishery and also it will allow for much needed stability and accountability for charter boats. Again, thank you for this.

Yesterday and today, there was discussion on bag limits and seasons and this state wanted that and is this good for you and is this good for you and you know different limits and seasons – You know, one size does not fit all and that’s one thing why the Headboat Collaborative has been so good.

Each individual in there has been able to do what they feel is best for their business with these fish and I would like to see a plan like this in the charter industry. It works and it’s proven to work and we much need it.

You know I would like to see the thirty-four inches on amberjack and I’m fine with those. That’s going to cut back on some catch, but we understand that that’s what it’s going to take hopefully to rebuild this fishery and I believe that’s all I have to say and thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right, Mike, and thank you. Jason Delacruz, followed by Tracy Redding.

MR. JASON DELACRUZ: How are you doing and thank you very much. I’m Jason Delacruz and I’m Vice President of the Reef Fish Shareholder’s Alliance and owner of a couple of companies and actually both count on both sectors here.

I will go through the laundry list of things. As far as amberjack, my commercial fishermen that are amberjack fishermen want to see a thousand-pound trip limit. If we’re going to keep
managing it in an inferior way, then at least let’s try to stretch it out so the fish can have a steadier pace.

Some of the charter boat guys that fish at my dock, they said they’re okay with the thirty-four inches as long as we can keep the closed season where it is right now and so they’re content with that.

As far as Amendment 28, everybody clearly knows our opinions on that and it just doesn’t make any sense to do this reallocation and put it in a system that’s just not going to solve any problems.

I think I’m going to take a chance here and stand up on my soapbox and say that I think it’s really -- I am really getting agitated with the fact that we have people that come to the podium and say that they’re looking for you guys to come up with a solution to the recreational challenges. It’s their fault.

They are the advocates for the recreational fishermen and if they’re going to advocate, they need to come up with solutions and help convince the people that these are the best choices they have and then bring them back to you so that you guys can put them in a rule process. People come to this podium and sit here and say it’s your fault and it’s your fault and it’s not your fault.

We solved our problems in the commercial fishery by coming up with solutions that we thought were best and we brought it and worked through the process. It’s time for them to do it and this idea that somebody is -- That it’s not their responsibility is grossly inaccurate.

Unfortunately, in their positions, it does them no good to solve their problem, because then they don’t have an advocacy point. If they solve the problem, then it gets a little less complicated for them, I guess, and maybe that’s no good for business and I don’t know, but I am really tired of hearing people come to this podium and say you guys fix our problem. No, it’s everybody’s responsibility to fix their own problems.

They need to come up with a plan, a tag system or something, that everybody kind of agrees on and work with their memberships and come back to this organization and say this is what we like and work through the process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Jason. Tracy Redding, followed by another attempt to see if John Braswell is here.
MS. TRACY REDDING: Thank you and my name is Tracy Redding and I own and operate AAA Charters for Alabama Gulf Coast charter boats. First of all, I would like to thank the council for the improvements that you’ve made in the technology over the last few years and being able to listen to this council meeting at any time through the internet or even through the telephone is huge.

As a small business owner, I was crushed by the oil spill and I’ve spent almost four years working on those claims and financially it hasn’t been possible to travel across the coast the way I used to and so thank you for that and thank you for putting the advisory panels and that on the web as well. It’s really, really useful.

First of all, Amendment 28, please, as people who try to conserve our resources, let’s not kill even one more tree printing that again. The fact that it’s Amendment 28 and we’re on Amendment 40 should say something. Taking any fish from a sector that has been accountable and has stayed under the quota and switching it to the other sector is absurd. I would like to see you take no action and put it to bed, at rest.

On Amendment 40, thank you. Sector separation is something that I was taking about since 2007 and there have not been very many steps and actual movement. That’s one of the few and so to be able to come back and say thank you for passing that and I’m really waiting for the Secretary of Commerce to go ahead and put that in place, which brings me to one fish, two fish.

Personally, one fish. I heard several people complain that they couldn’t take out church groups or other groups if they only could catch one fish and, well, I’m going to agree with Bob Zales for maybe the first time ever. I can sell one fish. It’s a lot harder to sell no fish.

I think what that could do in the charter industry is very, very important and I believe at least our local Headboat Collaborative would probably adjust to one fish as well, considering that their quota has probably shrunk from how many fish they can land. That would help everybody.

The other items that I was giving public testimony about back in 2006 and 2007 are the same, real-time electronic logbooks. To not have that in place at this time is absurd to me and VMS on the charter boats. That technology is there and you have captains that have been begging for it for years.
I would also like to commend the State of Alabama for putting in an electronic logbook program in a lot less time since 2007, since we’ve been talking about it. They got it up and running and, from my understanding, got about 85 percent compliance from the charter boat fleet in the first year. That’s impressive.

I will go with whichever and if it be all the charter boats throughout the Gulf can come together with a plan, using electronic logbooks and real-time data and VMS, great. If they are going to fight and if the State of Alabama can come up with a plan for our charter boats quicker, I will go that route. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Tracy. Last call again for John Braswell. That concludes our public testimony for this evening and we will recess until 8:30 tomorrow morning. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 5:30 p.m., January 28, 2015.)

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January 29, 2015

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Grand Hotel Marriott, Point Clear, Alabama, Thursday morning, January 29, 2015, and was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Kevin Anson.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That will take us to Committee Reports and, Mr. Gregory, you had a couple of comments?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For those of you that are not committee chairs, you may not be aware that we are doing what we can to shorten the committee reports, to give you all more time for discussion.

We have verbatim minutes of all the committees that will come out and, at the request of Mr. Diaz, we are starting to mail those to the council as we get them, to give you sufficient time to read them before the meeting, instead of hitting you with them all at once two weeks before the meeting.
The committee reports you will get today are abbreviated and let me know if there’s any problems with that approach. We’re trying to get these to our committee chairs as quick as possible. Thank you very much.

One other thing I was talking with Chairman Anson about is you might recall in the AP and SSC Selection document, when we got to the point in the document where staff thought there was a need for a committee decision or a council decision, we put in there “draft motion” and that was not an attempt to put words in your mouth, but rather to highlight that a decision needed to be made.

If in doing documents that are unlike plan amendments, where there is no clear alternative to select, if you elect staff to be a little more proactive to put a highlight that says a decision needs to be made here or even to draft some motion language, like I did in that report, just let us know. We can do that and be a little more proactive that way.

The other thing is if we don’t do something like that, if you have motions you want to make, I encourage you to get with the staff ahead of time and let them help you write it and we can get it to the administrative staff and they can display it on the screen right away and we might save some time in discussion, so we don’t have to craft a motion and wordsmith it so much. Thank you very much.

DR. CRABTREE: I think those are good points, Mr. Gregory, and I think anything staff can do to help structure the decision making process and help us get to decisions and thought-out, coherent motions, rather than us struggling here to make them on the fly, is a positive thing, because we are -- I think all of us agree that we’re sometimes struggling to make decisions and I think the more we can structure it so there’s a logical thought process that gets you to a decision point, I think that’s a good thing for the council.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I would just add that there would be some constraint, if you want to call it that, as far as making preferreds, obviously. I think you would leave that up to the council, but as the example that you just mentioned regarding the SSC selection and appointments and how it’s structured there, particularly in that document. I mean they’re not very contentious decisions that could be made in that document, but certainly I think, as Dr. Crabtree stated, it would be very helpful in being more efficient, I think, during our deliberations to have those in there. I don’t see anybody
waving their hand or shaking their head that that would be
inappropriate and so I think you and staff have direction to go
ahead and do that for future documents.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Again, moving into Committee
Reports, we have Data Collection, Tab E, and Mr. Pearce.

MR. PEARCE: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I thought we were going
to go to Reef Fish, but I’m ready and it’s not a problem.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Excuse me. I apologize. I did skip that.
Sorry. Thank you. It seems like Reef Fish is always last or
something in my mind and so, Mr. Greene, are you ready?

COMMITTEE REPORTS
REEF FISH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MR. GREENE: Yes, sir. I am ready. Red Snapper Update
Assessment, Shannon Calay reviewed the red snapper update
assessment and Will Patterson summarized the SSC recommendations
for OFL and ABC, Tab B, Number 4.

Steven Atran reported the results of the ACL/ACT control rule,
which recommend an ACT buffer of 19 percent for the recreational
sector and zero percent for the commercial sector, Tab B, Number
5(a) and 5(b). Dr. Calay’s presentation included a
recalculation of ABCs using the SSC’s input parameters and
provisional 2014 recreational landings.

Mara Levy advised that the SSC would need to review and approve
the recalculated ABCs with the provisional landings before the
council could establish ACLs and ACTs based on them. In order
to have the new ACLs and ACTs implemented by June 1, the SSC
would need to meet in February and a special council meeting via
conference call or webinar to take final action would be needed
by March 1.

By a vote of seven to zero, the committee recommends, and I so
move, to ask staff to prepare a framework action to increase the
ACL for red snapper based on the ABC recommendations by the SSC,
using the provisional 2014 estimates.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a committee motion and can we have that
up on the screen, please, the center screen? Again, the motion
is to ask staff to prepare a framework action to increase the
ACL for red snapper based on the ABC recommendations by the SSC,
using the provisional 2014 estimates. Any discussion on the motion? **All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye; all opposed like sign. The motion carries.**

MR. GREENE: Committee members indicated that if the SSC does not approve the provisional ABCs, staff should proceed with developing the framework action using the SSC-approved ABCs.

Reevaluation of Gag OFL and ABC for 2015 and 2016, Will Patterson reviewed an analysis by David Chagaris of Florida FWC which indicated that the 2014 red tide event only had 4 to 7 percent of the mortality relative to the 2005 event.

Consequently, the SSC revised its OFL and ABC projections, which earlier had assumed that the 2014 event equaled the impact of the 2005 event. Committee members observed that if the ACL and ACT are increased, the recreational sector might not be able to catch their allocation unless the July 1 season opening date is moved to earlier in the year.

**By a vote of seven to zero, the committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to begin a framework amendment to adjust ACL/ACT and the season options for gag.**

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s a committee motion and it’s up on the screen to direct staff to begin a framework amendment to address ACL/ACT and the season options for gag. Is there any discussion on the motion? **Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.**

MR. GREENE: Draft Framework Action for Greater Amberjack, Will Patterson reviewed the analysis by Nancie Cummings on the projected rebuilding times under the ACL options in the draft greater amberjack framework action.

He noted that the SSC deemed the analysis sufficient to inform management actions by the Gulf Council. John Froeschke then reviewed the actions and options in the options paper for the greater amberjack framework action, Tab B, Number 7.

**Action 1, Modifications to the Greater Amberjack Annual Catch Limits and Annual Catch Targets, committee members noted that suboptions Options 2a and 3a that would not use an ACT buffer would not be considered by the council. Without opposition, the committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 1 to remove suboptions 2(a) and 3(a) to considered but rejected. Suboption a is no ACT buffer, i.e., ABC equals ACL equals ACT; note this option would require modification of the accountability**
measures.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a committee motion and is there any
discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The
motion carries.

MR. GREENE: The committee made no motions regarding Action 2.1,
Modify the Recreational Minimum Size Limit for Greater
Amberjack, or Action 2.2, Modify the Recreational Closed Seasons
for Greater Amberjack.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess we heard a lot of discussion about the
minimum size limit and it seemed to me there was close to a
consensus about thirty-four inches. I know this is just an
options paper and so I don’t know I we wanted to choose a
preferred now or come back in. I guess they will bring a public
hearing draft to us at the next council meeting would be the
plan and we could do that then.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes, it sounds like that staff will be doing
that for the next meeting.

DR. JOHN FROESCHKE: We plan to bring a completed draft. It’s a
framework action though and so I don’t think we had planned to
go to public hearing, unless you have a different plan.

DR. CRABTREE: So you would bring a completed document back to
us at the next meeting and we would choose our preferreds there
and have public testimony at that meeting and then move on? All
right.

MR. FISCHER: If that’s the direction to get completion from the
document on the modifying the recreational closed seasons, I
would like to see an option that closes the spawning season with
the increase to thirty-four inches and then see where we are.
Let’s take care of the biologicals first and so let’s close the
spawning and raise the size to where we’re harvesting mature
fish.

Now, we still might be short and have to close some other part
of the year, but let’s take care of the biologicals first and
then look at options, if we have to make any further closures,
and the existing paper didn’t give us a whole slate of options
that included the spawning season and then other months.

MR. GREENE: I guess this question would be for Dr. Crabtree.
Looking at the season we had last year with amberjack and the
season closing in August, is there any potential that we could
move an increase in size limit faster, perhaps for this year, than going through the options paper route, being that there seemed to be a consensus of support for that? Is there any possibility to extend the length of amberjack for this coming season?

DR. CRABTREE: I think, Johnny, from what I’ve heard, if they can finish this document and bring it to us, we could take final action at the next council meeting. It’s really going to depend if we start adding things or messing with it, but I don’t think there’s any way faster than trying to get the final action at the next meeting.

MR. GREENE: That would be my choice as well. I mean I think that we’re down to just a couple of different lengths. I think there has been testimony for thirty-four and thirty-six inches and so I don’t think we would have to analyze any of the smaller ones. Then perhaps, to Mr. Fischer’s point, the spring season for the biology and then the current summer season. Perhaps that would streamline the process.

MR. FISCHER: We had discussion, and especially if we take final action at the next meeting, but I think we had discussion of getting the scientists cited most frequently, Murie and Parkyn, at the meeting to explain some of the amberjack biologicals, but I don’t remember specifically what it was to discuss. It may have had to clarify spawning season and it may have had to clarify something, but I know it was brought up in discussion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Myron, I guess you had mentioned about an option for the spawning season closure and there is a table in there that kind of gives some various season scenarios, buffer scenarios and such. It wasn’t satisfactory? It sounds like you might need to talk about that and maybe we might need a motion, I guess, to instruct staff to include that for the next version, if that’s in fact what you want to do, or can we just do it? How do you feel about that, Doug?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I mean either approach is fine.

MR. FISCHER: Just so Doug and staff understood where I was coming from is close the established spawning season and maybe that’s what we were going to consult Murie and Parkyn on, but close the spawning season and the increase in size limit and see how many days we can fish or see how many days we can’t fish. Then look into other avenues of closure that might increase days.
DR. STEVE BRANSTETTER: Myron, you might want to look at Amendment 35, because we did look at different closure seasons and the problem with amberjack is it’s such a dome-shaped catch curve that I think the bang for your buck was so low on the spawning season was why it was bypassed last time, but that would give you an idea of where you’re trying to go if you look at 35.

MR. FISCHER: Right and my issue of the closure of the spawning season had nothing to do with bang for the buck to extend the season. It was if there was -- I think some of the other reason we talked about getting the authorities to speak was that there seems to now be proof of aggregations and anything that makes it easier to harvest the fish during the spawning season I would like to see protected.

I know you won’t get a lot of bang for the buck, but you will down the road with SPR if you protect the spawning fish. I would just like to see other options that would close that and I would like to see it open through the summer and into the fall, if that were possible. That’s what we would be seeking.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think staff heard that and so they will try to amend the document to include that information for the next version.

DR. FROESCHKE: Just for your information, in Table 2.2.2, the season lengths and things are in there for the various closed seasons that are options that are currently in the document and that includes both the March to May spawning closure that you’re talking about and if you wanted to look at the effect of that on projected days compared to what we currently are doing.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and so there is that range of spawning seasons and so I don’t know, Myron, and, again, I thought it was referenced in the table and covered some of that.

MR. FISCHER: I will send Doug and I will send staff -- I wanted to see dates that -- It does, but when you look at the spawning closure, it also closed November and I wanted to see it with November open, because we have a tuna fishery in November and when they strike out on tuna, they would really like something to fall back on, on amberjack, and that’s the messages we’re getting. It was to keep that November timeframe, that October and November, open.

DR. FROESCHKE: One of the great things that the Regional Office has done is they’ve made the decision tools and things that I
think they’re going to update and we can send you those, but it would also allow you to explore those kinds of options until your heart is content on the fly and we could do that and so I think that’s a good idea.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you. Go ahead, Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: Committee members noted that the trip limits are in whole weight, but commercial fishermen land greater amberjack gutted. This creates confusion as to what the allowed landing weight actually is.

It was explained that the assessment uses whole weights and ABCs are expressed in whole weights. The committee passed a motion that all whole weights for trip limits in Action 3 in the Amberjack Framework Document be specified as gutted weight.

By a vote of eight to zero, the committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 3 to specify trip limit in pounds gutted weight and include whole weight in parentheses for each option.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s a committee motion. Any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: Options Paper to Update Minimum Stock Size Threshold for Reef Fish Stocks with Low Natural Mortality, staff reviewed the actions and alternatives in the options paper to set minimum stock size thresholds for reef fish stocks with low natural mortality.

It was noted that at MSST equals 50 percent of BMSY, it was likely that snapper would no longer be overfished, although it would still be in a rebuilding plan. The framework action also includes an action to set a default MSST for all reef fish stocks not affected by Action 1.

A suggestion was made to allow for exceptions to the default MSST in Action 2. Mr. Atran stated that staff will develop the options paper into a draft framework action for consideration at a subsequent council meeting.

Red Snapper Poaching by Mexican Lanchas, after an introduction by Captain Joe Hester, Lieutenant Commander Jason Brand and Lieutenant Beth Denicola reviewed an analysis of incursions into U.S. waters off of Texas by Mexican lanchas.

These vessels typically target red snapper and sharks using longlines and gillnets. Detected incursions and seizures
increased over 70 percent since 2008. About 20 percent of the
detected incursions were seized.

When a lancha is seized, the gear and catch are seized, the
vessel is destroyed, and the crew is deported back to Mexico.
An estimated 1,525,715 pounds of red snapper were poached from
U.S. waters by Mexican lanchas over the past two years.

An impact analysis model indicates that the Coast Guard may be
detecting only about 12 percent to 18 percent of the incursions.
A committee member suggested making these illegal harvest
estimates available to the stock assessment scientists to
incorporate into future assessments.

MR. PEARCE: I am not sure how I should proceed with this and I
don’t think we need a motion or a letter or anything at this
time, but I would sure like Jason and Tracy to come back to us
at the next meeting and let us know how we as a council can help
them stop throwing these fish away or destroying these vessels
and maybe using them for some good purpose or whatever or how we
can help them possibly prosecute these illegal fishermen for
U.S. law.

I don’t think I’m ready to do anything now, but I would sure
like for them to come back to us at the next meeting and tell us
how this council can help them or what we can do as individuals
to try and solve this problem a little more than we have in the
past.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Mr. Pearce, Jason and I were
talking about that this morning. The council cannot write a
letter to Congress and request anything in particular. What we
can do, if some language is provided to us, the next time
Congress asks us to comment on the Magnuson Act, that could be
one of the things we suggest to them in response to their
request for input from us.

MR. PEARCE: I understand and I just think that no action is the
wrong thing to take, for any of us as individuals even, and it’s
clear that we need to try to help the Coast Guard do their job
in a better way and help -- All the hard work we do with this
council to preserve the red snapper and we’re watching this
happen and it affects our fishermen and it affects our states
and so I think we have to figure out a better way for the Coast
Guard and help them solve this problem and that’s all and if
there’s any way we can do it, Jason, I would like to know, as an
individual if we went away from the Magnuson Act, if there’s a
way to change that or work with that, but that’s coming up in
this session, the Magnuson Act, and so whatever we can do, because we’ve got to change what’s happening.

LCDR BRAND: Thank you, Mr. Pearce and everyone, for all the support after the brief that was presented. We also have an LEC/LEAP meeting at the next Gulf States Fisheries Commission with Mr. Donaldson and so we will bring that up as an item on the agenda, to get with all the LE folks and come up with some ideas with Tracy. The Magnuson-Stevens Act recommendations, when asked, would be great as well and so we will continue to work this issue and, again, thank you all for your support.

MR. PERRET: We may not as a council be able to write a letter relative to Magnuson or to congressmen unless we were asked to comment, but I guess that’s why state directors are so successful in getting federal money. We know how to craft, or those that are directors that are there now, know how to craft things.

We can certainly write a letter to the Admiral, if this council so desires, thanking them for their excellent enforcement action relative to the efforts off of I guess it was primarily south Texas. In that letter, how puzzled we were to find out that one person had been cited fifteen times and all that kind of stuff and so there’s a way to do it.

If we want to send a letter, I think we should send it to the Admiral and also, we were also surprised that the fish had to be discarded at sea and all that good stuff and then the Admiral knows what to -- I am sure the Admiral and his competent staff would know how to handle it, but, Harlon, if you want to use that approach.

I do think we should compliment the upper level of the Coast Guard and Texas Parks and Wildlife people that were involved and Tracy’s people I am sure were involved for that effort, because I am sure it took a substantial amount of manpower and time and money and so on. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Before I go to Roy, I would just add that if we do a letter that also to include some kudos towards their efforts in estimating the amount of pounds and the economic impact and such.

DR. CRABTREE: I think Corky makes good points. I think you certainly can write a letter to the Coast Guard encouraging them to continue their active involvement in addressing it and you can highlight the importance of this issue.
As we’ve said, you can’t write a letter to Congress, because we can’t lobby, but I suspect over the coming year, with the interest in Magnuson and all of these kinds of things, that you will have opportunities to either answer questions or testify on the Hill or lay out the problems you’re facing. I think, somewhere along the way, you’re going to get an opportunity to bring this up as a problem that we need to deal with and so I think that will arise, but I think for right now, a letter to the Coast Guard would be a good idea.

MR. BOYD: To follow up on Corky’s comment, I don’t know why we couldn’t write a letter or also send that letter to the Secretary of Commerce, who sits on the Presidential Cabinet. That’s not Congress and so we could let the Secretary know how we feel about this.

MR. RIECHERS: I certainly appreciate everyone’s attention to this matter and just so that all of you kind of understand this from a frame of reference, this is not a new matter. As indicated by the presentation, a greater focus in the past few years or a greater presence highlighting the matter, but this has been an ongoing issue down there for a while.

Obviously those incursions into federal waters seem to be maybe increasing, but, as the presentation suggested, maybe not increasing, but just the presence of seeing them, but I do think it’s very, very important that we now have an estimate of those landings and we can help incorporate that into the assessments, but obviously certainly any encouragement and help that this body could give to any of the law enforcement bodies who are down there, Parks and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries Service or the Coast Guard, would be very beneficial. Thanks.

MR. STEVEN ATRAN: You’re talking about not being able to comment to Congress and something just occurred to me and I don’t know if this would really be a valid approach, but the proposed revisions to National Standard 1 are out right now for public comment and National Standard 1 says to achieve optimum yield while avoiding overfishing.

Illegal harvests are going to hurt both of those and so right now, there is nothing in the National Standard 1 Guidelines about enforcement, but potentially -- I don’t know what we would say and perhaps recommend something be added into the National Standard 1 Guidelines dealing with enforcement. Maybe, if that’s a good approach, the Law Enforcement AP might be able to come up with some language.
MS. LEVY: I just want to note that the National Standard Guidelines are regulations and so they have to -- They are constrained by what’s allowed under the Act, the Magnuson Act, and so nothing is going to go into the National Standard Guidelines that isn’t currently permitted by the law. The mechanism, I think we’ve heard, is to change the laws and I don’t know that commenting on the guidelines is going to get you anywhere in that regard.

MR. PERRET: I would like to recommend that the council send an appropriate letter of thanks to the appropriate Admiral of the Coast Guard, copying the Secretary of Commerce and copying -- Robin, your guy is an Executive Director?

MR. RIECHERS: Yes, the Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

MR. PERRET: The Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife. I would -- We can have some discussion and this is not part of my motion now, but anyway, Parks and Wildlife, the Secretary of Commerce, the appropriate Admiral of the Coast Guard, thanking them for the recent enforcement action by the their personnel that worked cooperatively in this Texas effort relative to foreign fishing. I would put, as the content of the letter, the volume of snapper that were involved, which is a very large part of our acceptable catch in domestic waters and other appropriate things that the staff sees fit.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Is that the end of your motion?

MR. PERRET: What did I say? A thank-you letter to the Admiral -- Jason, what Admiral? Is the Admiral in Washington or --

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Give her a chance to type something up there and then we can finish it.

MR. PERRET: While she is typing something up, would it be appropriate to copy especially the two United States Senators? Robin, would it be appropriate to copy at least the two United States Senators from Texas? I would like to copy all ten from the Gulf, but especially Texas.

MR. RIECHERS: I think that would be appropriate. I am assuming Mara -- That’s the issue regarding that, whether they believe that’s appropriate. The other thing I would add, Corky, and if you don’t mind a friendly amendment, I think it should also go to Lieutenant Colonel Hunter, who is our Chief of Law
Enforcement, as well.

