1   GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2
3   DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE
4
5 Perdido Beach Resort   Orange Beach, Alabama
6
7   JANUARY 25, 2016
8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**
10 Greg Stunz...Texas
11 Dave Donaldson..GSMFC
12 Myron Fischer (designee for Randy Pausina).............Louisiana
13 John Greene..Alabama
14 Kelly Lucas (designee for Jamie Miller).............Mississippi
15 Robin Riechers...Texas
16 Ed Swindell..Louisiana
17 David Walker...Alabama
18 Roy Williams..Florida
19
20 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**
21 Kevin Anson..Alabama
22 Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley)................Florida
23 Leann Bosarge.....................................Mississippi
24 Doug Boyd..Texas
25 Jason Brand...USCG
26 Dale Diaz...Mississippi
27 Campo Matens......................................Louisiana
28 John Sanchez..Florida
29
30 **STAFF**
31 Steven Atran.......................Senior Fishery Biologist
32 Assane Diagne.................................Economist
33 John Froeschke...................Fishery Biologist/Statistician
34 Doug Gregory............................Executive Director
35 Beth Hager.................Financial Assistant/IT Coordinator
36 Karen Hoak...............Administrative and Financial Assistant
37 Mara Levy...............................NOAA General Counsel
38 Charlene Ponce.....................Public Information Officer
39 Bernadine Roy.................................Office Manager
40 Carrie Simmons..............................Deputy Director
41
42 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**
43 John Anderson...FL
44 Pam Anderson...........................Panama City Beach, FL
45 Billy Archer.................................Panama City, FL
46 Steve Branstetter.......................................NMFS
47 Eric Brazer...................Reef Fish Shareholder's Alliance
48 J.P. Brooker...................Ocean Conservancy, Gulfport, FL

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 1    Mark Brown...............................................SAFMC
 2    Gary Bryant.....................................Gulf Shores, AL
 3    Jim Clements......................................Carrabelle, FL
 4    Michael Drexler............Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
 5    Traci Floyd.....................................MDMR, Biloxi, MS
 6    Troy Frady...........................................Lilian, AL
 7    Brad Gorst..................................................
 8    Chad Hanson.................................................Pew
 9    Bill Huth.......................................Pensacola, FL
10    Joe Jewell......................................MDMR, Biloxi, MS
11    Robert E. Jones.............................................EDF
12    Bill Kelly...............................................FKCFA, FL
13    Kristen McConnell...........................................EDF
14    Rusty Pittman.....................................MDMR, MS
15    Bonnie Ponwith...........................................SEFSC
16    Kellie Ralston...........American Sportfishing Association, FL
17    Lance Robinson..............................................TX
18    Katie Semon.................................................LA
19    Clarence Seymour............................Ocean Springs, MS
20    Bill Tucker.......................................Dunedin, FL
21    Bob Zales, II..................................Panama City, FL
22    Jim Zurbrick..................................Steinhatchee, FL
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The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
Management Council convened at the Perdido Beach Resort, Orange
Beach, Alabama, Monday morning, January 25, 2016, and was called
to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Greg Stunz.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIRMAN GREG STUNZ: We will go ahead and convene the Data
Collection Committee. Our first order of business is -- Looking
around the room, I think just about all of our committee members
are here for the quorum. The first order of business is
Adoption of the Agenda. Is there any changes or modifications
that anyone would like to make to the agenda? Seeing none,
would anyone like to make a motion to approve the agenda?

MR. JOHNNY GREENE: So moved.

CHAIRMAN STUNZ: Is there a second? Any opposition to the
motion? Seeing none, the agenda is approved. Our next order of
business is Approval of the Minutes. Any edits or changes to
the minutes? Seeing none, would someone like to make a motion
for approval of the minutes?

MR. GREENE: So moved.

CHAIRMAN STUNZ: Is there a second? Okay. We've got a little
bit on our plate for today, and Dr. Froeschke, will go over our
Action Guide here in just a minute, so we can continue with our
discussions. Just to give everybody an idea of where we need to
go today, Bonnie is going to give us a presentation and I assume
-- I actually don't have that presentation and I don't know if
we'll get that emailed around in just a minute, but to talk
about some of these transition considerations.

As you guys know on the schedule, the final action was scheduled
on our agenda, which we'll talk about some and a lot of the
public comment related to that final action coming up. We will
listen to what the webinar and other public comment was, but,
John, did you want to go over the details of the Action Guide?

ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

DR. JOHN FROESCHKE: Sure. The direction is that staff will
review the final draft of the Electronic Charter Vessel and
Headboat Reporting Amendment, including the public hearing and
written comments, which we have several of each.

1 The committee will receive a presentation from Dr. Ponwith,
2 which we are going to receive momentarily. I have a short
3 presentation over the document itself, which we can discuss the
4 preferred alternatives as well as the comment. The committee is
5 expected to determine whether to recommend to the full council
6 to take final action or not. I imagine we will have
7 considerable discussion about that.
8
9 The important thing to note is that if the council decides to
10 move forward with final action, the formal transmittal of this
11 document will be delayed, because we don't have codified text
12 available, because we don't have enough clarity in some of the
13 descriptions of how this might work that's necessary to draft
14 the text. If we did do final action, we would have to bring the
15 codified text back to the council at some future time for review
16 and to deem as necessary and appropriate.
17
18 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, John. If there's not any comments on
19 that -- Mara, go ahead.
20
21 **MS. MARA LEVY:** I just wanted to say something about the
22 implementation and codified text issue. I think one of the
23 things is that there's still a decision point to be made about
24 the location type of device, like the issue of whether you're
25 going to require VMS or not require VMS. I think that's still
26 at issue, and so it's difficult to draft the codified text
27 without knowing all of those kinds of details.
28
29 Then once you do figure that out, we can potentially draft very
30 broad codified text that doesn't necessarily include all of the
31 details about how folks are going to report and what mechanism
32 they're going to report it. The issue is that NMFS can't
33 publish a proposed rule until we can explain that.
34
35 It is possible to have codified text at the next meeting if all
36 the decision points have been made by the council that reflect
37 the very broad reporting requirements, but there is also going
38 to require how it's going to be implemented.
39
40 I think the other thing that NMFS may bring up is adding
41 language in there that basically says that implementation of
42 this is contingent on funding, because it's going to require
43 funding to put it together, and I think Bonnie's presentation
44 might go over some of that, but there have been other programs
45 that the council has put in place that have basically said
46 implementation of this is contingent on funding appropriations
47 for NMFS to actually do it. We can talk about that more, but I
48 just wanted to raise that at the beginning.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Mara. With that, I think we'll move
3 on, if Dr. Ponwith is ready for her presentation. That was just
4 emailed around. It just came through just a few minutes ago,
5 and so if you're looking for that presentation, you can check
6 your email. Go ahead, Bonnie.
7
8 **TRANSITION CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHARTER VESSEL ELECTRONIC**
9 **REPORTING**
10
11 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today, we're
12 going to talk about some of the technical aspects that are going
13 to be required or considered for implementation of electronic
14 reporting, and this should be reporting and monitoring really,
15 for the for-hire fishery in the Gulf of Mexico.
16
17 I would like to recognize the team of colleagues that helped put
18 this together. This is a conversation, of course, between the
19 Southeast Fisheries Science Center, the Regional Office, and the
20 MRIP Program up in Headquarters, and colleagues who were key
21 players in the development of these slides and the presentation
22 are Nick Farmer from SERO, Ken Brennan from the Center, and Ron
23 Sauls from the MRIP Program.
24
25 Right now, we've got a headboat survey. In our status quo,
26 we've got an unbiased census that covers about sixty-nine Gulf
27 headboats. They report weekly and that reporting consists of
28 catch and effort. We have dockside intercepts, and those
29 intercepts are used to validate the electronic self-reported
30 data, and also to collect biological samples.
31
32 The estimates of the landings are generated using those data,
33 now with about a forty-five-day lag, which is about the same
34 amount of time that MRIP uses for theirs. The forty-five-day
35 lag comes from the time that it takes to gather the biological
36 data, to understand what the size composition of those landed
37 fish are, to be able to equate those landings in terms of
38 pounds.
39
40 Ultimately, the direction we would like to be running is toward
41 a better, faster, and more accurate system, as contemplated in
42 this amendment. We would be shifting to electronic logbooks for
43 a little over 1,700 vessels. The amendment looks at daily trip
44 reporting. The reporting scale would be on a trip-by-trip
45 basis.
46
47 There would be dockside and at-sea validation, and we're looking
48 at a higher resolution in the reporting for fishing areas than

1 the current. The goal would be to get more timely delivery of
2 those data for management purposes, and, of course, we would
3 have to calibrate that system to the existing system, so we
4 maintain the integrity of those long-term time series data,
5 which is important for both stock assessments and for
6 understanding allocation issues, among other purposes.
7
8 The notion is that a census can be better than a survey. A
9 survey looks at a subset of a population and uses what we learn
10 from that subset to infer what the whole population does. We
11 see some of the benefits to going to a census is we get improved
12 precision, we can get improved timeliness, we certainly get
13 improved geographic data, by refining that reporting, and we
14 also have the ability to gain from individual accountability.
15
16 There is some challenges that come with that as well. One of
17 the challenges is 100 percent reporting. Often, when 100
18 percent reporting is required, less than 100 percent of the
19 people report. You have to have then a system for what you do
20 when you're missing information and how you interpret that
21 missing information.
22
23 Basically, we have to have the mechanism to enforce the
24 reporting and then a mechanism to deal with what do you do when
25 the data are missing.
26
27 The technology requirements are some outstanding questions, and
28 that was reflected in the letter that the Gulf Council sent to
29 me last fall. That is will we have a single system, a hardware
30 system, for the reporting or will there be many?
31
32 We know that we want something that's cost-effective and we know
33 we need something that's reliable. What we're looking at is
34 meeting a minimum set of standards for the timing of the data
35 transmission, the quality of the data, the confidentiality of
36 the data, and the security of the system, and these are not
37 disputed criteria. These are closely-held criteria among the
38 key data collection partners.
39
40 You see here kind of a graphic of what it takes to get the job
41 done with the coordination among the NOAA Fisheries partners,
42 GulfFIN, ACCSP, and the Gulf states. The major components of
43 this are going to be data management, dockside validation, the
44 biological sampling, and, again, that's so we get the age
45 structures we need and we get the lengths and the weights of
46 these fishes, and then at-sea validation. The at-sea validation
47 is to validate the discard data.
48

When it comes to electronic data management, again, some of the
benefits that we're looking for are faster delivery, integrated
QA/QC. The example I use is when you're writing a paper report
and you mistakenly put a wrong species or a wrong weight down,
there is no way to catch that in real time. It isn't caught
until an analyst looks at the data and says, wow, that's an odd
report, whereas with electronic reporting, you can build in the
ability to question data that if -- If someone submits a forty-
pound guppy, you can send a note that says a forty-pound guppy
is an unusual landing and maybe your species is wrong or maybe
that poundage is wrong.

You can build those kinds of checks into the system. Again,
we've already talked about improving the geographic data, the
resolution of where those fishes are caught, and we can
standardize these types of data across different fisheries, to
avoid redundancies, to reduce the reporting burden on the
industry, and to reduce issues reconciling multiple datasets,
but, again, there are also some hurdles that we need to grapple
with.

