

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Sawgrass Marriott
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida**

June 9, 2014

SUMMARY MINUTES

Executive Finance Committee:

Ben Hartig, Chair
David Cupka
Charlie Phillips

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Jessica McCawley

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Dr. Roy Crabtree
Doug Haymans
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Dr. Wilson Laney

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Dr. Mike Errigo
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Observers/Participants:

Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Jennifer Lee
Sam Rauch
Leann Bosarge
Col. Bruce Buckson

Dr. Jack McGovern
Phil Steele
Ken Brennan
Russ Dunn
Tracy Dunn

Additional Observers Attached

The Executive Finance Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Sawgrass Marriott, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, June 9, 2014, and was called to order at 4:15 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Ben Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: I would like to bring the Executive Finance Committee to order. The first order of business is approval of the agenda. Are there any additions to the agenda? We have one item at the end to talk about how the council wants to deal with Magnuson and future comments from the council to Magnuson. We'll add that at the end.

With that addition, is there any objection to approval of the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda is approved. The next item of business is approval of the March 2014 minutes. Are there any corrections or deletions to the minutes? Is there any objection to approving the minutes? Seeing none; the minutes are approved. That brings us to the 2014 council budget under Attachment 1.

MR. MAHOOD: Attachment 1; we actually for the first time this year feel like we have a budget. At the last CCC meeting we pretty much got the definitive on what our budget will be in our Calendar Year 2014. It is laid out. If anybody has any specific questions, we showed it related to our 2013 budget.

You can see that we budgeted a little bit higher funding for this year, which matches what we expect to have. Now, we haven't got all our money yet, because I don't think the spending plan for the National Marine Fisheries Service has been approved as far as I know; and Phil is shaking his head no, so that is still the situation. Mr. Chairman unless someone has got any specific questions.

MR. HAYMANS: Just a general one; how do we get the state liaison portions bumped up in the future; how do we go about that?

MR. MAHOOD: Well, you make a motion. I don't know if everybody knows how we do the state liaison right now. We give a base of \$45,000 to each of the states and then the additional fund that you see listed there for each state is relative to their participation at SEDARs, on the SSC, or any other items directly related where their staff work with the council.

That is why there is a little bit of difference in that. I guess if you wanted to increase everybody, Doug, you could make a motion at some point to increase it whatever you feel is appropriate. I will point out I know nationwide, the councils in the southeast are maybe some of the only ones that still give liaison money to the states. I'm not sure what the Gulf gives to each state, but I think we may be the highest; I'm not sure. That is how you would do it if you would need it increased.

MR. HARTIG: Are there any other questions to Bob about that part of the budget? Seeing none; that brings us to the next item, the budget expenditures 2014.

MR. MAHOOD: All right, if you look under Attachment 2, you will see the budget expenditure for the year. If you look at the middle column, which kind of gives you a rough idea, we're about five months through the year. We have not included obviously this meeting in the costs yet. None of the states have put in for any of their funding at this point yet. If you add those two

things in, we're probably in the mid to high 40 percent of our expenditure for the year. We're running pretty good as far as that goes.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions about the budget expenditures? The next Action 5; address council follow-up and priorities, and that is under Attachment 3.

MR. MAHOOD: Gregg is coming in this direction right now to deal with that.

MR. HARTIG: I went through that and, man, that takes some time to go through that, Gregg. It takes a lot of time to put that together. While Gregg is coming up, if Sam is still here, I do appreciate him coming to the meeting today. It is not often we get to see him in the southeast.

MR. WAUGH: Again, you can see the agendas that are upcoming for council meetings. Since this is six months into the year; what I wanted to do is look at where we are in terms of our priorities that you set out for us. This begins on Page 99 of that document. At times people have commented on the length of the document.

Of course, if we were working on fewer amendments, it would be a shorter document. Anybody that wants to shorten it, let's cut back on the amendments. Visioning workshop; we're right on schedule. We've got through June where we're providing input. What we will add in the next version of this is the October 14 through 16 special council meeting/workshop just to deal with visioning.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 21, which deals with the minimum stock size threshold revisions; the council finished that at the March 2014 meeting. That has been submitted and is under review. That is completed from the council's perspective. Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 13A, where we're looking at the ten-year evaluation for the Oculina Experimental Closed Area; the council will look at that and give us guidance here, and then you will be finished with that item.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 29; this is revisions to the control rule and gray triggerfish. You are scheduled to give final approval to that document at this meeting. We'll be finished with that at the June meeting. Joint Mackerel Amendment 20B; you finished that at March. That has been submitted, so we're finished with that.

