

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SHRIMP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Lodge at Gulf State Park Gulf Shores, Alabama

April 8, 2024

VOTING MEMBERS

- 10 Chris Schieble (designee for Ryan Montegut).....Louisiana
- 11 Kesley Banks.....Texas
- 12 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 13 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 14 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 15 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 16 Bob Gill.....Florida
- 17 Anthony Overton.....Alabama
- 18 Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi
- 19 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 20 Troy Williamson.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- 23 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 24 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 25 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 26 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 27 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
- 28 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- 29 Ed Walker.....Florida

STAFF

- 32 Max Birdsong.....Social Scientist
- 33 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 34 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 35 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 36 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 37 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 38 Jessica Matos.....Administrative & Accounting Technician
- 39 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 40 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 41 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 42 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- 45 Leann Bosarge.....MS
- 46 Jessica McCawley.....SAFMC
- 47 Mike Travis.....NOAA
- 48 John Walter.....SEFSC

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PAGE 18: Motion in Alternative 3 to replace "a non-OLE" with "the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC)". The motion carried on page 24.

PAGE 34: Motion that the council requests NMFS adopt the following priorities for utilizing the FY24 \$850,000 appropriation for ELB development and implementation: 1) sufficient funding to ensure the SEFSC server has capacity to receive and store shrimp fishery vessel position data; 2) develop a statistically robust design for distributing units to a representative portion of the fleet that would be comparable to the last ten years; 3) cover the cost of providing units and cellular service to those shrimp vessels, pursuant to the early adopter program. The motion carried on page 34.

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1 The Shrimp Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at The Lodge at Gulf State Park in
3 Gulf Shores, Alabama on Monday morning, April 8, 2024, and was
4 called to order by Chairman Chris Schieble.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

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

16
17 The first item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda, Tab
18 D, Number 1. Does anyone have any other business they would
19 like to add? Mr. Gill.

20
21 **MR. BOB GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to add,
22 under Other Business, a request by industry regarding
23 certification of noncompliance.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Duly noted. We will add that at the
26 end. I would also like to get a motion to adjust the agenda a
27 little bit, as far as the order of the speakers today, and we
28 would like to move Agenda Item VII ahead of Agenda Item VI.

29
30 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** So moved.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Can a get second?

33
34 **GENERAL JOE SPRAGGINS:** Second.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, General Spraggins. All right.
37 The next agenda item is the Approval of the January 2024
38 Minutes, which is Tab D, Number 2. Are there any additions,
39 deletions, or edits to those minutes from the last meeting? I
40 didn't have any corrections that I saw. Anybody else? Seeing
41 none, is there anyone opposed to adopting the minutes as written
42 then? All in favor. The minutes are adopted.

43
44 Next up on the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps, and
45 that's Tab D, Number 3, and we're going to let Dr. Freeman lead
46 us through that action guide, please.

47
48 **DR. MATT FREEMAN:** Thank you, sir. The first agenda item is the

1 Biological Review of the Texas Closure. For this item, the
2 Shrimp AP meeting summary and recommendation will be presented
3 to the committee, and the committee is requested to take action
4 and determine if the Texas closure should continue in 2024, and
5 we had the Shrimp AP chair, Ms. Bosarge, who is going to lead us
6 through that discussion.

7
8
9

BIOLOGICAL REVIEW OF THE TEXAS CLOSURE

10 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Good morning, everyone. It's good to see
11 you. I'm excited to be here, especially for this Shrimp
12 Committee, because you're actually going to get a lot of
13 presentations and information on two of the major management
14 measures that you actually have for shrimp.

15

16 Shrimp, unlike a lot of the other things that you manage,
17 doesn't, I guess, require quite as much attention sometimes,
18 because it's an annual species, and so you don't have your ACLs
19 and quota monitoring and that. However, you do have things like
20 this, which is the Texas closure, and so if staff could pull up
21 the presentation that's background information in the briefing
22 book, and I think the best slide to kind of summarize this for
23 the council would be Slide 6, if you could go to that.

24

25 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Hold on a second, and so we're having some
26 power problems here, and I was requested to announce that please
27 try to unplug as many laptops as possible, to cut the amperage
28 load on all the breakers for a little bit, and we can get the
29 projectors back up and going.

30

31 **MS. BOSARGE:** All right. Well, that's fine, and we can do it
32 without that slide, and so, just to give you a little
33 background, this management measure, the Texas closure, is
34 something that the council looks at every year and decides
35 whether they're going to continue on with it or not. It's a
36 little different management measure, in that it's not
37 necessarily done for a biological basis, but more so for
38 economic reasons for the fishery.

39

40 Like many things in life, the bigger something is, the more it
41 costs sometimes, right, like a vehicle, and it's the same thing
42 with shrimp, and so this closure allows the shrimp, which the
43 closure generally goes from mid-May out to mid-July, and so the
44 federal waters off the State of Texas are closed, along with the
45 state waters as well, for many years now anyway, and this allows
46 the shrimp to grow to a bigger size before they're harvested,
47 which means that the fishermen that land those shrimp will get
48 hopefully get a higher price for those shrimp, right, and so

1 it's more economically viable, from a business standpoint, and
2 so the Shrimp AP --

3
4 Although the council has done this for many, many years, we
5 always have a robust discussion, and we weigh the pros and cons
6 of that. We did get a presentation from the Science Center, at
7 our Shrimp AP meeting, which is what I was going to show you
8 there, and so Slide 6, if you have it up on your laptops, that
9 slide just kind of shows you the size of the shrimp that were
10 landed last year during the Texas closure, and what you would
11 want to see is fewer of those small-size category shrimp being
12 landed, and that would indicate that the Texas closure, as a
13 management measure for economic reasons, was successful, right,
14 and it was working.

15
16 Although some of the data that we received this year was
17 limited, compared to last year, and the AP did have some
18 feedback on that, that we really need to see CPUEs, because,
19 generally, shrimp landings are going down, and so, without the
20 CPUE, we couldn't really make heads or tails of the landings.

21
22 However, for the size bins, we felt that was enough information
23 to say that it was still successful, and so, after we got past
24 the Science Center presentation, we moved on to the more general
25 state of the industry, which, as you all know, our industry is
26 essentially in a crisis at this point.

27
28 There are a lot of boats that are tied up, and have been tied up
29 for quite some time now, and so, as fishermen around the table,
30 we had this discussion of, you know, what do we think this year
31 will look like, and we don't see things getting better.
32 However, we all agreed, as fishermen, that the Texas opening --
33 If we were going to be able to make money anywhere this year,
34 going out on a trip to catch shrimp, it would probably be the
35 Texas opening.

36
37 Your CPUE is just very high there, and you're catching larger
38 shrimp, and so you're getting more money for them, and so we
39 felt, if we had a shot at being profitable, it would be that
40 Texas opening, which relies on the Texas closure, and so the
41 Shrimp AP, after that discussion, which we always have the flip
42 side as well, and we talk about what if we don't, you know, but
43 we did have a motion that carried, and that motion was to
44 request that NMFS continue with the Texas federal closure in the
45 coming year, in conjunction with the State of Texas closure in
46 2024, and the motion carried with one abstention, and that's
47 what I have for you.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Do we have any
2 questions for Ms. Bosarge and the Shrimp AP report for that
3 item? Mr. Gill.

4
5 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure if these
6 questions are for Leann or just generic, but one of my concerns
7 on this question, and this is probably the ninth time I've done
8 this, is that I tend to rubberstamp this, and I suspect that
9 most of us around the table do, and we don't really know the
10 background, the why-for, and Leann provided some good
11 information in that regard, but the whole process kind of falls
12 behind is it a good thing, and yes, and let's do it, but we
13 don't base that on good information that says, yes, this really
14 does make sense to me, aside from the fact that Harry or Joe
15 industry, or anybody else, wants it.

16
17 The presentation that has been provided, it seems to me, does
18 not do the job at all, and it doesn't provide -- For example,
19 this is an economic question, and where is the economic
20 information, and where is the shrimp pricing by size, for
21 example, currently? How about things like shrimp size comps,
22 both temporally and spatially, to see what is there, so that the
23 decision is something more than a rubberstamp, and the
24 presentation, as provided, at least Dr. Lowther's presentation,
25 doesn't provide any of that.

26
27 There's almost nothing there on which to make a rational
28 decision on this question, and so Dr. Lowther asked, at the end
29 of his presentation, what else is there, and a whole bunch, and,
30 if it's an economic question, then there certainly ought to be
31 economic data to support it and justify it. Thank you.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gill. Just as a
34 reminder, from the AP report, which we have here from the most
35 recent meeting, there was some discussion, by members,
36 especially from Texas, about the closure, and they talked about
37 the CPUE, as Ms. Bosarge mentioned, and Dr. Lowther said that,
38 in future presentations, that would be included, and so I think
39 we'll get some more information, I guess, the next go-round with
40 this, but, also, there's an anticipation, by businesses in
41 Texas, that that closure is going to take place every year, and
42 it's an economic driver, and so just keep that in consideration
43 as well, and perhaps Dakus could speak more on that.

44
45 **MR. DAKUS GEESLIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Leann,
46 for the presentation. I do have one kind of counter argument,
47 and, when we saw that it's strictly for economic reasons,
48 primarily yes, but we're using the biology to get to those

1 economics, and the proof is in the pudding, and maybe that's
2 what Mr. Gill is speaking to, that it's been over nine times
3 that you bring this up, and I think because it's been
4 demonstrated that those shrimp do get to bigger sizes, and those
5 bigger sizes are more economically viable within the industry,
6 and so we get to that point.

7
8 I completely agree with the Shrimp AP, and what Leann has
9 brought to the table today, but I would argue that that biology
10 is critical to getting to that economic impact within the
11 fishery, and we certainly support continuing of the Texas
12 closure.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dakus. Mr. Gill, to that point?

15
16 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I don't disagree at all,
17 Dakus, and I think that's part of the equation, but part of this
18 equation is economic in nature, and, for example, we're in an
19 unusual shrimp market position at the moment, and does that
20 change anything? I have no idea, and there's nothing here to
21 tell us, but I would comment, Mr. Chairman, to your comments,
22 that I don't believe I've ever seen economic information on the
23 Texas closure question, as backup, and it's always been just the
24 biology, but not enough of that, because there is no size comps,
25 and there's none of that.

26
27 I think what we have is an inadequate document on which to
28 really make a basis, other than, hey, it seems to be a good
29 thing, and let's do it, and we rubberstamp it again, but we're
30 really basing it on very, very little.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Mr. Diaz.

33
34 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I don't really disagree
35 with anything that's been said, and I think Mr. Gill makes a
36 good point, but I am going to support the Texas closure this
37 year, but I would encourage the Shrimp AP to maybe take a
38 different look at it in the years coming, because what's
39 striking me is the world has changed, and Leann knows that
40 better than anybody else, and so, about thirty years ago, we
41 would have a thousand, or more, boats in the State of
42 Mississippi for an opening, and now we've got about a tenth of
43 that.

44
45 We don't have the effort anymore, and I'm just wondering, if the
46 future, if effort keeps dropping off, if this Texas closure
47 really is as effective as it has been in the past, and so I just
48 think, in the future, there needs to be somebody examining that,

1 and that examination is going to come from what Mr. Gill is
2 talking about. It's going to be a good, robust economic
3 analysis, and so thank you, Mr. Chair.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right. Any other comments? Leann.

6
7 **MS. BOSARGE:** Dale, we actually did go through exactly what
8 you're talking about, and there were these two competing forces,
9 as I saw it, that we wanted to debate at the Shrimp AP, and that
10 was, okay, well, so let's play devil's advocate. If we have
11 this many boats tied up right now, generally, right, in the
12 industry, do we need the Texas closure this year, or is the
13 Texas closure even more important as a result of that, and so
14 the fishermen around the table weighed-in heavily on that point,
15 and they said, you know, yes, we have lower effort right now,
16 but, even with those lower efforts, we're having hell turning a
17 profit, and so anything that you can do to make -- Just give us
18 that edge, right, that larger-size shrimp, that's a little bit
19 more money at the dock, and the CPUE that's a little higher, so
20 we can catch them faster, right, than if we didn't have the
21 closure, and those things will make us a little more efficient,
22 and hopefully we can make money.