MR. PERRET: I assumed your head guy would send it down, but that’s fine. Whoever or whatever appropriate people.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We are still trying to craft the motion.

LCDR BRAND: Corky, just to answer your question, the Admiral for the District 8 who supported this initiative is Rear Admiral Kevin Cook.

MR. PERRET: Has staff got that?

LCDR BRAND: He is actually the person appointed to this council on the website.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Just take another minute to try to get everything that Corky had said he wanted in the motion on the board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I have the gist of what you all are discussing and so we don’t have to put all of that in the --

MR. PERRET: Dr. Crabtree had some good comments relative to content of the letter and so you’ve got all that and if anybody else wants to offer any suggestions, staff, I’m sure, would be happy to receive those. That’s my motion. Staff, remember Robin’s suggestion for the law enforcement guy with Parks and Wildlife.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: The motion is to write a thank-you letter to Rear Admiral Kevin Cook of the Coast Guard, copying the Secretary of Commerce and Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife, thanking them for the enforcement actions relative to foreign fisheries off of Texas. We need a second to the motion.

MR. BOYD: I second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. It’s seconded and is there any discussion on the motion? Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries. Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: Draft Amendment 39, Red Snapper Recreational Regional Management, staff from the Mid-Atlantic Council gave a presentation on summer flounder regional management, Tab B, Number 9.

Staff reviewed the actions and alternatives in the restructured
regional management amendment, Tab B, Number 8. The committee members requested reinsertion of preferred alternatives for regional closed areas and sub-allocations in an appropriate place in the document.

Action 1 includes two new alternatives modeled after summer flounder management. If selected, regions would provide proposals describing the conservation equivalent management measures for the harvest of the region’s portion of the recreational red snapper quota.

Under Alternative 3, regions would submit proposals directly to National Marine Fisheries for review and approval, while under Alternative 4, proposals would first be reviewed by a technical review committee followed by a NMFS review and approval.

Following discussion, the committee passed the following motion. By a voice vote, the committee recommends, and I so move, that Alternative 3, Action 1 be the preferred alternative to establish a regional management program in which a state or group of states (regions) submit proposals to NMFS describing the conservation equivalent measures the region will adopt for the management of its portion of the red snapper quota. Conservation equivalency proposals would specify the red snapper season structure, bag limit, minimum and/or maximum size limits, and optionally closed areas in the EEZ for the harvest of an assigned portion of the recreational red snapper quota. If a region does not participate or its proposal is determined by National Marine Fisheries to be inconsistent with the requirements of the regional management program selected in Action 1, the recreational harvest of red snapper in the EEZ off such region would be restricted to the federal default regulations for red snapper.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There’s a committee motion. Any discussion on the motion?

MS. LEVY: I just want to note that there was a little sentence after that that said if the council adopts this, then the sunset is removed, because right now, your preferred alternative has a sunset option, but the committee motion included Alternative 3 without the sunset option.

I also wanted to note, and I think it’s after this in the committee report, that some of us got together and restructured, based on yesterday’s discussion, how Action 1 and Action 2 read and I don’t know whether you want to look at that before you decide what to do here or whether you want to vote on this and
then look at the restructured actions and alternatives and decide if you want to do anything different, but they essentially contain the same substantive language, except we added back in the closed area thing, but it looks different is what I’m saying.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I mean we would have to dispense of this motion, I guess, and look at what’s been developed and maybe deal with that as a substitute motion I guess is how we would proceed, because it’s -- I guess we can see it and modify what we have here or whatever and so I guess I’m open to anything.

MR. PERRET: Is that modified language available to put on the screen? I will move a substitute motion with the new language and we can take a look at it, if you get a second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a substitute motion to look at the new language that has been brought forward based on Reef Fish Committee discussion and is there a second to the motion? We have a second by Mr. Pearce. Any discussion on the motion?

DR. CRABTREE: I guess we’re waiting to get it up there, but I will, once again, state my preference for Alternative 4 with a technical review committee. I still am a little surprised, given the criticisms, particularly from some of the states, of the way the federal government has handled the seasons and some of the statements that have been made, that you’re so willing to turn all of this over to the federal government without having some oversight of it. I find that very surprising.

DR. LUCAS: Just to that point, Roy, would you -- In leaving it the way it is currently written, how about having an appeal process, where about if you deny -- If National Marine Fisheries Service denies it, it would then go to a review committee, possibly made up of the Gulf States Fisheries Commission, for an appeal process.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess you could do that, but that seems to even be getting more time-consuming and cumbersome if we go through that way of doing it and it seems, to me, with a technical review committee that maybe had some commission people, but had state people on it, I think the states are all going to have a real interest in watching what the other states are doing and making sure that everybody is upfront and doing the analysis in a transparent way.

It seems that would give us some oversight of the whole thing and if it was just structured right upfront so it happened, it
seems it would work smoother than coming in and having something sent back and then convening panels and going through a whole appeals process, because we’re going to be pressed for time to make these things happen by the next year, but I will leave it to you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do we have the new language up on the screen?

MS. LEVY: This has been restructured and the preferred alternative that’s up there now is similar to the -- There is two. There is the preferred alternative that the council had from the last decision point, which was the delegation, and then under each one, instead of having an Action 4 that had you choose what you wanted to delegate, all the options are under the delegation alternative.

Then, below that, there is a committee preferred, which is what was chosen yesterday, which was the conservation equivalency with the NMFS review. Again, under that are the options for what the states can establish or must establish by conservation equivalency.

We structured it that way so that could choose the type of regional management you want and then choose what the states would be responsible for or could be responsible for under each one of those.

MR. RIECHERS: Sorry, Chairman Anson, but I am trying to remember. The previous motion we already dispensed of?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: No, this is a substitute motion.

MR. RIECHERS: Okay and so you’re substituting this and I’m sorry. Okay. Then within the context of the substitute motion, I am going to make one amendment to the substitute motion and I amend that Option e also be listed as preferred. I don’t know how you all -- I can handle it with a whole committee substitute, because we’ve got room on the board, or I can handle it with an amendment. Kevin, you tell me how you would prefer to do it.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I guess we’ll see how the council goes in regards to that. It might be just a friendly amendment if Corky would like.

MR. RIECHERS: Again, I guess I’m a little bit struggling here on the same point of order we were on before, because when we asked them to draft a new conservation equivalency amendment, we
assumed it was going to include all the previous actions and items that we had before and it seems as if the reason it’s not listed here as a committee preferred is because it wasn’t specifically listed in the document we were dealing with yesterday. Again, we’re a little bit stuck between what we would have thought was coming back to us and where we are.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Corky, do you accept the friendly amendment, if we want to go that route?

MR. PERRET: First, I was not privileged to the group that put this one together. This is my substitute motion and this is what the group worked up and can you go up so I can read it and see what -- This was agreed upon by all of the Reef Fish Committee or by certain members of the Reef Fish Committee?

MR. RIECHERS: No, this was a redrafting to try to put it back the way we had it from the last meeting, as I understand it, and, Corky, trust me that none of us were privy to this other than now.

MR. PERRET: But you’re saying, Robin, that the closed area was not included that had been previously in the document? I agree with Robin and if it was there previously, we should have it in there.

MS. LEVY: The issue is when we had it just as a delegation the closed areas were included, which it is included as a council preferred in the other alternative, which is the delegation alternative.

The issue was when staff was asked to develop a conservation equivalency type of program and model it after summer flounder, that summer flounder includes size limits, bag limits, and season structure. It doesn’t include closed areas and I think I said seasons again. That’s why it wasn’t put as a preferred in that conservation equivalency model one. It wasn’t because that wasn’t what summer flounder did and staff was trying to model after summer flounder and so we did add it back as a preferred under the delegation, which is what was selected in the previous document, but there really wasn’t nothing selected for conservation equivalency in the previous document, because we didn’t have it is what I’m saying.

MR. WALKER: This is the recreational 39 and I just wanted to -- I am concerned and I need to be clear on how this Option e would -- I want to make sure it doesn’t have any effect on the commercial industry.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: No, this is all for the recreational sector, David.

MR. WALKER: The closure, I didn’t want to say these are closed and just as long as it’s closed not for commercial.

DR. CRABTREE: Just to that, I mean this would create an area that was open only to commercial fishing, as it stands now, as I understand it. I have just a point of order. This is a friendly amendment and this is Corky’s motion then that was amended?

MR. PERRET: Robin’s suggestion?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. PERRET: Yes.

DR. CRABTREE: I would like to make a substitute motion that the preferred alternative be Revised Alternative 4 with Options a, b, c, and d.

MS. BADEMAN: Are we up to a second substitute now?

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes and so is everyone clear of where we are? It’s the second substitute motion and that’s making Alternative 4 the preferred. Alternative 4 is the one where it has the technical review committee that would review the plans that the states, the regions, submit. That was a through d, Roy?

DR. CRABTREE: a, b, c, and d would be the preferred suboptions under it.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: While they structure that, maybe we can have some conversation to that substitute motion and is there any? First, we need a second.

MR. WILLIAMS: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a second by Mr. Williams.

DR. CRABTREE: I just think we would be much better served if we have a small subcommittee that involved state people as part of this process to review it. I think that’s going to head off all kinds of disagreements and conflicts and other problems down the
road and it’s going to give the whole process greater acceptance and I think that’s what we need to do.

As I have said before, I just do not believe that within the context of regional management that the idea of closed areas is workable. I don’t know how the NEPA goes. We don’t know what those closed areas are and I think the better way to come in and handle closed areas is if a state wants a closed area, they come to the council and ask the council to establish it and we go through the process of doing that and that’s cleaner than having it get tied up into a state’s proposal, because I think having that in a state’s proposal will really bog down the process of trying to go through an expedited review and get an approval of their process, because it’s going to require a complicated NEPA analysis and a plan amendment that the council will have to go through and do.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Mr. Donaldson, you were here as part of the Reef Fish discussion and so I just -- That would be -- We could have it outside of the standard spring and fall commission meetings, but I guess you all would just serve as the facilitator, I guess, to get the group together and then we would have that meeting to set time, so that plans could be available to review and all that and is that correct? That doesn’t create any issues for you or staff or anything like that?

MR. DONALDSON: No, we have the resources and staff to be able to handle that, if so desired, and we would work out the details at the commission.

MR. RIECHERS: Obviously I am going to speak against the preferred or against the substitute, as we’ve had this discussion several times regarding the closed areas, but as far as the review committee goes, you’re just alluding to the fact that it’s going to Gulf States. There is nothing within the document that would suggest that at this point in time and so I am making that clear.

I might be able to get more comfortable with a review committee and I don’t think I’m going to vote for this motion, but I might be able to get more comfortable with it if we would define that better in the document as we move forward.

I am not crazy about it, because I think at the end of the day, if we’re asking National Marine Fisheries Service to approve these, we would probably just all go to National Marine Fisheries Service. I understand what Roy is attempting to do,
which is to maybe provide some more oversight.

Frankly, he suggested that the states may want it and I certainly trust my other state directors to be able to do the calculus in their own state regarding their landings and making sure that if they agree that they’re going to stay within a particular allowable catch limit that they’re going to manage their fishery to do that and so I don’t really have that concern at all, but I do understand the issue of transparency and if he wanted some other bodies to look at it.

At this point, I can’t support this. Maybe, in a subsequent meeting, fleshing out a technical review committee and a structure for that might make me more comfortable with it.

MS. BOSARGE: I think Robin is right in the sense that there’s a lot of variables as to who would be on this technical review committee and it doesn’t necessarily have to go the route that the summer flounder technical review committee went, where it’s their commission, per se.

I was kind of interested in this alternative, because I almost thought of it as if that technical review committee was possibly more like an SSC body that looked at it and, in other words, an independent group that could look at it for the merits of the conservation, the biological impacts, and give us feedback as the council.

In other words, to keep us somewhat in the loop and their report would come to us, as opposed to implementing regional management and now we have the states managing it and they could get up to NMFS and NMFS either kicks it out or doesn’t. We are kind of out of the loop, which is not a bad thing, unless regional management has some issues and doesn’t work.

Then we’re the ones that implemented it and we have to come back and fix it, but yet, we haven’t really been a part of it and we’re not real sure -- Maybe the states would know what the issues are, but somebody like me that doesn’t work for a state government, I am not really going to have been in the loop and know what’s going wrong and how to fix it.

That was one thing that appealed to me about possibly having this -- I don’t like another layer of bureaucracy in the system, from that aspect, but to keep us informed and to have another independent body that looks at it from a technical standpoint doesn’t bother me too much.
DR. CRABTREE: I think the way the technical review committee --
The reality is it’s going to be an advisory panel that you will set up and appoint people to and you can appoint people from the commission or whatever, but that will be your decision and you will appoint them and their technical review will come to you as well as to the agency.

I can assure you that if there are problems with regional management that you will have large groups of people come to these council meetings and let you know about them, because if it doesn’t work, you’re going to be the body that is going to have to change it, because it’s your fishery management plan and you set it up and it will be up to you to make the corrections and the tweaks to it and so you’re going to need to remain very engaged in this whole process, because I would be amazed if we don’t run into problems and need to make changes to this if we go down this path.

MS. BADEMAN: In the long run, I am like Robin and I don’t know which of the alternatives in this action I think my state will go for. We have discussed delegation and our commission seemed to be maybe okay with that.

What concerns me at this point is I’ve heard three different people talk about this alternative and I have heard three different ways about how it’s actually going to work and so I think, at least for me, I need to understand exactly how this is going to work before I can really pitch it to my commission, for one, and get behind it. Thanks.

DR. CRABTREE: I mean it’s your plan and so it’s going to work how you decide it’s going to work and you are going to decide who this technical committee is and when they see things and what they do and how all this happens and we’re going to have to lay out that process in the amendment.

MS. BADEMAN: Just to that point, that’s fine, but I am not ready to make it my preferred based on that.

MR. PERRET: Well, I am. Every state director that I have ever served with on this council at some time or other has been critical, and rightfully so in many cases, of the National Marine Fisheries Service and its Regional Administrator.

Yesterday, we heard Dr. Crabtree, by one person, is doing an excellent job and I don’t want Dr. Crabtree to be the sole czar to make these decisions. I think we definitely need a technical review committee made up of -- My suggestion would be state
directors and/or their designee for the purpose of reviewing the
state plans that are going to go forward.

If indeed, which I’m sure there will be some issues raised, I
don’t want Dr. Crabtree alone to have to make that decision of
yea or nay. I want state people working with Dr. Crabtree or
his appropriate staff people to make those decisions. I think
it’s very similar, in my mind, to the way state resource
agencies operate, other than Alabama, I think.

Every state has a commission and they don’t have just an
executive director or a secretary. They have a commission and
that’s a buffer and I think that’s what we need in this process.
I think it would improve the system rather than just have one
agency make the final decisions and, as Dr. Crabtree says, this
is a state plan and this is your plan and I think you should
have as much oversight over it as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any further discussion?

MR. FISCHER: I see compelling arguments on both sides, but I
also envision just a streamlined process that we don’t have to
start requesting approval from sub-agencies.

We have worked with Roy’s office in the recent past on snapper
issues and have done that very successfully and I would feel
very comfortable, from our seat, submitting a proposal and
explaining the proposal and it’s not just a blind email and
letting it be, but explaining how we came up with our figures
and walking away and then some dialogue where his people could
say we like these parts and we don’t like these parts.

I could see this committee dragging down and just slowing down
the whole process, especially if there’s little tweak changes.
They are going to send it to National Marine Fisheries, who is
going to send it back to them and we’ll be trying to set the
2016 season in 2018. I just would like to see something quick.
We turn it in and make our case and get a response and,
therefore, I still support Alternative 3.

DR. LUCAS: I would like to echo what Myron said. We have
worked very well with NOAA in the recent past in trying to get
our mandatory red snapper reporting system in place. We’ve been
working with his staff and we’ve gone back and forth and they’ve
had great dialogue and offered great suggestions and we’ve taken
them up on the suggestions and I can’t see why that process
couldn’t work the same way as just working with your staff to
make sure that we are meeting your goals and where you see
tweaks, we make the tweaks and move forward. Like Myron said, I think it would go a lot faster if we went that process.

I do still think that there -- I guess if they came to complete odds, if there was a way to then send it to an appeal, just so it gave National Marine Fisheries Service a chance to at least say somebody else then reviewed it. I will be rejecting this alternative.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other comments? We have a second substitute motion to make Alternative 4 the preferred alternative with Suboptions a through d. All those in favor of the second substitute motion that’s on the board, please signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. We are going to need to raise our hands on this. All those in favor raise your hand, please; all those opposed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: The motion failed and so we go back to the first substitute motion and that substitute motion is to make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative and that’s to establish the regional management program in which a state or group of states or regions submit proposals to NMFS describing the conservation equivalent measures and that includes identifying Preferred Options a through e for what those plans could contain and so that’s up on the board and is there any further discussion on this motion?

MR. FISCHER: On the motion that was just defeated, I thought we had a strikethrough on Option e and I was going to ask what that criteria was, what that rationale was, and if it applied here.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think that was the way it I guess carried through from the Reef Fish Committee, that it was struck during that time and just kept in the document.

MR. RIECHERS: No, Roy specifically did not want Option e in his substitute motion that he just made.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and so any other discussion on the substitute motion? It’s on the board. All those in favor please raise your hand; all those opposed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: For this motion, we had nine for. It passed nine to seven.
The substitute motion making Alternative 3 the preferred passed nine to seven. Thank you.

I guess I should be pleasantly surprised and I want to thank all of you for your endorsement and expression of confidence in the National Marine Fisheries Services’ management of red snapper.

Not all of us voted for you.

Well, but it’s the majority.

In that context, Roy, I think Corky hit it that it would still be a partnership. This is going to be states working with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Absolutely. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Do you have something, Ava?

If we could go on back to the document with the actions and alternatives.

The document that was presented to the committee or the document that we just --

The document that I emailed Karen and asked her to put up that goes with the report.

Okay, because that has not been put on the website or distributed.

I believe it has. If we could back to the first page of that.

Ava wants to readdress some prior action, possibly based on the discussions that were had with IPT members after the Reef Fish Committee is what I think is happening.

Okay and apologies. This is another modification that we need to get -- We are requesting some guidance on. In the previous version, in that previous Action 4, because of delegation, the council created boundaries to some of the management measures that could be delegated to the states.

It wasn’t just that your bag limit and size limit and season structure would be set. There were parameters around those between zero and four fish and that’s necessary under the
delegation option, but it’s up to you if you would like to adopt the same, as a council, the same types of boundaries for these proposals or if you would just like to leave it open and then allow the review process to determine if they have exceeded the boundaries or not.

That’s why in the top parts of the preferred options, if we could scroll up just a little bit, a region must establish its season structure and a region must establish a bag limit from zero to four.

This was all from the previous action with those limits. We do not currently have those on the summer flounder options. If you scroll down a little bit now, right now they are open and we just wanted to get some feedback of would you prefer it this way or would you, as a council, like to put boundaries on what those proposals could modify?

DR. CRABTREE: I heard concerns wanting this to be a rapid process and move quickly and so the extent you put bounds on things now, we can do the NEPA analysis potentially upfront and there will be less process required when the states come up with plans.

If we leave it wide open and a state comes in with something unexpected or different and we haven’t considered it, we will have to go through a whole NEPA analysis and that’s going to have to come before you as a council and go through the whole process and so I think putting bounds on this is a good idea and will make this move more quickly through this process.

MR. FISCHER: I do think they should have bounds. I would like to bring one particular one up for discussion and that is size limit. Size limit is a very biological issue, because it relates to what you are extracting from the population and how it’s going to affect the population and the fecundity, the biologicals, of that fish.

We have a thirteen-inch size limit on the commercial, which is about half our fishery, and we have a sixteen-inch size limit on recreational and I could be mistaken, but Texas state waters is at fifteen inches and so we have varying sizes.

I think if we concluded on one unique size for the recreational fishery, and it may be lower in the sixteen-inch mark somewhat, but I think it should be a council decision and I haven’t seen any type of histogram or anything with the mode of catch, but I suspect the mode is eighteen or twenty inches and it’s a big
I don’t think people are now fishing on that minimum size, but I would like to see a universal size limit and it may make Roy’s calculations a little easier if he’s just working on one size limit and I would rather let someone else comment on this that does this work.

MR. RIECHERS: Maybe I am getting confused as to the question, Ava, but as I’m understanding your question is we had had this in the previous document and when you brought it conservation equivalencies into this suite of options -- You’re just asking should we apply that same set of ranges that we had in our previous discussions to this new conservation equivalency option or at least that’s the understanding that I am getting and not trying to hone in on it anymore at this point, Myron. We had those ranges in there before.

I guess my notion was always kind of, and maybe there is where the council didn’t provide good guidance, but I thought it was going to be part of this suite so it would apply or at least have the option of applying. If it pleases the Chairman, I will make that as a motion and we can then just apply it to the recently adopted, and I am getting lost in action, but I think it was Alternative Number 3 now.

DR. LASSETER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Ava, did you want to address that?

DR. LASSETER: Yes and the reason that the summer flounder alternatives do not have those limits is because that’s not the way the summer flounder program does it and so we just wanted to clarify do you want to maintain those boundaries or adopt the more summer flounder model?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We will probably get to a motion here, Robin, I guess, but there’s a couple of other people that are in the queue.

DR. CRABTREE: What I almost heard from Myron was he doesn’t think we ought to have minimum size limits be part of what the states are allowed to change and I probably agree with that, but if we are going to allow it, we need to put these bounds in, but you should be bear in mind that remember we saw the new stock assessment yesterday, right?

I think the TAC is going up by probably a million pounds,
because the selectivity in the recreational fishery has shifted
towards larger fish. If a state comes in and puts a maximum
size limit in place, you’re going to shift that back and so you
could lose a million pounds right off the TAC because of what
states do with a slot limit or something. That’s going to
create a huge disruption if that happens.

We have heard -- I think it was Dr. Barbieri from the SSC who
told us that having a whole range of different size limits in
the Gulf is going to create a lot of problems for the stock
assessments in terms of estimating selectivities.

We all sit here and we talk about the need for better science,
but we ought not do things that are going to make it harder for
the scientists to deal with this and I frankly haven’t heard
anyone in the public come in and ask us to change the minimum
size limit. Maybe there has been someone, but it doesn’t seem
to be a burning issue in anyone’s mind.

We have talked about slot limits and things, but it seems like
the prevailing public opinion has always gone about that and so
we’re putting something in here that’s giving flexibility that
maybe no one is ever going to use, but it potentially has some
real consequences if it did change.

If Florida put in a maximum size limit, 40 plus percent of the
catch occurs there and that could have a real impact on the
overall selectivity of the fishery and that could affect the
total allowable catch.

MR. FISCHER: Roy, actually what I was trying to say is I think
size limits should not be part of this. The council should set
a size limit and leave it at sixteen and for the very reason you
just said, from the last meeting and Dr. Barbieri talking about
stock assessments. To that, I would -- Do we have a motion on
the board to accept this suite? Robin, did you make such?

MR. RIECHERS: I think part of the problem is we’ve got the
motion previously on the board and people are still confusing
that as a motion that’s standing.

MR. FISCHER: No, the motion with the actual numbers in it. I
don’t think we passed that and that is in the document on the
very first page, under Preferred Alternative 2. I think we
should keep those bounds, where regions can establish their
season structure and the bag limit has to be from zero to four.
I would choose to eliminate -- Leave the minimum size at sixteen
inches, what it’s set at, and let others debate the maximum
size, if that has an effect on the population, and then a
Preferred e about closed areas.

I would like to see the numbers, if it helps the states see what
they’re working with. Now, this is what you’re working with.
You’re working with fish and you’re working with season
structure and size should be set at sixteen inches.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Myron, you are talking about two
different things and let’s try to keep them separate. On one
hand, you’re saying that size limits should not be a part of
this, but on the other hand, you’re saying for the other items
there should be limits and so they’re like two different motions
and the only administrative or parliamentary problem is this
motion has already been approved, but I think if the council
wants to take out size limits, that’s fine and if they want to
put the boundaries into this Alternative 3 like exists in
Alternative 2, that’s fine too as separate motions, as long as
we all understand what we’re doing.

LCDR BRAND: I just wanted to remind you that we have a Law
Enforcement AP and Committee meeting before the next council and
so if there’s any charge or any questions that you would like to
take us to take a look at in regards to this preferred
alternative.

I kind of understand that most of the enforcement will be done
dockside. However, with a closed area, that would be at-sea
enforcement and would federal be able to enforce these closed
areas or would this just be left up to the states to do? Some
of those questions I still have, from my perspective.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Certainly the council wants to do that and look
for some more guidance and might make a motion to add that as a
charge to put on the agenda or to bring up for discussion.

