

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SHRIMP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Gold Nugget Hotel and Casino & Virtual Biloxi, Mississippi

August 19, 2024

VOTING MEMBERS

- Chris Schieble (designee for Ryan Montegut).....Louisiana
- Kesley Banks.....Texas
- Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- Anthony Overton.....Alabama
- Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- Troy Williamson.....Texas

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- J.D. Dugas.....Louisiana
- Troy Frady.....Alabama
- Tom Frazer.....Florida
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- Jason Osborne.....Mississippi
- John Sanchez.....Florida
- C.J. Sweetman.....Florida
- Ed Walker.....Florida

STAFF

- Assane Diagne.....Economist
- Matt Freeman.....Economist
- John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- Sarah Gardiner.....Fishery Biologist
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- Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- Jessica Matos.....Administrative Document Editor & IT Coordinator
- Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- Kathy Pereira.....Meeting Planner & Travel Coordinator
- Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- Verena Wang.....Fishery Biologist

1 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

2 Gary Borland.....SAFMC
3 Carissa Gervasi.....NOAA
4 Frank Helies.....NOAA
5 Jennifer Lee.....NOAA
6 Alan Lowther.....NOAA
7 Laura Picariello.....Shrimp AP
8 Clay Porch.....SEFSC

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PAGE 40: Motion to request that NMFS provide an updated presentation on the National Seafood Strategy as well as the pilot program example during the Shrimp Committee at the November 2024 council meeting. The motion carried on page 41.

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1 The Shrimp Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at The Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino
3 in Biloxi, Mississippi on Monday afternoon, August 19, 2024, and
4 was called to order by Chairman Chris Schieble.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF APRIL 2024 MINUTES**
7 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
8

9 **CHAIRMAN CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** At this time, I would like to call the
10 Shrimp Management Committee to order. Members of the committee
11 are myself, as the chair, Dr. Banks, Mr. Broussard, Mr. Donaldson,
12 Dr. Overton, Mr. Geeslin, General Spraggins, Mr. Strelcheck, and
13 Mr. Williamson. All committee members are present in-person today.

14
15 The first item on the agenda is Adoption of the Agenda, Tab D,
16 Number 1, and let me give an announcement that we're going to swap
17 a couple of items, as far as the order here, and so we're going to
18 go with Tab D-6(a) ahead of Tab D, Number 5, just because of
19 semantics, and they flow better in that order, and so, if anybody
20 has an objections to that, please let me know.

21
22 Otherwise, we'll move forward with that, and, also, if we have any
23 other business, and does anybody wish to add any other business
24 items to the agenda? I would like to add one, Dr. Freeman, which
25 is a discussion of the National Seafood Strategy. With that said,
26 can I get a motion to adopt the agenda?

27
28 **MR. BILLY BROUSSARD:** So moved.

29
30 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Second.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** We have a second from General Spraggins. The
33 next item on the agenda is the minutes from the April 2024 Shrimp
34 Committee meeting. Does anybody have any changes to the minutes,
35 or additions or edits? I've got one edit that I would like to
36 add. It would be on page 34, line 37, and, in Bob Gill fashion,
37 I would like to edit the word "receive", and so it says, "I would
38 suggest that we receive the", and to change that "receive" to the
39 word "remove", "I would suggest that we remove the second
40 sufficient in Number 1".

41
42 Other than that, I have no further edits to the minutes. Does
43 anyone else have any edits to those? If not, can I get a motion
44 to approve the minutes from the last April 2024 meeting? Do we
45 have a second? Kesley. Thank you. Next on the agenda, we can
46 move to Tab D, Number 3 and let Dr. Freeman go through the action
47 guide for us.

1 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Would you like for me to
2 go item-by-item, as we --

3
4 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Yes.

5
6 **REVIEW OF THE EXPENDITURES OF THE FY23 FUNDS FOR THE EARLY**
7 **ADOPTER PROGRAM FOR SHRIMP CVMS AND UPDATE ON THE EARLY ADOPTER**
8 **PROGRAM FOR SHRIMP CVMS**
9

10 **DR. FREEMAN:** Okay. Perfect. The first item is a review of the
11 expenditures of the Fiscal Year 2023 funds for the Early Adopter
12 Program for shrimp cellular VMS, an update on the Early Adopter
13 Program for shrimp cellular VMS, and so, as requested by the Shrimp
14 Committee at the April 2024 council meeting, the committee will
15 receive information on NMFS' expenditures of the Fiscal Year 2023
16 funds for the Early Adopter Program for the cellular vessel
17 monitoring system with the Gulf of Mexico federal shrimp fleet.

18
19 The committee will also receive information on the progress of the
20 Early Adopter Program. The committee should ask questions and
21 provide feedback to NMFS, and we have Dr. Lowther available in-
22 person for this presentation.

23
24 **DR. ALAN LOWTHER:** Good afternoon, everybody. It's a pleasure to
25 be here updating you on the Early Adopter Program. We also have,
26 in the audience, staff from LGL, Nathan and Taylor, and they've
27 been the ones implementing this, along with Gregg Bray from Gulf
28 States Marine Fisheries Commission, and so we have a lot of
29 partners in this, and I'm lucky that they're all in the room to
30 correct me if I make a mistake.

31
32 I just summarized what Matt put up on the board, and so we can
33 skip this slide too, and we can go on. I was just going to give
34 a brief review of the situation, and I know that probably most of
35 you are tired of hearing a review about the ELB, but there may be
36 some new people who haven't heard the whole history, and so, just
37 very quickly, we had these position recording devices that we've
38 been calling cELBs, or cellular electronic logbook.

39
40 It's not really a logbook, and it's a position recording device,
41 and they would transmit the location, the cellular service, but,
42 unfortunately, these were using the 3G technology that was phased-
43 out, or eliminated, at the end of 2020, and so we were no longer
44 getting the automatic transmissions from the devices.

45
46 Because we were no longer getting the automatic transmissions from
47 the devices, we -- Fortunately, the devices have a backup, or two
48 backup systems, but we were getting the -- They have SD cards on

1 them, and so we could manually retrieve the SD cards and still get
2 the data, but it's a bit of a cumbersome process, and so that's
3 what we've been doing since the end of 2020.

4
5 The agency, the council, the industry, were all looking for
6 alternatives to continue collecting effort data, and that's kind
7 of where we are, and so, in the fiscal year 2023 budget, there was
8 congressional language that appropriated \$850,000 for us -- For
9 the NMFS, in consultation with the council and the industry
10 stakeholders, to continue the development and implementation of
11 the newly-approved electronic logbook program that archives vessel
12 position and automatically transmits scientific shrimp fishing
13 effort data via cellular service to NMFS.

14
15 We received money to continue, or to develop, a new program, and
16 we had a special Shrimp Advisory Panel meeting in May of 2023, to
17 develop a spend plan for those funds, and part of that was
18 allocating \$360,000 to what we're calling the Early Adopter
19 Program.

20
21 The way we did this was that the funds were provided to the Gulf
22 States Marine Fisheries Commission, who then sent out a request
23 for proposals, in August of 2023, to set up sort of the outline of
24 the program that we came up with, and that would include
25 recruitment of vessels, and outreach to vessels, installation of
26 devices, provide devices to volunteers, along with two years of
27 cellular service, and then also to monitor the data coming in, and
28 so the data acquisition, and troubleshooting that, and so that was
29 what the RFP was for.

30
31 As a result of that process, LGL Ecological Associates was awarded
32 the contract, in September of 2023, and \$347,602 was transferred
33 to them for the Early Adopter in October of last year, and so that
34 was out of the \$360,000, and so Gulf States generously just took
35 a small amount for their overhead, and for administering this, and
36 so it's an efficient use of the funds.

37
38 LGL has been working on this since October, soliciting vessels and
39 installing devices on vessels. So far, they have 204 volunteers
40 to participate in the program. Of those, you can see here the
41 state distribution, and then there are three different devices,
42 and I will show a slide a little bit later, and maybe I should
43 have had that sooner, but it shows some of the specs for the
44 different devices, but there's Boat Command, NEMO, and then Zen,
45 and you can see that the Zen is most popular.

46
47 To-date, ninety installations have been completed, and, again, you
48 can see the breakdown by state, and by device, and the average

1 cost so far, for LGL, has been \$2,428 per installation, and so,
2 just from the fiscal year 2023 funds, there is still \$129,000
3 remaining, and LGL estimates that that could potentially cover an
4 additional fifty installations. That should say cover fifty
5 additional installations, and so that would be a total of 150
6 installations for the original approximately \$360,000.

7
8 That's actually more than was foreseen in the original LGL
9 proposal. They had done sort of low, medium, and high cost
10 possibilities, and this 140 I think is very encouraging, in terms
11 of what we -- You know, what we thought we might be able to get
12 out of it, and so I think that's been a good start to the program.

13
14 A little more detail on the expenditures, and the biggest chunk of
15 that \$850,000 is the \$360,000 that went to the Early Adopter
16 Program. There is technical IT work that we needed to do at the
17 Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and that has taken some funds
18 as well, and so we're rebuilding our shrimp data management system,
19 basically, and so there is costs for building that system, the
20 costs for data management, hardware testing, application
21 development, staff, and that's all going to that, and then you see
22 that management and administrative costs take a chunk too, but the
23 biggest chunk is the Early Adopter Program.

24
25 We were fortunate enough to receive the same funds for fiscal year
26 2024, and so these are the proposed and anticipated budget, and
27 some of this has been already implemented, and some is being
28 transferred. Because of the contracting situation, we couldn't
29 get it transferred by October, and so it will be transferred in
30 the first quarter of 2025, the big chunk of \$450,000 that will be
31 going to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission to continue
32 the Early Adopter Program, and so that would be year-two of the
33 Early Adopter Program.

