Chip Bethell: My name is Chip Bethell. I'm a golden crab fisherman, and I'm also on the golden crab advisory panel.

With regard to Action 26 of the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment for the South Atlantic region, I would like to go on record as being in support of Alternative 2. I agree with the council that the golden crab fishery is a relatively small fishery with regard to participants and fishing effort.

Also, the relatively small allowable golden crab fishing area in the South Atlantic region is surrounded by thousands of square miles of protected known golden crab habitat. I feel that this situation dictates that overfishing for golden crabs is highly unlikely, if not impossible.

With regard to Action 27 of the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment for the South Atlantic region, I support the combined preferred Alternatives 2 and 3. However, I feel that with regard to Alternative 2, some mechanism for providing fishermen with a reasonable advance notice of any harvest closure should be incorporated in the amendment.

With regard to Alternative 3, it seems only fair that if the actual annual catch falls short of the ACL, the ACL for the following season should be increased by the amount of the shortage.

With regard to Amendment 5 to the golden crab fishery management plan, at this time, I am in support of the amendment and I recommend that the council do an analogy of all proposed actions. Thank you.

[End of Audio]