That is to make decisions about what are adequate reporting
technology, to develop the collaborative approach across the
data collection agencies, and hat's going to take some good
collaboration, to develop a centralized data management
strategy, and to avoid duplication between the state and the
federal data collection programs.

Dockside validation, again, I'm going to touch lightly on this,
because we've talked about it in almost every slide. It's
important, because what it does is it groundtruths the self-
reported data, particularly the catch and the effort, and it
helps us account for non-reporting and also misreporting. If
there are errors submitted in the self-reported data, it gives
us kind of an error rate, so we can make corrections for that.

The biggest challenges with dockside validation are the need for
additional field personnel. You have to have boots on the dock
to do it. Access to private docks is challenging now, but
having it would improve the validation.

Then the logistics. By that, I mean should it be a stand-alone
program, where they focus exclusively on that, or should we fold
that into the job that the current people who are doing
biological sampling are? If we do, that means we're going to
have to add the number of sort of joint samplers that do both of
those, to make sure that we can get both of those jobs done
without holding people up.

1
2   Field personnel for biological sampling is really important.
3   These are crucial data for being able to get length and weight
4   data, age composition data. These mean weights are used to
5   convert landings and numbers to total pounds, and that's
6   important both from ACL monitoring, but also it's important for
7   the stock assessment. Then, again, to get the otoliths and the
8   gonads, to know that age distribution and the reproductive
9   parameters for these landed fish.
10
11 Again, some of the challenges are simply we need to add
12 additional field personnel, and we've talked a little bit about
13 private dock access to improve those data.
14
15 The at-sea sampling gives us biological sampling of discarded
16 fish and it also enables us to validate those discard reports
17 and verify the self-reported data. Some of the challenges are,
18 again, we need more people. It typically is more expensive than
19 dockside sampling. It takes strong cooperation from the
20 industry to put people on those vessels. For example, some of
21 the charter boats are smaller than headboats, and it creates
22 some challenges to put another person on those vessels to do
23 that validation work.
24
25 Compliance is a really critical component of this. What we need
26 is a way to manage for late and for missing reports, and the
27 reason is if we have 100 percent compliance, we're in good
28 shape. If there is less than 100 percent compliance, we need to
29 know what happened on those vessels that didn't report.
30
31 Typically, what we do then is make estimates of what happened.
32 This reduces the overall accuracy and it increases the
33 uncertainty of those estimates and it lengthens the amount of
34 time it takes for us to be able to tell you how many fish were
35 landed in any given period of time.
36
37 The compliance activities we picture would come in the form of
38 port agent observations, the headboat activity reports, database
39 monitoring, and delinquency measures, to be able to deal with
40 the aftermath of missing data.
41
42 Just to give you a feel for how crucial this is, the headboat
43 program right now is monitoring about 145 headboats. 25 to 30
44 percent of the survey staff's time is spent chasing down late
45 reports.   That's time that could be spent doing more
46 validations, gathering more biological data, or improving the
47 quality of some of the data products that we put out. This is
48 something I think we really need to spend some time thinking

1 about.
2
3 This is a graphic that takes some of the data types that we
4 talked about and it helps you kind of visualize how they're
5 doing. If you take a look to the right, that image there, we
6 use the biological sampling and the at-sea validation to collect
7 weight information. Those weights enable us to understand the
8 relationship of the number of fish to the total biomass that was
9 removed.
10
11 If you look at the lower half, the logbook reports and the
12 dockside validation helps us develop correction factors for
13 errors in those self-reported data, and this is all really
14 crucial for getting accurate catch estimates.
15
16 The timeframe of the reporting is going to be important for
17 that. It influences the program size and complexity, and you
18 can see the accuracy and completeness of the logbook reports,
19 and then the coordination among those different data elements to
20 get the products we need for ACL monitoring and for stock
21 assessment inputs.
22
23 The next thing is once you stand up this program, the current
24 program can't go away, because we do need to stand up the
25 program and spend a good amount of time working with the
26 industry to make sure they understand the importance of really
27 high-quality data inputs to this, and we think that those
28 communications, the outreach and education on this, would take
29 about a year.
30
31 The historical catch and effort data are absolutely crucial, not
32 only in and of themselves, but as a time series, and so to be
33 able to take data collected in this way and link it to the data
34 that were collected in the current MRIP approach, we need to
35 calibrate them against one another, to see how those two
36 programs perform against one another.
37
38 Of   course,   all   of   that   is   important   to   obtain   MRIP
39 certification.   This   methodology   is   going   to   have   to   be
40 certified as meeting the criteria for scientific quality for use
41 in management.
42
43 Again, the headboat survey is a census for about 145 headboats
44 in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, total. It costs right
45 around $1 million a year. The MRIP for-hire survey right now is
46 covering about 1,600 federal charter boats and costs around $4.9
47 million. Again, these are really rough estimates, because we
48 don't keep our books by individual project.

1
2 What we're looking for going into the future would be a for-hire
3 electronic reporting program that has electronic logbooks for
4 about 1,700 total vessels. We expect that we would have some
5 startup costs that happen once, and then they go away, but then
6 there would be operational costs that continue going into the
7 future.
8
9 The types of those would be survey design, developing the
10 software and the support for the software, the reporting and
11 monitoring hardware, and additional personnel. We've talked
12 about the dockside and the at-sea and then the data management.
13
14 What you see here are very rough order of magnitude. I want to
15 really emphasize that these are rough order of magnitude
16 estimates of what we think those costs could be going into the
17 future and a first-cut notion of who would take on those costs.
18
19 You see we have software, outreach, data management, and
20 personnel costs, dockside personnel, at-sea samplers, and some
21 enforcement officers. Again, the enforcement, we can talk about
22 how we want to manage enforcement. There are multiple ways,
23 but, again this is just a first cut. Then the real question is
24 VMS. Would we be using VMS, per se, or would we be using some
25 other form of electronic monitoring or no form of electronic
26 monitoring? That is why you see this in a different color.
27
28 There are questions regarding who is responsible for buying
29 those units and the installation of those units and then
30 certainly, once they were installed, cost-sharing with the
31 industry to pay the data services for that. Again, these are
32 all estimates, rough order of magnitude, so you know what we're
33 looking at and the differences between costs with VMS and
34 without.
35
36 Remember that while some of those dockside samplers already
37 exist for the existing program, we're going to have to beef them
38 up for this new program. You know we're going to have to run
39 the electronic reporting alongside of the existing program.
40 That's what some of the initial startup costs are. Again, this
41 is just to remember that this is a work in progress. Be careful
42 about carving these in concrete, because this is the first take
43 on this.
44
45 What we view as some next steps on this is the fact that the
46 regulations are farther along than some of the other components
47 to actually be able to implement this. Having the codified text
48 does not create the program. There are lots of steps that have

1 to happen for the program to be implemented, not the least of
2 which is to make sure we have the resources we need to carry
3 this out.
4
5 We need to make decisions on what kind of devices should be
6 required and what those requirements should be for those,
7 decisions about who pays for the costs of the hardware, the
8 software and the monitoring, and what the council's desired
9 timeline for implementation is, given some of these additional
10 steps that have to happen.
11
12 What I view in this is really an iterative process. The council
13 is very far along in thinking about the regulations. We're
14 working on the technical aspects. I don't picture those as
15 being independent of one another.
16
17 I think as decisions are made that we're on parallel tracks and
18 those parallel tracks get closer and closer together and
19 ultimately will converge on the approach that we need to
20 actually implement this, should we find the resources we need to
21 make that happen. At this point, I will turn it over to see if
22 we have any questions.
23
24 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY:** I don't have a question, but,
25 for the audience, we update these presentations as we get them
26 to our website. This presentation is on our website. You have
27 to refresh the website every now and then to get the newly-
28 updated publications.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Dr. Lucas.
31
32 **DR. KELLY LUCAS:** Bonnie, I don't know if you can speak to this
33 or if this is strictly MRIP, but we talked about the forty-five-
34 day delay in getting information and so let's say people are
35 reporting daily. What would then be the delay in getting the
36 data?
37
38 **DR. PONWITH:** The real question is now versus when the program
39 has matured. Right now, what we want to be careful about using
40 -- Be careful about using raw data for immediate decisions.
41 That's concerning.
42
43 As we accumulate data that are self-reported against data that
44 are observed by the dockside samplers, we will get a stronger
45 and stronger feel for how close those two are to one another.
46 If those two are very close and very stable in their
47 relationship, it brings a higher level of comfort using the raw
48 data as a leading indicator of where we are relative to the ACL.

13

1
2   If those data are parallel to one another, but very different,
3   we can still use a correction factor. If those data are not
4   parallel and they zig-zag back and forth, then it means we need
5   to wait for the validation data to come in before we can make
6   strong statements about what we're seeing in there.
7
8   If you see uncertainty, it is, until we see the data and see how
9   they behave relative to one another and how much confidence we
10   have in the self-reported data without correction, is difficult
11   to forecast. The second thing is the poundage. We will be
12   collecting data at the dockside to be able to understand what
13   the average weight of these landed fish are.
14
15   Those average weights are needed for converting the numbers of
16   fish that are being reported on the vessels into pounds. For
17   species that are common, those data are plentiful and we're able
18   to do those quite readily. For species that become more and
19   more rare, we have empty cells, meaning you could sample three
20   or four or ten boats without seeing one, and you don't want to
21   make those relationships based on one observation, because if
22   someone catches a really, really, really big fish, you could
23   very much overestimate your total poundage.
24
25   You typically have to wait for enough data to accumulate to have
26   average weights that are meaningful, and that's the situation
27   we're in with the headboat data. We used to do headboat
28   estimates once a year based on the paper. We're getting those
29   data in on a weekly basis and the thing that is our bottleneck
30   right now are getting adequate weight data to be able to convert
31   those numbers to weights.
32
33   **DR. LUCAS:** So you don't necessarily envision -- Whoever is out
34   there dockside validating and the biological sampling and all
35   that, they will continue upon their normal process of reporting
36   when they report, regardless of the fact that there is an
37   electronic reporting system. You will basically have to wait
38   for that information to come in and go back and look at the
39   electronic reports.
40
41   **DR. PONWITH:** No, that's not necessarily the case. I mean those
42   -- The dockside sampling, we can make modifications to how they
43   report, too. Making modifications to that will have some costs,
44   but it can be done. It's just that there is an analysis that
45   needs to happen to be able to create those correction factors.
46
47   Otherwise, you basically have two raw data streams. There is
48   still analysis that needs to happen. The other thing is that

