

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**DoubleTree by Hilton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront  
Atlantic Beach, NC**

**December 7, 2017**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Committee Members**

Charlie Phillips  
Chester Brewer

Mark Brown  
Dr. Michelle Duval

#### **Council Members**

Anna Beckwith  
Zack Bowen  
Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Ben Hartig

Mel Bell  
Chris Conklin  
Tim Griner  
Doug Haymans

#### **Council Staff**

Gregg Waugh  
Dr. Brian Chevront  
Kimberly Cole  
Mike Collins  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Kim Iverson  
Cameron Rhodes  
Christina Wiegand

John Carmichael  
Myra Brouwer  
Dr. Chip Collier  
Kelsey Dick  
John Hadley  
Roger Pugliese  
Amber Von Harten

#### **Observers/Participants**

Jim Estes  
Rick DeVictor  
Erika Burgess  
Dr. Erik Williams  
Dr. Jack McGovern

Nik Mehta  
Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dale Diaz  
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith

Other observers and participants attached.

The Executive Finance Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the DoubleTree by Hilton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, Thursday afternoon, December 7, 2017, and was called to order by Chairman Charlie Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: We are going to convene the Executive Finance Committee. The first thing is the Approval of the Agenda. Any modifications or changes to the agenda?

MR. WAUGH: Under Other Business, we have one thing to go over, the report from the Council Coordinating Committee call.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Any other changes? Seeing none, any discussion? Any opposition? No opposition, and the agenda is approved. Approval of the September 2017 Committee Minutes, are there any changes or modifications? Seeing none, any opposition to approval of the minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are approved. Gregg, I will turn it over to you.

MR. WAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of MSA Reauthorization, the working paper that we got your input on at the last meeting has been finalized. That is included as Attachment 1a. It's dated November 14, 2017. That has got our regional perspective, along with the regional perspective of each of the other councils, on the items. We finished up our new topics, and we were asked to provide that to the Secretary, and we did that. There is a cover letter attached, I think, to the CCC call report dated November 15, and so that was provided to the Secretary.

Our hope is that that will help inform them when they start developing their agency positions on reauthorization. It has also been published to the all council website, and so any congressional staffers, any members of the public, anybody who is interested, can get that and see what the positions are of the various councils.

We also expect, at some point, that HR 200 will be likely used as the vehicle for work on a reauthorization, and that is included. What I've got is an updated version included as A1h. That is sort of a table format that has all of our individual input on various items in multiple bills, and so we've got that. All of your comments have been compiled, and so we're sort of in a holding pattern now waiting for something to happen on reauthorization. If we were to get a request to comment, then we would prepare a draft letter based on the working paper and that is Attachment 1h. Any letter that we draft would be circulated, and it would have the Chair's signature and be circulated to all council members for you to have some comment on.

We are still working on that letter to Chris Oliver, and we'll finish up after this meeting. I got some comments from several council members, and we'll make those and incorporate anything that comes out of this meeting and then get that to Chris, and hopefully he will be able to make our March meeting. He was trying to get here for this one, but it didn't work out with his schedule. That is sort of where we are with respect to the reauthorization, and certainly, if you all have any additional suggestions or questions about what's in either of those documents, we would be glad to answer those, and I will turn it over to the Chair.

MR. ESTES: Are you going to recirculate those? I think that you made some changes, and is that correct, and are you going to recirculate those two?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, and the working paper is included as Attachment 1a, and that's in the briefing book, and Attachment A1h in the late materials has the comparison across bills, and so those are the most recent.

MR. ESTES: If we have some comments, we can send them directly to you then?

MR. WAUGH: Yes.

MR. ESTES: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anything else? I don't see anything else, and so I guess we can go into our Budget Status.

MR. COLLINS: I think I will just defer to see if anybody has any questions about the document. I think we're looking like we're in pretty good shape to carry over what we thought we were when I briefed you in June and in September. I would encourage everybody that is here on a travel order to please get them in as soon as possible after this meeting. That will help us close the year out more efficiently, and I just think we're on track, on the target that we thought we would be, at this point in time.

MR. WAUGH: That's Attachment 2a. That's the budget update.

MR. PHILLIPS: Do we have any other questions or thoughts? I guess not, and so we'll go on.

MR. WAUGH: Okay, and so we're still estimating to have somewhere around \$100,000 or \$110,000 that we carry over, and we were directed to bring you some options to look at potential cost savings, and we discussed some savings, and this is Attachment 2b. I have just added a couple of lines to it here from the Personnel Committee action on Monday, and they have recommended that we carry forward, when we prepare our 2018 budget, a 10 percent reduction to state liaison grants and a 10 percent reduction to the council staff retirement match, and so those savings are just under \$30,000.

We also have switched, effective December 1, savings from our new insurance for staff group life insurance, dental, and voluntary vision. Basically, it's the same or, for some parts of it, a little bit better coverage, but at a cost savings of \$6,000. Basically, those two items are an additional \$25,000, almost \$26,000, savings over what you have in the table, and so, right now, we are projecting a total savings of about \$104,000, and that will be reflected as we prepare our budget for 2018.

In addition, we'll have a much better handle on how much we actually carry over. We've got projections right now, but, for the March meeting, we'll know exactly what we had to carry over, and so we feel that that's a sufficient cost savings, and I will just walk through the other items now, but the idea is this is sufficient trimming right now, and we'll use this to prepare the draft 2018 budget, and we'll get with Charlie and Mark in January and look at what we've got put together, and then what you will see in March is the draft activities schedules for our council operations, for SEDAR, and a draft budget.

If, when we look at this in early January, we feel there needs to be some additional trimming done, then we'll bring those options to you all to look at in March, and so, if you look at the top of this Attachment 2b, the draft council member travel policy, what we were asked to look at is instituting a policy that, for advisory panel meetings, the committee chair and vice chair are approved to attend. If one of them are not attending, then that would open up a slot for another council member, and so, in general, that would give you two council members attending a meeting, and, depending on the AP, that would be a cost savings of between \$1,500 and \$5,000 per meeting.

For SSC meetings, the SSC liaison and a council representative on any SEDAR assessments that the SSC is reviewing would be authorized to attend. Again, if one of them can't make it, then that would open up to another council member, and so, generally, that's two council members attending, and that would save somewhere between \$1,200 and \$3,000 per SSC meeting. The Council Chair and Vice Chair, since they have to represent the council at CCC and other meetings, we feel it's important for them to keep up with what's going on, and so they would be authorized to attend any AP and SSC meetings.

When you look at those cost savings, and we look at two Snapper Grouper Committee meetings, and the savings would be approximately \$5,000 per meeting, and so that's a \$10,000 savings. Then, looking at an estimate for the other APs, approximately six meetings a year times a \$1,500 savings, that's a \$9,000 savings. The savings from two SSC meetings at generally \$3,000 per meeting is an additional \$6,000, and so that's a \$25,000 savings from that travel policy is our projection. We would need your guidance on approval of that travel policy.

MR. BREWER: Gregg, I can do the math, but how much would we lose if we had one council representative at these different meetings? In other words, either the Chair or the Vice Chair, but not necessarily both? It looks like you would save upwards of \$12,500 a year or something like that.

MR. WAUGH: It depends if they're a state or a compensated council member, but, yes, there would be some additional savings. It's probably \$700 or \$800 additional savings at an AP meeting.

MR. BREWER: Per meeting?

MR. WAUGH: Yes.

MR. BREWER: How much do you think would be lost by having one representative as opposed to two?

MR. WAUGH: Well, I think the potential loss there would be if you run into a situation where at the next committee meeting the Chair couldn't be there, and you would then have another person that you could rely on, and vice versa, and so I think it just covers you for input at the next meeting and a little more council representation at an AP meeting for exchange, and I think that's helpful.

MR. BREWER: I am just looking for ways to save a little money.