MR. PERRET: I am just trying to get -- Can we have the last
motion that was passed, the first substitute motion, I guess it
was, my motion I guess it was? Can we put it up there and keep
it for a minute?

Now Myron is talking about, and Roy, the size limits and whether
or not to have a specific size limit. Myron, are you now
wanting to establish a certain number or a certain size?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: To that point please, Myron.

MR. FISCHER: I was going to make a motion.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: Martha, did you have any other --

MS. BADEMAN: Just a point of order. If we’re going to start fixing this, don’t we need a motion to reconsider before we do that? That’s all, since that’s about to happen.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: You can be very technical about this with parliamentary rules, but as long as everybody understands what’s happening, I think we could go forward and I see Roberts Rules as guidelines.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Mara, can you get us back on track here, please?

MS. LEVY: Okay and so we identified two issues. I think if you want to change what you just selected as your preferred that you need a motion to reconsider. If you want to modify these options to reflect what is in Alternative 2, so that you have the boundaries, then I think you can make that motion, but if you want to actually change what you’ve just selected as a preferred, I think you need to have a vote on a motion to reconsider that decision.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Since Myron brought it up, Myron, do you want to go forward?

MR. FISCHER: I move that this Preferred Option b set bounds where the bag limit must be from zero to four fish.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Let’s wait until we get this on the board here. Myron, can you repeat the bounds? Is it zero to four? Yes, zero to four fish, of course. Is that your entire motion, Myron? Myron, is that your entire motion or did you want to include anything else?

MR. FISCHER: Bag limit.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We got that for b and do you want anything with size limit?

MR. FISCHER: Not at this time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Not at this time.

MR. WILLIAMS: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s the motion, that new Preferred Option b
set bounds from zero to four fish.

**MS. LEVY:** Just a suggestion that if you feel like setting the bounds for the conservation equivalency alternatives is necessary and that’s what we’re getting at, you may want to have the motion put those bounds in both Alternative 3 and 4. I understand that you haven’t selected 4 as a preferred, but they are addressing the same thing and so it may just be to add the zero to four fish in Option b in both Alternative 3 and 4.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Myron, as Mara pointed out, it would be more consistent to have zero to four in all the other alternatives, Alternatives 3 and 4.

**MR. FISCHER:** Sure, that’s fine.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Option b would be to set the bounds from zero to four fish. I think the motion should read that Option b in Alternatives 3 and 4 be set -- The recreational bag limit be set zero to four fish, if you will accept that, Myron. It adds a few more words in there than you had originally.

**MR. FISCHER:** Yes.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** The seconder agrees?

**MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** All right. Thank you. Is everyone clear on this now, Option b in both Alternatives 3 and 4? Again, we just selected that in a substitute motion just a few minutes ago and Alternative 3 is the preferred alternative, but for making consistency in the document, we’re including it in 4, that the recreational bag limit be set to zero to four fish. Any other discussion on this motion? All those opposed to this motion please indicate by saying aye. The motion carries.

**MR. FISCHER:** I would like to create a similar motion regarding Preferred Option c. Of course, this would do for the other alternatives. A region must establish a minimum size limit no smaller than fifteen inches. Mr. Chair, I phrased it incorrectly. The size limit must be set at fifteen. We want to have a uniform size limit Gulf-wide is what we’re seeking, a minimum size limit Gulf-wide.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** I don’t have the document, but, Mara, is this also for 4? Do you recall? This would also be applied to 4? It would read “both Alternatives 3 and 4” again, for
consistency. Correct? Is it 4, Ava? Is that correct?

DR. LASSETER: I would also think Alternative 2 in that case. Why are you having it different in 3 and 4 than 2?

MR. FISCHER: Mr. Chair, I could give brief rationale.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Hold on one second. Is it Alternatives 2, 3, and 4?

DR. LASSETER: I believe so, yes. Mara?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: 2, 3, and 4. It’s Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 that the region must establish a uniform size limit of fifteen inches and do I have a second for this motion?

MR. RIECHERS: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a second from Mr. Riechers and is there any discussion?

DR. DANA: Just a technical question. What is the age difference between a fifteen-inch and a sixteen-inch?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Two or three months maybe, maybe.

MS. BADEMAN: Myron, why fifteen inches then, if our current size limit is sixteen?

MR. FISCHER: By lowering the size limit, it still gives the anglers flexibility. If you raise the size limit, obviously those fish have to be returned to the water and fifteen was in the range between fourteen and eighteen and it would give a state an opportunity -- If they wanted to have a smaller size limit, they could creep smaller and just discussions we’ve had internally, it shouldn’t affect the -- It may affect the mechanics of a stock assessment, but it shouldn’t affect the stock and especially with commercial at thirteen inches and they are harvesting half the fish at a smaller size limit.

Your size will be fifteen inches and Roy may oppose it and it may be -- I am just trying to make calculations Gulf-wide and have every state on the same playing field with size limit. Sixteen would be the next option if you substituted the motion.

MR. WALKER: I had asked this question to Will Patterson the other day and I was asking him about size limit, about changing the size limit to increase the recreational access to more days.
I spoke with him out in the hall and asked him if more studies would be helpful and he said, of course and he would like to see some more studies to look at size limits.

I don’t know if you want to leave it at fifteen or maybe we would like to put some thought in it and I would like to see some more information on, some more studies on, to tweak that size. I think Alabama, when they had their landings, it was showing some smaller size limits and, of course, they said the landings came in lower.

In the headboat pilot program, the fish turned up being smaller and it just I think gives you a -- I am kind of concerned about leaving it at fifteen and you may want to look at thirteen. I wouldn’t want to be stuck with thirteen until I knew more about the size limits.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Myron, you had your hand up earlier and did you get your comments in? Okay. So I have Dr. Crabtree and then Roy Williams.

DR. CRABTREE: Just to be clear, I mean my read on this is this says that the states have to include a fifteen-inch minimum size limit in their conservation equivalency plan and they can’t go below it and they can’t go above it.

The weird part of this, to me, is the default federal size limit will remain sixteen inches, unless we do something else to change that, and so if a state opts out, it will have a sixteen-inch size limit off of that state and I have a hard time -- It seems cleaner, to me, if we want to have fifteen inches to be the size limit, to just change the size limit to fifteen inches everywhere.

MR. FISCHER: We agree, Roy, but I don’t think it would be germane to enter it into this motion here.

MR. WILLIAMS: I agree with what Roy said. I am also concerned that if we go to a lower size limit that it’s going to also force a lower bag limit too and that’s -- I am kind of concerned about that.

MS. LEVY: I think I originally nodded my head when you talked about Alternative 2, but after further thought and discussion, Alternative 2 is a delegation and so if you’re going to say you have to set a -- There is just no delegation of that.

I mean with a conservation equivalency, I guess you’re saying
you have to include a fifteen-inch size limit in whatever plan you submit us, but it just doesn’t seem to fit with the delegation, because really then you’re just not delegating that to the state.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: To clean that up then, Myron, if you wouldn’t mind, my suggestion would be to remove Alternative 2 from your motion, based on that.

MR. FISCHER: That’s fine.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s fine and so we can get it to apply appropriately. Roy, I think you seconded the motion.

MR. WILLIAMS: No, Robin did.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Robin, do you agree with that? Okay. All right.

MR. RIECHERS: Just to walk everyone through this, I mean basically we went to a sixteen-inch minimum size limit and then, as I’m recalling, the commercial size limit went to fifteen and now it’s at thirteen and, in fact, since I’m the one at fifteen, that’s one of the reasons we stayed at fifteen at that point in time, was just because of the differential between commercial and recreational and we were going to keep it at one size limit in our state.

Also, the yield per recruit analysis conducted by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center I believe suggested that it was maximized at fifteen inches total length during their last assessment and so there is some biological rationale for fifteen inches.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other comments or discussion on this motion?

MS. BADEMAN: I just -- I don’t necessarily have a problem with fifteen, but it seems to me that wouldn’t we just -- Wouldn’t we want to do this across the board, through a different way than this amendment?

If we want to change the size limit to fifteen inches, we’ll just do it, the minimum size limit. I see that as a separate issue than this amendment.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I don’t know and --
MS. BADEMAN: The default thing.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Dr. Crabtree had some comments to that and certainly if we change it, then I just -- I think we have to have some verbiage in here that dictates or kind of tells the states, as they submit their plans, that hey, this is what you’re allowed to do or this is what you should be following.

Granted, if we change it across the board and just don’t have this option in there, then that could be a better way to do it, but I don’t know if someone has some more comments on that or we can just go ahead and vote and deal with that later, but any comments to that? Okay.

We have a motion that Option c in Alternatives 3 and 4 must establish a uniform minimum size limit of fifteen inches. All those in favor of this please raise your hand.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have ten four and just for the record, all those in opposition, please raise your hand.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: One, two, three, four, five. It passed ten to five.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That takes us through this.

DR. CRABTREE: So you don’t want to put any bounds -- I think the maximum size limit issue is much more significant and has much more ramifications and if you leave a maximum size limit in here, you potentially allow one state to unilaterally make a decision that could result in significant changes in the TAC.

We have put no bounds on that and I don’t think fifteen or sixteen inches changes anything really, but the maximum size limit clearly does and then the closed area thing is a really open-ended thing and I’m not quite even sure how to put bounds on that, but if you don’t want to allow the states to set the minimum size limit, I sure don’t think you want to allow them to set maximum size limits, because I think that’s a much more significant issue.

MR. FISCHER: Roy, we are taking them alphabetically and it’s d and so I agree with Roy that the size limit is a minimum size, as we’re used to fishing now fifteen inches. Therefore, I would make a motion that we remove Preferred Option d of a maximum
size limit.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We are getting that motion on the board. Dr. Lasseter, does this apply to Alternatives 3 and 4 only?

DR. LASSETER: Myron, would your intention be delegation as well and you would not want to delegate this? Okay. So I would say 2, 3, and 4.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Myron, that would be okay to include it then, to remove Option d in Alternatives 2, 3, and 4?

MR. FISCHER: It’s not rationale, but it’s just as time goes on and as science changes and science gives us other information — If science would dictate that we shouldn’t be doing it this way and they come to us in three or five years, I’m sure the sitting body at that time would then incorporate it, but we don’t have any evidence that this would do any good whatsoever.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion and do we have a second to the motion?

DR. CRABTREE: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s been seconded by Dr. Crabtree. Any discussion?

MR. WILLIAMS: I would like Roy Crabtree to explain to me your comments about how setting a maximum size limit is going to have an effect throughout the Gulf. I don’t get that.

DR. CRABTREE: Recall the presentation on the stock assessment yesterday and we saw a figure that showed how the recreational selectivities had shifted towards larger fish and as a consequence of that, the TAC went up. If you put a maximum size limit on there, you are essentially shifting it back down and the TAC is going to go down on it.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion on this motion?

MR. ATRAN: I have been looking for the discussion of slot limits that the SSC had and I can’t find it, but I do recall that maximum size limits were found not to have a whole lot of impact, mainly because there were fewer fish caught at the large size limits than at the small size limits.

Now, based upon what Roy just said, selectivity has shifted towards the larger fish, there may be a little bit more impact
than what that slot limit analysis indicated, but I don’t think this is a major item. I think the main thing is trying to provide uniformity of the regulations would simplify it across the Gulf.

DR. PONWITH: The size of the fish that are brought in matters in the stock assessment. The relationship is complex and so I would be careful about making kind of strong one-to-one relationships, but Dr. Crabtree is correct.

That was one of the things that did change in the stock assessment between this update and the last benchmark, is that those selectivities did change and it did change the relationship.

I think what Steven just said is exactly true and that is that the size composition/age composition of the landings are important in the stock assessment and having different regulations in different subregions will add to the complexity of the stock assessment and I think that’s the take-home message.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and so any other discussion? The motion is to remove Option d, eliminating a maximum size limit, in Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. All those in favor of the motion please raise your hand.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: So we have fifteen and just for -- Any opposition? Okay and it was pretty much unanimous. Let’s take a quick break at this time for about ten minutes, please. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We are going to go ahead and continue the discussion and, Dr. Lasseter, you had a couple more points in the document?

DR. LASSETER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. We want to look back at the updated actions and alternatives to Alternative 5. Staff also reorganized the Action 1 and, as you noticed, the preceding options are now the various management measures and so we’ve removed the sunset options within the alternatives and we made them a stand-alone alternative.
You had selected Option c, to sunset regional management after three calendar years of the program. That was selected with your Preferred Alternative 2 and you did select now a new preferred alternative and you have not selected a sunset option and so, as it stands now, Alternative 5 has no preferred alternatives.

MR. FISCHER: I know this was somewhere else, but I thought we had further discussion that, and I thought it stemmed from Roy, that the sunset option is moot, because the council can vote something in or out as needed and it wasn’t necessary and maybe we didn’t vote on it and maybe he just made the comment and we let it be, but I thought after that discussion that it was decided that a sunset wasn’t needed.

DR. LASSETER: I understood that at this time you had not selected -- You no longer have a sunset selected and I wanted to out how it’s restructured. They are here and if the council does not wish to consider sunsets, you could move this to considered but rejected or we can just leave this here for now and I just wanted to point out that there is not a preferred sunset at this time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any direction from the council? Does anyone want to make a motion to remove the alternative for a sunset?

MR. PERRET: Myron is absolutely right that a majority of the council at any meeting can modify whatever, but I assume the reason it’s in there the way it is is because of sector separation with the sunset and now maybe -- Myron now says we don’t need a sunset here and I agree, but we didn’t need a sunset on sector separation, but we put it in and so I think, for consistency, leave it in for now and it certainly can be changed.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion? Ava, have you got some direction then or any other things in the document?

DR. LASSETER: Yes and if we could scroll down to Action 2, to address the sub-allocation alternative for regions being able to modify allocations.

We have modified the Action 2, Regional Management and Sector Separation, and the tables that you will see in here are not part of the alternatives. These will be in the action on allocation, but we’ve included them here just so that you could see an example of what each of them do and so I would like to
review this action for you again.

Alternative 2 would extend sector separation, essentially, extend separate management of the recreational components, and apply this amendment, regional management, to the private angling component only. Now, the table there would represent your current preferred alternative for allocation, but applied to just the private anglers only.

Alternative 3 would extend the separate management of the components, but to apply this amendment, regional management, to both components, but to continue to manage them with separate allocations. We have provided options for each of the states and each of the states could decide if they wanted to adopt sub-allocations for their state. This way, we could analyze the sub-allocation on that state in the document and so this is how we approached trying to work the sub-allocation back in.

Then Alternative 4 was the previous Alternative 4 as well that ends the management of the separate sectors at the time that this amendment is implemented, which could be shortly before the sector separation would sunset.

This alternative would end sector separation at the time of this amendment and have this amendment applied to the entire recreational sector without there being separate subquotas and so these tables are from the document that you have in the briefing book and the table on the right-hand side reflects the current preferred alternatives in the document.

Currently, you have both 2006 and 2010 removed and so we also provided you, on the left, the difference if you just exclude 2010.

MR. BOYD: Mr. Chairman, is this a new document? I am having trouble finding this document.

DR. LASSETER: I believe we did email them out. There was discussion in the committee and Myron asked if we could work some of this up and Robin also wanted some of these actions and alternatives put back in and so staff got together and have brought you a document that we felt better reflected what had been asked for and we just wanted to go ahead and show it to you at this time and get any guidance that we can, so we can continue working on the document.

MR. BOYD: When did we email it out?
DR. LASSETER: This morning. Yesterday, I printed out and I apologize that I couldn’t email it. I couldn’t copy the tables, but your preferred alternative in the last iteration of the document, which included landings only through 2012. We updated the landings through 2013 and the alternatives.

We updated the landings to include 2013 and they now have the calibrated MRIP numbers and so the handout you got yesterday, the highlighted rose shows you the difference between the preferred alternative before 2013 was added and the calibrated landings were modified. This was at Mr. Boyd’s request.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We are having some technical difficulties here with some other conversation.

(Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

DR. LASSETER: If I can explain, in the Reef Fish Committee Report, there is a place where it says the restructured alternatives will be provided on the screen. We have emailed it out and it is on the web and I apologize for the confusion. Staff got together and reworked this quickly to give you an updated version that you could comment on and that we could get some more feedback on.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Anything else you want to add or talk about related to this?

DR. LASSETER: This particular action, I am hoping that the Alternative 3 now expresses what you were interested in for the sub-allocations. Did we get it successfully?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I will be quite honest with you that I’ve been having a little trouble trying to keep up with you and I am checking my emails and I don’t see it. I am not saying you didn’t send it, but I am having some technical difficulties on my end and I certainly appreciate the staff taking the time to try to be very attentive to the council’s wishes and needs, but this is quite a bit of information here to try to digest at this point in time.

If somebody else has had the document and they have followed along better than I and they have comments to try to get to Ava’s point of getting some feedback as the document is still under development, certainly I don’t want to stop any of the conversation, but you know this does have an impact on the overall tone and discussion, I guess, related to the entire document. Does anybody have any comments?
MS. LEVY: Just to -- I don’t know that you need to do anything except maybe indicate that you’re okay with us putting this into the next iteration of what you see and essentially what we tried to do in crafting Alternative 3, which is really what is different than what you had seen before -- The wording is a bit different in the other alternatives, because we were trying to make it more clear exactly what was getting applied to what and which allocations were being used, et cetera, but what Alternative 3 tries to do is give you an option, at a state or regional level, to select keeping sector separation and managing the two separate components separately at whatever level you choose, which went back to that alternative that you had before in the prior document that was to allow the regions to establish sub-allocations.

It’s attempting to get at that and then trying to make the other alternatives more clear and as long as you’re comfortable with us continuing with this for the next version, then I think staff would probably be good.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I would certainly let folks respond to that. I guess, Dr. Lasseter, if you could answer this question. Does it have, in these current alternatives that were just now included, I guess an option -- If a state didn’t want to or a region didn’t want to and let’s assume that the option that was selected was --

There was an option for states to opt out or opt in and just submit a plan and they kind of develop or is there an option for a state to select the Gulf-wide percentage? Can that be addressed in here, if we have like one that doesn’t want to, yet another state that does? Can they have a choice or is this all or nothing? Is this every state has to select all the percentages that are in here?

DR. LASSETER: The way we’ve structured it for the Alternative 3 is that the council could select options for which states would intend to continue sector separation within their region. Now, whether or not you could decide this annually and modify it, that’s when we get tricky, because an allocation decision, a sub-allocation decision, is going to require a greater analysis, a deeper analysis, and so I am leaning toward -- We can discuss it in the IPT afterwards, but I am assuming that you would have to make the decision for each state at this time, but this does offer up each state could do it or not. If you don’t want to do it, your state is not selected as an option.
MR. RIECHERS: Ava, as I’m understanding it, it does have an opt-in-opt-out notion to it right now, which was what we talked about in committee. That was the thing we were trying to fix and the only caveat you’re saying to that is it appears, at least the way it’s drafted at this moment in time, is it’s an opt in or opt out right now and then it may not have the flexibility to think about through time, given the way it’s structured at this moment. Is that fair?

DR. LASSETER: That is how I understand it and if a state did want to opt in at a later date, we would have to follow a proper document procedure.

MS. BOSARGE: So on Alternative 3, if a state opts out, what does it revert to, Alternative 2 or Alternative 4 percentages?

MS. LEVY: I don’t know about the percentages. I am not sure that these tables reflect all the different variations that can happen, which would have to be reflected in the allocation alternative, which is Alternative 4, but the way this is written, for the states that decide to do this, the private angling and for-hire components would be managed by each region under separate quotas that are based on the component allocation in Amendment 40 and the regional allocation selected in Action 4.

In all other regions, the private angling component would be managed by each region under the quota that’s based on the allocation in Action 4 and the federal for-hire component would be managed under a Gulf-wide quota that’s based on the allocation in Amendment 40.

I don’t know how the percentages worked out, because that’s going to have to be in the allocation amendment. I think these were just put in here as an example and I don’t know what would happen if some states opted in and others opted out and how those might shift.

MS. BOSARGE: As a follow-up, Mara, if a state opts out, essentially it reverts back to Amendment 40, in the sense that for-hire will not be under state management at that point and only private angling?

MS. LEVY: Right and so this action is structured to either allow the council to say for everybody they are going to be managed separately, right, and regional management only applies to private angling. That’s one of the alternatives here.
Another alternative is there is no sector separation and regional management applies to the recreational sector as a whole. This third option is a combination of those two, depending on what you choose for each state. This allows each state or region to either operate regional management with sector separation or without it and so this is a combination of those other all-or-nothing approaches, to sort of allow you to decide on a case-by-case basis what each region would want to do.

The reason that we’re putting it in here upfront is because then we can do the NEPA analysis on the impacts of keeping sector separation for some regions and getting rid of it for others, depending on what you do, so that you can implement it. What happens is if we don’t decide upfront, then when you come in and one state is like, oh, I want to do sector separation, then we don’t have a NEPA analysis or anything that tells us what the impacts of that are and so we’re trying to frontload it right here.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other comments on this?

MR. FISCHER: We passed Amendment 40 and I don’t think I would even want to address Alternative 4 if it dissolves Amendment 40. That’s not the goal. The goal is to work within the system.

I think Alternative 3 allows the states to work within the structure of 40, where their charter boats are granted their historic catches on the same years that we had in the sector separation document. To that, I would like to see discussion on this, because I think we’ve progressed with alternatives that we would like to see and I’m trying to come up with a preferred and I’m trying to get to the correct page again.

I would like to see Alternative 3 as a preferred, but I would only want to speak to Louisiana as Option d being the preferred. If we do that, then we’re bound that each state can’t add -- Because there is not enough room on the board for five motions and so I would like to see some discussion and see where we go on that and allow states just to have the feeling of states, but our view is Alternative 3 with a minimum of Option d and allowing other states the opportunity to comment and maybe then we’ll sweep it in as one motion.

MR. RIECHERS: Like you, Kevin, I certainly want to applaud the IPT team for getting together and attempting to draft as much of this as they can. I think the discussion we had in committee was to craft something that allowed for the flexibility of
opting into this or opting out and I don’t know if this current set of alternatives captures that. It seems like it may be difficult for it to capture it, based on what you just said, Myron.

The other part is I think we have a very difficult time in picking preferreds on this, given that we have some people who haven’t been able to access it and so forth and I think, procedurally, we probably wouldn’t want to go down that road today and we may want to digest this and each person have their opportunity to look at it a little more closely.

What I would just suggest is that maybe one of the things is going back to that committee discussion and making sure that we have that flexibility that Myron just spoke to.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes and I will also add that, as Dr. Lasseter had said, that this was just something to try to address the committee’s intent or recommendations to try to get at a broader suite of options and that’s essentially what she’s trying to do and Mara just added that if there was anything that we could, based on the brief look at, that we could improve or give further guidance on, then we can do that.

DR. LASSETER: I just want to add that we don’t need — We are happy if you want to make preferred alternatives, but it’s not as much what we’re going for. It’s more just to lay out where the structure is and if there’s anything you want to add or take out or remove and we understand that you don’t even have the discussion for each of these actions yet, but we just kind of wanted to get some sense of direction.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes and so I don’t know if that — I certainly would allow everyone that wanted to speak to go ahead and speak, but I would kind of just put a hold, if you will, or we can come back to this at the next meeting with these, but if we have some immediate comments to this or what’s been provided to us, then, again, to help staff for that next version, then let’s go ahead and do that, but, as Robin stated and I agree, it’s a little premature, based on just really seeing this document, to kind of select any preferreds.

DR. LUCAS: Mara, I think you explained this earlier, but I am just trying to clarify what you were talking about. In Alternative 3 that’s down there, if a state opts in to that or opts out or let’s say a state opts out and we then only manage the private recreational sector, which then goes, I guess, back up to the Alternative 2 that was before it, and the council is
managing the for-hire sector, that’s still the percentage that Mississippi’s for-hire sector is going to get is what this document says or no?

DR. LASSETER: To clarify that, these little tables we just put in to show you an example and these are the allocations and that’s a completely separate action.

All of these are based on your current preferred alternative, except actually these exclude 2010 only. We will look at this again in a few minutes and we’ll get to the allocation action and hopefully I can clarify that a little more. These would not be the results and this is one alternative and you will be able to select from a range of alternatives for the allocation.

MR. PERRET: You know we’ve been discussing regional management for how many years now, Myron, two-plus? The main focus of regional management is flexibility and giving a region and/or a state, if you will, the flexibility to manage their own fishermen.

Now, we sat here yesterday for several hours and, at my count, I’ve got fifty individuals that commented and never have I sat through a public testimony where this council received so much thanks for doing something and that was for Amendment 40 and sector separation.

I don’t know how many of those fifty commented relative to they want to opt out of the regional management thing. I think we definitely need the option that would not include the for-hire sector in sector separation.