The other item that was ranked Number 4 we will be dealing with under snapper grouper. That deals with the Regulatory Amendment 17, how we deal with additional protections for speckled hind and Warsaw. That work is on schedule. Snapper Grouper Amendment 21; that was another Priority Number 4.

That is the document we'll use to deal with the outcomes from the visioning process. Sixteen, dealing with black sea bass pots; originally we were scheduled to deal with that for public hearing at this meeting. The analyses are taking longer to complete; and as you will hear when we get into snapper grouper, we are asking you to delay that so that we would be approving that for public hearing at the December meeting, with public hearings then occurring in January.

Joint Charterboat Reporting Amendment; that is ongoing. You will hear a report from the Technical Subcommittee that was held last week; so we'll have that updated input. Coral

Amendment 9; this was a placeholder. Based on your guidance in March, there is no need to move forward with that at that time.

Seven was the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagic Framework Amendment 1. The council completed work on that in March 2014; so that is completed as far as the council is concerned. Then Amendment 32 deals with blueline. We're on target. You will be discussing that in the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting here. The SSC reviewed the projections in April, and we're on schedule to complete that in September.

Generic AM Dolphin Allocation Amendment; we are on schedule with that. You will be discussing that here. That is on schedule to be completed at the December meeting. You can stop me if you have questions as we're going through this. System Management Plan; this is dealing with the Amendment 14 MPAs.

Due to our other workload, we had fallen behind in terms of getting this completed. We've just recently contracted with someone, Michelle Tisler, to help put that together and work with us and the IPT. We expect to have this on a draft – you will see a draft at the September meeting; review the revisions at the December meeting. We would take it out to scoping, get any scoping input in January; and then finalize that at the March 2015 meeting.

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 7/Snapper Grouper Amendment 33; we're on schedule with that. You will be talking about that at this meeting. That is targeted for council completion at September. Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 20, which is snowy grouper, we'll be discussing that here at this meeting. That is on schedule for completion at the September meeting.

FEP II; Roger talked about this some. There has been some interest in finding out what more the timing is on this. Page 32 of this follow-up does have more detail in terms of the timing that various sections are going to be completed. It is on schedule to be reviewed – the technical parts reviewed by the Habitat AP in November of this year.

We intend to come back to you at the September meeting with more specific dates and details filling out that timeline. But those of you that are interested in what is happening when, you can look at Page 32 that has the more detailed timeline for the FEP II. Snapper Grouper Amendment 22; this is a tag program to track recreational harvest.

This is on hold pending determination whether this is a LAPP or not. Then we need to figure out how we're going to move forward once that determination is made. Joint Mackerel Amendment 24 dealing with allocations; we're going to be talking about that here and we will get some determination at this meeting how you want us to move forward with that.

CE-BA 3 is on hold pending determination of what is going on in the New England area and Mid-Atlantic area; how that progresses and how we might need to deal with bycatch reporting and cost sharing. We will hear a little bit of a report on that at this meeting; and then at some point we will begin moving forward.

Joint South Atlantic/Gulf Amendment 26, which is the permit split, the Gulf Council has determined that we don't need to move forward with this right now. We have discussed this.

We have been asked to provide a discussion paper at the September meeting. Any bulk of the work on this amendment would likely take place in 2015 after the current king mackerel stock assessment is done.

That will ultimately give us some more guidance on what needs to be addressed in that amendment. Number 13 is the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf Generic Commercial Logbook Amendment. You asked us to put together an options paper for review at this meeting. We have that; and so we will be looking for further guidance on how we proceed at the conclusion of this meeting.

