

**Gulf SEDAR Committee Report  
August 24, 2026  
Mr. JD Dugas – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab I, No. 1**) and approved the minutes (**Tab I, No. 2**) of the April 2025 meeting as written.

*SEDAR Steering Committee Assessment Schedule Updates and Meeting Outcomes  
(Tab I, No. 4)*

Council staff reviewed the outcomes from the virtual Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Steering Committee meeting held on July 20, 2026 (Tab I, No. 4). One of the items staff highlighted was concern regarding the independence of cooperator review workshop appointees who previously contributed to the data and assessment portions of the same SEDAR assessment. In discussing SEDAR review workshop participants, a Committee member agreed it was difficult to find enough Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) members to review stock assessments at times but was more concerned with ensuring reviewers were appropriately experienced and familiar with Gulf fisheries. Another Committee member agreed and thought those concerns should take priority over the concerns discussed by the SEDAR Steering Committee regarding independence for reviewers who may have participated elsewhere in the SEDAR process. A Council member recommended establishing recusal criteria for reviewers, and that while they appreciated external reviewers, they agreed with Committee members that familiarity with Gulf fisheries was critical. Another Council member asked whether the budget could accommodate hiring independent contractors, and Council staff said that was unlikely. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) asked whether a participant with conflict could participate in the review without having a formal role as an independent reviewer. Council staff and Committee members generally disagreed with this approach, as it would incur additional participation costs without the added benefit of that participant's contribution to the written review report.

A Committee member asked whether there were any data on cobia coming from Mexico along with the previously discussed data on king mackerel. The SEFSC replied that it was not aware of any cobia data being shared, but it would investigate.

*Other Business*

There was no other business discussed.

This concludes my report.