23
24 The Texas boats around the table were very outspoken about this,
25 and they were like, please, you know, we need this, and,
26 although there may be fewer boats -- Like so our boats, a lot of
27 times, travel to the Texas opening, to make that opening, from
28 Mississippi, and you will see boats from Florida, and even from
29 the east coast, during your bumper years, right, when conditions
30 are right, that will make that trip to go to the Texas opening,
31 because it's just that great of an opening.

32
33 We doubt we will see that this year. However, we still think
34 it's very important, for those boats that will make the trip, to
35 be profitable, and, to Mr. Gill's point, the AP had the same
36 feedback for the Science Center.

37
38 We're lucky we have Dr. Nance out here in the audience today,
39 and he would always give this presentation to the Shrimp AP, and
40 he not only would give that presentation, which would include
41 CPUEs and lots of other information, but he also had an economic
42 report, that was always in our briefing book, that he would go
43 over as well, where he did what you're talking about, the
44 economic analysis, and he put a lot of work into that.

45
46 The Shrimp AP did ask the Science Center, and we said, you know,
47 that's not in our briefing book this year, and we need to see
48 that, and, you know, please pick that back up, but I think any

1 encouragement that you could give the Science Center would
2 really help the AP drive that point home, and so we had the same
3 concerns.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I've got General
6 Spraggins and then Dr. Frazer.

7
8 **GENERAL SPRAGGINS:** I would -- Leann, I thank you for what
9 you're doing on this, and I'll you what, that you're right. You
10 know, watching the shrimp seasons, and watching what's going on
11 in Mississippi, just in our little bitty state area, and seeing
12 the size of them, and, obviously, you know, we have to watch,
13 because they'll move out, and we have to still do the shrimp, to
14 where the smaller person can go catch some of them, but, at
15 sixty-cents a pound, it's just not getting it, and, you know,
16 whatever you can do, whatever you all can do, or the Shrimp AP
17 or anything else, and just try to help these people, and I
18 appreciate everything you're doing. Thank you.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, General Spraggins. Dr. Frazer.

21
22 **DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not on the
23 committee, but I just have a question for Leann. I'm trying to
24 understand kind of the nature of the industry, and the
25 competition with the foreign imports, right, and so, you know,
26 when you look at the size of the shrimp, the white shrimp, in
27 August, right, and so they're in that zero to fifteen bin,
28 right, and so is there a -- What are -- Typically, what do the
29 imports look -- You know, what size bin would they roll in? How
30 much of a competitive advantage is it to the U.S. industry to
31 hold off?

32
33 **MS. BOSARGE:** So I'm probably not the best person to answer
34 this, since I'm not an economist that, you know, sees all the
35 data on imports, but, I mean, generally speaking, from a
36 commonsense standpoint, right, and so the imports, first off,
37 are our biggest competition, and they're not wild-caught, right,
38 and they're raised in a pond, and it's aquaculture.

39
40 Therefore, to grow that shrimp to a bigger size, it costs that
41 company more money. Therefore, they have a lower profit, right,
42 and now, in years past, from my perspective, and Dr. Walter, or
43 maybe even Dr. Nance, can weigh-in, but there weren't quite as
44 many of those bigger shrimp on the market, and it was more of a
45 smaller shrimp in that aquaculture market.

46
47 Now, I have seen bigger shrimp these days, and I don't know if
48 that's being they're in dire straits as well, and I don't know

1 what's driving that, but the fact still remains that, the bigger
2 shrimp that we can catch, the more money we will get for them,
3 and so it's still better for us, and so there's that piece of --
4 Was that -- Generally speaking, what we're up against is a -- I
5 was going to talk to you about this at the end of the committee,
6 when you asked for the rest of the report from the AP, but,
7 essentially, what we're up against, and I'll bring this up, and
8 give you some things that I think the council could do to maybe
9 help the industry.

10
11 There's been a subsidization, by entities that are very
12 powerful, like the World Bank and things like that, of shrimp
13 ponds overseas, for forty or fifty years now, and it's a great
14 way to put people to work in developing countries and bring them
15 out of poverty. That's great. That's good, but, at some point,
16 there has to be an equilibrium.

17
18 You can't continue to subsidize that, to the point that you have
19 more shrimp on the market than the world demands, and wants to
20 consume, and I think that's what has happened in our industry at
21 this point. Any downturn in the global economy, just a little
22 blip on the radar, and we have more shrimp supply on the world
23 market than what the world wants to consume, and that is why our
24 industry has crashed, and, until someone in a place of power
25 will say no, the U.S. does not support subsidizing industries
26 overseas that are killing our industry here at home, which these
27 are people on the brink, you know, and that's where we're at,
28 and so -- But, anyway, I have some ideas to fix it, and I'm not
29 just going to fuss about it, and so we'll get to that,
30 hopefully, at the end of your committee.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

33
34 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I mean, this is a good conversation, and,
35 you know, the economic issues are, obviously, far broader than
36 just the Texas shrimp opening, and I appreciate, Bob, your
37 comments, and certainly I think future closures and openings can
38 present some additional economic data, but I would caution that
39 I don't think it's all that simple, and it requires some
40 modeling, and assumptions, and, as you have long pointed out,
41 Bob, right, fishermen behavior is very difficult to predict,
42 especially when we've closed the shrimp fishery, for however
43 many years, and, you know, had this closure in place, but some
44 work could be done there, obviously, to at least provide some
45 additional economic information.

46
47 What I did want to note is that Sea Grant, and Gulf States, are
48 preparing for a meeting, in Baton Rouge, at the end of this

1 month, or early next month, and this will be certainly front and
2 center, in terms of the conversation of the future of the Gulf
3 shrimp industry, and, where we're able to help, and kind of take
4 a whole-government approach, with some of the work that the
5 Science Center is doing, but the other work that other federal
6 agencies are doing, as well as working directly with the
7 industry members, and so more to come on that, but I just wanted
8 to acknowledge that that is certainly taking place, because I
9 think it directly relates to the challenges that Leann is
10 talking about here.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Any other further comments on this?
13 Seeing none, Dr. Freeman, are we able to go to Dr. Lowther's
14 presentation? Is that working?

15
16 **DR. FREEMAN:** Just one moment. Let me check with admin staff.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay, and so the presentation is background
19 information, and Dr. Lowther is not presenting, and I was
20 misunderstanding that, and so the AP gave us a motion, from
21 their meeting, to request that National Marine Fisheries Service
22 continue the Texas federal closure in the coming year, in
23 conjunction with the State of Texas closure in 2024, and, at the
24 AP, that carried with only one abstention. Do we have anyone
25 that would like to move forward with that at the council? Mr.
26 Diaz.

27
28 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. **Based on the AP's**
29 **recommendation, I would like to move forward and present the**
30 **AP's motion for council.**

31
32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. We have a second from Mr. Broussard.
33 Is there any other discussion for this motion? **Seeing none, is**
34 **there any opposition to going forward with the motion? I don't**
35 **see any, and so the motion passes.** Moving on to the next agenda
36 item, Dr. Freeman.

37
38 **DRAFT SHRIMP FRAMEWORK ACTION: MODIFICATION OF THE VESSEL**
39 **POSITION DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO SHRIMP**
40 **FISHERY DOCUMENT AND PRESENTATION**

41
42 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir. For this next agenda item, the
43 committee will be presented with the draft framework amendment
44 to transition the Gulf shrimp fishery from the expired cELB to a
45 new device collecting vessel position data for the purpose of
46 maintaining effort estimation. Staff will review the draft
47 purpose and need statements and draft alternatives, as well as
48 other potential decisions.

1
2 The committee last reviewed the draft framework at its April
3 2023 meeting and decided to hold on further discussion until
4 NMFS conducted side-by-side testing of cELB units with certain
5 cellular vessel monitoring system units and the results of the
6 data being run through the new NMFS shrimp effort algorithm
7 being presented to the committee.

8
9 Those results were presented to the committee at its October
10 2023 meeting, and the committee then requested to review the
11 draft framework amendment at its April 2024 meeting, following
12 an update on the NMFS early adopter program at its January 2024
13 meeting.

14
15 The committee will also receive the summary recommendations from
16 the March 2024 Shrimp AP meeting. The committee should ask
17 questions and provide staff with further direction for the draft
18 framework amendment.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Freeman. The next
21 step here is Tab D, Number 5(b), and is that correct?

22
23 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Are you ready to go forward with that
26 presentation? Can we do that, technically, or no?

27
28 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, that should be fine.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay.

31
32 **DR. FREEMAN:** Okay, and so this provides the outline of the
33 presentation, and so, as a reminder, we will review the purpose
34 and need statements, which the committee saw last April. Then
35 we'll review the alternatives and review and respond to feedback
36 from the IPT and the Shrimp AP on alternatives. Then we will
37 look at issues that are impacting next steps regarding
38 development of the document, and, lastly, look at a tentative
39 timeline.

40
41 All right, and, as a reminder, here for the purpose statement,
42 the purpose is to transition from the expired 3G cellular
43 electronic logbook program to a system that would maintain the
44 council and NMFS' scientific ability to estimate and monitor
45 fishing effort in the Gulf shrimp fishery, while minimizing the
46 economic burden on the industry, to the maximum extent
47 practicable.

48

1
2 The need is to base conservation and management measures on the
3 best scientific information available and to minimize bycatch,
4 to the extent practicable, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens
5 Fishery Conservation and Management Act and minimize
6 interactions with protected species, as required by the ESA.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Freeman, can we pause for a second? We
9 have a question from Mr. Strelcheck.

10
11 **MR. STRELCHECK:** If you can go back to the purpose statement,
12 and so I just wanted to comment, and so I'm fine with the
13 purpose statement, and I would add that we do need to look at
14 this from the standpoint of minimizing the economic burden on
15 the industry as well as the agency, or the taxpayer, right, and
16 so it's kind of that collective cost of the program as a whole,
17 and so I would suggest adding that to the purpose statement.

18
19 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you, sir. I made a note of that, and I will
20 bring that to the IPT following the council meeting. Bernie, if
21 we could advance two slides forward, to Action 1, and so this is
22 a note contained with Action 1, before we go into the
23 alternatives, and the types of data, and the amount, as well as
24 the timing of data collection, would not vary between
25 alternatives.

26
27 Consistent with current requirements, the permitted vessels
28 selected to participate must also provide the National Marine
29 Fisheries Service with information listed there, and, as set
30 forth in Amendment 13, and 50 CFR, compliance with these
31 requirements, and the requirement to submit vessel position
32 data, is required for permit renewal.

33
34 Alternative 1 is the no action, where would maintain the current
35 method to collect vessel position data through the cELB units
36 supplied by NMFS. Prior to December 7, 2020, the owners, or
37 operators, of selected vessels were responsible for the cost of
38 cellular service necessary to transmit the data. Currently,
39 because 3G cellular transmission is no longer possible, NMFS
40 will collect the memory cards from the units via mail.

41
42 As a quick reminder for committee members, that is currently
43 being done every six months with NMFS, that they are mailing, to
44 vessel owners, replacement SD cards, and they are taking out the
45 current ones and mailing those back.

46
47 Alternative 2 would be to implement a cellular vessel monitoring
48 system requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that provides

1 archived position data compatible with the Science Center's
2 shrimp effort algorithm. If selected by the Science and
3 Research Director, the owner, or operator, of a shrimp vessel
4 with a valid or renewable Gulf shrimp moratorium permit would be
5 required to install a type-approved VMS unit that archives
6 vessel position on a shrimp fishing trip in the Gulf and
7 automatically transmits that data, via cellular service, to
8 NMFS.