Shrimp closure work was completed under the new process. Calico Scallop FMP; that was Number 15 with no specific timeline on that. There appears to be some sporadic reports of increases in catches, so that may be something that we deal with. The added but not ranked – again they are not ranked.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 35, removing species, this is something that came out of our Joint South Florida discussions. At the last meeting you gave us guidance to prepare a scoping document, and that will come up under our Snapper Grouper Committee. The timing we're looking at there is for your approving it to go out to scoping.

Scoping would take place in August, review the input in September and approve for public hearings in December, and hold public hearings in January. Then we would fill in the rest of those details in 2015. The final item was Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 22 dealing with gag and wreckfish.

We were looking at possibly using the new framework; and we'll have some discussions during Snapper Grouper to determine whether that operates under the new framework or really needs to be a full regulatory amendment. The timing on that is you have an options paper now. Public input, do we take it out to public hearings in August or just hold the public hearing in September?

That will depend on whether we use that abbreviated framework or it is a regulatory amendment; but looking to finalize at the September meeting and submit to the secretary in October. Those are your priorities that you gave us. We think other than one or two items we are pretty much on target. As you can see there, there is no room to add things without taking anything away at this point. I would be glad to answer any questions. As you look at this, if you have any questions during the meeting week, give me a shout. I would be glad to answer them. Thank you.

MR. HARTIG: Questions for Gregg?

MR. HAYMANS: I'm just remembering a conversation we had during the run-through process, and you and I didn't have a chance to discuss it. I believe my questions about the Shrimp FMP and removal of some of the species you suggested that we discuss during Executive Finance. Was that not the case; do you remember?

MR. MAHOOD: Yes; we talked about either at Full Council – in my notes we ended up we're going to do it in Full Council under other business.

MR. HAYMANS: I'll hold until Full Council; thank you.

MR. HARTIG: Are there any other questions of Gregg? I have one. In calico scallops, we haven't required them to have VMS, but they are bound – they can't fish in the HAPCs based on the gear that they use?

MR. WAUGH: That is correct. We have no regulations specific to the calico scallop fishery, but our Coral HAPC regulations talk about certain gear types that can't be used; so they would fall under that. But, for instance, it is not like royal red shrimp vessels that also fish for rock shrimp that have VMS. There is no other requirement except that issue of not being able to fish within the HAPCs.

MR. HARTIG: If there aren't any more questions, we will move on. The next item of business is an update on the Joint Committee on South Florida Management Issues.

MR. MAHOOD: All right, you received several attachments on this. There is a summary of the Joint Florida Issues IPT Conference Call. Let me say all these things are pretty much just informational at this point. The group gets together – also just to back up a little bit, a reminder that our contingent that is part of this group is our Executive Committee.

We meet with the five council member Gulf group and the State of Florida in I believe Key Largo in July. I can't remember the dates right offhand; we've got so many meetings going on. It is around July 14th or somewhere around there. I believe. In your package you will find a summary of our last conference call; and this was the IPT. This was just the plan team portion of that joint committee.

The committee asked that Monica look at and put together some information on what kind of management options we would have as councils to address some of these joint problems; and she has put that together. The joint committee will be looking at that in July. There is also some recommendations and actions that came out of our committee, as Gregg mentioned earlier.

We are moving forward with those independent of the joint committee process. Also, there is a mutton snapper bag limit analysis that the committee had asked for. Also, the South Florida Committee had asked for some commercial landings on five species of the snapper grouper complex that occur in South Florida that we're looking at some sort of a management on; and also for the recreational landings.

I believe we owe our thanks to Jack for putting that information together. We appreciate it, Jack. Mr. Chairman, unless somebody has got some questions, we will be coming back at the September meeting perhaps with some concrete actions that we want the council to start moving forward with. Jessica, did you have anything to add to that?

MS. McCRAWLEY: No, I'm good, thank you.

MR. MAHOOD: If Jessica is good; we're good on that.

MR. HARTIG: All right, any other questions about the South Florida Issues and how we're moving forward? Seeing none; that brings us to Overview of Proposed Bills in the House and the Senate related to Magnuson.

MR. MAHOOD: You should have received three attachments. One is the House Discussion Draft that was marked up on May 29, very recently. It is so recently I haven't been able to get hold of the new bill as it has been amended. There were a number of amendments. Congressman Sutherland from Florida had a number of them in there.