MR. PHILLIPS: Of course, if you've got somebody like Mark going, he doesn't have to have a hotel, and so he's a little cheaper than some of the rest of us.

MR. HAYMANS: If I understand it the same way, you have the potential for having four council members at an AP meeting, and I thought that's what we were trying to get away from, and I thought, when we talked about it, it was an "or" situation and not an "and", sort of what Chester is alluding to. \$68,000 is a significant savings. If we could save a little more, great, because, quite honestly, the reduction in the state apportionment hurts a little bit. If there were other ways to make that savings -- I apologize for not being here for that part of the discussion.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Doug. Anyone else?

DR. DUVAL: I think we should try this approach and see how it goes. I do think it is helpful to have the committee Chair and/or Vice Chair there at a committee meeting, and I think it's also important for the council Chair and Vice Chair to be able to -- I mean, I don't expect that the Council Chair and Vice Chair would attend every advisory panel meeting. I didn't do it when I was Chair, and I don't think Ben did it when he was Chair. The meetings that I went to tended to be Snapper Grouper AP and a few Mackerel AP meetings, when there were some sticky issues on the agenda that involved North Carolina, and then SSC meetings, and so I wouldn't expect that all four -- That you would have all four of those people at every advisory panel meeting, but that's just my opinion.

MR. CONKLIN: I am wondering two things, about requesting permission to get orders for webinar participation or monitoring, and then, also, instead of limiting it to the Chair and Vice Chair, open it up to, when we have a meeting and the committee meets, we appoint a council representative to go to the next AP meeting. Would that be too hard?

I mean, a lot of these AP meetings are very, very important, and near and dear to a lot of people's hearts, and, if we're going to slash out stuff -- I understand there's a budget, but there's a lot of bang for the buck when a council member goes to a necessary meeting, and if they feel like it's something they need to do to better understand and better serve and better manage the fishery, I think we need to make room in the budget for it and allow for it, but there are good points that we don't need seven people sitting in an Information & Education AP meeting because it's the day after Snapper Grouper.

I understand that, but, taking away or limiting someone even who is not on a committee, because we're all on the Full Council, their ability, because of budget constraints, but I think we should pull somewhere else, if at all possible, and give people the latitude still to attend these meetings and not just limit it to the Vice Chair or Chair and then open it up if one of them can't attend.

MR. PHILLIPS: I get your point of view, and maybe there is enough wiggle room in there somewhere where we can let the Chair and the Vice Chair or Chair and Vice Chair and Executive Director, on some limited instances, to allow more people to come. If it starts getting out of hand, then we'll just have to start tightening it up, and maybe we can just do it that way.

MR. WAUGH: Some of the other councils allow attendance and don't pay expenses, or attendance and don't pay compensation. For council members to attend via webinar is not very expensive, but that's an option that we could consider allowing, and, even for those members that are compensated, it isn't that expensive to do just the webinar, but you would also have the option of allowing people to attend via webinar and not pay the compensation. It's up to you all how you want to do that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Again, as we talked about earlier, being physically there and having those conversations in and out of the room is just something that you can't replace.

MR. CONKLIN: Just thinking, my thinking was like so I'm going to attend the SEDAR for greater amberjack, and so, when the SSC meets and I'm not the Chair or Vice Chair of that committee, theoretically, I can't go to the meeting if they want to go, but I went through that whole process, and I wanted to get the SSC report, and I feel like, as someone who is overseeing most of the process, I need to have the latitude to go to that meeting.

MR. WAUGH: Chris, that would be covered there, because it says, for SSC, it's the SSC liaison and the council representative on any SEDAR assessments that the SSC is reviewing, and so, if you're the representative on amberjack, then, when that goes to the SSC, you would be covered to attend.

DR. DUVAL: That was what I was going to point out, and so I attended the last SSC meeting, and I was one of the members who went through the entire blueline tilefish assessment. I also think that I'm -- I appreciate what Chris is saying about conversations inside the room and outside the room, but, at some point, we've got to tighten our belts a little bit, and so I'm willing to walk down this road and try this out. I think anybody can attend any meeting they want and elect to forego compensation. If I were to work out my hourly wage, based on everything I do, it would probably be pretty small, and I'm not saying that to be catty, but I'm just saying that to be truthful.

MR. CONKLIN: I understand that we all lose money being at this table, and I expect to be compensated for my time, when at all possible.

MR. BOWEN: I am not on this committee, but I had some real heartburn after the last meeting when we went into this discussion, or this similar discussion. When I signed up to get on this council, I didn't even know that we got compensated. I mean, I had no clue, and it just got insinuated to me that I attended a lot of meetings, and I kind of felt like it got insinuated that I was there for a paycheck. I am putting it on the record right now that I am going to continue to attend those SSC meetings and those AP meetings, and I will never, from last meeting forward, ever fill out another travel order, as long as I am part of this council.

MR. PHILLIPS: You are budgeted, and so don't worry about it, but we probably need to, maybe when we start looking at our numbers, and we're going to look at some of the other personnel and some of the other numbers that we've talked about on the side, and we probably need to bring some of those forward and just see, so we can prioritize just how important is all of the things, because we want to do everything and prioritize exactly where we want to cut and just cut fairly across the board, where everybody can live -- Everybody can make it to the meetings they need to make it to, and, if you can afford to go to meetings and not turn in a travel order, that's fine. That just helps us down the road, but I wouldn't ask anybody to do that, and we will approach it -- Go ahead, Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I just wanted a clarification on which committee chairs -- Are you saying committee chairs can go to the specific AP meetings, or are you saying that just the council Chair and Vice Chair can go to the --

MR. PHILLIPS: Both.

MR. HARTIG: It is both?

MR. WAUGH: Yes.

MR. HARTIG: That's why it was four people. Okay. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Is there any more discussion? This has covered a lot of bases. Do you want to put some kind of an exception or appeals in, so, if you just really feel like you would like to go and you want to go and you need to be compensated, that you can come to the Chair and the Executive Director? Do we want to put something like that in, or do we want to just leave it like it is?

MS. BECKWITH: I listen to a lot of this stuff via webinar, and half the time I'm not in the country when these are going on, and so I just listen in through the webinar process, and so I think the webinar process actually gets you what you need, but I also think that, with four slots allotted, if somebody feels really strongly -- Charlie, if I really want to go to a Snapper Grouper AP, I probably just need to call you and say, Charlie, I really want to go to the Snapper Grouper AP and do you need to go to this one too, because there is still four slots to each of these, and so I think there is some wiggle room, and I doubt that all four council members are going to -- I suspect there is going to be at least a space at meetings, and, if somebody feels really strongly about it -- Like I habitually have gone to one Snapper Grouper AP meeting every other year, just to connect with the members, but I also listen to them via webinar, but, if that was -- If the time was there where I felt like I needed to go, I feel like, as a council member, I could call you or Mark and be like, I kind of want your slot, guys, and somebody give it up.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Any other discussion?

MR. CONKLIN: That's all I was saying, is just the latitude to be able to attend, even if it's four slots or two slots. I don't foresee us filling four slots every AP meeting at all, but that's a great point, and you summed it up. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think there's going to be some slots that there won't be a lot of attendance, but that's probably already built into our cost budgets anyway, and so anything else, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: No, and so we'll put together the 2018 budget planning to use this council member travel policy. Okay. Then we were also asked to look at the size of advisory panels and the SSC and look at any reductions there, and we took a look at that. The Habitat AP is one of our bigger ones, but a lot of the individuals on there are agency representatives, many of them from agencies that we can't pay for, and the SSC -- We did add one seat to that, and our recommendation right now is let's hold off on any changes there and see how we are doing next year, and, as they come up to advisory panel appointments and SSC appointments, you all can revisit this issue then and see if you want to trim.