9
10 Alternative 3 would be to implement a cELB requirement for the
11 Gulf shrimp fishery that provides archived position data
12 compatible with the Science Center's shrimp effort algorithm.
13 If selected by the SRD, the owner, or operator, of a shrimp
14 vessel with a valid or renewable SPGM would be required to
15 install a NMFS-approved ELB that archives vessel position when
16 on a shrimp fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits
17 those data, via cellular service, to a non-OLE NMFS server.
18 NMFS-approved ELBs would not be type-approved, based on
19 regulations at 50 CFR.

20
21 The next couple of slides discuss some of the similarities and
22 differences between Alternatives 2 and 3. In comparing
23 Alternatives 2 and 3, the types of data, the amount and timing
24 of data collection, and the minimum number of position fixes
25 would not vary. It is of note that, as soon as the technical
26 specifications for Alternative 3 that are outlined in Appendix D
27 would be formally adopted by NOAA Fisheries.

28
29 As a reminder, under those alternatives, vessel position is
30 recorded every ten minutes, and the minimum number of position
31 fixes the unit can process would be 14,400, and that would
32 ensure a minimum hundred days of position fixes, which could be
33 stored for long trips outside of cellular range.

34
35 In terms of reimbursement, under Alternative 2, currently, VMS
36 reimbursement is available nationally for the purpose costs of
37 the units, while installation, maintenance, and communication
38 costs are covered by vessel owners, and reimbursement is capped
39 at \$950 for programs allowing the use of a cellular VMS. The
40 way that Alternative 3 is structured right now, they would not
41 be eligible for that reimbursement program.

42
43 In terms of data storage, under Alternative 2, under the current
44 national VMS regulations, OLE would maintain final storage of
45 the collected data, to which the Science Center would have
46 access. Under Alternative 3, an approved ELB would operate in
47 the same manner as an approved VMS, but the collected data would
48 be transmitted to a non-OLE NMFS server. OLE would retain

1 access to this data.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Freeman, could we have a pause for a
4 second? I think Mr. Strelcheck had a question about the
5 previous slide, Alternative 1.

6
7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I just wanted to note that, I think, with
8 Alternative 2, or even 3, with this early adopters program that
9 the agency has received \$850,000 for, and it's being
10 administered by LGL, that we probably should note that in the
11 amendment, because certainly that is providing some
12 reimbursement to the industry for purchase of these units
13 already.

14
15 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you for that. We did include some
16 discussion of the early adopter program in this draft, and
17 certainly, once we get into Chapter 4, with the analysis,
18 particularly the economic analysis, that would come into
19 consideration. Vessels that participate in the early adopter
20 program, that may be selected, would not have to purchase units,
21 and so thank you for that.

22
23 Bernie, if you could go to the next slide on type-approval, and
24 so, with Alternative 2, a national VMS type-approval process
25 already exists. As noted, with Alternative 3, if the national
26 VMS type-approval process is not followed, the Science Center
27 would need to develop a separate contract for shrimp-specific
28 testing and certification, as well as maintain requirements for
29 vendors on the Science Center shrimp program website. I see a
30 question.

31
32 **DR. JOHN WALTER:** Thanks. I'm not on the committee, but I just
33 wanted to make the comment here about the requirement here then
34 to accept -- To stand up a separate certification process that
35 the Science Center would do, and, given that we're talking about
36 trying to minimize costs, both to the industry as well as to the
37 taxpayer, setting up a separate, and duplicative, process is
38 going to add additional costs.

39
40 I believe that all of the early adopter units are type-approved
41 in other fisheries, and the specifications are just set
42 according to the shrimp needs, which would mean that we would
43 just set out what those specifications need to be in the
44 framework action, but the actual hardware, and software, could
45 certainly meet the type-approval in another fishery, which has a
46 couple of benefits, the first one being that the vendors then
47 have access to other fisheries, so that there's an economy of
48 scale, and, two, there is an existing type-approval process that

1 we don't have to stand up as separate from it, which, as the
2 Science Center, we don't want to be in the business of standing
3 that up.

4
5 Then, three, I think we have then the flexibility, within what
6 our needs are here locally, to simply program them and use the
7 features that are desired for this fishery for the data
8 collection, and so I think that's probably something that, if I
9 could recommend sort of a -- There's text that said those would,
10 in previous slides, not be type-approved in other fisheries, and
11 I think that's an extreme position, because they could be type-
12 approved in other fisheries, but just programmed for shrimp, and
13 I think, here, we are mainly crystallizing the concerns of the
14 industry, in terms of how the data is routed, in the differences
15 between 2 and 3, and if we could -- We're exploring how the
16 Science Center can collect the data as part of the early adopter
17 program, but the hardware and software combinations, and how you
18 use it, are just what specifications you use.

19
20 I would say, in that previous slide, where it says that they
21 would not be, that maybe we could soften that language, and
22 then, here, that the separate contract -- Maybe we could allow
23 for previously type-approved units to be programmed. Thanks.

24
25 **DR. FREEMAN:** All right. Thank you for that. Bernie, if we
26 could advance to the next slide, and so, last time the council
27 saw the document, last April, there was a request for some
28 feedback from the IPT, in terms of the current wording of
29 Alternatives 2 and 3. In response to that, these are bullet
30 points offered up from the IPT, which is to be consistent with
31 language with shrimp in the South Atlantic, and it simply
32 requires that the VMS be operating, quote, on a trip, and so, in
33 essence, a fishing trip, and not just a shrimp fishing trip.

34
35 There were some questions from the IPT, in terms of how we would
36 know whether the trip is for the purpose of harvesting shrimp,
37 as opposed to some other species, and there were some comments
38 that imposing a declaration requirement might be the only way,
39 and so, at this point, before I advance to the next slide, one
40 thing we would be looking for is a committee response to that
41 IPT feedback, whether we should remove or retain the word
42 "shrimp" in the phrase "when on a shrimp fishing trip" in
43 Alternatives 2 and 3. Yes, sir.

44
45 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess my comment, on this
46 one, is that shrimp vessels are rigged out for shrimp, and
47 they've got a lot of gear onboard, and that's what it's for, and
48 so the number of times you would do the expense for going out on

1 a trip for the pleasure of a fishing trip, or maybe a reef fish
2 trip or something, are few and far between, because you're
3 carrying a lot of stuff that's uniquely designed for shrimp, and
4 so I think the question is fundamentally academic.

5
6 Yes, there might be some times that a vessel goes out for other
7 reasons, but, 99.9 percent of the time, they would be going out
8 for shrimp, and so I don't think it's a big issue, and I
9 personally prefer including "shrimp" in there, but I'm perfectly
10 fine with leaving it out, and I do not think we need to impose a
11 declaration requirement to identify this, because it self-
12 identifies, effectively. Thank you.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Any other comments on that? Dr. Freeman, I
15 guess carry on.

16
17 **DR. FREEMAN:** Okay. Thank you. Bernie, if we could advance to
18 the next slide, and so this was a motion from the Shrimp AP in
19 March. Here, they were requesting that the council amend the
20 language of Alternative 3 in Action 1 and to select Alternative
21 3, as so amended, as its preferred alternative. There is some
22 language that has a strikethrough, that the AP would like to see
23 removed, which was the part that says "and automatically
24 transmits those data, via cellular service, to a non-OLE NMFS
25 server".

26
27 Then we've highlighted the new language inserted by the AP, and
28 so that states that "data shall not be transmitted directly to
29 the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement, but shall instead be
30 transmitted automatically and directly via cellular service to
31 the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center server", and, in the
32 last sentence, specifying that NMFS-approved ELBs for the Gulf
33 shrimp fishery would not be type-approved, based on regulations
34 at 50 CFR. Again, I will pause here, to look for the
35 committee's response to the AP's change to the wording of
36 Alternative 3.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Gill.

39
40 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so the intent here is,
41 obviously, on the transmission side, where it goes, as opposed
42 to any other reason, and I thought that we could simplify the
43 first part of the AP's recommendation, and I've got a motion for
44 that, and, Bernie, if you would pull up my shrimp motion. It
45 basically -- My understanding is it says the same thing as the
46 first part, and I would move that to replace it.

47
48 **If I might, Mr. Chairman, the motion is, in Alternative 3,**

1 replace "non-OLE" with "Southeast Fisheries Science Center
2 (SEFSC)", which is the intent of the AP motion, as I see it, but
3 it does it with a whole lot fewer words. It does not address
4 the second recommendation for the Gulf shrimp fishery, but it
5 simplifies, if you will, the required, or, excuse me, the
6 requested AP change to where the data should go, and so I move
7 that we consider this motion.
8

9 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Do we have a second for that? Mr. Diaz.

10
11 **MR. DIAZ:** I'm not sure whether to second it for discussion or
12 to ask a question to Andy at this point. I will second it for
13 discussion, so we can flesh this out.
14

15 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. We have a second. Do we have any
16 other discussion here? Mr. Strelcheck.
17

18 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, it's been a while since we made the
19 previous motion to refer to a non-Office of Law Enforcement
20 server, but I think the intent there was to allow the agency
21 maximum discretion with regard to where this data goes, and, to
22 me, whether it goes to the Science Center, or the Office of
23 Science and Technology, or someplace else that's not the Office
24 of Law Enforcement, I would like to maintain that flexibility,
25 and I think this is overly prescriptive.
26

27 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Gill.
28

29 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I understand that
30 argument. What I'm trying to do is put forward the AP's motion
31 in a simplified version. Now, whether it's possible or not, and
32 I think Dr. Walter just mentioned that they're looking into
33 that, and it's not clear, at least in my mind, that it's even
34 possible, but it's functionally the same thing as what the AP
35 passed, and I'm continuing that.
36

37 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Mr. Gill. Mr. Strelcheck.
38

39 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, I appreciate that, Bob, but the AP's
40 motion is not the one that's currently in the amendment, right,
41 and so, if we're going to vote on the AP's motion, we need to,
42 obviously, offer that up for consideration, and so I am opposed
43 to your motion.
44

45 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Diaz.
46

47 **MR. DIAZ:** So I think I've got a pretty good understanding of
48 this. In a former life, about a hundred years ago, I used to be

1 a commercial fisherman, and I've been around law enforcement a
2 long time, marine fisheries, and I understand government, and
3 how things work, and how things are set up, and maybe it's set
4 up right now to where the Office of Law Enforcement houses this,
5 but, you know, when it first come out where you could track
6 vessels with GPS systems, that was only used, that I remember,
7 when it first come out, in criminal cases, when you had a
8 violator that violated something, and the judge might impose
9 that we would track that vessel.

10
11 I understand shrimpers now not liking this going to the Office
12 of Law Enforcement. They're participating in a legal activity,
13 and it just feels like they're being tracked by law enforcement,
14 and so I think that's the crux of the matter, but I don't know
15 if we can do anything about it, because I don't know if NOAA's
16 system can accommodate just sending it to certain places, with
17 all the issues that we have with computer security and
18 everything else, and it's just such a complicated thing.

19
20 It can't be a deal-killer though. We have to move forward and
21 get what we can collect data from folks, and so I don't know
22 where I stand, but I understand how we got here, and why we're
23 having this discussion, and it would be wonderful if National
24 Marine Fisheries could just tell us, you know, that it is very
25 viable to move it to a different server, and a different
26 location, and that's not a problem, but that's really not what
27 we're hearing, and so thank you.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Mr. Diaz. I think, during the AP
30 meeting itself, there was some conversation about this, and the
31 discussion around the room was that, if law enforcement wanted
32 to get ahold of this information, they could get it anyway, and
33 it didn't have to go directly to law enforcement for them to
34 obtain it. If they need it, they can access it from the Science
35 Center's server in the first place, and that's just how that
36 works. Dr. Freeman, would it be appropriate to have the AP
37 chair come address this, or at least summarize that part now, or
38 should we wait?