34
35 That number has been a little bit in flux, because -- I'm not the
36 budget person, but I know that, you know, sometimes there are taxes
37 taken out of money, as it's transferred from Headquarters to the
38 Science Center, and so what we thought was going to be \$511,000,
39 as indicated in the initial amount budgeted, and extra overhead
40 charges that have been applied, and so now it's \$450,000, is our
41 best estimate of that, and that's the amount on Line 7, the
42 additional M&A, but the idea -- For the Early Adopter Program, the
43 idea is that we will be taking the \$450,000 and transferring it to
44 Gulf States, and hopefully getting devices installed on many more
45 vessels. As you saw, we had many that had volunteered to
46 participate, and so we have a good pool of potential participants.

47
48 Here's a slide that I think I showed last January, but it hasn't

1 changed too much, the LGL timeline. They're staying on this, where
2 you see the time blocked off for the outreach and reimbursement
3 plans, the volunteer solicitation, and I think that is still
4 continuing though, and then the device installations will
5 continue, as well as then the reimbursements and troubleshooting
6 and operations, and so all of this is going on now. With this
7 influx of additional funds, I think then, you know, we can continue
8 to solicit additional volunteers and install additional devices.

9
10 Based on the -- Through the council, we had done some testing of
11 different cellular devices, location recording devices,
12 previously, and three vendors were specifically invited to
13 participate, and this was the Atlantic Radio and Telephone, who
14 has the Zen device, and Viatrax, who has the Boat Command device,
15 and then the Woods Hole Group, with the NEMO device.

16
17 We intentionally did not say that these are the only vendors that
18 could participate. If somebody else came to us and said we have
19 a viable cellular position recording device, we would have
20 listened, and let them participate, because this is completely
21 voluntary, and we didn't receive others, but those three were the
22 ones that did want to participate, and so all three vendors have
23 transmitted data to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center,
24 through an API, and I should probably put an asterisk by that, and
25 I will come back to why in just a second.

26
27 Then LGL has set up agreements for purchasing and shipping the
28 devices from the vendors, and so they're taking care of those
29 details, and they have their agreements in place.

30
31 These are the three devices, and you can see -- It's small, if
32 you're looking from the room probably, but if you have it in front
33 of you, and there's the Zen VMS device, the Boat Command VMS
34 device, and then the NEMO. You see they range in price, where the
35 Zen is over a thousand dollars, and the Boat Command is only \$200,
36 and then the NEMO is somewhere in the middle.

37
38 We provided some basic information on the reliability, based on
39 the testing, and the Zen was the most reliable. The annual cell
40 fee is a little cheaper for the Zen, but, again, this is all picked
41 up through the Early Adopter Program at this point, and then so
42 there is no cost to the volunteers, for the device or for the
43 service, and it's all included.

44
45 I guess, not surprisingly, if you tell people that you have a
46 thousand-dollar thing they can have, a \$200 thing, or a \$500 thing,
47 they take the thousand-dollar thing, and so more people selected
48 the Zen than the others, but we did not say -- You know, we didn't

1 do any sort of assignment, and we just said, whatever you guys
2 want, you can have.
3
4 This is a little bit busy, and I apologize for that, but just the
5 idea here is to show that the way that the Early Adopter Program
6 -- That the data is flowing for that is sort of the schematic on
7 the bottom-right, where the data comes into -- It comes into the
8 -- I'm getting confused on whether what we're talking about here
9 is the -- I think because it really should just say it's received
10 by the NMFS data server, if we're talking about the Early Adopter
11 Program, because it's not going through the API.
12
13 The API is at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and so it's
14 a little bit confusing there, but so what's happening is the data
15 comes into the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, through the
16 API, and then that data is monitored by the Southeast Fisheries
17 Science Center.
18
19 Theoretically, if this was the model adopted for the future, then
20 that data would be available to whoever wanted it, or not whoever
21 wanted it, but to -- For example, if law enforcement needed it,
22 for some action, they would have access to all of our data, and
23 they could request it.
24
25 The idea is to just contrast that with the current VMS model that's
26 in the upper-left, and so sorry for my confusion there, but so
27 what happens there is that the data first goes to the OCIO office
28 at National Marine Fisheries Service, and it then would be
29 transferred to the Office of Law Enforcement, and then it would
30 come to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and so it's just
31 kind of changing the order of how the data is transmitted. I think
32 I complicated that unnecessarily, but you can come up with some
33 questions on that, when we get to that, and apologies for that.
34
35 In terms of data status and monitoring, some of this information
36 is not as up-to-date, from what I just found out today, and so we
37 had two -- At the time that the presentation was submitted, two
38 vendors were submitting data to the Southeast Fisheries Science
39 Center through the API. What I have found out is that we are --
40 We had to do an Oracle APEX upgrade, as part of our -- Of the
41 Southeast Fisheries Science Center migration to the cloud.
42
43 That has broken the API temporarily, and so now we're not receiving
44 the data through the API. It's a temporary problem that we are
45 working on, and it should be fixed soon, but just I want to be
46 transparent that, right now, the vendors are not successfully
47 transmitting the data, and so two vendors were, when I did the
48 presentation, submitting through the API, but, because of these

1 Oracle upgrades, and cloud migration, it's actually temporarily
2 broken.
3
4 We also had an issue with verifying the receipt of the data from
5 one vendor, and so we need to look into that. There were no issues
6 found running the algorithm through our effort estimation
7 algorithm, and so, if you were -- I think, over a year ago, we
8 talked about this, with the council, and the SSC, the new method
9 for estimating effort in the shrimp fishery, and so there's -- The
10 data coming in through the API does work with that algorithm.
11
12 I think the message here, in terms of data status and monitoring,
13 is that we need to do some more work, in terms of monitoring the
14 data quality, making sure the API is functional, and, you know,
15 that kind of quality control. I think one of the reasons that
16 maybe it slipped through a little bit is because it wasn't being
17 actively used for compliance, or estimation, and so other problems,
18 you know, sort of took precedence, but that's something that I
19 think, you know, we're recognizing that standing up a program like
20 this involves a lot of different pieces, and these are things that
21 -- You know, it's -- There's a lot to standing up a VMS program,
22 or a VMS-like program. We're kind of learning, as we go, what
23 kind of things we need to be focusing on.
24
25 Next steps, we will, hopefully in October, be able to distribute
26 the fiscal year 2024 Early Adopter funds to Gulf States, and then
27 a continued focus on outreach and recruitment, and I think we can
28 still get more vessels. Installing devices, and I think that third
29 one is a big one though, monitoring data transmission and quality,
30 making sure that we're -- That the data coming through the API --
31 Making sure that the data, first of all, is making it through the
32 API and then looking at the quality of the data.
33
34 I know that we -- In some of these previous sessions, we've talked
35 about the quality coming through the cELBs, and that there are a
36 lot of, you know, missing dates and bad data that gets through,
37 and so just kind of doing basic checks, to make sure that what
38 we're getting through the Early Adopter Program has valid data,
39 and so those are some of the things we want to focus on for next
40 year, and then this last thing is the integration of a valid
41 sampling design, and, if we can go to the next slide, I will talk
42 more about that.
43
44 We've had a lot of questions about -- So this is great, and we're
45 giving all these devices to vessels, but what does that mean in
46 terms of going forward? How do we integrate these devices into a
47 statistically-valid sampling program, and I think that's -- So
48 that's really where we are. You know, we do have to have a valid

1 statistical design, and then we also need to meet the requirements
2 in the shrimp biological opinion, under the Reasonable and Prudent
3 Measures 1, that NMFS must ensure that future fisheries effort
4 monitoring is conducted at equivalent or greater levels as
5 conducted over the past ten years.

6
7 I think, you know, we need to define exactly what that means, but
8 I think the most -- You know, the most transparent reading of that
9 is looking at what, you know, the level of cELB coverage is, and
10 I think that's kind of our minimum starting point for what we do
11 with a new program, and so, you know, I think that's -- You know,
12 throwing a number out there, maybe that's say 40 percent of the
13 fleet was covered by cELBs, and don't quote me on that exact
14 number, but that's roughly what we're talking about here.

15
16 What we want to do is look at, well, you know, what do we get if
17 we start at that level, and then if we increase it a little bit,
18 you know, all the way up to say full census, and what do we gain
19 for that. If we do the -- You know, have some sort of statistical
20 sample, then we need to consider how we do resampling. You know,
21 with the current ELBs, we're in a situation where it's the same
22 sample for over a decade, and so we don't -- You know, we lose the
23 ability to know if that sample is very representative of the fleet,
24 as things change, and so we would like to -- You know, it would
25 make sense, from a statistical point of view, to be able to
26 resample.

27
28 Logistically, maybe that becomes difficult, because we're talking
29 about devices on -- We're talking about devices on vessels, and,
30 you know, are we talking about taking them off, and putting them
31 on another vessel, or does everybody keep it on, but then they're
32 not necessarily in the sample every year, and so there are some
33 details to be worked out there.

34
35 I think some of this was originally on the agenda for this meeting,
36 and then there were some discussions between the center and the
37 council, and this was primarily deferred until November, and I
38 think part of the motivation for that was that we would like to
39 have another meeting of the IPT, to discuss some of these survey
40 design issues in greater detail with them, and see where we're
41 going with that, and I guess I should mention too that, you know,
42 there are other considerations too, like the manta and smalltooth
43 sawfish BiOps, that could -- That may weigh-in on this in the
44 future.

45
46 I think we're hoping for an October meeting for the IPT to discuss
47 this, and we'll come back in November with a little more detail on
48 that, and that may be it. Is there another slide? No, and so

1 that was it, and so thank you, and I will take any questions.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Lowther. We appreciate it. It
4 was a very good recap and summary of expenditures and the program
5 to-date. We appreciate you coming here in-person and being able
6 to answer questions for us. Also, I would like to acknowledge,
7 and thank, the staff from LGL for being able to pull off more
8 installations, potentially, than what was originally contracted.
9 Nathan and Taylor, great job on that.

10
11 If anyone has any questions for Dr. Lowther, for his presentation
12 -- It's looking like no questions, and so we appreciate the concise
13 expenditure summary and everything. I have got one question, and
14 it may be more for Andy than for you, and I'm not sure, and you
15 guys can fight over it.