Then one place where we were asked to look at too was loosening the AP policy on voting, to allow voting via webinar, and some APs via webinar, and you all did that. Our rough guess is that, depending on the level of usage, we could save approximately \$10,000 by doing that.

There was a suggestion at the last council meeting to explore looking at webinar -- Having a webinar meeting the week prior to a council meeting for some committees, to try to save a day on a council meeting, and we've already signed contracts with hotels through 2019 for full five-day meetings, and the marginal cost of people meeting one more day is not that significant, and so we wanted to come back to you all and see what your guidance is on how to proceed on this one.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thoughts?

MR. HAYMANS: I'm not on the committee, but I still think it's a good idea. I understand that you can't do it until 2020, but I still think it should be something we should explore. Five days is an awful lot of time to sit in this room, and I think we could pare it down.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anybody else?

DR. DUVAL: I think we certainly have the option, as we discussed last time, to have half-day webinars, like we did for the ABC control rule, to try to knock some stuff out that is easier, and I thought that was really helpful. I think that saved us time on the agenda, and the Executive Finance Committee meeting that we had to review Magnuson reauthorization.

I think there are topic-specific things that we can use webinars for that would save time, and I think perhaps, Gregg, when you and your staff are putting together agendas for future council meetings, perhaps look at committee agendas with that idea in mind. If it really looks like we're going to just overflow our committee time with the number of things that need to be reviewed, or if there's things that we need to take action on, and it's time sensitive, that might be grounds for talking to Charlie and Mark and having a half-day webinar or something like that, to sort of knock some of those things out, and then we won't be stretched quite so thin when we get to the regularly-scheduled meetings.

MR. PHILLIPS: I could see it being nice to give Snapper Grouper a little more time.

MR. BREWER: Gregg, when you say that we're booked for a full five-day meeting, does that mean that you're booked with the room for a full five days? But that wouldn't apply to hotel rooms, would it?

MR. COLLINS: As Charlie brought up earlier, we're tied to -- The cost of the room is based on a couple of things. It's based upon how much food and beverage you consume, and it's also based on how many sleeping rooms you have, and so, if you reduce the amount of sleeping rooms to a certain level, then it's not cost effective for the hotel, and they just raise the price of the meeting room.

MR. BREWER: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anybody else? Okay.

MR. WAUGH: Then the next item is, in our activities schedule that you all get every year and you will get again in March, we have miscellaneous meetings that cover things like attendance at CCC meetings and other regional groups that we have seats on, and so we're not proposing any



changes there, but then we have other meetings, and this is where we attend other meetings and we allow council staff to attend one professional meeting a year for professional development, and so we're proposing a 10 percent reduction, to match the other lines that we cut 10 percent, and that will project to save us \$8,400.

Then the final item is scoping and public hearings. We have generally agreed to do all scoping via webinar, and, for the most part, agreed to do public hearings, and so what we are proposing here, in terms of putting the budget together, is one full round of public hearings costs us about \$25,000. We're proposing, for the budget, to assume that we will only do one full round, if indeed we do one full round.

If there is a need to do some in-person public hearings, we have the option of doing listening stations, and we've done that, and those seem to work well. It helps some, but the cost to do listening stations in Florida, depending on the attendance of people, can be high. The last round, it was almost \$16,000 to do the listening stations in Florida, and it was \$3,000 in North Carolina. It was less in South Carolina and Georgia, because their coastline isn't as large.

If you wanted one in-person, and we did it via listening station, that would be some savings over doing a full round of in-person, but, in terms of putting the draft budget together, our recommendation is to assume that we're only doing one round, and so that would save us \$25,000, and so that gives us, for Items 1 through 6, a savings of \$68,400. Combined with the other two, it's a projected savings of \$104,221.

Again, we feel that's sufficient for us to go back and do our activities schedule and see what we have to carry over from this year, and then, if we need some additional trimming, we'll work those options up and get with Mark and Charlie and bring that to you in March, and you will see in March the activities schedules and a draft budget. We have a CCC meeting in late February, where we hope to receive final word about our funding for next year, but, depending on how the budget works, we may or may not know. This past year, we didn't approve our budget until June, but at least we'll be able to look, assuming level funding in March, and we'll be able to get you all's guidance on what we bring to you.

MR. HAYMANS: 1 through 6 I will say are fairly -- Permanent, I guess is the word, but we're looking for a way to keep that there. Line 25, that's going to go up, because one thing for sure in life is that insurance always goes up, but, again, not being part of your conversation on Monday, Line 24, with reduction to the state and council staff retirement, was there discussion about reinstatement of those and how long you foresee those cuts continuing? Was there any sort of discussion on that?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, and our direction was to use these reductions for 2018, and, certainly, once we get our final monies in 2018, if we have sufficient funds to come back and revisit these, we will. They're not necessarily permanent, but we were directed to use them for 2018, and we'll see where we are with the monies, but then we're going to have to also look at 2019 and our projections, because remember we host the CCC meeting in 2019.

Now, the Region is making a request to see if there is some potential funding assistance from NMFS, but, when we did that before, I think the figure was about \$17,000 the last time we hosted that meeting that it cost us, and so each council does that. It rotates around, and the suggestion

was offered that maybe we should approach the agency and see if the agency doesn't have some money to assist in offsetting that periodic cost, and so we're going to certainly pursue that, but certainly if we can revisit this in 2018, we will, but, once we get our final 2018 money, we also have to look ahead to 2019, because that's the fifth year of our grant, and that's the one we're sort of nervous about, but the intent was to come back and revisit this as soon as we can.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Anything else? All right. I guess you're going to start putting our tentative budget together, and we'll see that in January or February, and let's go ahead and kind of outline the other things that we had talked about earlier and what bonuses are and how they're done and the things like that, so, if we have to cut further that we will know -- We can prioritize what we want to do, and obviously we don't want to go there, but we need to know what our options are, so we can have it all laid out.

MR. WAUGH: Right, and we will take it as your guidance to use this revised total savings, use this to prepare our 2018 budget.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right, and so that looks like that takes care of that. Do you need a motion, or we're just going to use guidance, right?

MR. WAUGH: It's up to you all. I think, for this, it's okay that we get guidance, but, if you all want to do a motion, to make it absolutely clear, that's fine as well.

MR. PHILLIPS: What is the desire of the committee? All right. Guidance seems to be fine.

MR. WAUGH: That's everything on the budget. Brian will come up and do the council follow-up and priorities.

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's always a fun conversation to follow, isn't it? After all that discussion you all just had about public hearings and all that, one of the things that I wanted to find out, because of the conversation you all had this morning about the cobia, and you voted to send it out for public hearings, we have been planning that we're going to do this via webinar, but I thought at least maybe, at some point, since this is a pretty volatile topic here, that you all might want to give us clarification on how you wanted to handle those public hearings for cobia.

If we could start there, and then we'll get into some of the other priorities and the different things that we have going on, and you can help us figure out what our top four things are that you want us to do, plus trying to figure out all the other different projects and stuff that we have going on, and so, Mr. Chairman, if we could just get some direction of what the council would like to do regarding the cobia public hearings, that would be great.

DR. DUVAL: This is a tough one. We did scoping via webinar in August of last year. They weren't shy, and I suspect that it would probably be better to have in-person public hearings for this, or like listening stations, where we have our staff, me, go to said locations and run the webinar that way and have staff provide a presentation. Like that, it would save at least a little bit of money. It would just be my travel, I guess. I apologize, but I'm struggling a little bit, because we have the for-hire outreach hearings that have been scheduled. In North Carolina, we've got like the third week of January kind of blocked out for those, and so I'm just trying to think of what my schedule looks like in an among that and ASMFC and everything else.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Who else?

MR. BREWER: How do we get Virginia to pay for it?