1 you need to accumulate enough samples to be able to have a good
2 correction factor. You don't want to take all the self-reported
3 data and have just one or two dockside validation observations
4 and expand using those, or you could end up having some problems
5 with that as well.
6
7 Again, if, after time goes by, we find out that the dockside
8 data are almost identical to the self-reported data, it creates
9 some flexibilities for us to be a little more limber in how
10 those data are used. We just can't anticipate that until we see
11 those numbers.
12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Lance, Myron, and then Roy.
14
15 **MR. LANCE ROBINSON:** Bonnie, I don't know if you can answer or
16 speak to this, but you mentioned in your slide presentation that
17 in the current headboat sampling program that almost a third of
18 the staff time is spent on tracing down compliance reports. Do
19 you know if there is any consequences to the headboat operators
20 for non-reporting or late reporting?
21
22 **DR. PONWITH:** Well, you know, regardless of what consequences
23 there are here, this is certainly something to take into
24 consideration in the construction of this program. If we want
25 to be efficient, if we want to use analysts' time on things that
26 make the system better, instead of analysts' time imploring
27 people to submit their data, then working together to find ways
28 to inspire timely reporting would be good.
29
30 Now, we understand that things happen. These are human beings
31 and we have lives and things happen. There can be technical
32 challenges and we can have personal issues, but, all that aside,
33 when we create a program with an expectation of a timely report,
34 getting it on time is going to be really crucial for this to be
35 successful, and I think that as we look at how we're setting up
36 this program that creating as many ways to incentivize timely
37 reporting will hopefully reduce that number down to a tolerable
38 level.
39
40 **MR. ROBINSON:** To that point, so you're unsure that there is any
41 compliance requirement right now?
42
43 **DR. PONWITH:** Well, so in the Gulf of Mexico, the for-hire
44 industry has permits and losing that permit has consequences. I
45 don't want to speak to the -- I want to be careful about
46 speaking to the management side, and I guess I would defer to my
47 management partners on this, but if one of the consequences for
48 chronically late reports was the risk of losing a permit and the

1 ability to recover that permit was limited, that's a pretty
2 strong incentive.
3
4 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** To that point, Dave?
5
6 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Lance, something to consider -- Bonnie said
7 about a third of the time is spent on compliance reporting.
8 When we did the MRIP logbook pilot in Texas and Florida, we
9 actually spent more time, because we were talking about more
10 vessels. That's for 145 vessels. If you're looking at 1,700,
11 it's probably even more time.
12
13 It's my understanding that the fisherman that doesn't report can
14 lose his permit, but he has -- He potentially has a year before
15 he has to report that information, and so the current
16 regulations could certainly be strengthened to provide a
17 stronger incentive for those guys to report.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I have Myron and then Roy. Mara, was that to
20 that point? Then Mara real quick.
21
22 **MS. LEVY:** Just to clarify, there is a reporting requirement in
23 the regulations that requires folks to report. When people go
24 to renew their permits, the Permits Office will usually check
25 with the Science Center to make sure their reporting compliance
26 is up-to-date before they renew the permit, because we view that
27 as necessary information for the administration of the permit.
28
29 If it's not up-to-date, they won't be allowed to renew it until
30 it is, but that is separate from any potential enforcement
31 action that the Office of Law Enforcement or NOAA General
32 Counsel Enforcement could take for a violation. Those are two
33 separate and distinct things, and the idea of having a violation
34 and then actually getting it prosecuted and going through the
35 administrative procedures and getting your permit taken away is
36 a totally separate process than the process for renewal and our
37 requirement that your reporting be up-to-date to renew. I just
38 want to make the distinction there.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Myron.
41
42 **MR. MYRON FISCHER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make
43 sure we're tightening up the boards, where we don't have data
44 falling through the cracks. Out of 1,723 vessels, and I know
45 there were other numbers up there, I guess I wanted to ask who
46 are they, because we have boats that fish HMS species that don't
47 have reef fish permits. We have boats that fish tarpon in the
48 EEZ that don't have reef fish permits.

1
2 Then we have a whole array of state guide boats that run up and
3 down the beach and they do go offshore and they do fish
4 mangroves, but red snapper are pushing closer and closer to the
5 beach and they're catching red snapper in state waters and then,
6 with the new nine-mile temporary limit we are experiencing, we
7 expect to see more snapper caught on these state guide boats.
8
9 The way it's going, we're going to have estuarine boats
10 venturing out into state waters before long and so it's going to
11 -- I think this number of 1,723 is a very low number of the
12 potential boats that can harvest reef fish. I just want to see
13 who is included in this and who is not included and how do we
14 pick up the boats, the data from the boats, that may not be
15 included in this total?
16
17 **DR. PONWITH:** The numbers that you see on the presentation are -
18 - There are some vessels that are Gulf exclusively and some that
19 are Atlantic exclusively and some that are dual. These are
20 numbers of federally-permitted charter boats, and I think that
21 one of the things that you raised, and it's really an important
22 thing as we think about this, and that is the states have their
23 own data collection procedures and these would be for federally-
24 permitted vessels.
25
26 I raised the question of is there merit to creating one system
27 for just the ease of having the data collected according to one
28 methodology and having the data all in one place and not having
29 to sew together two numbers that were generated from two systems
30 on potentially two different timeframes.
31
32 Again, that makes things unwieldy and that makes things slower,
33 but it is worth raising to the consciousness of the council of
34 what those pros and what those cons are as we talk about that.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Roy.
37
38 **MR. ROY WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Bonnie. Your next-to-last slide
39 was labeled "Next Steps", and you said we could approve the
40 codified text, but you can't implement the program until the
41 design is complete and funding is available. Have you not --
42 Didn't you receive funding for VMS and for -- In this last
43 budget, didn't you get a lot of money there for doing this kind
44 of thing?
45
46 **DR. PONWITH:** That was for a pilot study that's underway right
47 now. It's a subset of vessels and they are getting -- They are
48 putting VMS on vessels and they are reporting electronically,

1 but it would take an expansion -- It would take an evaluation of
2 the results of that to determine what in that process was
3 exactly what we want and what needs to be adjusted, either
4 adapted or adopted, and then look at what it would take to do
5 that for the whole fleet.
6
7 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Then so how far are we into that program? Do you
8 know?
9
10 **DR. PONWITH:** That just got underway.
11
12 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Continuing on, I mean it seems like your next
13 steps slides here are -- It goes in the direction that I was
14 going. What types of devices should be required and what
15 capabilities should NMFS-approved devices have? I mean
16 obviously for the bigger charter vessels, a VMS-type system
17 should work pretty well. If they don't have to pay for it, if
18 that's being funded by Congress, I don't know why we wouldn't go
19 ahead and require that.
20
21 I imagine everybody has been getting these emails from Louisiana
22 that I've been getting about these runabout vessels, which I
23 guess have federal reef fish permits. Is it possible that we
24 could use some system other -- They don't want to use a VMS, or
25 at least the ones that have been sending me emails don't want to
26 use one. Are there other systems, for example the iSnapper
27 system, that might work for these vessels?
28
29 **DR. PONWITH:** Rather than picking a piece of equipment, the most
30 important thing is to always start with the requirements. You
31 start with the management requirements, what do you want, what
32 data do you want, and you start with the science requirements
33 and you knit the science and the management requirements
34 together and then start talking about tool is going to be the
35 most effective way to deliver those requirements.
36
37 The answer to your question is if the council wants to be able
38 to monitor a vessel and use VMS as a means to validate whether a
39 vessel was off the dock or on the dock in a given day, to
40 validate an effort report, then it's going to require some sort
41 of a locational device.
42
43 The real question then is does that locational device have to be
44 a VMS, per se, or can it be something different? Again, I think
45 it's a matter of understanding exactly what those requirements -
46 - What do we want out of the system? Then look at what hardware
47 solutions meet those needs and what are the benefits and what
48 are the costs of those hardware systems and make a decision in

18

1 that direction.
2
3 The same thing with the notion of an open vessel. You know
4 we're talking about two separate things. We're talking about
5 where are you, and that's one piece of information, and the
6 other is how do I send my report? Those two things may be all
7 collapsed into one device or they may not, but those are the two
8 pieces of information we need.
9
10 We are doing studies right now that are looking at ruggedized
11 notebook-type of means to be able to submit those data. I know
12 that we've seen iSnapper as an example of a way to deliver those
13 data. Again, it's a matter of looking at the requirements and
14 matching the hardware to meet those requirements.
15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bonnie, to Roy's point, I guess one of the
17 questions that I would have too on this next step, and a major
18 concern that we'll have today if we move, which is obviously
19 going to be a big decision on if we want to go down the final
20 action route, but the big concern of the fishermen, whether it's
21 Roy's example of VMS from the Louisiana guys or whatever, is how
22 input past this approval stage are the fishermen going to have
23 in what systems end up approved or used or what input would they
24 have on designing their data collection system? I think that's
25 where a big issue is going to be.
26
27 **DR. PONWITH:** Again, that's a hard question to answer when we
28 have sort of a basket of components in there. The issues are
29 the hardware, the software, and the reconciliation of the
30 dockside to the self-reported data. All of those are
31 components.
32
33 I will tell you that our experience, when it comes to creating a
34 method for moving data from the industry to the government, the
35 more interaction we have with the industry, the better that
36 system works. That's why we do pilots, because if you have a
37 bunch of biologists who design a system and it's all based on
38 what I want to get, it doesn't often take into consideration
39 what's the easiest way to deliver it, to give it.
40
41 I think marrying the how do we tell what's on those boats to the
42 biologists and how do the biologists need to receive those data,
43 getting those two halves together is really, really important.
44 We will learn a lot from this pilot program, and I think that
45 there's a latitude in there for those kinds of interactions.
46
47 The first step in that process is to set the requirements. What
48 is non-negotiable and I need this? There are questions with

1 respect to management and there are questions with respect to
2 science, where those requirements are -- This is the starting
3 point and I need this. How do you get it? There will be some
4 latitude for interactions in.
5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Next is Kevin and then followed by
7 Johnny, but, Kelly, go ahead, to that point.
8
9 **DR. LUCAS:** A lot of time we spent talking about VMS wasn't
10 necessarily about the enforcement or the validation. It was
11 about having a location to help improve stock assessments and
12 discard mortality and stuff like that.
13
14 If that was the only requirement, if you were only looking at --
15 Not enforcing where they are, if they're at the dock or away,
16 not looking at that type of validation, and if it's strictly
17 about what depth were you fishing at, is there an easier way,
18 besides a VMS, to get that? Could you zone it off and say what
19 zone or what depth you were fishing at and have them report that
20 as part of their electronic reporting and that would also get
21 that information?
22
23 **DR. PONWITH:** You know there is a whole range of solutions to
24 wanting to know where were you fishing. I think the coarsest
25 way of getting that is, oh, you went fishing today and what
26 depth did you fish at? That's not a really good way to do
27 things, because we know everybody fishes -- It's a continuum.
28 They can be at multiple depths and there is no one true answer.
29
30 There are ways of partitioning the reports over time, or
31 different ways. That kind of approach would be less precise
32 than having a locational device. There is also even a range of
33 sophistication in the locational devices. Those can be like
34 VMS, which is used for enforcement purposes, so very precise.
35 Those are certified by the agency as adequate for use for
36 enforcement purposes, but there are other types of electronic
37 monitoring devices that are less rigorous that may end up being
38 less expensive.
39
40 Again, there is a whole range. What we get by having locational
41 information is valuable. If we know that fish pulled from
42 deeper water die at a higher rate than fish pulled from
43 shallower water, having a depth profile across that trip gives
44 us a better way to credit shallow water fishers in terms of
45 lower mortality rates. That can be done.
46
47 It takes an analysis, but that's a way to do that, but there is
48 that other thing and that is what percentage of fleet reported