39
40 **DR. FREEMAN:** I think, given the conversation, I think that
41 would be appropriate, to hear from the AP chair.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Ms. Bosarge, could you please give us a
44 rundown? Thank you. In the meantime, Mr. Strelcheck, and I
45 think Dr. Walter, had a question, also.

46
47 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Before Leann speaks, just to address Dale's
48 comment, right, and so I don't think we're at a point where

1 we're deciding between Alternative 2 and Alternative 3. I'm
2 just stating clearly, you know, the flexibility that we would
3 want to see with Alternative 3. I think we're going to have to
4 come back in June, or later, with a comparative analysis of the
5 costs to both the industry and the agency for taking these two
6 approaches, and really look under the hood and determine,
7 obviously, what is the most suitable approach, given these
8 considerations and some of the differences between the two
9 alternatives.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right, and I agree. I think we're not
12 really at a point of even picking preferreds today, and we still
13 need some data to come in here, and so crafting this correctly
14 is probably the goal for today. Dr. Walter.

15
16 **DR. WALTER:** Thank you, Chair, and this will be partly a
17 question also, to get the AP chair's thoughts on this, because
18 there is a desire to move the administration of this data from
19 OLE to the NMFS Office of Science and Technology, and that's
20 where the idea of all things data should go through there,
21 because they should have the capacity, and that -- We don't know
22 the timeframe, or when that would happen, but, ideally, that
23 would then allow for the more capacity to keep it within the
24 government, and, Dale, you say you know how the government
25 works, and then you're smarter than I am, because I was hoping
26 that would work a little faster than it has, but it has slowed
27 down a bit.

28
29 If that does happen on a timeframe, say a couple of years in the
30 future, having it say a non-OLE server allows to then say, okay,
31 the Science Center catches it for two or three years, but, as we
32 get down to the future, maybe it then merges to Science and
33 Technology, and, if that were the case, would that seem to be
34 acceptable to the AP, and I guess that's a question that I would
35 like to hear from the chair on. Thanks.

36
37 **MS. BOSARGE:** So I think the AP was kind of coming at it from
38 just the opposite angle from what you're coming at it, and so,
39 when it said "a non-OLE NMFS server", we had the concern that,
40 well, what if somehow this ends up being a program that they
41 say, well, it just says a non-OLE NMFS server, and so it can go
42 to the Office of Law Enforcement, because that's already set up
43 for it to go there, and then we'll just transfer the data to the
44 Science Center after that, as they need it, and we wanted to
45 make it very clear here that this is our scientific data, and we
46 do not want this to turn into weaponized data.

47
48 This is for science, and that if law enforcement -- We want our

1 data to go to the Science Center, and we understand that law
2 enforcement has the ability, when they are working on a case, or
3 they see something that's suspicious, they can go and request
4 that data from the Science Center, but, when it goes
5 automatically to law enforcement, it feels, to a fisherman, as
6 if your data is being weaponized against you, that you're no
7 longer doing this for science, and this is now an enforcement
8 program.

9
10 That was our reason, and our rationale, for being very specific
11 and saying that the data shall not be transmitted directly to
12 the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement, but shall instead be
13 transmitted automatically and directly via cellular service to
14 the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and, just from a
15 fisherman's perspective -- Like I know you see it as scientific
16 data, but you have to understand that what you're actually
17 seeing is a man's competitive edge. His ability to make a
18 living is what you're putting on that screen for so many people
19 to see.

20
21 Without the knowledge that he has here, because you can't go to
22 college and be a shrimper, and you have to be on the water for
23 twenty, thirty, forty years, understanding when to go and where
24 to go, and, when you put that information on the screen, which
25 is what you get with this data -- You know, when we're going,
26 and where we're going, and that's how you catch shrimp, along
27 with gear and everything else, but, still, that's the key,
28 right, and that's what that man makes his living upon. That's
29 his private information, in his mind, that allows him to have a
30 career as a commercial fisherman, to support his family, and so
31 we are very protective of it, and we do not want it going out to
32 more people that it needs to go to.

33
34 When you send it to OLE, and I have nothing against law
35 enforcement, and hopefully they safeguard it, but, still, the
36 risk is magnified, and it not only goes to NMFS OLE, but they
37 have state partners that also see that information, and so it's
38 just being broadcast to a wider group of people that it wasn't
39 meant for. They can get it if they need it, but it shouldn't be
40 carte blanche, and so that's what we were getting at there, Bob.

41
42 That's why we were very specific to say it will not go to OLE,
43 and it will go to the Science Center, and we didn't push that
44 issue as much before, because, before, we had not actually tried
45 to send the data to the Science Center, but, with the early
46 adopter program, and some of the testing that's gone on, we've
47 seen, at least from a desktop testing perspective, that we can
48 send the data straight to the Science Center, and, from what I

1 understand, the early adopter devices that are offshore on boats
2 -- Those are being transmitted directly to the Science Center
3 now, and so we felt it was time that we could go ahead and say
4 that, yes, we feel that this can be done, and let's put that in
5 there, and let's make it clear that that's we want in that
6 alternative.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Do we have any
9 other further comments, or discussion, on this motion? I think
10 what Mr. Gill has provided sort of cleans up the version from
11 the AP, and so, in essence, also, if you're looking at the AP
12 motion, from their report, it removes "the data shall not be
13 transmitted directly to the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement".
14 Then it essentially replaces that with going to the Southeast
15 Fisheries Science Center as well, and so, looking at the two
16 different versions here, it's a little confusing, but I think
17 that cleans it up, and so I tend to agree with it. Dr. Walter.

18
19 **DR. WALTER:** I will just say that the difference between a non-
20 OLE server and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center could be
21 fairly substantial in cost differential, and I say that because,
22 if indeed the Office of Science and Technology can take over
23 administration of this data, then it would mean that the Science
24 Center doesn't have to do it entirely on its own when we go
25 operational, and so, when we do that cost-benefit analysis, by
26 moving to only the center, then, in June, or August, when we get
27 this cost-benefit, it's going to probably be an additional cost,
28 because of that, versus stating that it may be a preference that
29 it go to the Science Center, and that would allow for at least
30 the cost-benefit analysis to be considered that maybe Science
31 and Technology could take that on.

32
33 I didn't hear an answer, from the AP chair, of whether it was
34 acceptable if the Office of Science and Technology gets that
35 data, but, because what I did hear was the confidentiality, and
36 the fact that that is privileged information that that fisherman
37 has, that there's a really strong incentive that that not get
38 out, and that that be preserved, which is why we have these
39 standard data processes to preserve that, which is where Science
40 and Technology has the bandwidth to do it.

41
42 For our Science Center to do that in perpetuity, we do that with
43 other systems, but, because the burden of maintaining that
44 integrity of the data gets higher and higher over time, it's
45 going to potentially have -- We're going to have to factor in
46 the cost of maintaining a system with strict confidentiality and
47 protections from that data getting out. Thanks.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. Maybe a
2 substitute motion might be in order going along here. Mr. Gill.

3
4 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, to Dr. Walter's
5 point, the only options that are currently on the table are the
6 old mechanism to OLE or, potentially, although this is not
7 certain, to the Science Center, and getting it to S&T -- Is it
8 possible in the future, and maybe, ultimately, where we go, but
9 I don't think this motion obviates that, and, if that should
10 come to pass, and that's probably a big if, that this could be
11 changed by the council at that time to allow that, right, and
12 this is not in perpetuity, and this is where we are today, and
13 the avenues that we have in front of us, those options, and so I
14 don't think the argument that, well, maybe it's going to go
15 somewhere else in the future bears on this motion, because
16 they're not an option, currently, and, yes, that might be the
17 best place, in the future, where the data should go, and deal
18 with it then, if that occurs.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gill. Any further
21 comments on this motion on the board? **In that case, we'll see**
22 **if anyone is opposed to this motion. Mr. Strelcheck, and so we**
23 **have one in opposition. The motion passes.** Mr. Gill.

24
25 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I would like to ask
26 Dr. Walter to comment on the second recommendation from the AP
27 relative to the comments he made earlier, and, to put it in the
28 proper context, about appropriateness from the agency point of
29 view, if that changed, and that is the addition of "for the Gulf
30 shrimp fishery".

31
32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

33
34 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I guess my view of that is it's not a needed
35 clarification, because this is in the shrimp plan amendment in
36 the first place, and so I feel like that's just providing a
37 clarification for the whole program, but we're dealing with
38 shrimp here, specifically.

39
40 The bigger question is, well, if it's not going to fall under
41 those type-approval regulations, what is it going to fall under,
42 and that's the new process that has to be thought through, and
43 someone has to manage.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. With no other comments, Dr. Freeman,
46 can you move us -- I'm sorry. Dr. Walter.

47
48 **DR. WALTER:** The question from Mr. Gill was on the last

1 sentence, NMFS type-approved ELBs for the Gulf shrimp fishery,
2 which is the additional language, would not be type-approved,
3 based on regulations, and I will reiterate that all three
4 devices that are a part of the early adopter program are type-
5 approved, I believe, based on these regulations, but for other
6 fisheries, and so presumably this would preclude them from being
7 used, because of the way that I read this.

8
9 I think that's problematic in the language, because I think
10 we've solved the concerns about where the data goes, which is
11 the major one, and then the other things, about like two-way
12 communication, et cetera, are how you use it, and that's
13 specified in the framework, and so I will say that that's
14 probably not necessary, and working against us, to have that
15 statement in there, and I would recommend some consideration
16 that maybe it be removed from precluding these devices that are
17 actually already implemented in the early adopter program.
18 Thanks.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Froeschke.

21

22 **DR. FROESCHKE:** John, can you explain why this process seems to
23 be different with regard to the type-approval than others? For
24 example, the SEFHIER, I thought it had to be specifically type-
25 approved for that fishery, prior to doing any of this, and there
26 was no blanket one, and I'm struggling to understand why the
27 difference.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

30

31 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I think that's where this issue has kind of
32 come about, is we did not have type-approval standards for
33 cellular VMS devices, when SEFHIER emerged, and some of the
34 other programs around the country emerged, and so the agency
35 took the time to develop new type-approval standards, that
36 include both satellite and cellular VMS, but you're right.

37

38 When we now approve these devices, we approve them for the
39 fishery specifically, under that umbrella of those type-approval
40 standards, right, and so I agree with John's comment that we
41 seem to have kind of learned a lot, in the last year, and we
42 have now type-approved units, that have been type-approved for
43 other fisheries, that likely will fall under our current type-
44 approval standards, but we would be precluding those from use if
45 we went with Alternative 3.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Gill.

48

1 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I think that makes
2 good sense, but one of the reasons for that sentence is to
3 differentiate it from Alternative 2, and so perhaps there is
4 different language that we could use to point out that it's not
5 the same as VMS, and I would like to work with Dr. Walter to
6 find that language for Andy, if he so chooses, to find that
7 language, so that we can note the difference between Alternative
8 2 and 3 in its entirety, to the extent we can. Thank you.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

11
12 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, I apologize, because I feel like I'm a
13 broken record with this topic over the years, but, to me, there
14 is no difference between a cellular ELB and a cellular VMS, with
15 the exception of where the data goes and how it's type-approved,
16 right, and the devices themselves are going to transmit data in
17 the same manner, right, and so it's really we're making a
18 distinction which I think is not really a difference in the
19 equipment or the transmission technology.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Any further comments, before we move
22 on? Dr. Walter.