We are waiting to get that information from the staffers up there. I am not going to go through it all. I know everybody especially read the House; it is only 45 pages. Now the 90-page Senate, I'm not sure if everybody read that version or not; but you have two versions. The Senate version is very early I think in the process. They differ somewhat in a number of areas.

There are some good parts I think that might give the councils more flexibility if they end up becoming part of the Magnuson Act. Then there are some questionable things that we may need to address. One thing I will say is that the councils through the CCC process is trying to address these as much in a unified manner as we can.

There has been one draft of a letter that will be going forward here soon. I know Sam has a much better idea on all this than I do; but I am not sure when the House and the Senate will start getting together. I don't even know that it has been talked about. I thought maybe that something would get done this year.

In discussing this with some of the staffers up there in D.C. is that with the Senate version being somewhat different, they would be surprised if we get a new bill or final bill by the end of this year. I'm not sure how long it will go on, but we will be poised to hear when they get together and decide how to manage under the Magnuson Act.

As you are aware, there are a lot of controversial things. I think our reauthorization ran out maybe in 2012, Sam, or something like that for the councils. We're kind of on shaky ground; no not really, I don't think. You could view it that way, but I don't think that is the case. If anybody has any specific questions on the bills that you've received, I would be glad to try to answer them, Mr. Chairman, before we move on.

MR. HARTIG: Does anybody have any questions about the specifics in the House or the Senate draft?

DR. DUVAL: It is not so much a question as really I just wanted to point out one thing in the Senate draft – I haven't had the chance to read the latest House draft – that folks may not have been aware of, but a provision was in the Senate draft that would have required for both the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils to nominate for any open council seat a recreational representative, for-hire representative, commercial representative, and an "other" representative.

This was something that was a provision for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council I believe after the last reauthorization. I personally have a little heartburn with that. Clearly, it is aimed at achieving some kind of balance in somebody's mind; but as one of the state

representatives who coordinates this process for the nominations' process for open council member slots, I feel we are pretty balanced in the South Atlantic.

There are four at-large seats. We have four representative states. We have four obligatory seats. I feel like we are fairly balanced. I know in North Carolina we make every effort to ensure that we have a commercial and a recreational representative on the council. I know other states have sort of their own ways of doing this.

I spoke to Jessica a little bit about how this has worked in the Gulf when they were under that provision. Knowing that the Gulf has an unequal number of at-large seats as compared to the obligatory seats, and the Mid-Atlantic Council is the same way; there is a little bit of, I would say, grabbiness when it comes to looking for some of those at-large seats. I feel like we've had a very congenial process here in the South Atlantic; and my concern is that although the intention might be for balanced representation, that it would result in exactly the opposite. Jessica may have a comment or two in that regard.

MR. MAHOOD: Some of that is hard to understand. You've got to have the Magnuson Act and you've got to have the bill language side by side. I'm not sure if we're talking about the same part, but I saw one part in the Senate version I thought said that if the Gulf Council did not send forward the appropriate balance of candidates; that the South Atlantic Council could make recommendations. I mean the way it is written it is so convoluted.

It is really hard to understand what exactly it means. I wasn't sure if it was addressing our council. It was originally aimed at the Gulf Council. If you look at the top section, it talks at the top of the section about the Gulf Council. It is really unclear in a lot of these things. We may need to comment on it at some point if they stay in there the same.

DR. DUVAL: I read it pretty carefully; and it was reinstating that provision for the Gulf Council and then adding the South Atlantic Council into it.

MR. HAYMANS: Just to be sure that I understand; this council has operated under an agreement since its inception that we would have equal representation. When a commercial seat came open by a state, we would put forward commercial applicants and likewise for recreational. But it is an agreement between all of us, right?

MR. MAHOOD: Yes; it is kind of a gentleman's understanding that we don't go after each others at-large seats. The State of Florida could put in for Georgia's at-large seat, so can North Carolina, and so could South Carolina. I think that happens a lot in the Gulf; but in our council some time ago – and, of course, it predates maybe everybody but Cupka. Some time ago it was decided let's keep it two, two, two and two; and it stayed that way ever since. The law would allow – you could have four, one, one and one or whatever. Yes, that is a gentleman's agreement. There is nothing that would keep that legally from changing.