1 they went fishing versus what percentage of the fleet did go
2 fishing. If you have 100 percent accuracy in the self-reported
3 data, then you don't need monitoring for that, or you just need
4 spot checks. If you don't have 100 percent accuracy in that,
5 then it makes for a stronger case.
6
7 **DR. LUCAS:** In that case, have you, or has another division
8 within NMFS, utilized VMS for scientific data collection that
9 you were talking about, versus enforcement? Have you all used
10 that locational information for --
11
12 **DR. PONWITH:** We have looked at fishing patterns of the VMS data
13 for science purposes, yes.
14
15 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Anson.
16
17 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Thank you. Dr. Ponwith, you had mentioned in
18 your presentation a forty-five-day turnaround time for headboat
19 reporting, and it's right now a weekly reporting. Is that the
20 first time that the agency looks at the data for ACL monitoring
21 and management, or is it, based on your discussion, where you
22 say once you get more comfortable with the data and you're
23 talking about a species that's more common in the catch, you can
24 develop kind of some algorithms and such that kind of predict
25 maybe or determine some sizes?
26
27 Is there a much quicker time that that data is available for use
28 for ACL monitoring in the headboat survey or is that forty-five-
29 day the minimum time that you need in order to process the data
30 and to analyze it and to use it?
31
32 **DR. PONWITH:** Right now, forty-five days is the time we use to
33 get preliminary estimates. We do look for patterns in the raw
34 data to raise red flags or to calm the waters in terms of the
35 pace at which we're approaching ACLs, but the forty-five days
36 would be the first time you would have a preliminary estimate.
37
38 **MR. ANSON:** So looking potentially at a weekly reporting in the
39 for-hire industry, and it would obviously be a much larger
40 segment of the fishery, what is your sense of increasing that
41 time or minimizing that time further, so that it could be useful
42 for ACL monitoring, since we are talking about, at least in red
43 snapper, a very short fishery? Triggerfish is the same thing.
44 What is the likelihood then of developing the processes to
45 shorten the time and what would be your sense of when that time
46 would be available, that they would be available, for use?
47
48 **DR. PONWITH:** If we set up a program and we've already gone

1 through the MRIP certification -- So MRIP certification has been
2 done and we are now sanctioned to use these data for management
3 purposes. If we look at the dockside validation data and the
4 self-reported data and they are very close to one another, or
5 are less close, but very consistent in the differences, it
6 creates sort of statistical grounds for using those self-
7 reported data closer to in real time.
8
9 The thing that you would want to be careful of is a situation
10 where behaviors change as you approach an ACL. If the self-
11 reported data -- If the behavior in how self-reported data were
12 submitted changed the closer you got to an ACL, that creates
13 some challenges. You can see where I'm going with this.
14
15 If there is rock-solid consistency between the validation data
16 and the self-reported data, our ability to use those self-
17 reported data as an indicator of when we think we're going to
18 close -- It becomes more valuable, but here is a question for
19 the council, and I know Dr. Crabtree has raised this.
20
21 In the for-hire industry, if you gave them a choice that I can
22 keep you open until you're within one day of your ACL, but
23 you're only going to get twenty-four hours notice that you're
24 closed, or I can use these data to create a more precise
25 projection of when you're going to hit that ACL, but you still
26 have to predict going into the future, using your current
27 circumstances, which would you rather have?
28
29 The sense that I'm getting from the industry is knowing twenty-
30 four hours from now that you are very precisely going to be at
31 your ACL is not what they want. They need enough lead time so
32 they don't end up having a situation of having to call customers
33 that are coming from all over the country and say, by the way,
34 that trip you planned last month isn't going to happen and we'll
35 be closed tomorrow.
36
37 The real question is in a well-executed fishery, how much in
38 advance does the industry want to know that, in all likelihood,
39 X number of days or weeks going into the future this fishery
40 will likely be closed?
41
42 That's kind of a management question, and these are the kinds of
43 things that I was talking about, how we need to know what our
44 requirements are.   Then we design the system to those
45 requirements. The answer to that question is very important in
46 terms of how we design the system.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Greene.

1
2   **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** Thank you, but just to follow up on your
3   very last point, if the season has been going along at a certain
4   rate and we know we've got an approximate season of however many
5   days, and we realize that we're getting close to that date, I
6   don't think it's going to be an issue for people to say, okay,
7   look, we can book this trip, but it may or may not be within
8   snapper season, and I don't think that's the end of the world.
9   I don't know that that's a big hang-up to the point that I would
10 stop the whole process.
11
12 Now, a couple of comments or questions. Part of it is, is there
13 a list of National Marine Fisheries approved devices that other
14 councils use, or are we the only ones that is experiencing this
15 type of stuff? I was under the impression, from the last
16 meeting, it was more along the lines of we will tell you guys
17 what we need and then you guys can work with it from there, but
18 now I'm kind of seeing it seems the other way around. Am I
19 confused? Did I misunderstand something? Can you help me with
20 this?
21
22 **DR. PONWITH:** Again, that's a chicken-and-an-egg question, and
23 that's why it's hard to answer. I don't picture the agency
24 saying you can have this and only this, unless the council
25 decides they want VMS as the tool for monitoring location.
26
27 What I picture is we decide what our requirements are and then,
28 as long as devices meet those requirements, they would be
29 approved. It's the same way with the reporting hardware. Here
30 is what we need from the industry, and as long as you have
31 hardware that meets these requirements, then that need is
32 satisfied.
33
34 **MR. GREENE:** Is that consistent with how this has been done in
35 the past? Was this a conversation that was done when we set up
36 the red snapper IFQ? Was it up to the council to come up with a
37 VMS, or how did that work? I wasn't on the council at that
38 time.
39
40 **DR. PONWITH:** I think that the decision was made that VMS was a
41 requirement, but within the VMS program, there is more than one
42 VMS unit that's approved, and so it's up to the industry to make
43 a decision of I have to have one of these and which one works
44 the best for my business. That's my understanding of how that
45 was set up, but I would turn to my management colleagues to
46 correct me if that's wrong.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** To that point, Mara?

1
2 **MS. LEVY:** I think that's correct, but I also think that there
3 were very specific regulations setting out how you get your
4 device approved and the process NMFS goes through. Then I think
5 there were -- Those approved ones were published and then folks
6 could select which one of those approved ones they want, but I
7 think the decision point was VMS and sort of real-time tracking.
8
9 I think the way that we changed the alternative in the document
10 now, it doesn't really talk about whether the council is
11 expecting this sort of real-time location tracking, and I know
12 we talked about that, versus gathering the locations and sending
13 it when you're back at the dock. Those seem to be two very
14 different things that folks had very strong opinions on.
15
16 Right now, it's very open-ended about what the council is
17 expecting from this device to record vessel location at
18 specified time intervals. That's very broad. It could be VMS,
19 where people are actually tracked as they're going, or it could
20 be something else. It might be helpful for the council to think
21 about what they really want in terms of that requirement.
22
23 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Right, and to that point, what I'm hearing from
24 the committee and counsel is maybe we need to define some of the
25 technicalities of this just a little bit more, but I know that
26 at least that's a big concern expressed from the fishermen, of
27 what they're going to get out of this amendment, should we pass
28 it. There is some concerns about that, but go ahead, Myron.
29
30 **MR. FISCHER:** John has a comment, but I do want my turn.
31
32 **DR. FROESCHKE:** After you make your comment, I just wonder if
33 this would be the time to -- I have a short PowerPoint
34 presentation about the document, the current state and the
35 alternatives, just so we could refresh everyone and make sure
36 we're all on the same page about meshing the science and the
37 management together.
38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, John. I think that's a good idea. In
40 fact, I was about to say that, so we could move it along, but I
41 had you on the list, Myron, and go ahead. After that, we'll let
42 John give this summary presentation and bring us up to speed.
43 Go ahead, Myron.
44
45 **MR. FISCHER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mine is a comment and then
46 a non-related question I do have. My comment is water depth
47 fished seems to always come up and talking about barotrauma, but
48 let's remember that you could be in 250-foot of water, and most

24

1 people are not fishing 250-foot down. They're fishing fifty and
2 seventy-five-foot down, and it's not a real indication of
3 barotrauma, just because someone is in 250-foot of water.
4 That's going to be something for the analysts to keep in mind
5 down the road.
6
7 My question is, through recent years, the states -- I don't know
8 about the federal government, but the states experienced cuts in
9 their age and growth labs and their age labs, trip ticket
10 systems, MRIP, or dockside systems and SEAMAP. It's been steady
11 cuts.
12
13 I guess my question is where are we getting the monies, because
14 it's going to be -- I think Bonnie may have pointed it out, but
15 there's going to be monies to construct the system, but once
16 it's implemented, you're going to have either the states or
17 contractors doing a ramped-up validation dockside. It's
18 probably going to be more work getting the data to Gulf States
19 and then having them do the final filters and get the data to
20 the Science Center, where it will be filtered again.
21
22 It will just more work all along the way. I anticipate that the
23 program is going to cost more than the existing MRIP monies the
24 states are getting, and so I am just curious if Dave knows
25 something about monies coming into the states or if Bonnie
26 knows. How are we going to handle the financial burden of
27 implementing the program?
28
29 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Good point. Go ahead, Bonnie.
30
31 **DR. PONWITH:** I think that's a really good question, and I think
32 it's just, first of all, being aware that even if running this
33 program costs the same amount, we would have to run both of them
34 side-by-side long enough to be able to calibrate for the
35 purposes of the time series, but I think it's reasonable,
36 looking at this, that it is going to end up being more expensive
37 than the existing system, because of the need for additional
38 validation.
39
40 Again, the statistics would be the determinant of what is the
41 right amount of dockside sampling you need, and, again, you
42 would start with an estimate of how much you need and then
43 refine that, based on the data that you collect, to determine,
44 okay, this is the amount of precision we need, this is the
45 correct amount of sampling to achieve that level of precision.
46 It's an iterative process.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. We're having some very good discussion.

1 In the interest of time, Johnny, and I know you're on the list,
2 but what would be the pleasure of the committee? John has
3 prepared -- John, about how long is your presentation?
4
5 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Five or ten minutes. It's like eight slides.
6
7 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Five minutes? It was largely an overview to
8 bring everyone up to speed on the actual amendment. We can
9 continue this discussion or have John present this, which might
10 help in the discussion, or would you like to -- You had your
11 hand up before.
12
13 **MR. GREENE:** I would like to just address a question toward
14 Bonnie, just to the slide show that she presented. Then we can
15 carry on, if that would be okay, Mr. Chair.
16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, that's fine.
18
19 **MR. GREENE:** Bonnie, I think where I'm kind of looking at this
20 is I think most people would agree that the Headboat
21 Collaborative Program was a pretty good success in a lot of
22 ways. I think one of the ways was finding out that there was
23 in-season monitoring that was happening, the fish were not as
24 big as they assumed they would be, and then there was an
25 extension or more pounds that were allotted to them.
26
27 I think where I'm trying to kind of look at this is that, number
28 one, if you're doing daily reporting, is it going to cut down on
29 the amount of time lag to turn the information around, as
30 opposed to weekly?
31
32 The other part is I think most everybody here wants to do
33 something. I think it's very confusing to what to do in what
34 level, but, building on the headboat program, the success that
35 they appeared to have, in my opinion, the flexibility they had
36 with in-season monitoring, I think that's where I would like to
37 see us go.
38
39 Now, how we get there, I'm not totally sure, but can we reduce
40 the amount of time at your shop to where we could potentially do
41 in-season monitoring with a program similar to the Headboat
42 Collaborative?
43
44 **DR. PONWITH:** Is the question to know in real time what
45 percentage of the ACL has been caught, in real time? Is that
46 what you mean?
47
48 **MR. GREENE:** Yes.

