

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting Minutes

August 04, 2016

The following constitute verbatim transcript
of the proceedings and the minutes of the
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting.

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CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yakupzack: Good morning. Call to order this August 4, 2016, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting. Will you please join me in the Pledge?

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands. One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Ms. Brogdon, will you please call the roll?

Ms. Brogdon: Bart Yakupzack.

Chairman Yakupzack: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Chad Courville.

Commissioner Courville: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Bill Hogan.

Commissioner Hogan: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Pat Manuel.

Commissioner Manuel: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Bobby Samanie.

Commissioner Samanie: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Jerri Smitko.

Commissioner Smitko: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Al Sunseri.

Commissioner Sunseri: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Mr. Chairman, there are 7 commissioners in attendance. We have

a quorum. Secretary Melancon is also present today.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Agenda Item No. 4: Approval of the July 7, 2016 Commission Meeting Minutes.¹

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman, I looked at them. It looks like it might be missing some of the supporting presentations that were in there so maybe we can pass on these today and consider them at next month's meeting if it would be ok to do that.

Commissioner Manuel: Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question or do I have to wait until next meeting?

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Manuel.

Commissioner Manuel: There's some stuff on that CWD in here, I think, that's backwards. I wasn't here at the meeting but I listened and watched y'all. I got some questions. Should I just wait until your presentation, John?

Chairman Yakupzack: On that issue?

Commissioner Manuel: Yeah.

Chairman Yakupzack: I think that would be appropriate. We'll ask Ms. Brogdon to check those minutes on that matter before they're called for approval in September.

Commissioner Manuel: Ok.

¹ Attached hereto and made a part hereof for reference and for all other purposes as Exhibit 1

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Chairman Yakupzack: If that's the pleasure of this Commission? So, we'll take action. We have a motion by Commissioner Courville to pass the minutes for consideration in September upon completion. And a second by Captain Samani. Any public comment? All those in favor?

All: Yea.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, motion passes. Agenda Item No. 5: Commission Special Announcements and Personal Privilege. I'd like to turn the floor over to Secretary Melancon to introduce a new commissioner.

Secretary Melancon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's an honor. I'd like to extend on behalf of the Wildlife and Fisheries Agency of Louisiana a welcome to Jerri Smitko from Houma, Louisiana. Jerri is an attorney and the owner of Smitko Law, APLC in Houma. She is a graduate of Nichols University and Tulane Law School. She has one son, Maxwell. Among the many positions held since graduating Tulane Law in 1986, Ms. Smitko is Chair of the Louisiana Indigent Defense Assistance Board from 2006 to 2009, was on the Board of Directors for the Terrebonne Parish Indigent Defenders

Office from 2000 to 2006 and on the Board of Commissioners for the Terrebonne General Hospital Service District No. 1 from 1997 to 2009. Ms. Smitko has been a commercial fisherman for over ten years and owns her own shrimp boat. She was also special legal counsel to Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government from 1992 to 1998, Assistant Parish Attorney for the same body from 1988 to 1992. Ms. Smitko is a member of the American Bar Association, Louisiana and Terrebonne Parish Bar Associations, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. She served in the Louisiana Army National Guard, in the U.S. Army Reserves until her honorable discharge in 1985. Welcome aboard, Ms. Smitko.

Commissioner Smitko: Thank you.

Secretary Melancon: Mr. Chairman, I don't have my Agenda. Do we have anything about The Conservationist on the Agenda?

Chairman Yakupzack: No.

Secretary Melancon: Alright. This will be another portion. I would like to announce today to the Commission and to the people of the State of Louisiana that we at the agency have made a conscience decision that it was time for The Louisiana Conservationist to return

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to the people of the State. Those of you that are my age and some younger and older will remember this great magazine and the contents of such. It not only promotes the things that we as an agency do, but it promotes the industries that we oversee and it allows for, will allow for, people, biologists, people that are doctors and masters that need to publish in a place that possibly help them and to share the information better or as much as possible with the people of the state of Louisiana. This will be passed around for you to take a look. This is the cover that is proposed and I'd like to thank the technical staff that is here at the Department for the great job and work that they are doing to help us get this thing off the ground. I'm excited about it. I grew up reading The Conservationist from front to back as a kid. Some of the stuff that the scientists put I didn't understand, but that's ok. I knew it was something in times I gleaned information where I may not have fully understood. I'm excited about it. I have yet to talk to anybody that was familiar with The Conservationist that wasn't excited or isn't excited about it. We're going to try. Our plans for The Conservationist are to print 5,000 copies, get those out to

the public libraries and the schools in the state for starters. Then we'll work on circulation and making sure that people of the state of Louisiana, the licensed hunters, the sportsmen, whoever get their Louisiana Conservationist. So with that, gentlemen, I hope that as members of the Commission at this time in history that this would be one of the things that you will be remembered for doing, for resurrecting, bringing back something that's an icon. Not only within the state but outside of the state of Louisiana.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Manuel

Commissioner Manuel: Do we need a motion to approve that? Because I think it's a good idea. I've been hearing it quite a bit.

Chairman Yakupzack: If you would like to do a motion that says

Commissioner Manuel: We could do a resolution. Whereas, we support bringing back The Louisiana Conservationist magazine. I move.

Chairman Yakupzack: A motion by Commissioner Manuel to issue a Resolution of support of this Department and working towards bringing back The Louisiana Conservationist publication. Do I have a second?

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Commissioner Hogan: Second.

Chairman Yakupzack: Second by
Commissioner Hogan. Any public
comment? All those in favor?

All: Yea.

Ms. Brogdon: {Audio Inaudible}

Chairman Yakupzack: I believe we will. I
mean, it'd be silly of us not to ask the
Chief his way.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing
no opposition, motion carries. Secretary
Melancon, do you have additional items
for personal privilege?

Secretary Melancon: Yes, sir, Mr.
Chairman. Thank you so much. I
would like to say I made clear in the
first statement this Department issued
relative to management of red snapper,
to remind those who have had the
opportunity to review the statement and
read in part. The Department's goal is to
begin a collaborative dialogue with our
State and Federal partners, to find a
durable solution to these issues
concerning management of the red
snapper resources for the public
good. Concurrently I'd directed the
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries staff to develop a
comprehensive plan to test how we can
use new technology and the best
available science to provide our anglers

with more access to red snapper. In
addition, as I've stated before, the
Department is already working through
the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
Management Council to set up a new
management system for our private
anglers, one that will give Louisiana the
power to manage our fishery as we see
best. Once this plan is fully developed,
I plan on hosting a meeting which
involves all interested stake holders to
discuss in proprietary input on the items
included in this plan. Again, my hope is
for these stake holders to reach some
sort of compromised position, that we
can all go forward together with and
finally bring to an end this long and
protracted fight. I also ask for the
Commission's support and cooperation
with this undertaking, as well. Finally, I
encourage all Commission members to
attend the meeting of the Gulf Council
so that you may have a better
understanding of that
process. Fortunately the next Gulf
Council meeting will be held in New
Orleans August 15 - 18 at the Astor
Crowne Plaza Hotel. As soon as a
specific agenda is published, I will pass
it along to you. While I understand your
schedules may not allow to attend the
entire time, my experience is that

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Wednesday and Thursday are the most substantive days where the public comment is allowed and the policy issues are thoroughly discussed. Should any of you need accommodations in New Orleans to attend the Council Meeting, please contact Amy in my office and the Department will take care of this for you. Again I would like to thank the Chairman for this opportunity to address you this morning and I look forward to working with the Commission going forward on all issues that affect this Department. The red snapper issue is obviously a very contentious and complex issue. I want to begin by reminding everyone how blessed we are to have such incredible natural resource. It is our duty to protect that resource for the next generation. Along with the private recreational fishery that has a significant economic impact on the state, we are also fortunate to have a multi-million dollar restaurant industry where world class seafood is served every day, thanks to our hard working commercial fisherman. Finally we are blessed to have a charter for hire fleet in Louisiana who provide an invaluable opportunity for those who otherwise lack the financial resources to enjoy the benefits

of our natural resource. While the regional management system may be working for the commercial and charter for hire sector, it is badly failing our private recreational fisherman. A 9 day federal season is punitive and unacceptable. I think the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries can do better, contrary to inaccurate assertions made by some in the media. Let me be clear. I am and I will remain in favor of state management of the private recreational fishery. This is why we are currently moving forward at the Gulf Council to provide state management for the private recreational fishery. As I mentioned earlier, this is an extremely complex issue and with the number of technical and procedural questions from members from this Commission, it is my intent to set up an educational symposium for the Commission members and bring in those individuals who know the most about the issues and hold a one or two day educational symposium on red snapper management. This would be extremely beneficial to all members of the Commission. Not just the new members. While we do hold a new Commission member orientation to discuss the business operations of the

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- Department and the Commission, I believe we need a more focused educational symposium on red snapper specific. I ask the Commission's support and cooperation towards this endeavor. With that, Mr. Chairman, I'm finished.
- Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Secretary Melancon. Any additional personal privilege or special announcements by Commissioners?
- Commissioner Manuel: Mr. Chairman?
- Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Manuel.
- Commissioner Manuel: I got a question. I get emails directly to me from a guy, Toby Gascon. Is that how you say it?
- Secretary Melancon: Yeah.
- Commissioner Manuel: What's the deal? Give me the background. Is he Special Assistant to the Secretary or is he an Assistant Secretary?
- Secretary Melancon: Toby is a Special Assistant to me. I brought Toby in when the auditors and the Inspector General showed up because of the demands for information that were going to need to be provided as we went through the process of the, not the internal, but the external audits that were going on. The audits are finished but there's some other items that the Inspector General is pursuing. Toby's charge when he first got here was to do that.
- Commissioner Manuel: But he will continue on?
- Secretary Melancon: Yes, sir.
- Commissioner Manuel: I've never met him. I don't know if any other members of the Commission have. I'd like to see who he is at some point.
- Secretary Melancon: Toby, would you stand up? I assume he's in here. He went upstairs? Ok.
- Commissioner Manuel: Ok. Good deal. I'd just like to know who he is.
- Secretary Melancon: Toby works, my first experience - there's Toby. Toby, Mr. Manuel says -
- Commissioner Manuel: There's the ghost.
- Secretary Melancon: I want to introduce y'all. This is Toby Gascon.
- Commissioner Manuel: Alright. We know him now.
- Secretary Melancon: I was a State Representative from District 60 which included Iberville, West Baton Rouge and Assumption Parishes and a portion of Ascension Parish back in the 80's. I got to know Toby's father back in those days and his brother and his family. Toby then became, for me more with the sugar industry as Toby worked on fishery issues, we worked on fishery

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issues for Congressman Billy Tauzin during the tenure when he was a Democrat and a Republican. Toby worked in the fisheries industry for several years, working for the Menhaden Industry. Then the last several years working as an assistant to Senator Norby Chabert in the State Senate.

Commissioner Manuel: I was just trying to find out. I hadn't met him then I see emails. He sends us emails. I thought he was a ghost. But I understand he's not a ghost now.

Secretary Melancon: That was my alias, Mr. Manuel.

Commissioner Manuel: That's it for me.

Chairman Yakupzack: Ok. Any other Commission Special Announcements, Personal Privilege? Thank you. Moving on. Agenda Item No. 6: To Hear Enforcement Reports for July, 2016. Captain Skena. Welcome.

Captain Skena: Morning, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Commission. For the month of July, we had 27 boating incidents, 22 with injury, 5 fatalities. A case report, we had 879 written citations, 520 written warnings and 27 public assists. Inside your folder there are several news releases for some noteworthy cases that were made last

month. Here are a synopsis of those cases. Enforcement agents received a complaint about closed season shrimping near Caillou Boca in Terrebonne Parish. Agents responded and cited two subjects for using skimmer nets during the closed season. 1,713 pounds of shrimp were seized and sold at the dock. While escorting the vessel and the subjects back to the dock, the agents observed another vessel without navigation lights. When the agents made contact with this vessel, they observed three subjects with what appeared to be stolen items. The items were verified as stolen through the Terrebonne Parish Sheriff's Office and the subjects were arrested. Additionally the operator was cited for several boating safety violations as well as outstanding warrants. Two St. Bernard Parish residents were cited for taking oysters from a polluted area, unlawfully taking oysters off of a private lease and failing to have written permission. One of the subjects was also cited for a log book violation. Agents were responding to complaints about fisherman taking oysters in polluted areas in several locations around St. Bernard Parish when they observed the subjects actively dredging for oysters in a polluted area.

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The illegally taken oysters were returned to the water. Agents seized the dredge and the vessel was seized on a Department seizure order. If convicted, the subjects could have their oyster harvester license revoked for up to one year, required to perform 40 hours of community service and only allowed to harvest oysters from a vessel equipped with a vessel monitoring device for up to one year. Responding to complaints to illegal shrimping in Bayou Little Caillou in Terrebonne Parish, agents cited 2 subjects for taking commercial fish without a commercial license, failing to comply with bait dealer permit regulations and using skimmers in a closed season. Another subject was cited in connection with this investigation for allowing an unlicensed fisherman to use a vessel license and gear license and failing to comply with bait dealer permit regulations. During the stop the subjects produced a bait dealer permit, commercial gear license and a vessel license belonging to another fisherman. Neither subject was able to provide the required commercial fishing license. Agents found that the subjects were well over the allotted two gallons of dead shrimp allowed to be possessed by a live bait vessel. Agents

seized and sold 628 pounds of shrimp. If convicted, each subject faces 40 hours of community service, criminal fines, possible incarceration, forfeiture of seized assets, one year of license revocation and only allowed to harvest shrimp from a vessel equipment with a vessel monitoring system. This concludes the Enforcement Report, unless there are any questions.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any questions for Captain Skena?

Audience Member: Can I ask a question?

Chairman Yakupzack: Sure. Will you come up and state your name for the minutes, please?

Roxanne Sevin: Roxanne Sevin. I'm the owner of RCP Seafood in Cocodrie and I'm owner of a live bait permit for probably the last 30, 35 years. I've just remembered about the monitoring system. As of three years ago we, I, myself and my brother, has a license and we had to put a monitoring system on the live bait boat to actually catch bait at night. So I'm just wondering if maybe somebody can let me know if there's, what is the law pertaining to the monitoring system. And I know this particular vessel he's talking about didn't have one and they were catching the bait at night.

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Chairman Yakupzack: I see Mr. Martin come up. I'll let him address your question.

Col. Martin: I can answer it.

Chairman Yakupzack: Ok.

Col. Martin: The VMS requirement is still there if you're going to know what's; With a bait permit, if you're going to do it during daytime hours you are not required to have VMS, but anytime you are going to operate at night they still required to have VMS. The vessel that we caught in this particular case, they have gotten with the District Attorney's office and they have added that additional charge for them not having the VMS on that particular vessel.

Roxanne Sevin: Ok. I just wanted to be sure because it's cost us \$3,500 plus the \$60 a month that we pay for it. So I just want to be sure. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Ms. Sevin.

Chairman Yakupzack: Agenda Item No. 7: To Recognize the National Archery and Schools Program National and World Champions, Mr. Robert Strode.

Robert Strode: Thank you Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for allowing me some time this morning. Real quickly, I want to run through a few things. I know we have several new commission members since the last time that I spoke

to many of you about a year ago at this same time. Real quickly for those of you in the public, as well as commission members, that aren't aware we run our Archery in Louisiana Schools Program here, which is a portion of the National Archery in the Schools Program. It's a program that introduces students in grades 4-12 an international target style archery. This is taught as part of their in-school curriculum, which means they are getting it normally, as part of their PE class. So instead of going and playing dodge ball or basketball, they are going in and learning how to shoot target archery as part of their school day. This program has been a great success, not only nationwide, but also here in Louisiana. A big part of its success is that it is safe and fun and our administrators and our parents and our coaches love it because it teaches our students focus and discipline and helps build self-confidence. All those are attributes that we encourage in our youth today. I just want to real quick look at some numbers because although this program is here and pretty prevalent in the state there's a lot of numbers that people don't realize just how big this program is. The national archery in the schools program has 47 states in the

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United States, as well as 8 Canadian Provinces, 4 African Countries, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia and the U.K. are now involved in the Program. So it's even extended beyond the borders of North American to involve several other countries with more coming on board each year. Currently in the U.S., there are over 14,400 schools that are participating in this program, which sounds like a lot of schools but what you don't realize is that is less than 10% of the schools in the U.S. So that's really when you look at the next statistic that tells you about the number of students that we can impact. Currently, this past year 2.4 million students received the archery in the schools program. As a comparison you can see those next two numbers. Last year 2.4 million youth were in Boy Scouts as well as 2.4 million in Little League Baseball, so this program really is on a grand scale. It's not a small program. Currently here in the state of Louisiana, we have 164 of what we consider active schools teaching the program which equates to just about 20,000 students here in the state of Louisiana receiving this curriculum. Each year we are able to provide schools with assistance to get

the program started as funding is often the biggest hurdle. We are able to give out 20 equipment grants each year to these schools who need a little bit of help to get the program there. So far over the past 3 years we've distributed 51 total of these grants which is an estimated \$88,400.00 of equipment that we are assisting these schools to get. The way these grants work is basically we provide half of the equipment and they are required to come up with the money to provide the other half. Therefore the school has a buy-in and we're not just giving them equipment without them having some investment in the program. Couple of photos, these are a couple of schools that received equipment this past year. And there's many more out there like these schools. They range from rural schools with K-12 to schools that are in large urban populations that are elementary, middle school or high school level. In order to run this program in the state, we train what we call basic archery instructors who go through an 8 hour certification. Currently we have 840 certified based archery instructors here in the state of Louisiana, with 120 of those being certified already this year in

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2016. In comparison, last year we certified 169. We'll easily surpass that number this year. Our program is in a state of very strong growth. Last year we were awarded as the top gain in percentage of the number of schools in the U.S. This year we were third in the U.S. behind New Mexico and Iowa in the greatest percentage of growth. Each year the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries hosts 3 tournaments. These are sanctioned NASP tournaments and they allow students to qualify to go to the national and the world tournament. This past year we had 584 participants at our South Regional, that's held in Alexandria, and 510 at our North Regional, that's held in Shreveport. Those statistics show that we are growing in all categories as far as individual participants as well as schools, with a respective of 22 schools at each regional, which is right at what we want. We want an even distribution of those schools. Another thing that we can highlight on this slide is really the gender participation. The great thing about archery and what's so many schools and school administrators like about it is it's not a male sport, it's not a female sport. It's a pretty close divide of both male and female students that are

participating in this program. At our 2016 State Tournament, which was held in Alexandria this past year, we had 822 participants. Again the breakdown of male and female you can see is a little bit more segregated towards the males but it's pretty close there in the center, and we had 37 schools attend that tournament. This year was our first year we added a 3-D element to the State Tournament, which was a big deal. This is getting kids that had just been shooting at bulls-eye targets in their PE classes, now they are shooting at 3-D animal targets. This is a secondary portion of the NASP Program that was introduced by IBO, International Bow-hunters Organization. We think it's a great way to help students make that transition from target archery to getting out there and hopefully either becoming 3-D shooters or, more than likely a lot of them transitioning in to bow-hunting or hunting in general. Two hundred eighty-one of those same participants that participated in the bulls eye shot in our 3-D, and this is just a photo of how that 3-D tournament so you can see that they're shooting realistic 3-D animal targets. It is still indoors and it uses all the same protocols for safety as the bulls eye portion does. Since inception of this

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program we've been working to build the ability to give away scholarships to these great young athletes who are participating. This year we were able to bump that scholarship level. This year at state tournament we gave away \$17,500.00 of scholarships and some of those scholarship recipients are going to be here today and we'll be introducing them. The top 3 male and female shooters in bulls-eye each received a scholarship. These are cash scholarships that are donated by sponsors of the program. These are outside organizations that see the benefit of what this program does for our youth and they're donating those funds to give back to the students. We also gave away \$2,500.00 on the 3-D side which was great to be able to do the first 3-D tournament and already be giving away scholarship money. Both the top male and female each received the \$1,250.00 scholarship. Here is some of our scholarship winners. Again some of those you're going to see here in person today. And some additional award winners from our State Tournament. After completing the State Tournament, teams and individuals can qualify to then move on to the National Tournament. The NASP National

Tournament is held each May in Louisville, Kentucky. That tournament the participation there also has continued to grow. This year at the National Tournament there was nearly 13,000 students who participated. Those students came from 41 states, as well as the District of Columbia. They also host the 3-D tournament there with just under 3,500 students participating there. We sent a strong contingent from here in Louisiana to National Tournament. One hundred ninety-eight of our students from 14 different schools in Louisiana took students to the National Tournament. One hundred ten of those also chose to participate in the 3-D. After competing in Nationals, students who qualify high enough may continue on to the World Tournament. This year the World Tournament was held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Not a bad vacation, either. We had 4135 as far as participation for the bulls-eye tournament at NASP and 1120 in 3-D. Of those 103 participants from Louisiana participated from 6 schools and 75 in the 3-D from 5 different schools. So what we're seeing is Louisiana although our program is much

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smaller than a lot of states in the Program, especially those surrounding us, we travel well. And there's a reason we travel well, we shoot well. These are some photos from the National Tournament of some hardware that our students brought home. I get a lot of questions we just had our coordinators conference last week and I get a lot of questions "What are they doing down there in Louisiana? What's in the water? What makes those kids so good down there?" And those are all questions that I can't answer. Those are questions for the coaches and for the kids. But I can tell you that these students are very dedicated for what they are doing. They take a lot of time, a lot of time that a lot of other kids are spending playing video games or hanging out with their friends or texting or playing Pokemon Go. And they are out there with a bow and arrow, honing their skills. We not only have teams that are placing at our National Tournaments, but we also have individuals that are scoring very high. Our National Tournament, Benton Middle School were National Champions in the Bulls-Eye. This is the first time that we've ever had a National Champion from the State of

Louisiana. We've had World Champions before but this is the first time for Nationals. Benton Elementary brought home a National Championship in the 3-D Element. We also had two individual award winners at the National Tournament, Madeline Lowry and Eden Old. They placed second and third place, respectively, in the Elementary Division of 3-D. Worlds Tournament, we brought home even more hardware. And I say we as them. We've got Benton Middle School who are the World Champions in Bulls-Eye and 3-D, in both categories they were World Champions in the Middle School Division. Second Place, Benton Elementary in 3-D and Third Place, Kingston Elementary. Which is pretty amazing this is their first year in the Program and they're already bringing home awards at the World Tournament. We also had 4 individuals that received awards, individual awards at the World Tournament. Miss Emma Bunch is the World Champion Middle School at 3-D. Kaitlyn Misenheimer, Third Place Middle School 3-D. Aidan Haire, Third Place Middle School 3-D, and Kennedy Halsel from Kingston Elementary, Fourth Place in Elementary for 3-D. So out of those kids that we're

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sending we see that they're bringing home a good chunk of that hardware. I got some more photos to drive that point home. I want to take some time, we've got some of those students and their coaches here today. I'd like to bring them up and give them the recognition that they deserve. Like I said, they spend a lot of time when a lot of other kids aren't worried about being disciplined and being focused. And this is just a small portion today of this 20,000 students here in Louisiana that are getting the benefits of archery through this program. We really want to make sure that they are able to continue their growth, not only as archers but as the youth of our next generation. That they can continue to develop these skills and work on those. If I could, I'd ask these individuals to come up if they are present here. Miss Madeline Lowry, she is here. And Eden Old. Miss Eden. We got each of the students receiving a cup that has laser engraved the year of their accomplishment and what their accomplishment was. As you can see, she's got a stack of medals on. These kids have so many awards, so many trophies and so many medals that we wanted to give them something that they can use every day. So we hope that

they'll take this with them and have it as a reminder of their accomplishments. So we just wanted to say congratulations.