MR. PHILLIPS: Giving them more allocation.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Right now, we have talked about -- Up until this point, we talked about potentially doing this via webinar, and we've kind of set aside the dates of January 22, 23, and 24 as when we would want to do that. If we need to negotiate different dates, there is the potential that that can be done, but that's kind of what we were thinking about coming into this meeting, is that we would be doing webinars on those three days.

DR. DUVAL: Can you say those days again?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That's January 22, 23, and 24.

DR. DUVAL: So Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of that week?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, ma'am.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I can go ahead and block those out.

MR. PHILLIPS: Are we thinking webinar listening stations?

DR. DUVAL: That's what I would do. I have that equipment at my office that the council purchased for us, and so I would be happy to set up locations in North Carolina where we could use that equipment. In other words, staff would run the presentation via webinar, and we would have a projector and a screen, and then we would pass the microphones around and let folks provide their public comment like that. I might need a refresher before we do it, but, yes.

DR. CHEUVRONT: The logistics thing on our end is we have to do a Federal Register notice thirty days in advance, and so what we would need to know is the locations of the listening stations and have all of that stuff worked out in the next week or so for those public hearings, so we can get that notice in on time, so we can actually hold them.

DR. DUVAL: One more question on that, Brian. So, the 22, 23, and 24, and you're thinking multiple locations, so that you would be able to -- In other words, if we're doing this by listening station, kind of how we've done previously, you could have -- There could be multiple listening stations in multiple states, but staff would just be running one webinar, and we would kind of cycle through the different locations to collect public comment, similar to how we've done in the past?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, I think that's probably the way we would have to do it. We would have to work -- If this is the route that you all want to go, we would need to work with everybody from all the different states to make sure that we can get those locations secured prior to the Federal Register notice going in and being able to meet that deadline.

MR. BELL: That would have to be how quickly, Brian? Like next week, you said?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, that would really help us, if we could get it by say next Friday, close of business next Friday.

MR. BELL: We've got something similar, and it works pretty quick, and it's kind of a wacky time of the year here, and I think we would be all right, depending on if we want to use the same places or something, and we could check on that.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Doing it this way, it kind of puts the onus a bit on the states, because it's who is going to be there and where can you meet and all of that, and so that's the way that would have to work out.

MR. PHILLIPS: Doug, can we make it happen?

MR. HAYMANS: Sure. We're talking about hosting from Georgia?

MR. PHILLIPS: The listening stations.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes. Not a problem.

MR. PHILLIPS: Jim? Okay. Then that looks like what we're going to shoot to do then.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thank you.

MR. BELL: So, we need to get with you next week, Brian, right?

DR. CHEUVRONT: That would be ideal. Probably by Thursday, if I haven't heard anything from you, I will be checking in with you to find out how you're doing on finding us places.

MR. BELL: Okay.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Thanks. I appreciate the conversation on that. We are moving now on to the spreadsheet that we have with the priorities that we typically go over, and it's a little bit difficult for us to figure out exactly fitting everything in right now, because there is a couple of items that you have not discussed yet and a few issues that we will have to work through, but I just wanted to show you some of the things that we're thinking about right now, and there's one other thing that we haven't really discussed yet, and so we need to get council direction as to whether you want us to put this into the hopper as well.

We are going to start now with -- This is Attachment 3a under Tab 12, and, as you can see, I have a slightly-modified version of it, and, basically, what I have of that document now is, listening to what you've been discussing all week long and trying to fit in all the different possible things that we've talked about and try to reorganize, and I've been keeping tabs on this all week long as we go, and, like I said, there is a couple of things that we haven't been able to get to.

From your discussion earlier about the snapper grouper for-hire moratorium, it looks like this is going to -- We needed to move this throughout 2018, at least, if this the way you're proceeding to go. You could, at some point, change your mind on what you're going to do with it, and that's all

okay, and we'll just adjust at that time, when that happens, but one of the things that we've talked about in-house is that, now with Christina and John Hadley both at the council office, both of them have had some experience with some socioeconomic reports that we had done in North Carolina over the past years, and it has to -- They're like reference documents.

It's based on fisheries as well as by location and looking at fishing activities, whether it's by species and major gears and all of this, and we've been thinking about this in terms of complementing not only the socioeconomic part of the FEP, but this could also supplement and help our fishery performance reports, and I have been kind of assured by them that this is something that, once we can get this put together and have it going, we could actually update these pretty much on a regular basis.

I think John, at one point, suggested that we could probably do it yearly, and that kind of scared me a bit, knowing how big these things are, but I don't think I would want to commit us to quite that yet, but what I think could happen is, once we get this done, we will have the data and the programs. Then what we could do is simply just do updates and swap data in and out and modify the text that goes with it, but I think you would probably find that these would include a lot of answers to the general type questions that come up quite frequently about what gears are catching what species in what areas, so we can get at some of this timeliness, and we could look at what are the main fishing ports for different species at what time of the year, and we can do some GIS mapping that shows hot spots and all these sorts of things, and some of these things have come up this week.

We haven't really talked about that yet at the table, but we would like, as council staff, would like to offer this to you as a product that we could prepare, and we've talked a lot in-house about collecting some of our own socioeconomic data, but this is not having to go out and actually do data collection. These data already exist. It's a matter of being able to synthesize it and pull it all together and putting the manpower towards doing that, and so I wanted to put that out there as a possibility.

Now, you don't have to tell me that, yes, definitely we want to do it and when and how. You all tell us what you want us to do, and we will make it happen. We will find a way to make it happen, but this is a new thing that we have not really thought about a lot, or acted upon, in the council. We've talked about it amongst staff, and folks from North Carolina have probably had some experience with these documents, and maybe some of the other states have done similar things, but I just wanted to put that out there, and hopefully you can discuss that some, too.

MR. PHILLIPS: I know we'll discuss that, and I am tickled to death to hear that we can do this, and you've got -- We always knew that we had a great staff, but we just didn't know how great.

MR. HARTIG: Similarly, Brian, we got a couple of reports in our snapper grouper folder that dealt with black sea bass and vermilion snapper, and like they were mini SAFE reports, and I found those things really, really cool, and they can be updated on a regular basis, and it provides data up to the year. Those different species are up to the two years, and I really like that, and I think what you're trying to do would complement that as well, and it would give the council even more information to look at.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One of the ways that -- We've even gotten so far as talking about how we would go about deciding what we're going to look at. We've got a lot of species, but what we thought we would do is perhaps make sure that, when we're looking by species, that we're doing all of the assessed species. Plus, when you all decide if you're going to do some groupings and re-groupings, we could do analyses by groupings, and so we can pull out key species and things.

There was some discussion of sailors choice or something, and I don't know if that's even in the FMU anymore, but there is not likely to be a high demand for a lot of socioeconomic information about that species by itself, but certainly black sea bass or b-liners or snowy groupers, and those are the kinds of things that we are -- Those kinds of species are the ones we're talking about pulling out and being able to look at that information as well as then turning it around and looking maybe either by port or county or areas, similar geographic areas, within a given state and then pulling all the fishing information together for that area.

It would be really quite useful, I think, to the council when they want to look at it as a reference document, and it would be put on our website, under the FEP site, because that fits in with our fishery ecosystem plan, and we would be able to keep this updated, and it would be available to council members and to the general public and the kids in school, because occasionally we get requests for information like I'm doing a term paper on something or other and what can you tell me about snowy grouper. I mean, that kind of stuff happens, and we can say, well, we do have a bunch of stuff about that, and go here and you can find it there.

This is the kind of product that we're talking about offering, but, again, if you want to go this route, this is something that we'll have to allocate some staff time to. Right now, primarily, I have John doing most of it, because Christina is -- She'll have a hand in it, because there is stuff that she has to do that's related to this, but we're looking at potentially even more stuff to put on her plate here, and so I just wanted to get that discussion out there, and, if you all want to put that in the mix, just tell me what you want to do.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think we talked earlier about hot spots for where they caught snowy grouper and blueline tile and the time of year and things like that, and so I'm sure that would make these management decisions much easier in some places. Any other thoughts?