23
24 **DR. WALTER:** I'm happy to work further, but I almost think that
25 striking the last sentence would do the job, or it could be
26 simply "could be type-approved, based on regulations", and, if
27 we were to say "could", it would leave them open to using those,
28 or, if an additional separate process were indeed possible to
29 stand up, it would also -- Because the Alternative 3 does
30 specify that the Science Center stands up a separate process,
31 but the Science Center could say, well, they're already 99
32 percent approved in other fisheries, and so we're going to say
33 that actually we're going to approve it as well, and give our
34 stamp of approval, but simply saying "could be type-approved"
35 would allow that, and I think correct this, right now,
36 prohibition on the type-approved ones being used.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Walter. I know that Dr.
39 Walter is not on the committee, but, if anybody would want to
40 consider posing a motion to make that amendment to Alternative
41 3, we could do that now. Mr. Strelcheck, did you have a comment
42 related to that?

43
44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I do, and, you know, if it's appropriate, I
45 would love to have the AP chair come up and talk to this point,
46 because, when she was on the council, I know that there were a
47 lot of concerns about the specifics of the type-approval
48 process, and so I would love to know if the AP, or the AP

1 members, have kind of concerns with regard to that type-approval
2 process, based on what we've learned from the early adopter
3 program.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Ms. Bosarge, would you be able to
6 help us out with that, briefly, please?

7
8 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, and so we actually kind of went through
9 this same discussion at the AP, when we read it at first, and we
10 were worried the same thing, right, that this would preclude --
11 Because some of the early adopter devices that we're putting on
12 the boats are type-approved for other fisheries, right, and so
13 we thought, oh, well, does this mean that we won't be able to
14 use them, but then, as we read this, you notice that it says
15 "NMFS-approved ELBs for the Gulf shrimp fishery would not be
16 type-approved, based on those regulations".

17
18 Well, that's fine, because you don't have any VMS regulations
19 specific for the Gulf shrimp fishery, and so you wouldn't have
20 any VMS that's been type-approved. If you chose -- If this
21 council implements Alternative 3, right, which is not the VMS
22 alternative, but the device that would transmit to the Science
23 Center, we wouldn't have a VMS regulation for the Gulf shrimp
24 fishery, and, therefore, you wouldn't have any devices that are
25 type-approved VMSs for the Gulf shrimp fishery. Therefore,
26 there is no preclusion for any of those devices that we're using
27 right now.

28
29 Those are type-approved for other fisheries, and so this says
30 NMFS approved ELBs for the Gulf shrimp fishery would not be
31 type-approved, based on those regulations, and they wouldn't.
32 They would be type-approved based on regulations in a different
33 section of the code, and, in fact, I think staff -- Matt, you
34 will have to find it for me, and staff actually went in and
35 said, in the document itself, in the text, that if the council
36 chooses to move forward with Alternative 3, that type-approval
37 specifications would likely be codified in Section, whatever
38 that number is, of the regulations.

39
40 If you're looking for a way to fix it, if you don't like it the
41 way it is, which I don't think there's a preclusion the way it
42 is, but, if you do, you could change that 50 CFR 600.1501 to the
43 other number that's listed in the text of this document, and I
44 just couldn't find it on the fly real quick for you. Sorry.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. Any further
47 questions for the Shrimp AP chair regarding that? Seeing none,
48 I think that part that you're talking about, in the text, is

1 that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center would need to
2 develop a separate contract for shrimp-specific testing and
3 certification, as well as maintain requirements for vendors on
4 the Southeast Fisheries Science Center shrimp program website.
5 In addition, NMFS may need to add the Gulf shrimp approval
6 specifications to regulations in 50 CFR Part 622(c), is what you
7 were discussing, right? Okay. Just for reference. Okay. Back
8 to Dr. Freeman, please.

9
10 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you. Bernie, could we go to the next slide,
11 and so the next section of the presentation addresses some
12 issues that may impact next steps for development of the
13 document. Here, the Shrimp AP has identified some issues,
14 throughout this process, some of which still need clarification
15 and which would impact the analyses in the draft framework
16 action.

17
18 The first relates to type-approval concerns, and so there's been
19 some discussion already, such as what will type-approval look
20 like, under Alternatives 2 versus 3, and the AP has heard that
21 type-approval for specific fisheries, in this case the shrimp
22 industry, would not be done until after the council takes final
23 action. The type-approval process listed in Alternative 2 is at
24 the national level, and it was not designed with the shrimp
25 industry in mind, for instance scientific data collection,
26 rather than for enforcement.

27
28 There was a question of if are units type-approved for use in
29 the early adopter program, meaning the national type-approval
30 process from Alternative 2, or what are they based on, and then,
31 lastly, until the type-approval process is determined, costs to
32 vessel owners/operators, under Alternatives 2 and 3, will likely
33 have to based on units and cellular monthly services from the
34 early adopter program. If there's no questions there, or any
35 responses -- I see a hand from Dr. Walter.

36
37 **DR. WALTER:** I guess there's a number of questions there, I
38 think, that maybe I can try to provide some clarity for, and I
39 don't have all the answers, but I think that there is, at least
40 from what would type-approval look like under Alternatives 2 and
41 3, and remember that type-approval, under the existing VMS
42 system, is for getting reimbursement for those units, and then
43 Option 3 would be outside of that reimbursement process, and so
44 -- But Option 2, using the existing type-approval, according to
45 all the VMS program specifications, would still, as long as
46 there is funds available, allow it to be reimbursed.

47
48 The process for type-approval between the two -- One would use

1 existing NMFS, and the other one would have the Science Center
2 stand something up, and, as I said before, the Science Center
3 could do this expensively, and have to stand up a completely new
4 testing system, or the Science Center could say, if that unit
5 met type-approval in another fishery, then it can be -- The
6 specifications can meet the framework action, and there wouldn't
7 necessarily need to be a, quote, unquote, new type-approval.
8 That would be sort of the easier way of it's meeting the
9 framework action specifications of this council.

10
11 Then, in terms of it is -- The third one, are units approved for
12 use in early adopter, meeting the national type-approval
13 process, they are in other fisheries, because they went through
14 for some other fisheries, and so they have all of the bells and
15 whistles that are needed to meet that, but we just won't
16 necessarily use all those bells and whistles for shrimp, and
17 then costs to vessel owners, under Alternative 3, will have to
18 be based on units, and, yes, that's the cost-benefit analysis
19 that we're going to do as we further evaluate the IPT process
20 and the cost to the fishery and the cost to the agency and the
21 taxpayer. Those are the numbers that are going to be brought to
22 this council for you to make that final decision. Thanks.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. Back to you,
25 Dr. Freeman.

26
27 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you, sir. Bernie, if we could move to the
28 next slide, and so this deals with the recipient of data
29 transmission, again an issue that's already been discussed this
30 morning, and so questions here were will OLE continue to be the
31 direct recipient of data transmission, under Alternative 2, or
32 will it shift to the Science Center or the Office of Science and
33 Technology?

34
35 Through this whole process, the Shrimp AP has emphasized that
36 this data is collected for scientific purposes, and not for
37 enforcement purposes, and so the Science Center should be direct
38 recipient, and this is one of the distinctions in Alternative 3,
39 and I think there's been sufficient discussion on that issue,
40 but I pause there, if there are any additional questions, for
41 comments. Okay.

42
43 The last deals with the breadth of data collection, and so the
44 overarching question here is will units be on a sample of shrimp
45 vessels, or will it be a census, and so, if a census is
46 conducted, then all vessels, including those from the early
47 adopter program, would be part of the data collection program.
48 However, not all volunteers from the early adopter program might

1 be selected, if a random sample is implemented from Alternatives
2 2 or 3.

3
4 The other sub-bullets here is that a range for social and
5 economic analyses will have to be conducted, since it's unclear
6 the number of vessels that will have to be included for data
7 collection, as well as the number of vessels for inclusion that
8 may have units already installed through the early adopter
9 program. The number of vessels that will need to pay for units
10 may also be affected by the new \$850,000 in congressional
11 funding in 2024 towards this data collection program, and this
12 is in addition to the \$850,000 from last year, if those funds
13 also go to the early adopter program, and so I will pause there,
14 to see if there's comments, or discussion.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.

17
18 **DR. WALTER:** I think the discussion that probably needs to be
19 better fleshed out is how that representative data collection
20 process happens, in terms of, ideally, every vessel -- Like the
21 way we do observer coverage is every vessel has a potential of
22 being selected, and then, if selected, they carry an observer,
23 and the census would be every vessel is part of collecting the
24 data all the time, and there is two different options. One is
25 we certainly need representative, which could be a random
26 sample, but, in that random sample, that eventually means that
27 everybody may get called on to carry this, which means that they
28 would have to have those units onboard.

29
30 A census means that everyone gets it all at once and collects
31 the data, and I think we have to think about what some of the
32 needs are going to be in the future, and two particular
33 endangered species considerations that are probably raising the
34 need, and the bar, for spatially-explicit effort data are
35 smalltooth sawfish and giant manta rays, that seem to be
36 relatively spatially confined in where the interactions are, but
37 it also might mean that we need to get that fine-scale data, in
38 order to understand those interactions and to be able to get
39 enough quality data to mitigate any issues there, and so that
40 might mean more spatial-explicit data.

41
42 The absence of having that means that we would have to
43 extrapolate effort estimates to a larger spatial area, with the
44 limited observer coverage we have, which I think that's telling
45 us probably that we're looking at more coverage, rather than
46 less, going into the future.

47
48 We also have the biological opinion for sea turtles that says

1 that we to cap effort equal to or greater than the last ten
2 years, and so probably we need to further explore the cost-
3 benefit of the census, versus a random sample, and, obviously,
4 the early adopter program is helping us, in terms of getting a
5 lot of units and effort collected right now, but that's probably
6 something that should be a directive to the IPT team, to explore
7 that and bring that back with the cost-benefit analysis that
8 they'll be doing for the other aspects. Thanks.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck.

11

12 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, I like that idea, and I think it would
13 be good to have the IPT work with the Science Center and bring
14 something back to us at a future meeting. You know, with the
15 language as it's currently written, right, it's if selected by
16 the Science Center Research Director, which that's Clay, and the
17 challenge, obviously, with that is, if it's not a census, and
18 I'm not recommending a census, is that you're going to be
19 continually in a position where boats are going to selected that
20 don't have these devices, and then it has to get installed, or
21 be selected, and so they have the equipment, but we aren't
22 necessarily going to be using it, if it's a randomized sample,
23 right, and so I think some more consideration needs to be at
24 least given to how we do that, how do we actually get that kind
25 of randomized sample, so that it's representative of the
26 industry as a whole.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Strelcheck. Mr. Gill.

29

30 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so the old ELB system
31 was a random sample, and the same language, right, of if chosen,
32 et cetera, and so I'm not sure that I see the rationale for
33 really considering a census, since the ELB program, as I recall,
34 was perfectly satisfactory for the Science Center's needs. Is
35 more better in this case? Yes, and a census is better, and,
36 yes, but it costs more, and blah, blah, blah.