Now, we get a lot of public testimony and we meet in another area of the Gulf and we may, in all probability, hear the whole other end of the spectrum, but certainly at this stage I certainly want to see it included for discussion and for additional input.

MS. BOSARGE: Two follow-ups and I guess I will do Corky’s first, since he just finished. I think what you were saying, Corky, is that you want to make sure there’s an option in there so that the for-hire stays at the federal management level and opts out of state management, which I think is Alternative 2, where we have that ability to choose that alternative, which would keep the for-hire sector at the federal management level and push private anglers down to the states for state management.
MR. PERRET: Do you want me to answer my opinion?

MS. BOSARGE: Yes.

MR. PERRET: Well, number one, there may be regions that don’t want any part of regional management, but let’s say all five do and I want to give those five regions the option to have it whichever way they want to do it.

Now, listening to what I heard yesterday, if I were a state director in a particular state, I would certainly want to try and accommodate their wishes. Some states, their for-hire may be in a different situation, but I think we need those options in the document.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: To that point, Dr. Lasseter, is that -- I mean these were just some additional alternatives, but that particular alternative will still stay in the document as it moves forward, because that is a major option or it could be a selection, correct?

DR. LASSETER: I am also understanding -- Corky is actually pointing out something different that is not in here and we can work up that alternative. It would be similar to 3, but it would allow the states to choose whether or not their for-hire -- Yes and so we’ll get that as a new alternative for the next iteration.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Well, this is really going off the rails. Again, I appreciate staff trying to be quick and for expediency purposes bringing something to the council, but for the next time we look at this, and I would say we don’t spend much more time on this document and move on to the rest of the Reef Fish Summary and look at the other things we need to do, if it’s a new alternative with a new analysis, I would say it just becomes an additional alternative to those --

DR. LASSETER: We haven’t done any analysis.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Okay, but as part of the next document, you might have some of that in there, but anything that’s new, it gets added and all the previous alternatives that we had when we had a document to look at for this council meeting still stay in there, but you just change the order and add more alternatives and so I think that would be probably the best way that we go ahead and not spend much time talking about choosing and which state might want to do this.
As long as it sounds like you’ve got some of the intent of the
council to look at as much flexible options -- I saw a puzzled
look at the last discussion with Corky and you or Dr. Lucas’s
request and I did too, because I didn’t think there was that
ability for a state to just come in, if everyone else didn’t
have a for-hire percentage selected, for a state to come in and
offer that as a plan.

I think there was some inequitable problems with that and so,
again, get with the IPT and try to be as inclusive as possible
for the next iteration, but let’s try to move on.

MR. RIECHERS: The only thing is I would have what you draft as
an option, but we haven’t voted on adding a lot of extra
alternatives here and that’s what has kind of led down this
particular road, both in committee and now here again. I would
just caution adding lots of things to the document that haven’t
been voted on by the full council to add.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I don’t know necessarily -- Well, we do and we
don’t. We do when a document comes from scoping and we give
some general guidance and we ask them to come with some
alternatives and so I mean these are just some additional
alternatives and I don’t know that we necessarily need to vote
on each specific alternative that we want to see in the first
iteration. I do agree with you in some way that we do give
direction, but we don’t give specific direction before we see
them written down.

MR. RIECHERS: I hear you and I’m not trying to dictate exactly
how this goes, but also, as we move through documents and we
think we’re getting closer to them, that becomes less and less
and so I would just -- We just need to think about where we want
to be and everyone wants to talk about expediency and those
sorts of things and so I understand between you and staff that
you can work through this, but just understanding kind of the
discussion this morning that we spent trying to clean up past
things and also in committee. Just understand that.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Anybody have anything?

MR. FISCHER: I just wanted to tell Mr. Perret that we totally
agree with him. The whole object is flexibility. I can say the
Louisiana charter boats want to be included in a state
management plan. My question to you is where are you proceeding
to next? Are you staying on this document to the end?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Well, I was going to ask Ava if she had any
other additional things that she might want to bring to our
attention and potentially we could kind of give some general
guidance as to include for the next version or not and it looks
like she does.

DR. LASSETER: Really it’s the timeline and if we could talk
about what you expect for the document coming back and then,
going on down the road, your intention for getting this put in
place.

The reason that there is that one alternative about ending
sector separation is it would be contemporaneous with adoption
of this amendment and that just makes the other alternatives
easier to analyze and it makes the document work, because sector
separation will only be in place for 2015 to 2107.

Here we are in 2015 and we’ve got a very restructured document
and we’re going to bring it back to you, if we could talk about
that and when you would like to see it again. We are trying to
get a sense of at what point within the sector separation sunset
might this be going final.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Personally, I would like to see it as soon as
we can and keep it on the agenda and continue our discussions as
we work, realizing that the sunset provision is in the for-hire
sector.

To Corky’s comment about the preference by a good portion of the
charter boat captains that were here and gave public testimony,
a lot of the comments that came out during their testimony, when
they made that comment, is they didn’t know what regional
management represented to them and so I think these alternatives
and this new addition as we all talk about what we would like to
see -- I think it goes to the broader questions that are still
in a lot of people’s minds as to what regional management would
look like. To answer your question, Ava, I think as soon as
possible, at the next meeting at the earliest, if you can do
that.

MR. FISCHER: I do think there’s one more thing in this document
we have to discuss and it would actually be a question for Roy
and it may be moot. It’s on Action 4 and if you do have the new
document, it’s when you scroll down to Preferred Alternative 6.

The issue is the sector separation document excluded the catches
from 2006 and 2010 and this document only excludes 2010 and is
that an issue or -- It’s the other way around. Is that an issue
in calculating and is it a legal issue? Is it something that we
should amend this? I just don’t know the burden it is on your office.

DR. CRABTREE: I don’t think it’s a burden, but I think if you’re going to do it differently than you did it in Amendment 40 that you’re going to need to explain why, because in Amendment 40 we excluded both years, right? Just 2010 and here we’re -- If here you want to exclude 2010 and 2006, I think you’re going to need to explain why you excluded 2006 here, but not there.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I have Mr. Boyd and then I’m going to pass it over to you, Johnny, to continue.

MR. BOYD: I just want to express a little frustration and to follow up on Robin’s comments. We seem to differ at different times about putting things in documents. We have a document here where we are injecting things and it sounds fine to me.

Yesterday, in Amendment 28, we had considerable discussion from Dr. Crabtree and from Martha and from several people about some things that should go in Amendment 28 and what we heard was we’re not going to put anything in there until you give us very specific instructions and so how should we go? That’s my question to council staff and you don’t have to answer me right now, but it’s just a frustration.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I’ve got comments, but, Doug, go ahead.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It’s two contexts. One is I think what Roy is saying is in Amendment 28 we need rationale for some of the alternatives that staff is not capable of developing.

In this instance and in general, if staff can identify some alternatives they think the council would be interested in in a draft document, we can bring them forward. We are not saying they are preferred, but they’re bring them to your attention for consideration and then you all decide if they’re preferred or if they’re considered but rejected and that sort of thing. So it’s two different contexts.

One it’s hard for us to develop rationale without specific guidance and it’s easier to identify a range of alternatives that would satisfy NEPA and provide the council with a better base for decision making. It’s just different contexts.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I will let Leann talk and then, Johnny, you’ve got it after that.
MS. BOSARGE: Thank you and I did want to give specific instruction to staff to make sure that I get clarification on one thing in Alternative 2 when we come back with this document and this is mainly clarification because there seems to be confusion in Mississippi in the for-hire fleet.

If Alternative 2 was selected, can you put some discussion in there that tells us that yes, the for-hire fleet would stay at federal level management and that as of right now, their percentage of the quota, of the recreational quota, that 42 percent or whatever it is, that’s fleet-wide across the Gulf and that’s what they have. We have not said that at the federal level we are going to hand Mississippi charterboats 4 percent of that. We haven’t done that.

We’ve got a lot of things that we’re talking about, but as of right now, what we heard yesterday a lot was a twenty-day season across the Gulf for the whole for-hire -- That 66 percent of the season, twenty days or whatever.

Make sure that that’s very clear in there, so that they don’t think that going with Alternative 2 still drills down to a state-level quota at this point for them, because it doesn’t right now. It’s just a for-hire Gulf-wide quota and we haven’t figured out what to do with it.

DR. LASSETER: If I may, the Alternative 2 there -- There’s a little note at the bottom and so that table is based on your preferred allocation and this is also breaking down 57.7 percent of the recreational quota. Is this what you’re getting at?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Can you all talk offline and see if --

MS. BOSARGE: If all of you all are okay with me giving her that direction.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes. Go ahead, Johnny.

MR. GREENE: Committee members discussed how the boundary lines between regions would be used, as each region’s regulations would be enforced upon landing. As an example, Dr. Crabtree said the lines are needed for closing parts of the EEZ should a state or region not have an approved conservation equivalency plan. Should I pause here before I move on? Then I will carry on.

Revised Public Hearing Draft Amendment 28, Red Snapper
Allocation, staff summarized the amendment, Tab B, Number 10, and discussed a potential timeline for taking final action. Staff noted that final action could be taken in June 2015 and indicated that the amendment will be updated to reflect the recent red snapper stock assessment.

Dr. Crabtree recommended that the committee further discuss the purpose and need for this amendment and consider the role that the recalibration of recreational red snapper landings and the change in selectivity could play in reallocation discussions. The committee initiated preliminary discussions on these issues and staff noted that guidance from the council would be helpful to update the amendment.

MR. BOYD: A question. At 9:15 or so or nine o’clock, we received a Strelcheck presentation and are we going to have another presentation this morning by Andy?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I wasn’t planning on it. I thought it was just to add to the record. Dr. Crabtree, is that germane to any of the conversation or remaining items in the Reef Fish Report?

DR. CRABTREE: Well, it depends on what you want to do and I haven’t heard anything out of this council as to what do you want to do with Amendment 28. If you have specific questions, it might be germane, but I don’t know what you want to do with it and so we need to give staff some guidance as to what we’re going to do with this amendment and do you want to add something or do you not or do you want to -- That’s what I don’t know.

MR. BOYD: A follow-up. I would like for Andy to go ahead and give this presentation. I have tried to quickly go through it and I think it’s important that this council might even hear again the specifics on the SPR calculations and some of the other issues, selectivity, that came out of yesterday’s discussions.

DR. CRABTREE: I think what this presentation tries to get out is the quota goes up and I think it tries to get at the details of recalibration and the details of the selectivity change and how that affected the TAC. Whether that’s relevant to this now depends on where you guys are trying to go.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Andy, you’re coming up to the podium and how long do you think you will need? Just a few minutes? Ten minutes?

MR. ANDY STRELCHECK: I would say one to two minutes. I am not
going to give the whole presentation, but I just wanted to talk
about a single slide in the presentation, because it’s come up
numerous times now during the meeting.

If you go to Slide 4, I recognize this is somewhat hard to see. The
time series goes out a fairly lengthy time period. Shannon
Calay presented this at the Scientific and Statistical Committee
meeting and what this is showing is the yields associated with
the overfishing limit and so not your F rebuild level. They
would be lower than this.

If you take a look carefully at the graphics, the royal blue
line, which is one of the lower lines, that’s the SEDAR-31 base
overfishing limit that was produced from the previous
assessment. The red line, that’s the new overfishing limit
trend that’s being produced from the current stock assessment
and so there was a change there and that’s what you’ve seen
obviously with the higher yield estimates that are now being
generated from the current stock assessment.

The question was what caused that change and what impacts did
some of the changes that we’ve discussed on the record at the
SSC meeting and obviously here at the council meeting, how did
those influence that increased level of yield?

Shannon took a look at removing the newly calibrated MRIP
estimates and going back to the old MRIP estimates without the
calibration, as well as not changing the selectivity, which were
information she provided during her presentation on Monday.

She looked at it from keeping one of those in, but taking the
other out or removing both of them, but, as you can see, if you
remove the calibrated estimates for MRIP and the selectivity
estimates, it generates that light blue line and so that is
essentially a comparable baseline run with the previous
assessment, with those changes not taking place.

You can see they’re very close to in line with the previous
assessment. However, if you modify one or both of those, those
yield levels start going up and ultimately the difference
between the base run, continuity run, and the approved run that
was selected by the SSC is about two or two-and-a-half million
pounds. That’s all related to changes in the recreational
selectivity function and the modification to the MRIP estimates.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and so any -- Does anybody have any
comments to that or any questions for Andy?
MR. BOYD: Yes, I have. Based on the presentations yesterday and based on this, I have a motion, if staff would put that up for me. It’s a two-part motion and I would like to change a little bit of what’s on there. The motion is in Action 1 of Amendment 28 to add two alternatives and they would be Alternative 8 is the increase in allowable harvest (due to the changes in recreational data) from the updated assessment will be allocated to the recreational fishery. The percentage increase for the recreational fishery should be that amount attributable to recalibration of MRIP catch estimates. This would result in an increase of, and I don’t have that number of pounds, to the recreational fishery. Then Alternative 9 is the increase in allowable harvest (due to changes in recreational data) from the updated assessment will be allocated to the recreational fishery. The percentage increase in the recreational fishery should be that amount attributable to the recalibration of MRIP catch estimates and the change in size selectivity. This would result in an increase of, and I don’t have the number of pounds and I will get Andy to put that in, for the recreational fishery. That’s my motion, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion and is there a second for the motion? It’s been seconded by Dr. Stunz. Is there discussion on the motion?

MR. PERRET: If we approve this motion, do we have an opportunity to have our S&S Committee and our advisory panel and so on provide input to us prior to us giving final approval on something like this?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes, this is simply adding alternatives to the document for consideration and so an analysis will have to be done.

MR. PERRET: So we will get a complete analysis by our advisory groups?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: The IPT will do the analyses and that can be reviewed by the SSC at the next meeting.

MR. PERRET: When is the next meeting?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It’s usually three weeks before the council meeting and so it will be about the first of March.

MR. PERRET: From a logistics standpoint, we should be able to get all of this done prior to the next meeting?
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: That I don’t know. I don’t know what’s involved in doing the analyses. That would be up to the IPT and if they can’t get it done within the next month, then it won’t come back as a full analysis in March, but I am sure they will do the best they can to do that.

DR. STUNZ: Just I speak in favor of this motion. The way I’m looking at it and understanding what Andy just presented, we had this fundamental change in the way the data was collected from MRIP, which obviously was incorporated in this last assessment that we saw, resulting in the two-million, and I’m trying to remember, but two-million-whatever-pounds that it was.

In looking at this and, Andy, please correct me if I’m wrong or not in interpreting this right, but when you look at these sensitivity runs or whatever you want to call it, that overage in that assessment is largely due to the MRIP recalibration that’s coming from this recreational sector.

To me, it makes logical sense that that overage or increase in allocation or whatever we want to call it should go back to that sector that in fact is contributing to this assessment and those two-million pounds.

DR. CRABTREE: Presumably, if we pass this motion, then staff will need to go in and revise the purpose and need to reflect that part of the purpose and need is to deal with the MRIP calibration and these other things and fundamental changes in the recreational fishery that are changing the TAC and all of that. I think staff would need to do that and then we can look at that language at the next meeting, because I would rather not try to hash that out right now.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you.

MS. LEVY: Just a technical point. If we could change “recreational fishery” to “recreational sector” and it’s not a big deal, but just to be precise. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Doug, do you approve of that change?

MR. BOYD: I have no problem with that. We need to change it in both of the alternatives.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Dr. Stunz, that’s good to you? Okay. Just making sure. Any other discussion on the motion?

MS. BOSARGE: I am not opposed to looking at what Doug wants to
look at right here. I think it’s definitely something that we
have to go back -- I mean that’s all in this recalibration and
we have to go back and examine the original allocations and how
that goes back in time and how you hash all that out.

Having said that, I don’t think that it belongs in Amendment 28.
If you put this alternative in with these other alternatives
that we have in there right now, which is just a simple shift of
allocation, even if you change the purpose and need, you’re
looking at two fundamentally different things.

You’ve got this first set of alternatives that are just shifting
allocation, which was originally for stability and things of
that nature. Then you’ve got these other alternatives that are
going to follow it which are changing allocation based on how we
originally allocated the fishery.

In other words, those numbers have changed and so therefore
you’re going to go back and revamp them. To me, those two
things don’t belong together in a set of alternatives. You are
looking at two different problems and solving two different
problems.

Now, I am not opposed to looking at this in a separate amendment
and also because when you get into that, there’s a whole lot
more than just saying, okay, we recalibrated and all that was
attributable to the recreational fishery and therefore, we’re
going to shift allocation in this manner. You will get into
some of the same problems that we had in allocation within the
recreational fishery in Amendment 40, where, when you start
going back, in 2007 you constrained the commercial fishery and
so now you’re not comparing apples to apples before 2007.

You see where there will more hurdles that will have to be
hashed out and this is just going to get longer and longer and
longer as far as the alternatives that are included in it. I
would rather see this done in a separate amendment, where we can
attack each one of those issues and come up with a good, strong
foundation for how we’re doing this.

MR. BOYD: Leann, I understand what you’re saying and I thought
about that and I think in this document, unless counsel
disagrees with me, is that you could have two preferred
alternatives or you could have one.

You could take one of these two new ones and make it the
preferred and that’s the document and there is no other
discussion or you could have a preferred here that would add
just this overage that we’re talking about or just this recalibration that we’re talking about and you could go back and have another alternative that’s no action in the rest of it or you could have the preferred alternative that we have now. I believe you could do two here.

DR. CRABTREE: I am not sure about that, but my suggestion to you, and I understand the point Leann is making, but if we come in and work on the purpose and need, we may well find that some of these alternatives don’t meet the purpose and need and we could pare this down to a more focused document.

I don’t know and that kind of comes down to what you’re trying to do with it, but I am not sure I would want to see us split this into two separate amendments at this point, but what we’ve struggled with really has been the purpose and need and exactly what we’re trying to achieve.

It does seem me, to me, that this motion is more focused and it seems more definite in that you can calculate the number that are the X’s now and put it in there and it does seem conceptually easier for me to wrap my hands around. The other alternatives in there have been much more general of reallocate some percentage of fish based on perceptions of net benefits and all of these, but we’ve never had a good way to know how much should we allocate and what exactly will it do.

That’s one of the problems, remember, that came out of the SSC in the economic study. It tended to indicate direction, but no one could really tell us how much and we had all of these arguments about what is marginal and all those kinds of things, but I think maybe, with some work on the purpose and need, when we come back in that we might be able to narrow down the number of alternatives that are in the document at that point.

MR. RIECHERS: I know there’s been a lot of attack on purpose and need and certainly that’s an easy thing to attack. I would say that as we’ve looked back at our documents that sometimes our purpose and needs have not been as fleshed out as maybe they should have been and maybe they’re not here, but, quite frankly, this document started as a call for looking at reallocation.

We have also had some past history with that on other species and it is a very difficult thing to look at, but we’ve said we’re going to look at it and there’s been a call and a policy for the councils to look at it.

We have received the economic analysis in regards to where those
additional pounds should -- Which direction they should go and so while the first suite of options there deal with various ways to do that, they actually have a purpose and the purpose was to reallocate from one sector to another based on the economic analysis that was brought before this council.

Even though other folks keep saying there is no purpose and need, we did have an original purpose and need and that’s part of it and it’s achieving those net benefits, which may address, in this case, where we believe, from this point on, more of that harvest should go. We attempted to create some alternatives that did that in a fair and equitable manner, where both sides were benefitting some from those increases.

There are certainly other percentages one could put in there, but we at least attempted to try to create some alternatives that would do that, in addition to those that just moved percentages. We’ve got a suite of alternatives that go about it in a different set of ways.

Mr. Walker: I’ve got to speak against this, this recalibration. If you back up in the history, the red snapper fishery began in Pensacola, Florida and it was 100 percent commercial and it was 100 percent available for the nation to get 100 percent net benefit.

Over the years, it’s been -- They’ve come up with the allocations and a lot of these allocations -- I mean these recalibrations are based on the certainty and so forth and as you go back in time and as I have been offshore in the 1980s and the 1990s and 2000s, it was the -- You didn’t see these recreational fishermen offshore.

You saw a few charter boats and as time went on, you would see bigger boats and they started out in the twenty and twenty-five foot and then thirty and thirty-five and then on up and I see one going down the interstate last year that was the high thirties and it had five engines on the back of it. It’s just evolved and the electronics and the things that have provided these calibrations, but in earlier years, we just didn’t witness this recreational effort. We saw some charter effort that was offshore and like the range and they’ve had the improved weather conditions and the artificial reef program.

At the same time, back in history, the commercial consumer and seafood supply access has been capped and weren’t allowed to grow and the charter for-hire, they have been capped, but there has been no constraints on other efforts and it’s a shame that
something hasn’t been done earlier in years and things continued
to go on.

As far as these uncertainties, I think the further you go back, it’s -- It gets kind of weak, in my view, and more recent years, with the two fish bag limit, it’s more accurate, I would say, in the more recent years.

The SESSC has said, over and over, that -- You know you just keep taking it and spinning the bottle and sending it back to the SSC and we’re not getting from the SESSC what we want and let’s consolidate these SSCs into one. This is just going on too long and the commercial industry has asked for closure and they want action. They are ready for someone to take action on this amendment.

The calibration, it’s weak, in my opinion, and the further you go back in history. Of course, if you go back to shortly after the Civil War, it would be pretty accurate. It’s 100 percent commercial, but I would speak in opposition to adding this.

MR. BOYD: Just a comment on that. If that same rationale was used in transportation today, we would still be on horseback and in covered wagons.

MR. PERRET: I think if indeed the recreational data methodology was wrong that we should correct it and I agree with the attempt Mr. Boyd is going to do. I think that those fish should go to the recreational sector.

My problem is putting it in 28. I am against 28 and this would go in 28. I can vote for this motion, but I am sure not going to vote for 28 unless I see some rationale to justify providing a sector with fish that have consistently not stayed within their allocation and that’s the problem I have, is where this is going. I agree with you, Doug, on the motion, but I don’t agree where it’s going.

DR. CRABTREE: I hear all the things you’re talking about and I know Amendment 28 has become a really charged amendment, but I mean this motion is talking about an adjustment to the allocation and if you look at the title of Amendment 28, it is “Red Snapper Allocation”.

Now, as I said, you want to -- We’re in a dilemma right now. Our allocations are mostly all based on our perception of what the historic mix in the fishery is and one of the problems with red snapper, and a number of other species, is those allocations
were put in place in Amendment 1, way back in 1990, and they’re based on a landings back from I think 1970 to 1986 and that’s a problem for us now, because it’s hard to correct all those landings that far back and even as David said, the world has changed.

I mean we’ve got bigger boats and bigger engines and populations have shifted and it gets harder and harder to know why the mix in the fishery thirty-five years ago really has any relevance in where we are today.

Now, we have economic data, which I don’t want to get into arguing about the economic data. People have interpreted it in very different ways and we have struggled with trying to figure out what that means to us and how we get there, but I think we do have to deal with the fact that if our allocations are based on the historical mix and our perception of what that historical mix is changes, because of new science on what the surveys mean, that’s something I think that you have to deal with and take into account in some fashion or another.

I don’t know where else to put this at this point and so I think that’s something you’re going to have to sort out and I think there may well be good reasons for paring this amendment down next time, but these are difficult decisions and somewhere we need to find some better basis for deciding what the optimal allocation is other than what we think it looked like forty years ago, because I don’t think anybody is really going to be happy with that kind of thing.

MR. PERRET: Roy, I agree with you, but my problem with the current allocation document is that this potential reallocation is being done and fish are being moved from a segment whose hands were tied. They could not increase. We shut them down when they reached their quota and we’re providing fish to a segment that consistently went over.

If that sector had stayed within the allocation, I could be supportive for economic and social and all those other reasons, a changing world, to move fish over, just like I’m supportive of the king mackerel thing that we’re looking at on a possible reallocation, but, saying that, I am not happy that the commercial sector of king mackerel fishermen have gone over and that’s why I want accountability measures that if indeed we move fish over, I want them held accountable and I also want a provision that as the world changes, and we know it is, and as recreational fishing increases, if we move something over from the commercial side to the recreational side and then the
recreational guys are being hammered because they’re catching more fish, then we should allow for that switch or portion of it to go back where it came from.

My problem is a sector that has consistently gone over and, in my opinion, we are rewarding them for that and that’s my problem with reallocation of red snapper.

MR. PEARCE: I understand all the arguments and I understand the fact that maybe the private recreational fisherman is catching more today than he did before. I understand that there’s bigger boats with five engines on the back on them, like David said over here. I understand all of those things and the world does changes, but we have to be able to factor in the change on the other side of that world.