16
17 Back in the April meeting, we talked about the second round of the
18 \$850,000 that was coming to us, and you showed it in the next
19 year's budget there, and I think Andy made the comment that it may
20 not be included in the President's 2025 budget coming up, and is
21 that still the same status, or has that potentially changed, to
22 where we're no longer worried about that?

23
24 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I can't -- I don't think it was ever in the
25 President's budget, but I want to say it was in the House or Senate
26 budgets, and so I will look at the marks and get back to you on
27 that, but I believe it has been included again for 2025, and I'm
28 just not sure if it's in both the House and Senate marks or just
29 one of those.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** So you're fairly confident that it should be
32 pushed through then, right?

33
34 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I would not give any level of confidence regarding
35 marks.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** That's a fair answer. Thank you. Any further
38 questions? Carrie.

39
40 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you. Thank you for being
41 here in-person and giving the presentation, and so I guess this is
42 one thing we've kind of talked about at the IPT meeting, but I
43 think the ball is kind of in the Science Center's court, and that's
44 in regard to Slide 14, on the need for the valid statistical
45 design.

46
47 I mean, I hope you have kind of an idea of when we could get that,
48 before the next series of devices are put on the vessels, because

1 I think that's really important, and we need that to really
2 understand how much the Early Adopter is going to defray the cost
3 of the industry, as we move forward with the framework action, and
4 so do we have an idea of when that could happen, and I know there's
5 some issues with the permits, with the Regional Office, but do we
6 know when this can happen?
7

8 **DR. LOWTHER:** I think what our plan is, it's to have a -- I don't
9 know what the right word is, and perhaps like a framework for how
10 we would do the sampling design. I mean, it wouldn't be -- By
11 November, it wouldn't be at the level of this vessel is in, and
12 this vessel is out, and this vessel is -- You know, but it would
13 be, you know, how we would do the stratification, how many vessels
14 would be selected, you know, what the metrics would be to determine
15 the stratification, and so we can have -- Our plan is to have that.
16

17 That doesn't mean that we're selecting this vessel or that vessel,
18 and so -- I mean, I don't know that there's -- You know, as a
19 statistician, my view is like the most -- You know, what we want
20 to do is select the sample, and then, given that a lot of vessels
21 will have these devices, we're going to select many that have the
22 devices from the Early Adopter, but not all of them.
23

24 There will be some that have the -- That are in the Early Adopter
25 that wouldn't be selected in an initial sample, but they might be
26 selected in say the next year, you know, or the next year.
27

28 Now, you know, any things that we did to say -- To try to like
29 force that we're going to pick that one, and that one, and that
30 one, then it decreases the statistical validity of what we're
31 trying to do, but, you know, there may be some middle ground, and
32 we haven't really fully developed that yet, but we will -- But I
33 think that's something that we would be prepared to talk about in
34 October, you know, how can we -- You know, are there ways that we
35 can maximize the efficiency, based on what we've put in, you know,
36 or is it going to be more of a benefit that's realized over time,
37 as we resample.
38

39 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Simmons.
40

41 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Just a follow-up on that, and so I
42 guess, in the meantime, maybe one thing we could do, or you guys
43 could help us do, I guess I should say, is could we at least look
44 at what -- How robust the design was in 2016, as far as sampling
45 design, and then perhaps you could use that as your baseline of
46 vessels, and then try to get that ramped-up with the Early Adopter
47 Program, so that we're not putting devices on vessels that have a
48 high probability of not being selected for the --

1
2 **DR. LOWTHER:** Could you say that one more time, because I'm not
3 sure that I caught the whole --
4

5 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Yes, and so I think, in -- I think,
6 in 2013, when we moved from the old devices, where they had to go
7 to the vessels and take those disks off, to the cellular ELBs,
8 that we had a sample, a random stratified sample, right, for that,
9 and then my understanding was, in 2016, we looked at that again,
10 and I think more vessels were outfitted with the old system, and
11 so, if that was a robust design then, would it be appropriate for
12 us at least to look at that now and then see if it's still a solid
13 baseline for us to move forward?
14

15 I just -- I just fear that, if we just put a bunch of devices on
16 vessels that aren't selected, that there's going to be a tremendous
17 number of repercussions for us, and I'm just trying to see if we
18 can get ahead of that in any way, and that's why I'm asking.
19

20 **DR. LOWTHER:** Okay. Thank you. Yes, and, I mean, we can definitely
21 look at what was done in 2014 and 2016 and see if there's some
22 lessons learned that we could take. I mean, I definitely see the
23 point, and it would be nice if we could maximize our efficiency
24 here, and the problem -- The other problem though is one of timing,
25 in that we don't know -- You know, we don't know what that sample
26 is going to be.
27

28 We don't know if this -- We don't know if this is even ever going
29 to happen, you know, and it's all hypothetical, sort of, right
30 now, because there is no -- There's no rule saying that this is
31 the way we're going, and so, you know, it feels like a little bit
32 of circular --
33

34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** But there are regulations on the books
35 for shrimp vessels that say, you know, if you have that permit,
36 you could be selected by the Science and Research Director to
37 report, to be monitored, to have this monitoring device, and so
38 there are regulations, right, on the books for that, and so I guess
39 what you're referring to, just so we're all clear, would be the
40 framework action the council is working on right now.
41

42 **DR. LOWTHER:** Right. Right. I mean, we're getting a little bit
43 out of my expertise here, but, I mean, maybe there is some -- I
44 probably shouldn't say that, but, I mean, it does seem like, if we
45 could say -- If we could look at the sampling frame, and say these
46 are the vessels that would be selected, and, here, you can have a
47 free device.
48

1 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** That would be awesome.

2
3 **DR. LOWTHER:** So we can look into that, how that could potentially
4 work.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Lowther, and so, to that point,
7 Mr. Strelcheck, and then I've got Dr. Frazer.

8
9 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Two things. One, a follow-up on your question,
10 and the \$850,000 is in both the House and Senate marks for FY25.
11 Then I think, you know, to Carrie's point, you know, this is
12 something that we will work through with the Science Center IPT
13 between now and the November meeting, and I think her point is
14 well taken. It's something that we can, obviously, coordinate as
15 well with LGL.

16
17 Obviously, it's a voluntary early adopters program, and, to the
18 extent we could set ourselves up for success, assuming that, you
19 know, this passes the council going forward, and, yes, it would be
20 great to, obviously, have vessels that have joined the Early
21 Adopter Program that are also then a representative sample of the
22 fleet, and then ultimately being selected to report effort data
23 going forward.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Porch, to that point, and then Dr. Frazer.

26
27 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Well, just to reiterate -- I mean, it's really
28 going to be hard to do some sort of subsampling. Ideally, we would
29 have the census, or we have the danger of what's listed down on
30 Item -- Which one was it that said "stale sampling"? 4.

31
32 Because what we had in the past is this fixed subset of people
33 that were reporting, right, but, you know, that's no guarantee
34 that that subset stays representative for the entire timeframe,
35 and so, ideally, at least periodically, we would resample folks,
36 and it doesn't necessarily have to be every year, but, in other
37 words, have a redraw, so we make sure that that sample is
38 representative of the total fishing effort that's going out there,
39 and it is going to be challenging, if we have just a certain subset
40 of early adopters, or even just a subset that actually gets subject
41 to that random selection process, if everybody is not outfitted.

42
43 That would mean then we would have to take units off some vessels,
44 and put them on other vessels, and that's going to be very, very
45 challenging to do, and so we really need to be working towards a
46 census, or at least a situation where everybody has the units, and
47 then we have a fairly sizeable fraction of the fleet that is
48 selected every given year, any given year.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Porch. Dr. Frazer, and I
3 apologize that we've deferred to you this long, but if you still
4 have a question.

5
6 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Yes, and I've got two things, Chris. One, I was
7 curious -- This is kind of in the weeds, right, but why did
8 Headquarters ask for an additional M&A dollars? There's sixty-
9 some-thousand dollars, and so the total for the agency, right, and
10 so the Headquarters has \$50,000, and I'm assuming the Science
11 Center has \$187,000, and so that's like 40 percent of the total,
12 and so I'm just curious why they assessed that, and I'm going
13 further, Clay, with that.

14
15 **DR. LOWTHER:** Thanks for raising your hand on that one, Clay.

16
17 **DR. PORCH:** Yes, and that's not a separate ask from Headquarters,
18 and I think it's just mislabeled, but they gave us some direction
19 of how we're supposed to take the M&A out, and it was a little
20 more than we initially thought, but the bottom line is the center
21 has staff that have to work on it, and there's facilities, and all
22 kinds of overhead, and so we take -- All the money that's
23 appropriated for various tasks like that, we have to take some
24 fraction of it to cover our costs. It's a lot less than a
25 university would charge.

26
27 **DR. FRAZER:** We could argue about that, but, you know, it's about
28 40 percent, and my question isn't necessarily that, and, I mean,
29 then you transfer money to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
30 Commission, right, and do you take overhead, Dave?

31
32 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** (Mr. Donaldson's comment is not audible on
33 the recording.)

34
35 **DR. FRAZER:** About 3 percent? Gotcha. Then LGL puts a multiplier
36 in too, and so my point is, by passing this money through so many
37 different steps, we've taken a whole lot of money out of it, and
38 I don't -- I'm not opposed to overhead. I get it, right, and, I
39 mean, we all need it, but I was just curious what the negotiated
40 rate from Congress to the agency is, typically, and 40 percent
41 seems a little high to me, and that's about what it is.

42
43 **DR. PORCH:** I mean, it should be -- The fraction that we're taking
44 out I think is closer to 29 percent. I'm not sure where the 40
45 percent -- But maybe this table is not exactly accurate, but, in
46 any case, it's not a specific negotiated rate. I mean, again,
47 when money is appropriated for a variety of activities, we have
48 overhead costs associated with it.