{Applause}

Miss Emma Bunch, I don't think she's present today. Aidan Haire. Kaitlyn Misenheimer. Is Miss Kennedy here?

{Mr. Strode continues to call up students and hand out laser engraved cups}

At this time I also want to recognize Benton Elementary as a team, as well as Benton Middle School. All of you that are here today, if you'll all come up. We want to recognize those participants as a team. Come on up. Each of these schools will receive, as well as this banner they can hang in their gymnasium, a pretty long list of accomplishments on that banner, they also will receive a target that they can use to help grow their program in their school.

{Applause}

Chairman Yakupzack: Excuse me,

Robert. Before you all take your goods and sit back down, since this is probably one of the larger groups to come up, can we get everybody to come up and I'll ask Secretary Melancon, if you'll come up. And the Commission if you don't mind. Let's take a minute and all

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surround these wonderful kids and document this incredible program and take a picture. If we can turn the lights back on.

{All Commission Members, Secretary Melancon, Students and Members of National Archery Schools Program gather at the front of the conference room for a group photo}

Robert Strode: And of course, it wouldn't be a complete presentation if I hadn't forgot someone. I skipped over Miss Abbie Rutledge, if she'd come up. She placed Fourth Middle School Girls at World.

{Applause}

Just in closing, I again want to thank the Commission for allowing me some time. I really do think that this program and what it's doing for our youth is really a great thing and I hope it continues to grow. We are adding new schools all the time and I really want to ask anybody, members of the public, members of the Commission, employees of Wildlife and Fisheries, if you know of a school or you have children or grandchildren, nieces and nephews who you think that this program would be really good for them, please reach out to us and we will reach out to their school. We would love to see that every school in the state of Louisiana have this program because some of the stories that

these coaches and these parents could tell you about what this program has done for their students, they'll make the hair on the back of your neck stand up, give you goose bumps and sometimes bring you to tears. This program really is something that I feel like we can do not only to help us here as sportsmen, as a wildlife agency, but also just as a society that we can give our students this opportunity to develop these life skills, that confidence, that focus that's really gonna help them for the rest of their lives and throughout their careers and their futures, whatever they go on to do. Last thing, we've got some tournament dates up there. All of our tournaments are open to the public. We would love to have any of you there, whether you have students shooting or if you'd just like to see it. We'll have two Regionals and our State Tournament again here in Louisiana as well as the National and World Tournament. Louisville, Kentucky and Orlando, Florida. We have some brochures on the back table, contact information on the back. Please do not hesitate to contact us. Again, thank you Commissioners. Mr. Chairman and the Commission.

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Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Robert. I'll take a second on behalf of the Commission to commend you, the rest of your team and especially the administration for continued support of this wonderful program. Congratulations to you, as well and again to all of you here today. Agenda Item No. 8: To Consider a Declaration of Emergency Setting the 2016 Fall Inshore Shrimp Season. Mr. Jeff Marx.²

Jeff Marx: Thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners for a little bit of your time this morning. What we have for you this morning is to consider the dates for setting the fall shrimp season. So basically the Declaration that you have in front of you will set the opening date for the fall inshore shrimp season. It also gives the authority to the Secretary to delay or advance openings dates if biological or technical data indicate the need to do so. It also allows closure of inside waters to protect small white shrimp if enforcement problems develop. And it also gives the Secretary the authority to open any area, re-open any closed area and to open and close any special shrimp seasons that may be

necessary. Just a little background, this is the 2015 shrimp landings. You can see, we are in August. The majority of harvest of shrimp from August to the end of the year is primarily white shrimp. This is just a breakdown of our estuary basins, basically, and we have offices located in many of these places that go take samples basically throughout all of this. And just a big thanks to those guys. They go out and get the samples for us. It's an important job and it does not go unappreciated. The landings by basin, if you are working from west to east, there's Calcasieu, Vermilion, Atchafalaya have some small landings of white shrimp. The main bulk of landings are in Terrebonne and Barataria Basins. There's a little bit of landings there in Mississippi and Pontchartrain, as well. This is just a state wide glance at all the sample shrimp that were taken and measured through July 25th through the 28th, that's when samples were taken. So last week. The two highlighted areas of course is a 50 count highlight there and there is a basically a hundred count shrimp highlight. So you can see there is a good many that are below, but what we are going to do is breakdown each basin that goes towards

² Attached hereto and made a part hereof for reference and for all other purposes as Exhibit 2

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this statewide graph and I'm going to break it down by basin and sort of show you where some of these cross over dates are. If you look at the bottom so the top graph is in the Pontchartrain Basin, that is all the shrimp that were sampled in that basin, you can see the distribution of shrimp there. That's in count per pound. The bottom slide basically shows you the percentage of the, there's two lines. There's a hundred count line. That's tracking the percentage of shrimp that are bigger than a hundred count. According to these samples taken last week so we know how fast shrimp go so we project it, we walk them forward that growth and then we can see basically when they crossed. The green line is a 50 percent, that's where 50 percent is. The red line is a 50 count shrimp, ok. So we went to the Shrimp Task Force, their last meeting in July. We requested some input from them on what they would like to see. Generally we use a hundred count during the spring season. We also use it in the fall because any shrimp, white shrimp under a hundred count are illegal to possess basically. If your count is under a hundred, smaller than a hundred count as a whole, with mostly white shrimp you are not allowed to

harvest those. So basically we are looking at Pontchartrain. As of Monday, they had 50 percent of their shrimp were larger than one hundred count. So that means half of them. That doesn't mean they are averaging a hundred count. That just means that half of them are bigger than a hundred count. If we look at the red line, that's when we project that 50 percent will be over 50 count, or bigger than 50 count, would be in the middle of the week of August the 15th, which would be 2 weeks from, a week and a half from now. So you're looking at the 50 count line would be August the 16th or 17th. Half of their shrimp will be bigger than 50 count. Moving on to Barataria. You can see Barataria as of August 1st, walking these graphs forward that their distribution of shrimp is a little bit toward the bigger side. The good thing that you do like to see, if you look to the left of the graph on top is some small ones, that means that we have recruitment. You are gonna have these waves of recruitment throughout the fall til you start getting some hard cold fronts that sort of halt that. But you can see the bottom graph, they are already at 75 percent or so above a hundred count. Their 50 count line,

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their red line, they would be crossing it probably today. That's again walking those shrimp forward. We're talking August the 4th or 5th when their 50 percent will be larger than 50 count. Terrebonne, same thing. We see a little recruitment there at the back but mainly they're already above the hundred count line. They're 70 percent larger than a hundred count. We're right now, as of Monday the first, only 20 percent were above 50 count. But you can see if we're walking those shrimp forward you're getting basically a cross-over, when they cross-over that 50 count line will be August the 9th or 10th probably when they would cross the 50 count, 50 percent larger than 50 count. Now we have a little, some water quality issues, things like that. A lot of rain over towards the west. Vermilion has a big number of small shrimp, you can see through that graph, a big large. They have a few shrimp that are getting up in size but not a whole lot. They're currently, as of Monday, at 30 percent over a hundred count. So they're still small. They cross over about the 19th of August, for a hundred count. You can look at the 50 count. If you use the 50 count for them, may not be until September if you wait that

long. Same thing for Calcasieu. Big numbers of smaller shrimp. They don't cross over until actually the 27th. So 50 percent of their shrimp will be bigger than a hundred count on the 22nd. Now that doesn't mean there aren't any big ones. You can see that graph and do it towards the right, they do have some that are 26/30, 21/25. But the majority are smaller, new recruits. We always like to have this graph to look at, as far as when the tidal cycle falls. The middle of the tidal cycle before the full moon is the 15th. That would be not next Monday but the next, and the 22nd is in between tidal cycles. Now looking at the blue graphs and sort of putting it into a percentage number. Looking at these graphs by basin. If you look at the Calcasieu Basin as of when these samples were taken, only 38 percent were larger than a hundred count. In Calcasieu, 9 percent were bigger than 50 count. So you're talking about a pretty small shrimp. That's last week numbers, correct. Vermilion, same thing. 31 percent were larger than a hundred count and 4 percent were above 50 count. Those are illegal. You can't possess those shrimp. If you were to take your trawl at that time, you'd be illegal. You'd have a possible

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citation. In the Terrebonne Bay system, 71 percent are above a hundred count and 21 percent are above 50 count. So that was up, that was as of last week when the samples were taken. Same thing with Barataria, 76 percent larger than a hundred count, 42 percent larger than a 50 count. And then lastly Pontchartrain, 53 percent were above a hundred count, so they just made the criteria, and 17 percent were above, larger than 50 count. So taking all of that in to consideration the recommendation from us would be to open the eastern part of the state, so from the Louisiana - Mississippi line, westward to the Atchafalaya River on August 15th at 6:00 pm. Then we would open the western part of the state from the Atchafalaya River westward to the Louisiana - Texas line on August 22nd, the following Monday, at 6:00 am. With that, I'll take any questions that you might have.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any questions from Commissioners for Mr. Marx? Ok.

Commissioner Samanie: Do you want to hear public comments then we make motions?

Chairman Yakupzack: Absolutely. I was about to go there. As it's become custom on issues like the setting of shrimp season

we like to hear from the public before a motion is made. So at the request of Captain Samanie, we will hear from the public at this time. I have a few comment cards of folks that would like to speak. It's not an overwhelming amount. So we'll limit the time. We'll shoot for about 4 or 5 minutes each, if necessary. I'd like to ask you all to focus your comments on this agenda item and on the dates and how you feel about setting the dates. Keep your comments focused on that at the pleasure of the Commission. First up to speak is Mr. Barry Rogers of Terrebonne Parish. Mr. Rogers, come up. State your name and address.

Barry Rogers: Barry Rogers from Terrebonne Parish. 223 Wimberly Way, Houma, Louisiana. We totally agree with what Jeff says on the dates and times. Totally think it's the appropriate thing to do right now. I'd like to first, forgot, tell Mr. Melancon, good morning. Commission members, good morning. Sorry about that. Totally agree on it. Think it's the appropriate thing at this time and date and what's going on right now. Totally agree on it. Give thanks to Jeff and his crew for what they do for us. Thank you.

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Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Rogers. Mr. David Chauvin.

David Chauvin: Good morning. My name is David Chauvin. I live at 5248 Briarside Drive and I own and operate a shrimp company in Dulac, Louisiana. A lot of fisherman wanted to be here this morning. Some of them are out on the water, a lot of them were getting ready to get back out on the water. But myself and a lot of fishermen from my area would fully support Mr. Jeff Marx's recommendations. I think it's an appropriate date and we thank you for his time and his effort that he put forth in preparing his presentation. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Chauvin. Mr. Al Marmande.

Al Marmande: Al Marmande. 840 Vice Road, Houma, Louisiana. I'm here to thank Mr. Secretary Melancon for letting us know in a more timely fashion when they are going to open and close shrimp season. As a processor I feel that it's important that we know this, and shrimpers, so we can prepare our boats, have ice, fuel, get everything ready. Get our ducks in a row. Also would like to congratulate Ms. Smitko for her appointment. Once again I'd like to thank the Secretary. I know he loves

Louisiana as much as me, and we want to keep Louisiana number one. I thank you, Charlie. Thank y'all.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr.

Marmande. Mr. Craig Authemente.

Commissioner Manuel: Mr. Chairman, does that fellow shrimp in those clothes?

Craig Authemente: Craig Authemente. 105 Pecan Court, Houma. Owner of {Audio Inaudible} Shrimp Dock in Cocadrie. I go with Mr. Jeff's recommendation also. Especially with the 6:00 pm on the 15th and I think it's good.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Authemente. Does anybody else wish to make public comment on this item who has not filled out a white card? Hearing the public comment, any further question or discussion from the Commission? Commissioner Samanie.

Commissioner Samanie: Thank you. Several fishermen have called me about the 6:00 pm opening. I'd like to get the views from some of the people in the audience, how they feel towards a 6:00 pm versus a 6:00 am. Which would y'all rather? Some of the fishermen?

Acy Cooper: Acy Cooper, President of the Louisiana Shrimpers Association. When it opens in the morning like that, white shrimp are mostly a night time shrimp anyway. So

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when you open in the morning we got a lot of disturbance. At night time coming, you got muddy water and it's just not right. Brown shrimp is ok but white shrimp, we definitely need the 6:00 pm.

Commissioner Samanie: Ok.

Acy Cooper: Take in to consideration that and we do want it at 6:00 pm.

Commissioner Samanie: Ok. I just wanted to double check. I had gotten a few phone calls. Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to make a motion that we file a recommendation to the Department based on biology.

Commissioner Courville: Second.

Chairman Yakupzack: We have a motion from Commissioner Samanie to accept the recommendations of Mr. Marx and the Department to open the shrimp season on August 15th from the Mississippi - Louisiana state line westward to the Atchafalaya River at 6:00 pm and opening from the Atchafalaya River westward to the Louisiana - Texas state line on August 22nd at 6:00 am. We've heard public comment. If no other discussion or question, all those in favor.

All: Yea.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, motion carries.

Jeff Marx: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: Jeff, I wanted to thank you for the time you spent with me this week.

Jeff Marx: You're welcome.

Commissioner Courville: You're helping me gain a better understanding of this. Job well done.

Jeff Marx: Thank you. And that goes out to anybody. If any of you Commissioners needs to discuss shrimp, give me a call. I'll be glad to talk to you. If you've got questions. You probably won't have as many as Chad. Chad likes to ask questions. But that's good and it helps us get everybody on the same page. Thank you.

Commissioner Courville: Pretty good chance I'm not going to be changing either.

Joe Macaluso: In our handout today, the Declaration or Emergency lists the western portion as one half hour before.

Jeff Marx: This a draft. That's a draft.

Joe Macaluso: So this would be 6:00 am?

Jeff Marx: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Manuel: You're supposed to say who you are and your address.

Chairman Yakupzack: Agenda Item No. 9: To Hear Presentation on Cervid Carcass Importation Ban Notice and Summary

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of Public Comments Received on the Cervid Carcass Importation Notice of Intent. Biologist, Johnathan Bordelon.³

Johnathan Bordelon: Good morning Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. I'm going to give you an update today. Basically on the comments that we've received up to this point. Also going to talk a little bit about what other states are doing. In addition to that talk about some of the things already done as far as preventative measures. First we'll talk about Carcass Importation Bans. There are currently 37 bans in the United States. Also 2 Canadian Provinces. All the states list certain exceptions. Basically those exceptions, for the most part, include de-boned meat, antlers, quarters not containing back bone and connective tissues, clean skull plates with antlers, clean skulls with tissue attached, capes, tanned hides, finished taxidermy mounts and cleaned cervid teeth. And that's basically if you look at all of them, they are basically going to include this language as an exception. This is where there is a few differences. One difference is 7 of the 37 states basically have a total ban. They do not allow

parts, except part exempted, to enter their state regardless of source. So 7 out of the 37, it doesn't really matter where the deer is coming from, it's prohibited. It has to be this specific parts listed. The other 30 states out of the 37 basically have a prohibition that prevents the importation of deer from CWD Positive States. And the question would be "Well how many states are CWD Positive?" And the answer right now is 24. So we are looking at 24 states across the country. Of course 2 of our neighboring states, Arkansas and Texas, are on that list of 22. I've received comments and I've tried to copy you with those comments as I receive them just so you have the opportunity to at least look through them as we get them rather than trying to go through them all at once. Basically I've received as 3 comments for support, 1 phone, 2 email. Also have received support from Louisiana Bow Hunters Association and the Louisiana Chapter of the Quality Deer Management Association. Received a few neutral comments. Basically neutral comments, it is just that. Someone asking me basic question about the regulation for clarification and understanding. Not

³ Attached hereto and made a part hereof for reference and for all other purposes as Exhibit 3

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really pro or against, they just had specific questions. But the majority, in this case, were actually negative. We had 33 total comments received up to today. Obviously that may not be reflected in your packets because I basically updated the list through today while I provided the information a few days ago. Thirty emails, one. So email is the primary mode of commenting. Primary complaints involve possession requirements to other states. Reciprocal properties located within two states. Difficulty in taxidermy requirements. Concerns regarding the effectiveness of this regulation. And inconvenience. So those are the primary concerns. Answers to some of the primary concerns, one of the most important questions to ask is this really a threat? Is this cervid carcass being imported in to Louisiana, put out on the landscape, is it a threat? Can that lead to CWD transmission in our state? That's a very important question because if we couldn't answer that question then it really would be difficult to even propose something like this. But what we've learned and what we knew about CWD for some time now is that it can be transmitted that

way. And even in 1985, the Colorado Division of Wildlife attempted to eliminate CWD from a research facility by treating the soil and removal of that treated soil and that's just surface material. Restocking occurred after one year only to have the animals re-infected. Now there could be some that say well possibly those animals that were introduced could have possibly been exposed prior to, but what they've done beyond that is they've actually taken prions from soil particles at burial sites and basically inoculate animals with those and those animals do come down with CWD in laboratory settings. The answer is yes. Those prions are shed in to the environment, they are binding to soil particles, they are there, they persist, they are not going to break down in the environment. It's just a matter of an animal coming along, feeding along the ground and what we've learned in 2015 is something much scarier. There is actually transfer of prions through plant material. University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston have actually infected animals in a laboratory setting by feeding them contaminated wheat. That's the wheat grass, basically. The soil was contaminated,

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wheat was growing on the soil, animals were eating the plants clippings and they became CWD Positive. So we do realize just how dangerous and the threat that we are dealing with. So that is the first major question that we had to answer and there is many more case studies beyond the ones I'm presenting to support what I'm presenting here today. What are acceptable disposal practices? We talked about these. First being incineration. Obviously that's not going to be a practical application to a hunter or a taxidermist, a meat processor. That's something we would do as an agency. We have a suspect animal that we are testing. The first thing we do after the test, samples are secured, is we are going to get that animal incinerated. That will destroy the prions. I'm not talking about cooking. The temperatures that have to be reached are actually much higher than conventional cooking temperatures. The temperatures that we can reach through incineration will actually turn the animal in to ash. That is sufficient and has been documented as a way of killing or destroying the prion. Field dressing and cervid carcass parts left at the site of the harvest, obviously that's the best case because

you're not taking any infected material from the site of which the animal lived. And the third one of which is listed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its disposal of cervid carcass parts in an approved line landfill. So those are basically, those are the tools at play across the country when you're talking about dealing or destroying CWD. And the scary thing about it, even talking about destroying something, this is something that's not a lot but infectious. So it's very, very hard to understand that principle. But, because of that, that's why the threat from this is so great. Yes, sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: Is it ok if we ask questions?

Johnathan Bordelon: Sure.

Commissioner Courville: My question is what is approved line landfill look like? How do you know the difference?

Johnathan Bordelon: Basically, it's a -

Commissioner Courville: How do I know the difference if I'm trying to dispose of an out of state carcass?

Johnathan Bordelon: That's a great question. Rather than using an approved line landfill, often they refer to a Type 2 Landfill. Then ask the same question,

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what's a Type 2 Landfill? I'm just going to give you a simple answer here. It's basically the landfills that accepts the household waste. So your waste management companies that pick up household waste and distribute or bring it and put it in an approved landfill. That is the approved landfill that they are talking about. So someone wouldn't be able to designate their own dump or landfill or construct something itself. It would have to be something used in that capacity. And those landfills basically are the ones that are approved.

Commissioner Courville: Ok. And just a quick follow up. I know it's for informational purposes but at some point, assuming this were to move forward and if this is going to be considered, can we get a sense of cost for if I'm a taxidermist what that might cost if I have to do something separate and above normal household garbage collection?

Johnathan Bordelon: As far as the additional cost for, there are currently taxidermist that are utilizing dumpsters to remove that waste. Obviously some of the larger taxidermists that are in urban areas obviously don't have the benefit of dumping it behind the shop or in a wooded area nearby. They're already having to have a mechanism for

disposal. So that is currently going on with some. The percentage is unknown. I'll talk a little bit about CWD preventative measures in Louisiana. We've gone over this before but for some of you that may have missed or have joined the Commission since the original presentation, a live cervid transport is currently prohibited. So live deer cannot legally be brought in to Louisiana. Our agency put this in place in 1998. The Louisiana Department of Ag and Forestry followed this prohibition with a moratorium in 2012. Obviously they regulate the captive cervid industry in Louisiana. So live animals cannot be brought in. Continued testing of high risk or target animals. So we're looking for high risk animals. These are animals near or adjacent or inside of pens. Animals are neurologic and roadkill animals. We are considering those as target animals. Since its inception of testing we've tested 7,870 animals up to this point. So we've tested quite a few animals without discovering any positives, fortunately. Obviously proper disposal and handling of cervid parts preventing infection or spread of the disease, that's through education. Proposed cervid carcass

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importation regulations aimed at preventing infectious materials from entering the environment, and that's the process that we are in now. We are basically proposing an added step of prevention and protection for our state. And obviously continued education regarding the risk of CWD. And that's really the key there is education of both hunters industry, agency to make sure that we are all on board, doing the things necessary to prevent the disease from entering our state. I have just a slide here of just the regulation. I'll leave it up. Basically no person shall import, transport or possess any cervid carcass or part of a cervid carcass part originating outside of Louisiana, with the following exceptions, de-boned meat, antlers, cleaned skull plates with antlers, cleaned skulls without tissue attached, capes, tanned hides, finished taxidermy products, and cleaned cervid teeth. Approved parts are de-boned meats transported from other states, must be legally possessed from the state in which it was taken. Approved parts and de-boned meats from other states must contain a possession tag with the hunter's name, out of state license number, address, species, date and

location of harvest. All cervids transported in to or through Louisiana in violation of the provisions of this ban shall be seized and disposed of in accordance of Wildlife and Fisheries rules and regulations. I'd be happy to take any questions. Yes, sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Manuel.

Commissioner Manuel: Johnathan, is it the Department's opinion that CWD is gonna be here eventually, no matter what we do and we are just trying to postpone it?

Johnathan Bordelon: Well CWD has grown and spread across the state, obviously. One of the quick ways for it to spread has been transport of either live or possibly contaminated parts. It's been recognized that prevention is the only mechanism and tool. And can it be prevented? The answer is well that's really an unknown. There are a few states, only one in particular that has had success in containing the disease, and that's New York State. New York State's infection came from what was believed to be a taxidermy animal. The reason that being is that taxidermy operation was tied to a high fence operation on the same property. And as you would guess it those parts were being basically placed on the property

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where deer were living within that high fence enclosure. That is where their first and only CWD Positive popped up. You know panic ensues after that first discovery. They started testing the animals within the enclosure. Then they start testing animals adjacent to the enclosure. They got no more positives after that point. That area has basically been quarantined and has without captive cervids. Fortunately, and I don't know about fortunately or unfortunately but, to their benefit the animal was, the area was an enclosed area so you don't have the ingress and egress of animals across that landscape. You can control that. They are the only state at this time that has been effective and that has been more than 10 years. So when you look at it along that line, and they've been diligently testing since that time they are the only case of finding it right away and able to basically put a band-aid on it and stop the bleeding before it got worse.

Commissioner Manuel: Ok. If this thing passes and we end up with it here, are we gonna have an opportunity to increase the, change the rules so to speak? Or should we? Or once you get it, you got it so nothing to do.