1
2 **DR. PONWITH:** For that, it really depends on how close the
3 dockside monitoring data maps to the self-reporting data and the
4 relationship between those two. If they are inconsistent with
5 one another, we still get information about what's happening on
6 a daily basis, but it creates a lot more uncertainty about how
7 much we know.
8
9 If those data are very close to one another, we can use the
10 self-reported, raw data to help us understand where we are
11 relative to an ACL. That is really the deciding factor on how
12 useful the raw data are for real-time decisions, whether you're
13 talking about weekly checks or whether you're talking about
14 moving to daily reporting and using daily checks.
15
16 **MR. GREENE:** Was there any non-compliance issues with the
17 Headboat Collaborative?
18
19 **MS. LEVY:** Just remember though that the Headboat Collaborative
20 wasn't just an open season and people report, right? They had a
21 certain number of fish that they were allocated and they were --
22 There was monitoring of how much was actually coming in judged
23 against that total, and it went through the fact that they had
24 vessel accounts and collaborative accounts. It was more like
25 what you're looking at in 41 and 42 and setting up a cooperative
26 or an IFQ-type of system and not just an open season where
27 people were coming and reporting what they were catching.
28
29 **MR. GREENE:** Thank you. I understand. That was where I was
30 struggling, but that clears it up. Thank you.
31
32 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, John. Do you want to give us the
33 overview with your presentation, please?
34
35   **FINAL ACTION - GENERIC ELECTRONIC CHARTER VESSEL REPORTING**
36   **AMENDMENT**
37
38 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Sure, and I will be brief. What I did is I just
39 put together a quick summary presentation. We haven't met and
40 discussed this since October and a lot of things have happened
41 related to this and other items.
42
43 What I did is I just wanted to sort of refresh everyone's memory
44 about the three potential actions in the document and the
45 preferred alternatives, and I will go through this. Action 1
46 refers to the frequency and the mechanism, and this applies only
47 to vessels that we consider charter vessels, and I will explain
48 the clarity to that in just a minute.

The council, at the October meeting, reaffirmed Preferred
Alternative 4, which is the trip level electronic reporting.
The same goes for Action 2. The only difference from Action 1
is this applies to headboats as opposed to the charter boats.
Again, it's Preferred Alternative 4, trip level electronic
reporting. Just for your clarification, the reason that these
are in separate actions is when we originally constructed this
document -- The current no action for charter and headboats is
very different, and so, to appropriately compare the
alternatives for impacts and things, we separated them into
separate actions.

Action 3 applies to both headboats and charter vessels. This
refers to the electronic reporting requirements in terms of what
to report, the primary item being some sort of catch location
reporting.   The preferred alternative is to record vessel
location using a NMFS-approved electronic device, which we've
talked about already, as to what that might entail. I think
there's a lot of work to do, and this would apply to both
charter and headboats.

Just a quick refresher on how we got to this point. In 2014,
the council appointed us to develop a technical subcommittee
report with some recommendations on how this program could begin
to materialize. The report of this was presented last January
to the council. Based on that, we initiated a joint document,
working with the South Atlantic Council, to address some of
these.

In March of 2015, we went through the amendment development
process, in both June and August. We met jointly with the South
Atlantic in June. At their September meeting, they recommended
splitting it and we concurred with that at the October meeting,
into a Gulf-only document, the primary reason being that they,
and I guess us, felt that our documents were developing on
separate tracks and at different timelines, and so they opted to
split. We concurred with that and so now we're really just
focused on the Gulf.

The second development was that we talked some about some of the
issues that Dr. Ponwith has presented to clarify here and
decided to sort of move forward and staff was directed to
prepare a document for final action, which we have done. That's
for January 2016. You will notice there's an asterisk, and
we've talked about this. This is the codified text, based on
some of those issues that are not worked out yet, and we don't
have those and that's the reason why.

1
2 This is just a brief overview of the three specific actions.
3 Again, Action 1 refers to the charter vessels, and it's
4 referring to the data reporting. I am just going to skip down
5 to the asterisk down at the bottom.
6
7 It says "Applies to federally-permitted for-hire vessels that do
8 not participate in the headboat program" and so there are lots
9 of ways that you could differentiate between what's a charter
10 vessel and what's a headboat, passenger capacity and Coast Guard
11 requirements and things.
12
13 What we have done is consistent with other amendments and what
14 we've done in the past. If you're currently reporting in the
15 headboat program, you're a headboat. If you're not reporting to
16 the headboat program, you're not a headboat, and that's the way
17 that we've at least worked this out for the purposes of this
18 document.
19
20 Again, it's Preferred Alternative 4. The same thing for Action
21 2 regarding the headboats and, again, the same language with the
22 asterisk down there. It indicates who this would be applicable
23 to.
24
25 Action 3, again, this is the location. As I indicated, it's
26 Preferred Alternative 2 with the NMFS-approved electronic device
27 to record vessel location. This would be opposed to something
28 like a self-reported click, you know you go to a website and you
29 indicate your primary area fished or something. This would be
30 passively recorded by a device, as opposed to something where a
31 user self-reported their own data. Based on the preferred
32 subalternatives, it would apply to both headboats and charter
33 vessels.
34
35 I put together my own little slide here about next steps or what
36 would be -- In the top box is sort of the NMFS and Science
37 Center steps, as I understood them. It seems similar to what
38 Dr. Ponwith has put together, but this idea that there is
39 hardware and software requirements that need to be developed
40 based on the objectives, and that's sort of a marriage of both
41 management and science needs.
42
43 There is some standards to ensure that the data meet the
44 obligation of best science available and how those could be
45 officially transferred among the data partners, the scientists
46 and things, to make sure everything was there.
47
48 The transition plan, Bonnie described that briefly. We will

1 need to do some sort of transition plan. It will have to occur
2 to ensure that we don't lose the time series of historical data
3 and we can continue to integrate both historical and the new
4 data in the stock assessment process. Then some sort of
5 technical recommendations.
6
7 The green box in the bottom is what I've just called the council
8 process. Essentially, once we get some clarification or decide
9 how to proceed in the blue box, the council could then complete
10 the analysis, the socioeconomic and biological things that we
11 normally do as part of our document development. We would like
12 to, as we always do, work with stakeholders about the preferred
13 alternatives and what they can do and what they like and what
14 they don't like, such that we can work back together, and then
15 we can complete the regulatory requirements, however long that
16 takes.
17
18 We would hope that the green box wouldn't take long once we have
19 the blue box done. That's really what I have to bring you up to
20 speed. I can answer any questions about this. I do have
21 comments. We did a webinar and we received some public comments
22 from that. We have written comments and we have some law
23 enforcement. We can go through those now or we can do it after
24 some discussion, whatever you prefer.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** John, I think it would be a good idea to go
27 through that now, but I know Dr. Lucas has a question. Then I
28 know we'll go through the full document here in a few minutes
29 and so we'll have plenty of opportunity to weigh in on the
30 comments, but, Dr. Lucas, go ahead. Roy, you're next.
31
32 **DR. LUCAS:** On your timeline that you had out there, at either
33 August or October, and I can't remember which one, we had a
34 discussion about a technical committee. Then the states all
35 received letters about having somebody assigned and we all
36 submitted them back to you or whatever, but I don't see where
37 the technical committee ever met or -- I see where we jumped
38 from somehow in October to where we are now, which is the final
39 action, yet we have this technical committee that we were adding
40 to or redefining, and I don't see where they met or discussed
41 anything.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** To that point, John, that's a concern I share
44 as well. I think that's a lot of the concern of the fishermen
45 as well. It seems like we sort of missed a little bit of that
46 technical committee and developing some of the technicalities
47 that Bonnie was talking about that might help her office in this
48 amendment.

1
2 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I can answer that question. That, I believe,
3 was appointed in October of last year. We did send out letters
4 to the states and we did receive appointments from everyone. We
5 have had a conversation with the Science Center and things, but
6 that committee has not met at this time.
7
8 As you can probably surmise here, there is considerable
9 uncertainty about whose job it is to develop these guidelines
10 and things like that, and so what we don't know is what they're
11 supposed to do. The reason I say that is we had a technical
12 committee and they met and they provided the recommendations
13 that were in the report that were received in January of 2015.
14
15 In that, there are a number of decision points that need to be
16 made about how the structure of the program and things -- Those
17 decisions have not really been made, as we're discussing now,
18 and it seemed fairly apparent to us that in order for them to
19 provide more feedback that we need some more clarification about
20 what it is exactly they're supposed to do at this point.
21
22 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead.
23
24 **DR. LUCAS:** To that point, on the last slide about -- If you can
25 flip back to the last slide, where you had the implementation
26 kind of listed, I actually thought that that was what some of
27 the technical committee -- Like I didn't have it divided into
28 boxes as much as I had that committee kind of working on this,
29 because I thought we captured people across NMFS and the
30 Southeast Science Center and Gulf States and all the states that
31 would kind of work together to do those things right there,
32 instead of separating them into the boxes of who was doing what.
33 I don't know and maybe some other committee member can speak to
34 that.
35
36 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I can try again. When we initially developed
37 the subcommittee report, it had a number of these things. The
38 way it was structured is if a VMS route were to be selected,
39 these are sort of the steps that it would be. If it were not,
40 then it would be something else, and so I think our
41 understanding is that once one of those nodes was selected that
42 more or information or more work could be done. We still have
43 not selected a node and so it wasn't apparent what we would do
44 without some more information.
45
46 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I was under that same impression as well,
47 Kelly, but, Roy, go ahead. You had a comment?
48