1
2 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm just trying to figure out where it goes, Clay.
3 No problem, because I know we take it too, right, and I know it's
4 important. Then my other question is, on Slide 12, there was a
5 number of vendors, and one of them had some problems with the API
6 -- On Slide 12. Which of those vendors had a problem with the
7 API?
8
9 **DR. LOWTHER:** So, Nathan, do you remember when I told you which
10 vendor was --
11
12 **DR. NATHAN PUTMAN:** Woods Hole Group.
13
14 **DR. LOWTHER:** Thank you. I phoned a friend.
15
16 **DR. FRAZER:** I'm just curious. Thanks.
17
18 **DR. LOWTHER:** You know, back to the question about the, you know,
19 moving towards a potential census approach, I mean, more than
20 likely, we are talking about a large fraction of the fleet being
21 involved in the initial sample even, and so, you know, if this is
22 periodically resampled, you would -- You know, most of the fleet
23 would be selected within -- You know, certainly within -- Well,
24 when I say "most", at least half would be -- No matter what we
25 did, they would be selected within two cycles, and then, you know,
26 it potentially could just be, you know, three or four cycles, where
27 almost everyone would be selected, and so I think -- You know, we
28 would get there, and it's just a matter of it's going to depend on
29 how big the sample is and some other considerations.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Lowther. Do we have any further
32 questions for Dr. Lowther? Okay. We appreciate the presentation.
33 Thanks again.
34
35 **DR. LOWTHER:** Thank you.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Moving on to the next agenda item, it's Tab D,
38 Number 4(b), and that is the council letter to the Southeast
39 Fisheries Science Center with a shrimp data request. Bernie, can
40 you pull that thing up for us? Do we need to discuss that at all,
41 or this is there for information?
42
43 **DR. FREEMAN:** No, sir, and that was there for background
44 information, just pursuant to some of the data requests that have
45 been made, and I believe Dr. Lowther touched on some of the issues,
46 in terms of how sampling related to the Early Adopter Program will
47 be analyzed, and that was some of what was in that letter.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay, and so, based on this, we were supposed
2 to see, obviously, the document at this meeting, and we're looking
3 at amending the action guide to final action in January then,
4 potentially, right, and we'll see it next at the November meeting?
5 Is that correct?
6

7 **DR. FREEMAN:** So I believe the intent is to bring it to the
8 committee in November. In terms of final action, we would need to
9 discuss, as staff -- I'm afraid, at the moment, I'm not familiar
10 with what the updated timeline would reflect.
11

12 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay, and so potentially public hearing draft
13 for January then, maybe? Right? Dr. Simmons.
14

15 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so, if you
16 recall, Mr. Strelcheck was talking about some of the issues with
17 the permits, and so I think some of the things that the IPT is
18 asking for here relies on that information, and so I don't know if
19 there's a workaround. I think we will know more in September, the
20 15th, I think we talked about was our next drop-dead kind of date,
21 as to whether we could have some of this together for the November
22 meeting, but that was one of the reasons we put this in as
23 background, is these are some of the outstanding requests we have.
24

25 I think we also need to spend some more time, when we bring the
26 document back, talking about having a better understanding of the
27 number of vessels that are active, or have a valid permit that are
28 going to be selected, because I think, previously, we thought that
29 this was going to be just approximately one-third of the vessels,
30 which is only about 400 vessels, right, originally, and so, now,
31 as we move towards this more census-style monitoring program, I
32 think we just need to have better estimates on that and then how
33 the Early Adopter is deferring those costs, potentially for both
34 the agency and the fishermen, and so we're trying do that. We're
35 working towards that.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. I appreciate that.
38 Moving on, we swapped two items in the agenda here, and so the
39 next agenda item will be Recap of the Southeast Shrimp Strategy
40 and Planning Meeting, Tab D, Number 6(a), from Ms. Picariello.
41 Dr. Freeman, can you take us through the action guide on that,
42 real quick?
43

44 **RECAP OF SOUTHEAST SHRIMP STRATEGY AND PLANNING MEETING**

45

46 **DR. FREEMAN:** Certainly. For this agenda item, the committee will
47 be presented with information regarding the Southeast Shrimp
48 Strategy and Planning Meeting that was held April 30 through May

1 1, 2024, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

2
3 The meeting covered various topics to address challenges facing
4 the shrimp industry in the Southeast. Georgia, Louisiana, and
5 Texas Sea Grant College Programs, along with the Gulf States Marine
6 Fisheries Commission, hosted the meeting, which was attended by
7 harvesters, processors, seafood buyers, and staff from both state
8 and federal agencies. The committee should ask questions
9 concerning the meeting, and we have Ms. Picariello presenting
10 virtually for us.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Laura, can you hear us?

13
14 **MS. LAURA PICARIELLO:** Yes, I can. Are you able to hear me?

15
16 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Yes, ma'am. Take it away whenever you're
17 ready. We have your presentation up.

18
19 **MS. PICARIELLO:** Okay. Wonderful. Thank you so much, and thank
20 you all for having me, and for taking some time to hear a follow-
21 up on this report. The Southeast Shrimp Strategy and Planning
22 Meeting, this is a meeting that was hosted by several of the Sea
23 Grant programs, as well as the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
24 Commission, and it was supported by some rapid response funding
25 out of National Sea Grant Office.

26
27 This came about really out of a multitude of conversations that
28 were going on, and I know you've heard, as a council, several times
29 now, about the state of the shrimp fishery. This came up in the
30 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission in October, and there was
31 a charge to the commission to look at the state of Gulf fisheries,
32 and the future of Gulf fisheries.

33
34 The Sea Grant Advisory Committee to the Gulf States Marine
35 Fisheries Commission was also engaged in that, and we also started
36 dialoguing about the Shrimp Futures meetings, and the potential
37 for that project, and what we were really hearing from industry
38 was a lot of urgency and a need for at least an initial starting
39 conversation about this, prior to the start of their 2024 shrimp
40 season. Forecasts were not looking positive, and there was really
41 a pressure to find some ways to at least have an immediate
42 dialogue.

43
44 So, as a precursor to the Shrimp Futures project, and an
45 opportunity to at least get the industry before the season started,
46 to have some conversation, we were able to organize a meeting in
47 Baton Rouge for April 30 and May 1 of 2024. We did a day-and-a-
48 half workshop to really bring everyone to the table, stakeholders

1 from the industry, researchers, resource managers, and really try
2 to broaden the conversation out amongst state, federal, various
3 agencies, to try to understand what's happening in this industry
4 and try to start to find some pathways to help address what's
5 happening with this particular industry at this point in time.

6
7 We did have sixty-one participants, and we addressed both the Gulf
8 and South Atlantic, as the South Atlantic shrimp fishery is
9 experiencing the same challenges, and issues, as the Gulf shrimp
10 fishery is. We felt that it was important that we include all
11 eight states throughout the Southeast region in this dialogue and
12 discussion.

13
14 We had representation from all levels of the industry, harvesters,
15 dock owners, processors, and several of the industry associations,
16 and we had seafood buyers from the market, representatives from
17 restaurants, catering food service, retail, and several and
18 federal and state agencies, most of the Gulf state resource
19 agencies, as well as NOAA, USDA, EDA, and even Louisiana's Homeland
20 Security Office, as well Texas, Louisiana, and Georgia, and support
21 from other Sea Grant programs as well within the region.

22
23 Just the background, a little bit more on the situation, and the
24 economic conditions in the shrimp fishery, both in the Gulf and
25 the South Atlantic, have deteriorated significantly over the last
26 several years, and, around 2023, we've really reached a new height
27 of challenges with the shrimp industry, at a point where we saw
28 most of our vessels tied up for part, if not all, of the season,
29 with an inability to operate, due to economic conditions.

30
31 Shrimp prices have dropped significantly, and, you know, we are at
32 a point where we're dropping 50 to 60 percent from 2021 dockside
33 prices. The NOAA monthly reports are continuing to show those
34 decreases in dockside value for the industry, while also coupled
35 with the inflation that we're seeing and increases in operational
36 costs, particularly fuel expenses, and, as boats went out in that
37 early 2023 season, we were seeing boats come back, on thirty-day
38 trips, and ending up with a loss, and barely being able to cover
39 fuel to get back out for a second trip.

40
41 We've seen lots of situations where most vessels have tied up, and
42 they've cancelled insurances, and they've done things to try to
43 cut business costs, but the industry is in crisis.

44
45 Largely, one of the primary stressors of this is recently we have
46 seen a point in which imported shrimp into the country has actually
47 exceeded the amount of U.S. consumption of shrimp, and, between
48 that, coupled with infrastructure losses that we've seen in some

1 of our cold storage and our coastal facilities, due to hurricanes
2 or buyouts, as well as domestic shrimp prices, it has just created
3 such a backlog of shrimp that markets were no longer buying.
4 Processors were no longer buying, and boats were being told not to
5 go out to fish, and we're just -- We were at a standstill.

6
7 Both in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, we saw multiple states
8 requesting disaster declarations and seeking support from
9 agencies, from the government, and the challenge that we have here
10 is that this isn't typically what we see in terms of a fisheries
11 disaster associated with a natural disaster or a biological
12 disaster, and trying to find solutions to this situation for the
13 industry has been challenging.

14
15 The goals of this meeting, the first is to create a neutral
16 platform. Sea Grant, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
17 Commission, felt that we were ideal hosts, in helping to take away
18 some of the dynamics and challenges between various sectors of the
19 industry groups and management, and so we really wanted to create
20 a platform where we, as hosts, could be a neutral place to
21 facilitate some conversations across these various groups about
22 the issues that are occurring.

23
24 We wanted to identify specific agency offices that may play a role
25 in recovery efforts, beyond our standard, hey, we're going to NOAA,
26 and we need a disaster declaration. We need to clearly think more
27 broadly about who else needs to play a role in the situation that's
28 occurring here right now for the industry. Obviously, there is
29 policy changes also that are likely to be needed to be associated
30 with this issue, and so we wanted to identify what's happening in
31 the legislative space, what policies are hindering progress and
32 solutions for the industry, and help the industry start to take
33 steps on a strategy for recovery.