Johnathan Bordelon: Well, actually Commissioner Manuel we do have a CWD Plan. We've actually had a plan for some time but we revised it in 2016. Basically because of some adaptations that other states have implemented that we feel would be better able to control the disease once it would be discovered. And with that, certainly, we would look to the Commission and to the Secretary to come to basically have emergency measures in place to prevent further spread within the state. That's basically what would happen. Disease pops up in the state, your focus then at that point becomes containment of the disease. You're doing a couple of things. First you're trying to determine prevalence of the disease in that location and then you're trying to find distribution after. And that's what we would do. And states that have it basically have importation rules within their own states that prohibit the movement of animals outside the containment zone to other parts of the state. They are basically trying to contain that one fire and keep it from turning in to 20 fires in that particular case.

Commissioner Manuel: Thank you.

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Johnathan Bordelon: Yes, sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Smitko.

Commissioner Smitko: Where is the disease located in Texas?

Johnathan Bordelon: In Texas? I do have a slide on the computer. Just bear with me. It's not really part of the presentation, but I can probably get it up for you. Ok this is a map of Texas here. If you look at the red, you look at far west Texas that's mule deer. That's in the wild population. Pretty low prevalence but it is there. There is also one positive mule deer in the pan handle. But the area of concern where CWD hit in 2014 is Medina County. Medina County is in basically San Antonio area. That's evident on the map. That's where it popped up. Now you notice to the east there is another red. That's a recent discovery in Lavaca County. That Lavaca County positive was tied to a movement. Basically Medina it's only found inside of an enclosure at this time. So you have a facility that's positive. The problem is they have trace outs that have gone all over the place. Over a thousand animals to be specific. But one of those trace outs led them to Lavaca. They go to Lavaca County, they test one of the trace outs, boom. Five more

positives. But what is the implication of Lavaca County, these positives? That one trace out to Lavaca hits positive. Well what happened in Lavaca since receiving those animals? Well they sent animals out to 29 other counties in Texas. So you see how quickly this can spread and get out of hand. So disease that takes a long time to move across the landscape can basically move overnight through human action. One encouraging thing in Medina, its multi-pens within the same large enclosure. It's found in 2 of those smaller pens and not in the others. They've been diligent. They've tested over a thousand animals on the free range adjacent to those pens with no positives. We are hopeful that they likely just caught it early before it really had a chance to proliferate and filter in to the surrounding environment. But it does go to show you the threat that's there. And the importation ban that we are looking to do, you're just trying to keep those infectious parts out obviously. It's the cumulative effort of everything that's being proposed and done now. And we do really have to look at trying to protect ourselves in this case. Other states are testing but we really are somewhat, you hate to rely on

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the diligence of others to protect you. And in this particular case we're trying to do something to protect ourselves and the Louisiana deer.

Commissioner Smitko: And, just very briefly, is it in southern Arkansas, northern or spread out?

Johnathan Bordelon: Arkansas is a little different story. This is northern Arkansas, Newton County. Newton County is basically one county lower than the Missouri boundary. The circle that's circled in blue is their target area. The red dots represent positives. You can notice that most of those red dots are there. The scary thing with Newton and the scary thing with Arkansas, they had tested 7,000 animals since 2002. They had no positives. So you are thinking everything's ok, we are in the clear, then all of a sudden they had a positive cow elk from a hunter harvest this season. Once you have that positive you now have a place to look. So rather than spreading your target out across an entire state, they then begin to focus on that area where the positive occurred and that's where the blue line is drawn. When they started looking they have an idea to collect a certain number of animals. You are looking for statistical

significance so you want a representative sample of that area. Basically they got to about 250 animals and the prevalence rate reached 23%. At that point they just pulled the plug on it because if you kill 250, its 23%. You kill 250 more it's probably not going to change much. You have it and you have it bad. So what they did at that point is they are no longer trying to figure out prevalence. You are no longer trying to figure out how bad is it, you are trying to figure out how far has it spread. And that's what they are currently doing now. They really can't answer that. That's their new focus and their new direction that they're going in at this time. But it does just go to show you just some of the threat. The 23% prevalence, how long have they had it? No one obviously knows for sure but states that currently are positive now that have been positive for more than a decade don't have prevalence rates even approaching that. So it's conceivable that they've been positive for a couple of decades or more in that particular area. And that's some of the fear and that's some of what went in to this provision. Not provision but actual proposal. It goes back to trying to protect ourselves. We made this

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recommendation 2 years ago. Arkansas obviously would have been free and clear if it was only focused on CWD Positive States but, as you can see, we could potentially be allowing animals from an infected state to come in not knowing that they were affected. Thank you for your question, Commission Smitko.

Commissioner Samanie: I have one question.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Samanie.

Commissioner Samanie: Mr. Bordelon, I have one question. I'm not sure about it. In your professional opinion, would an educational program and proper disposal restriction suffice as opposed to a ban on imported cervid?

Johnathan Bordelon: There's been tremendous education efforts now across the country and there have been tremendous education efforts for some time. The difficulty with that is you just really are dealing at that point on public knowledge, understanding this and willingness to comply. The regulation obviously just gives you the ability to enforce those recommendations in the form of a regulation. So we feel it would obviously afford us the best protection.

Commissioner Samanie: Thank you.

Johnathan Bordelon: But education certainly is still important.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Sunseri.

Commissioner Sunseri: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Johnathan, thank you and the rest of the Department for your patience with me and passing the information along to all of us with all of the comments.

Johnathan Bordelon: Thank you.

Commissioner Sunseri: I really appreciate it. It really helps me understand an issue and where we need to go from here. I wanted ask, do you have any idea what type of violation that you are going to be looking at if this proposal becomes a regulation? If people are found to be importing cervid pieces and parts of carcasses.

Johnathan Bordelon: The penalty would be set by statute and that is something that would be outside of our division. So we would not as a division, Wildlife Division, be involved in that because it is actually set in statute and possibly our legal section could expand on how that process would work. It is something outside of our shop in this case.

Colonel Broussard: That's correct. The way it stands now, Commissioner Sunseri, is that it's a Class 2 the way the regulation would be assessed.

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Commissioner Sunseri: Wouldn't you think you'd want to raise that if you'd want to truly deter these animals and carcasses that have the problem so that you'd really have the deterrent?

Colonel Broussard: Certainly think that would be proper. The issue is that it would require legislation and would require legislators to have to consider that to be able to increase that class level of violation.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank y'all very much.

Johnathan Bordelon: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: If I might chime in on Commissioner Sunseri that I think that at that point, assuming we get there, would it be appropriate for this group to encourage the legislature to impose stronger penalties? I think I'd be in favor of that assuming this thing passes.

Colonel Broussard: I certainly think that's within reason, Commissioner Courville.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any other discussion or questions on Agenda Item No. 9? I do have one public comment card with regard to this item. Jackie.

Jackie Achee: That's me. Hi.

Chairman Yakupzack: Hi. Will you please come forward?

Jackie Achee: Hey guys. How y'all doing?

Chairman Yakupzack: Hi.

Jackie Achee: I've been a hunter and fisherwoman myself for quite some time. When we were younger and the kids were in school we couldn't but I want to ask y'all a question and in Mr. Bordelon's presence, he's the biologist. Do y'all know who Dr. Kroll is? And I realize 37 states that we are doing what they're doing with CWD. My question to you is not EHD worse for the deer, for the cervid, than CWD? And if CWD was this bad we'd have the countryside, the landscape would be covered dead bodies with CWD. And since there is no prevention, right? So my question to y'all is if another nationally, well known biologist. I'm trying not to be nervous. Had said hey, CWD isn't a disease that needs to be monitored but there's other diseases that are far worse for the deer. In other words, EHD does actually from 7 days the cervid goes down. But with CWD it's like a man having prostate cancer. That deer may get CWD but it may not die with CWD. And all the states that when the first mule deer was found in 1967 to have CWD, nobody or nothing vaccine you can do for the deer. There's landscapes not littered with CWD dead deer. We're allowed to eat deer that

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supposedly have CWD. They're telling us all that it's safe to eat. That's been going on for 50 years and there has never been a scientific peer review study in the past 50 years on cause and effect of CWD. And I'm not saying that CWD is not bad but it's getting to the point now that I think the whole country ought to accept that you got it. And you're going to start piling regulation on regulation and anything that you do isn't going to prevent it but yet you know you're gonna get it. A lot of the states that have CWD they still have deer that carry it, they don't die from it. Their landscape is not covered with it, Mr. Bordelon. So had you talked to Dr. Kroll and have you discussed with him what his studies have done to the have not been a peer reviewed scientific study? Have you reached out to him to say what made his opinion to be? Could y'all not maybe get another nationally recognized biologist and have a discussion with him and say, you know, if there's no cure but yet every time they've put a ban on something being imported. The problem in Arkansas is they brought in CWD elk that, I mean they brought in elk from the Rocky Mountains back in the 80's, and Dr. Kroll's pretty sure that they had CWD

all along they just something they hadn't monitored it enough to really find if they had it or not. When they got it of course then they panicked. I'm trying not to be nervous. I'm not here to be antagonistic.

Chairman Yakupzack: Miss.

Jackie Achee: I'm just saying that there's maybe some other info out there. And y'all are gonna do what you're gonna do. I just would like to see everybody going forward if you do find that you do have CWD in this state that you don't pile on regulation on the hunters because if you can eat the deer and especially free range deer, unless you are gonna pen them all in, the free range deer are gonna go where they're gonna go. And since it's in the ground, sometimes a bird might take the packaging somewhere. You know what I'm saying, Mr. Bordelon?

Chairman Yakupzack: Miss, is it Achee?

Jackie Achee: Achee. It's Cajun.

Chairman Yakupzack: Achee. I'm sorry. Yakupzack is Polish Cajun, too.

Jackie Achee: My big question is there, and I know this. And y'all are great. It's just that he says in Arkansas they got so panicky instead of just kind of calming down, looking what's going on. Up in Wisconsin where they had this, supposedly these huge out breaks

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everywhere, they've also had massive new trophy deer come in. There's EHD worse than CWD, by far. And as we go along here, more and more where they got regulation going to be piled on the hunter where. Like they said in Newton County where they first found it, they can't even, hunters up there they can't transport their meat. If they live down south, down south to where, because they're scared it's going to get all over the place. But y'all it already is everywhere.

Chairman Yakupzack: Yeah. I'm going to stop you.

Jackie Achee: I'm done.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you for coming. You don't appear nervous. You've done a great job. We have to have comment from the public and we appreciate that. What I want to recommend is that you get with Mr. Bordelon after the meeting. The Commission recognizes your opposition as we've had a bunch of opposition on this issue and I can assure you we are going to consider it carefully.

Jackie Achee: My opposition is that to make sure that you do it the right way. Everybody that's, it's been ongoing since the 60's when it first

found anyway. And a lot of the elk and mule deer population were lost.

Chairman Yakupzack: Again, thank you for your comments. We'll be interested from Mr. Bordelon on it further. Any other question or comment on Cervid Import Ban? Hearing none, I'd like to move to Agenda Item Number 13 at this time and recognize that our U.S. Congressman for District 6, Garrett Graves, is here and would like to make a couple of comments and is limited on a time schedule. Thank you, for being here today.

Congressman Graves: Thank you, Mr.

Chairman, members of the Commission. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today. I wasn't planning on coming and I kept reading more information about comments that were made at the last Commission Meeting. I know your job is critically important. I know most of you are here because of the pay you get for doing this but, seriously, your job is to maintain the tag line that Louisiana is a Sportsman's Paradise. That's your job, effectively. To make sure that we have sustainable resources for generations to come, for people to enjoy just like we have and our ancestors have. At the last meeting of the Commission, a number of things were

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said that I think are completely inaccurate. And your job is to make decisions on behalf of the State and our natural resources and I want to make sure that y'all have accurate information that you are acting upon. When I was a child, we used to be able to fish for red snapper year round. And as you know, in 2014 it was 9 days, 2015, 10 days, this year 9 days with a 2 day weather exception. That infringes upon the Sportsman's Paradise. So I didn't come up with an idea. What I did is I took an idea that the five Gulf States reached on their own and we took that and we introduced it as legislation. I got to tell you, Mr. Chairman, whether it was our bill or someone else's bill, it doesn't matter to me. The fact is that we got a major problem in regard to our resources and the access to red snapper for folks in the State of Louisiana and the Gulf Coast and this is a solution. And the five Gulf States don't agree upon much. The fact that they came to consensus on an idea I thought was commendable and we introduced that solution. The bill was introduced over one year ago, over one year it's been out there in the public domain. We had a conference call on April 6th of this year with staff from the Department of

Wildlife and Fisheries. It was the only conference call; it was the only discussion we had with the exception of one other which was a meeting on May 9th of this year. Now, in both of those discussions or meetings, it was clear to me that there was a degree of discomfort on the part of the Department with our bill. However, in discussions we attempted to probe those concerns and it was clear to me that the bill had not been read. So to actually articulate concerns, because we asked over and over again about specific concerns and it was clear that the bill had not been read so to articulate concerns would have been difficult. I called the Department about five or six days before we marked up the bill. We marked it up on July 15th, if I recall correctly, of this year. I called the Secretary to let him know that the bill was scheduled to be marked up and, once again, to solicit input from the Department because, as I've said numerous times it doesn't have to be our bill it can be an administrative solution, it can be somebody else's bill. This isn't a partisan issue, Mr. Chairman. We have Republicans and Democrats, over 40 of them, from around the United States that are on our bill. In fact, the lead co-sponsor on our bill is Cedric

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Richmond, a Democrat from New Orleans, because this is a big deal for Louisiana and he recognizes that. We have Democrats from Mississippi, from Texas and other states on the legislation as well, on the Gulf Coast. Under the bill, the State prepares a red snapper plan. They prepare it and they submit it. Other states can't force a plan on us. The states submit the plan, they prepare the plan. The bill requires public participation. In addition to written comments, the bill explicitly requires that public meetings occur in each of the five Gulf States. They have to occur. And because, effectively, the jurisdiction is actually under you, because of the Secretary and the Department being the one who prepares the plans, this venue can serve as a monthly meeting where folks could provide input of the preparation and limitation of a plan. The bill requires that the best science be used to ensure we sustainably manage the Fisheries. And the plan is considered by the five Gulf States and is approved or disapproved. Importantly, for three years the commercial fisheries continue to be managed by the federal government; for the first three years they continue to be managed. The

transition of the recreational fishery is only contingent upon a gulf management plan or state plan being approved. Mr. Chairman, there was no unfunded mandate. Period. Other states cannot force a plan upon the state of Louisiana. Anything to the contrary is absurd. To suggest that me, that Congressman Cedric Richmond, or other members of our Congressional Delegation, all of which support the legislation, with the exception of one who has not articulated a position we would never jeopardize that and give away Louisiana's resources to the control of the other Gulf States. That's absurd. One thing that I think is really important is in the last meeting there was a lot of discussion about this alleged 10 million dollar cost to...

Yolanda Martin: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

Point of order. I'd like to adhere to the order of the day and just receive this as a public comment and no consideration by the Commission.

Congressman Graves: Mr. Chairman, if I can.

Totally inaccurate information has been given to this board in regard to our bill, something that this board has to make decisions on. I think it is awful to allow this board to continue to operate under

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the assumption the information they have been given is accurate

Secretary Melancon: If I may.

Chairman Yakupzack: Secretary Melancon.

Secretary Melancon: This is exactly the reason I asked what I asked for today. So we didn't have poor Pinocchio speeches. And we didn't get into this kind of stuff that we have.

Congressman Graves: I'm sorry. Mr. Secretary, did you just call me a liar?

Secretary Melancon: Excuse me, sir. I've been recognized now. Yes, sir.

Congressman Graves: You just said that I lied.

Secretary Melancon: We tried to contact you five times from our office before. This is the thing that I was trying to avoid.

Congressman Graves: Wow.

Secretary Melancon: This is exactly what I was hoping to not happen.

Congressman Graves: So Mr. Secretary, it's okay for you to come here and tell things that are inaccurate but I am not allowed to come and set the record straight?

Secretary Melancon: We spoke with you. We called you about five times before to talk with you, Toby spoke with you for an hour and a half on the phone, we met with you in the office, you came in there

and you said I have no prior authorship, let's talk about the bill. The first question I brought up, you started explaining everything to me, everything I didn't understand about the bill.

Congressman Graves: Sure.

Secretary Melancon: But we did read the bill. I'm afraid this is not Obamacare. We read the bill. This is not what I want to discuss. What I want is for every one of you, and he can come at the proper time and be part of the educational process, where everybody's in the room having the discussions so that no one can have a say and say I said this without there being a rebuttal and the discussion. I would ask that we move on.

Congressman Graves: That's exactly what I'm trying to do is provide the rebuttal right here because you provide inaccurate information in this room.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Secretary Melancon. A debate here today is probably not going to be productive for this matter, but what I would like to do, certainly, is to allow Congressman Graves to wrap up his comments and to move on with the agenda and recognizing Secretary Melancon has invited Congressman Graves to be a part of the solution that Secretary Melancon proposed earlier today in terms of some

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extra meetings, informational meetings.

So, Congressman Graves?

Congressman Graves: I will briefly wrap up and thank you, Mr. Chairman. The bill it was stated in here previously again the ten million dollar cost, and whether that number is accurate or not I have no idea but I can tell you the number is significantly different than other states and provided, however the base text of the bill explicitly distinguishes stock assessment, research and management. There are three separate things. While the amendment by Chairman Bishop does affect management cost, it does not implicate stock assessments or research which are different categories. Therefore the federal government will continue to provide those. And as a matter fact just to make sure that I was accurate in that assumption, I went back and met with Chairman Bishop and sat down and had a thirty minute meeting with him where he agreed to put it in writing if that would be helpful as to what his intent was. Most importantly, let me just be clear on this. Chairman Bishop supports the bill. He voted for it. He supports state management and he has tried similar things in his State related to Wildlife Resources. He is not opposed to the bill. It was not a killer

amendment or anything else and allegations to the contrary are completely uninformed and absurd. We're going to continue working. This is the second step in the process. It still goes to the House floor, the Senate committee, the senate floor. The way this process works is people provide input, which is why we repeatedly solicited input from the Department. The reality is this. At the April conference call, concerns were expressed. At the May meeting, concerns were expressed. To now blame opposition to the bill upon an unfunded mandate is simply not accurate because there was a clear bias against the legislation prior to this ever becoming an apparent issue. And so I stand here and absolutely remain open to ideas, solutions, suggestions and I don't care who solves this problem but the status quo is unacceptable. We have repeatedly reached out to the commercial industry, offered multiple solutions and they have refused to come to the table. And so we are going to continue moving forward with this until a better solution comes forward. Because I'll say it again, the status quo is completely unacceptable. Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I want to make note. Under

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the Oil Spill Settlement that I helped negotiate, there is 350 million dollars set aside for adaptive management under the Gulf Environmental Benefits Fund, under the Restore Act and other adaptive management programs.

There's 265 million dollars available for region wide and open ocean assessments and there are tens of millions of dollars more through what is known as Bucket Four of the Restore Act. So even if it was accurate that these data collection and research was being put on the state, there are hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenues that are available to this Department as part of that settlement that we negotiated. Again, I want to repeat, while it's not, I also want to state the fact that hundreds of millions of dollars in new research funds and data collection funds are available to the state of Louisiana under the BP Oil Spill Settlement. I'll wrap up there, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make sure y'all have accurate information and if you have any questions I'd be more than happy to answer them. I do appreciate the opportunity to come and address the Commission.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you

Congressman Graves. Commissioner Sunseri.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you Mr.

Chairman. Hi Congressman Graves.

How are you doing today?

Congressman Graves: Doing well. How are you? Congratulations.

Commissioner Sunseri: I just want to ask a question. I'm new to the Commission. The subject matter is new to me. I've not been part of the Gulf Council and all of that and those discussions that have taken place over the years that you're discussing today. As a practical matter I'm just going to ask a question because, as a guy who is from the Ninth Ward from New Orleans, I started thinking about you got nine days to be able to fish. But only nine days and they pick them. And they could be terrible days. What would be wrong with like a tagging system to where you had 18 tags that you got that you could go out 365 days a year and you would get those tags to do it? I'm just asking a question. This is new to me. I don't know anything about this subject matter.

Congressman Graves: I think there are all sorts of discussions we can have on ways to better manage the species and to better provide access to the fishers. And I think that the stock assessments are wholly inaccurate which provide for bad allocation numbers which result in bad

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numbers for commercial, for charter, for recreational. We've got to have better science. And right now, what happens as a result of the fee increase that the recreational fishers agreed to is, the recreational fishers are paying for the science at this point, or paying for the State science to the tune of 1.7 or 1.8 million dollars, whatever it is, per year. And so you can't have discussions if people aren't even willing to come in to the room. So I can sit here in a vacuum and develop solutions all day long or you and I can as well. But I think it's important that we all sit down at the table, talk about different options. But I want to reiterate, the status quo is completely unacceptable. The other four Gulf States are clearly supportive of the bill in its current form and we need to continue having discussions to come up with a good solution.

Commissioner Sunseri: Mr. Chairman, if I may. That's what I recommended at the last meeting. That we have a meeting of those people within the recreational, the commercial, the charter, the members of this Commission and the Department to try to sit down at the table and hammer out something. That was what I recommended. Not knowing, this is all new subject matter to me. I'm just a

guy who is trying to solve problems. And I agree with you. It's best to sit down with all players and get something done. Let's not fight over this. We've got to do what's best for the citizens of the state of Louisiana more than anything. More so than the other Gulf states, definitely for the citizens of Louisiana. All of them. So that's going to be my recommendation again. That we have a group come together of the recreational, the commercial, the charter fishing people, as well as the members of this Commission and the Department that manages the Fisheries and see what we can come up with.

Congressman Graves: I appreciate your commitment to a solution and I certainly look forward to working with you.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you Mr. Chairman

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Commissioner Sunseri. Any other questions?

Commissioner Manuel: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Manuel.

Commissioner Manuel: Congressman, I appreciate you coming to spend time here. I know you got a busy schedule. And I appreciate the additional information. I just hope that our Department did not leave something out

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when they presented. I wasn't here last month so I'm not sure all the information that was presented. But that's some new information that I've gotten today. I would hope that our Department would continue to give us all the information, both sides, where we could make a determination. That's all I've got thank you. Thank you for your time, too.

Congressman Graves: Thank you
Commissioner.

Jackie Achee: Can I ask one question?

Chairman Yakupzack: Well you -

Jackie Achee: Are we the only state that is bucking, not going along with the other 4 states? Are the other 4 states already? Cause this issue about the red snapper {Audio inaudible}

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank -

Jackie Achee: {Audio Inaudible}

Yolanda Martin: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

Jackie Achee: {Audio Inaudible}

Chairman Yakupzack: Ms. Achee. Did I say it right?

Commissioner: Achee.

Chairman Yakupzack: Achee. No. You've done great. I think Congressman Graves has already answered that question. If you want to take just a quick sentence to answer the lady and then we are going to move on from this issue.

Congressman Graves: The other four states have clearly expressed support for the legislation in its current form and in its previous form. From what I understand and from what I gather there may be a separation between the Commission's position and the Agency's position if I can perhaps establish that distinguishing factor. But look I want to apologize to you all. I apologize for talking over earlier and for my tone. I want to tell you that I've actually known Secretary Melancon for probably close to 20 years. I have never in my life had any type of adverse experience with him ever. I've never in any way had any situation where I think he was being undishonorable or anything else. I think he's a good guy and I'll tell you I'm scratching my head trying to figure out what in the world's going on right now. So I apologize.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you
Congressman Graves. To conclude Item 13, I have one additional public comment from Mr. Ronald Coco, Avoyelles Parish, on feral hogs and CWD. Would you like to speak? We can conclude this Agenda Item? Sir?

