

Data Collection Committee Report August 22, 2022 Ms. Susan Boggs, Chair

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab F, No. 1**) and approved the minutes of the June 2022 meeting as amended (**Tab F, No. 2**).

Abbreviated Framework Action to Modify For-Hire Trip Declaration Requirements (Tab F, No. 4a and b)

Council staff presented rationale for the framework action and reviewed the document options. Several Committee members questioned the purpose for collecting hail out information for non-fishing trips. Some alternative suggestions proposed by the Committee included changing the regulatory language to create a fishing trip definition, making hailing out for non-fishing activities voluntary, and development of an exemption form. Southeast Regional Office staff cautioned that too broad an exemption could potentially create a law enforcement loophole. They maintained that striking a balance between reducing reporting burden while meeting the data integrity goals of the program was the most beneficial. NOAA General Counsel added that integrating a time period consideration within the current program regulatory language was feasible and would not require any additional reporting by the fishermen (i.e. filling out an exemption form).

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to make **Option 3 the preferred**.

Option 3: The exemption from the trip declaration requirement would apply to non-fishing trips that are completed in 120-minutes or less.

Motion carried 5-3.

Draft Options Joint Amendment to Require Electronic Reporting for Commercial Logbooks (Tab F, No. 5a-d)

Council staff presented an update on the development of a joint amendment to modify the commercial coastal logbook program. This modification would allow for the submission of logbook data through an electronic platform. The Committee had no edits after reviewing the draft purpose and need statement. The Southeast Fishery Science Center (SEFSC) has proposed using the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) eTrips software as an electronic data submission platform and integrate the current paper form into ACCSP's database. Mr. Geoff White of ACCSP explained, that to retain standardization between data collection programs throughout the eastern United States, that data fields remain largely static to achieve the goals for numerous contributing partners. This is the rationale for modifying some of the existing data fields used in the logbook program. Several Committee members expressed concern that substantial changes to the program could create burden on commercial fishermen. The Committee reviewed a spreadsheet detailing changes to program data fields. The Committee suggested revising the spreadsheet to indicate which data fields would be additions

and which were modifications to existing reporting requirements to better assess any potential inconveniences incurred on program participants.

A Committee member stated that a previous pilot study to examine the utility of electronic submission in the commercial coastal logbook program in the Gulf of Mexico had been completed some time ago, but the results had not been published. He continued that any future study regarding electronic submission of commercial data needs to be published in a timelier manner. SEFSC staff indicated that the final pilot program report had been published and that report would be disseminated to the group. Mr. White also stated that electronic submission through eTrips had been vetted and used in the northeast. Dr. Julie Brown (SEFSC) added that while eTrips was currently being proposed as a software reporting program, VESL could also be an option in the future. She continued that VESL would still transmit through ACCSP's database; and therefore, the same modifications to the data fields would apply. Council staff informed the Committee that the Council's Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Advisory Panels will be convened in the fall and presented an update on the proposed program modifications.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.