DR. DUVAL: I am completely supportive of it. I think it's a great idea, and, if you guys feel like you have the wherewithal to move forward with that, two thumbs-up.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. I don't see anybody else, other than thumbs-up. All right. Thanks, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Basically, at this point, what we're talking about is potentially doing the socioeconomic report and for-hire with John, in his regular economic analyses that he has to do on every management plan that goes through the council, and looking at that for 2018. I have left in Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 11, because we don't want to forget it. It just keeps getting slipped a little further down.

Right now, for Christina, we've got the cobia transfer document that we're working on as well as the spiny lobster, and we haven't had that discussion yet about the king mackerel trip limits. If you all decide to proceed on that -- Actually, probably of the three, that may be the easiest one. I

didn't talk about this specifically with Christina, and so I'm going on based what I know, but Kari had done a lot of work on that, and a lot of work had been done even in the amendment, where it was the wrong alternative was chosen for that action and that the fishermen endorsed a different alternative than they probably should have, and so we've got a lot of work that's been done on that. If you decide to move ahead on that, that could probably fit in there just fine with Christina, and, of course, she'll be doing the social analyses.

We've got Myra is going to be pretty slammed with the two visioning amendments, as she has been, and that's been an awful lot of work that's going into those amendments, but we've also got b-liners and black sea bass coming up that we may have to do some kind of actions or something on later, and so I am not exactly sure what our timing is going to be on the visioning amendments at this point, whether we're going to be able to get the final documents by September. I am beginning to think that might be a bit optimistic, and so we just need to keep that in mind. I don't know for certain, but that's where we are.

Before, we were told that we wanted the two amendments to proceed together and be finished around the same time, and it's sounding a little more like maybe the commercial amendment is moving a little more quickly than the recreational one, but that can all change over time, and so that's what we have there.

Right now, for Chip, we have the SMP review, and we have had, on the agenda, and it's been getting slipped down for the last several years, the coral and the shrimp amendment that's looking at potential for additional allowable areas, and that is stuff that I have down for Chip to be working on. Now, he's been working on Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, and I haven't had a chance to talk with him after you all worked on Amendment 46 this week, and you took out a number of actions, and so I'm not sure exactly how much of his time that that is going to be taking immediately, in the immediate future, but that is something that he is still actively working on.

When we get to me, I'm doing the wreckfish ITQ review, and I am also looking at the -- We're going to talk about golden tilefish, and one of the things that I was going to suggest to you when we get to that discussion is that we could do another abbreviated framework amendment for this, and it may not be able to go as quickly as the red grouper one, and the thing that determines that speed with which an abbreviated framework can be completed is the NEPA analysis that needs to be done associated with it. We were able to do the red grouper abbreviated framework as a categorical exclusion, which is why you were able to say, in September, do this and we're bringing back to you a finished product in December.

We're pretty certain that this one is probably going to be an EA, but remember that we did some NEPA analysis for the interim rule, and so we probably will need to look at is that adequate for what we're doing here, and I can't commit us to that we could do this, if you tell us that you want it done at this meeting, that we'll have it done in March, and I just don't know. We've got to wait for the NEPA guys to weigh-in on how all of that is going to go, but the nice thing about it is that the abbreviated framework process really is abbreviated, in terms of the amount of documentation and things and everything that we have to provide. It's very limited in its usage, but, when we can use it, it's a great tool, and I will go into that tomorrow, more about abbreviated frameworks, when we talk about red grouper, but I am thinking we might be able to do that for golden tilefish.

John Carmichael is going to be working on the ABC control rule, as well as his involvement with SEDAR and the SSC, and Roger has Snapper Grouper Amendment 38, and, of course, we still are working on FEP things as well, because you have given direction that you want to see some things back in March, and so we will continue to work on that.

The issue that we're still facing right now is we have several items that are not on this list, and I wanted to get some direction from you all as to which of these things you would like to make sure get included. There has been some discussion about looking at recreational AMs and somehow modifying that. We haven't gotten any real definitive direction on how you want to handle that, your timing of this, when you want to have it done, and so, at some point, if there can be some discussion on that, so you can help us figure that one out.

Red grouper, we're doing this abbreviated framework, which is going to allow us to change the ACL, but you will remember, as part of that determination, and the council received a letter in September that said that we're not likely to meet the rebuilding schedule. Rebuilding for red grouper ends in 2020, and we're not likely to meet it, even if we were to stop fishing altogether for red grouper, and so that means that we need to somehow do something within two years to get a plan implemented that will help us to meet the rebuilding schedule.

One of the things that we could consider is -- I'm sorry if I'm jumping ahead on some of these things, but, for red grouper, we can look at extending the rebuilding plan, the timeframe that it's going to take to do this, but there is some concern that, perhaps under low recruitment, that it still might not rebuild even if we did another ten-year rebuilding timeframe, and so there's more details to that that we could do. Now, looking at my own schedule, I could probably take on the recreational AMs or the red grouper rebuilding amendment and add that into what I'm already doing and what I already have planned, but I think it might be difficult for me to do both of those.

I know you're going to talk about yellowtail tomorrow. That's something that had been discussed, and I'm assuming you will give us some direction tomorrow on how you want to deal with yellowtail in the near future, and I just want to make sure that I have everything. I think those are the things that I need to make sure that we get in there.

If we can do golden tilefish as an abbreviated framework, we can do that, as long as you don't want to change any of the other management measures. If you do want to change some of the other management measures for how you're dealing with golden tilefish, then we might need to rethink what kind of an amendment and stuff that we're going to do and the timeframe to make that happen, and so those are some things that you need to put into the mix.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Brian. Golden tile, I've had some discussions with some fishermen who would like to see a trip limit change. I've had some discussions with others that don't, and so I will follow-up more on that. Do you need to know tomorrow about that?

DR. CHEUVRONT: No, and I guess what I'm trying to say is let's -- Give us some direction. You can come back in March and say, yes, we need to think about doing another amendment to look at trip limit changes for golden tilefish, and then that just gets into the mix with everything else. I think you'll probably find, in tomorrow's discussion, that you're going to need to do something about the ACL for golden tile, and that's my assumption. You haven't had that discussion yet, and so it's a little bit of an awkward position for me to be in to try to estimate what



you might be wanting to do, but that's part of what I've got to try to do in working out this schedule, and so, anyway.

I just wanted you to know that we'll do whatever you tell us that you want to do. I will find a way to fit these things in here, but you just tell us what you want. We haven't really had that discussion about the recreational AMs, and you may not be prepared to deal with that at this meeting, but I know there's been a lot of traffic online, and a lot of us have gotten emails about this and what can be done, and so we were thinking that you all might want to consider that at some point and doing that as separate from the ABC control rule amendment, because I think that's going to move a little too slowly, and I think you can modify the AMs through a framework amendment. Well, for snapper grouper you can, and I don't know if you can do it for all of your amendments, and that's something we will have to do research on, but we can figure that out, probably, for you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Brian.

DR. DUVAL: I would like to see the recreational AMs move forward as a framework, because, as Brian said, I think it's going to be easier for us to work on that, and it would move ahead, probably, a little bit more quickly, and it might make sense to remove that from the ABC control rule amendment, just because we're going to have to have more dialogue with the SSC on the ABC control rule, and I think the recreational AMs is completely our shop, and so that would be my suggestion there.