Ronald Coco: {Audio Inaudible}

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Chairman Yakupzack: No. To compliment the Congressman's request, I rearranged the Agenda which is perfectly fine.

Ronald Coco: Last month I told you we would have a meeting in Mansura at the Ag Center for the Chronic Waste Disease and for the Feral Hogs. Johnathan was there, him and Dr. LaCour did a Chronic Waste Disease. The main question people was wondering about is if all the states don't have the same rules, how do I leave from one state and go to the other without breaking their rules and not having them take my deer away from me? Or elk or whatever they killing. Is there any way it can come through all the states and have this one general rule for transportation of these animals through the states? I know like Arkansas a lot of people told me they hunted like in Missouri to come back they couldn't come through Arkansas last year. They had to go around through Oklahoma or go back the other way around because they couldn't come through the state. That's one of the basic questions the hunters and the people going out of state, they want their opinion on that.

Chairman Yakupzack: I'll respond to your comment just briefly in this way. And I encourage you, as well, to speak with

Mr. Bordelon after the meeting. I know that members of this Commission asked that very question. They are very interested in the regulations of the other states that require them. That information has been provided and the Commissioners are reviewing it in preparation for further consideration of this NOI. So I don't know the answer to your question but it is being considered.

Ronald Coco: I see y'all are going to have meetings to carry on.

Chairman Yakupzack: Yeah.

Ronald Coco: For this {Audio Inaudible} disease. Also I handed y'all the new regulations from the Ag Department about the feral hogs to have the permits to transport these hogs and to have quarantine pens to keep them in. This is information that was given to us Thursday night. And I brought it to y'all. Y'all can study it. I've given some to the Secretary and everyone to study these new regulations. I don't know. Y'all are preaching no transportation and they're talking letting them transport them so. That's between y'all and the Agriculture Department. You all have the rules so I gave it to you, you can study, maybe next Commission meeting. Or maybe if y'all do set some meetings up, talk to the

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people about it. And y'all did have one newsletter that came out that a lot of people was very upset about, about the water quality. These animals around the Alexandria area. They've tested 40 sites around Kisatchie and all that. And around Alexandria area where they had e coli, salmonella and different diseases that these hogs that carry. That was an eye opening thing to the people. When they read this, it came out in the paper and they was wondering, you know, what effect did their animals and everything it had. I think {Audio Inaudible}. These diseases from these hogs are effecting all the animals around the source. Squirrels, raccoons, everything. It goes even to the migratory water fowls that come in to these areas, the contact areas. So this is starting to be an eye opening thing. I don't know how you are going to solve it or what but it's going to lead up to a big decision people are going to have to come with trying to control these wild hogs.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Coco.

Ronald Coco: They are just spreading that much disease around.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Coco. I want to point out that the Department worked very closely with the Legislature

this year and created, established a Louisiana Hog Task Force to try to focus in on that exact problem. The Department even, through Secretary Melancon, provided committed to some funding in that regard. And already had funding. So thank you for your comments and

Ronald Coco: {Audio Inaudible}

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Agenda Item No. 10: To Consider Resolution to Add Property to Peason Ridge Wildlife Management Area. Biologist, Tommy Tuma.

Tommy Tuma: Thank you Mr. Chair, Commission Members. Actually I'm not going to be presenting the formal Resolution. I'm just here in an advisory capacity to let you know that the Department, the U.S. Army has made available an additional 23,000 acres to be included and managed as part of the Peason Ridge WMA. For those who are not familiar, Peason Ridge WMA is a 51,000 acre WMA in Vernon, Sabine and Natchitoches Parishes. We are entered in to an agreement with the U.S. Army to have it operated as a Wildlife Management Area. Peason Ridge is a little different because they also use it as the Fort Polk Training Grounds so it makes the Resolution a little muddy

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when we're putting it together. Because not only do users have to abide by our Department's WMA's self-clearing permits, you also need a daily military clearance permit and they call the night before. The U.S. Army provides a phone number which is in our hunting regulations. You call the night before and they tell you whether the WMA is all open, partially open or some areas are just closed because the military training exercises. So with the inclusion of this property it will be 76,304 acres and I will be coming next month to present the formal resolution. I was just giving you and the public a heads up that we are going to have a pretty substantial amount of land be added to Peason Ridge should this Commission approve the Resolution next month. Thank you for your time.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Tuma. Any questions or discussion from the Commission on that item? Agenda Item No. 11: To Hear and Consider Suggestions for Public Hearing Dates for Cervid Carcass Importation Ban. Mr. Bordelon.

Johnathan Bordelon: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. Technical difficulties. Thank you gentlemen. Yes, sir. Basically with the Proposed Cervid

Carcass Importation Ban Public Meeting Schedule, the dates, times and locations are already listed. Basically this is going to go in to the public registry on August 20th, and because of that Public Hearings must be held 35 - 40 days after it goes in to the registry. That's required by the Louisiana Administrative Code. So because of that we are kind of tied to those specific time frame and dates and that's the dates we were left with. We picked locations obviously southeast, south Louisiana, central and north Louisiana, at this time. And we'll do a news release to make the public aware of these dates. Any questions? Yes, sir. Four venues at this time.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Bordelon, run those dates. So currently we have a Notice of Intent that's been passed by this group, correct?

Johnathan Bordelon: Correct.

Commissioner Courville: And we are in the comment, amendment, potentially period up until what point again?

Johnathan Bordelon: Well originally November 20, I mean originally it was August 22.

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Commissioner Courville: Ok. And now we are moving it anywhere?

Johnathan Bordelon: It's going to be extended due to these public hearing requests.

Commissioner Courville: Ok. What date is that again?

Johnathan Bordelon: The registry date will be August 20th. That's when this will go in to the registry. And as a result, we will be limited to 35 - 40 days post-registry as required by the Louisiana Administrative Code.

Commissioner Courville: Ok. So if I'm understanding you right we need to take some sort of action if we're changing any of it by this September meeting?

Johnathan Bordelon: I'll defer this question to Mr. Ribbeck. Thank you.

Yolanda Martin: It's no additional action. It's just for the public meetings. They are held between days 35 and 40 after the publication after the Notice of Intent. And so that these dates are falling within the time frame prescribed by the Administrative Code.

Commissioner Courville: Ok. Thanks Ms. Martin. Maybe if I can ask you another question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: If there's going to be any changes I want to make sure we

have time to make any changes before it becomes law or a rule.

Yolanda Martin: He should come back to you with a summary of the comments and then you can have any amendments at that time.

Wendy Brogdon: Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Yakupzack: Ms. Brogdon.

Wendy Brogdon: I understand where Commissioner, the point of his question is once we hold the public hearings and if a decision is made as a result to change the original NOI from the original verbiage to make a substantive change, it will require a potpourri to be done as with the hunting rules and regulations. Another public hearing will have to be held in the same manner where we allow people to comment on the proposed changes that you're making due to the public hearings.

Commissioner Courville: To the existing NOI, that would be the law of the land at that time.

Wendy Brogdon: Yes, sir. That is correct. Yes. So it does, if changes, if proposed changes are made to the original verbiage of the NOI that was published last month then it will add additional time on to the end. If substantive changes are proposed. It resets it.

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Chairman Yakupzack: Ms. Martin, is that how you -

Yolanda Martin: It resets it. It resets the notice period.

Commissioner Courville: So we reset. We get another extent before it becomes the law of the land, right?

Chairman Yakupzack: So if there are changes to an NOI, like with this NOI, like within any NOI, it could delay the ultimate regulation being set. So we all recognize that here today and we'll see what comes out of these public meetings and this Commission will consider the NOI fully and if it requires amendment then we'll consider amendment then. Is my appreciation correct?

Yolanda Martin: Yes.

Commissioner Courville: I think I'm ok. As long as we still have some time. I'm concerned about the timing and all of that but it sounds like if you're good with it, I'm good with it.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Manuel.

Commissioner Manuel: Johnathan, on most issues we have more than 4 meetings in areas. You go to 7 or 8, whatever it is. Why are we only doing 4 for this? This is a pretty contentious Notice of Intent.

Johnathan Bordelon: Well we picked areas that we felt would give us good

distribution, you know, around the state.

Commissioner Manuel: Is there a possibility to have more?

Johnathan Bordelon: You certainly could request more. We are going to -

Commissioner Manuel: Well I'd like for you to look in, I don't know about the rest of the Commission, but I'd like, me personally, I'd like to see you look in to doing some additional meetings. You know, I don't know where. New Orleans, for instance. Something like that.

Randy Myers: Commissioner Manuel. We certainly could consider that. Obviously we would have to do it within the time frame, within those dates. If you have any -

Commissioner Manuel: As soon as this meeting is over, y'all can start deciding.

Randy Myers: If you have any specific recommendation of where you'd like for us to have one if we haven't covered those bases then we'll have to consider and see if we can make those arrangements. Again, your point is -

Commissioner Manuel: The New Orleans area would certainly be one. Somewhere around the Baton Rouge area since so many people going to Mississippi and Alabama. You know you got hunters on

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both sides of the state. Minden is close, I guess, close to the Texas line as you there. You got Lafayette but you could go to Fort Polk. Somewhere like that. Just I think it would be best to have a few more meetings to give those people who are on the edge of the state where they don't have to go so far.

Johnathan Bordelon: Yes, sir. That will be considered.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any other questions from the Commission? We have a public comment request from a Joe Macaluso.

Joe Macaluso: I'm going to follow up on Mr. Manuel's proposal. In here they have ignored the two major population areas in the state. There's no New Orleans. I realize Mandeville is close but guys get off of work at 5:00 and to get to Mandeville at 6:00, there's going to be a little bit of trouble for a guy from Belle Chasse. And then Baton Rouge. We had these meetings every month but making for businessmen and for other folks making a 9:30 meeting on a Thursday is a little difficult. There's none in Lake Charles and none in Monroe, and that's two other major metropolitan areas. So I would suggest, like Mr. Manuel suggested, that this be expanded. Thank you.

Commissioner Manuel: You agree with me, Joe?

Commissioner Sunseri: Mr. Chairman, I would say possibly on the West Bank in New Orleans the Alario Center would probably be a good site.

Chairman Yakupzack: So we've heard Baton Rouge, New Orleans, West Bank of New Orleans. I trust that the Wildlife Section will refocus on those and see if additional meetings can be fit in to that five day period and covered by the appropriate staff. Thank you guys. Next on the Agenda would be Agenda Item 12. I'd like to pause for a moment and go back to be in a point of clarity on Agenda No. 10. It was listed as an Action Item, we heard from the Department that this certain Resolution to add 23,300 acres to Peason Ridge Wildlife Management Area required some additional consideration before the Department was ready to present to this Commission for approval. So we will consider that in September. Ms. Martin, do we, is it appropriate for us to take action to pass that to September?

Yolanda Martin: Take action to pass on the item.

Commissioner Courville: So move to consider the Resolution at the September meeting.

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Commissioner Manuel: Second that we pass.

Chairman Yakupzack: Ok. So we got a motion by Mr. Courville and a second by Commissioner Manuel. Any public comment? All in favor?

All: Yea.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition we'll pass to consider the Resolution listed in Agenda Item 10 at the September Commission Meeting. Agenda Item No. 12: Set December 2016 Meeting Date.

Commissioner Manuel: Mr. Chairman. Last year we moved the December meeting to Lake Charles. I would suggest we move it again this year to somewhere. Monroe, Alexandria, New Orleans. It don't matter to me. Just have it somewhere where we can all duck hunting before the meeting and move it to after lunch.

Chairman Yakupzack: We certainly got 5 or 6 months to consider that and if you want to refine your proposal for next meeting and we'll take it up then.

Commissioner Manuel: We can do it then?

Chairman Yakupzack: Yeah.

Commissioner Manuel: That's fine.

Chairman Yakupzack: Today what's important is the date. We can adjust the location next month.

Commissioner Manuel: The date is the December what? December 1st, that's going to be during the split, huh?

Chairman Yakupzack: The 8th would be the split as I appreciate it. Where's Larry?

Commissioner Manuel: Well we can still go somewhere. We can go fishing that morning.

Chairman Yakupzack: The first Thursday is December 1st. So we're going to, the meeting will be held on December 1st. Somewhere at some time and we will provide that information as soon as Commissioner Manuel refines his request.

Commissioner Manuel: Unless we can change the seasons again.

Chairman Yakupzack: Now I come to Agenda No. 14 and this meeting is adjourned. I need one motion.

Commissioner Courville: So moved.

Chairman Yakupzack: Motion from Commissioner Courville.

MEETING ADJOURNED

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CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yakupzack: Good morning. Welcome to the July 7, 2016, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission Meeting. I call this meeting to order. Commissioner Courville, will you please lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Courville: All right, stand, please. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chairman Yakupzack: Ms. Brogdon, will you please call the roll.

Ms. Brogdon: Chairman Yakupzack.

Chairman Yakupzack: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Chad Courville.

Chad Courville: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Bill Hogan.

Bill Hogan: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Pat Manuel.

Ms. Brogdon: Bobby Samanie.

Bobby Samanie: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Al Sunseri.

Al Sunseri: Here.

Ms. Brogdon: Mr. Chairman, there are five commissioners in attendance. We have a quorum. Secretary Melancon is also present today.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Agenda Item No. 4, approval of the June 2, 2016 commission meeting minutes. Has the commission had the chance to review the minutes?

Commissioner Courville: So move to approve.

Commissioner Hogan: Second.

Next Speaker: Motion by Commissioner Courville to approve the June minute meeting minutes. A second by Commissioner Hogan. any public comment. All those in favor.

All: I

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, motion passes. Agenda Item No. 5: Commission Special Announcements Personal Privilege. I'd like to turn over the floor to Secretary Melancon.

Secretary Melancon: Thank you. Mr. Chairman. It's good to be with you this morning and have you and the Commission here. I would like to, if I can, the last meeting we had the opportunity of introducing Mr. Bill Hogan from Ruston, who is a new at large member. This week, this month meeting here, we have two new members that are serving on their first meeting with the Commission. Robert, Bobby Samanie. Bobby is originally from South Terrebonne Parish. Relocated and living in Meraux now. He has been in the seafood business now for 40 plus years. I think that means you're either younger or you start young, Bobby, I'm not sure. But he's a native of Terrebonne Parish, been active as president of the American Shrimp Processors Association. He also serves on the Governor's Task Force and Shrimp

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Management, the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, the Louisiana Shrimp Industry Review Panel, Louisiana Seafood Standards of Identity Task Force and the Louisiana Seafood Industry Advisory Board. Bobby will be serving as a commercial member of the Commission. Welcome, Bobby.

Bobby Samanie: Thank you.

Secretary Melancon: The second new member is Alfred 'Al' Sunseri. Al, for those of you who like oysters, has been in the oyster business his entire life with his brother. They have P & J Oyster Company in New Orleans. He's the owner and general manager, is a lifelong Louisiana resident. He's only managed his family oyster business and has been an advocate for Louisiana and Gulf of Mexico Oyster Industry since 1985. He was founding member of the Gulf Oyster Industry Council and served on several oyster boards. Al lives in New Orleans and finished college at Southeastern in Hammond. Al's term runs to 2020. Al, it's a pleasure to welcome you to the commission, and I hope y'all have as much fun as y'all can stand.

Al Sunseri: Thank you.

Secretary Melancon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: On behalf of the Commission, welcome gentlemen. I do know if you care to if you want to say a few words, it's up to you guys.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Sunseri

Al Sunseri: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission. Mr. Secretary and people in the audience, this is humbling thing for me to be put on this commission. It means a lot. I've spent my entire life working with the oyster business. My family's been in the business, for 140 years and I'm very proud and humbled by this opportunity and hopefully we'll be able to do a lot of good things over these next few years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Commissioner Sunseri, Commissioner Samanie.

Bobby Samanie: My name is Bobby Samanie. I'm originally from Terrebonne Parish, and my family has been in the shrimp business since 1938. We started off canning shrimp. We've changed directions with the industry as it's changed. Four years ago I moved to Saint Bernard Parish where the company I worked for opened up one of the largest plants in the state. We do any, anywhere between a hundred and 150,000 pounds of shrimp per day we process. I've served on this commission before and it's really an honor to help manage Louisiana's natural resources, and it's a large responsibility. I promise y'all I'm going to give it the best that I can, and I'm sure y'all won't be disappointed. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Commissioner Samanie. Any other special announcements or personal privilege by the Commission? Agenda Item No. 6, to hear enforcement reports from June, Captain Skena.

Captain Skena: Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the

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Commission. For the month of June, we had 14 boating incidents, 12 injuries and 3 fatalities. We had 734 written citations, 424 written warnings, and 23 public assists. Inside your folder there is a few news releases from last month. Here are a synopsis of those new releases. While conducting a boating safety check in Terrebonne Parish, enforcement agent cited a subject for possessing 26 black bass, 16 over the legal limit. If convicted, the subject faces criminal fines, up to 60 days in jail and could be charged civil restitution for the illegally taken fish. The fish were seized and donated to a local charity. Agents responded to an anonymous tip in Lafourche Parish and cited four people for taking oysters off a private lease and from a polluted area. One of the subjects was additionally sited for not possessing a commercial gear license. Each subject faces criminal fines; up to 90 days in jail; 40 hours of community service; only allowed to fish oysters from a vessel equipped with a vessel monitoring device and possible revocation of their oyster harvester's license. The agency seized nine sacks of oysters and returned them to the water. They also seized the vessel and dredge on a department seizure order. Alan Gaspard, the second subject involved in cutting down trees on Spring Bayou Wildlife Management area was sentenced on June 16 in Avoyelles Parish for his involvement in cutting down over a hundred trees in order to block navigable access to an area where he regularly hunted. Gaspard was ordered to serve 2 years in jail suspended, pay \$250.00 to the Criminal Court Fund, \$400.00 in court cost, and \$20,000.00 in civil restitution to the department. In addition to those monetary fines, the subject was also given 5 years of probation during which time he will not be allowed on any wildlife management area and not allowed to possess recreational hunting or fishing licenses. On

June 29th, the enforcement academy graduated the 30th cadet class. Nine new agents have been added to our ranks and we wish them luck in their new careers. This concludes the enforcement report, unless there are questions, sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any questions for Captain Skena? Thank you, Captain Skena.

Captain Skena: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Agenda Item No. 7, a hearing update by Ducks Unlimited on the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission funded waterfowl breeding grounds habitat work in Canada. Presenting here today is Mr. Dave Kustersky.

Mr. Dave Kustersky: Thank you, Chairman Yakupzack, Secretary Melancon, much appreciate the time on your agenda today to give you an update on the funds that you've dedicated to conservation on the Canadian breeding grounds. This is a 52-year, or 51-year partnership with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and I'd like to just give you a really good snapshot. In your packets as well, is a report that has obviously more detail than what I'll present today. This contract year, the first year of a 3-year proposal that we provided is focused on three, two different major activities, habitat retention and habitat restoration. The habitat retention, land purchase, conservation easements are both perpetual in nature. They are there forever, and that's where the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries funds are focused. We also do conservation agreements as part of this. Pothole restoration, dense nesting cover; which is that nesting habitat for upland nesting ducks and forages and winter wheat. And all those programs are part of the proposal and use partner money, DU money and other noncom monies and other partners

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to make that happen. This is a Durr land purchase. This purchase was 315 acres south of Saskatoon Saskatchewan. As you can see it is about a half section of land that's got a lot of wetlands on it. The uplands were cultivated, so we will be converting that to grass, and we purchased that with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries monies along with other partner monies, including DU. This land was purchased for an average price of \$606.00 per acre and is located in the Allen Dana Hills priority area. This is one of our highest waterfowl density landscapes with over 60 pairs per square miles in this landscape. On this project, there also was a wetland that one in the picture on the right that had been drained a large ditch coming out of it. So, as part of the purchase we restore any wetlands that have been drained so that's the process of filling in that ditch that was created a number of years ago to drain that wetland. This is a conservation easement that was purchased, Martin's Olson Conservation Easement also in this last year this easement is 850 acres of incredible habitat in the Allen Dana Hills as well. High waterfowl density, high wetland density. This land was paid perpetual conservation easement for \$208.00 per acre on this particular piece of land. So, a pretty reasonable rate to get that there forever. All the wetlands and grasslands and habitat that you see there will be there in perpetuity. This is a project that was done with partner money. Matter for Marsh Wetland Rebuild. So this project is about replacing those culverts. This project was originally built in 1980. It served its life and needed to be rebuilt. So the culverts and some of the structure was dug out, replaced at the cost of about \$66.00 per acre and it's a 915-acre marsh. Wetland rebuilds we go through an extensive revision process where we look at these things, make sure they are still productive for waterfowl. This one was an

incredible project, which is part of a larger complex of wetlands called Yorton South, and this one in particular just needed to be restored. We resigned all the agreements with the landowners to make sure this is there for another at least 30 years. This is a wetland restoration. Gaul Wetland Restoration, one small wetland within the landscape, and these are really what we targeted, these small wetlands 2.9 acre restoration. We do larger ones if there is an opportunity. But frankly what we've lost across the landscape is small wetland. That's what carries the waterfowl productivity on the breeding grounds is all these little wetlands that have been drained. So restoring this wetland is about putting that plug. That picture on the right is just the earth and plug that we use, a cat, and I've got other pictures that it'll show you a little bit more on how you can do that. But basically 2.9-acre wetland restored and it cost about \$700.00 an acre to do that. Wet Project Nesting Covers. This is a piece of property that we purchased about 3 years ago and we got it seeded to grass this past year. Spent the money on it to put it to a nesting cover. This nesting cover is critical for waterfowl. This particular quarter section of the land had 85 acres of broken land or cultivated land that we planted to grass. And what we're trying to do is make it do this, create nests. So that was planted the first the year. We put a cover crop so they harvest, and then next year it'll be left idle and left idle, but typically harvested once every 4 to 5 years. So it's idle sitting there for ducks to nest in every year. And then you have to rejuvenate it, you've got to cut it or graze it in order to keep it healthy, but that's what we're trying to raise is ducks. Another project that we do is called 'winter wheat'. This is a field of winter wheat that was seeded last fall, October 1 that was the picture, that's about 3 weeks after it was seeded. So this go, over winter it survives