All we can look at is the catch from the private recreational, but what about the fact that there are bigger planes and there are bigger trucks that haul seafood across this country to the people that own that fish in the Gulf?

I mean those people need access as much as the recreational fisherman does and I think we’re losing sight of the fact that there’s more to this picture than just catching fish and there’s more to this picture that this country deserves the right to have access to that product and so it deservedly should be just the same for the general public as it is for the private recreational fishermen and I’m not against the private recreational fishermen, but I am telling you those same accesses that they have increased, those accesses to that species and that fish, or whatever fish we’re talking about, to the American public has expanded as well and why should we take their access away because they have expanded because another side of the fishery has expanded as well?

I think it’s hard to put all of this into perspective when you’re looking at this one, because we can’t measure that as well and we can’t look at it as well, but we clearly know that fish is a center-of-the-plate protein in almost every restaurant now.

We clearly know that the planes and the trucks and the fish -- There is more access to that too now and how do we measure that and how do you take away from those people their access that they’ve worked for a long time and they get because technology has changed?

We’ve got better cooks and better chefs and better everything
and a lot of it is geared at fish. You can go to a restaurant today and I can promise you the center-of-the-plate protein is going to be fish.

You’ve got shrimp and crab and those are good too, but the center-of-the-plate protein is always fish and so now we’re going to be reallocating away from that center-of-the-plate protein and were going to be reallocating away from the citizens of this country that own that resource as much as you and I do without thinking about that their access has grown as well.

We need to take that into consideration and we need to really think about that and it’s very hard for me to do something without thinking about the other side.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I am going to add a point in here. First off, we need to be talking specific to the motion and I think the last couple of comments were maybe looking beyond the motion. We as a council are looked upon to evaluate allocations and to make decisions on them.

I think it would be appropriate to have, to the extent practical, all of the available tools by which we would come up with that decision and so this particular motion looks at another way of looking at how to make or how to come to that decision and certainly we will have our discussions again on this much or this much or nothing and that’s a decision.

If there is any additional comments to be made, I want them to really focus on the merits of this motion and looking at the data or including this analysis and this data in our decision as to how we proceed in evaluating whether or not any reallocation needs to occur. Corky, to that, and can we keep it to this motion, please?

MR. PERRET: Yes and I had council members tell me they could not vote for sector separation because the specific percentages, et cetera, et cetera, was not provided in the motion. We don’t have any idea what the pounds are going to be.

Now, increase of X pounds to the recreational sector, I would have to assume that would be to the recreational sector for the coming season as well as in the future is what you’re getting at and I agree with that, but we’re being asked to vote on an issue that we have no idea what that’s going to be. Again, I’m supportive of it if the new methodology is more accurate in providing the information to us, but I would like to have a number, to know what we’re talking about.
DR. CRABTREE: Let’s remember we’re just adding an alternative for analysis and when this comes back to you, we will have numbers in there and a full analysis of it and so you’re not deciding and you’re not changing the preferred. We already have a preferred, but we’re just adding another alternative to be analyzed.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion?

MR. WILLIAMS: A question for Doug Boyd, the maker of the motion. Doug, is this meant to be a one-time increase and would it have the effect of replacing those marginal increases in allocation, those 75/25 increases? In other words, are you planning to keep those in the document as well as this one-time increase?

MR. BOYD: Yes and a while ago, I spoke to Leanne’s question. I said that the council could make a decision to have one of these two alternatives as the only alternative and do a one-time increase and this would just be it and it would be there or they could choose to keep the other alternative of 75/25 or move to 100 percent to the recreational.

I am not trying to tell you what to do. I am just saying with these two motions that I think there’s been a change in the fundamental understanding of the catch ratios and there’s been a fundamental understanding that the numbers we’ve dealt with over the past few years have been incorrect and we need to recognize that those numbers greatly affected the recreational industry.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It looks like we’re ready to go. The motion is to have two new alternatives included in Amendment 28 and you’ve seen them up on the board.

MR. BOYD: I would just say, to Corky’s point, that yes, I wish I had numbers, Corky, but we got the presentations yesterday and I don’t feel comfortable giving you a number at this point and I would hope that staff would have that in there when we come back.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Let’s go ahead and take a vote and raise your hands again, please. All those in favor to include the two alternatives in Amendment 28, please raise your hand.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I’ve got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think John raised his hand late. All those opposed, for the record.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: One, two, three, four.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Four opposed. The motion carries. All right, Mr. Greene. I forgot and there might be something else. Go ahead, Martha.

MS. BADEMAN: Thank you and so to dovetail with our past motion and conversation, I would like to make a motion to revise the purpose and need of this action and I think Karen is going to put it up there, but I will read it.

The purpose of this action is to reallocate in a fair and equitable manner red snapper resources between the commercial and recreational sector to increase the net benefits from red snapper fishing. The need for the proposed action is to base sector allocations on the best scientific information available and use the most appropriate allocation method to determine sector allocations while achieving optimum yield, particularly with respect to food production and recreational opportunities and rebuilding the red snapper stock.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion to change the verbiage of the purpose and need in the current document and Martha just read it and it’s on the board and do we have a second for the motion?

DR. LUCAS: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a second from Dr. Lucas. Any discussion on the motion?

MS. BOSARGE: Martha, for my peace of mind, would you be willing to put something in there, that first sentence, that says maybe to evaluate the allocation or evaluate reallocating, as opposed to saying we are going to reallocate?

MS. BADEMAN: I can live with that.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Dr. Lucas, are you fine with that, too? Okay. Any other discussion on the motion?

MR. GREENE: Just a question. I don’t remember a time when we have gone back in and redone a purpose and need to a process and now, maybe the staff has worked on it or whatever, but it seems like there was a need or a reason that we started this process and perhaps because it’s taken so long that the need has
changed, but I don’t ever recall running into something like this before and is this common?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Doug, you can comment, but I don’t recall many times it happening, but, as you stated, this has been a fairly long process and it’s one that the council doesn’t usually take up and so I think everyone had a hard time trying to wrap their minds around to get to an appropriate purpose and need and certainly at Reef Fish, counsel had recommended that we address the purpose and need portion of the document.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It’s a reasonable thing to do.

MS. BADEMAN: Just to that point, it happens. It happens on the South Atlantic sometimes and I think, at least in my mind, a lot of this was, in my mind, where the purpose and need was before. We did just add those alternatives that Doug had about the calibration stuff and I am trying to, out of the best scientific information available in there, to try to speak to that issue as well. That’s kind of where I came from with this.

MR. WALKER: My question is do we plan on sending this to the SESSC?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We had some discussion about the timing and whether or not the SSC would evaluate it and do you have an immediate answer to that, Doug?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: If we do send it to them, it would be sequential. We would need the stock assessment people to estimate what those numbers are and what the impacts are and then the economists can give us -- In fact the economists on the IPT can give us the relative impacts and we can have those reviewed by the Socioeconomic SSC.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: What do you think the timeline -- Would that be something we could bring it back the next meeting or is this a June revisit?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I would think for both SSCs that it would probably be a June revisit. I just don’t know how long it will take to get those initial numbers.

MS. BOSARGE: When I’m reading the first paragraph of this motion, to me it says we are evaluating reallocating for economic purposes and that’s the way we have it structured right there, the syntax.
To me, there is two things we evaluate when we look at allocation. We want to make sure it’s fair and equitable and then we evaluate it on the basis of the net benefits.

There is two things, two components, that we have to make sure are in line in our allocation, but the way this reads is that we’re going to allocate it in a fair and equitable manner, the red snapper resources, between commercial and recreational to increase the net benefits from red snapper and so that is our purpose. It’s economic. Our purpose is economic driven, in my mind in this, the way it’s written right here.

When we get into our debate, we are saying we are doing this to increase the net benefits. To me, it should read that we’re going to evaluate the allocation to, number one, make sure it’s fair and equitable between the two sectors and, number two, to make sure that we have maximized net benefits, based on that allocation between the two sectors. To me, this focuses too much on the economics the way it’s reading right now.

**MS. BADEMAN:** In my mind, net benefits go beyond economics, in my opinion, and I -- There is no mention of economics in there and I mean there is social factors and there certainly are economic factors, but its more than just efficiency, if that’s what you’re trying to get at. As we all know, that’s part of this, but it’s not the sole driver. I don’t know how to fix the wording to fix your problem there.

**MS. LEVY:** I will make a suggestion and not to the wording, but that I guess that if the real motion is to modify the purpose and need to better reflect the best available scientific information and the MRIP calibration and new stock assessment information, to make the motion to give staff direction to look at those things and maybe come back with some suggestions as to what a modified purpose and need could be, because I think you can tell from the conversation that it sort of requires a lot of thought process in how you’re articulating it.

I don’t know if you want to try to work out how to articulate it right now or give the direction and have staff go back and take that into account and then bring you something that you can consider and then tweak if you want to.

**MR. PERRET:** Since I am against 28, I probably should keep my mouth shut, but I have said for many meetings that the purpose and need certainly needs some work. We heard Myron this morning talk about biology of the amberjack stock and spawning time and we hear Robin all the time talk about conservation and there is
nothing in this purpose and need that says one word about conservation.

How is it going to improve the conservation of the red snapper stock, whether you give them all to one segment or all to the other? If I was supportive of this, I would put something to do with conservation in there and so I am giving you all a suggestion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Mara gave us some food for thought, so to speak, on how we might want to approach this, but we do have a motion on the board.

MR. RIECHERS: I think Mara’s suggestion is trying to get at the notion of us trying to edit a purpose and need with seventeen members around this table is obviously a difficult thing to do. I think what Martha has attempted to do was address some of the past concerns that we've been hearing, both from members of this council as well as members of the audience.

I am in favor of voting this up, but I would also suggest that counsel -- The problem is that counsel has been hearing these discussions and certain members of the staff and I would suggest that yes, if you’ve got better suggestions as you go back and think and work through this, that we have those come back forward before us at the next meeting and I think if wording is even better still, then we adopt that.

I think, as a whole, the umbrella of the notions are both in the past purpose and need as well as in this one, but certainly we can always craft those things a little bit better.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I would just say, Martha, you’re the one that brought the motion forward and if that’s a way forward and we -- I would hate to have this go out and then there’s going to be some retooling and such and so we have multiple purpose and need statements, but I would leave that up to you and the rest of the council.

MS. BADEMAN: I am comfortable if staff has -- If they look at this and they have suggestions on how to improve it, I am okay with that. I just wanted to get a starting place.

DR. ASSANE DIAGNE: Essentially, if I understand this, we will be given the latitude of providing you suggestions for purpose and need the next time you see this, but our first reaction looking at this, based on the alternatives that you are considering, that you will add to the document, essentially,
fundamentally the purpose and need for this amendment really has nothing to do with net benefits and net benefits, in the understanding, are economic by nature, because if it is to reflect the best data that we have, the best scientific information and so forth, perhaps that is the direction that the IPT will be looking into in crafting the purpose and need.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you and so we have a motion and it’s been seconded and we’ve had discussion and so let’s go ahead and vote this motion. The motion is on the board. All those in favor signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. The motion carries. Is there any other things related to Amendment 28 that needs to come up? Johnny, if you can carry on.

MR. GREENE: Report of the Ad Hoc For-Hire Red Snapper AP, staff summarized the report, Tab B, Number 11, and discussed the motions made by the AP. The committee inquired about regional differences relative to the support for a one fish bag limit. It was noted that for-hire operators from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas generally opposed the bag limit reduction. The committee noted that due to section 407(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the for-hire component may not fully harvest its quota if a split season is in effect.

In response, Jim Greene, Chair of the AP, indicated that for the for-hire component, accountability is more important than access to the resource. The committee discussed a motion to expand the for-hire management scoping document initiated in 2014, but the motion failed.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Go ahead, Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: As we went through this report on Tuesday at committee, I was kind of surprised that there wasn’t very much conversation about it. Having attended and chaired that AP, there was a good mix of people who were there and there were a lot of ideas that were fleshed out and there were people who put down their differences and actually worked together and it was very surprising to me, actually. I was kind of in amazement, especially the later the meeting went.

There was a lot of talk about what can we do this year and I think that kind of got everybody moving in a common direction. I think it would be a good idea to put this group back together as soon as we can notice it and get it back together. They were pretty specific in asking questions about how does that process work and it has to be noticed for twenty-one days, I believe was the answer, and they wanted to meet as soon as practically
possible after this.

With that, I would like to make a motion to convene the Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-Hire AP to provide recommendations to the council regarding the for-hire amendment.

DR. DANA: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion to convene the Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-Hire AP to provide recommendations to the council regarding the for-hire amendment and it’s been seconded by Dr. Dana and is there council discussion?

MR. GREENE: I think it was a pretty good meeting and I think they covered a wide range of topics and I think that we should put them back together and see what happens and see if we can further flesh out some of these ideas.

MS. BADEMAN: I attended that meeting also and I thought it was a really positive meeting. There were a lot of different personalities and views around the table and I thought that they came together and were pretty productive in the end. My question for you, Johnny, is the for-hire amendment that you were talking about, are you talking about the recommendations from this AP?

I know we had talked about, in committee, adding that to some amendment that I can’t remember the number now that no one really knew what it was and I’m not sure which for-hire amendment you’re talking about in this motion.

MR. GREENE: In the report, they were talking about wanting to put an amendment together and so I would probably at this point just move to strike the words “regarding a for-hire amendment” and just leave it at that particular point for right now, if my seconder will agree.

DR. DANA: I agree.

MR. BOYD: I would just like to comment that I was there also and just as an observer, I thought that the interaction was incredibly good and there were diametrically-opposed opinions, but everybody worked together and it was well done and well managed.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I take this motion that basically they’re just going to -- As long as they come up with a majority vote on any of the motions that come forward, they’re going to come up with
anything under the sun and is that correct, Johnny?

MR. GREENE: They were all over the place and they talked about stuff that I never even dreamed of as far as that goes and I thought I had really educated myself well on it and so there’s no telling what you’re going to come back with and I think that’s kind of the beauty of this whole thing, is trying to get outside of the box and do something different.

DR. CRABTREE: I am fine with convening this somehow. I guess one thing that has disappointed me is we have a remarkably successful headboat pilot project that’s in its second year and it works great.

It maintains them within their quota and they are economically doing much better and it provides flexibility and all of these things and we are in a position where it’s going to lapse at the end of this year and it would probably take us two years to go through the whole process of putting in a program for that and we really haven’t had much discussion about that, but we put this in place to try something and it’s been a remarkably successful program and I think it’s just a shame that we’re not going anywhere with what’s come out of that.

DR. DANA: I am going to vote for this and not because we should be holding AP meetings for AP meetings sake, but because we have placed a three-year sunset on this particular initiative and while the last meeting, as I’m told, was productive, it was only two days and the first day was just organizational.

We owe it to the expedited process or program to allow for this diverse group to come together and finalize their thoughts on how they would like the program to proceed.

MR. RIECHERS: When it was first talked about in committee and there was an amendment process starting, I was less likely to support it. I will support this as it is. Certainly those individuals coming together and trying to come up with ideas that they can bring back to the council.

I would hope that they focus though on those things that are executable in a manner, in a timely manner, that we’ll actually be thinking about probably not even in June, but obviously the next season, and things that aren’t going to require referendums and those sorts of things. Those are the kinds of things we need now and not things that are way down the road.

MR. WILLIAMS: When are we considering this to meet, as soon as
we can? Could we also consider, or at least be understood by staff, that at least we give them one charge to make a recommendation as to what to do with the headboat program, because we had many recommendations yesterday that the headboat have their own advisory panel and that they be convened to come up with a plan themselves.

I don’t see how we could do that at this meeting. We would have to get applications and so on from people who wanted to be on it, but it’s a relatively small universe, I think eighty boats or something like that, and they’ve got records back to 1990 of what they have captured and if there’s some way to begin the process, specifically to ask this panel as to what their recommendation would be as to how to deal with the headboat program, I would like to do that. I don’t know that it’s necessary to stick this in the motion, but if staff would at least understand that I would like to see that as one of their charges.

DR. CRABTREE: I think one of the recommendations that came out of their last meeting was that the council convene an ad hoc headboat red snapper and grouper AP and they -- They have already told us that we need to pull together a headboat AP to start looking at that and so I’m fine with doing this, but I guess after we dispense with this motion, the question is do we want to put together a headboat AP?

MR. PERRET: Somebody said, and I think it was Robin and I agree with him, let’s try and get doable things, something that’s near-term and not long-term, and let’s not kick it down the road. With that, I have not heard anybody in opposition and I call the question on the motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: He called the question on the motion and so we will go ahead and vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye to convene the Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-Hire AP to provide recommendations to the council; all those opposed like sign. The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: I would like to present another motion that the council convene the Ad Hoc Headboat Red Snapper and Grouper AP.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: We would have to create one.

MR. GREENE: I was understanding that there was one already in existence and did we -- I think, following on the heels of Dr. Crabtree’s comment, I think that there is something there that needs to be done and if we do not have an ad hoc headboat red
snapper grouper type AP, then perhaps we need to put one together, but we’ve got three years to do anything within Amendment 40 context.

However, as Dr. Crabtree noted, their EFP expires the end of this year and there is not anything to extend that. Now, I don’t know if that’s the proper avenue or if we should do something different and I will certainly take some guidance here.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I think we heard from the AP, the Red Snapper AP, that that was a recommendation, to convene a headboat advisory panel to look at that very issue, as Dr. Crabtree pointed out, and so I think Doug just told me that they are advertising or in the process of advertising right now and so I took that statement to mean that we can just add -- If we wanted to make a motion to create another headboat AP, ad hoc AP, that would look specifically at implementing this among the fleet and maybe with looking at what tweaks or changes need to be made would the charge to them and come back with the plan that we could then use to develop an amendment, that might be something that we could go toward.

MR. GREENE: Well then I think she’s getting it up there now, that the council create an Ad Hoc Red Snapper Headboat and Grouper AP and I believe that would basically do what we’re trying to accomplish here.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: I need a second.


CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do we need to give them a charge or let them know what they’re doing or we just want to create one and then I guess we’ll give them a charge once we create it? Is that the intent or do we need to do that, Doug?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It would be nice to have a charge that we can let people know what they’re applying for to accomplish. We don’t have a charge necessarily that we advertise for the existing APs, but when we create a new one, we develop a charge. What I heard Dr. Crabtree say is the charge was to evaluate the future or continuation of the current program.

MR. GREENE: Yes, sir, that’s correct. I mean I do agree that it has worked well and they stayed under quota last year and it
seemed like it worked very well and it was a very small group of individuals and I think, just following on what Dr. Crabtree’s comments were, it would be relevant, but if he or anything else would like to add to that, I certainly have no problem with it.

DR. DIAGNE: Just a quick suggestion, perhaps. It could be a Headboat Reef Fish AP, for flexibility’s sake. They may be looking at things surrounding red snapper and grouper and so if the maker of the motion agrees to just make it a Reef Fish Headboat AP.

MR. GREENE: I don’t have a problem with that. I just had put red snapper and grouper in there because that was what was in the other one, but I certainly have no issue at all with Reef Fish.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Corky, you were the seconder on the previous motion.

MR. PERRET: That’s fine.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s fine, okay.

MR. BOYD: I don’t have any problem with the idea that Roy has, Dr. Crabtree has, of looking at some way to analyze how this EFP worked and if it’s viable and if we should go forward with it. My problem is I don’t want to create any more ad hoc APs or APs that we have to and we have two APs already in existence and one is the Reef Fish AP and one is the Red Snapper AP and couldn’t this be given to those two committees, one of those two committees, and let them analyze it and bring it back to us?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It could. To that point?

MR. WILLIAMS: Just to the point, we do have, I think under Reef Fish Amendment 1, there were all of the headboats that were required to report their landings and so we have landings data for this particular group of people and it’s a relatively small group, eighty to a hundred boats or something like that. I don’t know exactly what the number is, but I would hope we could get that group and that whoever we put on that group be a subset of that group, to come up with their own fishery management plan and that they be charged with doing that.

In particular, some kind of regulations of how they would replace the expiring headboat collaborative that was assembled as an EFP and how we would replace that and I would like them specifically to work on that problem.
DR. CRABTREE: I was going to essentially say what Roy Williams just said, that I think this needs to be a headboat group and the focus ought to be on the EFP and where do we go from there and what changes would need to be made to it and what program would replace it when it expires.

MR. RIECHERS: I don’t want to belabor the point, but I wonder whether we’re getting a little bit ahead of ourselves, because while Dr. Crabtree has indicated and certainly we’ve had testimony from Mr. Boggs and Mr. Williams and others that the program is working well for them, we’ve got other headboat operators who weren’t in the program and we probably need to hear some from them as well.

We have law enforcement who was working with the program and we probably need to hear from them. I haven’t seen the reports or any of the information surrounding that and kind of the report back on all of that EFP at this point in time and not that they can’t get together and talk about their industry and certainly they can do that, but I think we also need to see some of that information come before this council, so that we can all have the benefit of seeing that information and what worked and what didn’t work and see it in writing and have those conversations with our various interests in our various states and get a little better handle on that before we assume that the first thing we need to do is extend the EFP or find a way to extend that same program, because that may or may not be what we eventually want to do.

DR. CRABTREE: I think those are some good points and I think we could certainly pull together a presentation reporting on the performance of the first year of the program for the next council meeting. I know Andy would do that and I don’t want to put words in Mr. Boggs’ mouth, but I am sure he would be willing to participate in that and we could review the program and the problems we’ve seen and all those sorts of things.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Very good.

DR. DANA: I am fine with the motion and I just want it clarified when it says the charge will be to evaluate the future and continuation of the current program, to me, the current program means the EFP and it doesn’t mean perhaps expanding that to include all headboats. What I would want that AP to be considering is if it works and if it’s the right thing to do, how does that include all of the charter boats? Sorry. Headboats.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s a good point, Dr. Dana, to make sure that it’s clear in the motion that that is the intent and if Johnny agrees with that, in making it more clear.

MR. GREENE: I certainly don’t have any problem with that at all and I think Dr. Dana is absolutely correct. I mean I think that’s the intent, is that the program is expiring and they’ve had some success with it and I haven’t noted any issues and I’ve kept up with it rather well, I believe, but I think that perhaps we change it to “the current program with the intent of expanding towards full implementation for that industry.” Or “full participation” perhaps.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That would be to evaluate the EFP program and consider expanding to the full -- Consider the EFP program and consider the possibility of including it for full participation.

MR. GREENE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Who seconded the -- Dr. Dana, you seconded the motion. You didn’t? Who -- Roy, did you? It was Corky. Corky, did you second? Corky says okay.

MR. RIECHERS: What we’re going to do is charge this group with creating an IFQ for the headboat fishery, as I understand it then, because that’s what the EFP basically provided. When we were having them get together and talk about options and EFPs, I was more likely inclined to vote for the motion.

In some respects, I don’t know that I can support it in its current form. Again, I think we need to actually make sure we understand and I understand the people that are in the program like it quite well. I also have heard from those who are outside the program who may or may not like it if they were in it and can’t say whether they would or wouldn’t, but certainly had some issues with it as it was established in our state.

I think what we need to do is make sure that we get the reports before us before we give them a full-blown charge and maybe we can have that at the next meeting. What I am going to maybe suggest, and certainly if we want to go ahead and try to create it, that we create the Headboat AP, because that’s the first step, and then we work on charge after we’ve seen those reports, but that’s just my suggestion and so I will vote no to the current motion, but if we would alter it in that way, I could at least accept that.
MR. FISCHER: I would just ask Robin why doesn’t he seek amending it?

MR. RIECHERS: Probably because I’m going to lose anyhow, Myron, and I just wasn’t going to take up the time, if you really want to know the truth, but I will create a substitute motion that the council move to create an Ad Hoc Reef Fish Headboat AP and the charge will be subsequently determined after receiving the reports from National Marine Fisheries Service regarding the EFP.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do we have a second to the substitute motion? We have a second from Myron.

MR. FISCHER: I agree with Robin’s approach, because until we see the report, this may be a direction we don’t want to go into. I think we’re just a little too far ahead of ourselves creating a committee and giving them a charge before we even see a report.

MS. BADEMAN: I’m okay with this motion and you know I kind of feel like no matter what comes out of this report and how you feel on this issue and potentially doing an IFQ in this fishery, we’re going to need to come back and probably look at that charge before we get this group together, based on the results of the report, and edit it anyway and so why don’t we just deal with it then?

MR. PERRET: Talk about kicking the can down the road and do we have any idea when we would get this report?

DR. CRABTREE: I think we can do something at the next council meeting.

MR. WILLIAMS: That was really what I was going to say. It seems like, to me, that we would solicit applications for this Ad Hoc Reef Fish AP and we would have them at the next meeting and we would assemble that AP and we would also get the report from Dr. Crabtree’s office and then we could give the AP a charge and so I’m okay with this motion too and I’m going to vote for it.