MR. CUPKA: I was going to point out exactly what Bob did and also the fact that it has served this council very well over the years to have that gentleman's agreement.

MR. HARTIG: I would just add when I was on the council the first time; after my second term the appointment process appointed another commercial fisherman. I stepped off the council at

that time. No, it was one year before I could have served my third term and I stepped off. That is how strong I believed in the agreement.

I had no intention to stay with that kind of a setup, so I just stepped off so another recreational person could come in, knowing how important that is for Florida and the council system. It is a pretty serious commitment that we've tried to abide by over the years. It has only strayed occasionally; once that I know of.

MS. McCAWLEY: Are we going to provide comments as a council on these various bills or how are we going to go about doing that?

DR. DUVAL: One of the things that we were going to suggest – and I am happy to make this as a motion – to allow the council Executive Director, Chair, and Vice-Chair to draft any comments on the council's behalf. Certainly, the council members can review that; but that is how we've approached the reauthorization discussions at the CCC level.

Certainly, as these drafts start coming more quickly, oftentimes the committee staffs that are working on this are asking for pretty rapid input. That was going to be I think our suggestion for how to deal with this. Then I would just note that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission just recently submitted comments on the reauthorization as well. I was going to e-mail those to Mike and ask him to e-mail those to the council so people could see how the ASMFC has weighed in on this.

MS. McCAWLEY: If that is a motion; I can second that motion. Also, I believe the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies also provided comments on Magnuson. Where the State of Florida is usually commenting on all the bills, if there is some mechanism that you would like to put in place where you talk to the state representatives or whatever to get some feedback, then we would certainly be happy to get involved in that process. I know that the bills are coming quickly.

MR. HARTIG: Do you want to make that motion?

MR. MAHOOD: I think she did.

MR. HARTIG: All right, we have a motion to allow the Council Executive Director, Chair, and Vice-Chair to draft comments on Magnuson-Stevens Act bills. Discussion? Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

I do know that as we've gone through this process and the timelines have been pretty short; we have sent some of the stuff around the council and we have got comments from some of the council members. We'll try and do that or we will do that. We'll send around the drafts as we get them. Like I say, the turnarounds are usually pretty quick so try and get any comments you have in as rapid as possible; and that would help tremendously.

It is interesting that some of these timelines have been so short, and yet the process is dragging on and on. Some of that was a bit counterproductive. It didn't allow some of the councils time. Their meetings didn't take place where we could actually discuss these in Full Council. That has

been disappointing, but we have comments and they have been sent around to you all, and we will continue to do that.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes; there was one other part to this. At the last CCC meeting we had a number of issues that we discussed relative to the reauthorization. Our vice-chair lady was chosen to chair one of the groups that dealt with reauthorization, particularly the stock rebuilding requirements that we would like to see. Michelle, did you want to just give a quick word on that?

DR. DUVAL: This is I believe Attachment 5 under the Executive Finance Committee. There were a number of questions dealing with stock rebuilding timelines, exemptions for implementation of rebuilding plans, and the stock rebuilding requirements, changes to the requirements to end overfishing, comments on a mixed stock exemption, exemptions to the current ACL requirements for incidentally caught species, et cetera, as well as some comments on the SSC's role in quota setting.

That was the draft position paper that our workgroup came up with. There were three different workgroups at the CCC, so we discussed this and tried to come up with some consensus statements; and those are available on the CCC Website, which is being hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Council.

I think it was a little disappointing for me to see that one of the things that we have felt so strongly about, which is some flexibility in the requirement to end overfishing immediately, that we could not achieve consensus on that. There was general agreement that if we're going to provide some exemptions for stock rebuilding requirements; that they need to be very clearly defined, that they need to be limited in scope.

We were able to come up with some consensus on that; but I think – and most of the disagreement I think was probably coming from some of the West Coast Councils that haven't had to deal with the significant ending overfishing impacts that we have had to deal with down here in the southeast.

I will say that Doug Gregory with the Gulf Council gave a great example of that overfishing is like speeding. You take your foot off the accelerator to stop speeding; you don't slam on the brakes. There were some great examples from New England as well. Unfortunately, we were not able to come to consensus; and I think we all agreed that required a bit more conversation than we actually had time for to discuss it. I was a little disappointed in that regard. The workgroup had offered up some alternative language that could be considered, but that didn't move forward.

