

**Shrimp Committee Report  
April 7, 2025  
Chris Schieble, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**). The Committee then approved the January 2025 meeting minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**), with removal of the word ‘of’ on page 7, line 2.

***Review of the Texas Closure (Tab D, Nos. 4a-b)***

Dr. Liese (SEFSC) presented on the economics of the federally-permitted Gulf shrimp fleet. The inflation-adjusted, average prices for imported shrimp and for Gulf shrimp trend downward from 1984-2023. A Council member commented that it appears shrimpers are only getting \$2.00 per pound on average for their product but that the final cost to consumer is about 2-3 times that initial price. Dr. Liese responded that he could only speculate as to what happens with markup along the supply chain, noting that it appears to get higher as the product gets closer to retailers, but that we would not expect any participant to extract excessive value in very competitive markets. Another Council member noted that, in the presentation, the Gulf shrimp price is the ex-vessel price, but the imported shrimp price is a final cost, which includes transportation and processing costs, and would therefore be higher. Ms. Bosarge (Shrimp AP Chair) reinforced that expenses have increased over time but that ex-vessel shrimp prices are lower in recent years than received in the 1980s and 1990s.

Dr. Lowther (SEFSC) presented a review of the 2024 Texas Closure. He noted a lot of variability in landings of Texas offshore brown and white shrimp from 2016-2024. He added that landings of Texas offshore white shrimp in July and August 2024 were primarily in larger size categories. A Committee member stated that there is a biological purpose for the Texas Closure in allowing shrimp to grow to larger sizes and encouraged Dr. Liese to work with Texas state agency folks on economic data for future presentations.

**The Committee recommends, and I so move, to request that NMFS continue with the Texas Federal Closure in the coming year in conjunction with the state of Texas Closure in 2025.**

*Motion carried unanimously.*

***FINAL Action: Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery (Tab D, Nos. 5a-e)***

Council staff reviewed the summary of written and virtual public comments, noting that a direct mailout was sent to Gulf shrimp moratorium permit holders and that a virtual public hearing webinar was held on March 31, 2025. A Council member inquired if there was any industry feedback in support of Alternative 2. Council staff responded that there were no direct comments favoring Alternative 2 but that there were comments indicating an inability of the fleet to take on any additional costs.

Council staff reviewed the alternatives in the Shrimp Framework Action and noted that, while the devices for Alternative 1 and Preferred Alternative 3 were referred to as cellular electronic logbooks in the text, the devices to be considered under Preferred Alternative 3 would not be the same technology as under Alternative 1. Council staff added that NMFS plans to transition the administration of the vessel monitoring system (VMS) program from the Office of Law Enforcement to the Office of Science and Technology. Council staff noted that the Effects on the Administrative Environment in Chapter 4 had been updated to reflect cost information provided by the SEFSC in its March 4, 2025, correspondence to the Gulf Council.

Dr. Gloeckner (SEFSC) reviewed the table of administrative costs in the SEFSC's March 4, 2025, letter to the Gulf Council. He noted that these costs are incremental costs to the agency and that Alternative 2 is expected to cost substantially less to initiate and continually operate compared to Preferred Alternative 3 when summed across all respective program components. Council staff added that these detailed costs are in a condensed version in Table 4.1.4.1 in the Shrimp Framework Action.

A Committee member noted the Council's desire for the Shrimp AP to discuss these administrative costs, which were not received by the Council for review by the Shrimp AP until the day of its meeting. The Committee member stated that several of the line items in the SEFSC letter have already been covered or completed and do not need to be included in the budget. The Committee member then added that some budget items were being duplicated as they are already being conducted for other programs and contended that approximately 70% of the SEFSC's projected costs for Preferred Alternative 3 could be eliminated from the estimate.