MS. BOSARGE: Just a reminder that we did already receive a presentation on the headboat EFP and how it had been performing with all the numbers and the percentages and the feedback and what they had done. I think Randy Boggs presented it and it wasn’t at the last meeting, but it might have been at the one before that, but it gave a full summary of how they did and I
think we have heard, maybe not in a report directly from law
enforcement on only this, but we have heard from law enforcement
off and on throughout this process as to how they feel about it
and so I don’t have a problem going ahead and giving that AP a
charge and getting the ball rolling, since we are under a time
constraint and if what they decide they want to do is implement
that headboat program for the entire industry. I would rather
move along with it and we can change it later if we need to,
rather than just forming it and not moving forward with it.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: As Doug stated earlier, they would prefer to
have, when they go to send out solicitations for folks to apply
to the various APs, they would like to have kind of generally
what the topic of discussion would be or the charge would be for
them and we may not get -- When we come back to the next
meeting, we may not get a list of appropriate people, because we
had not defined what it is that they would be potentially
discussing and that would be talking about an EFP-type program
for the entire headboat fishery.

We can give them the specifics possibly at the next meeting,
with a more fleshed-out report, but I think some general
direction as to what they could be talking about would be
helpful to pass on as we try to get participation or
applications to the AP here that we’re trying to form.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I mean we do have some context here. The
headboat EFP will expire in another year and, Robin, do you have
any problem if staff puts our solicitation for a Headboat AP in
the context of the EFP expiring and we are looking to figure out
whether we want to do anything beyond that?

MR. RIECHERS: Well, I mean you could also put in the charge
that the EFP is expiring and we’re considering regional
management and how would that headboat and those headboat
operators from each state work in the context of that? So I
mean there’s a lot of moving parts that we always have in this
council and so I understand the EFP is expiring. That’s part of
the problem with trying to do fisheries management options with
EFPs, because you have a temporary timeframe that they’re done
for and then they’re going to expire.

The answer to your question, Roy, is I guess I wouldn’t mind
staff putting some sort of verbiage in regarding what the things
are to be considered, but I don’t know that EFP is the only
thing they should be considering at this point.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion? Let’s go ahead and vote
on the substitute motion that the council create an Ad Hoc Reef Fish Headboat AP. The charge will be determined after the headboat EFP report is presented. All those in favor signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. The motion carries.

We are at 12:30 just about, Mr. Greene, and according to my stomach, it’s time for lunch and so let’s go ahead and take an hour break and we will pick up Reef Fish when we reconvene. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:30 a.m., January 29, 2015.)

January 29, 2015

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

The Full Council of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Grand Hotel Marriott, Point Clear, Alabama, Thursday morning, January 29, 2015, and was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman Kevin Anson.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We are going to go ahead and restart the Reef Fish Committee, Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: Yes, sir. I have a motion and just to bring everybody back up, we are still under Report of Ad Hoc For-Hire Red Snapper AP. We are pretty much at the bottom of the page and there’s just going to be a couple more motions and then I guess we’ll move on, or at least for me anyway. I could probably continue on with some more if you would like, but whenever you’re ready, I will start with the motion.

The motion is to begin the development of an amendment considering a wide range of management approaches to improve the flexibility and accountability in the federal for-hire component.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Is that your motion, Johnny?

MR. GREENE: Yes, sir, that is correct.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Do we have a second to the motion?
MR. WALKER: I will second the motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s seconded by David. Is there discussion on the motion?

MR. GREENE: As you’re all aware, we started the clock ticking with Amendment 40 and we only have a three-year sunset in which to work and so with that being said, we kind of have to start getting stuff together as quickly as possible to have any hope of trying to make anything happen within this three-year window that we have to operate.

MS. BADEMAN: Johnny, I take it your intention here is to start with what the AP has come up with so far, those four ideas that they had?

MR. GREENE: Yes, I figured we would just start with that and then if they come up with some other stuff, just kind of add to it. I kind of figured we would just get the staff working on this and as ideas are brought forward, then they can just be plugged in as it moves along. It will kind of have to be one of those work-in-progress type of things, to make sure that we get everything that is brought up by the AP and then if other people have interest or ideas, we can include them as well.

DR. DANA: Essentially what this would be, given the expedited program, the three-year program that will sunset after that point -- This will be like a management plan to add some structure and make it as feasible as possible or successful or whatever?

MR. GREENE: Yes, ma’am. That’s correct.

MR. RIECHERS: Johnny, I am assuming that these ideas, this wide range of management approaches, will they also include options or as they meet, and, of course, we don’t know when or if the sector separation amendment will be signed, but obviously these options and approaches can include things beyond what might be considered there and I guess I’m a little concerned that we’re only considering the federal for-hire component, but I am just trying to get a notion of how broad the charge is. Are you confining it to Amendment 40 or are you trying to be broader or what’s your goal here?

MR. GREENE: At this particular point, we passed Amendment 40 and we have had a lot of discussion about that. In Amendment 40, it did speak exclusively to the federal for-hire component and I think at this point I’m just trying to grasp those
particular items.

Now, should Amendment 40 not be signed or whatever, then maybe some of this would be moot, but at this point, we just have a very small window of time in which to operate, as you all well know how long it takes to do stuff like this, and I am just trying to allow staff to have time to get something going, should there be additional good ideas come out of the next AP, but I would -- To answer the first part of the question, to take what they already came up with and insert that and them, depending on what comes out of the next AP, it would also be included as well.

MR. RIECHERS: Well and I mean you heard me speak to your previous motion that I think set up the ad hoc and as we had done in committee, I think they were merged into one motion. At that point, I indicated I was going to have trouble supporting the development of an amendment at this point.

I think, again, we may be getting ahead of ourselves here, because we’re asking staff to feed off something that the ad hoc is fixing to go work on and so I’m not certain whether I’m going to vote for or against the current motion. Good ideas can come from a host of different folks at different times and so I don’t ever want to preclude people getting together and coming up with suggestions and certainly staff is part of that mix, but they can certainly do that as well, even without this motion.

Again, I am just -- As we indicated earlier, as they were split, it seems to me that we could get one moving and not necessarily go into a full amendment process yet, but I certainly appreciate the motion anyhow.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Johnny, just a point of clarification to me. You mentioned the sunset of the Amendment 40 and everything and so would this be ideas that would center on the notion that the for-hire sector would still remain as a separate sector or -- Obviously some things you can put in place now would still have carryover in the next and is it wide open? I am, I guess, a little concerned, just in light of the alternative approach and regional management that we’ve been trying to deal with now for the last couple of years.

Albeit there might be some ideas that come out of it, but at least it might be a detractor and that’s what I just would be concerned about, is that it would detract some of the focus with trying to go forward with regional management and trying to craft that and that would be as far as looking at the entire
recreational sector and the notion of flexibility and accountability and all that stuff.

**MR. GREENE:** Well, I mean you kind of answered the question for me, to a degree, because it has taken a couple of years to get Amendment 39 going and we don’t have the luxury of that kind of time.

I didn’t want to be laser precise on telling them to do this, because then you and I and all of us get labeled as pushing anything and so I chose a wide range, because I figured if there are those ideas out there that someone has that they want to throw on the table, then I think we should look at that.

We got some emails of some management plans by some various associations, plus there is other stuff out there. I just didn’t want to limit it to a specific idea or a topic and I just wanted to let the staff develop the -- Begin the development of an amendment with that appropriate protocol and then just insert the ideas as they come up and present us what they have as the meetings come forward.

**MR. BOYD:** At this point, I think I would speak against the motion, because we just created an Ad Hoc Headboat AP to look at what they deem were the successes of their particular EFP and we haven’t heard from them yet.

They are only 50 percent into their test, if you want to call it a test, and they have another 50 percent to go, another year, and they could run into problems and issues that we don’t even know about today and we’re also waiting to hear from an additional meeting, from one more meeting, of our charter for-hire AP and so I think I’m with whoever said it a while ago and I think we’re a little premature on developing an amendment at this point. Thank you.

**MR. WALKER:** I will speak in support of it. We have heard enough public comment that the council develop this and we need an FMP. These fishermen, charter boats, let them develop their FMP and let them come up with the ideas and there’s nothing wrong with the council staff exploring all options. Anything is better than the alternatives and you already have witnessed for years what the alternatives will give you.

I think it’s time to be proactive and I would support it and I would like to see -- Let’s get some work on it and get some ideas. There is a lot of idea out there that they could support and they could use and implement and it’s their plan and let
them develop it. I think this is a good thing to start and it’s a good idea. Let’s get started. Let’s be proactive.

MR. BOYD: To that point, this doesn’t say that the industry is going to develop a plan. It says develop an amendment that the council is going to consider and I don’t think we have all the information we need yet and I think it’s just premature.

MR. WALKER: We’ve been discussing so many things that an amendment -- Yes, it’s a plan, but you’re going to take public comment and it’s a long process and it takes a long time and we are just -- We hear it all the time, that we kick the can down the road. I would like to look at this plan. I would like to look at getting started with something.

MR. SANCHEZ: I spoke against the sunset for this very reason. We are looking at a sunset and so we’re under a time crunch and let’s get going.

MS. BOSARGE: When we passed our motion a minute ago to form the AP, we decided that we need to leave it vague and open-ended and now I see this as very open-ended and flexible and we don’t want that now. Now we want specifics and that confuses me.

As far as this, I will support this. I think that we do have the information we need to get started on this. We had an AP that met and they came up with a lot of options that were a wide range of management approaches for that sector, for that for-hire component.

I think staff has what they need to get started and put it in the form of a document and let us flesh it out from there. I think some of these APs that are going to meet in the future will help to guide us with that, but I don’t see any reason or rationale why we can’t go ahead and get some of those ideas that have already been given to us and endorsed started in the form of a document.

MR. GREENE: In the report when you read it, one motion that passed, and I will quote right off of it, is that the council consider management options such as angling management organizations made up of for-hire vessels, one part of which could feature dividing the for-hire into regional groups, a catch share program, a tag program, a days-at-sea program. I mean that’s pretty much a wide-ranging set of management approaches.

I mean it’s just trying to capture all of those ideas and
building off of what went on earlier, as Ms. Bosarge suggested, is one of the reasons I did so, but it’s just a very simple deal and we have to start somewhere and we know that three years is not much time in this process.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There is a motion on the board to begin the development of an amendment considering a wide range of management approaches to improve flexibility and accountability in the federal for-hire component. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. The motion carries.

MR. GREENE: One more motion and it will be the same motion as the last, except you can just substitute the last few words with -- Instead of “charter for-hire component” as in “headboat component”.

I will read it and it’s to begin the development of an amendment considering a wide range of management approaches to improve flexibility and accountability in the federal headboat component.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There is a motion on the board and do we have a second to the motion?

MS. BOSARGE: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s been seconded by Ms. Bosarge. Johnny, do you want to talk about it first?

MR. GREENE: Just going back to some of the comments that we made earlier before we broke for lunch about the success the program has had and as Ms. Dana pointed out, there is changes that need to be made and looked at.

I understand that perhaps it’s a little unorthodox to put all of this together at one time. However, time is a very sensitive thing here for a lot of these guys and they’re businessmen trying to make a living and provide for their families and pay their taxes and do their jobs.

I just feel that it’s time to just get the stuff together and I don’t know that staff would have a whole lot to put together at this point, but at least they will have a heads-up that it’s coming and will do the best they can to accommodate it.

MS. BADEMAN: I was just going to note that the previous motion didn’t say “charter” and it just said “for-hire”.

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CHAIRMAN ANSON: I thought, in the discussion and everything, I was under the impression it was for charter for the first one myself and unless I hear some or see some shakes of the head, I think everybody else had the same consideration.

MR. BOYD: I thought it was for-hire, which is both components, the headboat and the charter for-hire.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Then, Johnny, as long as staff understands it’s both then.

MS. LEVY: Does that change anybody’s -- First of all, does that change anybody’s decision point, that we have one motion that’s talking about an amendment just for charter and not headboats and we have another one now that we’re talking about just headboats, realizing that we have one permit and one component quota for those two things.

I don’t know if it changes anybody’s discussion point, but I wouldn’t want to just change it to “charter” in that motion if there was some confusion and maybe we need to go back and specify that that’s charter and revisit that motion or something. I am not exactly sure what we should do, but --

CHAIRMAN ANSON: The reason I was thinking it was charter is because we had just passed a motion developing an Ad Hoc Headboat AP to look at the EFP in the context of coming up with another plan or advice that might have been based solely on the EFP or something else. In my mind, they were given that charge and we were going to do it after we got some recommendations and so I just thought of it that way.

MS. BOSARGE: I guess I was under the impression it was the charter for-hire component as well. Like you said, we established two separate APs and then this addressed the first AP and then it looks like we’re going to address the second AP and maybe there was an oversight when it was typed up, but I thought Johnny said charter for-hire.

DR. LUCAS: I thought we were going to do both of them in the same and I don’t see why we can’t do both of them in the same.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: So I think that’s what Mara was trying to get to, is if people felt like that would change their vote if having them combined when they previously thought it was just a separate thing and I don’t -- I mean does that change people’s votes on it? I mean do we want to call the question or call a
reconsider or -- I mean we can do a couple of things here and so I’m just trying to dispatch this and Mara’s point was to make sure everyone was clear on what they were voting.

If you were unclear and you feel like the first motion dealt just with charter boats and that were two separate entities and you thought it was charter that you were voting on the first one and having headboats now included in that, if that changed your mind, then -- I mean it doesn’t appear to be a big deal to folks and so we can go ahead with the second motion and then it’s very clear, by the two, that both of them are going to go forward as development of an amendment and so I think we might as well just go with the second one, just to be clear, so we don’t have to worry about editing and everything, is my opinion, and then we will have clear guidance and understanding. Any other comment?

So we have the motion and it’s to begin the development of an amendment considering a wide range of management approaches to improve flexibility and accountability in the federal headboat component. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. The motion carries. Back to you, Mr. Greene.

MR. GREENE: That concludes that section and we will move on to Final Action Framework Action to Adjust Recreational For-Hire Red Snapper Management Measures. Staff summarized the alternatives in a draft framework action to adjust the red snapper bag limit on for-hire vessels, Tab B, Number 12(a).

It was noted that there was no support for a reduced bag limit in the public comments received during the last one-and-a-half weeks since a video summary of the framework action was posted on the council website.

A motion to make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative, set the red snapper bag limit at one fish per person per day in the for-hire industry, and make it contingent upon the approval and implementation of Amendment 40, failed by a vote of three to six. No other motions were made for this action.

A supplemental action with alternatives to implement a split season for for-hire vessels was produced based on a recommendation by the Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-Hire AP, Tab B, Number 12(b). Committee members expressed concern that there was a lack of economic and other analyses on the impacts of the alternatives. No motions were made regarding split seasons.

DR. DANA: I have a question about the motion on Alternative 2
to be the preferred alternative, set the red snapper bag limit at one fish per person per day in the for-hire fishery. We heard extensive testimony yesterday that there was sentiment for two fish versus the one fish per person and where does that stand at this point?

**MS. BADEMAN:** This motion failed.

**DR. DANA:** I am sorry and I have been told it failed and I misread. Sorry.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** All right. Mr. Greene.

**MR. GREENE:** Final Action Framework Action to Adjust the Recreational For-Hire Red Snapper Management Measures, staff summarized the alternatives in a draft work action to adjust the red snapper bag limit on the for-hire -- I am sorry. I picked up at the wrong spot. My apologies.

Other Reef Fish SSC Summary, the SSC also reviewed the proposed SEDAR assessment schedule and recommended that a standard red snapper assessment be conducted in 2017. A standard assessment would allow new sources of information to be included, provided they were specified in the terms of reference.

The SSC discussed alternative red snapper MSY proxies. There is a poor relationship between spawners and recruits, which makes it difficult to estimate the proper proxy for FMSY. Following a discussion over reproductive strategies and where red snapper fit in, the committee passed the following motion.

**By a vote of six to zero, the committee recommends, and I so move, to remove red snapper SPR consideration from the status determination criteria document and request council staff develop a plan amendment to adjust the FSPR levels for red snapper to alternatives for: status quo, FSPR 24 percent, FSPR 22 percent, FMAX (FSPR 20 percent). The plan amendment should also determine the timeline for F Rebuild at each FSPR.**

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** We have a committee motion and is there any discussion on the motion?

**MS. BOSARGE:** I wanted to have a little discussion on this. I like the motion. I like pulling this out and looking at it by itself, because I think it is very important, rather than having it in that other document, so that we can focus on it.

What I wondered though, listening to the different presentations
that we were presented with over the week, the science seems to suggest that the possible range of SPRs is anywhere from 20 to 40 percent. Now, I don’t feel like as a council we’re moving upward in this and we’re probably moving in the other direction, but to give us a range and allow us to see where we’re at on that risk/reward tradeoff spectrum, can we not look at 40 to 20 and then obviously we’re going in the 26 or down category there, but so that I understand where my risk profile is at right now, I feel like I need to see the entire spectrum, in order to determine how much more risk I want to take on in that direction and does that make sense?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It does to me and yes, there were, as I recall, a couple of comments during public testimony relative to providing enough alternatives that provide you the wide range or spectrum of opportunities and alternatives.

In one direction, that doesn’t necessarily provide you a wide range and so potentially we could amend the motion or someone could amend the motion to include some additional numbers, but is there any other committee discussion?

MR. SANCHEZ: I am not sure what adjusting or changes to SPR, given the ranges, would do to a thirty-year rebuilding, maybe forcing you into a much more stringent timeframe and without me fully understanding that, I am reluctant to go that route.

DR. PONWITH: Of course, this isn’t to make the decision to change. It is to do the analysis so you can see what happens and it was based on -- My understanding is it was based on the outcome of the discussion that there is uncertainty with this and that it is an opportunity to take a look at the associated risks with each of these and from that standpoint, it certainly makes sense, to me, to bracket, so that you get a full range of the distribution and not that you’re biasing a decision to any one or another, but when you can see a range, it makes it a little bit easier to understand that relationship.

MS. BOSARGE: I am not sure, procedurally, how this would work, since this came out of committee, but I think it was Doug’s motion and would you accept a friendly amendment to add in an SPR of 40, 30 and then go with the 26 and 24 and --

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Leann, it’s a committee motion and so probably a substitute motion to add maybe whatever numbers that you feel is appropriate and see if we can get a second.

MS. BOSARGE: Then I would like to make a substitute motion and,
staff, you can copy and paste the motion that’s on there and
right before “status quo”, put in an FSPR of 40, FSPR of 30”.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We’re at FSPR 26 right now.

MS. BOSARGE: You are going to have to put in -- You can take
out status quo, if you want, and in between the 30 and the 24
percent, put an “FSPR of 26”. Never mind. Legal says no.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Leann, I think that captures what you want and
do we have a second for the motion?

MR. GREENE: Second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s been seconded by Mr. Greene and is there
any committee discussion on the motion? All right. Any
opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MS. LEVY: I think that, and I’m not sure and so correct me if
I’m wrong, but when we got messed up about where we were in the
committee report, did we talk about the split season issue? If
not, then at least we should get that in that that was part of
the committee report.

I am just raising it that we also had, in addition to the bag
limit reduction, you looked at a split season. He read it?
Okay. Sorry. I didn’t hear it and I wanted to make sure it was
out there.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Go ahead.

MR. GREENE: Other Business, a committee member asked that an
education session be scheduled at a future council meeting on
SPR. Mr. Gregory replied that explaining SPR in layman’s terms
was difficult, but he would look into finding someone who could
provide a seminar to the council on the topic. Mr. Chairman,
this concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Greene. Myron.

MR. FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had a request from
some of our field samplers that said if they could get an SPR
for dummies, they would really like to attend and if it gets
pushed down to the Key West meeting or something like that --
Randy is not here, but I will speak for him and I don’t think
we’re sending them. If it’s up on the northern Gulf, we would
like to have our staff show up at these meetings and that would
be a nice one for them to sit in on.
CHAIRMAN ANSON: Just for a heads-up, I think Mr. Gregory said he would try to get something for the next meeting and is that correct, the April meeting, the March/April meeting?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: We can, but we need to look at our schedule. We had a busy March/April meeting schedule even before today and so we’ll see how everything shakes out.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes, we’ll see.

MR. BOYD: I might note that Myron didn’t say for Doug. He said for dummies.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Right. To accommodate some staff travel plans, we are going to move Mackerel Committee in front of Data Collection and so the Mackerel Committee will be our next report and so, Dr. Dana, that’s you.

MACKEREL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

DR. DANA: Thank you, Chairman Anson. The Mackerel Committee met on January 28, 2015 and was chaired by Pam Dana. We talked about the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Amendment Renumbering. Staff noted that the current list of CMP amendments had been renumbered and organized to move similar management changes along as efficiently as possible.

CMP Amendment 24, tabled until 2016, will address Atlantic Spanish mackerel allocation shifts. CMP Amendment 26 will address Gulf and Atlantic King Mackerel ACLs, allocations, stock boundaries, and sale provisions and CMP Amendment 28 will address splitting the commercial king and Spanish mackerel fishing permits.

SEDAR-38 Stock Assessment, ACL Control Rule Buffers, SEFSC staff presented the Gulf migratory group king mackerel stock assessment, Tab C, Numbers 4 and 4 (a). The assessment determined the fishery is not overfished or experiencing overfishing, with favorable reviews of the model.

A substantial change in this assessment is the new winter mixing zone that has been reduced to the area south of the Florida Keys. This zone assumes a 50/50 mixing between the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups. Recruitment has been declining in recent years and SEFSC staff recommended monitoring this trend in recruitment in the future.
Overall, the stock is perceived to be healthy and indicative of successful management strategy. The projected retained catch estimates increase in the first year of projections, 2015, and decrease thereafter to equilibrium levels. Council staff shared the results of running the SSC OFL and ABC recommendations through the council’s ACL/ACT Control Rule, Tab C, Number 4(b), which indicated a necessity for a 9 percent buffer for the combined recreational and commercial fisheries between the ABC and the ACL.

This should be addressed again at a later date, once the council has a better idea of how it wants to proceed with redeveloping the commercial zone allocations in the Gulf.

We then moved to CMP Amendment 26 Scoping Document. Council staff reviewed the CMP 26 scoping document, Tab C, Number 5, which addresses Gulf and Atlantic King Mackerel ACLs, allocations, stock boundaries, and sale provisions.

The ACLs can be increased in both migratory groups. The councils are also interested in exploring sector reallocations within their own regions. The Gulf Council also must revisit the commercial zone allocations for the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel, since the SEDAR-38 stock assessment determined that the current Florida East Coast Subzone was actually part of the Atlantic migratory group.

This requires redistributing the percentage of the Gulf commercial quota voided by the loss of the Florida East Coast Subzone amongst the remaining Gulf commercial zones. The councils must also consider recognizing the new stock boundary and mixing zone from the SEDAR-38 stock assessment, which defines the new winter mixing zone as south of US 2 Highway 1 in Monroe County from the Dade/Monroe County line in the east to the council jurisdictional boundary in the west from November 1 through March 31.

Also, the South Atlantic Council is interested in allowing bag limit sales of king mackerel in the Atlantic shark gillnet fishery, to permit a historic practice in this particular fishery.

Lastly, committee members were interested in seeing sector-specific accountability measures developed for the king mackerel fishery. The committee recommends, and I so move, to recommend that CMP Amendment 26 go out to scoping.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a committee motion to recommend that
Amendment 26 go out to scoping. Any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

DR. DANA: The committee recommends, and I so move, to hold scoping meetings in the following locations: Port Aransas, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; Galveston, Texas; Panama City, Florida; Grand Isle, Louisiana; Tampa Bay, Florida; Biloxi, Mississippi; and Key West, Florida.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s a committee motion. You see the locations listed on the screen and is there any discussion?

MR. BOYD: In consultation with Robin, I would like to add one more location on that and that’s San Antonio, Texas. If we can do that, I would like to and I will give you rationale.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: If you want to make a substitute motion and get a second, then we can discuss it.

MR. BOYD: I will make a substitute motion and if you just copy the motion and add San Antonio, Texas. While they’re doing that, my rationale is that some large percentage of the saltwater licenses are held by fishermen in San Antonio and one of the key fish that they fish for are mackerel and so I would like to hear from that group if we can and Robin and Lance are okay with it.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Lance indicates that he did second it and so do we have any other discussion?

MR. PERRET: Lance added a San Antonio meeting a while back which I seconded for public hearing and I was just wondering if we had a good turnout at that meeting. It was on sector separation.

MR. LANCE ROBINSON: Yes, we had a good turnout.

MR. PERRET: I just wanted to know. We had one recently added and if we had a good turnout, then we ought to do it again, I guess.