34
35 It was a day-and-a-half meeting. Our very first -- The day-one of
36 the meeting, we really wanted to focus on an overview of not only
37 the challenges, but trying to think more broadly on what
38 opportunities there are, and bring more people into the
39 conversation, and so we did start out the meeting with an industry
40 perspective. Mr. Gary Graham helped provide an industry context,
41 given his history and relationship over fifty years, as both a Sea
42 Grant agent for a significant period of that time, and as a shrimp
43 industry member himself, as a vessel owner.

44
45 Really, talking about, you know, the industry, because they've
46 seen struggles for years, and we have known there's been challenges
47 with imports over time, for the last twenty years, really, and
48 what's different about this situation that we haven't seen, or

1 that may be compounding the situation now, as opposed to some of
2 the past challenges that the industry has gone through.

3
4 We heard several different presentations from USDA. We had some
5 discussions -- There's been a lot of questions about catfish moving
6 under USDA, and what that looked like, and the benefits, the pros
7 and the cons, and so we did have some dialogue around what that
8 process looked like. We explored some of the risk management
9 programs in USDA, crop insurance, revenue protections, and those
10 dialogues are continuing.

11
12 We had a shrimp buyers panel, to get some representation from the
13 marketplace, to understand what the restaurants are dealing with,
14 what retail markets are dealing with, and I think there was a lot
15 of clear discussion, out of that market panel, that highlighted
16 the disconnect that currently occurs between the market and the
17 vessels and the docks, and so there's a lot of murkiness that
18 happens between where that shrimp lands at the dock and how it
19 gets into the market, and all of the process in between, and all
20 of the costs associated with that, and a lot of the consumer
21 education that is really lacking around an understanding of shrimp
22 and the shrimp markets and various shrimp products, and so it was
23 a very productive discussion.

24
25 We had NOAA initiatives, with the Seafood Strategy, Shrimp Futures
26 project, and we had the Louisiana Sea Grant Law Program provide an
27 overview of the legislative policies, the potential bills that are
28 currently -- There are several bills related to seafood, or
29 particularly shrimp, in Congress, being discussed at this moment,
30 as well as some of the food assistance programs, the farm-to-
31 school programs, food banks, how we can engage more in those
32 programs, to really give a broad overview of options and things.

33
34 Then day-two focused on collaborative breakout sessions, where we
35 really mixed all of the participants, between management,
36 industry, various folks, at small group tables, to have some
37 conversations, to really try to prioritize which are the biggest
38 challenges, what are some potential solutions, and really trying
39 to start to envision what a successful shrimp industry in the
40 future might look like.

41
42 We had several breakout sessions, with some prompting questions,
43 and we started with Session 1, to check in on, you know, have we
44 covered all the stressors, are we understanding where the industry
45 is at, and what the biggest challenges are. Going into Session 2,
46 we were talking about what success looks like for this industry,
47 and what is their vision, and what would they like to see a
48 successful industry looking like in the future.

1
2 The two biggest components that we heard a lot from industry, going
3 into this meeting, were marketing and legislative policies, and so
4 Breakout Session 3 focused on marketing and education needs, on
5 consumer education, and how to better engage with the market, and
6 then 4 was discussing what some of those legislative, state and
7 federal level, opportunities and challenges -- What policies could
8 be addressed, and we really spent the majority of the day talking
9 collectively about these points.

10
11 Out of those discussions, there were five key challenges for the
12 industry that were prioritized, and, obviously, imports is at the
13 top of the list. There's a feeling of unfair competition from
14 imported shrimp, due to various regulatory imbalances. You know,
15 a lot of products coming into the country may not have the same
16 environmental or health and safety standards as we are held to
17 here in the United States, allowing them to compete with lower
18 prices.

19
20 Labeling inconsistencies that are misleading in the marketplace,
21 and it makes it difficult for consumers to understand whether they
22 are supporting, and buying, local products, and, of course, the
23 labor issues that we've seen in some countries, and potential
24 subsidies that are occurring, and these are all factors that are,
25 unfortunately, depressing price for the industry here.

26
27 Consumer awareness and marketing, there is a real need for better
28 understanding amongst consumers of understanding domestic
29 products, versus imported products, and how those products may
30 differ, how they're -- What different production systems and
31 quality and sustainability and a variety of elements that go into
32 that.

33
34 Funding and infrastructure is also a significant challenge for the
35 industry. There's limited capital for equipment, upgrades,
36 infrastructure improvements, and the disaster relief has been
37 slow. This is an industry that's been hit, particularly in the
38 Gulf, across all of the states at this point, in the last several
39 years, with multiple hurricane situations that they're dealing
40 with relief, or they're dealing with disaster recovery, on top of
41 this economic challenge.

42
43 Workforce development, there is a challenge attracting skilled
44 workers, and there is also some challenge associated with the
45 demanding work conditions. This is an industry that operates at
46 the federal level offshore, for thirty to forty days, at times, on
47 trips, and it's difficult to recruit industry folks to come into
48 this industry, being away and being at-sea for that long, and we

1 have a lack of training programs to help support training people
2 to come into the industry, and then regulatory policy, which is
3 complex, and can, at times, even be contradictory, in terms of the
4 industry's ability to operate and causing increased costs.

5
6 A series of action items have been identified for each of these
7 areas. Consumer awareness and marketing has been high on the
8 industry's mind. A couple of key points that have come out in
9 this space are a national brand identity, specifically for domestic
10 shrimp, and marketing has been a challenge for quite a while for
11 our seafood industry, and there is a call for a national level of
12 looking at promoting seafood, and particularly shrimp, and helping
13 to elevate that profile with a national brand.

14
15 There is a strong need for economic analyses, both of the market
16 and market conditions, as well as a better economic analysis of
17 our supply chain. Consumer education campaigns that need to
18 highlight sustainability, quality, taste, and really a better
19 understanding of why domestic shrimp is a premium product.

20
21 There's a lot of opportunity to work with schools and culinary
22 programs, to better educate those within those school and culinary
23 program systems to promote domestic shrimp consumption, and, as
24 well, educating the industry on quality practices and ensuring
25 that the shrimp that we are putting out in the market is in fact
26 the high quality that we would like to see out of our domestic
27 seafood product.

28
29 Workforce development, as is mentioned, was mentioned, and
30 training programs are needed. We have had an industry, in the
31 seafood industry, that has, you know, been very generational, and
32 we see children coming up in seafood families, and that structure,
33 that pathway of moving into the seafood industry, has changed, and
34 there really are no training programs to allow people outside of
35 the industry to understand and learn how to be a part of the
36 fishing industry, and there are a lot of challenges also associated
37 with substance abuse and mental health within the fishing industry.
38 There were several concerns expressed on that front.

39
40 On the policy and advocacy side, there were a couple of key aspects
41 that the industry, and the group, identified here. Stricter
42 labeling requirements have been raised many times. There are a
43 lot of loopholes associated with country-of-origin labeling.
44 There are no labeling requirements in restaurants. There have
45 been several domestic shrimp campaigns, eat local and these types
46 of things, but, at times, consumers still struggle to understand,
47 and identify, local and domestic product in the marketplace, and
48 that's a labeling concern that hinders those campaigns and

1 education efforts for moving forward.

2
3 There is continued discussion around addressing imported shrimp
4 into the United States, particularly with respect to inspections
5 and the health and safety of some of the product coming into the
6 United States.

7
8 Lobbying for policies that support shrimp purchases by government
9 programs, and we have started to see Section 32 purchases by the
10 USDA for shrimp products, and there's a lot more opportunity, I
11 think, to really expand and work -- To continue to work with some
12 of the government programs, school programs, other opportunities
13 for shrimp products specifically.

14
15 Working with agencies like NOAA and the USDA to continue to
16 streamline disaster relief programs. Disaster relief efforts are
17 long, and lengthy, and it often doesn't provide the short-term
18 support that the industry needs in times of disaster, and
19 advocating for the inclusion of shrimp in the Farm Bill is
20 something that has been raised multiple times, as well as just
21 seafood overall within the Farm Bill, and an Office of Seafood
22 within the USDA.

23
24 Industry has also acknowledged that there needs to be strong
25 industry collaboration. There's been a lot of fracturing in this
26 industry, and that was acknowledged, and there needs to be a common
27 message to advocate for policy changes, to work on solutions, and
28 there's been a strong encouragement for different sectors,
29 different regions, to come together and work collaboratively to
30 move forward for some solutions for the industry.

31
32 A couple of additional considerations, and it was noted, and I've
33 mentioned, that there is still a significant amount of
34 misunderstanding about supply chains for shrimp and what happens
35 between the dock and that retail price that you're seeing in the
36 market. Shrimp moves around a lot, and is trucked to multiple
37 areas, and there's processing -- You know, there is processing
38 levels that go on there, and I think having a better understanding
39 of the supply chain, where shrimp goes once it leaves the dock,
40 what path it goes through, and how it gets to the market, would
41 help significantly in the industry developing solutions and better
42 messaging the importance of domestic shrimp.

43
44 Investigating opportunities for funding, and there are funds, like
45 S-K grants and loan programs, and they are often difficult for
46 industry directly to apply for. They need partners, and they need
47 help in understanding how to apply for a lot of those programs.

1 There is also some potential opportunities with new initiatives,
2 such as the USDA regional food business centers, which are
3 developing. Exploring the feasibility of USDA crop insurance, and
4 this is a conversation that has continued since this meeting, in
5 various forms, with USDA, and the risk management agency, to look
6 at opportunities to bring shrimp specifically under some of those
7 programs, and identifying solutions for limitations in public-
8 private partnerships for infrastructure development.

9
10 We have a lot of infrastructure issues, but the industry doesn't
11 have a lot of control over some of those infrastructure areas,
12 docks, things along those lines, and so that's another issue
13 identified.