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over the winter. In May 3, 2016 this field looked like that. It is starting to provide a little bit of habitat, but not, no not a lot, pintails will nest in that. So this is what it looked on June 16, so it turns into this really lush vegetation that you can hide a nest in. Really attractive for Gadwall, later nesting Mallards, blue-wing teal, pintail a bunch of different species utilize this. This is one of our most effective partnerships with agriculture on the landscape. That annual crop that typically is spring, if we can get them to seed it in the fall it can provide tremendous nest cover for the waterfowl and some of the highest nest successes in the winter wheat program. I've got two more projects I wanted to show you. This is the Ingle Purchase. This is a quarter section that we purchased outright. We'll have it forever keep it in perpetuity and there is a number of wetland restorations on this project you can see it. A number of small downs and I'll show you a picture in a bit of how it looks when we build those. This project in particular, you know that you can see that it has a whole bunch of water on it and all the green area that is crosshatched that's all going to be planted to nesting cover. When we buy it we typically have to do some weed control to get it all in shape so we can plant a good mix of grassland species that can survive and compete. This is a conservation easement. This is a paid conservation easement also in the Allen Dana Hills. As you can see, we restored a fairly large wetland on the west side and a smaller one in the middle. Again on this conservation easement this one was paid to keep all the wetlands and the existing grasslands on the landscape. The Ingle Purchase was \$101.00 per acre to purchase that piece of land, the one on the left and that conservation easement we paid \$235.00 an acre to have that habitat in perpetuity. So these are very cost-effective programs to have habitat on the ground

forever. This is really what it looks like when we restore a wetland. It's as simple as taking a small dozer D-3 CAT or so and pushing up some dirt and filling a ditch. That's really what most of our wetland drainage is. When you deal with the Canadian prairies we don't have a whole lot of tile drainage yet. Thank, God. Thank goodness that is mostly ditch and like this, that we can go back and restore it when we can get a CAT out there for a few bucks and push the dirt back in and then sign an easement and put it there forever. So this is really the opportunity to put those back on the ground and it's a pretty simple process. So that's a number of projects that we did. That's not all that we did with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries money because certainly it would take a much longer presentation for me to talk about every project. But these are some of the highlights of projects that we are able to do, because you provided some dollars to Canada. This is why we do it. As you know, a number of, significant portion of the waterfowl that winter down here in Louisiana that you get the opportunity to hunt and harvest, come from the breeding grounds in Canada. The band return information clearly demonstrates that connection to Saskatchewan and the other prairie providences as well as the northern U.S. So providing that support up there is what provides that habitat. We just don't have, it's a vast, vast landscape. We do not have the resources to do all the conservation work that needs to be done to make this landscape productive for waterfowl for years to come. So with your partnership we are able to make a difference. In Saskatchewan, your dollars were focused on some of these habitats the Allen Dana Hills, I mentioned right in the middle of the providence. The Upper Sina bonne is on the east side of the providence and then the lighting creek landscape is in the southeast, so those are

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some of the landscapes of those projects I, I showed you fall in. But, we obviously work in all these red areas and that's a thunderstorm map that gives you waterfowl densities. The hotter the color, the higher the waterfowl density and that's driven primarily by high wetland densities, lots of water on the landscape. Why do we need to do this? Well, we continue to lose habitat. This is a scene from 1958, and it, and it identifies all the wetlands and kind of that line as agricultural drainage has been moving east to west in this landscape. This is the same landscape in 2010 continued loss of wetlands as you go west. It spreads as you get a network of ditches, they just continue to add ditches to the landscape. Here's another scene of wetlands in 1958 and here's a scene in 2010 of those same wetlands. That entire property has been drained. This is the landscape that we have to deal with, there is a number of these in Saskatchewan in some of our priority areas. As you can see with all those wetlands there, you would have 20 to 30 wetlands per a quarter section for 160 acres on that landscape, now they're gone. This is the landscape that we need to work in to restore those wetlands and protect what's left. What do we lose, obviously we lose our waterfowl and wildlife factories if we lose wetlands. We lose flood protection, places to hunt with friends and our health our most valued commodity on earth is water and we lose our quality of life just having that place to go. So how did we do it? Last year, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provided \$328,702.00. Ducks Unlimited committed to match that with an equal amount of money and we used those dollars to apply for and got approved for \$657,404.00 U.S. Therefore every dollar that Louisiana provided, we added \$3.00 at minimum. This is just the basic match that we provide. Ducks Unlimited has many other sources of matching, including other

Canadian dollars and 39 other states, fish and wildlife agencies that provide money to do work on the breeding grounds in Canada, of which 12 more in the, in the province of Saskatchewan. So you're one of 13 states that provides money to do breeding grounds work in Saskatchewan. Your investment of \$328,702.00 leveraged to \$1.3 million. As you know the Canadian and the U.S. dollar always fluctuate in value. Well, right now your dollar is a lot stronger than ours. So we were able to get an exchange gain of 1.3. So that \$1.3 million turned into \$1.7 million on the breeding grounds in Canada when you turn it into Canadian funds. So we were able to expand over \$1.7 million dollars on conservation and habitat. The goals that we propose to do in this first year of this proposal, of the three year proposal was to retain 3,500 acres of habitat, restore 67 acres of wetlands, and restore 900 acres of grassland through upland as well as continue to manage over 90,000 acres. What we were able to do was over 5,400 acres of habitat retention, 85 acres of wetland restoration, and over 1,700 acres of upland restoration and managed 150,000 acres of existing habitat. So far exceeded the, the planned goals for the funding that we had requested and spent the majority of the money as you can see in habitat retention. I flip up the next slide – this has the detail it's in the report I provided. I am not going to go into detail as obviously, there is, there is more numbers in here than we intend to or care to go through right now. But clearly, a big chunk if you look at the top four categories those are all perpetual protection. That adds up to over a million dollars of the \$1.1 million spent out of this budget. That's where Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries dollars are dedicated just into that perpetual activity. Keeping those grasslands and wetlands there forever. Acres equals ducks. It's as simple as that. You put grass on the landscape, you restore grasslands,

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you protect grasslands, and you're going to get waterfowl, that's what the limiting factor is. That is how the landscape has changed and that's what's caused our issues with waterfowl production over the years. If you restore wetlands, you get ducks, the same thing. We need grasslands and wetlands to have waterfowl produced on the breeding grounds of Canada. It's that partnership that you have bought into, that you've invested into that allows Ducks Unlimited to go up there and make difference on the breeding grounds. We've been doing this for 77 years up in Canada, 78 years here in the U.S. Our conservation work is, is long, and your partnership in fact has been as I mentioned 51 years, so that's 77 years we've existed. So that partnership is absolutely critical to ensuring that we continue to do the right thing on the breeding grounds and make a difference for waterfowl. With that, I want to thank Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for your partnership; for your ongoing support of conservation on the Canadian breeding grounds. The prairie pothole region in Canada is the breadbasket of waterfowl production for this continent. Your partnership in making that happen and continuing to support the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Ducks Unlimited and conservation work on the breeding grounds is critical and valued. In my last comments I'll say that what the breeding grounds look like today. We're a little drier than we've been for a while. I wouldn't say we're into the hardcore part of a drought, but we certainly are a lot drier than we have been. The true prairie part, the southern part of Saskatchewan and Alberta are fairly dry. It was quite dry this spring and so not a lot of habitat there for the, for the ducks coming up early in the spring. The parklands, which is just north of that south of the Boreal Forest, was a little bit wetter and has received significant rain

especially in Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan. So we are going to have bird production. It won't be, I don't believe what we've seen over the last number of years, but frankly some of the wetlands do need to dry out. So it's this cycle that's critical. The risk that we run is as things dry out, there is that risk that the agriculture will go after those ponds that are left. They can access those ponds, get ditches into them and we can lose more habitat. So we have to stay diligent continue to do this conservation work and make a difference on the breeding grounds. If you have any questions, I will be more than happy to answer.

Chairman Yakupzack: No questions from the Commission, we appreciate your presentation Dave, and I do have one public comment here who does not wish to speak, Mr. Charles Williams of the Louisiana Waterfowl Alliance is here, and notes that their organization is very interested in these waterfowl project reports.

Mr. Dave Kostersky: Excellent. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: So, thank you. Agenda Item No. 8. To hear and update on the White Fronted Goose Telemetry Project. Mr. Paul Link, presenting.

Mr. Paul Link: All right. Thanks, Chairman, members of the Commission. My name is Paul Link. I'm the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Coordinator here at Wildlife and Fisheries. And today I am here to give you an update on the White Fronted Goose Research Project that we started last fall. Since we do have a quite a few new faces in the room this morning, I'm going to again, go over a lot of the information that you saw at the last update before getting into the updates of what we've learned over the last winter and

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this spring. First briefly talk about the technology advancements. This project couldn't have come at a better time. Two years ago if we had wanted to do this project, we'd have been using the transmitter pictured on the left, which is a satellite PTT transmitter they are quite large, they are 80 grams, they're mounted via a backpack with a double-bodied loop harness system, that have relatively limited data capabilities. You can get four to seven locations per day. They're transmitted back through the satellites which are slow and expensive and they're just relatively cumbersome. The transmitter on the right is what we deployed last winter. It's cutting edge technology. These are the first wild birds to carry that transmitter in the wild. They collect the data via the same satellites, but then they transmit it through cellular tower networks, which allows to collect a lot more locations daily and then transmit it very quickly and efficiently through the cellular tower network. And they are also quite a bit cheaper. Believe it or not to. Again, moving on to the technology itself, these things are solar powered. Birds are incredibly lightweight they evolved for flight which is, weight you know, pretty important to minimize weight. So they have a solar battery, they have sub meter accuracy, which is very important for classifying locations and finding what these birds are doing. Again the duration of locations we can collect, we program these to collect locations every 30 minutes both day and night last winter. An important thing too they can store up to 45,000 locations on board in a hard drive. These things aren't in cell phone range as a lot of you guys are aware, and they breed and spend the summer in areas that hopefully will never have cell phone coverage, and they also collect a lot of important information that's previously not been able to be recorded. Abiotic and ambient data are

recorded every time those things log a lat and long. And, when, when the birds are in flight they have an accelerometer that allows them to, to generate at altitude speed the bearing of their flight, and a bunch of other, information that is probably not quite as critical to us at this point. And lastly, these transmitters since they are solar powered, they have a life expectancy of 3 to 4 years. So we're going to get this fall's migration and up to two more which they are going to allow us to look at migration stopovers, breeding ranges, filopatry, site fidelity and a whole bunch of other things that have previously been unknown to us. But first I had to catch them. These things aren't very easy catch. Primarily, because they won't get on bait like most other waterfowl will. That's pretty helpful when you can go dump a bag of grain out and get a bunch of bird's heads down on something. White fronts for some reason or other don't like a, a free handout, and they're also incredibly weary. Long live the smart birds, so they don't want to approach anything out of the ordinary. This is one particular set that I made on Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, that clump of vegetation there is a net box, that I designed for this project that allowed me to trap out in these wide-open habitats and hide the nets. Occasionally hid the nets a little bit too well. That clump of vegetation on the far right is a 40 by 50 net that's going to be coming out of a small box. Everything on the right half, the right half of the side of the picture would probably be killed and injured and everything on the left would probably have the net fly right over the top of them. So sometimes we hit them a little too well. But after about 8 hours of waiting for those birds to finally move off of that site, we were able to fire the net. This particular capture was 13 birds we marked, 11 total birds, all adults. Roughly three fourths females and the remainder males. We were able to determine age and sex, glue

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the transmitters on, hold for a few minutes, let them orient to their new jewelry and then release them back at their capture sites with their, their counterparts, usually within a half an hour. And then it was simply a matter of waiting for the data. I was also able to get visuals on a couple of these birds. And I was pretty happy to find out that they were acting normally a few days after letting these go I came across this bird here that was still, still with it pair, with its mate, and it's young were also in toe. They were about 10 yards beyond this and out of the spotting scope range, but they were acting pretty normally. Getting around pretty well so that was encouraging to see. And then it's simply a matter of waiting for those birds to fly back within range of a cell tower. This is what that data looks like, again. I don't expect you to see all this, but it's a pretty, pretty cumbersome large file. There is a lot of really basic things that are important in here. Like a date and time stamp, the lat and long but then also a lot of other things, the speed, the solar outlook, temperature, barometric pressure, lots of other things that we're going to be able to use analytically later down the road. It makes a little more sense when you pull out this information, in some kind of mapping software. This is what that one individual's bird looks like. The squares are stationary locations. When a bird is basically walking or resting, preening, doing some other kind of non-movement type activity and the triangles are birds in flight. Anything over 7 kilometers per hour. And then the lines connect to locations, so every point on here is 30 minutes apart. I'll go through a couple of examples of some birds. This was a bird named Seafly that marked near Thornwell in October. Shortly after marking her, she moved around between the Elton and Fenton area for a couple of weeks and then back down into the Thornwell area. On opening weekend of the coastal zone, she took off.

She apparently thought World War III was coming and got out of the coastal zone. Went up to the Monroe area up between Winnsboro and Monroe, hung out there for two weeks, and then on opening morning of the east zone, she again took off, heading north, northeast out of the Monroe area for Arkansas. You can see some of the data associated with her. She was at the, the time stamp on there is UTC that Universal time so you need to subtract 6 hours, so at 6:46 on that Saturday of opening morning of the east zone she was heading out 38 knots at 451 meters, getting pretty, pretty interesting information and she never returned to Louisiana after that she stayed north. Another bird named GS365 a couple of days after we marked her near Thornwell she took off to Stuttgart, flew nonstop to Stuttgart. Spent less than one day there, and came right back to the exact same field that we captured her in. Pretty remarkable movements, and that bird as well stuck around in Louisiana until opening weekend of the coastal zone. Went to that same general area near Monroe for just a few days and left Louisiana prior to the east zone opening. Spent another week or so near Lake Village, Arkansas and then bounced up to the northern MVA, eventually spending most of the winter in the Boot Hill, Missouri, but again, never came back to Louisiana throughout the winter. So where am I know. I've been working with Dr. Collier over at LSU on some neat home range maps. This one of the, the few birds that stayed in southwest Louisiana long enough to give us some data in the area that we were primarily interested in. These large polygons are 95 percent home range estimate maps and the smaller shaded areas within those polygons are the 50 percent core areas. And basically what I'm trying to show here is that the birds move around a lot more during the hunted time periods than they do during the split. They basically

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don't move during the split. They find their groceries. They're basically undisturbed, so they don't move around a whole lot. Not surprisingly. And perhaps the more important thing I'm trying to do right now is classify all these locations. I have roughly 60,000 locations on these 11 birds, from the time we let them go until they either went off line or left cell phone tower coverage. So I'm trying to identify every point. All of these 60,000 locations, primarily using remote sensing stuff, which I've learned has a fairly large error rate, which I'm going to be trying to work around trying to ground truth and to verify some of these locations down the road. But once we get all these locations classified, it's going to be pretty important for us. We're going to be able to go back and model the habitat use through time. Going back in and looking at historic data, but I don't think many of us are going to be surprised if we find that there is less capacity of the landscape to the winter white fronts now, as in the past. More importantly where are they are now? We had seven birds that survived the winter and made it back to Canada. This is the last locations that we had on those birds. You can see four of them are on the northern reaches of the prairie pothole region in Canada near the parklands, and three of them miraculously found cell tower range way up in the middle of nowhere. It's also pretty interesting to see where these things are going. Those three lines heading north are heading to very well establish breeding areas for white fronts. So we're pretty excited to see this fall when they start heading back south where they're going to, where they had spent the summer. And just to put this in perspective, where these birds are and in Central Canada right now, it's roughly the same distance from the Gulf Coast to the prairie Canada's. These things make tremendous movements; roughly 3,000 miles one-way. Of course they do this a

minimum of twice a year, plus all those other flights throughout the winter. So these things are really getting around a lot. So what about the others, we had seven that made it back to Canada this spring. We had two that I suspect were crippled and un-retrieved by hunters. I had two banded birds that were banded and captured with two birds that were radio marked that were called into the bird-banning lab and reported. I got the contact information for those hunters and called them and chatted with them a little bit and both of them had recalled pulling feathers or sailing birds off that they were unable to retrieve. So it seems less than coincidental that they went offline on the same day that birds that were captured and marked with them were killed. We recovered and redeployed one transmitter. We were able to find one transmitter laying in a soybean field near Brinkley, Arkansas. But I was able to send the coordinates to a friend and colleague there who was able to find that transmitter. We suspect it was crippled from a hunter as well. It was about 200 yards from a spread of decoys. and I also want to mention too that the published literature for crippling rates for geese runs from 25 to nearly 100 percent, so this is pretty typical of what we would expect to lose a couple of birds to hunting and crippling. I suspect we had one transmitter failure. One of these birds had a declining solar panel. We suspect it had a declining voltage over the couple days prior to it going offline. We don't know what happened with that. But we suspect a failure. And then we have one that we simply have no information leading us any indication of why it went off line, but lots of things happen to these. if they killed by a rapture, fly into a tower or something and, and land face down in the mud, they aren't going to charge or if they are out of cell phone tower we're just never going to hear from them again. But overall it's a pretty

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good rate to have 7 of 11 birds make it to the prairies. We're pretty excited about that. So our future plans, we are going to continue monitoring the seven birds. Hopefully they are all going to survive the summer and head back south with their young and all that data. We're also going to deploy 15 to 20 more units this fall. And then again, hopefully in the fall of 2017 and we have a whole host of analytical opportunities with this data. There is so, there's so much information coming in here that it's kind of hard to wrap our head around right now with what we have. But I'm hoping to find somebody with more time and more analytical capabilities than me down the road to help with this stuff. again, the, the, going to deploy more units for each of the next two years and there is quite a few new advancements in technology this year again that are going to allow us to get even more unprecedented information. They've been able to reduce the size of the transmitters by 5 grams. They've got a new microprocessor in them that is going to allow us to differentiate between different movements behaviors. They say that they are going to be able to tell us when a bird is actively foraging. When its neck is moving around in this particular behavior or when it's preening or sleeping or flying, so we're going to have all kinds of new energetics type stuff that we'll be able to do and time budget stuff done remotely through these transmitters. So pretty exciting stuff and lastly, I'd like to thank all of our donors that helped make this happen. All those transmitters were purchased by a private individuals with their own money who stepped up, probably not knowing how risky their investment would be. These transmitters again had never been deployed on birds. So basically like buying a fancy \$3,000.00 laptop computer and just throwing it in the air and hoping that you get something out of it. So again, we, we really

appreciate their support for making this happen and particularly Chad and Bart for their work get this project up and going off the ground. With that, I'll take any questions?

Chairman Yakupzack: No questions from the Commission, it appears Paul. I would just like to make a comment and thank you and Larry Reynolds. The entire waterfowl staff for taking on what appears to be a cutting edge investigation and study. We're proud of you all and proud of this department for being a leader in these wintering birds that are so dear to so many. Being a leader in these wintering birds, in research on their habits when they come down the flyway. Thank you. Moving on, we have Agenda Item No. 9 to consider a Declaration of Emergency for extended falconry season for Rails and Gallinules. Presenting, Mr. Steve Smith.

Mr. Steve Smith: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name's Steve Smith. I'm the WMA program manager for our wildlife division. I am also responsible for preparing and proposing our annual notice of intent for hunting season rules and regs. The notice of intent was proposed and adopted in April by you guys, and subsequently we discovered 1 error in the proposed and adopted migratory bird seasons and that was the extended falconry season for Rails and Gallinule. As you know, we are provided with a framework by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service each year within which we can adopt seasons. The proposed season which you adopted for extended falconry for Rails and Gallinule was off, erroneously, by 1 day, and this Declaration of Emergency would be a measure to correct that error, so with that I ask you to consider this Declaration of Emergency changing the extended falconry for Rails and Gallinule

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from November 2nd through January 31st to November 3rd through January 31st therefore placing that season within that allowable framework by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any questions?

Chairman Yakupzack:
Commissioner Courville?

Commissioner Courville: Run, run that, run those dates again that you're looking for?

Mr. Steve Smith: Okay. That, it would be a change. What was adopted is November 2nd

Commissioner Courville: Right.

Mr. Steve Smith: – through January 31, okay? We would change it to November 3rd through January 31. It would basically shorten it by 1 day.

Commissioner Courville: Okay the, the DE's saying November 1st that I'm reading.

Next Speaker: It's a, I'm sorry, it's effective, it will become effective November 1st. DEs are only good for a certain –

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Mr. Steve Smith: – period of time; therefore, it would have to become effective November 1st to carry through January 31.

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Mr. Steve Smith: But the actual date is November 3rd.

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Mr. Steve Smith: Yes sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any other question or discussion? Do we have a motion?

Commissioner Samanie: So Moved.

Chairman Yakupzack: Motion by Commissioner Samanie.

Commissioner Courville: Second.

Chairman Yakupzack: Second by Commissioner Courville. Any public comment on this matter? Seeing no public comment all those in favor?

All: I.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition the motion carries.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Smith. Agenda Item No. 10, to hear and update on the public comments on the black bass regulations on the Sabine River notice of intent presented May 5, 2016. Presenting is Mr. Alex Perret.

Mr. Alex Perret: Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission. My name is Alex Perret. I am the operations manager for Inland Fisheries here this morning just to report results of our public comment period that we had which was notice of intent to reduce the large-mouth bass regulations on the Lower Sabine River to 12 inches. We received a total of 2 comments during the public comment period. Both were favorable to the regulation change. One of the comments was made by a local bass tournament organizer and he was very much in favor of the change. He felt like it would allow them to have more events on that section of the river. According to the notice of intent, the secretary has the authority to finalize this rule and that will be our recommendation and I'll take any questions y'all have. That's it.

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Chairman Yakupzack: Any questions?
Seeing no questions, thank you Mr. Perret –

Mr. Alex Perret: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: – for your presentation. Do you have anything? Okay, moving along Agenda Item No. 11, to consider a notice of intent to establish the rules and regulations on the importation of cervid carcasses. Presenting is Mr. Johnathan Bordelon.