37

38 From the standpoint of where we were, to where we're trying to
39 go to, the old program worked very well, and it was different
40 gear, and different costs involved, but, nevertheless, that was
41 a fine-working system, and so I'm hard-pressed to seriously
42 consider a rationale for a census, if the old program worked,
43 and why a similar program for the new units wouldn't also work,
44 and, yes, there is some more issues on the table currently, but
45 sawfish has been on the table for a long time, and so there's
46 nothing new there either, and so my inclination is that where we
47 want to be is a random sample and not seriously consider a
48 census.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gill. Any follow-up
3 to that comment at all? None? Okay. Moving on, Dr. Freeman.
4

5 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you. Bernie, if we could move forward to
6 the next slide, and so this is a tentative timeline that we've
7 got for the committee, which is to bring the draft framework
8 action back to the council at its August meeting, and then,
9 behind the scenes, we would prepare Chapter 3 of the draft
10 framework action and discuss with the IPT if it's possible to
11 also prepare Chapter 4, with the current information, and then
12 the council would look at selecting the preferred alternatives
13 once we have the analyses completed in Chapter 4. I will pause
14 there, to see if there's any feedback on that.
15

16 All right. Then, Bernie, if we could move forward, and an
17 additional motion from the AP, that does relate to the matter
18 at-hand in the draft framework action, is that the Shrimp AP
19 recommends that the council request NMFS adopt the following
20 priorities for utilizing the Fiscal Year 2024 \$850,000
21 appropriation for ELB development and implementation, and they
22 listed three priorities here. The first is sufficient funding
23 to ensure that the Science Center server has sufficient capacity
24 to receive and store shrimp fishery vessel position data.
25 Secondly, develop a statistically-robust design for distributing
26 units to a representative portion of the fleet that would be
27 comparable to the last ten years. Third, cover the costs of
28 providing units and cellular service to those shrimp vessels,
29 pursuant to the early adopter program.
30

31 As mentioned earlier, this is a separate pool of money from the
32 \$850,000 that went towards development of a shrimp data
33 collection program last year, and so I will pause here, to see
34 the committee's response to the Shrimp AP's motion.
35

36 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Gill.
37

38 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last bullet asked for
39 our response, and so I would like to hear the agency's response,
40 before we consider ours.
41

42 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.
43

44 **DR. WALTER:** For one thing, we're really pleased to get this
45 additional \$850,000, and this is great. This, I think, is going
46 to allow us to really bump-up the early adopter program, with
47 substantial additional funding, to get a lot more vessels. We
48 are hearing a fairly good response from the industry to this,

1 and a lot of vessels are interested in this, and this allows us,
2 I think, to probably double, if not more than that, the
3 coverage, and I think we're at a hundred or so vessels that have
4 expressed interest, with this additional funding, and I would
5 like to hear, from this council, whether they agree with the AP.

6
7 I think, as a Science Center, we've talked about this, and I
8 think that this is actually spot-on, in terms of how we would
9 allocate the funds to do this, and, one, we heard sufficient
10 funding for us to evaluate whether a server can be set up, and
11 then whether that can be done in perpetuity, and then develop
12 the robust design for distributing the units to a representative
13 portion of the fleet, which I think is what we were talking
14 about before, is how do we get to representative, and then cover
15 the cost of providing the units for the early adopter, with as
16 much funding as we can do that early adopter, to get more units
17 out there, and so we actually agree with this. Thanks.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, DR. Walter. With the original
20 \$850,000, on the onset, there were administrative costs that had
21 to be pulled out of that, obviously, to operate the program, and
22 do you suspect that there would also be administrative costs
23 that would need to come out of this \$850,000 as well, and would
24 they be similar to the amount pulled out the first time, or --

25
26 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, we would have to take the normal standard
27 administrative costs, where we would probably not need as much
28 for the programming support, because we've already been able to
29 set that up, and so I think that would allow us to pass fairly
30 substantial additional monies for the early adopter program.
31 Thanks.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Walter. Mr. Gill.

34
35 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that, Dr.
36 Walter. That's good to hear, and this may be an unfair
37 question, but what's your knee-jerk reaction to the allocation
38 amongst those priorities? Where do you see the money going, and
39 perhaps that would be best addressed to the council, but I think
40 that's also a question, so that everybody gets the picture of,
41 at the end of the day, that, oh, you didn't give any money to
42 whatever, and can you answer that now, or can we address it in
43 Full Council?

44
45 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Walter.

46
47 **DR. WALTER:** Well, I try not to have knee-jerk reactions, and I
48 think that the helpful thing to do is to interpret the

1 congressional language, and I think, if the AP had the benefit
2 of having someone who can interpret that language quite well
3 interpret that for the AP, to put this motion ahead of it, which
4 I think signals the intent of that language, which was to ensure
5 that there's server capacity, so that Option 3 is as viable as
6 it can be, and as cost-effective as it can be, and then ensure
7 that we get that statistically-robust design for the units, et
8 cetera, and then, for what's left over, cover the cost of
9 additional implementation of the EAP, and so I'm assuming we
10 don't have to have a knee-jerk reaction, and we can say we're
11 following the will of Congress, as directed to do, by following
12 this. Thanks.

13

14 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** A follow-up, Mr. Gill?

15

16 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, with that in mind, I
17 would move that the Shrimp AP motion, starting with "the
18 council", as the motion for consideration by the committee.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Diaz seconds. Okay. Any further
21 discussion on the motion on the board? Seeing none, anyone
22 opposed to the motion currently as written on the board? I
23 guess we probably need to read this out loud, right? Okay.

24

25 **The motion stands as the council requests that National Marine**
26 **Fisheries Service adopt the following priorities for utilizing**
27 **the Fiscal Year 2024 \$850,000 appropriation for electronic**
28 **logbook development and implementation: 1) sufficient funding to**
29 **ensure the Southeast Fisheries Science Center server has**
30 **sufficient capacity to receive and store shrimp fishery vessel**
31 **position data; 2)develop a statistically robust design for**
32 **distributing units to a representative portion of the fleet that**
33 **would be comparable to the last ten years; 3)cover the cost of**
34 **providing units and cellular service to those shrimp vessels,**
35 **pursuant to the early adopter program.**

36

37 **I would suggest that we receive the second "sufficient" in**
38 **Number 1. It seems redundant, and we could say "sufficient**
39 **capacity to receive and store shrimp fishery vessel position**
40 **data". Is the seconder okay with modifying that? Mr. Diaz?**
41 **Okay. Any other comments? Anyone opposed to the motion, as**
42 **written? No opposition, and the motion passes. Mr. Strelcheck.**

43

44 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just, for the record, note that I abstained,
45 since it's requesting NMFS.

46

47 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Strelcheck abstains. Dr. Frazer.

48

1 **DR. FRAZER:** Thanks, Chris, and so I'm not sure who I'm going to
2 ask this question of, but -- And I'm not on the committee, but
3 I'm trying to think through this philosophically, because,
4 ultimately, I will have to vote on this, right, and so what I'm
5 -- You know, this motion relates to a congressional
6 appropriation, and an interpretation of that congressional
7 language, right, resulted in these three bullet points.

8
9 That first bullet point essentially takes the position that
10 Congress, right, is assuming that the data collection, and
11 storage system, is already going to go to the Science Center,
12 which bears on the discussion this committee had earlier, and so
13 I just want to know if that's the intent of Congress, and is it
14 an implicit intent of Congress that the data collection, and
15 storage, bypass the OLE thing, and that's what I want to ask,
16 very specifically.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Well, I am no attorney, but I did sleep at
19 the Gulf States State Park last night, but I will defer to Ms.
20 Levy on that.

21
22 **MS. MARA LEVY:** I'm trying to just think about the question. I
23 mean, I have to go back and look at the language in the act, but
24 this whole implicit thing -- I mean, I don't think it's -- I
25 mean, you can do things related to data collection, and I don't
26 -- I guess I'm just trying to think about how to answer the
27 question, because I'm not exactly sure what you're asking, and
28 are you asking does the Magnuson Act have specific language?

29
30 **DR. FRAZER:** No, and I'm asking, very specifically, Mara,
31 whether or not -- If I was to interpret this language, right,
32 coming from Congress, right?

33
34 **MS. LEVY:** You're talking about what's in the appropriations
35 act?

36
37 **DR. FRAZER:** Yes.

38
39 **MS. LEVY:** Got it. I would have to look at it. I need the
40 language, and I don't have it right in front of me, but maybe
41 Andy does.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** So maybe this is something we bring back at
44 Full Council, if you think that would be appropriate. Mr.
45 Strelcheck, are you okay with that?

46
47 **MR. STRELCHECK:** We'll look at the language, and so there's a
48 couple of things also to consider, right, and one of which is

1 short-term funding by Congress, right, and the other is whether
2 or not there's also an intent by Congress to provide any sort of
3 long-term funding to sustain this, going forward, and I will
4 note that, in the President's budget for 2025, the
5 recommendation is to eliminate this \$850,000, and so just a
6 heads-up there.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Freeman and then Mr. Diaz.

9

10 **DR. FREEMAN:** Thank you. In terms of the language, one of the
11 Shrimp AP members had sent me that information prior, and, in
12 it, it refers to the transmittal of the scientific shrimp
13 fishing effort data via cellular service to NMFS, and so it does
14 not specifically say whether it's to the Science Center or to
15 OLE or to any other specific part of NMFS. I will add, if
16 anyone so cares to further peruse through it, in the Shrimp AP
17 summary, in a footnote, there is a link to the appropriations
18 language, and it also references the specific page with that
19 language, if anyone wants to look at it further.

20

21 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** So there's a little "2", I guess, subset in
22 the report, and it says page 41 of the Fiscal Year 2024 Senate
23 Appropriations Committee Report, blah, blah, blah, and it has
24 the link on the bottom. Mr. Gill.

25

26 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given Andy's remarks, I
27 would hope it's the plan of the Science Center, as they make the
28 determination of how that \$850,000 should be allocated, that
29 they will share that with the council at the next meeting of the
30 Shrimp Committee and the council.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Diaz.

33

34 **MR. DIAZ:** To Tom's point, and I understand that Tom is just
35 asking the question, and getting his mind how to vote at Full
36 Council, but I don't think the council -- We're just requesting,
37 and we're not demanding, or have anything that ties NOAA's hands
38 to do anything that's in conflict with the congressional
39 language, and so we're requesting. Thank you.

40

41 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Point well taken, and I agree with that.
42 Any further conversation? Dr. Walter.

43

44 **DR. WALTER:** Yes, and so, just on the timing of the execution of
45 this \$850,000, and I think it's helpful to get this information
46 from what the council may choose to recommend, I don't know that
47 there will be an AP meeting that we could bring that budget back
48 to them before we would want to execute these funds, and so,

1 previously, we brought it before the AP, and we had extensive
2 discussions, and so I guess what I would say, before -- To set
3 appropriate expectations, it's that we would like to execute
4 these funds fairly soon, and we're well into this fiscal year,
5 which would mean probably not getting it before an AP, and so
6 that's just probably more the reality, that we would then have
7 to wait, if we were to get it before the next AP, unless there
8 was some need for a separate special AP to vet this, and I think
9 we're pretty close, in terms of -- You know, we've got this
10 directive, and that would allow us to set a workplan, and to
11 execute it, and that would be at least timely, in terms of
12 allowing us to proceed with the early adopter program. Thanks.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Thank you, Dr. Walter. Any other
15 comments regarding this motion that we passed? Dr. Simmons.

16
17 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so we
18 were not planning to convene the Shrimp AP again to discuss
19 this, and so we will -- If this passes at Full Council, we'll
20 draft a letter, and send it to you all, and hope to get an
21 update after you have fleshed out the budget and other things,
22 and bring it back to the council, and then the AP later on.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Moving on, the next agenda item is
25 going to be -- I'm sorry. Dr. Freeman.

26
27 **DR. FREEMAN:** I did want to just ask one last thing of the
28 committee. As mentioned, there was a separate pool of \$850,000
29 last year, and so I did want some feedback as well if the
30 committee/council would be interested, at some point, in
31 receiving a final update on how those funds were spent, and, if
32 so, that's something that we can request.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Do we need a motion for that, Dr. Freeman,
35 or is that just --

36
37 **DR. FREEMAN:** Just feedback, just general feedback, would be
38 fine, and I don't necessarily need a motion, but, if that's
39 something that committee members would be interested in, that's
40 something that I can email with the Science Center and make that
41 request.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Diaz.