I did have a question about red grouper and modifications to the rebuilding plan. I know we still need to take up the abbreviated framework to adjust the ACL, and so I guess I just want to get some clarity on -- I know we have two years to implement a rebuilding plan or modify the existing rebuilding plan, and so we would hopefully spend a couple of years under this new annual catch limit that is established, predicated, upon a lot recruitment level, and so, really, the change we're looking for is to see if there's any change, I guess, in that low recruitment level, but we do need to get something going -- I'm asking the question, I guess. We do need to get something going that would be implemented by September of 2019?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes, I believe that's correct, and Monica has been involved in a couple of conversations with us on this, but, because that -- I believe, because that letter said that we're not going to make the rebuilding schedule, that something has to be done to address that issue, and we've got two years to do it. If it was just that overfishing was occurring or something, that would be fine. We would reduce the ACL, and that probably would have taken care of the issue, but I think, because of the finding, we have to address rebuilding. Is that correct, Monica?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes, you have to do a new or revised -- I would call it revised. You have to revise your current rebuilding plan.

MR. WAUGH: Monica, I wonder if there isn't some way to get a little bit of flexibility here, because I know we've got a letter with the indication that we have to modify the rebuilding timeframe, but the projected date for that to be rebuilt is 2020, and, to do anything, we would have to go back to the Center and ask for additional projections now, and we are getting all new MRIP numbers in July of 2018, and so, any numbers that we were to get from the Center now would not mean anything, because we're going to get new numbers in a new assessment, and that new assessment could show anything. I mean, it could show that it's no longer overfished and no longer

overfishing. We just don't know, but it seems to me, if we start working on a revision before we get it implemented, we'll have new numbers that we'll need to change what we submitted, and so I just wonder if there's some way that we can get a little bit of flexibility, given this situation, around this legal requirement.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I will be happy to look into it for you. I have just re-read all the information in the National Standard 1 Guidelines about what happens when you don't make adequate progress, and it's pretty clear to me that you have to revise your rebuilding plan and maybe do other things. Some of the other things you have already done is this abbreviated framework that's going in place, and I don't know whether there is anything else that you would also need to do to reduce fishing mortality, but I would be happy -- These are guidelines, and there are reasons sometimes for deviating, and so I would be happy to look into that further for you.

We can do it via a framework if it turns out, I think, that you have to revise the rebuilding plan, and it looks like your snapper grouper framework would allow that, and so you have a little bit of flexibility there, but I will look into it further, but right now, like I said, the guidelines are pretty clear that you've got to do something within that two-year period, and one of the somethings is revising your rebuilding plan.

MR. WAUGH: One additional thing we've done is, through Amendment 36, we implemented a spawning closure targeted to red grouper off of North Carolina, and I know this is an issue that's been debated at many CCC meetings, but those are guidelines and not law, and so maybe we can push for a little flexibility, given the situation that we have.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: The law kicks you back into, if you're not making adequate progress, it kicks you back into that two-year time period as well, but you're right that they are guidelines, and so I would be happy to look into it further for you.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I wanted to follow-up with one thing that Michelle had suggested, that, if we go ahead and look at the recreational AMs and doing it by framework, I think one of the first steps we have to do is make sure that our framework for all of our FMPs -- Because of the number of species that we're talking about recreationally, it would affect many of our FMPs, and I think we would have to check our framework rules for all the individual FMPs, to make sure that we could do it for all of the affected species, but we know we can do it for snapper grouper.

The other ones, I would suggest that, if we find something that we can't do it by framework, that can stay in the ABC control rule amendment, and so we could handle those species in that amendment, and my guess is probably in CMP -- I think we can do it in CMP. I remember working on that, and I think that they were modeled after snapper grouper, and so it has a lot of the same things.

It's funny though that I can't remember if we did the exact same thing in dolphin wahoo or not, but I think that would cover the main species of concern, and we'll just have to look at anything else that might be affected, and so I just wanted to get that as a point of clarification, and so we could probably go ahead and do it as a framework for most of the species that would be affected, if not all. The other thing that I need -- Go ahead.

DR. MCGOVERN: I was just going to mention that I think it's only three FMPs that would be affected. It's snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and CMP that would have recreational AMs.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Correct, and I guess I just want to go through and verify that our framework procedures allow us -- I know it does for snapper grouper, but I just want to confirm it for the others before I promise something that I can't deliver on.

The one thing that I need from you all is we need to know what your four priorities are, your four top priorities. I am assuming that the two visioning amendments are two of the priorities, and if you could give us the others. The cobia transfer is one, and Snapper Grouper Amendment 46. That's what we had from last time. Now, I don't know if you want to change any of those from what you had in September, and we will do those, continue definitely working hard on those, and doing the other things, which I'm sure we'll be able to make progress on the other amendments, but I think having the four priorities helps us to focus our efforts.

DR. DUVAL: Don't you like how I always have an opinion? I agree with those four priorities, but I just want to make sure that, because we -- I don't know how long Executive Finance is going to go today, but we might be able to jump back and pick up a couple of snapper grouper things and mackerel that we weren't able to get to.

We did bump the wreckfish ITQ update to the March council meeting as well as Snapper Grouper Amendment 44, which is yellowtail, and, after conversation with my counterpart from Florida about whether or not we might want to consider adding an action to Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 for a yellowtail trip limit, it sounds like Florida would like to actually go out to the fishermen and have some workshops prior to doing something like that and that Florida was okay with taking up just discussion of the various actions in that Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 options paper on combining ABCs, and that you all were okay with taking that up in March, but it would just be great to get some confirmation on that.

MR. ESTES: I am glad you have an opinion. Yes.

DR. DUVAL: So that's not like work that staff has to do. We're really just shifting all of those documents to the next briefing book, and I just wanted to make that clear. Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Michelle. Anything else? I don't see anything else, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: The thing that I would like to get a confirmation on, and it sounds like there is a lot of interest in these recreational AMs, but is that something that you want staff working on now, prior to the March meeting, and come back to you in March? If you do want that, what would you like to see staff bring back to you, if at all possible?

MR. BREWER: I think that we ought to look at that question in March, because you've got an awful lot on staff's plate between now and March, and let's kind of see how things are going with what you've got on your plate before we get into that.

MR. HARTIG: We're going to do this framework, correct?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Yes. For the recreational AMs, yes. We will do whatever we can through a framework.

MR. HARTIG: Okay. I just was wondering about the timing. We know it's not coming in 2018, and what timing would it take to get it in 2019?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Well, I'm not going to tell you that you can't have it in 2018. I mean, if you tell your staff that you want it done, we'll find a way to make it get done. We can handle what's happening on our end, and we'll figure out a way to work it in, and we'll tell you, as we go along, how long it's going to take to make it happen, but, if you want us to start it -- I was about to suggest that perhaps what I can do is do a little bit of homework on this and bring back some kind of an options -- Not even an options paper, but more like a white paper, just a description of what we know about this, and bring it back to you in March as a way to help the discussion move along.

Then you all can decide, maybe in March, how you want to proceed and whether you want to now consider a full-blown amendment, based on what you're able to do, and we could do it that way, and so I would offer that up to you, just bringing back a document that says, this is what we know. I can't promise you what's going to be in that document, but I will spend the time researching it and putting it together if that's what the council would like.

MR. BELL: Actually, I think that would be helpful, because what I was trying to get a handle on is sort of what are our options, what are our range of things we can do, in terms of structuring AMs, and what have we got to look out for, and so something that would kind of summarize that, as Brian just described, I think that might be pretty helpful.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Part of what I could do is show you what you actually have in place right now, and then that will give you even a place to start on what of those AMs that you have in place now would you like to consider modifying for the future, and that might tell you something about how big of a task you're considering to undertake here, and I don't know.

MR. BELL: That would be perfect, kind of the state of where we are now, and then we can figure out if we want to make changes, in some cases.

MR. PHILLIPS: I am going to guess that we can do direction to staff and guidance. Do you need to add to that, Jim?

MR. ESTES: I am sorry, but I missed the suggested top four. What are they?

DR. CHEUVRONT: I have got them here. They're the two visioning amendments, the cobia transfer amendment, and Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, which is the red snapper.