Mr. Johnathan Bordelon: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Commission. Today we are proposing for your consideration a cervid carcass importation ban. We define cervids as any animal or of the family cervidy including but not limited to whitetail deer, mule deer, elk, moose, caribou, fallow, axis, red and reindeer. The notice actually reads no person shall import, transport or possess any cervid carcass or part of a cervid carcass originating from outside of Louisiana with the following exceptions: Deboned meat, antlers, and clean skull plates with antlers, clean skulls without tissue attached, capes, tanned hides, finished taxidermy products and clean cervid teeth. Approved parts or deboned meat transported from other states must be legally possessed from the state it was taken. Approved parts and deboned meat from other states must contain a possession tag with the hunter's name, out-of-state license number, address, the species, date and location of harvest. Also cervids transported in or through the state in violation of the provisions of the ban shall be seized and disposed of in accordance of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries rules and regulations. So why propose this. One of the reasons we're proposing this and the primary reason is a disease known as chronic wasting disease. We'll refer to it as

CWD from this point. CWD is a neuro-degenerative disease affecting cervids. There is a small thumb drive that each of you are provided. There's actually some great information on there about chronic wasting disease. Dr. Lacour, Louisiana Partner Wildlife and Fisheries' veterinarian presented that to the Commission in April. Of course some of you here today weren't privy to that presentation so I went ahead and put that supplemental information for you to review at your leisure, but CWD it's basically a neural disease. There's prions basically, mutated proteins that are mis-folded. These proteins are actually shed into the environment and basically what happens with this disease is tiny holes are actually eaten into the brain so the animal at some point's going to become emaciated, it's going to become lethargic and it's going to eventually die, perish. What's so scary about this disease is that it persists in the environment without a host so that makes it very different from other diseases that are transmitted between wildlife. This is something that once it's on the landscape it's there for quite for some time. Environmental conditions are going to determine just how long but it's going to be a number of years. There's been cases where infected animals in captive facilities have been depopulated and the area basically void of captive cervids for some time then the area re-stocked and then after it re -stocked they basically come down with the disease again so we know that it persists in the environment and once we have it we're going to basically have to manage it over time so what we're attempting to do is prevent this and that's the method that we're choosing to employ here. A couple of other facts, 1 or 2 years before animals become symptomatic, so it's a slow progression as mentioned before, it's 100 percent fatal in cervids. Prevention is the only method of defense. There's only postpartum testing at

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this time which basically means we have to have a dead animal to get a positive or negative test. 23 states and 2 Canadian providences are infected. All of this data comes from the CWD Alliance. The 23, sometimes read 24, there's some debate and argument. There's some states that on their web site aren't included, because they've had maybe just in captive facilities and no further outbreaks outside of that facility but regardless, its 23 states is the accepted number including 2 Canadian provinces. What is LDWF's response to CWD? First we do have a CWD plan. We've had one back since the early 2000s. It was revised in 2016. In addition to that we have an importation ban for captive cervids. These are basically the live animals. That ban was first implemented by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Commission back in 1998 as a moratorium. It was renewed again in 2002 and in 2005 it was adopted in perpetuity so we basically don't allow live captive cervids in Louisiana. To back that up the Louisiana Department of Agriculture who regulates the captive cervid industry in Louisiana placed a moratorium on importation in 2012 so basically the borders are closed to live deer, lot, or live cervids from entering the state. One of the other things is we've done some diligent testing dating back to 2002, we've tested 7,870 cervids dating back to that time. Early on we were testing pretty much state-wide. We were just trying to determine if the disease was out there. Our sampling now has become much more focused and targeted. Basically we're testing urologic animals, animals that are symptomatic. We're also testing road kills. We're also testing animals in or adjacent to captive facilities since we deemed those to be the greatest threat. So the third thing or the next step is proposing an actual carcass importation ban. So basically what this is going to do is going to prohibit a hunter who

takes a deer from outside of Louisiana from bringing it in unless they meet those exceptions that we mentioned earlier. Arkansas and Texas are the latest states to test positive. Arkansas, their positives came in 2000 and 16, first from a hunter-harvested deer animal that appeared to be healthy. It was an elk in Newton County, Arkansas. It tested positive. Results came in to them in February. Subsequent to that they had a deer then once they found those two hunter-harvested samples, they intensively harvested animals as an agency within those areas and they turned out many more animals in addition to those hunter-harvested animals. The prevalence rate was actually quite high. At a rate so high, pretty comparable to what you see on the landscape when you've had CWD for a decade or so. So it basically just went undetected which is very scary. One thing I'll mention, they had a pretty diligent testing program too. They had tested over 7 000 animals before they ever got a positive which is very close to what we tested with 7800. So, it's just a matter of finding it in some cases and that was the case in Arkansas. What we're proposing here today, the carcass importation ban, this isn't anything new. We're not the first to bring this to the table. Right now 36 of 50 states have some form of a carcass importation ban. Information in your packet may say 35 and the reason is Mississippi's actually did not go into effect until late last week. So at the time I put the information together, it was a proposal they had and it was actually finalized as of last week. So they are the 36th and we're proposing to be the 37th state with some form of a carcass importation ban. And it's 23 of 29 eastern states. As mentioned before, CWD, it slowly moves in a wild deer herd. But really the big fear where it hopscotches and jumps across the state is when a live animal is moved and then obviously it's shedding those prions

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into the environment or a cervid carcass is moved and those prions are disposed into the environment where they then can be up taken by cervids and re-infect a new population. If anyone has any questions, I'd be happy to answer them but there's the information in your packets, includes everything I presented including some supplemental information about chronic wasting disease, in addition to some information on Arkansas.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Sunseri.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Johnathan, is there any kind of way to treat these animals that are infected with CWD?

Johnathan Bordelon.: No, sir. There's actually no treatment for CWD. Once the animals contract the disease, it's going to be fatal. There's not really even an easy decontamination. This is something that you cannot even kill in the environment with bleach. It takes high heat or an alkaline bath, so it's not necessarily a living organism. It's a mutated protein which can be transmitted or taken up by other animals. It's shed into the environment by urine and feces. You know, that's the primary mode at which it's shed into the environment. And you know, obviously it's also going to be part of that carcass so if that carcass is left to decay in the environment then those prions at that point will become part of the environment and they can actually then at that point infect other animals. So there is no treatment for CWD nor is there any type of vaccine or prevention. You know, your only real tool or method for dealing with the disease is simply just trying to prevent it. So, obviously we're just promoting a preventative measure, in hopes to minimize

the risk of deer in our state being infected by the disease.

Commissioner Sunseri: Is there any way to treat an area that's found to be infected?

Johnathan Bordelon: No, sir. There isn't. Once it's in the environment, it's going to be there.

Commissioner Sunseri: And there's no, and is anyone doing any kind of work on trying to see about eliminating it from the environment or –

Johnathan Bordelon: Yes, sir. There's extensive research being done on chronic wasting disease but at this time there's no practical means of eliminating it from the environment. Obviously it can be in a laboratory setting. It can be destroyed under high heat. For instance, a carcass could be burned up at a high temperature in an incinerator and that will actually destroy the prions. But, you know, those methods obviously just can't be applied to the landscape.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you.

Johnathan Bordelon: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman, I –

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Bordelon, I got a couple of questions if you can bear with me. So in this notice of intent, so will it be department staff who's going to bear the responsibility of inspecting – how, sort of how do you – so if you develop this ban

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on importation, how do you police it or enforce it? What's that going to look like? Are you going to come to my house? Are you going to go to a taxidermy? How are you going to know?

Johnathan Bordelon: No. Obviously that won't really be a practical approach of enforcing it. We'll have the regulation out there in hopes that the majority of people –

Commissioner Courville: Discourage

Next Speaker: – actually will abide by this rule.

Commissioner Courville Okay.

Johnathan Bordelon: And then if a carcass is observed by our enforcement staff and it doesn't meet any of the provisions listed as far as the tagging requirements, and it's deemed to be a deer from out of state, then they'll have a mean or mechanism for confiscating that animal and removing it, you know, or removing that risk from our landscape or from Louisiana.

Commissioner Courville: So, it, just I sort of playing it out, you would anticipate that a lot of this burden is going to fall on a taxidermist and the taxidermists throughout this state.

Johnathan Bordelon: Certainly.

Commissioner Courville: So an obvious and an easy place to go and sport around and look for this stuff is going to be there. What burden then falls on the taxidermists of this state that if, I'm, and I for some reason go out of state. I shoot a nice deer. I bring it to a taxidermist, whoever. He's got it in his freezer and its sitting' there and maybe I tagged. Maybe I went through the right procedures. Maybe I didn't, but now

it's in his freezer. It's got my tag on it. Does he bear any burden if you will, to ensure that he's not accepting carcasses that will violate the provisions in this new rule that we're considering?

Johnathan Bordelon: And that may be a better question for our legal counsel, or possibly even enforcement but the responsibility would still – I mean, the regulation, would be accepting, if he accepted an intact carcass that didn't meet the exceptions listed, he would be accepting an animal that was basically illegally brought into the state in a violation of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Rules and Regulations.

Commissioner Courville: No, and I don't need an answer today, but it's something as we go through the comment period, we need to be able to answer that because, if I'm a taxidermist, I'm going to want to know that answer.

Johnathan Bordelon: Certainly.

Commissioner Courville: And then beyond that, as an assumed taxidermist, if you will, how am I going to be able to know that, you know, I'm in the business to make money obviously, and I get this kid. I'm assuming these guys are pretty skilled at knowing what isn't parts that would be accepted and parts that wouldn't be accepted, at some point there's going to be some gray area there. Is there going to be any kind of a material where these guys can have a good sense that, yeah, this is one that is in good shape or this is one I need to be a little suspicious of. At some point I think enforcement of this is going to be problematic. I guess I'll disclose where I intend to vote on this thing. I'm in favor of this. I just think there's a lot of tentacles that are going to come with this that we need to

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flesh out so that we can provide some level of comfort because I know a lot of people, probably some people in this room, will go out of state and harvest a nice deer. And they're going to want to do something with it so either they'd have to get it, establishing some protocols, if you, or some guidance for the hunter that, all right, I go in there. I kill it, maybe I need to go in, and I shoot it in Mississippi. I need to get a pressure washer. You know, some logical things that the everyday hunter can do to make sure he doesn't get himself in a bad position when he brings that animal back into Louisiana would be beneficial to make this work. My other quick questions would be, from a transportation of chronic wasting disease and these prions, is there any other mechanism by which they can come in outside of a live animal or a dead animal into this state? Can some other conduit bring it over? Like if a coyote eats a deer and he brings it over. Can it be transported by those means as well?

Johnathan Bordelon: The prions themselves, the likelihood would obviously come from the methods that you've mentioned. You know, and you talk about shedding those into the environment. It would have to be something that would be loaded up on a trailer and transported.

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Johnathan Bordelon: So, —

Commissioner Courville: So we're not worried, it's this —

Johnathan Bordelon: Right.

Commissioner Courville: It's mainly about moving deer parts.

Johnathan Bordelon: It's about moving deer, live deer or, in this case, deer parts that could potentially be infected.

Commissioner Courville: And then, maybe my second to last, the sites in Arkansas, were those on sort of public private land or were those in captive pens?

Johnathan Bordelon: No, those were actually free ranging deer.

Commissioner Courville: Free ranging —

Johnathan Bordelon: In Arkansas there is no captive industries.

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Johnathan Bordelon: So there was deer pen industry or cervid, captive cervid industry in Arkansas.

Commissioner Courville: Same thing in Texas from the sites that tested positive there?

Johnathan Bordelon: Well, Texas was different. Texas was actually captive cervids. So in Texas their positives were actually within pens.

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Johnathan Bordelon: The scary part with that is the trace-outs from those pens. Some of those, the one particular positive in 2015, there were more than 19 trace-outs. Basically meaning animals from that infected pen that were moved from that pen to other pens and when you looked at the map the scary part is some of those counties were actually very close to our eastern, I mean, our western boundary or the east Texas boundary. So, that's kind of the worry with that. The fact that's in the

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captive herd in Texas to some degree makes it even scarier, because of the movement of those animals across the state and the slow detectability in that. So, certainly, because it's in the captive cervids in Texas doesn't make it any less fearful that what we're seeing in Arkansas.

Commissioner Courville: And then my very last question, captive pens here in Louisiana, they are allowed to move a captive animal within state boundaries, correct?

Johnathan Bordelon: Within the state but you can't transport deer in or out of Louisiana right now.

Commissioner Courville: And the captive trade operation if you will, is overlooked by Department of Ag and Forestry.

Johnathan Bordelon: LA Department of Ag and Forestry.

Commissioner Courville: And what kind of authority does the department have in that regard and how do we get a sense for how well that captive pen is being, the oversight if you will. We could have a sense for how

Johnathan Bordelon: The Department of Ag, obviously, they are the regulatory agency. We do have some oversight into new permits but the participants that are in the program, they're basically just one on one dealing with the Department of Ag. So we're more or less out of the loop with those guys. Where we are in the loop is within the new permits. They basically have to meet certain provisions and we actually inspect those facilities prior to them being permitted. and that's something that dates back that there was even a lawsuit filed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries against the Department of

Agriculture early on, because of the division or the loss of oversight, but unfortunately you know we weren't successful in that endeavor and right now, Department of Ag is the regulatory agency for the captive cervid industry in Louisiana.

Commissioner Courville: I lied, last question. Is there going to, is there an open exchange currently between the Department of Ag and Forestry and data sharing if you will with Wildlife and Fisheries or is there a bit of a gap? Do we need to bridge that gap?

Johnathan Bordelon: No, we do work with them obviously and it's, you know, it's to our advantage to do so that information obviously is very important and we've attended meetings with them and we do have open dialogue with them. They provide us information upon request, so we do receive information on number of pens, where they're located, all of that information is shared.

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Johnathan Bordelon: But, but we're out of that regulatory loop with the exception of new proposed pens.

Commissioner Courville: Okay. Thanks.

Johnathan Bordelon: Yes sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any other questions? Do we have a motion to –

Audience member: I'm sorry, I didn't fill out a card.

Chairman Yakupzack: But look, let's wait for them to see if the motion is passed please. We have a motion?

Commissioner Courville: Yeah. So Moved

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Commissioner Bill Hogan: Second

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay, so, motion to approve the NOI and second. Any public comment. Sir, would you like to come forward? State your name and address please.

Scott Rainey: Thank you very much. My name is Scott Rainey; I live in Lafayette. My question is really about transportation. If I hunt in Texas I have to be able to prove the sex of the deer that I'm transporting through Texas. A tag by itself is not considered adequate proof; I have to have the skull of the deer. If I cannot carry the skull, how do I comply with laws to transport that animal?

Mr. Johnathan Bordelon: Thank you. And that's a very great question. Very valid, something we've even discussed and was brought up our enforcement section. Within that provision there are certain exceptions. One of the exceptions obviously is the clean skull cap. So you can have the head, you can have the skull cap, you can have the antler, you're just not going to be able to possess the brain, the spinal column, the bone tissue. The only bone exception obviously would be the skull itself. So you would be able to possess a clean skull or a clean skull cap or antlers but you will not be able to possess as this proposal has been mentioned in this form, you will not be able to possess the head intact.

Scott Rainey: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: You have a public comment? I'll let you up this time. Next time we need to make sure we fill out cards but, no, come on up. Come on up. State your name and address please. Public participation is always very important. We

appreciate you all coming, we just got to keep some order going.

Steve Leonard: I understand Mr. Chairman. Steve Leonard, Clinton, Louisiana. I killed my first bull elk last year in Colorado. And do it on my own. That's problematic to get the brains out of that thing if I want to mount that animal and I wish, I hope we can think through this is all I ask. Just to think through this thing. There's going to be some issues of getting stuff back into the state. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you for your comment and I think that's what the NOI process is about is to encourage more comment and to fully vet the motion and to see if there could use amendment or further thought. Hearing no further public comment, motion is on the table by Commissioner Courville with a second by Commissioner Hogan to approve this NOI. All in favor?

All: I.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition motion passes. Agenda Item No. 12 to consider a notice of intent to prohibit commercial harvest of blue crabs during the 30-day period for the years 2017 through 2019; and restrict the commercial harvest of immature female blue crabs for the years 2017 through 2019. Presenting is biologist Jeff Marx.

Jeff Marx: Thank you Mr. Chairman and Commissioners for some of your time this morning. I'm here to present you guys with a notice of intent for blue crab seasonal closure and some restrictions on harvest of immature females. Basically the problem our 2016 stock assessments completed earlier this year, the data was through the year 2015 so it's the most recent we can get.

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We were very close to the over fishing benchmark established by the department and we had basically crossed an over fish benchmark. So, just a little visual of what that looks like. The last dot on the right, the top is your fishing mortality. That's how many we are removing, how many fish or crabs in this case are being removed; that's your fish immortality. The red lines on both graphs are limits. That's a place you do not want to cross. The yellow lines are our tags; we're okay with bouncing around those lines. For the fish immortality you can see there in the 90s, there was hovering around that what would be our targets for fish immortality. If you look at the bottom graph that is the exploitable biomass; that's how many individuals are out there. That's the millions of pounds of fish out there. We unfortunately crossed our limit in 2015. The red line, that limit comes from the three lowest years, of biomass that we have seen, and we have seen recovery past that. So it's not panic mode but it is something we are concerned about. We don't want to dip down there too low and then have irreversible effects of any kind. And that's that point right there. That's bad. So the policies that we have in place right now. So, I guess 3 or 4 years ago when dealing with our sustainability, blue crab sustainability, we had a policy in act that said should the fish immortality or exploitable biomass exceed the over fish or over-fishing limits. Okay, well, check box No. 1. LDWF will bring to the Commission a series of management options for the commissioners to review and act upon. So, basically those options are for review are going to include provisions for emergency closures, time-based closures, spatial closures, closure basically. The authority that the Commission has to do this is in 56:6, it says that we have the rules and regulations as long as we go through the administrative procedures act, set seasons,

times, places, size limits, quotas, daily take and possession limits based upon biological and technical data. So, the management actions that we are recommending in this notice of intent; basically there will be a closure of the commercial and trap fishery for 30 days beginning on the third Monday in February. I'll get to that in a second, I'll cover why we went with the third Monday. That when we say commercial harvest that means crab traps, which means trawls, basically no harvest, no commercial harvest of blue crabs for that 30 days. We also said the reason with closure of the trap fishery is so that recreational traps have to be removed from the water as well as commercial traps. The second management option that we are presenting to you is the restriction on immature female harvest. Basically you wouldn't be allowed to harvest an immature female blue crab unless it was for the soft shell production basically. It wouldn't be allowed to be sold in the hard crab fishery. Now both of these actions are for three years 2017, 2018, 2019. It's the sunset basically, the input we got from the crab task force from talking to other folks, was that they would like to see a sunset on these provisions and then we can come back and then evaluate what has or hasn't happened as a result of these actions. So what we will be looking at for the effects of a closure. It's a little hard to say but if we look at the last three years average landings has been around 41 million pounds. A 30-day closure basically is looking at a 3 percent immediate reduction in landings or about 1.2 million pounds. Now, that is not exactly true; it's not like if we don't catch those crabs in that 30 days that we won't catch them after the closure is over with. You will probably have an improved product if the crabs are not harvested at that time they have a chance to grow, get bigger; you'll basically increase the yield per recruit in that thing but they're not unavailable basically is what I'm trying

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to get at. Just because we say we're going to close for 30 days and that 1.2 million pounds harvested is gone basically, it's not really gone. It may be harvested later. But it gives those animals a chance to escape. Now, why we went with the third Monday. It's easier to remember than trying to go with trying to rotate a date around, trying to worry about when Ash Wednesday is, when Lent is, so basically, here's a graph or a table that depicts when Ash Wednesday would be and get how many Lent fishing days there are basically on the right-hand side. You know, in those occurrences in 2017 to 2019 when Ash Wednesday doesn't start 'till March you're really only looking at a couple of weeks in March where you're unable to harvest. 2018, unfortunately it looks like Ash Wednesday's very early, it's on Valentine's Day, February 14 but there are still 17 fishing days within Lent there. Now, of course, within the regulations that we have in place already, the department has the authority through the Commission to close, for a 16-day consecutive period, any time between February 1 and March 31 for derelict crab trap cleanups. And at that point we are actually able to remove traps, during that period, that 16 day period. So what would some effects be from the immature female harvest? Basically it's some of the numbers that we've looked at through our bycatch studies, things like that, is that approximately reduced landings 5 percent, or 2 million pounds; this isn't going to have an effect on busters, peelers that the soft shell industry is still allowed to harvest them just like they are at this point for undersized crabs. You know, if you can have an allowance of that if it's white line or later in the soft shell process. Crabs would still be available. Again, it's not like these immature crabs won't ever become mature female crabs. They will eventually get to maturity. The thing is that we're allowing them a greater chance to get to maturity and

to perhaps get offshore and become a little harder to get and get contribute to our spawning stock of female blue crabs. That's the quick, the dirty there of what you have before you, but, if you have any questions I'd be glad to take them.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any questions or discussion?

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman –

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville.

Commissioner Courville: If we could, maybe we could hear from the public in advance. I think we have a lot of people who want to comment.

Chairman Yakupzack: I've got three comment cards.

Commissioner Courville: Let's hear from those guys and then give them another opportunity after, if we decide to move forward on that.

Chairman Yakupzack: I'm happy to offer public comment before a motion is made. First card I have here, would like to speak, in person, indicates that they are against the proposal, Mr. Whitney Curole, you want to come forward? Please, state your name and address.

Whitney Curole: Yes, my name is Whitney Curole, 245 Highway 631, Des Allemands, Louisiana. Alright, I'm just against it, man, and the reason I'm against it is I started fishing when I was a kid man, and now I buy crabs, I box crabs, I also have a retail business in Baton Rouge and, closing at 30 days would put a real lick on me. I have, right now I have eight people employed and, I mean, I don't really know, I guess that

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would put us all in the unemployment line, you know. As far as the virgin female crabs, we've caught them our whole life and, you say that's not going to change anything because it's good for the busters, but required, and when you get checked by wildlife and fisheries in the boat, it's got to, there's got to be more busters on the box. And, I mean, you know, to be in reality with the law, you could put 20 boxes in your boat, write busters on them, and they could be legal. I've been stopped many times by Wildlife and Fisheries and they don't actually know what a buster is. So, I mean, you could put 20 crates on the boat that say busters on it and legally still be good with the law that they're proposing. I'm just against it, I'm against closing the season; it would hurt my business out and I'm against taking the female, not taking, closing the female crabs also.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay. Thank you for your comment.

Whitney Curole: Yes sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Next comment card is Mr. George Jackson. Please state your name and address. We're going to take a second during this pause to remind everyone if you wish to speak on any of these remaining items, and please fill out a white card and get it Ms. Wendy over here at the end of the table. Thank you. Mr. Jackson.

Mr. George Jackson: George Jackson, 618 Floresaint, St. Bernard Parish. I'm for getting rid of the maiden crab, but I'm against the closure because I think it's going to hurt the industry; because, they're going to go look somewhere else for product, while its closed, it's going to fall in the Lent season, and, that, and I was for closing it at a different time of the year but I don't think they want it that way. Like right now, the

prices of the crabs is going down. I figured it would have been better for September and October but they don't feel like its better this time of the year. And that's about all I got to say about it.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you Mr. Jackson. A final comment card, from the representing Louisiana Crab Task Force, Mr. Pete Gerica. Gerica, I'm sorry. You're handwriting's about like mine.

Mr. Pete Gerica: Yes. Yeah, Pete Gerica, New Orleans, Louisiana. I been fishing for my whole life. I'm 63 years old. The task force, you know, we talked about things that we have to do and we all see that there's something has to be done. I mean, you know, when you get to a point where you got so many traps in the water, because that seemed to be the answer to getting more crabs is not producing more crabs but putting more traps in the water and just clean out what you got. So that's why we're in a problem we in right now. So, you know, we had a couple of votes on the thing and it was always like, you know, 7 to 4, and then maybe 2 abstained or 1 abstained. So, I mean, it seems to be we have to start somewhere, this is the best place to start it; we're only going to do it for three years with a sunset. My experience is whenever we had closures that was nature closes, like with Hurricane Katrina and any of the storms, if you laid off of them for a month or so, you always came back with better production. I mean, it's just common sense. If you get another month of growth you're going to make more money because you have more pounds there. So, I appreciate everybody voting' for it.

Commissioner Bobby Samanie: Of course if, Mr. Gerica, were there any other options that y'all looked at while on the crab task force and what were they?

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Pete Gerica: We've been looking' at different things. I mean, you know, everybody'd like to see less traps in the water but we haven't come up with a concrete way of doing that. I mean, you know, how's enforcement do it, how do you, how do you know what, how many traps a man has in the water? We talked to people from Virginia and other places and they really haven't got a handle on, you know, how do you limit the number of traps in the water. We also talked about changing sizes. If you moved up to 5 1/2-inch crab, you'd probably get a lot-better yield, you know? Now some people say it would be bad for the picking houses but I know pickers in Alabama and, you know, throughout the different areas that they have pickers and, you know, they want a better yield. I mean, you know, if they can get a better yield out of the crab, they can get a better price for them, you know? So, you know, we need to do something and there's just so many options we have that we can take at this time. You know, nobody's in favor of limiting people, you know, so if you're not limiting the people, you're not limiting the traps, you've got to limit some time. It's the only way I know how to manage the system.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay, thank you.

Pete Gerica: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any other questions? Discussion? Commissioner Sunseri?

Commissioner Al Sunseri: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move this favorably.

Chairman Bart Yakupzack: Motion to approve the notice of intent as proposed by Mr. Marx?

Commissioner Courville: Second.

Chairman Yakupzack: A second by Commissioner Courville. Note that the motion was by Commissioner Sunseri. We held public comment first. Is there any additional public comment? Seeing none, all those in favor?