MR. HARTIG: I couldn't attend the CCC meeting. I had a cold that I wasn't willing to share with all the people on the airplane, so I didn't make it. I will add as Magnuson-Stevens gets continually gets more complex and prescriptive; but the way Magnuson was actually done in the first place was predicated on the differences in those different areas and council jurisdictions.

Now we're trying to fit everybody into the same hole; and it really doesn't work very well for us. Based on the amount of data we have compared to a number of the other councils, and just our timing of the assessments; we still have assessments that have not been done for the first time, at

least in the new assessment realm, which is much better assessment scientists and much better way to assess our stocks, and which are giving us rebuilding in every case that we've run these assessments.

We can argue about how much data goes into them; but the answers we're getting are moving us forward on all of our assessments. To me this regional aspect of the different councils is getting lost in the prescriptive nature of this. We're getting lost in the shuffle. There was in the CCC; was it the consensus?

There were two bullets there; the last two bullets that pointed to talking about why some of the councils had differences of opinions on overfishing. At least that was added and we have that in the consensus report that talks about some of the differences in the different council jurisdictions that cause these different ways to approach Magnuson Reauthorization.

To me I think somehow – and I don't know how you do it. We continue to push forward on what we need, but we're kind of getting drowned out by other councils who have much better data and a lot longer time series and much more assessment history than we have in our area. That is just observations that I have going through the process.

Are there any other questions on Magnuson? We have a motion and we're moving forward with a way. I think Jessica's suggestion about seeing what Florida is doing and other states as well would be prudent for the council to have that kind of information when we're drafting ours as well, so we'll do that.

MR. MAHOOD: I guess the next agenda item is the report on the CCC meeting. Everybody had a copy of the agenda. If you have any specific questions, I'm sure Michelle and I will be glad to address them; but I do want to say one thing. Our CCC process, working with the NMFS leadership is working extremely well, and it seems to get better each time.

Sam brought it a long ways along in his acting role as the AA. Eileen Sobeck; she is a real nice lady and I really enjoyed meeting her and talking with her. I would say it was probably the most cordial partnership meeting that we have had since I have been involved with the CCC meetings. It worked very well and it was a very productive meeting.

We got a lot done; we moved a long ways forward on some things. I think we're going to all be very busy during this reauthorization process, however long it takes. I am very hopeful we are going to see some changes to the Magnuson Act that make our job somewhat simpler down the road. That is all I had to say, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure our Vice-Chair lady might have something.

MR. HARTIG: Michelle, do you have anything to add about the CCC meeting from your perspective?

DR. DUVAL: No, just trial by fire for me. Michelle, welcome to CCC; do you want to chair a workgroup? Sure, I'll do anything I can to move something along. I told Chris Moore that I thought it was payback for that summer flounder lawsuit all those years ago in my previous lifetime.

MR. HARTIG: If there are no other questions about the CCC meeting, we will move on to the status of the Beaufort Lab Report.

MR. MAHOOD: I put this on the agenda, because at one point in time in the President's budget – I guess it is probably still in the President's budget – they were going to close the Beaufort Lab, our main source of our stock assessment folks in the southeast. Bonnie came to our office on one of her trips, and we had a chance to talk about it quite a bit. I told her that I think the council needs to be aware of this.

I think that would be a critical move for us if that lab was closed and they shifted those stock assessment folks all over the southeast or the Gulf of West Coast or wherever. I know Bonnie was concerned that even just the threat of that might start having people looking for other jobs in other areas. I think some of that has happened. My understanding, though, is that in the House version of the budget; that money was put back in to keep that lab. That is pretty much what I know, Mr. Chairman. I think Bonnie probably knows more.

MR. HARTIG: Bonnie, do you have anything to add?

DR. PONWITH: Yes, I do, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, indeed there was a proposal in the President's budget to close the Beaufort Lab. Both the House and the Senate Subcommittees have included provisions in their appropriations that talk a little bit about that. In the House it asks for a comprehensive analysis not more than one year after the enactment of the Act for a report talking about the current maintenance costs and a detailed analysis of the research conducted by the lab in the region.