44
45 **MR. DIAZ:** I think, the next time the Shrimp Committee meets at
46 the council, that would be a good presentation to have, a short
47 presentation.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Freeman, would you prefer to tie that
2 with the August meeting, when we're getting the document back
3 for picking preferreds?
4

5 **DR. FREEMAN:** I think that would be a good idea, to have that at
6 the same time.
7

8 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay, and so now we're going to Agenda Item
9 VII, right, and we're leapfrogging VI, and Dr. Mike Travis will
10 be on virtual?
11

12 **UPDATE ON NUMBER OF VALID AND RENEWABLE GULF SHRIMP PERMITS AND**
13 **DISCUSSION OF MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**
14

15 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, and I will read the action guide item
16 for that first. Here, the committee will be presented with
17 information regarding the number of valid and renewable Gulf
18 shrimp permits. Amendment 17B established two important
19 provisions related to the number of valid and renewable Gulf
20 shrimp moratorium permits.
21

22 The first provision sets the minimum threshold number of SPGM
23 permits for the fishery at 1,072, and the second provision
24 states that, if the number of valid and renewable SPGM permits
25 hits 1,175, the council will form a review panel to review the
26 details of a permit pool and other options.
27

28 The committee should consider the information presented, ask
29 questions, and determine if a review panel needs to be formed,
30 at this time, or if other action is needed, and so we have Dr.
31 Travis on the webinar for that presentation.
32

33 **DR. MIKE TRAVIS:** Good morning, everyone.
34

35 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right, Dr. Travis. We have the
36 presentation up here, whenever you're ready.
37

38 **DR. TRAVIS:** I'm sorry, and that's not my presentation. That's
39 Kyle's presentation. Okay. There we go. First, I want to
40 apologize for not being there in-person, as I planned, and I'm
41 just not physically capable of traveling right now, and so
42 hopefully, you know, we'll get through this presentation and
43 cover all the necessary material.
44

45 In this presentation, I will be discussing the Gulf shrimp
46 moratorium permits and various provisions that were passed in
47 Amendment 17B to the Gulf Shrimp FMP.
48

1 With respect to the number of valid Gulf shrimp moratorium
2 permits, you will see, in the table at the bottom of the slide,
3 that the number of valid permits in each year was relative
4 stable from 2015 to 2020. There was some reduction. The
5 average number of permits that terminated each year averaged
6 about fourteen during that time, but still relatively stable.

7
8 Unfortunately, NMFS cannot currently provide annual counts of
9 Gulf shrimp permits in 2021 to 2023, at this time, due to
10 ongoing improvements that we're making to the permits database.
11 We are hoping that those improvements will be resolved by this
12 summer.

13
14 However, the Permits Office was able to provide a current
15 estimate of the number of valid, or renewable, permits, as of
16 April 1. That number is now 1,282, and so, over the three-plus
17 years, we have lost about 118 permits, and so that means we're
18 now losing around thirty-nine permits per year, rather than only
19 fourteen, and, you know, the assumption is that that's being
20 driven by the poor economic conditions in the fishery.

21
22 Provisions in Amendment 17B, the first provision sets the
23 minimum threshold number of valid and renewable permits in the
24 fishery at 1,072, and so we are still well -- You know, well
25 away from that particular threshold, and this particular number
26 was based on the predicted number of active permitted vessels
27 that were needed to attain aggregate OY in the offshore fishery.

28
29 Now, aggregate OY accounts for various economic, ecological, and
30 social factors, consistent with the National Standard 1
31 Guidelines, and examples of those factors would include catch
32 per unit of effort, landings, sea turtle bycatch, and juvenile
33 red snapper bycatch.

34
35 Now, the second provision in Amendment 17B states that, if the
36 number of valid and renewable Gulf shrimp permits hits 1,175,
37 the council will form a review panel to review the details of a
38 permit pool and other options, and that panel will consist of
39 Shrimp AP members, SSC members, NMFS and council staff.

40
41 Now, if the number of permits reaches the minimum threshold
42 number of Gulf shrimp permits, which, again, that was 1,072, any
43 permits that are not renewed within one year of the expiration
44 date of the permit will be converted to what we ended up calling
45 a Gulf shrimp reserve pool permit and then go into a Gulf shrimp
46 vessel permit reserve pool for possible reissuance.

47
48 Now, these Gulf shrimp reserve pool permits will not be issued

1 until eligible requirements are developed, and implemented,
2 through subsequent rulemaking, through a new council amendment,
3 and so the main point there is 17B did not establish those
4 eligibility requirements, and that would have to be done in a
5 new amendment.

6
7 One of the other provisions that was established in 17B was we
8 established aggregate OY, and this was discussed a fair amount
9 at the recent Shrimp AP meeting, and so that document
10 established aggregate OY at around 85.76 million pounds, and
11 that's in tail weight, and it's for the offshore fishery. Now,
12 offshore landings, as you will see in the subsequent slide, have
13 been well below that level in each year from 2019 to 2022, and
14 we strongly believe that it will be again in 2023, based on
15 preliminary data. It's also important to keep in mind that the
16 actions in 17B relied on data from 1990 to 2014.

17
18 Now, the data points, which, again, I will show you in a minute,
19 but the data points in 2021 and 2022 are outside the bounds of
20 the data that was used to generate the yield curve, as well as
21 other models that were used as a basis for the actions in 17B,
22 and that includes how many permitted vessels and active
23 permitted vessels that we think are needed to attain effort at
24 aggregate OY.

25
26 Now, specifically, what we'll show here in a minute is offshore
27 effort is lower than at any point we saw from 1990 to 2020.
28 However, CPUE is higher, compared to any -- Now, this suggests
29 the stocks may, and I want to emphasize "may", have become more
30 productive, or the actual fleet may have become more technically
31 efficient.

32
33 This is the yield curve that was estimated for Amendment 17B,
34 and you will see that the data points are in that upper part of
35 the curve, whether on the declining part or the increasing part,
36 but these recent two data points, in 2021 and 2022, are way down
37 in the lower-left portion of that graph, and so they are far
38 removed from the data points from 1990 to 2014, and, actually
39 then going through 2020.

40
41 This table illustrates it a little bit differently, and so this
42 table provides the estimates of offshore landings, offshore
43 effort, and CPUE for 2015 to 2022. Now, you will see, in the
44 landings table, and this is offshore landings, over the last
45 four data points that I put in red to illustrate that they are
46 well below the aggregate OY that the council established in 17B.

47
48 Again, we expect that to still be the case in 2023, if not more

1 so, and then, for offshore effort, the last two data points,
2 those levels of offshore effort we have not seen previously, at
3 least not from 1990 forward, and the same with the CPUE values
4 for 2021 and 2022. Those are the highest CPUEs we've seen in
5 the offshore fishery since 1990, and, in fact, that part of it
6 is probably a good thing, for the vessels that are still
7 fishing, because it allowed them to continue operating, from an
8 economic perspective, and so we don't have a catch rate problem
9 in the fishery.

10
11 Recommendations, NMFS will closely monitor the number of valid
12 and renewable permits, as well as the rate of decline, to see
13 how close we're getting to that 1,175 threshold, and we're now
14 just a little over a hundred permits away from that. The
15 council should request periodic updates, for example in October,
16 for what I assume will be the next Shrimp AP meeting, and at the
17 November council meeting, and, by that time, we expect that we
18 will have those annual counts of permits for 2021 to 2023, as
19 well as an update on the current number of valid and renewable
20 permits.

21
22 Third, as the permit count approaches the 1,175 threshold, the
23 council should consider when to create, and populate, the review
24 panel, and then, lastly, if the council pursues a plan amendment
25 to look to determine the eligibility requirements for reserve
26 pool permits, and offshore landings in 2023 are below aggregate
27 OY, which they definitely will be, and, third, offshore effort
28 and CPUE in 2023 are outside the bounds of the 1990 to 2004 data
29 as well, then the council should also reconsider the actions of
30 17B, and particularly the empirical basis for those actions, and
31 that's all I have, and I'm open to taking questions. Thank you
32 very much.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Dr. Travis. We appreciate the
35 presentation. You always do a great job of explaining this
36 stuff, in a very explicit form, and I have one technical
37 question, and then I will field it to the rest of the committee
38 here, and the 1,175, I guess, threshold, as we're looking at it
39 here, can you -- Is there a proportional reduction, over time,
40 that would be able to give us some sort of target date when you
41 would expect that it would fall below that, or is there really
42 no discernable pattern as to how that reduction is happening?

43
44 **DR. TRAVIS:** I just wanted to confirm that -- Was that question
45 for me?

46
47 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** You're breaking up a little bit, but the
48 question was, the threshold of 1,175, is there a pattern, or a

1 rate of reduction, that's proportional to be able to determine
2 an expected date as when that threshold would be met?

3
4 **DR. TRAVIS:** It's a good question. I don't know that we have
5 the ability to predict that, and that's why I recommended that
6 the council check back in, late this year, because I think we'll
7 be getting close, but I'm assuming the council doesn't wait
8 until after we go past that threshold to start creating, and
9 populating, the review panel.

10
11 It's a little hard to tell, because of some issues that we've
12 been having with the permits data, and the rate of decline has
13 been fluctuating, likely as economic conditions have been
14 fluctuating, but I certainly wouldn't expect the termination
15 rate to decrease, based on what I'm hearing from the industry,
16 because it doesn't sound like the economic conditions are
17 getting any better, and so, unfortunately, I can't give you an
18 exact answer to that. I think we will know better by later in
19 the year, and we might be able to give you a predication, at
20 that time, with more data.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** So maybe at our August meeting we could come
23 back with a projection timeline, possibly?

24
25 **DR. FREEMAN:** While we wait for Dr. Travis, I was going to just
26 mention that his presentation -- I think he had suggested the
27 November council meeting.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** I missed that. Thank you. Do we have any
30 other questions, or comments, for Dr. Travis? Mr. Gill.

31
32 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mike, for
33 that presentation. I would like to address Slide 3, which
34 addresses really the last sentence in the recommendations as
35 well, and that gets to how you calculated the minimum threshold,
36 or how you calculate any of these, and, to me, the OY for
37 example, and so my question is does that follow the same process
38 as the old overcapitalization calculation for the IFQ fishery,
39 wherein my understanding is that the number of vessels needed
40 all were assumed to maximize catch, or does it follow a broader
41 aspect of how the fishery actually works, and not all vessels
42 maximize their catch every trip? Thank you.

43
44 **DR. FREEMAN:** Dr. Travis, it shows you as being self-muted.

45
46 **DR. TRAVIS:** Folks, I am having a real hard time hearing council
47 members, and the audio is very garbled. I know Bob asked a
48 question, but I honestly don't know what he asked. I'm sorry.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right. We'll take one more stab at it,
3 and, if that doesn't work, we'll have to move on, in order of
4 time, and maybe we can reapproach during Full Council, but Mr.
5 Gill, take one more shorthand crack at it.
6

7 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, Mike, as you know, all
8 of my questions are garbled, and so there's nothing new there.
9 My question relates, on Slide 3, the calculation of the number
10 of vessels, or in this case permits, to achieve OY. What I'm
11 asking about is the process to determine that number and whether
12 it's similar to that utilized in determining overcapacity in,
13 for example, the IFQ system, wherein my understanding is that
14 the vessels were assumed to maximize their catch every trip, or
15 is it based on an aggregate of the shrimp fishery's capacity, in
16 some kind of current timeframe, wherein every vessel does not
17 maximize their catch every trip?
18

19 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Dr. Travis, you're self-muted again.
20

21 **DR. TRAVIS:** I'm sorry, but you folks, from my end, are still
22 really garbled, and I cannot make out what you're saying, and I
23 apologize.
24

25 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Understood. We're having some technical
26 problems here as well, and so we'll move on to the -- Dr.
27 Freeman.
28

29 **DR. FREEMAN:** I was just going to say, if it's okay with the
30 committee, I can always speak with Mr. Gill and send an email
31 with that question to Dr. Travis and get a response for Full
32 Council.
33

34 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** That will work. I appreciate that. For the
35 sake of brevity, we're going to move to Agenda Item VI, which we
36 skipped over with this one, but we're going to only address a
37 portion of it from the slide show, and the AP chair, Ms.
38 Bosarge, wanted to bring up a specific slide, I believe, in the
39 presentation that we got, correct? Then we will try to move any
40 other further questions on this to Full Council on Thursday, as
41 well as the Other Business item that we have on the agenda. Is
42 that correct?
43

44 **DR. FREEMAN:** Yes, sir, and would you like for me to go through
45 the action guide, quickly?
46

47 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Yes, please.
48

1 **GULF SHRIMP FISHERY EFFORT**

2
3 **DR. FREEMAN:** Perfect. For this item, the committee will be
4 presented with information regarding the 2022 Gulf shrimp
5 fishery effort calculations. The committee should consider the
6 information presented, ask questions, and provide
7 recommendations for future considerations. I will hand it over
8 to Ms. Bosarge.