Commissioner Al Sunseri: Mr. Chairman, if I just may say, I, have difficulty with limiting you know, putting so many years on it. And I understand it, the task, the crab task force went through this. There's a lot of people that, that had opportunities to talk. The vote was, you know, almost, unanimous, and with it being that, that said, I, you know, I just feel that there's been a lot of scrutiny over this situation and, and something needs to be done according to those people within the industry. So, I just wanted to make that clear to the public out here as well as to the commissioners and the department. I got concerns about 3 years. I'd rather see less than that but, this is what they chose to do. So, I'd like to move that favorably. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. The motion is, is, is made and seconded. All those in favor?

All Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, motion carries.

Mr. Jeff Marx: Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Agenda item Number 13, to hear a presentation on information relating to the management of red snapper and related costs. Presenting is assistant secretary Mr. Patrick Banks.

Mr. Patrick Banks: Thank you, thank you

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Mr. Chairman. Appreciate the opportunity. This is the first time I've been able to address the Commission since I was put into this position and I'll tell you, it's been an interesting 5 months. And if I look older, it's because I am. What you guys requested that we provide some information this past Friday on the, the related costs of red snapper management in the gulf. Certainly this has been a big topic of conversation for quite some time; several proposals for regional management for red snapper to be given to the states. Over the years it, it hadn't seemed to make it through either Congress or the Gulf Council so far. And we're still pressing forward with trying to do something for regional management at the council level. And, apparently that has, certainly had the topic back in front of everybody and, and back on everybody's radar. And so I appreciate the off, the opportunity to come and give you some of the, the cost-related information that we feel would be necessary if the authority for red snapper management came to the state and would remove federal funding from that equation. So these costs have to do with, with the state management of that species with no involvement from the federal government whatsoever. So when you manage a species, as y'all well know, it's not just about one piece of the management pie which is any number of those listed above. We certainly have Fisheries-dependent data that must be collected when we manage a species. And the La Creel program that's in place right now is a fully funded program. It was funded through an act of the legislature a few years ago, to increase the salt water license fees by \$7.50 and that generated all the money we need to run La Creel. Now La Creel is a Fisheries-dependent piece of data that's collected for on our charter for hire as well as our private anglers. That's not how we collect Fisheries-dependent data on commercial catches. So we would have,

that would be another piece of Fisheries-dependent data that we would have to fund. And we do that through the trip ticket program and that's funded through the federal government. Our other piece of information that we would need from a management stand point in order to manage a species, any species including red snapper, would be our Fisheries-independent data. So think about your scientific sampling that it takes. When we go out and sample the, the animals in the, in the nature; determine sizes, determine the reproductive ability of those animals sample different habitats; try to get a biomass estimate basically, the number of fish that're in the water. An, another big part of, of this particular species management that's performed by the federal government, is an understanding of juvenile mortality that's created through our shrimp trawl fishery. So we would have to replace that sampling as well, as part of our in, independent sampling and have to perform shrimp trawl by-catch studies. And that's a big part of, of that Fisheries-independent cost estimate of the \$6 million. Of course all this data comes in. Right now all of that data comes in and is, and is managed by the federal government. We collect some of it for them but we send it to them, they manage it. We would, we would take over management of all of that, and we have an estimate, estimated cost for that in Year 1. Another big thing that the federal government does is, they have a stock assessment team that, that does stock assessments on red snapper, grouper, and all, all different kinds of species. We would have to have a team to do that as well. So it, it takes a team of scientists, you know, a lot of time and effort to work on a stock assessment, a true stock assessment of fin fish. And so we estimate about \$300,000.00 there for the stock assessment team to work on all of this data. And then of course we have some administrative support functions

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that would be required and so we're looking at a biological total of about \$9 million in Year 1, if you add enforcement in there, which was estimated at about a million dollars to enforce out to 200 miles, you're looking at an overall Year 1 cost of about \$10 million. Now certainly in Years 2 through 5, that cost will be lowered. We're, would anticipate only needing to do a stock assessment every 3 to 5 years. We're, we're estimating every 5 years right here as, as the bare minimum. So a large portion of the fisheries-independent data collection would not have to be done in those interim years, but then it would have to be repeated in, in Year 6. So, yeah, this is the Year 1 cost. Just recognize that in Years 2 through 5, it'll be a little-bit less and that's the estimate that we came up with over the last, whatever, 72 hours since you guys instructed us to, to put this information together. And I'll be happy to answer any questions before we move on to the next portion of the presentation.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Sunseri?

Chairman Sunseri: You said this is Year 1. What would 2 and 3; have y'all gone that far – to see what that would be?

Mr. Banks: Yeah, year, Year 2 would end, end up being about, well in the biological, now enforcement is the same no matter, no matter what –

Chairman Sunseri: Right.

Mr. Banks: – year it is. But biological total, we would be down in about the \$4 million range on Years 2 through 5.

Chairman Sunseri: Thank you
Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville?

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of what we did on the last agenda item, perhaps we have some people in the public who want –

Chairman Yakupzack: OK.

Commissioner Courville: – to comment on this or are we not there yet?

Chairman Yakupzack: Well, –

Chairman Yakupzack: Yeah, he's not quite done with his presentation.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay.

Commissioner Courville: Well then I have, in, in that regard then, I do have a couple of questions.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay.

Commissioner Courville: how much do the feds spend now on this issue? Do we have a handle on it? Is it 10-point –

Mr. Banks: I, –

Commissioner Courville: – something million?

Mr. Banks: – I do not

Commissioner Courville: Do you have a sense on what it costs them?

Mr. Banks: No, unfortunately, I don't have an idea of what they spend. They, they send a boat out and they sample all species, of course, and red snapper being one of them. Or they hire us to go out and say, and sample all species, red snapper being one of

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them. So I don't know that they know how much they would spend on just red snapper if they just had to do red snapper. Certainly the bill that's before Congress right now does not have a CBO score; that would be very helpful for us to know what, what they would spend on managing just red snapper but unfortunately we don't have that estimate right now.

Commissioner Courville: Is it, is it safe to assume that in the event this were to come down and, and be our responsibility that the feds are going continue to sample everything else that they're currently sampling though, correct?

Mr. Banks: As I understand from, from speaking with them, they would still send their ships out to go and, and sample way offshore like they're –

Commissioner Courville: They just close –

Mr. Banks: they're doing now.

Commissioner Courville: their eyes when they saw snapper.

Mr. Banks: That's, that's the best guess they can give me.

Mr. Banks: And, and they – and so they would not be able to provide us any of that information.

Commissioner Courville: You mentioned the shrimp trawl by-catch, I assume they're not only looking at snapper during that effort, is, is that, is that a fair assessment?

Mr. Banks: That's right, they're –

Commissioner Courville: So –

Mr. Banks: – they're –

Commissioner Courville: – is it safe to assume they would continue to collect that data?

Mr. Banks: Our hope would be that they would collect that and we could request it.

Commissioner Courville: But under a Freedom of Information Act.

Mr. Banks: Right, and say, "Well, we're not going to use it for snapper so that we could still get it" and they wouldn't, they wouldn't be violating the, the, you know, no funds are spent on snapper mandate, you know, and so, you know, but we can't, we can't assume that at this point so that's why that \$6.4 million includes if we had to go out and do that shrimp survey ourselves.

Commissioner Courville: Okay, and then, I think maybe my last question is, do we have a, a, a sense for how much we currently spend, managing snapper out to 9 miles in our current budget?

Mr. Banks: In our current budget we spent – what'd we do for snapper right now is Fisheries dependent data through La Creel and, and that's –

Commissioner Courville: So we're spending about 1.8 million.

Mr. Banks: Well, 1.7 is what we've spent on La Creel in this past fiscal year.

Commissioner Courville: But –

Mr. Banks: So remember that Fisheries dependent is La Creel and, and other Fisheries dependent data collections which brings it up to 1.8.

Commissioner Courville: And we're not doing any data management, I would

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assume the administrative support would be somewhat similar although expanded and then we're obviously enforcing it too, so, but we don't, is that sort of all in there, uh? The, I guess where I'm going with it, Patrick, and you know what it is, is how much incremental money are we sort of considering and maybe we're not there yet, uh –

Mr. Banks: Well, a, a lot of this would be – now I can't speak for enforcement – but a lot of this would be extra work that we would have to do. For example, Fisheries independent data collection, if we can't get that data from the federal government, we have to hire a ship, put our people onboard and we have to go out and take that data, and we have to bring it back and we have to crunch it, we have to analyze it. So, you know, that's, that's new efforts that we would have to put together to go and do that, that work if we had to do a, a, a brand new stock assessment.

Commissioner Courville: okay, but, I mean, anybody can ask anybody for anything these days –

Mr. Banks: Yeah well maybe so –

Commissioner Courville: – unless we've switched our form of government to some other form outside of democracy, it, and it'd be nice to know what, what they spend if we can figure that out at some point.

Mr. Banks: Yeah, that, we, we're hoping to have a, a CBO score of the bill which would help us understand that.

Commissioner Courville: Um –

Chairman Yakupzack: 'Cause –

Commissioner Courville: – and, and just to clarify, you, you sort of, obviously you've been working to develop these numbers, but you mentioned that you had about, you've sort of settled on this in the most, in about 72 hours plus or minus?

Mr. Banks: Right and that, which was a group of about five people working almost around the clock trying to put this all together. Lots of conversations amongst staff, amongst different sections of our Fisheries on how much it costs to go offshore, how much work we do, calls to the feds about what they do, how they do it, what we would have to replace, things like that, so it was a –

Commissioner Courville: Okay.

Mr. Banks: – it was a –

Commissioner Courville: Okay, thanks.

Mr. Banks: – a large effort.

Commissioner Courville: That's all I have for now.

Chairman Yakupzack: Yeah and I'll, I know you – got a thick packet here and you got plenty of present, presenting to do, you got more to talk about but just since that's come up now three times about the 72 hours, I think it's important to recognize for this commission that the questions about related costs started on the, the 21st when the Commission, the Commission, no, I began receiving calls from commissioners on that day and so thank you very much for working very hard over the last 72 hours to prepare this for presentation, but we, we, we've, this has all been a topic for now nearly 3 weeks and, and to, to receive the agenda on Thursday and for it not to have a presentation of any sort about this was a

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little surprising and I got call after call from, from these guys saying we weren't going to hear about this and so that's why at their request the agenda it was add, was, item was added. So, I certainly appreciate your hard work and sorry that your, your holiday was, was compromised but I do want to, did want to recognize that point.

Mr. Banks: Well I, I'll tell you, my holiday was not compromised, thank goodness, but you're, you're right, we, we have been talking about calls for several weeks now and we were able to put together a rough cost estimate several weeks ago but this, to present it to you guys, we knew we had to have every bit of meat on the bone that we could possibly get at this time and, and that's the difference between the general cost back-of-the-napkin type effort we did a few weeks ago and this one and, you know, I knew that y'all would have a lot more questions at this point.

Secretary Melancon: Yeah, and, and if I might, um –

Chairman Yakupzack: Secretary.

Secretary Melancon: – back on the 20th we had put some rough cost estimates but everyone kept challenging our cost estimates, so we finally after asking the, finance and management group to try to give us numbers, they kept trying to figure out where they were coded, where they came from, what the actual numbers were, we came to the conclusion that we weren't really going to have solid numbers to give you or didn't really have, other than "we think this is what it is", so it wasn't that it just got put together in 72 hours ago, it was, because we didn't want to come here and have questioned the numbers that we had, we wanted to try and give you something

that we thought we could basically put out solid and say "here's the numbers", so.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you.

Mr. McClinton: Chairman, commissioners, Bryan McClinton, Undersecretary Wildlife and Fisheries, I was asked part of this presentation to kinda give a, a fiscal update on, as part of this, on the cost and how it impacted the department. A couple of you have, have, we've discussed this in the past so this is not going to be new information to everybody but I'm talking about the conservation fund. The conservation fund is the largest funding source at 63 percent of kinda the department's expenditures, it's what can be expended that, that doesn't have a statutory dedicated or a federal nexus on it to where it, it has to be spent on certain things so that's the majority of enforcement, the majority if anything doesn't fit within something else, so it, the, the assumption is without, the federal dollars, that's where the brunt of it, the additional costs that would come in would, would impact the conservation fund – and I'm trying to see how I get this thing to scroll, sorry. This is a very brief projection of the conservation fund. You'll see 15/16 still projected; that's, because we're still receiving invoices and some of those are grant related, we'll draw that federal dollars down so revenues may go up, expenditures may go up, that's kinda where we're at right now. You can see as we project out, I'm currently projecting and - , when you see your presentation to me for the new commissioners, always do this as well, at 20-21, we look like we're going to be needing general fund to exist which is a 4-year, 4-year out projection. So, and the question, also I'd like to know, I'm on this page at bottom, is reductions that have occurred, usually mid-year budget reductions, because the state's at a deficit and they're allowed to take 5 percent of our

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statutory dedicated funding so that's what some of those reductions are at the bottom. You can see, I'm not projecting any of that but I'm going to address it a little bit later. The, this is the conservation revenue. The top line is total department, the total revenue within the conservation fund. That secondary line that's right below it that has a very similar shape is our mineral revenue. The third line down is recreational hunting and fishing licenses. The bottom two lines are commercial and fishing licenses. The majority, please note the majority of that funding goes to commercial, to commercial interested, statutory dedications, that's why there's not a huge amount that goes to the conservation fund and the other is boat registration and other permits and things that are sold. The reason I wanted to show you this to show how dependent we are on a mineral revenue and one of the reasons that we're currently in the situation we're in, that you say "well I haven't heard about this", prior to that is the \$35 million cut we've taken from last year, year-end and, again, I know we're still projected but we're pretty close to where we're going to be revenue-wise this year, it's about a \$35 million less in revenue on mineral mineral royalties that are generated on a WMA. you couple that with these are the, the reductions that we've had from the last 8 years, these are mid-year budget reductions or fund sweeps or us purchasing different things and we've, that we've been, through different, either acts or, or executive orders, if they've given up about \$15 million in conservation fund. there's also some other obligations for the past several years we've been funding the **** libation program at DNR, we've been giving the mineral board at DNR to collect our mineral revenues; we've never done that in the past but twice we now, we've, we've supported them, you can see that's a little over \$2 million and then we've had our, a lot of our functions in Office of Management

Finance has been consolidated first at DNR and then the division administration, that's \$7 million. If we had that in-house we would still have to pay for those functions, I'm not trying to make this look, you know, inflated that's another \$7 million but there is some cost savings because we do pay a premium we do pay an overhead which we wouldn't have if they were in-house but I just wanted to say that does add to why we're currently in the \$3 million deficit, the for 20-21. And this last slide is some, some release mineral revenue that we've, that's been collected on our behalf that we did not receive, the state hasn't given us. We, we've argued it with the entities that are involved and we've gotten some payment back but there's still 6½ million and we've been told that it's unlikely that we receive that money so I just kinda wanted to show you that, you know, the department, when we had money, we've been looked to and required to help out other agencies, help out through executive orders and things, and we, and I don't begrudge doing it but projections, I guess, my wrap up, I got a \$3 million deficit in 20-21, I got a \$35 million increase, decrease in mineral revenues from the prior year, we got additional costs. I do not have that consolidated functions in that 24 million because I didn't think that was fair, and, but we do have concerns, because the currently the state's budget's not real healthy, K through 12 is not funded, you know, some of the hospitals aren't funded. I'm anticipating us to have to go through another mid-year reduction, they come and take another 5 percent, so I just wanted to kinda give you all an update for those who haven't seen it, on kinda where we are financially. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you.

Secretary Melancon: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, let me start by

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saying that. Since I've been at the agency, I have said and I continue to say, that with regards to red snapper, my goal was to provide a larger Creel limit and more days of fishing and that still is my goal and that still what I have told the, the staff and the biologists for this agency that we want to do. If you, the man, the federal government as people say, is not managing the fisheries, the Gulf Council manages the fisheries. The Gulf Council is made up of 17 people; one is a federal official, the rest are five state directors, representatives of the commercial, recreational sport fishing and charter fishing sectors. Those 16 people are the Gulf Council. The proposal to establish a new bureaucracy to replace the Gulf Council would be additional revenue, because the feds are not going to fund it and I'll talk to that in a few minutes. The problem is that we've got citizens and stakeholders that are involved that some want it their way or no way and they can't seem to come to the realization that you got to give some. The Gulf Council saved the red snapper. Does that sound like an organization that can't do something when it wants to do it?

The red snapper, it was at about 3 percent estimated left in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now up to about 65 percent. In the last 4 years the quotas or the allotments have doubled for the different groups. Now, Magnuson Stevenson was put in law for a reason, because people were fighting over the fish rather than discussing how to make sure that we conserve the fish. We as an agency, the Council, NOAA, Magnuson Stevens, is all about conservation and it may not be that we're happy with the number of fish we're getting right now, and we're not, particular when you go offshore in Louisiana and you see the quantity of fish that are out there. When you go offshore in Florida and Alabama, not so, but they've got the fishermen. So, to set up a Gulf Council

or a new entity still doesn't solve the problem of how you going to share the fish, it's still problematic and it's going to be problematic. If you divide it to the east and the west and you do the new proposal, there's going to be five guys running this whole thing; no public input like you allow, no stakeholders' input, it's not provided for. Five guys. So let's say Texas and Louisiana decide that we're going have our Fisheries and do whatever we want to do from the Mississippi River or from the Mississippi line going west. There's three votes on the other side that may decide they don't want to let us do that without public input, without stakeholder input, without any kind of input. So from the standpoint of are we being regulated by the feds, no, we are the Gulf Council. The five states run the Gulf Council, make the decisions, cast the votes and for some reason we can't seem to get where we want to go even though and one of the things, and I think you're going to cover some more viable about what we've done, yeah, what we've done, let me speak to, and let me go straight to my notes so I can make sure that I'm not misquoted, because there was an article that said - was written that said that Charlie Melancon was against state management of the Fisheries and that is a lie, I mean it's just blatantly not correct. I felt that the resolution passed by the Commission in April obligated this department to pursue one of several options, only one of several options, related to a very complex and contentious issue. The resolution passed essentially prohibited myself or any of the Fisheries' management and biologists within this department from exploring all options to accomplish the goal of providing recreational anglers longer seasons and increased daily bag limits. Nevertheless, and putting aside the questions of with whom the authority lies to make decisions related to federal Fisheries' management, I respected this Commission's

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wishes and followed their direction. On numerous occasions I was requested to express concerns in opposition to Congressman's Graves' bill, HR 3094 and I didn't, I stayed quiet. Congressman Graves himself stated during congressional mark up on HR 3094 that this bill is endorsed by all of the Gulf states and if in fact this department or I would have opposed it, Congressman Graves would certainly not have knowingly provided false information to the committee. Two days before that vote, I received a call from a former senator that's a friend of mine who lobbies for and we didn't even get into the question who she lobbies for, but she asked what was the position of the department and I said that a position, as far as I knew, was to support the Graves bill and asked me if I was going to do anything and my comment was "no, one way or another for or against, my hands were tied, stay at home, don't get involved." That was basically as I interpreted the resolution. Chairman Bishop, however, during the congressional markup, Chairman Bishop authored and passed an amendment. That amendment was basically to gut the bill. It's a poison pill amendment. It's how chairmen that don't want something to come out will kill a bill by letting you get a bill passed out of the committee. His quote, "This removes any of the federal funding from the authority, one of the things I think significant." Then ranking member Grahald just to ratify it, and if you look, if you go to the web site, you can see this committee in action, and Representative Grahald, who's the ranking member says, "This amendment makes sure the states get all the responsibility but none of the federal funding, the very definition of an unfunded mandate." That was in the committee hearing. You can see that online anytime. The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission resolution should, said "Gulf States red snapper management authority should prove

to, to not be viable, then the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission will work diligently in conjunction with Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Department toward a resolution for successful management of the resources for the betterment of the Fisheries. Without any federal funding associated with this mandate, along with the proposed role of the U.S. Secretary of Com, Commerce, without the new authority that would be established" – and by the way, it's a new, it's a whole new administration bureaucracy which I think most people that I know are against establishing more government, but it basically provides that there would, that U.S. Secretary of Commerce which includes NOAA, includes the Council, includes any government money would not be allowed to use the federal funding to provide to any of the states or entities of the state in the management of the red snapper. so that's where, and I'll get to how I came about making this statement actually it was about 5 days after the committee, I'd still not ever said anything and found it kinda strange that a press person from Louisiana hadn't called to say what I thought but I did get a question from a reporter out of Texas. We were on the road, we were over at the Gulf going to the Gulf Council and this reporter, we asked him to put his question in writing so the question we received is "If asked by legislators whether Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries would favor the Garrett Graves Bill to allow for state snapper management but without federal funding how would the department respond if asked by state legislators?" My answer: "HR 3094 would transfer to the Gulf states the management authority and responsibility" – and this is after it's passed with the killer amendment – "to the states, the management authority and responsibility for scientific data collection for the red snapper resource in state and federal waters off their respective coast.