The Senate language just came out, I think it was last week. The Commerce/Justice/Science Subcommittee said with regard to the Beaufort Lab, NOAA is granted the ability to explore alternatives for transferring the lab and the associated funding to a different line office outside of the National Ocean Service, which is the current holder of that lab, the facility itself, in future budget requests, while ensuring the important research conducted at the lab continues.

As you know, there is a long way to go before we end up with final appropriations. We continue to watch for language as these deliberations continue; and that will basically drive the fate and the future of the Beaufort Lab and our team there that support the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Bonnie. Are there any questions of Bonnie? I had one. When this first came out, I think Robert had mentioned, hey, we've got some room down here, you could move your facilities over to our area. I think you actually talked to Robert about that; looking for all options, exploring everything that you can do to keep those assessment scientists that are so vital to our stock assessments in the area.

I don't know how those negotiations went or anything like that. The little bit I've heard, I don't know a lot about the maintenance cost. I've heard that was substantial to retrofit that lab with the maintenance it needed. I don't know what the costs are versus moving somewhere. You have that information. As this progresses, it would be nice to have an idea of some of that information; what the maintenance costs are versus moving it to some different location. There

are different ways to deal with it; and hopefully we'll be able to keep those assessment scientists in some manner.

DR. PONWITH: To that end; again, until we see an actual appropriation, we won't know what the final word is. What we're doing is preparing for the possible range of scenarios we might face based on when that appropriation comes. One is nothing happens, everything stays exactly the way it is; but we certainly are also preparing for if that lab is indeed sometime in the future closed.

The commitment that we have, though, is that the science that is being conducted on the fishery side within the Beaufort Lab; there is no part of that science that we deem to be irrelevant and not important. After looking at that proposal, the commitment is that we will continue to support and supply the science requirements for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

It may be in a different place depending upon the outcome of those deliberations; but the bottom line is the commitment for supplying that science, those stock assessments, the sampling, the fishery-dependent and independent work; the commitment remains. That science will continue.

MR. BEAL: I just wanted to chime in. The ASMFC did send a letter off to some folks on the appropriation staff expressing our concerns over the closure of the Beaufort Lab. Our letter was primarily focused on menhaden work and the science that comes from the Beaufort Lab on our Atlantic menhaden.

The geographical location of the lab in Beaufort is fairly important to us in that they can get to the Reedville Plant in Virginia where the bulk of the menhaden is landed on the East Coast, conduct some fishery-independent sampling and bring those samples back to the Beaufort Lab and then process that to support stock assessments.

There is the geographic component that we are concerned about, and we have expressed that. Hopefully, that will get some traction; it is hard to say. The other thing that ASMFC has chimed in on while we're here is there is also consideration for potential consolidation of two NOS labs in Charleston.

Those two labs; I know there are a number of state staff that work for South Carolina DNR that are located in some of those offices. That gives them access to a lot of equipment and technology and other things that they wouldn't have if those offices were consolidated and they were asked to go somewhere else. I think those NOS Labs in South Carolina; that consolidation is also concerning to the commission.

MR. HARTIG: That I hadn't heard about.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I'll just speak frankly. I don't believe the estimates that were put forward in terms of maintenance. I spent formative years over on that island. I am still over there frequently. I was glad to see that the House was going to be asking for a more complete study. Quite honestly, it just does not make logical sense just from a geographic perspective as well.

If you look at the number of NOAA Labs along the Gulf Coast, there is a much greater number within a far smaller geographic range. Just given the agency's concern about climate change

impacts and other things, the Beaufort Lab is in my opinion situated geographically in the perfect place to continue to focus on those types of efforts. Certainly, in North Carolina we would feel the lack of those staff in that location. There is a lot of synergistic science that occurs between all three of the universities that are in that area and the Science Center staff on both sides; both NOS and the National Marine Fisheries Service side of the house. I'm glad to see the House taking the action that it did.