1 **MR. WILLIAMS:** John, thank you. Going back to the proposed
2 actions that we're considering, the first action was to modify
3 the frequency and mechanism of data reporting for charter
4 vessels. Then the same thing was for headboats. Then Action 3
5 is to also require a vessel location. We spent a lot of time
6 earlier talking about that, and it seemed like we were kind of
7 hung up on that.
8
9 How important is that location in this whole thing? It seems to
10 me that it really isn't all that important. We need to know did
11 the person fish, what species did they catch, how many of each
12 species did you catch? Other than that, you can kind of -- I
13 mean I know there's boats that leave Panama City, Florida or
14 Destin and fish off of Louisiana, but that's not real critical,
15 it seems to me, and we could get a lot of that just other ways.
16
17 I am not sure why we are getting -- It seemed like we were kind
18 of hung up on this this morning, and I'm not sure why we are,
19 and so I'm going to ask you how important this particular aspect
20 of it is.
21
22 **DR. FROESCHKE:** My understanding is that the number one benefit
23 of this is that this is the only surefire way to know in fact if
24 that vessel left the dock and engaged in some sort of activity,
25 and so whether it went fishing or it didn't, or at least whether
26 it left the dock.
27
28 This gives you a piece of information that is of higher quality
29 than sort of self-reported data. Moving beyond that, once you
30 knew that, then you could look at things like where they went
31 and approximately what depths. You could use that for bycatch
32 mortality and things like that, but the number one thing, as I
33 have understood it, has always been effort validation.
34
35 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mr. Brown had his hand up, but I think, before
36 we get into some of the details, that's a good point, Roy, and I
37 will add to that later. Some of the comments, John, from the
38 public might shed some light, and so maybe we can go through
39 that in just a minute and then we can move on to our
40 discussions, but, Mr. Brown, go ahead.
41
42 **MR. MARK BROWN:** I just wanted to just make a brief statement
43 that I'm also on the ACCSP and the South Atlantic Council made a
44 proposal for some funding for a pilot program for location. It
45 would have a tablet that was issued out to the fishermen to
46 report their catches, and it would also have a way of collecting
47 the location data on these tablets that will be issued out for
48 this pilot program. That is something that's already been

1 approved and it's something we'll be doing in the near future.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Good. John, do you want to summarize
4 the public comments, and if I could ask you to move so we can --
5 We still have a lot of discussion to go.
6
7 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I will go fast. What we have, we have three
8 different types. I am going to do the webinar public hearing,
9 which we held in December. Charlene is going to cover the
10 written public comments, and then Steven Atran has some law
11 enforcement comments.
12
13 I will go through the webinar very quickly and then turn it over
14 to Charlene. The meeting was held on the 17th. We had thirty-
15 one members of the public attend, which is pretty good for a
16 webinar, and it probably is better than what we would have
17 received had we moved around the Gulf.
18
19 Eight members of the public provided comment at the meeting, and
20 I won't read them to you. It's Tab F, Number 5(a). You
21 probably had a chance to review those in the briefing book, but,
22 just briefly, many of the people that did comment were concerned
23 about the use of VMS as the only sort of allowed tool.
24
25 There was some concern that this program might be approaching
26 development and final action from the regulatory aspect too
27 fast, and they were concerned that without many of the details
28 being worked out that they may not have an opportunity to
29 comment appropriately later on, and their primary objective was
30 to slow this part down and to let the science part catch up, to
31 make sure that they had an opportunity to comment as the program
32 developed. That was really the consensus of what was stated at
33 the webinar, and, again, it's Tab F, Number 5(a), if you want to
34 read into the nitty-gritty.
35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay and just, John, to comment on the webinar,
37 I had attended that and it was maybe interesting or maybe
38 refreshing. There was a lot of diverse groups there, but it was
39 pretty much a consensus of what John had said, that everyone
40 agreed that we might be moving just a little bit too fast and
41 not feeling real good. No one there was opposed to data
42 collection. In fact, it was just the opposite. Everyone was --
43 We've been talking about this for a long time and we're really
44 getting close, but they felt like just they needed a little bit
45 more input before we move forward on this was the general tone,
46 but, John, go ahead.
47
48 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay. I'm going to go to Charlene now. She has

1 the summary of the written comments that we received on the
2 website.
3
4 **MS. CHARLENE PONCE:** Okay and John put together a map, just to
5 give you an idea of where these comments, these online comments,
6 came from. We also received a handful of telephone calls from
7 the Fort Myers area.
8
9 Just briefly, there was opposition to electronic reporting for a
10 number of reasons, mostly because the cost would be too much and
11 it could put some people out of business. People feel like they
12 already participate in the phone surveys and anything more than
13 that is a burden.
14
15 People would support a paper logbook, but anything more than
16 that, again, would be cost-prohibitive, and there was support
17 for online weekly reporting or weekly reporting via smartphone.
18 There was opposition to having to submit reports on the way back
19 to the dock. People felt that this would interfere with safety
20 issues and tending to customers and having a small crew onboard
21 and not being able to have the time to do that while they were
22 in route.
23
24 There was support of electronic logbooks and VMS, people saying
25 that it's the best way to streamline data collection for the
26 charter/for-hire industry and it's a huge opportunity to provide
27 timely and accurate data while increasing accountability.
28 People suggested VMS and electronic reporting or fish tags,
29 saying that they're the only way to collect real-time data.
30
31 There was support for specific actions and alternatives. There
32 was support for Action 1, Alternative 4; Action 2, Alternative
33 4; and Action 3, Alternative 2. There was a note in that
34 support that the headboat pilot program worked very well. There
35 was also support for Action 1, Alternative 2; Action 2,
36 Alternative 2; and Action 3, Alternative 2; and support for
37 Action 1, Alternative 2, as long as reporting requirements are
38 only for the days in which fishing occurs.
39
40 There was also support for Alternative 4 in Actions 1 and 2, but
41 no action in Alternative 3. There was a lot of opposition to
42 VMS. Some of the reasons are VMS will not work, but electronic
43 logbooks would. VMS is too much too fast and it would drain the
44 batteries on the smaller boats.
45
46 Then there was support for no action at all, stating that these
47 actions are too broad and they only establish a blanket rule
48 that would be sent to some committee somewhere and designed with

1 no stakeholder or council input and people just really don't
2 know what it is that they would be getting. They need more
3 information. Is there a cost? How much is the cost? Is there
4 a subscription fee? Things like that. Many people just
5 reiterated that they couldn't afford this kind of cost.
6
7 There was a comment that any modifications to reporting should
8 be paired with Amendments 41 and 42, and other comments were a
9 request to implement trip limits on the commercial sector and
10 consider adding an action that would require the weighing of
11 fish via fish kiosk weigh system. That's all I have.
12
13 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thank you. John, just as some kudos to
14 staff, and I don't know if you are responsible for the map, but
15 I just think that that's a good idea. I mean it gives a nice
16 visual representation of where they're coming from or if there's
17 concerns. I can see this really taking off to give a nice Gulf
18 perspective of what regions have what concerns and that kind of
19 thing, and so that's nice.
20
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just to follow up on the map, if you zoom out,
22 you can see the full extent, and the comments that were actually
23 provided are referenced, and so if you click on the dot, that
24 represents a comment and so you can see the comment and its
25 approximate location of someone. That's on there and then the
26 actual information is down in the table, down below, in a little
27 nicer form that it comes on the Google docs. We can circulate
28 that out, or we can make them live on the website or something,
29 if you are interested.
30
31 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Right. I think that could prove to be very
32 useful, and, John, did you say that Steven had a few comments
33 concerning enforcement?
34
35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I did, yes.
36
37 **MR. STEVEN ATRAN:** Thank you. I will be brief. The Law
38 Enforcement Technical Committee, after they finished their
39 agenda items, which Doug Gregory went over during the
40 Administrative/Budget Committee -- Under Other Business, they
41 got into a discussion of Reef Fish Amendment 39, which included
42 some discussion of electronic logbooks. I will save the
43 Amendment 39 comments for when we get into the Reef Fish
44 Committee.
45
46 Their comments regarding electronic logbooks are on the top of
47 page 4 of the Law Enforcement Technical Committee Report, Tab G,
48 Number 6. Scott Bannon, who is the Alabama representative on

1 the Law Enforcement Technical Committee, should be in the
2 audience somewhere, in case I misrepresent or leave anything out
3 that they wanted to say.
4
5 Most of their comments had to do with hail-in and hail-out
6 requirements, which I don't think that's part of any of the
7 alternatives that are currently in place, but I know it's
8 discussed in the amendment.
9
10 They're concerned about the volume of hail-in and hail-out
11 requirements that would occur under electronic reporting, if it
12 were to be a requirement. They said under the Headboat
13 Collaborative that there's only about thirty-nine vessels that
14 had those requirements, but if it was extended to all for-hire
15 vessels, there's something like 1,200 or so vessels, and they
16 thought the system would be overwhelmed.
17
18 Also, if those are supposed to be used to help verify that the
19 fishermen are indeed submitting their electronic logbooks, if
20 they intercept a vessel, they would have to have immediate
21 access to those electronic submissions. Otherwise, without that
22 immediate access, they felt that the hail-in and hail-out
23 requirement would be a moot point. That's basically what they
24 had to say on the subject.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Thanks, Steven. Could you please remind the
27 committee, or maybe me again, but where -- I missed those
28 comments and where do we --
29
30 **MR. ATRAN:** That's in the Law Enforcement Technical Committee
31 webinar summary, Tab G, Number 6, and it's the paragraph at the
32 top of page 4 on that committee report.
33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Thanks, Steven. We're just barely over
35 fifteen minutes left in this committee and I know we need to
36 move on to actually getting into the document and the committee
37 recommendations. I think we need to really move into that
38 discussion, so we can take our recommendations to the council.
39 If there is other comments or suggestions, now is the time.
40 John, do you want to talk us through the document?
41
42 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I guess what do you want to do? I mean we can
43 go through this action-by-action, or do we want to do more of a
44 holistic kind of do we want to proceed on this or do we want to
45 hold off or maybe a little more information about some of the
46 timeline from the pilot programs and when additional information
47 would come online, such that we could complete the document, in
48 order to satisfy the information necessary for the codified text

36

1   and those sort of things.
2
3   **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:**   What is the committee's pleasure, looking
4   around? Dr. Lucas.
5
6   **DR. LUCAS:** I am going to say this in a broad sense. I don't
7   think we have a final document, and I don't think voting on this
8   as final action with no codified text is going to help us get to
9   where we need to get, and I am wondering, and, John, this is a
10 question for you, if we did settle on some of these alternatives
11 and get some questions addressed, do you then think that moving
12 forward with the technical subcommittee could help, if we had
13 direct questions of that committee, so that they could help
14 clarify some things that would make at least me feel a little
15 more comfortable voting on a final document?
16
17 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I think perhaps I could speak with Dr. Ponwith
18 or we could have it in -- I think some of this they're
19 developing, and so I'm just not sure whether they want us to
20 lead that role or how we could work with them so we're not
21 stepping on their toes.
22
23 I am really not sure how we could help them do what they need to
24 do, but I'm getting the feeling that that was a process that
25 they felt like they should lead.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Kelly, I agree with where you're going with
28 that.   Could you explain maybe just a little better what you
29 would envision?   So we would ask that this technical
30 subcommittee convene fairly soon and then we would take this up
31 at the next meeting, or what timeline would you envision?
32
33 **DR. LUCAS:** Well, I mean I think it's -- Granted, NMFS has a
34 huge role in this, in processing the data and all that, but
35 even, like Bonnie said, it's working with the stakeholders and
36 it's working with the states and it's working with everybody who
37 is involved in the process to get this into some form that is
38 workable.
39
40 I'm wondering if we can't just narrow down what some of the
41 requirements are, in terms of what we want to see or how we want
42 to see it. Then that committee could address those things and
43 come back to us. I mean I don't expect it to be kind of real
44 time and it may not be April.
45
46 I mean I would like for it to be, but I don't think it can be
47 that quick, because of what they have to go through, but come
48 back and like show us what the program looks like. I don't just