9
10 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thanks, and so there is a Science Center
11 presentation in the briefing book, as this is not my
12 presentation, and I do not have a PhD, but I will do my best to
13 lay it out there, frame it for you, and then give you the AP's
14 feedback, and so I think that's the pertinent slide.

15
16 Just to kind of frame it, the shrimp fishery is monitored
17 annually for its effort in Stat Zones 10 through 21, and you
18 have your former Science Center head of the Galveston Lab here
19 in the audience here to help out, but 10 through 21 in the depth
20 zone of ten to thirty fathoms.

21
22 The boxes on our boats, that you all spent all that time
23 discussing in that framework amendment -- You know, they don't
24 transmit anymore, and you're trying to figure out a new device
25 to put on there, and this is one of the things that those
26 produce, and so all that position data goes into the shrimp
27 effort algorithm, and generate total effort, right, and then we
28 parse it out, as you see on the screen here, and so the
29 requirement currently on the books is that we reduce our effort
30 by 60 percent from those baseline years, that 2021 through 2023,
31 and, as you can see, we have exceeded what we needed to do.

32
33 We actually decreased our effort by 87 from that baseline
34 period, and so we've done better than we needed to do, from your
35 perspective, and that means that my industry is, you know, in
36 the crapper, essentially, right, if our effort is down that
37 much, but, as far as what you're managing here, that's actually
38 a good thing for this particular presentation, and so I'm glad
39 to report that we are in compliance. This data is also used for
40 endangered species compliance as well, and we have some
41 thresholds there that we have to look at as well, and that's why
42 you also see total Gulf effort, but both of them were down from
43 the previous year.

44
45 That's 2022 effort, and so let's be clear about that, and, in
46 2021, our effort, in the 10 to 21, the ten to thirty-fathom, was
47 15,836 days, twenty-four-hour days of towing, and the total
48 effort was 46,711, and you can see we're down from those, and

1 we're at about 10,000 in the 10 through 21 zones and 35,000
2 total, and so down across-the-board. Yes, sir, Mr. Schieble.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Bernie, can you back up one slide on that,
5 to 2021? That was what she was talking about.

6

7 **MS. BOSARGE:** Yes, and so that's 2021 data, as computed by the
8 Science Center, and then what we just received at our AP
9 meeting, which this is the presentation that the Science Center
10 gave the AP, was the 2022 data, although we are in 2024 now, but
11 we do get these annually, and the council has gotten this
12 presentation from the Science Center annually, for as long as I
13 was on the council, and so for at least nine years, and,
14 generally --

15

16 So the Science Center has to wait for all the trip ticket data
17 to come in from the states for the year, and so they can't
18 compute it until the end of the year, at a minimum, and then it
19 takes some time for the trip tickets to trickle in, and so,
20 really, they can't probably start working on this analysis until
21 maybe the second quarter of the following year, and so the
22 council -- When I was on the council, we would historically get
23 this presentation at our October meeting.

24

25 If this is 2024, this October, you would get your data from
26 2023, and, now, unfortunately, we are a little further behind at
27 this point, but I do encourage the Science Center to give this
28 presentation to the council, to have a Science Center
29 representative, because it's important.

30

31 It's important to our fishery, and it's one of the important
32 management measures that we have for shrimp, and, I mean, we've
33 spent all this time on this document, and to say, oh, this
34 information is so important, and that's why we have to get these
35 devices, but it wasn't important enough to send a Science Center
36 representative to give us the actual compliance, you know,
37 outputs from it. I just -- I'm not trying to ruffle feathers,
38 but I think that's important for the council, and so I would
39 encourage that, going forward.

40

41 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge. I would like to
42 point out that, you know, this is important from a number of
43 aspects.

44

45 For one, you know, obviously, it has to do with the effort
46 within that depth zone, and, you know, we have Section 7
47 reinitiation for the Endangered Species Act, and it would seem
48 to imply that reduced effort would be also reduced bycatch, on

1 some of those species within that depth zone, potentially, and,
2 also, it has impacts on the fishing mortality coming from age-
3 zero snapper that go into the stock assessment, with a reduction
4 below the threshold.

5
6 The council, a few years back, in 2017, lowered that threshold
7 from 67 percent to 60 percent, and it may be time to consider,
8 you know, reevaluation of that threshold as well, since we're
9 working on a stock assessment right now, but, anyway, do we have
10 any other questions about this around the table? We need to
11 move forward, because every minute we take is less you get to
12 spend in the potty. Dr. Walter.

13
14 **DR. WALTER:** I thank the AP chair for presenting this. We're
15 not against presenting it, and I don't think we were requested
16 to give this presentation, and so I think that's the reason that
17 my staff weren't assuming that they were on the hook for it, but
18 I think it's pretty self-explanatory as to what is in here, and
19 so -- If there's further questions, I can ask staff about it,
20 and we can get back to the committee. Thank you.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Mr. Gill.

23
24 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Relative to the threshold
25 establishment, that was done in a red snapper amendment, back in
26 the day, in I want to say 2011, or something like that, and so,
27 procedurally, does that need to be a -- Because that's what the
28 driver was, and does that need to be in a reef fish amendment or
29 a shrimp amendment, or does it matter?

30
31 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** My recollection is hazy, but I think we
32 reduced the effort from 67 to 60 percent back in 2017 in the
33 shrimp, right?

34
35 **DR. FREEMAN:** It was Shrimp Amendment 18 that we made that
36 reduction to 60 percent.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Other questions, or comments,
39 regarding this? Again, we'll move some of the Other Business
40 stuff that we had to Full Council on Thursday, in the interest
41 of time conservation here as well. Dr. Simmons.

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** (Dr. Simmons' comment is not
44 audible on the recording.)

45
46 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Okay. Can you wrap up the AP report? I
47 forgot that you may not be here on Thursday.

48

1
2 On your discussion of that \$850,000, which kind of falls under -
3 - The new \$850,000 for 2024, that falls under this early adopter
4 program, and I heard some words like "evaluate" and "cost-
5 benefit analysis", and I would say that, to generally sum up
6 what the AP wanted in those three priorities, it would be a
7 little less talk and a lot more action, and so I don't think we
8 want to evaluate having the data being transmitted directly to
9 the Science Center, and we want you to invest in the capacity
10 for your cloud-based server to be able to actually maintain all
11 the data, right, and, right now, it can maintain what's coming
12 through with these limited boxes, but we want to make sure you
13 have the capacity to receive it all, and to maintain it, and not
14 evaluate it, but put it online, and let's do it.

15
16 The same thing goes for this statistically-robust design for
17 distributing units, and you're putting units on boats right now.
18 Now, I was glad to see that, of the units that have been put on
19 boats, 70 percent of those boats actually had a CELB.

20
21 It depends on how you look at it, but that means that, right
22 now, your old sample is saying your new sample is fairly in line
23 with the old sample you have, right, but, if there's a piece of
24 our industry, or our fleet, that you think was underrepresented
25 in your old sample, which is static, this is the time to look at
26 that, before you get this next charge of money, and figure where
27 you want LGL to direct its efforts to putting these early
28 adopter devices on, and we need to do that now, and not after
29 the fact, when the devices are already put on. We really want
30 you to do that before more devices go on with this new charge of
31 money.

32
33 We got an update on wind energy areas in the Gulf of Mexico, and
34 I think the key takeaway there is BOEM is doing a great job of
35 looking at shrimp effort and doing the best it can to minimize
36 the impacts on the shrimp industry.

37
38 I would say the one caveat there is we have a very large
39 unsolicited bid that has come in off the coast of Mississippi
40 and Alabama, and it's pretty much the whole coast of Mississippi
41 and Alabama out in federal waters, and that has not been
42 analyzed yet for shrimp effort, and so, because it's coming
43 outside of the normal leasing process, it was an unsolicited bid
44 outside the call area, and so we want to have that shrimp effort
45 presented to the AP, have it overlaid on this big area off of
46 Mississippi and Alabama, and make sure that that's not going to
47 take in some primetime shrimp grounds.

48

1 The SD card returns are looking great for the June 2023 mailout,
2 and the shrimp industry requested that NMFS maybe take some of
3 the port agents that had been working on SEFHIER and prioritize
4 shrimp, while that was in a lull, but that was unable to happen,
5 so that we would have boots on the ground for the shrimp
6 industry, and so we hired someone, as an industry, to go out
7 there and help get the message out that these chips need to be
8 mailed back in, even if you're not shrimping, and we got our
9 return rate up to 86 percent for that mailout, with boots on the
10 ground.

11
12 The National Seafood Strategy, that's where I was hoping to give
13 you all some positive feedback of things that might could help,
14 and we don't really have a lot of time to get into that, but I'm
15 happy to talk to people offline. We need some marketing,
16 directed marketing, funds that are consistent year after year
17 for domestic seafood, and not all seafood, but domestic, and
18 that's what we manage here, and we need to promote that domestic
19 seafood, and tell our story, so that consumers can choose us.

20
21 We need consumer education that goes along with that, so they
22 know the difference between what could possibly be in those
23 imported shrimp, versus what you're going to get with a wild-
24 caught domestic product.

25
26 The last thing was our species-specific effort and the SEDAR 87
27 research track, and that was a lively discussion, and so we're
28 going through the research track assessment process. Right now,
29 it looks like the two big pieces of data that will go into that
30 are SEAMAP CPUE and then shrimp landings, and they're looking at
31 putting some environmental data in there, and that's tricky, and
32 hopefully it will work, but it will take a lot of fishermen in
33 the room, I think, to make that work, to understand what
34 environmental data really drives the shrimp stock.

35
36 However, the AP felt strongly that you need more fishery-
37 dependent data in that stock assessment process, and I don't
38 think it's out of the realm to include fishery effort in the
39 stock assessment. Right now, we are only doing landings, but
40 I'm pretty sure that we put effort in most of our stock
41 assessments. Is there a little more uncertainty around effort
42 sometimes? Yes, surely there is. However, it has a strong
43 signal, especially in my fishery, where landings are trending
44 down. It's a negative trend.

45
46 A stock assessment could interpret that to mean the stock is not
47 healthy. However, if you look at effort, and you get a CPUE,
48 you would see that, oh no, they're actually catching a whole lot

1 more shrimp for the time that they're out there, but they're
2 just not out there, because of economics, and globalization
3 won't let them go out there as much, but you've got to have that
4 fishery-dependent data in there, and so that -- The AP was
5 really adamant that species-specific CPUE and/or effort, go into
6 that stock assessment, and I think that's where I will leave it.

7
8 I hope that we'll get a chance to talk about the more positive
9 things at some point, that I feel could help the industry, and
10 so thanks for listening.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** Thank you, Ms. Bosarge, and do we have any
13 questions around the table, real quick? Dakus, please.

14
15 **MR. GEESLIN:** Just one comment. Leann, I do appreciate the Toby
16 Keith reference that you snuck in there, and I agree
17 wholeheartedly that we do need to double-down on both our
18 educational and our marketing efforts related to domestic
19 seafood, and so thanks for that.

20
21 **MS. BOSARGE:** Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN SCHIEBLE:** All right. Seeing none, again, Other
24 Business will be moved to Full Council on Thursday, and that
25 wraps up the Shrimp Committee, and we're way over time, and
26 sorry. I apologize for that. Back to you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 8, 2024.)

29
30 - - -