14
15 Next steps from here, you know, so this was a limited opportunity
16 for us to at least host this initial launching point, and
17 conversation, and, you know, this was a precursor, I think, to
18 some activities to come, and the participants have been encouraged
19 to share the meeting report, and the meeting summaries, as far as
20 possible, and it has been shared with some state and federal
21 representatives. It has been shared with the Texas legislature,
22 and there was recently a hearing of the Culture, Recreation, and
23 Tourism Committee to support coastal shrimping and fishing
24 communities.

25
26 It was also -- Some of this material was also presented to the
27 Bipartisan American Seafood Caucus in D.C. recently, and so trying
28 to get as much of this information out there to different folks
29 and areas and really get the word out that there's a need for
30 assistance for this industry.

31
32 Partners will develop and implement action plans, based on the
33 identified priorities, and so a few things have come out of this.
34 Sea Grant has recognized the need for a centralized location for
35 a lot of the resources that the shrimp industry has asked for, and
36 so we are working to stand up a website to at least provide the
37 resources up-to-date. Many of the reports, economic analyses,
38 things that are coming out, need a place to live, so the industry
39 can access them easily.

40
41 We are also willing, as the Sea Grant program, to continue to host
42 some topical meetings, as requested by the industry, and we don't
43 have continued funds to do that in-person, but we are willing to
44 virtually support the industry, as possible. We're looking at
45 other -- I've mentioned we're continuing conversations with USDA,
46 and working with state marketing programs, and so we've been
47 working, in Texas, with the Go Texan Program, and looking at Caught
48 Here and Not Brought Here campaign. That has come out of some of

1 these dialogues.

2

3 Again, continuing communication and collaboration across industry,
4 and across sectors, is just such a key element of this that I think
5 has been recognized across-the-board, that it's going to take many
6 hands, and many different folks, to help bring this industry back
7 to success, and so we are encouraging the industry to participate
8 in the Shrimp Futures Project, working with that Shrimp Futures
9 Project as it continues, and you'll hear more about that in a few
10 minutes, and continuing to help, where we can, to facilitate some
11 neutral platforms for stakeholders to continue to dialogue, and
12 that's it. Are there questions?

13

14 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Picariello. Excellent
15 presentation and summary of a very comprehensive meeting, and I
16 appreciate you giving that to us. Do we have any questions for
17 Laura here at all? Dr. Simmons.

18

19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so not a
20 question, but I just wanted to commend Laura, and the team at Sea
21 Grant, and Matt and I attended this meeting, and I know a lot of
22 the state directors and their staff attended, and I think it was
23 -- It was a well-attended meeting, and I think it was productive,
24 based on what we could do at that meeting, as far as the discussion
25 goes, and it was a nice report, that hopefully can be used in other
26 venues.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Simmons. Laura, I think -- You
29 know, in Louisiana, we have sort of a model that I thought would
30 move forward with things, the Delcambre Co-op, and, you know, the
31 fishermen got together, and they put the equipment together, and
32 assembled it all, and they came up with direct-to-consumer
33 marketing, and I just don't understand why that never really took
34 off to be larger than it is, and especially in this situation.
35 Can you speculate on how that would look going forward?

36

37 **MS. PICARIELLO:** Sure. I can speculate a little bit. You know,
38 the volume of shrimp, and particularly for our offshore vessels,
39 which are much larger shrimp vessels, going out for significant
40 periods of time, and I think there is some challenges in direct
41 marketing for vessels that are coming in in that industry
42 structure, and so it's a little bit harder for the offshore vessels
43 to participate in direct marketing and move that much shrimp.

44

45 It definitely seems to be a better marketing, or a better business
46 model, for inshore vessels, and smaller vessels, but it's really
47 area-specific as well, and some of the challenges that we have,
48 across the coastline, is that the -- You know, some of the shrimp

1 ports are located in areas that just don't necessarily have the
2 draw for people locally coming. They're not centered in more urban
3 areas.

4
5 There is some competition as well between the traditional pathways
6 and direct marketing, and, if not enough -- There's been some
7 challenges to, you know, getting product to processors. There's
8 also been challenges in terms of the public not necessarily wanting
9 -- I think there's some education factors for the public in fresh-
10 off-the-boat product, that may not be graded, and so you're getting
11 different sizes, and you're getting head-on shrimp, and you're
12 having to handle that shrimp in a different way than you may be
13 processed product that's going through retail markets and a longer
14 supply chain.

15
16 It's a model that works, and it works for a sector of the industry,
17 and it's certainly something we need to keep continuing to pursue
18 and support for some of the industry, and it's not an answer for
19 the industry as a whole, is what we've seen so far.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Laura. I appreciate that. Do we
22 have any other further questions for Ms. Picariello. Go ahead,
23 Dave.

24
25 **MR. DONALDSON:** Not necessarily for Laura, but for you, Chris.
26 Another issue with -- I think Delcambre -- It's been very
27 successful, but part of it too is lack of resources to get
28 something up and running. We actually provided some funding,
29 through the disaster program, to Delcambre, to get some marketing
30 money to them, and I think, on top of what Laura mentioned, I think
31 that's another issue as well.

32
33 Since I do have the mic, I will mention that, at our upcoming
34 commission meeting, we've got a discussion about this meeting, as
35 well as Florida held a commercial fishermen's summit, and it wasn't
36 specific to shrimp, but a lot of the same issues were discussed,
37 and so we're going to -- We're going to continue to talk about
38 this. This is something that our commission has identified as
39 being important and trying to find solutions.

40
41 I agree with Carrie that it was a well-attended meeting, and it
42 was fairly productive. I think some of the industry members
43 weren't quite so sure on day-one, but, as we finished up, I think
44 there was -- There was some positive thoughts coming out of it.
45 Thanks.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dave. I appreciate that, and I
48 think, you know, we need to continue to push the ball towards the

1 goal here, and, you know, this lays out a good template of action,
2 but we can't just let it sit stagnant, and we need to keep moving
3 things, and so do we have any other questions at all for Ms.
4 Picariello on this presentation? If not, we can move to the next
5 agenda item, which is actually the prior one. Thank you, Laura.
6 I appreciate the presentation.

7

8 **MS. PICARIELLO:** Thank you for having me.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Next is an Update on the Shrimp Futures
11 Project, Tab D, Number 5, and we're going backwards to Dr. Gervasi.

12

13

UPDATE ON SHRIMP FUTURES PROJECT

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DR. FREEMAN: Great. For this item, the committee will be presented with information on NMFS' Shrimp Futures project. The project objectives, and actions designed to accomplish these objectives will be reviewed, as well as the anticipated timeline. The committee should ask questions and provide feedback to NMFS.

DR. CARISSA GERVASI: Hello, everyone. My name is Carissa Gervasi, and so I'm going to give an update on the Shrimp Futures project that Laura mentioned in her talk, and John Walter initially introduced you all to this project, several months back, and, at that point, it was sort of just an initial idea of a new approach we could take for addressing some of these many challenges that the shrimp industry is facing.

Since then, the Southeast Shrimp Strategy and Planning meeting was held, that Laura just talked to you all about, and we were able to tailor this project, so that some of the specific actions are direct responses to the actions that were identified at that meeting.

We appreciate that many of the issues facing the industry are urgent and need immediate attention, and so we've split this project out into two parts. The first is how can we support the shrimp industry in the present, and, to do that, we aim to characterize the current state and major challenges addressing the fishery throughout the entire Southeast region, build connections with key partners and agencies who can actually do something to elicit change that's needed, and identify immediate actions and opportunities that industry members can take advantage of.

Then part two of the project is thinking more long-term, and how can we support this industry into the future, and, with that, we'll develop a 2050 vision for the industry, through a series of workshops, and we'll identify strategies to support a resilient

1 industry into the future, and we'll create some action items that
2 are robust to uncertainty in things like climate and the economy,
3 et cetera.

4
5 For the first part of this project, our initial action is a
6 stakeholder analysis, which we've started working on, and the goal
7 here is to identify all the different players in the shrimp
8 industry, what are their roles and interests, and how are they all
9 related, and also identify the resources and activities that the
10 different players indicate they can contribute, specifically state
11 and federal government agencies and what they might be able to do
12 to address some of these issues, and so this is going to include
13 some extensive stakeholder outreach and consultations, and so
14 we're working with Sea Grant, and Gulf States, to get those
15 contacts, and we've identified several groups that we're going to
16 be reaching out to to help with this effort.

17
18 The second component of this part one of the project is an economic
19 analysis. As Laura mentioned, this is really a data need, and
20 we're missing -- There's kind of that disconnect, right, between
21 what the vessels and docks are getting to the end market, and so
22 we want to compile all the information that we have on the shrimp
23 economy into a snapshot report, something that's user-friendly,
24 that stakeholders could use to plead their case to legislators, or
25 however else they would like to use it, and it will assess the
26 current economic conditions, trends, and threats in the fishery,
27 including landings and revenue, prices and costs, and price
28 drivers, like imports, et cetera, and we're working with Sea Grant
29 to pursue that possible shrimp fishery insurance option that Laura
30 mentioned.

31
32 Some possible elements of this economic report, and economic
33 effort, could be to fill some data gaps, by collecting more
34 economic data from non-federal shrimp fisheries, which we kind of
35 lack a lot of data on right now, research on the supply chains,
36 and, again, from the harvest/imports to consumers, with a focus on
37 shrimp product differentiation, margins, and timing, and also look
38 at some case studies of succeeding businesses and approaches, and
39 so who is really doing well in the industry, and can we get some
40 lessons learned from what they're doing. We also might be able to
41 do a consumer preference study, which would be really interesting,
42 to see how consumers actually view the domestic shrimp industry,
43 as well as some regional impact modeling.

44
45 Then the third part of this project action is supporting resilience
46 strategies, and so, again, kind of like Laura mentioned, there are
47 some opportunities, some grant opportunities, funding
48 opportunities, but it's not always clear what industry members are

1 eligible for, how they should apply for them, and so we really
2 want to work to compile all of that information into a centralized
3 location.