1 want to -- I don't think it's this council's responsibility to
2 just say, hey, you all go handle it. I think it's our
3 responsibility to work with everybody involved to determine how
4 it should proceed.
5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Well, several times Bonnie has mentioned set
7 the requirements. Personally, I don't feel the document right
8 now is setting the requirements to a level that I feel
9 comfortable voting on that, just personally, and that's kind of
10 where I am on it right now and I would like to follow that path,
11 but, Myron, I see your hand is up.
12
13 **MR. FISCHER:** Mr. Chair, if you're seeking a motion or something
14 to move forward, I just emailed staff a motion that may work
15 with what Kelly is saying, and I will read it as it gets posted.
16 **This motion would be to convene the technical committee to work**
17 **in concert with the Science Center and SERO to compile the**
18 **minimum data fields necessary for assessments and management and**
19 **to weigh various devices and platforms capable of fulfilling**
20 **these requirements and report back to the council.**
21
22 Anyone can wordsmith it how they think it should be, but I think
23 we're giving them direction of where to go and what to do and it
24 will come up on the board and if someone seconds it -- I think
25 it captures everything that we just discussed in this committee.
26
27 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay and so we're getting that motion up now.
28
29 **DR. CARRIE STUNZ:** Dr. Stunz, I was looking back through the
30 full council minutes, if I may, and just to remind everyone, one
31 of the reasons that staff waited on holding this technical
32 committee was, at the discussion at the October council meeting,
33 and I know a lot of things have changed in light of this, is we
34 were trying to get that regulatory aspect completed and then
35 prepare the document for final action.
36
37 We came to find out that we couldn't get the codified text
38 drafted without a better fleshed out program from the Science
39 Center, and so that's why we don't have the proposed rule for
40 you guys to look at and deem as necessary and appropriate.
41
42 Then the other thing we talked about is even you guys taking
43 final action on the document and then, at a later time, in
44 better coordination with the Science Center, to have this
45 technical committee be convened to work out the details of the
46 program. I know we've gotten a lot of public comments and
47 there's been a lot of concern since then, but that was the
48 nature of the discussion at the October council meeting.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Yes, and it seems like we're back to the
3 chicken-and-egg thing, but maybe this technical subcommittee
4 would help, and we do have a motion on the floor, and so if we
5 hold that thought just for a minute. Myron, is this your
6 motion?
7
8 **MR. FISCHER:** Yes, and like I said, anybody can make a friendly
9 amendment to it, and I might nod my head one way or the other,
10 but I think it captures some of what we talked about. I don't
11 think we're ready for final action, because we don't know what
12 we're taking final action on. I think this gets us down that
13 trail and hopefully the report back to us starts to narrow what
14 we're doing.
15
16 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** So Lance is seconding the motion. Is there
17 discussion? Dave.
18
19 **MR. DONALDSON:** Myron, do we need to put -- It says to report
20 back to the council, but do we need to put a timeframe when you
21 want them to report back by?
22
23 **MR. FISCHER:** I am not certain when these committees are going
24 to meet. I hate to give them a timeframe. I don't know what
25 the schedule on APs or technical committees are, and so I'm not
26 capable of adding a timeframe. Someone else can.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Carrie, could you comment? I mean I think the
29 timeframe -- I agree with putting a timeframe, but we don't want
30 to push it too much and not get a quality product, but what's a
31 reasonable rapid timeframe, if we were to suggest that?
32
33 **DR. SIMMONS:** I think we would do it as soon as possible, but I
34 mean there's a lot of players involved and I really -- I know we
35 want to move this forward, but I would feel more comfortable if
36 we kind of put the ball in the Science Center's court and asked
37 them to coordinate and us work closely, the staff and the state
38 representatives, and moving forward with this committee in
39 developing the plan, because we've had this technical
40 subcommittee convened.
41
42 We've made recommendations, but we're kind of at a standstill
43 until we know funding, the scope of the program, who is going to
44 run it, is it going to be a census or a sample. These are all
45 things that we can make recommendations on, but until we have at
46 least a platform, I think it's kind of like the technical
47 subcommittee doesn't really know where to go without some just
48 basic information from the Science Center. That is my

39

1 understanding in why we haven't moved forward.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Myron.
4
5 **MR. FISCHER:** That's why I added to work in concert with the
6 Science Center and SERO, to get those minimum elements.
7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Go ahead, Mara.
9
10 **MS. LEVY:** I am just wondering -- I mean compile the minimum
11 data fields necessary for assessment and management. I guess
12 that seems pretty broad, to me, and so what exactly are you
13 asking? I mean in the document now, it talks about the data
14 elements that the headboat survey reports on, and I mean I think
15 a policy decision is, and it seems to be a big one that's
16 somewhat controversial, is VMS-type location reporting or after-
17 the-fact location reporting or no location reporting.
18
19 It's those types of decisions that I see the council making a
20 policy decision, and then that can kind of narrow down sort of
21 what devices maybe you may be looking at. If the council says
22 we don't want real-time location reporting, then let's not give
23 people a device that does real-time location reporting, but in
24 terms of what to report, I mean we have a pretty well, I guess,
25 used list of data elements that folks have been reporting, and
26 that seems to be more of a science question, whereas I think the
27 focus here really needs to be on those big sort of policy-type
28 calls. Then you can mold what the system is to fit that.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay and so now I'm not totally clear of how we
31 would work this into your motion, Myron, if you even want to.
32 We need to do something, obviously. I'm sure we're going to
33 hear a lot of public comment in a few days on this matter, if
34 it's any indication of what all our email boxes look like lately
35 concerning this matter. Go ahead, John.
36
37 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just circling back to what Dr. Ponwith stated in
38 her presentation, she alluded that it would be necessary to put
39 in some text about upon receiving adequate funding to implement
40 these programs. It seems like I think that's where we're
41 seeking some leadership from them.
42
43 If, for example, you had a program with VMS and the Cadillac
44 plan, but the funding is such that it would never be
45 implemented, if there was a lesser program that maybe didn't
46 have every single aspect, but it could be implemented with
47 available funds, that seems like it would be something,
48 information, that should go into the decision making process.

40

1
2 Just having more information about the types of reporting and
3 things, I think without -- We've got to figure out some way to
4 get the communication going between the Science Center and what
5 they're able to do, so we know what we can figure out on our
6 end.
7
8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Myron, there's two things to his point, real
9 quick, and I think that's exactly what I was about to say, but I
10 guess there's really two things going on.   There is the
11 technical aspects, but then there is the concern with the end
12 users that aren't real comfortable with this amendment, because
13 they don't really know what they're going to get, and so we need
14 to come up with that.
15
16 I feel that, Myron, your motion is getting to that, but I don't
17 want to have another meeting in April and we're still at the
18 same spot again. Bonnie, do you have any insight in how to move
19 this in the direction we're headed?
20
21 **DR. PONWITH:** Well, the materials you saw in the presentation,
22 we're in the process of putting together into a white paper that
23 just further elaborates on some of the considerations. Really,
24 if you step back from all of this, it's challenging stuff, but
25 if you step back, really what we're after is we have a program
26 that delivers data right now.
27
28 What I'm hearing is, well, that's fine, but we want the data
29 faster. It's a timeliness issue that is one of the drivers, and
30 there is a desire for data that has more precision, and so the
31 real issue here is to take a look at does this change deliver
32 data in a way that's more timely and does it have the potential
33 to deliver data that are more precise and in a way that is
34 affordable?
35
36 The real thing is we don't want to create a system and say yes,
37 this is going to do the job and then find out that it can't be
38 implemented because it's too expensive, whether that's too
39 expensive for the government or whether that's too expensive for
40 the industry.
41
42 If, all in all, we look at a system and it's going to cost
43 around the same, but it doesn't deliver data that have the
44 promise of being substantially faster or substantially more
45 precise, then you would ask yourself why would you make that
46 change?
47
48 What we're trying to do is put together kind of a white paper

41

1 that looks at these technical aspects and looks at cost, to try
2 and get that information out in a way that's organized, so we
3 all remember what we're trying to accomplish and can use that as
4 sort of guardrails for the decision making.
5
6 I think Mara is right that one of the key decision points here
7 is the notion of location versus not location, because that
8 changes not only the cost of the program, but it also changes
9 the approach that you would use for -- It would influence the
10 approach that you would use for effort validation and it would
11 influence probably the sample size that we would need for
12 dockside intercepts, and so that's a pretty fundamental decision
13 that would be helpful in moving this along.
14
15 Again, I think it's a challenge of mapping the management
16 decisions against the science decisions, making decisions of
17 whose decision has to be made first before we can go the second
18 step on the other side, and those are challenging choices.
19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Myron, we have your motion on the floor and I
21 know your hand is up. We still didn't really didn't get back to
22 Dave's issue of do we want to put some time of general date on
23 the thing, and we're quickly running -- The clock is ticking
24 here, and so I'm looking for some advice from the committee.
25
26 **MR. FISCHER:** I think the consensus is we may not need the
27 motion and we may not need to vote on it. It might be something
28 later. Bonnie is going to supply a white paper to give us more
29 information. I think the only consensus is we don't have enough
30 information to take final action on this document at this time.
31 That's my feeling, and I have heard no -- I know we'll have
32 public testimony, but I have heard no benefit of a VMS system,
33 as an example.
34
35 We only have a few options, VMS and the daily reporting. So
36 far, I haven't seen the reason for either, and so what I was
37 going to do is give the opportunity for the committee to meet
38 and possibly find these items. It could be just postponement
39 until we have more information.
40
41 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I still think there is -- Personally, I think
42 there is value to this motion, and is there any other discussion
43 on this motion, where we can act on it? John.
44
45 **DR. FROESCHKE:** One thing I just wanted to see if we have
46 clarity on this is when we put together the document, the
47 language states a "NMFS-approved electronic device", one of
48 which could include VMS.