MR. WAUGH: Coming back to this recreational AMs, we had, within the ABC control rule, the last action was AMs, and you all looked at those, and I think gave us a little bit of guidance, and so that's certainly what we will use to start with. If you look ahead to 2018, we won't get any of the new estimates for the recreational catches until -- They will be available in late July, and so my presumption is then we won't be dealing with any recreational closures until sometime after July, because those numbers will then have to be transformed into the currency that our ACLs are measured in.

I just want to make sure that you all understand the timeline here, because I certainly don't think we could get anything ready for you to approve in March, but, if you want to think ahead and approve it in March -- Give us the guidance in March and then approve it in June, and then we can submit it right after the June meeting, and I don't know how long it's going to take for those numbers to get transposed into the ACL currency, but you might be able to head off some in-season recreational closures the latter part of next year, depending on how fast that could get implemented.

Certainly it doesn't change what we do now, but just thinking ahead to looking at something in March and giving us your guidance to bring back a finalized document in June to approve at the June meeting, and then that could be submitted and, again, as I said, perhaps head off some in-season recreational closures during 2018.

MR. ESTES: I don't know exactly how you do this, but you create your top four priorities, but it looks to me like, based on what we've done this week, we actually do a lot more, and so my question is where are we at with the -- Are we going to be able to do the lobster thing, which seems like it's a fairly simple thing, also?

DR. CHEUVRONT: Jim, about the lobster, I believe the Gulf Council is the lead on that, and so what happens for us is our staff burden is actually less on an amendment like that. We still have a lot to do, because we put in our input and everything, but the administrative burden and all that falls to the other council.

DR. CRABTREE: Where is golden tilefish in that, because we've got an interim rule that will run out at the end of the year, and so we need to get adjustments in place.

DR. CHEUVRONT: You may not have been here when we discussed that briefly, but I know they're going to bring it up again in Snapper Grouper, but we were suggesting potentially doing - - Once that discussion happens, starting immediately on an abbreviated framework to change the ACL for golden tile, and with the understanding that the amount of time it takes to do that abbreviated framework is dependent on the NEPA requirements that have to be met to do the document, and so I was trying not to give everybody the thought that they're going to have a final document in March until we know exactly what the NEPA requirements are going to be, but we plan to start working on it. I've got that under my list of things that I will be doing, and so you'll have something to talk about in March. I doubt it will be a final document, but who knows?

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. I'm thinking this has about got us wound up here.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I want to thank you all very much, because you helped us figure out a lot of things. There is a couple of loose ends that will get tied up here in the next day or so, but I feel like we have a much better, clearer path forward of where we're heading with all of this, and so thank you all very much.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Brian.

MR. WAUGH: The next agenda item is Council Meeting Materials, and we have implemented all the suggestions that you all have provided. We've got the agenda and overview standardized,

and I think we've got attachment numbers on all of the documents this time. There's still a little variation in the format, which we'll work on, but I think we've got it in all of them, and I will just see if Brian and Cameron have any additional comments and then any input from you all.

DR. CHEUVRONT: I just wanted to say one thing in regards to that. One of the things that I'm working on, and I'm fitting it in with all the other stuff that's going on, but I am actually working on what amounts to a SOPP for the technical staff on how we go about doing all the procedures, because we're finding that we have so many different things that we're keeping track of that sometimes it's really overwhelming, and nobody can remember it all, and so what I am trying to do is -- I have actually, during this meeting, have even been working on it some, working on the outline of how we're working through these things.

I will be presenting that to the tech staff, and we'll have the discussions. I am going to take the charge of writing the procedures. The tech staff will review it, and it will go through Gregg, and, at some point, we'll probably be presenting it to you all as well, so you can get a feeling for this is what you all have to do all of the time, and it is really kind of overwhelming sometimes, when you think about all the steps. We have also noticed that every time we get a new staff member, and we've had several in the last few years, while we hire really great people, and there is no doubt about it, but there is a huge learning curve to learn how we do amendments and how we get through everything.

Part of what this document would be used for is training new staff as well as to be a reference document, so that we all know this is how we agreed that things are going to be done, based on direction that's been given by the council as well as internal things that we have decided together how it needs to work out, and so I just wanted you all to know that this is happening. I can't tell you how long it's going to take, because this is one of those things that gets fit in around everything else, and so I just wanted to make you all aware of that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks.

MS. RHODES: I am just really up here if you guys have any notes or comments from how the briefing books have been structured. We are still using the late documents folders, and, if you still seem to like that setup or if there's something else you would like to see a little differently, but I'm just here to listen and make changes as you see fit.

MS. BURGESS: I have two things that I have questions about, and so the first being the staff overview presentations that are given before we walk into an amendment, and those are new things the council -- It's a new practice that the council is inputting, and I understand that it's not in the briefing book, but I think those are really good summaries of what we're going through, and, just for my records, I would love to have a copy of them somehow, whenever they're done, to hold onto as a refresher if I need to go back and look at things. Is there a way that those materials could be made available?

MR. WAUGH: You're talking about making those available after the meeting?

MS. BURGESS: That's fine.

MR. WAUGH: Sure, we can do that, because the idea there is, if we're pulling material that isn't in the documents that you have the decision document, then we will definitely distribute it ahead of time. If it's just pulling from materials that we have, we do that last minute, but we can make those available to you after the meeting.

Let me just mention one thing. You got materials later this time, and that two-week delay in our council meeting and red snapper openings just kind of constantly cascaded throughout, and we were really scrambling, me in particular, to finish some of the documents and get them out, and so I apologize for that, but, yes, we can make those available after the meeting.

MS. BURGESS: The second item I had actually had to do with the late documents, and I totally can appreciate the amount of work that goes into prepping for these meetings and how any little change in a timeline that's unforeseen can just put everyone behind. One thing that I -- The council has discussed, and I feel like the council has given staff mixed messages on it, but, this time around, items went into the late documents in a trickle flow, and we weren't always aware -- The public wasn't aware, or the committee members weren't aware, council members weren't aware, that new documents were in there. An email to say, hey, this document is in there would be great.

Additionally, if council staff knows that there is going to be major changes to a document and it's going to go into the late documents, I would recommend that there not be a placeholder draft put into the first round of the briefing book, so that there's not any confusion and time isn't invested in reviewing those documents that are nowhere near the final version for the briefing book. Thank you.

MR. WAUGH: Yes, and, again, that was my bad, totally, for not getting something out and alerting you all when new stuff was going in, and that won't happen again.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm glad you're going to tighten up. Go ahead, Brian.

DR. CHEUVRONT: One thing I would like to say is, in spite of the time crunch and all that stuff that we had, how amazingly proud I am of our staff and what they have done and what they're able to accomplish. Nobody ever says no, I can't do that. We all try to figure out how we're going to make it happen. To be honest with you, I've been associated with this council since about 2002, when I first went on the SSC, and having come through as a council member and now as staff, and I really think we've got the best staff that this council has ever had, and these are folks who work hard, and they're conscientious.

Clearly, there is always room for improvement, but I am really proud of what these people do and what they do for you and what we do for managing fisheries, and so I just wanted to take a moment to say that and recognize them publicly and on the record for what they are doing for all of us.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think we all concur. I know you all have done a lot to cover up and help me get through my inadequacies, and still do, and still will, and so don't think you're done, but it's really great working with you all, and I think everybody at the table feels this way.

DR. DUVAL: Yes, absolutely, 100 percent ditto on everything that Brian said. I think those of us who, as Erika indicated, work for the states, we understand those kinds of time crunches and the demands that we put on our staff, and especially the difficulties posed by having a two-week

delay in our September council meeting, and that just really crunches things up, not only for our staff, but for the Regional Office staff in putting everything together as well, and I think I also appreciate Erika's suggestions for -- Gregg, you usually do send out an email saying, hey, here's the late materials, and this is when they're going to be there, and I think we understand that everybody was kind of scrambling at this minute.