4
5 We're going to stand up a website for Shrimp Futures, where people
6 can keep tabs on the projects, and also have access to some of
7 these links, and some of this information, including points of
8 contact, eligibility information, et cetera, and there's a list,
9 on this slide, of some identified resources to-date that we hope
10 to, again, kind of compile and make more accessible.

11
12 That was all, again, part one, sort of the present issues, and a
13 quick overview of part two is thinking ahead to the future, and so
14 we'll be holding some workshops throughout the region. We'll start
15 with some conceptual modeling, where we'll collaboratively develop
16 a model that encompasses all of the economic, social, biophysical,
17 and regulatory factors impacting the industry, and that will be
18 the foundation for our next steps, where we'll do a vision
19 identification with industry members, figure out what they
20 actually want their fishery to look like in the future, and then
21 identify all of the critical factors that are influencing the
22 fishery and what are the uncertainties that are really going to
23 shape the future.

24
25 From there, we can do a scenario planning exercise, where we'll
26 develop some long-term scenarios for the fishery, taking into
27 account all of those uncertainties, and we'll be using some
28 information from our climate model efforts to look at predictions
29 of how the climate, how the biophysical environment, might change
30 in the future, and also look at some forecasts of community
31 demographics, port infrastructure, and we'll take all of that into
32 consideration when we're thinking about the future, and we'll try
33 to identify some actions that are robust to all of these different
34 scenarios.

35
36 Just quickly, a little bit on our process and timeline, and so,
37 right now, for 2024, we're working on consulting with those
38 stakeholder groups and agencies to complete the stakeholder
39 analysis. We've already started on the economic analysis, and
40 we're pulling past information that we have, and we're seeing what
41 else we need to supplement with additional data, and we're working
42 on creating that Shrimp Futures website and compiling
43 opportunities and resources.

44
45 Our next steps will be to work with Sea Grant, Gulf States, and
46 other agencies to identify locations and timing for the scenario
47 planning workshops, and schedule those workshops, so we can engage
48 in the exercises, and the end goal of this project is really

1 twofold. First, it's to provide support for the industry in the
2 near-term, and then it's also to collaboratively develop a
3 resilience plan for the future. I think that might be all I have,
4 and so that's it. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Gervasi. I appreciate the
7 presentation, and the quick summary of the Futures. Does anyone
8 have any questions for Dr. Gervasi? Seeing no questions around
9 the table, thank you. We appreciate the presentation. Great
10 recap.

11
12 Moving on in the agenda, Item Number VII is Update on the Timing
13 of Reinitiation of Section 7 Consultation, Tab B, Number 7, and
14 Ms. Lee. Dr. Freeman, do you want to run us through the last item
15 on the action guide?

16
17 **UPDATE ON REINITIATION OF SECTION 7 CONSULTATION**

18
19 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, and so, here, the committee will be
20 presented with information regarding NOAA Fisheries' reinitiation
21 of the 2021 shrimp opinion to address giant manta rays and
22 smalltooth sawfish. Formal consultation begins once NOAA
23 Fisheries determines it has the information necessary to
24 adequately evaluate the potential effects of the proposed action,
25 i.e., a complete initiation package.

26
27 Staff from the Protected Resources Division at SERO will review
28 process made on assembling the complete initiation package for
29 conducting the consultation. SERO will describe the latest
30 information available, timing for the consultation, and next steps
31 in the process. The council should consider the information
32 presented and ask questions. The committee should also consider
33 a request for NOAA Fisheries to present data and analyses with its
34 SSC and consider what information would be useful in updates to
35 the council at future meetings.

36
37 **MS. JENNIFER LEE:** All right. Thank you very much. Again, I guess
38 you've been getting a few recaps, and this is kind of a recap
39 presentation too, with some updates. What I'm going to do is I'm
40 just going to mention the 2021 opinion, and why we reinitiated,
41 and hopefully this sounds familiar. I have been here before
42 talking about this issue over the last year, and so I'm just going
43 to be quick on that, but, if you have questions, and don't know a
44 lot of background on Section 7, I do advise you to come and chat
45 with me later. Then I'll talk about progress addressing the data
46 needs for the reinitiation, and then I'll finish up with a
47 consultation timing update.

1 Back in April of 2021, we did issue an ESA biological opinion
2 incidental take statement on the implementation of the sea turtle
3 conservation regs, the TED regulations, basically, under the ESA,
4 and then the authorization of the Southeast U.S. shrimp fisheries
5 in federal waters under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and so that's
6 your Shrimp FMP and then also the South Atlantic FMP.

7
8 In June of 2023, SERO, the Sustainable Fisheries Division, and so
9 they were acting -- They were basically acting as an action agency,
10 or serving as the action agency, requested the SERO Protected
11 Resources Division, and so we serve as the consulting agency, to
12 reinitiate consultation in the U.S. shrimp fisheries to address
13 giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish, and so that reinitiation
14 was required because we had unanticipated observed lethal
15 interactions of giant manta rays, and then we had new information
16 revealing effects of the Southeast shrimp fisheries on both
17 smalltooth sawfish and giant manta ray that wasn't considered in
18 that 2021 opinion.

19
20 Just pointing out that we didn't have any other reinitiation
21 triggers that were met, and so reinitiation was limited to
22 addressing only those two species, and so, at this time, we still
23 have just those two triggers.

24
25 Information is required to initiate formal consultation, and I put
26 a little hyperlink to the regs that give those details, and, when
27 the Sustainable Fisheries Division requested reinitiation, they
28 pointed out a number of data needs for moving forward, and that
29 included trawl effort data, revised bycatch estimates, based on
30 recent observer data and effort data, evaluation of the best
31 available data on giant manta rays and smalltooth sawfish, and
32 then completing the smalltooth sawfish and giant manta ray
33 population viability analyses, that were already underway, and it
34 just looks at understanding the impacts of the fisheries on the
35 species, and then we also noted that we would need to look at
36 assessment of any new proposed management actions that you had
37 underway or that you did in response to some new information that
38 we've presented.

39
40 Like I said, I have been providing updates, over the course of the
41 last year, and I went ahead, in this slide, and put hyperlinks to
42 every presentation that I've actually given on this topic over the
43 last year, and so I thought that would be helpful. Just, if you
44 are not familiar, you can just take a quick skim back, if you have
45 any questions on what we've gone over before.

46
47 From here, like I said, I'm just going to update sort of where we
48 are, and so, for obtaining trawl data, again, we need that to

1 extrapolate observed bycatch for our estimates, and so annual South
2 Atlantic effort data is usually QA/QC'd and ready by the end of
3 September of the following year. In your area, the Gulf, that
4 manual submission process, the SD cards and, you know, getting all
5 those cards, compliance with that, we have a pretty big delay of
6 shrimp bycatch estimate availability.

7
8 We do now have data through -- Sorry that I'm pausing, because I
9 just want to make sure -- I almost feel like I got the year wrong,
10 but data through 2022, since March of 2023, and we expect to have
11 2023 data ready for sometime this fall. That is correct.

12
13 We'll proceed with initiating consultation with data through 2023.
14 If 2024 becomes available, then certainly we would incorporate
15 that, but I just wanted to point out that we are, you know,
16 proceeding with the information that we have.

17
18 Back in March, SERO requested a number of analyses for initiation,
19 including updated bycatch estimates for giant manta ray and
20 smalltooth sawfish, and I put a little link, because that memo,
21 explaining specifically what we asked for, was in a previous
22 briefing book, and the Science Center has completed initial sawfish
23 and giant manta ray bycatch and observer coverage analyses, using
24 observer and effort data through 2022, and there's a semi-colon
25 there, with a little fragment left off, and that's basically that
26 they're still working on the report, and so it's not in your
27 briefing book.

28
29 It's too soon to share, but, essentially, they've been working on
30 estimates, looking at two different methods of doing that, and
31 then we're also -- SERO, and the Science Center, are working to
32 look at incorporating species distribution models, which would
33 help reduce uncertainty, and reduce those confidence intervals,
34 and so we will be evaluating that information, and making any
35 additional requests, as needed, and so that's where we are with
36 that.

37
38 The Protected Resources Division has been working to assess that
39 best available science. We've been updating what we call our
40 status of species sections. If you ever look in a BiOp, Section
41 3 always has a great summary of what we have for our information
42 that is the foundation of our consultation. We're working on
43 updating that, with all those recent publications that we've been
44 reporting on, and we're also updating the smalltooth sawfish
45 recovery plan, and it's not related to the consultation, but that's
46 something that we're doing, and that revised plan is under internal
47 review right now, and there's probably a notice of availability
48 about a draft plan coming out early next year, and I mention that

1 just because, when we do our jeopardy analyses, recovery criteria,
2 and looking at the recovery plan, it factors into that.

3
4 Then there's a new publication that is in review, "Distribution
5 and Trends in Relative Abundance of Juvenile Smalltooth Sawfish in
6 Charlotte Harbor". That is in SERO and Florida Fish and Wildlife
7 Conservation Commission review, and so that relate to species
8 distribution modeling, and so I wanted to mention that.

9
10 Speaking of population, or speaking of modeling, population
11 viability analysis, just to make sure we're all on the same page,
12 it's a modeling tool that estimates the future size and risk of
13 extinction for populations, and it predicts the probability of a
14 population persisting into the future, and it's really just a
15 management tool that we use to explore potential consequences of
16 management actions, in light of uncertain data, and so, as you
17 know, back in December of 2023, Dr. Carlson published a sawfish
18 PVA.

19
20 In March of 2024, that was presented to the Shrimp AP, and, again,
21 the link is there, so everyone can check it out, and then I added
22 the next step, which is just that, in light of the sawfish
23 mortality event, and, of course, the fact that we'll have updated
24 bycatch estimates, you know, it would be logical that we would
25 probably do some updating, in terms of additional runs.