1
2 When we originally talked about this, we had a suite of
3 electronic devices and VMS, and then we discussed that VMS was
4 one type of electronic device and that we could just fold all of
5 that together, with the understanding that we need to work with
6 the National Marine Fisheries Service to develop what are the
7 requirements, and then hopefully a suite of electronic devices.
8 Perhaps VMS could be an approved device, especially for people
9 who already have that because they're dually permitted, but not
10 necessarily -- I don't think the intent was to restrict it to
11 only those and that we would ideally certify tablets and a
12 variety of other things, and so it wouldn't have to be a one-
13 size-fits-all kind of thing.
14
15 If that's not the intent, perhaps we need to revisit the
16 document and at least clarify that, but I think that was the
17 intent, and so not to get just wrapped around VMS entirely.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. If there is no other -- Go ahead, Leann.
20
21 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** I just have a technical question. Whether
22 we take final action on this document today or we don't, once
23 this technical committee meets -- Like say we did take final
24 action, because I'm a little concerned about how this plays out.
25
26 If we took final action and sent this up today, and then this
27 technical committee and NMFS and the meeting of the minds occurs
28 and they decide, okay, these are the applicable platforms that
29 we could use, VMS and this or that, and then does that -- Once
30 all those details are hashed out and there is more decisions to
31 be made of which platform we choose, that's going to then come
32 back to this council and we will say, you know obviously with
33 stakeholder input, this is the way we want to go, or what's out
34 input after that?
35
36 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** That's a great point, Leann. That's something
37 that I don't think a lot of us have answers to and what has got
38 a lot of people concerned, is that at what point is there going
39 to be this flow of information back and forth between let's say
40 it's Bonnie or Roy's group and getting a program that's going to
41 work for everyone.
42
43 If we pass this now, does that mean we just sort of don't have
44 any say in it anymore? That's what has got a lot of the charter
45 captains concerned, and I share that concern of why I don't feel
46 like we're ready for final action, which I thought by having
47 this motion, in my mind, that Myron made, it would make some
48 progress and help us develop our ideas along those lines, but I

1 don't know. Bonnie.
2
3 **DR. PONWITH:** In terms of the minimum data fields, we have got a
4 pretty good feel for -- We know what data fields we're
5 collecting now and we know what additional data fields would be
6 beneficial to have. I'm not sure if this is getting to the
7 heart of the program, because I could sit down and create a list
8 of data fields that I think would be useful and could talk to
9 the managers and get consensus on it, probably within a half-an-
10 hour.
11
12 I think the conversations are important. I'm not sure the data
13 fields are the right metric, and really I think it's a step back
14 from the data fields kind of question and say this is what we
15 have now and what, of this, is inadequate and what would it take
16 to fix those inadequacies, both from a management standpoint and
17 from a science standpoint, and I think that is the bigger issue.
18
19 Do we need a report that's once a week where there are actual
20 consequences if you're late? Do we need to be able to validate
21 whether you left the dock or not when those reports come in?
22 Those are the kinds of questions I think we're at, more so than
23 what data fields we're getting at. Is that helpful?
24
25 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think so, and it's sounding like, as a
26 committee, we need to get with staff and develop this document a
27 little bit further to specifically define that, Bonnie, and not
28 so much the specific data fields, and, Myron, I don't know and
29 maybe that was your direct intention of the motion, but things
30 like VMS reporting that I think maybe John can bring that back
31 to us, to where we feel more comfortable with what we're moving
32 forward. Is there any more comments on that? I know, Chairman
33 Anson, that we're running over here and so you can direct me on
34 what we need to -- I know Dr. Lucas has her hand up.
35
36 **DR. LUCAS:** I was just going to ask a question of Bonnie. I
37 think some of why I keep getting stuck here is we keep saying --
38 I mean there's timely reporting and then there's the translation
39 of that timely reporting into timely management.
40
41 I think when we start discussing all these scenarios of how
42 things work that that translation -- If you can put that in your
43 report, your white paper, that you're preparing, that says, you
44 know, all these things equal a turnaround of X, it may help,
45 because timely reporting does not necessarily mean more timely
46 management, and so I think that's what some people's concerns
47 are. If you're reporting daily, but you're still getting the
48 information forty-five days from now, then why are you requiring

1 these people to report daily? What's the advantage of that?
 2
 3 If they report weekly and it's still forty-five days from now,
 4 what's the advantage of that, versus if you can at least show
 5 that in your white paper, I think that at least helps connect
 6 some of the dots for this committee, and that's just a thought.
 7
 8 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Mara.
 9
10 **MS. LEVY:** Thank you. You have actions in here. Action 1 and 2
11 have a decision point about frequency of reporting, right? So
12 it's keep it as it is, change it to weekly for charter and keep
13 it weekly for headboats, go to trip reporting, daily reporting.
14 You have made a decision, right? We've had these discussions
15 and decided that trip-level reporting is what you want to do.
16
17 Then the next question is for NMFS and the Science Center to
18 sort of figure out how that could be implemented, right? You
19 can revisit that decision, but I'm hearing conversation like
20 that's still a decision that hasn't been made, which it has.
21
22 Then the next piece was the catch location reporting. Yes, John
23 is right that there is something in there that -- The way the
24 alternative is written now, it's to use a NMFS-approved
25 electronic device, and that could include VMS or something else.
26 I think the important piece, from a policy perspective, is to
27 record vessel location at specified time intervals.
28
29 There is nothing in here that tells us what that is. Again, are
30 you talking about real-time intervals, while people are on the
31 water, or are you talking about specified time intervals that
32 then get transmitted when they're back? I really think that
33 that's an important decision for the council to say how they
34 want that location information provided and the reason for it.
35 Is it important to have real time, or is it just important to
36 know that they left and came back in one day and kind of where
37 they went after they're back?
38
39 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Bonnie.
40
41 **DR. PONWITH:** Just following up on the forty-five days, I hear
42 exactly what you're saying and that question makes sense. The
43 real question back, again, is how does the for-hire industry
44 desire to be managed in terms of the ACLs? Is it a forward
45 projection of season duration to enable planning, and then using
46 the more real-time information to ground truth whether that
47 needs to be adjusted or not, or are you really truly looking for
48 today we are at 47 percent of our quota and tomorrow our

1 projection is?
2
3 You're always going to have to project the future. You're
4 always going to have to take what you have today and use it as a
5 tool for understanding what's going to happen tomorrow and next
6 week, but I think a really important question is how does the
7 industry want to plan its season for these shorter seasons.
8
9 Is it better to know a beginning date and an end date, and,
10 because that end date is uncertain, build a reasonable buffer to
11 make sure that end date keeps you within your ACL, or is it to
12 inch day by day toward that ACL and have a more refined notion
13 of when you actually hit that? The tool you would use for those
14 two scenarios could be very dramatically different and have very
15 dramatically different costs.
16
17 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. In the interest of time, Myron and Mark,
18 real quick.
19
20 **MR. FISCHER:** I understand Mara's comments, but the last
21 sentence under the electronic reporting requirements is the
22 Center will develop the specific details and will provide the
23 council the opportunity, but we're taking final action at this
24 meeting. That's the part I don't understand and that's what
25 this motion was about, so we could get the details first and
26 then move forward.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Right, and if I may make a suggestion, I agree
29 with that, Myron, and maybe John can capture some of this
30 discussion through this technical committee, and we obviously
31 have to have some more discussion on this. What it really means
32 is until we feel comfortable as a council that we're providing
33 the fishermen with some idea of what type of end product they're
34 going to get to record their catch that they're comfortable with
35 -- Then, I think, personally, I would feel better moving that
36 forward, and so, maybe through this technical committee, we can
37 do that. I don't know. Mark.
38
39 **MR. BROWN:** I just wanted to mention something about the program
40 that we have in the South Atlantic for the headboats currently.
41 We have seventy-six headboats that are doing electronic
42 reporting, and they use a ten-by-ten-mile grid for reporting the
43 area that they're in. They just give it by a code. Then the
44 proposed pilot program, which is going to be done for the 1,984
45 charter vessels that are in the South Atlantic, will also be
46 using a similar grid.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** I think that's probably more than adequate for

1   what we're doing here, is this broad grid versus the more
2   refined. We're at a point where we're really just out of time.
3   John.
4
5   **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just quickly to that point and then one other.
6   The grid, I guess the difference isn't necessarily the grid
7   size, but it's whether it's self-reported data or if it's
8   passively reported by a device.
9
10 As to this, one thing that seems like it might be appropriate is
11 Dr. Ponwith noted that her staff is producing a white paper. It
12 would seem that once that white paper is available, that might
13 be the perfect product for this technical subcommittee to review
14 and provide recommendations on the council and how to proceed,
15 based on the results of the white paper. I don't know what the
16 timing of that white paper is, but that seems like that would at
17 least give us something tangible to work through.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Steve.
20
21 **DR. STEVE BRANSTETTER:** To reiterate something that Dr. Ponwith
22 said, and it's something that I made comment on in the last
23 round of iterations of the document that we were able to review,
24 but a lot of the discussion in the document focused on the
25 timeliness of the data, the timeliness of the data, and I made
26 the comment back to the writers that timeliness of the data is
27 one thing, but, again, as Dr. Ponwith pointed out, it's the
28 accuracy and the precision that comes with the validation over a
29 larger sample size, or even a complete census.
30
31 Let's face it. QA/QC is going to happen. QA/QC doesn't happen
32 overnight and I don't care how well you write the program.
33 QA/QC is going to take you ten days, fourteen days. Maybe we
34 can speed up forty-five, but let's use the really bad example of
35 the red snapper season as the real point here. You get fourteen
36 days' worth of data reported and it will be fourteen more days
37 before you have any information about that fourteen days.
38
39 You are going to be projecting, and I think wouldn't you rather
40 have a season that you're going to get forty-five days and let's
41 see if down the road that forty-five days still looks good or
42 not, but if you have more accurate and more precise, through
43 validation, data, then that forty-five days may not be forty-
44 five days anymore.
45
46 I think that's a distinction that the council needs to make and
47 that the industry needs to make. I don't think you're going to
48 get timely data. You're not going to see IFQ reporting up on

1 the website tomorrow morning, especially for self-reported
2 information. That may be a direction that the council -- That
3 may be a dichotomy right there that solves some issues for the
4 development of this program.
5
6 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay, committee. We've got a motion on the
7 floor and we need to act and end our business, so we can turn
8 this over to the council business. I would ask for us to take a
9 vote on this motion. If there is no other very important
10 comments --
11
12 **DR. LUCAS:** One question everybody seems to be stuck on is "the
13 minimum data fields necessary". **I am wondering, Myron, if it
14 just read "to weigh various devices and platforms capable of
15 fulfilling the requirements" and struck the "minimum", if that
16 works.**
17
18 **MR. FISCHER: That's great. I accept it.**
19
20 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. To the motion, it's to compile the and
21 get rid of the minimum data fields. Strike through the minimum
22 data fields. I'm sorry, Kelly, but would you say that again?
23
24 **DR. LUCAS:** I think it can just start with -- Stop at the "to"
25 right before "weigh". Get rid of "to compile". Does that work,
26 Myron? Thanks.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Okay. Yes, Dave.
29
30 **MR. DONALDSON:** I think John had a good suggestion to react to
31 the white paper that the Science Center was going to develop and
32 can we incorporate that?
33
34 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** Would you like to incorporate that in, Dave?
35
36 **MR. DONALDSON:** Yes.
37
38 **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:** So where would you like to -- To weigh the
39 various devices and platforms and review the -- So after
40 "capable of fulfilling the requirements" and "and platforms
41 capable". Sorry. "Various devices and platforms capable of
42 fulfilling the requirements and review of the white paper from
43 SEFSC". Is that right? From NOAA Fisheries. So, instead of
44 "SEFSC", it's "NOAA Fisheries".
45
46 **MR. FISCHER: It's fine with me.** I thought that would have been
47 captured in the Center and the SERO comment.
48

1   **CHAIRMAN STUNZ:**   Okay.   Does that capture your motion, Myron?
2   Okay. Anyone else? **Is there any opposition to this motion? If**
3   **there is no opposition to the motion, the motion passes.**   Other
4   Business is the last agenda item.   If there is no other
5   business, Chairman Anson, I will pass it back to you, a little
6   late.
7
8   (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m., January 25,
9   2016.)
10
11   - - -