DR. LANEY: Bob and Michelle already said part of what I was going to say. I was just also going to remind all of us that under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, which is sort of the organic legislation for ASMFC; and even going back to the charter in 1942 – and Bob can correct me if I misspeak here, but the Fish and Wildlife Service originally was charged with providing science support to ASMFC; and then with the government reorganization in 1972, which carved the National Marine Fisheries Service out of the Fish and Wildlife Service; both agencies sort of became responsible for science support.

Then when our Research and Development Division was carved out of us and moved into the U.S. Geological Survey, that pulled the USGS into it. Providing science support to ASMFC and the species it manages is a very important function for the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Certainly, the closure of the Beaufort Lab, if that were to come to pass, would have a big impact on the provision of that science support especially to ASMFC for those species that the Beaufort Lab works on.

MR. HARTIG: All right, anything else? We'll address other issues under other business.

MR. MAHOOD: Yes, I just wanted to announce to everyone we have hired a person to replace Anna as our coral/fishery biologist. We've hired Chip Collier from North Carolina. You guys train good people up there. That is the third one we've hired. It was an interesting process. We had 32 good applications for that position.

We interviewed nine people, and we had some very, very good interviews. It was probably the best I've run into in years. Chip kind of stood above everyone else. He has been on our SSC, he is a regional manager, he has dealt with all the species that we deal with, and he has the background writing fishery management plans and everything that we do. He was offered the position and he has accepted it. I haven't heard from Louis yet, but I'm sure I will.

MR. BOWEN: I just wanted to give my two cents. I know Chip, and I think that is an excellent choice.

MR. HARTIG: I agree. Okay, any other business to come before the Executive Finance Committee? Seeing none; that committee is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 o'clock p.m., June 9, 2014.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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Monday, June 9, 2014

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MON JUNE 9, 2014

80	Johnson, Alison	alison.johnson@myfwc.com	23372251 min
70	Harrison, Robert	tunaprowler1@embarqmail.c...	1 min
69	colby, barrett	bcolby3@cfl.rr.com	138 min
64	McCoy, Sherrie	susannemazza@yahoo.com	0 min
62	klostermann, joe	grkjkf@comcast.net	453 min
49	harrison, vicki	hhsfd@gmail.com	75 min
42	Hamer, Caitlin	caitlin.hamer@duke.edu	221 min
39	Hudson, Rusty	dsf2009@aol.com	480 min
39	., fisherynation.c...	bhfisherynation@gmail.com...	3 min
34	Stewart, David	dstewa11@uwyo.edu	469 min
32	Records, David	david.records@noaa.gov	433 min
31	holiman, stephen	stephen.holiman@noaa.gov	343 min
30	Mehta, Nikhil	nikhil.mehta@noaa.gov	456 min
29	grubbs, david	cappedoffcharters@gmail.c...	433 min
29	steele, ian	isteel@tampabaytimesforu...	1 min
27	Young, Erik	eyoung77@uw.edu	62 min
26	gore, karla	karla.gore@noaa.gov	521 min
26	Michie, Kate	kate.michie@noaa.gov	485 min
26	Eich, Anne	annemarie.eich@noaa.gov	509 min
25	Bademan, Martha	martha.bademan@myfwc.com	303 min
25	McCoy, Sherylanne	sherrim@wildoceanmarket.c...	542 min
25	Takade-Heumacher, ...	htakade@edf.org	379 min
24	blough, heather	heather.blough@noaa.gov	498 min
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24	cox, jack	dayboat1965@gmail.com	216 min
23	Vara, Mary	mary.vara@noaa.gov	583 min
23	DeVictor, Rick	rick.devictor@noaa.gov	526 min
23	Baker, Scott	bakers@uncw.edu	368 min

22	Bresnen, Anthony	anthony.bresnen@myfwc.com ...	489 min
22	Sedberry, George	george.sedberry@noaa.gov	113 min
21	sandorf, scott	scott.sandorf@noaa.gov	347 min
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21	Latanich, Katie	ca17@duke.edu	203 min
21	ortner, peter	portner@rsmas.miami.edu	252 min
21	Raine, Karen	karen.raine@noaa.gov	422 min
21	Byrd, Julia	julia.byrd@safmc.net	534 min
20	Amick, Steve	steveamicks@aol.com	0 min
20	L, I	captaindrifter@bellsouth.com ...	584 min