26
27 The other thing going on is a giant manta ray PVA, and you haven't
28 seen that before, and this is something that the center has just
29 completed, basically, and, again, is working to finalize that in
30 a report, and so that's to come.

31
32 That takes us really to the consultation timing update, now that
33 I've kind of given you a little information on, you know, some of
34 the things we've been doing, and so, just to be clear, because it
35 gets a little confusing for some, what we're in basically is a
36 pre-consultation, or a technical assistance, phase. We're making
37 a lot of progress, but the clock is not running, in terms of that
38 135 days that a lot of times people are familiar with.

39
40 We will continue to keep you and the South Atlantic Council
41 engaged, and we have some pretty big presentations that I foresee
42 in the future that are coming up. We're going to want to -- The
43 Science Center will be wanting to share their updated bycatch
44 estimates, and that observer coverage level evaluation, and then
45 any new, or updated, PVAs, like the giant manta ray one that I
46 just mentioned.

47
48 Then SERO, or probably me, will come in and try to provide you a

1 summary of this reinitiation package, or you can think of it just
2 as your biological assessment, but try to put together all this
3 information that we've been working on.

4
5 Then I do point out that, again, we'll need to consider any
6 proposed Shrimp-FMP-driven actions, or anything new, as this data
7 becomes available, and so we anticipate completing the
8 consultation package in early 2025, pending any proposed action
9 changes, and I say that just because the proposed action is what
10 we're consulting on, obviously, and so, if we have some new action
11 in the works that's going to have an impact on our BiOp, then, you
12 know, we want to make sure that we're including that in our
13 consultation, and so that's why I added that there, but, again, in
14 terms of sort of that initial list of things that we said we
15 needed, we're definitely checking them off, I guess is what I would
16 say.

17
18 Then the last slide is just some suggestions for where you can get
19 additional information, and so, if you want to look back at the
20 biological opinion that was on all the species that may be
21 adversely affected, you've got that there, and we've got great
22 smalltooth sawfish and giant manta ray species information online,
23 and also, for all our action agencies, we have this document called
24 Consultation Species Frameworks, and that helps in terms of
25 thinking about how you assess your action relative to Section 7,
26 and so that's there, and then just a shoutout.

27
28 I'm always around, and so, if you have information you want to
29 share, or questions, et cetera, please just reach out to me. I
30 did put my email there, but, obviously, if you email, I'll give
31 you a call, and I would love to talk to you, and that is it.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. We appreciate the recap
34 and the presentation. Do we have any questions for Ms. Lee around
35 the room? Dr. Freeman.

36
37 **DR. FREEMAN:** Hi, Jenny. Thanks for coming in-person to give this
38 presentation. One of the questions that I had was in terms of the
39 different analyses that you reviewed. Is it the population
40 viability analyses that you all would be interested in having go
41 before the SSC, or what aspect were you all thinking about
42 presenting and potentially getting feedback from the SSC?

43
44 **MS. LEE:** Sure, and, well, I think, frequently, you all do like to
45 pass things to your SSC, to make sure that, you know, you feel
46 confident in the information that we're using, and so those bycatch
47 estimates, when we have that data and report available, and you
48 have the PVAs, and all that information could be useful, if you

1 wanted to sort of get an additional -- Get additional input on, I
2 guess, what that information is saying, and perhaps what direction
3 you may want to go, if any, on that, and so I think that could be
4 useful.

5
6 What we're really trying to do here is be very transparent, and,
7 rather than, you know, sort of go into our black box and work on
8 our consultation, through sharing sort of the work toward our
9 action agency side of the house, getting this information together
10 is allowing us to share with you, and I know you're familiar with
11 the Endangered Species Act and the MSA policy directive, and
12 working towards getting councils engaged in the consultation
13 process, and so, really, all I've been trying to do, over this
14 year, and, today, is just to make sure that I am keeping you
15 informed, so that, you know, you can have sort of a role in this
16 process.

17
18 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Thanks for the presentation. Many of the
19 analyses require a sample, and then scaled up to the population
20 estimate, but I'm not understanding how you're getting that, or
21 what information about the size of the fishing fleet, et cetera,
22 that you're using. Is it based on a number in the past, or is it
23 current, or is that something that can be updated if the fleet
24 continues to reduce in size?

25
26 **MS. LEE:** Well, usually bycatch estimates aren't so much based on
27 the number of vessels, but the amount of effort, and so that's
28 where I was saying that, right now, we have the effort data through
29 2022, and we are going to be using 2023, and so, you know, we
30 recognize all of what's been said about what's going on with the
31 industry, and how, you know, we recognize effort trends, and so
32 that's all encountered, or included, in terms of looking at when
33 we do these bycatch estimates and things like that.

34
35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Well, if I may, just as a follow-up, the effort -
36 - You take a sample of the effort, and then you scale that up to
37 the total effort, based on the number of vessels participating,
38 right, what we talked about earlier.

39
40 **MS. LEE:** Sure, and it sounds like you have very specific
41 questions, that maybe we can also talk offline about, but I guess
42 I'm just recognizing that we're basing things on the most recent
43 data available, and so, yes, the effort, or the bycatch estimates,
44 and the analyses that are going forward, are using the most recent
45 information that we have.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Froeschke. I guess,
48 sort of a follow-up to that, and I was going to ask earlier, and

1 so, with regard to the timing of all this, if you had -- You know,
2 we've seen a reduction in the shrimp effort, and, at the April
3 meeting, they gave us a presentation on that, of about 80 percent
4 since 2021.

5
6 We're looking at a timeline of 2023 data here being used for that,
7 and do you, I guess, speculate, or expect, that that timeline could
8 extend, because of the reduction in effort, to where we're not
9 seeing the final result by 2025, or does that not tie into this?

10
11 **MS. LEE:** For now, I think we'll at least be moving forward with
12 the 2023 data, and I'm not saying that we won't continue to
13 incorporate information. We have acknowledged the need to
14 reinitiate now, about a year ago, and so we're sort of balancing
15 new information with proceeding, right, and, you know, obviously,
16 there's always going to be -- With all of your amendments, you run
17 into the same thing, where you have to take an action, even though
18 you would like to have real-time data, or closer to, and so
19 certainly the approach we're taking is to incorporate, you know,
20 the most recent information, and I think everyone knows that
21 consultations take a while, and so, if 2024 data is available, and
22 we haven't, you know, completed our BiOp, and we can figure out a
23 way to incorporate it, then great.

24
25 I just was basically letting you know that, in terms of that
26 complete initiation package, and sort of us moving forward with
27 this consultation, that we wouldn't be waiting all the way for
28 that, and like we're going to look at what we have. We're using
29 that 2023 data sort of as our initial base. Is that helpful?

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Yes, it is. That answers the question. Thank
32 you, Ms. Lee. Dr. Simmons.

33
34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I think
35 we're kind of all asking the same question, and so maybe it's to
36 Dr. Porch, or his staff, and so I think those effort estimates are
37 coming out of the shrimp -- The penaeid 87 shrimp assessment
38 process, because we got a presentation from Mr. Detloff, but that
39 was for Gulf-wide, and so I think that's what we're asking. Is
40 that -- Through that SEDAR, are we refining those zones, where
41 that pink shrimp fleet could potentially be interacting with those
42 protected resources, via that process?

43
44 **DR. PORCH:** Yes, and, as I understand it, that's what we're doing,
45 and then, obviously, the pink shrimp fleet doesn't operate over
46 the same spatial dimension as the entire Gulf.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. We're moving things through here, and

1 thank you, Ms. Lee, for your presentation. I don't think we have
2 any further questions. That will take us to Other Business,
3 correct, Dr. Freeman?
4

5 **OTHER BUSINESS**
6 **DISCUSSION OF NATIONAL SEAFOOD STRATEGY**
7

8 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir. For this item, additional items may be
9 brought for discussion by committee members during the adoption of
10 the agenda, time permitting. If the committee wishes to pursue
11 action, then action can be scheduled at a future council meeting,
12 and I had that a discussion of the National Seafood Strategy was
13 added during adoption of the agenda.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Freeman, and so I will keep
16 this short. I know we're moving ahead of schedule, but to keep
17 things rolling. Back at the January 2024 council meeting, we got
18 an update on the National Seafood Strategy Implementation Plan,
19 and I sort of wanted to revisit this, real quickly.
20

21 In there, they gave us the example that, by spring of 2024, we
22 would get the published implementation plan, quote, living
23 document, and so I guess what I was trying to strive for is, maybe
24 at our next Shrimp Committee meeting, in the November council
25 meeting, we could try to get an update on that, the implementation
26 plan, as well as we were given a pilot example, which included
27 federal actions to promote fair trade, and where the status of
28 that pilot example is, and the implementation of that as well, and
29 so do we need a motion for that, or is that just something we can
30 add on and request NMFS to give us an update on that on the November
31 Shrimp Committee meeting?
32

33 **DR. FREEMAN:** So, conferring with staff, we're going to look to
34 the Science Center, for right now, to see if they have any
35 information on the status of that pilot, to see if it would be
36 ready and prepared to present, but, at a minimum -- We wouldn't
37 need a motion just to request the updated presentation on the
38 National Seafood Strategy, but that is certainly something that we
39 could handle.
40

41 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Well, I'll make a quick motion then to
42 request that NMFS gives a presentation on an update of the National
43 Seafood Strategy, including the status of the pilot example, or
44 the pilot project, for the Shrimp Committee during the November
45 2024 Gulf Council meeting. Request that NMFS provide an updated
46 presentation on the National Seafood Strategy, as well as the pilot
47 program example, during the Shrimp Committee at the November 2024
48 Gulf Council meeting. I need a second.

1
2 **MR. BROUSSARD:** Second.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Billy. Any discussion on this
5 motion? **Seeing none, anyone opposed to the motion? No one**
6 **opposed, and the motion passes.** Mr. Chair, that brings us to the
7 end of the Shrimp Committee meeting.

8
9 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 19, 2024.)

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