Mr. Strelcheck (SERO) reviewed an infographic of administrative costs between Alternative 2 and Preferred Alternative 3 and emphasized that the system to be built under Preferred Alternative 3 duplicates the system that exists under Alternative 2. A Committee member inquired who is paying for device costs under Alternative 2. Mr. Strelcheck responded that the Early Adopter Program, as well as the national VMS reimbursement program, is currently available to help fund the purchase of devices. Council staff inquired why development of technical specifications are a cost under Alternative 3 and why customer service would be an administrative cost, instead of calls going to vendors. Dr. Stephen (SERO) responded that technical specifications are for hardware and that the National VMS Program already has a contract in place which would cover devices under Alternative 2. A separate contract would be needed for a program under Preferred Alternative 3. Dr. Stephen added that calls about device issues are typically received by the agency first. Dr. Gloeckner responded that calls can range from regulatory questions to device troubleshooting.

A Committee member inquired why shrimpers would want Alternative 3 even though it means they would bear the cost of devices. Ms. Bosarge stated that shrimpers would prefer the government pay for the devices and that the industry lobbied for \$1.7 million to assist with the data collection program. She stated that there are two problems: (1) devices needed to go from 3G to 4G and (2) the physical server needed to be replaced with a cloud-based program. She acknowledged that the cloud-based server is in place and that about 300 devices will be purchased through the Early Adopter Program. However, more devices should have been covered through the Early Adopter Program. She also expressed concern that, in the current budget environment, NMFS may not have the funds to reimburse vessels for VMS units under

Alternative 2. She stated that the technical specification development costs should be minimal, as she already wrote the technical specifications, which can be found in an appendix of the Shrimp Framework Action. Mr. Strelcheck noted that it has long been a concern of industry that data will go directly to OLE, and that the agency is now transitioning the VMS program administration to the Office of Science and Technology. He added that requirements for government security have substantially increased over time, as have the costs. Ms. Levy (NOAA General Counsel) reviewed the codified text for Preferred Alternative 3 and noted that final details would need to be approved by the Council Chair.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to recommend the Council approve the Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.

*Motion carried with one abstention.*

#### ***2023 Gulf Shrimp Fishery Effort Presentation (Tab D, No. 6)***

Mr. Dettloff (SEFSC) presented on the Gulf shrimp fishery effort in 2023. From 2022 to 2023, effort increased in statistical areas 10-21 but decreased in the total Gulf. Council staff added that, in Shrimp Amendment 18, the target reduction goal for juvenile red snapper of shrimp trawl bycatch mortality is 60% less than the benchmark years of 2001-2003 and requires monitoring of days fished in the 10-30 fathom depth zone in statistical areas 10-21; the purpose of target reduction goal is to assist with rebuilding of the red snapper stock. A Committee member noted that the Gulf shrimp fishery is well within the target reduction goal.

#### ***Discussion of Potential Expiration of Moratorium for Federal Gulf Shrimp Permits (Tab D, Nos. 7a-b)***

Council staff noted that the moratorium for federal Gulf shrimp permits is set to expire October 26, 2026, as set forth in Shrimp Amendment 17B. The moratorium was initially established in Shrimp Amendment 13 in 2006 for a period of 10 years and was then extended for another 10 years in Shrimp Amendment 17B. Both amendments referenced the prevention of overcapacity as a purpose of the moratorium. Council staff added that the Shrimp AP passed a motion recommending the Council extend the moratorium for an additional 10 years. Ms. Bosarge emphasized that the Shrimp AP expressed interest in the amendment having only one action to focus solely on the continuation of the moratorium for federal Gulf shrimp permits.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to direct staff to begin development of a shrimp amendment to extend the moratorium on federal Gulf shrimp permits.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

***Remaining Items from Summary of the March 4, 2025, Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting (Tab D, No. 4c)***

Council staff reviewed a motion from the Shrimp AP related to the forthcoming results of the SEDAR 87 stock assessments for brown, white, and pink shrimp. Council staff added that the Shrimp AP's motion could be brought back to the Shrimp Committee when the results of SEDAR 87 are presented. Ms. Bosarge noted that the Shrimp AP was not expecting the Council to act on this motion.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.