MR. BOYD: I would just say that I have chaired several meetings in Port Aransas where we’ve had zero people show up, just as a contrast.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Just making sure, Doug, but obviously we have funds to pay for one more scoping meeting?
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Funds are not as much of a constraint as time is, but yes, we have the funds.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion on the substitute motion? Again, the substitute motion is proposed scoping hearing locations in Galveston, Port Aransas, and San Antonio, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; Biloxi, Mississippi; Kenner or Grand Isle, Louisiana; Key West, Tampa Bay, and Panama City, Florida. Any opposition to the motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries.

MR. FISCHER: I think we just discussed that we would go with just Grand Isle and not the Grand Isle/Kenner. In the summary, it doesn’t have Kenner listed in it, but it’s on the board.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you for catching that and I guess we can -- You’re from Louisiana and so it will be all right.

DR. DANA: Myron is correct. We did have Kenner yesterday put on there and it was just an omission on my part.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Myron, as long as you’re happy that it’s just going to be Grand Isle, Louisiana.

MR. FISCHER: Grand Isle is good and it’s where all the fishermen are, Grand Isle/Fourchon.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Okay. Very good. Dr. Dana.

DR. DANA: Thank you, Chairman Anson. The committee then moved into CMP 28 Scoping Document. Council staff reviewed the CMP 28 Scoping Document, Tab C, Number 6, which addresses splitting the Gulf and Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel commercial fishing permits.

The South Atlantic Council is interested in splitting the federal commercial permits for these species to facilitate more region-specific management of the Atlantic migratory group of mackerels. The South Atlantic Council wants to explore a two-for-one permit reduction system similar to the same system in place for their snapper grouper permits.

Though the Gulf Council has not yet formally agreed to participate in CMP Amendment 28, the council has heard and voiced concerns in the past over Gulf-specific permit issues, including how to address increasing effort in the Western and Northern Gulf zones from traveling fishermen.
Multiple options could be considered for how to determine which fishermen qualify for which permits and what qualification protocols would be necessary to achieve management goals. The committee recommends, and I so move, to move forward with scoping hearings on CMP Amendment 28 at the same meetings as CMP Amendment 26.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s a committee motion. Any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

DR. DANA: Staff then reviewed concerns presented by king mackerel gillnet fishery permit holders, Tab C, Number 7, and a summary of a meeting with those stakeholders and council members held January 12, 2015 in Key West, Florida, Tab C, Number 7(a).

The gillnet industry is asking the council to consider raising the current trip limit from 25,000 pounds to 45,000 pounds. To accompany the increase in the trip limit, the industry has proposed accountability measures which would reduce the current and following year’s quotas by the amount of each individual overage over the proposed trip limit.

The industry goal is to reduce the probability of fishermen getting fined due to accidental overages. Gillnet fishermen think that a 45,000-pound trip limit is highly unlikely to be met, making a trip limit overage that much less likely. Some fishermen suggested that a 35,000-pound trip limit would constitute a compromise between the current and requested trip limits.

In reference to the council’s request whether smaller nets could be used to reduce the amount of fish potentially caught in a single set, the fishermen noted that the fish can sometimes get strung out over large areas, requiring the larger nets to encircle and catch the fish.

Fishermen also requested that the council consider removing latent permits that have no gillnet landings, revoking those gillnet endorsements.

Fishermen supported creating a system whereby a fisherman suspecting themselves of being over the trip limit could call a NMFS port agent prior to landing their catch. The port agent would meet the fisherman at the dock and, if the fisherman was in fact over the trip limit, he would not be fined and the amount of catch over the trip limit would be excluded from his sale profits. Any profits from the sale of the landed fish over the trip limit would then be given to the proper authorities to
go to the National Treasury or donated to charity.

The committee recommends, and I so move, to recommend that the council create a framework action plan to evaluate alternative gillnet trip limits and accountability measures and elimination of latent permits to minimize the potential for enforcement action due to accidental trip limit overages.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a committee motion. Any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion is carried.

DR. DANA: Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Dr. Dana. That takes us to the next committee report, Data Collection, and Mr. Pearce.

DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

MR. PEARCE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee reviewed the technical subcommittee report for electronic charter boat reporting, Tab E, Number 4. If anyone has got any comments on that, now would be the time. Johnny, did you have any comments on this? I mean this is that technical report and did you have any --

MR. GREENE: Well, we had talked about it earlier and I was trying to get to the report myself, but I mean I believe we passed a motion in committee and is that right?

MR. PEARCE: Yes, we did. I will go to that. After discussion, the committee recommends, and I so move, that the Data Committee direct staff to begin developing a plan amendment that would require electronic logbooks for the charter for-hire vessels in the Gulf and South Atlantic that considers the use of VMS and other recommendations from the joint council technical subcommittee report. It’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a committee motion and is there any discussion on the motion? I guess, Johnny, since you brought up the other motion in Reef Fish relative to an amendment of flexibility and accountability, this kind of has some -- This also could be duplicative, I guess, and so I don’t know if there’s -- I don’t want to put it all on you, but I just wanted to see if you have any thoughts on how these two could work together or be merged together.

MR. PEARCE: Mr. Chairman, I think this is really not
MR. BOWEN: Thank you, sir. Yes, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is moving forward with electronic reporting. We have completed the dealer amendment that specifies weekly electronic reporting, the headboat amendment that specifies weekly electronic reporting for headboats, and we are working on an amendment to do the same for charter boats. We are also exploring a way to have commercial logbooks done electronically.

MR. PEARCE: Does that help, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes, it does. Again, relative to the accountability, which some people have couched that, in terms of data collection, as being accountable and not just the payback options and everything. I am just, again, trying to streamline the process, I guess, and make sure that staff isn’t spending a lot of efforts in developing two documents I guess is all I was just concerned about.

MR. PEARCE: I understand.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Staff or Doug, if you have any comments and if you understand that and it’s all good to you, then I am just wasting time, but go ahead, Martha.

MS. BADEMAN: I was just going to say I think this is a broader issue. I mean there’s a lot of folks in Florida that have both permits and it would be silly for them to have two different electronic logbook procedures and one streamlined would make it easy.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Very good.

DR. FROESCHKE: One thing to think about, I think the motion on the board that you have builds on the recommendations of the technical subcommittee, in that it was built as a replacement or recommended as a replacement for the current charter survey and part of the recommendations is that was supposed to be a multispecies fit and not designed for a single species or problem, whereas the previous motion, that’s sort of the intent and so I see them as different and whether there is need or funding to do both of them I guess is a different problem, but it is a little bit uncertain on how to proceed, given two different charges.
MR. PEARCE: Mr. Chairman, we have a motion on the table.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes, we do, Mr. Pearce. Any other discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. PEARCE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Data Collection Committee also received presentations regarding the EM/ER implementation plan, the MRIP calibration update, and the recent red snapper workshop. Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report in line with Doug Gregory’s Paper Reduction Act.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Pearce.

MR. GREENE: I wasn’t really sure where to jump in there with what was going on, but I mean I was -- Obviously with what we passed in Reef Fish and trying to figure out how this is all going to tie together has been rather uncertain, to me.

I understand that we have a multi-council action here and that Martha is right and there will be people that are dealing with it on both aspects and I can understand that. I wasn’t sure if something like this needed to stay in Data Collection or if it needed to go to the Reef Fish Committee, because that’s where it’s ultimately going, to my knowledge.

I have had some question about that. Now, I didn’t know where the South Atlantic was and if they were ramped up as much as what the Gulf seems and obviously with the Gulf having a three-year sunset on some of the stuff that we’re doing and I would personally like to include this in the charter for-hire industry and to try to do something within a very small window of three years and incorporate this at the same time seems like it’s a bit arduous, at best, to try to do that.

I mean I understand the expense and I understand Martha’s point about having boats dually permitted and I don’t know if it would be better to just scale it back to just do something in the Gulf for one or two species quickly or whatever. I don’t know, but obviously we’ve put that technical group together and it seems like that they have done what we’ve asked them to do and now it seems like they’re just kind of -- Everybody is kind of saying, okay, well now what?

I guess my question is, okay, now what? Does this go to the Reef Fish Committee for some type of implementation or where do we go from here is my question.
MR. PEARCE: As Chairman of the Data Collection, this is, to me, clearly data collection and I do believe that we’re going to be following the joint technical subcommittee committee report and I don’t see any difference in one fish, two fish, three fish.

I think that if you’re getting everything in order to do reporting, it’s just a matter of what that report says, basically, and what you report and what you don’t report. I just think that we can move this as quickly now as we could have through Reef Fish and I don’t see why it would go to Reef Fish.

MS. BADEMAN: Just one more on this. I think in that technical group we also had HMS people on here as well and so I think this goes, again, not just beyond the Gulf and South Atlantic Council, but this whole other suite of species that’s out there and so I think I would prefer Data Collection.

DR. CRABTREE: Whatever committee you decide to do it, it seems to me you have two for-hire permits now, a CMP for-hire permit and a reef fish for-hire permit. You’re going to want to modify both of those FMPs and require all of those for-hire permit holders to report.

I assume we are going to require them to report everything they catch, whether it’s in these plans or not. CMP, of course, is a joint plan with the South Atlantic and so whether we’re in agreement or not -- We have separate permits, because ours is under a moratorium, but it will need to be a joint amendment with them to do that, but it does seem, to me, we want to have a general reporting requirement that’s going to go on all of these for-hire vessels with either CMP permits or reef fish permits.

MR. GREENE: I certainly understand all of those points and they’re very good comments. It seems, to me, that the headboat collaborative has had real good success reporting almost daily within their industry.

I realize it’s twenty boats or whatever and it’s worked very well and I mean why can’t we -- I mean we put together a technical subcommittee and they came back and gave us recommendations, but yet, when you look at what the headboat collaborative has been able to pull off, it seems like you could almost just borrow the technology and the information they have and go that route.

Without getting into a super long debate about it, it just seems like that has worked pretty well from the people I have talked to in that industry who have been reporting for twenty years now
with logbooks, with paper logbooks, and have now gone to
electronic and so I’m just looking to build off of that.

MR. PEARCE: I think I know what Johnny is saying and I think
that all will be incorporated as we move down and I think,
again, this is South Atlantic as well as us and so we’ve got to
make this plan work for both of us and I think that’s the
direction we’re heading and I’m sure when we begin the
development of this plan that all of those things, the headboat
and all, will be taken into consideration, how the reporting
went around and everything. This is pretty much a really good
move that we’ve been trying to do for a long time.

DR. PONWITH: You know you can see from the electronic reporting
and electronic monitoring policy from NOAA that this is the
direction that we believe we need to go in, but there are
caveats with that in terms of making sure that it’s done in a
way that’s manageable and that we understand the costs to it.

We also had our technical advisory committee put out their
report and there are some very valuable findings in there to
guide this process and my sense on this is that the worst thing
we could do is little tiny stabs at this across this fishery or
this geographic region.

My sense on this is, with respect to the Data Collection
Committee, is if you’re going to embark on this, being mindful
of all those caveats, that the best way to do it is go big and
make sure you’re taking into consideration the entire geography
and multiple permits and then get advice from the subcomponents
underneath there, rather than creating twelve tiny projects or
programs that don’t link to one another and end up having
inefficiencies because of it.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Dr. Ponwith, given the direction
the council wants to go, it seems to me the burden of doing this
falls on the Science Center and what’s the next steps and what
can we do to help get this implemented as quickly as possible?

DR. PONWITH: You know I actually disagree that the burden falls
on the Science Center. We are a partner in data collection with
the council and with the states and with the industry themselves
and I view this as a very, very strong partnership to make this
happen.

The Science Center can’t make this happen unilaterally. For one
thing, the Science Center would have to stop an awful lot of
what they’re doing right now if we unilaterally had to foot the
bill for this and so I think the discussion is how do we set
this up.

The Science Center can create the technical, sort of the -- Let
me explain one of the things that we’re doing in the South
Atlantic. The South Atlantic is interested in having electronic
reporting for the vessels, switching to an electronic logbook
for commercial vessels, and we’re doing a pilot on that.

What we’ve done was created sort of the minimum data
requirements and here are the fields that we have to have and
here is the level of precision we need for each of those fields
and then gone to the commercial enterprises and said here are
the data we need and you figure out how to write the software to
create the system to collect those data.

What I can envision is a similar thing. We would say these are
the data that we need and this is an opportunity to engage with
the industry and find out are there more data that we would like
to amend that list by, given this is an opportunity for change,
and then create the specs for what data we would collect, but
then it’s a matter of working together to figure out how to do
that.

Do we create those specs and then allow commercial enterprises
to write software and then sell that software to the industry
and we would have to engage with enforcement to understand if we
make this mandatory, which would be my recommendation if you’re
going to do it, if you make it mandatory, what are the best ways
to make this enforceable and all the other aspects. Again, a
very strong partnership will be required for this to be
successful.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Harlon, do you have any comments?

MR. PEARCE: Yes, I do. This has only been in the works for
eight years that I know of and I would sure like to get
something finished before my next two meetings and I get the
hell off of this council, but I don’t think anything -- We’ve
done so much and moved so -- I mean I don’t see the problem and,
Bonnie, I know you keep throwing these roadblocks at us, but
doggone it, just get it done. Just get it done.

DR. PONWITH: I don’t see anything I said just now as a
roadblock. I was asked the question of what will it take to
make this happen and this is a paragraph and it’s very simple, a
handful of words, and there’s a lot that has to happen to go
from this to that and it’s going to take a partnership and
that’s all I’m saying.

I can sketch out and I think that the technical report that you
have in your hands right now does a very good job of sketching
out all the things that have to happen. They are doable, but it
just takes a partnership.

GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. No other comments on that and so
that will take us to the next committee report, Gulf SEDAR, and
that will be presented by myself. This is Tab F. Staff
reviewed the status of ongoing and planned stock assessments in
the Gulf through 2017 and that was Tab I, Number 4.

The committee was encouraged to consider which data-poor
species, in addition to red drum, to assess in 2016. The
Southeast Fisheries Science Center noted a change in effort
estimation for MRIP, which would require Southeast Fisheries
Science Center assessment scientists’ time, and thereby possibly
reduce the number of assessments which could be completed in the
Gulf in a given year.

The council stated that their 2016 priorities were currently the
same and wanted to see more assessment slots in 2016 and beyond.
The council decided to wait until the March 2015 meeting to
determine which data-poor species would be assessed in 2016,
giving the Science Center time to develop a list of species to
include in the data-poor assessment and to provide better
guidance on the potential impacts of the MRIP calibration effort
on the assessment schedule. This concludes my report. Next
would be Administrative Policy, Tab G, and Mr. Boyd.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

MR. BOYD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Administrative Policy
Committee met on Monday of this week and I too have an
abbreviated report. Mr. Gregory has a Report Reduction Act in
effect and so I’m going to read as little as possible here.

Staff reviewed the current structure of the Gulf Council SSC,
indicating how it differs from other councils. An integration
of the three major SSCs, Standing, Ecosystem, and Socioeconomic,
into a single SSC is expected to provide improved scientific
advice to the council.

The committee approved, and I so move on behalf of the
committee, to integrate the three SSCs, which currently total
thirty-five members, into a single Standing SSC of eighteen individuals with the following approximate multidisciplinary structure: not less than seven stock assessment or quantitative biologists/ecologists; three ecosystem scientists; three economists; three quantitative anthropologists/sociologists; one environmentalist scientist; and one other scientist from one of the above disciplines or from some other field. That’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Boyd. We have a motion on the board and is there any discussion on the motion?

MR. WALKER: Well, with all these allocation issues and all of the social and economic and several of these have been brought up and it’s been taken to the SESSC and they have reviewed these and it’s come back to the council and I think it’s extremely important to keep the SESSC. I don’t see any reason to consolidate it.

I have talked with some of the SSC members and they don’t seem to disagree. It’s kind of like having the Army lead the air strikes. I mean it’s just -- They’re not going to be interested, the biologists, as much so in the social and economics and I think you need to keep this separate and it’s really important and it’s important to a lot of people in this country to have these decisions and the council sends these to review and I think it’s extremely important to keep the SESSC separate.

DR. CRABTREE: I think, David, the next motion kind of addresses that, because it talks about a special Socioeconomic SSC, but I have a question on this list, because I wasn’t here when you all did this, but what does an environmental scientist exactly mean? Do you mean a scientist who specializes in the environment or what do you mean?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: More particular, it could be someone, a scientist, that works for an environmental organization, but we didn’t want to label somebody as “NGO”, because there’s consulting firms and other aspects of that.

DR. CRABTREE: Why do we want to do that? We don’t generally set the SSC up to represent constituent groups. We set it up to have qualified scientists on it and we don’t have a commercial scientist and a recreational scientist and I don’t think we ought to have an environmentalist scientist either and we ought to have good scientists that represent the disciplines that we think we need to get the science advice.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It would be easy just to do away with that term and just say two other scientists from the above disciplines or from some other field.

DR. CRABTREE: I think that’s a good change.

MR. PERRET: So this motion is open to amendments, right?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s correct.

MR. PERRET: I would move that we remove “environmental scientist” and, for the last bullet, instead of “one”, put a “two” and at the end of “other scientists.” We are going to have two qualified scientists from other fields and just two scientists and we don’t need “from one of the above disciplines or from some other field”. Just “two other scientists.”

CHAIRMAN ANSON: They are making final edits.

MR. PERRET: That’s my amendment.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Corky, I think you wanted the last bullet --

MR. PERRET: I want to delete “from one of the above disciplines or from some other field” and just leave it at “two other scientists.” Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: That’s your motion, Corky? Do we have a second to the substitute motion?

MR. BOYD: I second.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. It’s been seconded by Mr. Boyd and is there discussion?

MS. BOSARGE: I have a question, because I was confused about this during the committee discussion as well and it has to do with the second motion that we’re going to get to, like Dr. Crabtree said, but it affects my decision on this and so I need an answer.

That Special Socioeconomic SSC that we have a motion to create, two economists, two anthropologists/sociologists, when we have economic or net benefit analysis or things of this nature that are typically evaluated in an economic manner, using that field of study, is that special SSC going to evaluate those on their own as someone that specializes in that and we get a report or
have what we done here is going to create this eighteen or nineteen members now on a Standing SSC and when we have an economic issue, we pull those extra four people in, but we still have stock assessment people and this and that that are making decisions on or voting on motions that are economically driven?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It’s the latter. The full SSC votes on issues, along with the special SSC. They would be fully integrated. Now, what the specialists can do and what any of the disciplines there can do is go off and form a working group and address issues and come back and report to the full Standing SSC, but the full Standing SSC votes on the issues brought before it.

MS. BOSARGE: Essentially the way it would work is we would have a working group of that special SSC and they would evaluate whatever the economic issue is and they would make motions in a report and then the full SSC would read that and make their decision based on that?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It could work that way or they could do it together as one meeting and have the discussion at the meeting and have a motion at the meeting, but the reason I was trying to get at least three of each discipline is to give them enough synergy to where they can address specific issues if they wanted to, but typically the SSC meets as a whole and votes as a whole, with the special SSC counting as a voting member of the Standing when they meet together.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion?

DR. STUNZ: I’ve got a quick question for you, Doug. The red drum and the shrimp and all those, are those still active then and will still just function normally as I guess what we would have had here?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Right. There is no proposals here to change the structure of the special SSCs other than to limit their number to less than five.

DR. STUNZ: Just one more follow-up question to that. Then kind of like Leann, the two motions that are going to follow this up, you have this Special Socioeconomic SSC and so one of those people will be one of the three on the Standing SSC or not necessarily or I guess I’m wondering, where do you get the continuity to carry it back to the main group that’s going to vote on what happened on the Special Socioeconomic SSC?
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Okay and let’s take an amendment that really requires input from economists and anthropologists. We would convene the Special Socioeconomic SSC with the standing SSC to address that and if it was red snapper, reef fish, we also convene the Reef Fish Special SSC and so we would have the two special SSCs meeting together with the Standing.

Now, if there was something in-depth in particular that the three economists on the Standing SSC wanted to address as like a separate working group, like we’re doing now with ecosystem and some of the shrimp issues, they can go do that on their own and come back to the full body if they want, but that’s the normal way we’ve been operating. That’s going to be an alternative structure that’s available to us that we’ve just been exploring this year and it started with the ABC control rule. The SSC formed a special working group to develop that.

MS. BOSARGE: One more question, because I’m not sure I understand all of the dynamics here. Will we actually be losing -- That’s almost taking thirty-five of these members and cutting it in half, just about, when you cut it down to eighteen or nineteen maybe now on that motion, but are we losing half of that expertise? Are we really doing away with it and those people are going away or are they somewhere else in these little special SSCs down here somewhere?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: No, they will be going away. The group that’s going to not have as much representation, given the proposals I have here, is so many people on the Ecosystem SSC, but we’ve got three on the Standing that we will incorporate from the existing Ecosystem SSC and so yes, you’re right that we’re going to have half as many SSC members, not counting the specials, as we do now and I would urge you to go back to the beginning of the document I wrote to tell you a little history of how these other SSCs got formed. They weren’t formed by a specific motion or action by the council. They came into existence in a more round-about way.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Doug, we had some discussion obviously during the Administrative Policy Committee and kind of following up to David’s concern regarding the number of economists that are available relative to other SSCs, was it mentioned or do you know how that, if this proposal were to go through, how it would compare as far as economists on other SSCs? Would it be equivalent or do they have two times as many economists as we would have? Do you have a sense of that?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: No, I don’t. That was a question
that was asked in the committee and I was going to research that
and provide it to the council after this meeting.

MR. PERRET: Doug, having been around when we initially set it
up, the council was in the process of developing fishery
management plans and we had the Standing S&S and that committee
was primarily made up of biologists and we had a department
management representative and we had an attorney and we had a
sociologist and economist and so on, but the special committees
were set up because we were developing a shrimp plan and we were
developing a reef fish plan and we were developing a mackerel
plan and we were developing a groundfish plan and spiny lobster
and so on. That’s how those special committees were set up, be
cause those were the plans that were being developed.

MR. GREENE: If we had a situation going on and we wanted to
send something specifically to the economic group, do we have to
-- Does everything go through the Standing SSC and then is
relegated out? Would we get reports of the findings of each
working group back or is it everything goes to the Standing and
they delegate it out and receive it back in and make a decision
and give it to back to us?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Right. The request would go to the
SSC and then we would convene the Socioeconomic Special SSC in
conjunction with the Standing and then they -- If they felt a
special working group was needed to explore something in more
detail, they would make that request of us.

Now, this structure is pretty much what we have in our SOPPs and
I will point out that we have not been following our SOPPs. Our
SOPPs very clearly say that the Socioeconomic Panel is a subunit
of the Standing SSC, but we have never treated them as such. We
have always treated them as an independent SSC and so this is an
attempt to -- I wasn’t using the SOPPs as my rationale for this,
but -- That’s kind of the way the original Socioeconomic
Advisory Panel was set up. They were designed to take the
output from the stock assessment scientists and apply the
economic data to the relative ABCs so the councils could see
what the relative economic impacts of different management
styles were or management actions.

It was difficult to make that happen, because of just the way
the process works with the stock assessments, but that was the
original purpose of the Socioeconomic Advisory Panel and they
became an SSC when Congress said that the council could pay SSCs
and the staff, at the time, said we’ve got these scientists over
here and let’s make them an SSC, so we can pay them too. That’s
how they became an SSC, but our SOPPs clearly say they are supposed to be a subunit of the Standing and this proposal would make that more functional.

**MS. BOSARGE:** I think I would like a little more information on how many economists, because of what you just said, because it’s such a priority for Congress right now. We have to take it into effect and I want to make sure that we have all the assets that we need to take it into account and I mean I want to make sure we have the assets we need to take it into account and so if we could get -- I don’t really feel comfortable making a decision on this without knowing where we stand relative to the other councils on that, simply because these are very specialized, high-level career paths that we’re looking at and I don’t want to see us let this go before we realize that we might need it, people.

**MR. WILLIAMS:** I think both Corky and David have made good points and I am starting to think that those special SSCs may have outlived their usefulness. He’s right that they were set up to help create the original fishery management plans and I don’t know what their utility is anymore.

I mean one of our objections here is we’ve got so many members, seventy, but if we dropped the thirty-two special SSCs, we are dropping the eleven Ecosystem SSCs and if we retained our Standing and retained the Socioeconomic SSC, we would be down to twenty-seven members and I am looking and that’s actually exactly what the South Atlantic Council has. They have eighteen members on their SSC and nine members on their Socioeconomic Panel.

I am not prepared to make a motion, but I don’t know. This whole thing seems a little clumsy with this Special Socioeconomic SSC. If I have to vote on it, I will probably vote against it, because I don’t know, but it just seems real clumsy to me, but I question whether we really need those special SSCs anymore and if we need to cut back, maybe that’s the place to cut back.