I think the problem is that you guys are so close to perfect that you spoil us, and so then we want it all, and we want more, and so I think that's part of the problem, is that you guys are too perfect. I do like the idea of, if you guys are amenable to it, making the staff presentations available after the meeting. I am sensitive to that, because I know we put together staff presentations for our commission, and we like our commission to read the briefing materials, as opposed to just cruise through a PowerPoint presentation and then ask uninformed questions, but I agree with Erika that that makes a really nice refresher and review of like where we were, what we were trying to accomplish at this meeting, and what we might get done or how things have changed. I agree that that's a really nice piece of recordkeeping, if you all are amenable to that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Michelle, and you've got all the state background, with management and budgets, and you're talking to a man that has never even had anybody offer him a job, and so we cover the spectrum. Now are we going to Other Business, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: Yes. This was included in the late materials folder. It's the Council Coordination Committee Report, and I'm just going to go over the high points in this, but there are a couple of places where we need some input from you. We went over the budget, and the present budget was a slight reduction for the council and commission line. The House mark was up slightly. The Senate mark was up also slightly, but the Senate mark included some language that all the increases above the 2017 levels go to the commissions.

Remember that we talked before about the councils and the commissions getting together and agreeing on how to split any potential increase, and the decision of the CCC was not to pursue that at that time, and so we may be able to revisit that, but the bottom line is the expectation for level funding, and we got the first portion of our first quarter funds to us in late November. They want us to work on our next grant cycle that would cover 2020 through 2024, and they would like to get that information from us by the end of 2018, which is earlier than we've done it in the past.

Where we need some direction is in terms of the February CCC agenda. They have circulated -- The North Pacific Council is the host council, and so they're worked with NMFS, and the February meeting is usually mostly heavy on budget, but here's the draft list of topics, and, as Doug suggested, we asked them to include this issue of how we can increase the penalties for non-reporting.

This is a draft agenda, and we will certainly provide them a little bit of explanation for the topics that we are interested in, so that they are clear on what to bring to that meeting and who to have make a presentation, but I wanted to see if you all had any additional topics that you wanted to see added to this agenda.

MR. PHILLIPS: You all are looking over this, I presume, and checking out the list? I don't see anybody that has any thoughts.



MR. WAUGH: Okay. Then we'll go with that list. That certainly covers, I think, the big issues that we had.

MR. BREWER: Gregg, we've had these conversations before, but I'm still concerned about doing something with regard to these -- I will call them outlier EFP requests. 99 percent of the EFP requests are good and valid, and they're well researched, but, here of late, we have seen at least one, and, in the past, more than that, of these requests that clearly, clearly, while they are cloaked in science, they are in fact commercial enterprises and trying to exploit the system.

I am happy to report to everybody that the one that gave me such heartburn -- When the Dean of Nova Southeast University found out about it, he pulled the plug on it, and that happened about a couple of months ago, but you've still got the problem of people attempting to utilize the system, or game the system, I should say, and I am just wondering if there could be some discussion or thought about having greater oversight put in place when you've got something that is so highly controversial, such as that. It's a suggestion, and I know I read what the CCC had to say about EFPs in general, and the CCC is happy with them, and happy with the system, and I agree with that, but the issue still remains about these outliers.

MR. WAUGH: We can certainly ask that that be addressed, because it would be interesting to see if other councils have run into this same situation, and so we'll make that suggestion. Continuing on, MSA reauthorization -- Again, as I mentioned earlier, HR 200 seems like it's going to be the primary vehicle, and our letter to Secretary Ross conveying the working paper is attached here, and so they have our comments.

Cisco covered the ecosystem-based management, and the roadmaps are completed. Regional implementation teams have been formed, and they are supposed to include one staff from each council on the team, and so I'm following up with Roger to make sure he is on that team and will participate.

One of the concerns shared by the councils here is that there's no additional funding, and that's a concern on behalf of NMFS as well, because they plan to leverage existing resources and make it complementary with other council activity, and so this is just a point of concern that all the councils have raised, but the plan is to have the regional implementation plans ready for review at the May CCC meeting and then to finalize them by the end of 2018, and so we'll get those at the May meeting, and we will bring them to the June meeting for you all to have a chance to have some input as well.

In terms of regulatory reform, Sam talked about the two Executive Orders. There is one that talks about two-for-one and another for general regulatory reforms. The council process is different from other regulatory processes, and the agency has realized savings of approximately \$100 million, mostly on council-generated rules, and so that is a positive, but the Executive Orders require us to look broadly at regulations to identify outdated, unnecessary, and ineffective regulations.

They have received over a hundred public comments so far, but few of them are on council-generated rules, and we've gotten the odd comment or two during our public comment sessions, but not so much, but they have requested that we identify a process to review and evaluate our existing regulations and that we do that by the end of December of this year. Then each council

conducts a review and evaluation and provide recommendations on rules to be removed by the end of June.

What we have got here for you is a suggested approach. We would continue to request public comments at each council meeting. Each technical staff will review the regulations for their respective FMPs, and we want to coordinate with the Regional Office to make sure that we're not duplicating our work, and so we want to coordinate with them to see what their thoughts are and make sure that we are consistent with what their thinking is.

We will bring a draft list to the Executive Finance Committee in March, get public input during the public comment session at March, and we'll have a draft document then, and maybe that will stimulate a little bit more comment. The council would review and provide input at March, and then we get some AP input. Any APs and SSC and SEP that's meeting in person, we would have them address it. Any APs that aren't meeting, we would send it to them via mail and get them to comment. If need be, we could hold a webinar session for them as well.

Again, coordinate with the Region and NOAA GC between March and June, because we will have a draft list, and whittle that list down, to make sure we're in agreement, and then bring that revised list to the Executive Finance Committee in June, and the council would review and approve the list of regulations to be removed at the June council meeting.

MS. BECKWITH: I sure would like to throw operator cards for the charter guys in the basket for removal.

MR. HAYMANS: Would items such as -- If we remove powerheads for South Carolina, is that a rule reduction? Is that something that counts, that minute detail?

MR. WAUGH: Sure.

MR. HAYMANS: If we did circle hooks and some things like that, then we are able to add back one? All right. I have a second question, if I could. When you get a chance, Gregg, scroll back up to that paragraph above. Something really caught my eye in that, and can anybody guess what it is? \$100 million. Expound upon that. How did the agency realize \$100 million in savings, and what are they doing with it?

MR. WAUGH: Well, I think that's looking at what are the impacts of the regulations that have been removed and identifying those regulations that can be removed -- I don't know if they've already been removed, but the cost savings are \$100 million.

DR. CRABTREE: It's not cost savings to the agency. It's cost savings to the regulated, by and large, and so it's like we have the \$100 million to spread around.

MR. WAUGH: So, as far as the approach, you all are okay with this approach, and we've got some suggestions for specific items to look at as well. Okay. Then, under Other Business on this CCC call, and I'm sure Cisco will talk about this tomorrow, but we asked about timing for the Center Director position, and the application period closed on October 10.

They are evaluating the positions, and there will be an Acting Director identified by mid-November, and that's Cisco. He's going to be in that role, and they hope to have this completed, depending on the process, and they're trying to get someone in there prior to March 1, if the federal hiring process works as it should, and so I'm sure he will elaborate on that tomorrow, and, again, the plan tomorrow is he will give a short presentation, and then you all will have the opportunity to ask him any questions.

MR. PHILLIPS: That's it?

MR. WAUGH: That's it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: Is there any other Other Business to come before the Executive Finance Committee? Seeing none, then that committee will adjourn.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 7, 2017.)

Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By:  
Amanda Thomas  
January 3, 2018

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[Go to Top](#)

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