**CHAIRMAN ANSON:** We have a motion specific to the Standing SSC and I understand the linkage of the special SSCs or these extra SSCs and the membership, but this one pertains particularly to the Standing SSC and so any other discussion on this motion? All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. The motion carries. That was the substitute motion. All right, Mr. Boyd.
MR. BOYD: I have a question. Did we pass the substitute motion?

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Yes, that’s what we were voting on, yes.

MR. BOYD: All right. Let me find where I was. Staff was asked to provide the council with a similar breakdown of the scientists that currently serve on the Standing SSC. That was discussed just a minute ago. I am going to go to the next motion, which we’ve talked about briefly.

The committee approved and, on behalf of the committee, I so move to create a Special Socioeconomic SSC to be comprised of two economists and two anthropologists/sociologists. That’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: There is a motion from the committee to create a Special Socioeconomic SSC to be comprised of two economists and two anthropologists/sociologists. Any discussion on the motion?

MR. BOYD: I just have a comment. I looked back at the makeup of the Socioeconomic SSC and there is about ten active members, ten to twelve active members, on there and we have six on this newly-created SSC.

We have three economists and three quantitative anthropologists/sociologists and so we’ve carried over at least 50 percent of the expertise into this and so, from my point of view, we don’t really need to have a Special Socioeconomic SSC. We have that expertise that we’ve brought over and this body will be able to appoint those people that are going to be on that committee when we redo the SSC. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion?

MR. WALKER: I am going to vote in favor of the motion. I keep trying to get through that I think it’s important to the nation and its fisheries to have some social on it. We need the special social and economic and we’ve removed the SESSC and I think this is the only other option left and so I would support this.

DR. LUCAS: I just have a general question for descriptive sakes. In the SSC that we just stood up, we have the quantitative anthropologists/sociologists and are you just specifying that -- There is no qualifier, I guess, in front of the Special Socioeconomic SSC and is there a reason for that?
Are you all just separating quantitative from --

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Not particularly. When I discussed this with the Standing SSC at their last meeting, as some of the discussion here, the concern was about the efficiency of the meetings. Having people that are not familiar with stock assessments is sometimes -- They can’t really contribute to the discussion and so the SSC was saying if we can track quantitative anthropologists to do so, but there was no other real intent with putting it there and leaving it off of here. We are pretty much going to be at the whim of who actually applies.

MS. BOSARGE: I will just repeat what I said earlier about the fact that this is such a concern when it comes to Congress and to the politicians and they have made that clear to us, I believe, as a council. It’s clear in the Act that this is very important, that the economics of the situation must be considered and not by itself and make a decision on it, but it has to be a big contributing factor.

Now, in my mind, somebody that has a business background that has both a bachelors in accounting and in finance and an MBA -- I don’t have an economics degree, but I have had a lot of economics classes and I would never put economics and then the rest of these sciences, your biologists and things like that, they’re totally different, completely different, fields.

To say that we really don’t know how many economists are on these other SSCs throughout the rest of the nation and then to get rid of this too and so we’re back to we have three economists and that’s it and that’s what we have, I think this has to be a focus for us and I think it is a very specialized science that a lot of those other people that are on that Standing SSC have no background in whatsoever and so I think this is very important to have this here as an option for us to go to and pull in when the SSC feels necessary.

MR. PERRET: I want to support this motion for a number of reasons. One, historically I think the region had one economist and we developed all these fishery management plans and we had a tremendous lack of economic data and social data, boy, we were really lacking.

The Act, Magnuson, was reauthorized sometime later and the biology and the maximum sustainable yield, as modified by relative social and economic and ecological factors, and so sociology and economics are extremely important in what we’re
dealing with today.

Early on, it was one group of commercial fishermen versus another and who gets this share or that share and so on and so forth and now we’ve got it where it’s a little more complicated with various constituencies within each user group, headboats and six-packs and true recs and commercial net and commercial this and commercial that.

I think it’s extremely important we keep social and economic scientists in this mix and I think this motion certainly helps us to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other --

MR. GREENE: The paragraph before this motion is a little concerning. It says the SSC expressed some concern about the potential loss of the existing socioeconomic expertise and staff suggested creation of a Special Socioeconomic SSC and my question is what was their concern about that? I sat through the committee and the whole deal and I must have missed it, but what was their concern that they were expressing?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: At the Standing SSC, I gave a summary like I did in the committee here about the discussions I’ve had with the Ecosystem SSC and the Socioeconomic SSC and it was the Socioeconomic SSC that was most resistant to being integrated and I think we have two economists on our Standing SSC and one anthropologist now and I think in the discussion with them at the Standing meeting, I threw out the option and I said, well, you know we can always create a Special Socioeconomic SSC to capture more expertise if we need it and they thought that was a good idea.

I actually developed that idea while talking to the Standing SSC about this restructuring and they were very particular about wanting more stock assessment people, because I think at the time I had four or six proposed. They wanted more, because there is a lot of work to be done with stock assessments.

Each workshop has to have SSC representatives and some of the same people go to all of these workshops and they are getting tired.

The discussion was -- The reason the quantitative come up with the anthropologists is economists are quantitative. Economists do understand models and modeling and particularly the ones that have been working in fisheries management, they are familiar
with stock assessments and they’ve even gone the next step and
developed bioeconomic models.

For a long time, it was thought that was the direction that
management analysis would go, is bioeconomics integrated into a
model. It just hasn’t proved to be effective, for one reason or
the other, and so that’s where that came from, in an attempt to
try to maintain some of that structure that we have now, but not
have it as a formal stand-alone group independent, but have it
more of a subunit.

MR. WALKER: It’s the social part that concerns me. Not
everyone lives on the Gulf Coast. I live up in inland Alabama a
little ways and I can remember as a kid that we used to come
down and I was too young to go fishing and my dad would bring us
down or mom and they did not go fishing, but we all got an
opportunity to go out and go to a seafood restaurant and have
something to eat and have a social time and we had seafood and
we had shrimp and we had crab and we had snapper and we had
grouper.

They all didn’t come down here to go fishing. They all came
down to the beach and enjoyed the sunshine and get out in the
water and swim and go to amusement parks or golfing or whatever.
Not everybody comes down here to -- I just think it’s important
for the rest of the nation that comes down here and when it’s
things like allocation and the access for the rest of the nation
that comes down here, I think you’ve got to have something and
social is a very important part for everyone in this nation, to
have the opportunity to get out and enjoy the Gulf Coast when
they come down here to.

MR. PERRET: Mr. Chairman, I would like to call the question on
the motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: The question has been called on the motion and
the motion is to create a Special Socioeconomic SSC to be
comprised of two economists and two
anthropologists/sociologists. All those in favor of the motion
signify by saying aye; all those opposed like sign. The motion
carries. Mr. Boyd.

MR. BOYD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another motion. The
committee approved, and I so move on behalf of the committee, to
limit the size of the Special SSCs to no more than five members
each. That’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a committee motion.
MR. WILLIAMS: Doug Gregory, do you think the -- Do the members of the Special SSCs still come and contribute? Are they still a useful portion of the SSC or have they -- They have certainly outlived what they were created for originally, but I haven’t been to an SSC meeting in over a decade and so I don’t have any feeling for it.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: It varies. Clearly the Reef Fish Special SSC has been more active than the others, but it depends on the individual. I think, like Mr. Perret said, the original purpose was to bring in species-specific expertise to the general discussion and some of them, I think by definition, are not quantitative or stock assessment types and so they tend not to participate in the stock assessment discussions as much.

MR. WILLIAMS: Do we pay them the way we pay the SSC?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any other discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. BOYD: Staff expressed that it would helpful to separate the appointment of the APs and SSCs, with the APs being appointed at the next council meeting and the SSC appointed in June, especially since the SSC applicants have to provide a Statement of Financial Interest forty-five days before they are appointed.

The committee approved, and I so move on behalf of the committee, to postpone selection of the SSC appointments until June of 2015, due to the forty-five-day lead time needed for SOFI’s to be submitted and to reduce potential confusion and workload during the transition to staggered terms and the online application process. That’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: We have a motion on the board. Is there any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.

MR. BOYD: There was considerable discussion about the utility of term limits and staggered terms as proposed by staff. Staff was requested to determine if the other councils had similar measures for their APs and so this discussion was postponed till the next council meeting.

Staff noted that the future efforts of the Ad Hoc Private Recreational Data Collection AP are similar enough to our
Standing Data Collection AP that consolidation of the two would be a reasonable way forward. You have the other two processes in front of you and so I’m just going to skip to the next motion.

The committee approved, and I so move, to discontinue the Private Recreational Data Collection AP and integrate function into the Data Collection AP. That’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: It’s a committee motion and is there any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. BOYD: The next motion that the committee considered and approved, and I so move, is that in the first council meeting of each year, the council evaluate each Ad Hoc Advisory Panel and if they deem the panel has completed its assignment, that the panel will be disbanded. That’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right. Any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. BOYD: The committee approved, and so I move, to eliminate the three state habitat APs. Again, that’s a committee motion.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Any discussion on the motion? Any opposition to the motion? The motion carries.

MR. BOYD: During the rest of the meeting, Mr. Gregory reviewed the NMFS and NOAA comments on the 2012 SOPPs. Mr. Chairman, that completes my report.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mr. Boyd. That puts us to Other Business and, Mara, it’s you and are you ready?

OTHER BUSINESS
FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

MS. LEVY: Yes and I know you’ve all been waiting until the very end of the council meeting for this exciting presentation on Magnuson-Stevens Act Financial Disclosures and Recusals.

MR. BOYD: I have one question for Dr. Crabtree that we may want to do before that, but I can wait until after and it’s not relevant to Mara.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: If it’s not relevant, then maybe we might want to wait. Will this be about ten minutes?
MS. LEVY: Yes, not very long.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Okay.

MS. LEVY: This is just a very brief presentation, like I said, on the Magnuson Act Financial Disclosure and Recusal Provisions. First, I just wanted to go over -- This is essentially just to give you all some information about what's required, very basic, and when reporting is due, so that we know that everybody is on the same page.

This is a presentation and it’s not specifically directed at you for any particular reason. The General Counsel Office for each region is going to do this at the first council meeting of each year, just to sort of make sure that everyone is refreshed and knows the requirements.

What does the Magnuson-Stevens Act require? Each affected individual must disclose any relevant financial interest in any harvesting, processing, lobbying, advocacy, or marketing activity that is being or will be undertaken within any fishery over which the council concerned has jurisdiction or with respect to an individual or organization with a financial interest in such activity. I will talk a little bit more about where you can find out what the harvesting, processing, and all of that activity means.

The important thing to note here is who is an affected individual. This applies to all council members nominated by a Governor or appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and SSC members and so if you’re actually nominated, you have to fill this out and then if you’re appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, this applies to you. It doesn’t apply to state directors or the Regional Administrator, those people that are automatically on the council. If anyone has any questions, you can feel free to ask now, during, or at the end.

The next slide, where can I find more information on what interests must be disclosed, descriptions on activities considered to be harvesting, processing, lobbying, advocacy, or marketing can be found -- There is the regulatory site and so if you go to 50 CFR Section 600.235(a), it has a definition and a description of all the types of activities that this includes and that should be disclosed.

I think the big thing here is when in doubt, disclose it. If it’s questionable, just put it on the form. This is all about
transparency and so my recommendation is if you have a question and you really don’t know, people in my office are always available to talk to you, but if you think it might be, then just disclose it.

When do these disclosures have to be made? You make them annually and no later than February 1 of each year and this is regardless of whether you’ve had any changes and so if you have the exact same things to disclose each year, that’s fine, but you have to fill out a new form each year.

Then if anything changes during that year, then you need to fill an updated form within thirty days of that information and so if you have a new activity that requires disclosure, please go and get yourself a new form and fill it out and submit it so that we have it on record.

Is the financial disclosure requirement confined to the interests of the affected individual? The answer is no. You are supposed to disclose things that are related to you, the affected individual, your spouse, minor child, or partner or any organization, other than the council, in which the individual is serving as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee.

MR. PERRET: Even if it’s a non-profit and it costs you money to attend the non-profit board activities and there is certainly no financial remuneration, but it should be disclosed?

MS. LEVY: Correct. There is employment with, but then there is also just serving as an officer, director, trustee, or partner and so if you serve in any of those capacities, then you need to disclose that. It’s not linked directly to your financial remuneration, but it’s linked to the organization and what that organization does.

MR. PERRET: It seems to me the whole title of “Financial Disclosure” should be just “Disclosure”, because there sure is heck no finances involved in my case.

MS. LEVY: Noted. What happens if an affected individual has a potential financial interest in a specific council matter? If that happens, that individual is not permitted to vote on a council decision that would have a significant and predictable effect on any financial interest held by the individual.

There are also -- There is a description and definition of what significant and predictable effect on financial interest means and that’s also in the regulations and if anybody has any
questions about whether that applies to them, again, you can always contact my office, Department of Commerce Ethics. We don't expect you to sort of go this alone, but if there is a question in your mind, please reach out and ask.

What steps must an affected individual take if he or she finds that a council decision could have a significant and predictable effect on any financial interest held by that individual? That's sort of what I was saying. Notify the NOAA General Counsel Attorney assigned to your council immediately to begin the process for determining whether a recusal is required.

If you think this might apply to you, please reach out and let someone in my office know or me know and we can start looking into whether it actually is going to require some sort of recusal on a vote.

Then, briefly, this just outlines the consequences for failing to comply with the Financial Disclosure Requirements. There are criminal and civil procedures in another statute related to conflict of interest and there is also prohibitions in the Magnuson Act if there’s a knowing and willful failure to disclose and if there’s a knowing vote on a council decision in violation of those provisions. It can also lead to removal from a council or SSC, as provided by the regulations.

The last slide just has some websites where you can go find some more information about the Financial Disclosure Form and the requirement and, like I said before, my office is always available to answer questions and so please don’t hesitate to contact me. The Department of Commerce Ethics has a hotline and an email address and they would also answer questions for you about this. Thanks for your time.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Mara, for the presentation. Any questions to Mara? There is one other item that I didn’t bring up earlier and I apologize and if I don’t get too many dirty looks, Zack Bowen, our liaison representative from the South Atlantic Council, I had just asked him -- It’s something that the South Atlantic Council does for the other liaisons, the federal agency liaisons, that attend their meeting, as well as the Gulf Council liaison.

They provide an opportunity and make it known that they certainly would like a report of sorts and so the times that I have been there, I have supplied a report, with council staff’s help, and I do appreciate that. I asked the same of Zack and so, Zack, if you have some big things going on at the South
Atlantic Council that you just want to pass on to the group and we certainly hope that your experience here was worth the trip and that you can take some ideas back to your respective council.

SAFMC LIAISON REPORT

MR. BOWEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It has been enjoyable and educational and I really appreciate the hospitality that I have received from being here. It’s my first chance to come, but I hope it’s not my last.

With that, I have sent Mr. Gregory the amendments overview and you can get them from there. I am going to go over a few and I know it’s the end of the week and everybody is tired, but there is a couple that I have heard some topics on gag grouper this week and we have an amendment or had an amendment that I would like to review the overview on and just give everybody a verbal heads-up on it.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 22, gag and wreckfish, at our June 2014 meeting, the council approved development of Regulatory Amendment 22 to address adjustments to the ABC, ACL, and OY for gag and wreckfish, based on the results of the stock assessment for those two species.

The amendment also contained an action to consider modifying the recreational bag limit. However, the council chose to take no action at this time and, just for your knowledge, the recreational bag limit for gag grouper is one per person at twenty-four inches minimum size length.

The council reviewed the amendment at our September meeting and approved it for public hearings, which were held via webinar in fall of 2014. The council reviewed public hearing comments at our December 2014 meeting and approved the amendment for submission to the Secretary of Commerce.

The second one I would like to verbally go over with you is Snapper Grouper Amendment 36, which is the spawning special management zones. Amendment 36 would specify a process for identifying spawning sites, aggregations for snapper grouper species, including speckled hind and warsaw grouper, based on the characteristics of sites important for spawning.

Spawning SMZs would only consider prohibiting fishing for and/or possession of snapper grouper species. Fishing for all other species would be allowed. The amendment would also revise the
boundary of the Charleston Deepwater Reef MPA and include an action to address transit and anchoring provisions within newly-designed spawning SMZs.

The spawning SMZ approach would not make any changes to the existing MPAs in the South Atlantic. The council is developing a system management plan to specify the outreach, law enforcement, and monitoring and research projects necessary to effectively monitor and evaluate the existing MPAs.

Then, of course, we have several joint amendments that you all are definitely fully aware of and that’s about the two that I wanted to really go over. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: Thank you, Zack. With that, is there any other -- Yes, Doug.

MR. BOYD: I have a question for Dr. Crabtree and just if you can help me. I read the two bulletins that came out and one says it seeks public comment on Amendment 40 and the other one says revised seeks public comment on Amendment 40 and I tried to correlate the two, to understand them, and really the only thing I can find is that it shortens the comment period and is that -- Can you explain those to me? I have had several people ask me and I can’t explain it. One is dated January 20 and says the comment period ends March 17 and one is dated January 23 and says the comment period ends March 9.

DR. CRABTREE: On plan amendments that have rules that are associated with them, there are always two different comment periods. The sixty-day comment period that started first is the comment period on the Notice of Availability and that’s the comment period on the amendment itself and that’s where you would logically comment as to whether you think the amendment should be approved or disapproved.

The second comment period, which is a forty-five-day comment period, is a comment period on the proposed rule and on that, you would comment on does the proposed rule adequately implement what’s in the amendment.

We always have separate comment periods on the NOA and the proposed rule and that’s required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act that you have a sixty-day comment period on the amendment and that is I think the Administrative Procedure Act that requires comment periods on proposed rules and so that’s standard practice. We want to normally have those comment periods running concurrently and that doesn’t always happen, but usually
it does.

SETTING OF COUNCIL CONFERENCE CALL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I have got an announcement. The doodle poll is in and the conference call for the council will be the afternoon of Tuesday, March 3, from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. We have twelve members that can attend and that’s the most and that’s counting Dr. Crabtree, who will be at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, but he assured me he or his designee can attend. It will be from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time on Tuesday, March 3. It’s 12:00 to 3:00 Central Time.

I have a question. Contact our office. We’re going to do this by webinar and the easiest way for people to participate in that is to call up the webinar and register for it, but communicate only through the telephone and don’t try to communicate through your computer, because you can get feedback from your speaker and your microphone. It would be easiest if you do it by telephone and there will be a telephone number with the webinar information that you can call in.

Now, if you have a headphone system, then that would work okay with your computer, but if you don’t have a headphone system, you start getting feedback and it messes up the webinar and we want this to go as smoothly as possible.

CHAIRMAN ANSON: All right and thank you, everyone. Have a safe trip back and this concludes the council. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m., January 29, 2015.)
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TABLE OF MOTIONS

PAGE 92: Motion to ask staff to prepare a framework action to increase the ACL for red snapper based on the ABC recommendations by the SSC, using the provisional 2014 estimates. The motion carried on page 93.

PAGE 93: Motion to direct staff to begin a framework amendment to adjust ACL/ACT and the season options for gag. The motion carried on page 93.

PAGE 93: Motion in Action 1 to remove suboptions 2(a) and 3(a) to considered but rejected. Suboption a is no ACT buffer, i.e., ABC equals ACL equals ACT; note this option would require modification of the accountability measures. The motion carried on page 94.

PAGE 97: Motion in Action 3 to specify trip limit in pounds gutted weight and include whole weight in parentheses for each option. The motion carried on page 97.

PAGE 101: Motion to write a thank-you letter to Rear Admiral Kevin Cook of the Coast Guard, copying the Secretary of Commerce and Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife, thanking them for the enforcement actions relative to foreign fisheries off of Texas. The motion carried on page 102.

PAGE 103: Motion to make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative. The motion carried on page 113.

PAGE 118: Motion that Option b in Alternatives 3 and 4 that the recreational bag limit be set zero to four fish. The motion carried on page 119.

PAGE 119: Motion that Option c in Alternatives 3 and 4 must establish a uniform minimum size limit of fifteen inches. The motion carried on page 123.

PAGE 123: Motion to remove Option d, eliminating a maximum size limit, in Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. The motion carried on page 125.

PAGE 141: The motion is in Action 1 of Amendment 28 to add two alternatives and they would be Alternative 8 is the increase in allowable harvest (due to the changes in recreational data) from the updated assessment will be allocated to the recreational sector. The percentage increase for the recreational fishery should be that amount attributable to recalibration of MRIP
catch estimates. This would result in an increase of XX pounds
to the recreational fishery. Then Alternative 9 is the increase
in allowable harvest (due to changes in recreational data) from
the updated assessment will be allocated to the recreational
sector. The percentage increase in the recreational fishery
should be that amount attributable to the recalibration of MRIP
catch estimates and the change in size selectivity. This would
result in an increase of XX number of pounds. The motion
carried on page 151.

PAGE 151: Motion to revise the purpose and need in Amendment 28
to read: The purpose of this action is to evaluate reallocating
in a fair and equitable manner red snapper resources between the
commercial and recreational sector to increase the net benefits
from red snapper fishing. The need for the proposed action is
to base sector allocations on the best scientific information
available and use the most appropriate allocation method to
determine sector allocations while achieving optimum yield,
particularly with respect to food production and recreational
opportunities and rebuilding the red snapper stock. The motion
carried on page 155.

PAGE 156: Motion to convene the Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-Hire AP
to provide recommendations to the council. The motion carried
on page 158.

PAGE 161: Motion that the council create an Ad Hoc Reef Fish
Headboat AP. The charge will be determined after the headboat
EFP report is presented. The motion carried on page 165.

PAGE 165: Motion to begin the development of an amendment
considering a wide range of management approaches to improve
flexibility and accountability in the federal for-hire
component. The motion carried on page 170.

PAGE 170: Motion to begin the development of an amendment
considering a wide range of management approaches to improve
flexibility and accountability in the federal headboat
component. The motion carried on page 172.

PAGE 173: Motion to remove red snapper SPR consideration from
the status determination criteria document and request council
staff develop a plan amendment to adjust the FSPR levels for red
snapper to alternatives for: FSPR 40 percent, FSPR 30 percent,
status quo, FSPR 24 percent, FSPR 22 percent, FMAX (FSPR 20
percent). The plan amendment should also determine the timeline
for F Rebuild at each FSPR. The motion carried on page 175.
PAGE 177: Motion to recommend that CMP Amendment 26 go out to scoping. The motion carried on page 178.

PAGE 178: Motion to hold scoping hearings for CMP Amendment 26 in Galveston, Port Aransas, and San Antonio, Texas; Mobile, Alabama; Biloxi, Mississippi; Grand Isle, Louisiana; Key West, Tampa Bay, and Panama City, Florida. The motion carried on page 179.

PAGE 180: Motion to move forward with scoping hearings on CMP Amendment 28 at the same meetings as CMP Amendment 26. The motion carried on page 180.

PAGE 181: Motion to recommend that the council create a framework action plan to evaluate alternative gillnet trip limits and accountability measures and elimination of latent permits to minimize the potential for enforcement action due to accidental trip limit overages. The motion carried on page 181.

PAGE 181: Motion that the Data Committee direct staff to begin developing a plan amendment that would require electronic logbooks for the charter for-hire vessels in the Gulf and South Atlantic that considers the use of VMS and other recommendations from the joint council technical subcommittee report. The motion carried on page 183.

PAGE 187: Motion to integrate the three SSCs, which currently total thirty-five members, into a single Standing SSC of eighteen individuals with the following approximate multidisciplinary structure: not less than seven stock assessment or quantitative biologists/ecologists; three ecosystem scientists; three economists; three quantitative anthropologists/sociologists; one environmentalist scientist; and two other scientists. The motion carried on page 193.

PAGE 194: Motion to create a Special Socioeconomic SSC to be comprised of two economists and two anthropologists/sociologists. The motion carried on page 197.

PAGE 197: Motion to limit the size of the Special SSCs to no more than five members each. The motion carried on page 198.

PAGE 198: Motion to postpone selection of the SSC appointments until June of 2015, due to the forty-five-day lead time needed for SOFI’s to be submitted and to reduce potential confusion and workload during the transition to staggered terms and the online application process. The motion carried on page 198.
PAGE 199: Motion to discontinue the Private Recreational Data Collection AP and integrate function into the Data Collection AP. The motion carried on page 199.

PAGE 199: Motion that in the first council meeting of each year, the council evaluate each Ad Hoc Advisory Panel and if they deem the panel has completed its assignment, that the panel will be disbanded. The motion carried on page 199.

PAGE 199: Motion to eliminate the three state habitat APs. The motion carried on page 199.

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