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However HR 3094 as recently amended by Congressman Bishop would not transfer any federal funding to the states to conduct necessary stock assessment, research data collection or enforcement. Without federal funding Louisiana could potentially lack the proper resources to manage the red snapper fishery. HR 3094 would not be a viable option for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. It would be fiscally irresponsible for the department to support any mandate that would result in the unknown amount of fish, of fiscal burden placed on the State of Louisiana for the management of a single species of fish. As a department we are charged with managing our Fisheries, our fishery resources for optimum yield and the same applies to our fiscal resources. The department is committed to responsibly managing our fishery resources, and we understand some of our user groups are frustrated with the current federal management of red snapper under the authority of NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. We remain committed to working with NOAA Fisheries, the Council and its members and all interested stakeholders to ensure optimum utilization of the fair and equitable access to the red snapper resources. The department's, department's goal is to begin a collaborative dialogue with our state and federal partners to find a durable solution to these issues concerning management of the red snapper resources of, for the public good" and that was my quote. Never a word about state management where this thing got all blown out of proportion. Now, the reality, you've seen the numbers. We're facing a half a billion dollar deficit this fiscal year. There are people, old people, young people, that can't get medical treatment at the hospitals, because we've cut, had to cut the budget. K through 12 has been cut drastically. The

university's got a few dollars back, but that won't even give them 1 percent of what they needed to get back. We as an agency since the day I got here have been looking at every contract, we have proposed through the process that we need to, the legislature, to reorganize this department. We found that we have a whole lot more chiefs than we had Indians, and that's not supposed to happen. There is guidelines of how you structure your organizations. So we, I think in the first 2½ months we found somewhere in the neighborhood of I think 2½ or \$3 million of much of contracts that we could go to and get out of, and basically I said we will stay with those that are needs and meet the core mission of this agency and those that we, or, wants, let's go and ask, see if we can get outa those things. And we've done some of that, and there's more to be done. As you know we have been going through an audit. Consumption of time has been spent more in responding to those audit requests, than I would've liked and would've liked to have a whole lot more time in actual policy, politics, in terms of trying to make sure that we had a smoother ride on things, with, with the commission, with the stakeholders that are out there. One of the things that I said when I got here, in the first couple of weeks, was that when I saw what was going on with the red snapper fisheries that it would behoove us to try and put all the stakeholders into a room as they do at the Gulf Council and see if we can hammer out at least in one state the differences that exist. And if that's the case, then maybe we can meld that in and get other states to sit down and do the same thing to where we can get this resolved. What I see for Mr. Graves' bill, and I served in Congress and I know what the actions are and I can tell you when a committee chairman puts a bill that takes the funding out of the bill, it is a killer amendment. It is not intended to be a friendly amendment, although I can tell

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you and I've been in position where the chairman says either you can bring the bill and you get it passed but I'm going put a killer amendment, whatever it's going to be, and you have that gentlemen's agreement, if you feel that you've still have to move the bill. So what I saw on that day is I believe what transpired, but the fact is if you look at the legislation, in Section 505 Prohibition on Federal Funding, no federal funding shall be appropriated or used for the GSRMSA or its members to carry out management actions of red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico, period, end of sentence, next section starts. Happy to answer questions, my staff is happy to answer questions. I have never been in a position where I'm against anything. I have always tried to find resolve to an issue, and as I tell people that's the blue dog in me. That's the Billy Tauzins, the John Breauxs, the people we all know, about trying to sit down and find resolution. Some people may not want resolution, and for that I can't do anything. But as in a person that has served in public office, that is now here at the department, trying to use what skills and what, the errors I made in the past to try and make sure that I do a better job in the future. It's all about trying to find a resolve to an issue that has been festering for too long. But people have to talk and people have to give, and one of the things that I have learned, I learned it in a marriage. I'll be 44 years this month. If you don't give in somewhere and, and give some, then it won't work. Business deals are the same way, mitigation in lawsuits are the same way. Sometimes you have to give some to get some. So when everybody gets up from the table, if nobody is truly happy with what they've done, the chances are it's a good deal. If one side gets up happy and the other side gets up mad, then you can bet somebody came out on the short end. Now, back to where we started. Do I want and does this department want more fish in the

Creel and more days to fish? The answer is absolutely emphatically yes, and it has been since the day I got here. So all the accusations, all the running around, is about one article that was written that if you look at the headlines and then you look at the first paragraph you would believe that I said that I'm not for state management. I'm for state rights, always have been. I've also always been against mandated, unfunded mandates as a public official. Voting record, you can check it if you like. That's the person I am, but I'm all about trying to find resolve. So with that, I'm happy to answer any questions, my staff is happy to answer any questions. They know, and I've told them since the day I arrived here, this is about making things better and not about stirring controversy, and I'm sorry that some people misinterpret the fact that the fiscal irresponsible thing is the easy way out. To say that the state can't afford millions and millions of dollars, this agency included, is not, I mean, that's, it is what it is. So I put that before you. If we were flushed with money we could maybe find it, but if I've have to go find money within this department, because I doubt very seriously the legislature's going to be giving me any money. But if I got to go find money then who do I take it from, the shrimpers, the crabbers? How 'bout the duck people and the deer people? I'm going to have to rob a pot somewhere to get the money. And so I want to try and make this agency solid for as long as I'm here and further into the future after I'm gone, and that's basically what I'm going to try and do. So I thank you for the opportunity to visit with you and, be happy to answer any questions, me or the staff. I think Patrick has a little bit more information. Starting the Monday at the Gulf Council when I felt like the bill was unviable, I sat down with Patrick and Myron and we started talking about what can we do now, because I felt like I was, I had the

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ability to have conversations finally about do we have any options. So we wanted to try and start back up the conversations in the Gulf Council about a recreation fishing, whether it's regional, whether it's state, any options to put on the table to try and solve the problem. And we had discussions about trying to increase the limit, we may have to shrink the day, because of the quota, but increase the limit so those boats that are going offshore they can maybe get more fish, and Patrick will talk to that because that was a conversation I felt that the scientists need to have and it wasn't just for a layperson like myself to be involved. Questions, or would y'all like to let Patrick finish up?

Chairman Yakupzack: Let's hear from Patrick.

Secretary Melancon: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Courville: Thank you.

Audience: Applause

Mr. Banks: I don't have any more of a presentation. We all prepared to present some information about the state red snapper season to you all, and it would give you an idea of how many fish have been harvested so far, how many, how much longer we think we can leave that open, maybe is there some opportunity in the future possibly to request an increase in bag limit, things of that sort. I would recommend that you allow us to give that presentation so that you know where we stand in terms of the season and how many fish have been caught, and then we can get into more in-depth questions, but I'll follow your lead.

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chair –

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville?

Commissioner Courville: I was thinking you were going to talk about something else. So if you would oblige me, I've got a couple of questions and I appreciate the clarification by Secretary Melancon, so I'll direct this at whoever wants to take a stab at it. I thought you were going to talk about the amendment that was moved forward at the Gulf Council meeting and –

Mr. Banks: I can if you would like.

Commissioner Courville: Yeah. I read it and I'd like somebody to explain to me what I just read.

Mr. Banks: Yeah. Well, it's a little bit difficult to explain, because it was a lengthy debate.

Commissioner Sunseri: Wait.

Mr. Banks: Sorry.

Commissioner Sunseri: I need to hear the amendment.

Commissioner Courville: Okay. You have it?

Mr. Banks: I don't have it in front of me.

Commissioner Courville: Should I just read the little excerpt I have? "Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council motion introduced by council member Patrick Banks on behalf of the State of Louisiana June 23rd, 2016. Motion to direct staff to create a new amendment for management of red snapper for the private recreational fishery in the Gulf of Mexico considering all options including regional management with input from the ad hoc private recreational

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advisory panel. Motion carried by a vote of 9 to 6 with one abstention.” What does that mean?

Mr. Banks: Well, I'll do my best to explain it. As Secretary Melancon indicated when the funding issue became a concern we got together and said how can we do what the Commission ask us to do if we don't believe this is the red snapper authority is going to be viable. So how can we still move down that road and try to do what the Commission wanted us to do? And at that point we felt like there was no way we could bring back full regional management in front of the council. That which clearly didn't work before. So we said well, why we don't try to start looking at just the private recreational anglers and see if we can get a regional management approach or some sort of a framework for that type of management through the council as a starting point to try to do what you guys wanted us to do. So my thought was well, the commercial side of the council has always been very skeptical of us, so I need to do what I need to do with them to try to convince them that we're not trying to pull anything over on them. So I talked to each of them, talked to them about what we're trying to do, what we're hoping to do, that we were not trying to change the management process for the commercial sector. We were not trying to change the management process for the charter for hire sector. This was strictly for recreational private angling only. And after a lot of conversations we got a lot of support. Unfortunately, we didn't get the support of the recreational members or three of the other four Gulf state directors. But that amendment, the original motion, was to develop a new amendment to develop regional management for the private recreational angling community. That was the original motion. A lot of discussion took place at the council. One of the other state

directors was concerned about the context of regional management, I can't remember all what she said, but I offered to change the wording of the motion, and then another comment maybe from another director, I can't remember, wanted to make sure that we waited until we got input from this ad hoc, private recreational advisory panel that was being put together. I said fine, we want input from everybody, you know? Certainly input is not bad. And I welcome from that group, from any group. So that's how the motion got changed up and got somewhat confusing in the end, but the gist of the motion is to try to get an amendment started through the council to develop a regional management plan or some other management framework for the private recreational community.

Commissioner Courville: Okay. So based on that, what gives us any sense that all of a sudden they've developed an interest in doing this when it doesn't appear, and granted I'm reasonably new coming into this deal, but they've had a lot of interest in that in the past. Why all of a sudden, why the change –

Mr. Banks: Yeah.

Chairman Courville: – of heart? That's -.

Mr. Banks: It's a valid question and I'm, and I'm new to the process as well and, and the other state directors told me I was being naïve. But all I heard at the council for the two meetings that I've been there is this council can do nothing, we can get nothing accomplished here. Everybody seemed frustrated, but yet nobody wants to stand up and actually do anything. This I felt moved us down the road. I mean, how, how can we, if we're just going to sit there and not take a step forward, because we don't believe that we can walk, well, then we will

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never try. And so, so I felt like that we got a lot of support for trying to move this down the road. Unfortunately, and it was somewhat surprising to me that the recreational community did not support it. They, they, they wanted us to go about it a different way, and that's something that we're going to talk to you about in a minute you know, the season and trying to increase bag limits. But, but we got a lot of support at the council. I mean, it said 9 to 6, it was actually a 10 to 6 vote. I mean, that's, that's unheard of from what I've been told at the council. Everything that's controversial is 9 to 8. You know, it either passes unanimously or it's 9 to 8. The fact that we got ten votes to push this forward, people are telling me that we've got a new, a new feeling at the council that Louisiana's work, is working again with the feds, working again with the majority of the council, and it, it just feels like to me we can make some progress. Now, this new amendment may, may come through the council and it may be something that we can't, we can't support in the end, and that's very possible. I think that's what happened to Amendment 39. I think the previous administration moved that forward and it was a very good amendment to start with, but in the end it just got to a spot that they just couldn't support in the end and they, they voted along with other state directors to table it or postpone it indefinitely or whatever, and that may happen in this amendment. And you're, you're right, Commissioner, we, we may be in the same spot, but to say we're not going to try ever again I just don't, I don't, I don't see how we can do for you guys what, what we're asked to do and push forward with regional management if we just sit on our hands. So, you know, if that's not the way y'all want us to do I, I'll gladly, you know, take your all's lead and Secretary Melancon's lead, but I feel like that we just

had to do something and we got a lot of strong support.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Sunseri.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, you know, I'm a solutions-type person and you know, you know this Patrick, a lot of people, you know, in the audience know me as well. And it's, you try to come together so that you can meet a happy medium and no one ever gets what they want but you have to come to a solution. If you don't, you always have this back and forth, back and forth, and that is not going, that is not a successful way to own any show. I mean, I'm a businessman and there's a lot of hard decisions I've had to make as a businessman, especially over these last 6 years since the deep water horizon disaster, and a lot of them were good, they're fun, but you know, it was what needed to be done to be able to make it work. So I'm hopeful no matter what goes on that we look at this in a solution manner trying to, to fix whatever's wrong. I don't know what's wrong, you know, but I'm looking forward to learning what, what the issues are on, on this, and hopefully we can, you know, reach some kinda solution to whatever management issues we got. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman, I'm Commissioner Courville. I have a follow-up question, and it may be better directed at Secretary Melancon, but I'll let whoever wants to dive into it give it a shot. Based on, on the secretary's comments earlier, do we have more faith that the resolution to this issue lies in the Gulf Council or in state-based management?

Secretary Melancon: Well, what we put into the amendment – an amendment is basically

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a bill in the council lingo – what we've put in there is that we put all options on the table and have the open discussion. If it's state management, if it's regional management, if it's gulf-wide management. I still have a problem trying to, to figure out, and I think I've told you this before, we've got biomass in Louisiana. They don't have the biomass over in Florida and Alabama but they damn well have more fishermen than we'll ever have. So the problem is how you get the fish from the bi, in the biomass state to the fish in the fishermen's state. It doesn't change it no matter where you're trying to make the deal. You still have the same problem. But to take it and put it in a bureaucracy that's got five people who are not elected. Appointed. That would be one would be me. Do you want to entrust five people that you don't know with no public input, no stakeholder input to make decisions on the life of the fish that we want to preserve and conserve for not just, you know, this generation but others?

Look, I remember when we went to three-duck limit and I know that, that, that the hunter right there, Mr. Courville, understands ducks. There was some very angry people in this state, but you know at the time, Ducks Unlimited had a lot, had biologist and scientists and our state agency biologists and scientists and U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists and scientists says you need to do it. It has to be done if we're going to conserve. If we're going to make sure that there's going be ducks for the future. So everybody pulled together and did it. Now right now, and I'm not going to get into the biology, but there's a whole lot more fish probably being thrown back into the, into the gulf rather than taken in, because their bladder has come out that can be brought home or should be brought home and the council should address those culled fish and should try and find some ways to

find a solution to it. It's a matter of having the guts to sit down and have an honest conversation about it. What I found about the council and I tried to get a person appointed to that at-large seat. I was unsuccessful. I thought I had a good shot at it. But as I told the people with NOAA and the people with the Department of Commerce, when I talked with them about giving Louisiana that, that at-large seat, that I found that's what happening at the council is that you've got round pegs, square pegs and triangle pegs. If you ever had a peg board, you know what I'm talking about. And what happens is as soon as it gets controversial, every peg goes to their appropriate holes and sit there and they don't do a thing. Which means they lock up. But it's not the feds. It's the people from the five states. They partner up, they lock up and make deals. I don't know. One thing that I told the guys that sit for Louisiana when they asked what I wanted them to do, I've told them all. I want you to do the right thing. We are the people that are responsible for the conservation of this species and every other species. And what you need to do is make sure that whatever we're doing is for the best interest of the species so that we will have the enjoyment and pleasure of them into the future, so our children and our grandchildren have them. We may have to pay the price in the short term by being limited by what we can catch. And I know that's frustrating. But there's been things that've been established in law, in the council, by rule, been through the court cases, have been fought out. The rec sector is the only sector, the rec to private sector is the only sector that hasn't resolved its problem. The commercial has an allotment. They know how they can fish, when they can fish, where they can fish. The charter people the same thing. Like it or not, they've got it. It's done. So do we start dismantling legs that are working

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already to fix one that isn't working yet?
No. We got to be able to figure it out. And remember, in 4 – what is it – 4 years, I think we've doubled the quota that's been allowed for the Fisheries, for the entire Fisheries of red snapper. I think our bigger issues are going to be about who, how you get those fish from where they are in Louisiana to other places.

Mr. Banks: Commissioner Courville, I'll, I'll try to answer as best I can your question. Do I believe the, the congressional act is –

Commissioner Courville: That's my question.

Mr. Banks: – State's management or do I think the council's - the answers. I don't know which one. But, and that's why I think it's critical that we, we operate with as many options on the table as we can. You know. I don't know a lot about politics. Thank goodness Secretary Melancon does. But, but when I hear things about Congress and, and the difficulty of getting a bill through and certainly in an election year, I, I look at that and say we need to be, we need to be working another option, you know, as best we can. And it doesn't mean that we're, we don't think that's a good option. That's a good road that'll get us, get us to the finish line. This is a road that we need to explore to see if it gets to the finish line and whatever other option we can come up with at this point. And so, that's the short is I don't know which one is the best option but I feel like, because of that, we have to explore them all.

Commissioner Courville: Well, then let me rephrase my question. Do we have a sense that we are exploring them all, because I, you know, in, in my judgment, you know, I've seen your budget and I appreciate as, as Bart mentioned, Commissioner Yakupzack

mentioned, I, there's, that, that big Fisheries' independent data thing that's out there that we think might or might not be done, that changes the game a lot. That's a big component to this, this budget, and without knowing if we can get that I think I agree. All options are on the table. Me, personally, I sure would love to hear and I intend to attend a gulf council meeting to find out if we can get a sense that these guys have had a change of heart. However, call me cynical, call me whatever you want it, I – let me back up. So is it fair to say, based on, on the comments heard here today, that we're putting a little bit more faith in the gulf council route than, any other route? Is that, is that a fair statement?

Mr. Banks: I don't think that's a fair statement. I don't know how much faith to put into either one of them, Commissioner Courville. The thing is to sit back, we just felt like, we were sitting at the council a couple weeks ago and to sit back and put all our faith in, in one route when it looks sort of bad, we felt like we needed to start forging another route. And, so that we had that option on the table as well. And if, and if the congressional instrument makes it, then we're set. We can, we can withdraw that amendment from the gulf council and, we won't need to do anything, thing else. But, you know, I don't have a good sense of which one is, is preferred.

Commissioner Courville: Sure.

Mr. Banks: I will say that the gulf council has been in operation for a long time. And it's done good work. Now, yeah, it's not perfect, just like anybody's not perfect. And we may disagree with how many days we get and I'm not happy with that either. But the fact is, that council, the man, the management scheme that it's utilized, has brought a fish back from the brink.

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Commissioner Courville: Sure. Absolutely.

Mr. Banks: So know, so we may not like the access that we're getting but, but it's, it's, it's done its job. It has managed that species and conserved that species. Now we need to fight to get greater access to it.

Commissioner Courville: Let me, let me back up one time and I hate to bogart the floor here but this, this may be my, the declining part of questions, do we have a sense of what the other four states, that we were at one time sort of partners with, if you will, do we know their positions on this same bill and theoretical unfunded mandate?

Mr. Banks: I don't know their position on the unfunded mandate. I know that they were, like we were, in support of the bill or in support of state management. I don't know that they put out a statement about the bill itself. And they're certainly in favor of state-based or regional management. They voted against my motion. All but one voted against my motion at the council. They were concerned about the timing. They were, Texas, was concerned that it didn't include the charter-for-hire industry, that that's the only way they could support it is, is if, if we brought in the charter-for-hire industry into the motion. And, so there were, there were various reasons. But they all spoke eloquently in front of the council about the need for regional management. So I think we're all in the same page there. They just, they spoke about the need for regional management and they support regional management but they couldn't support my motion. And Florida abstained, so anyway.

Commissioner Courville: Okay. I'll take a breath and let somebody else chime in if they care to.

Chairman Yakupzack: And I, I'd like to follow up since you just made a comment about it, the Texas position, with regard to your amendment about where Texas would support it if the charter-for-hire were included in your amendment. What's the department's position on that?

Mr. Banks: Well, my feeling is right now, Mr. Chairman, is that certainly charter-for-hire traditionally and private angling is all one recreational sector, and that was the way I think Amendment 39 started out, but then when that sector, separation occurred, you know, pulled the charter out from there, from the private angling that, that issue was controversial. But it, it has stuck. It has been challenged in court and it has stuck, so the feeling I have is, is yes, traditionally it is part of the recreational sector, but we've got a charter-for-hire sector that's working through the council process, building their framework for management; they're not quite sure about it yet, but they wanted some more time to continue to explore it. I felt like it was fair to give them more time, so I didn't feel like it was fair to try to pull them into this, while they're working on their management framework, at least, at least the folks that are there and talked to us seem to be happy with it, and they want to try to see if that framework works. Now if we, if we do something with the private angling community that works, and is really, really good, I think it would be easy for that group to come back, you know? But to dismantle the commercial side and, and the charter-for-hire that seem to be working, just to get this done, I well it wouldn't have made it. It wouldn't have even passed the council had I included that, so, so I didn't, I didn't feel like it was a, it was a motion that could make it, if I accepted what Texas asked me to do.

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Chairman Yakupzack: Okay, will you put back up your chart, please, with your costs, for a second? And, and again, I'm just, I'm following up on what Commissioner Courville asked because I know I will receive calls on it and, and as Chairman, I've been very careful with that. I've received a bunch of calls in the last 15 days, and I've, I've deferred. I've not given public comments and I think that that's my place as Chairman, but being that it's an open Commission meeting, I, the, Courville's, Commissioner Courville pointed out the \$6 million number that is, is, sort of, grows that number tremendously there, because we all recognize that the 1.8 is already here and, so what I'm interested in clarification on is the Fisheries' independent number of \$6 million and the enforcement number of \$1 million. Can you itemize the Fisheries' independent number?

Mr. Banks: Sure, sure. So to do the necessary Fisheries' independent sampling for reef fish, there's several different types of sampling that occurs within that management program. You have to take ground fish samples. You have to bottom long-line samples. You have to do vertical-line samples. You have to do plankton samples. And then you have to, to estimate the shrimp by-catch, shrimp effort, to determine your by-catch mortality on the juveniles. So those are your, your main components within Fisheries independent. So ground fish is about \$650,000.00. Bottom long-line, is about \$532,000.00. Vertical line is about \$460,000.00. Plankton is about \$550,000.00. The shrimp effort can range, but it can range anywhere from a couple million to \$4 million, depending on the level of sampling you have to do. And so, so if you remove that \$4 million, then you're down to, to, to \$2½ million for that first year. But, and we can, and we can remove that and, and in years 2 through 5,

but we really have to get that number. That's a, the shrimp effort survey determines the juvenile mortality within the stock assessment model that you use. And it's a huge driver of that model. It's a critical piece of information, as I'm told, of the model for the stock assessment of, of re-fish, and so to remove that piece of data from the model, almost makes the model useless. So it, it's a critical piece of information that we have to get. It's also the most expensive, from what I understand, our biologists talking to the NOAA biologists; it's the most expensive part of their survey. Likewise, it, it would be the most expensive part of ours.

Chairman Yakupzack: And so that, with regard to the shrimp surveys, the \$2 to \$4 million, that's just for off the coast of Louisiana?

Mr. Banks: That's right.

Chairman Yakupzack: The, um –

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville?

Commissioner Courville: In the middle of that, and so, kind of follow-up to my earlier question, how much of that, do we, of the ones you just listed, do we anticipate that the feds will have to do anyway, in the event you were to transfer snapper management to the state? Is it just the shrimp by-catch or is it all the plankton sample, the vertical long-line and the other things that you mentioned?

Mr. Banks: Well, I would anticipate they would still have to do all of this sampling, okay? It's just a matter of they wouldn't be able to put any kind of federal funds towards this, this effort, so as we appreciate it, in talking to, to them, they wouldn't be able to share the information with us. They

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wouldn't be able to provide the information to us, as we appreciate.

Commissioner Courville: They, they told you that, we cannot share this information?

Mr. Banks: No, they didn't say we cannot. They just said as we appreciate the –

Commissioner Courville: They're not going to.

Mr. Banks: – the directive of the legislation is that we would not be able to provide that information to you. So we have to assume that we would have to go out and replicate all of this.

Commissioner Courville: Wow. Okay.

Mr. Banks: So, that's how we arrived at these numbers.

Chairman Yakupzack: No, that's okay and this, the follow-up to that question is, is, is we all appreciate it and I think you've said earlier that the NOAA currently does a stock assessment for the entire gulf?

Mr. Banks: That's right.

Chairman Yakupzack: – on red snapper and it, as I appreciated it, this department has a contract with NOAA, where NOAA pays this department to gather the stock-assessment data off the Coast of Louisiana –

Mr. Banks: A portion of it.

Chairman Yakupzack: – to, to contribute?

Mr. Banks: You're right, a portion of it.

Chairman Yakupzack: Right, a portion, and so that, that's my question, what, what is the amount of that contract and if we did our

own stock assessment, how much would, how much more would we have to have, would we have to spend more than we're currently being paid by the feds –

Mr. Banks: Oh, absolutely.

Chairman Yakupzack: – to do it?

Mr. Banks: Absolutely.

Mr. Banks: Myron, can you give us an idea of what they pay us, currently, to do the, the closer-end samples, as part of their survey?

Myron: Thank you, thank you for letting me address the Commission. For the fishery independent work, the states, the five states do take part in the sampling regime. In the case of plankton, as an example, there's 101 stations off Louisiana, but we only do seven of those stations and we do the seven closest to Grand Isle. To do an assessment, we would have to do all the stations twice a year, and some of the other sampling regimes, we do a much higher percentage, but, the numbers, you know, the numbers posted would be for us to arrive at the same data for the Louisiana stock assessment. And a percentage of what we do for ground fish, for I think there's 93, 91 or 93 stations for ground fish and this year we're doing 14 of them, so if we took over the full data collection, we would have to do all 93 stations. So, to answer your question, we get 400, we were at \$447,000.00 where we're funded, and through time, through the last few years, we were cut down to 391. We're up to 398 this year.

Commissioner Courville: Mr., Mr. Chairman,

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville

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Commissioner Courville: So, so you're, you're, make sure I understand this because I'm way out of my element here, you're saying' that currently, all of these samples are snapper-exclusive? There is absolutely no other species that's out there that you're looking' at?

Myron: No sir. The, but –

Commissioner Courville: So what do you do, so let me, okay I thought that was the answer, so what are you going do with all the other species that you're looking' out, at, out there? You going to just stop that?

Myron: Well, the major expense is going to sea to get the data, so I'm certain all the data would at least be going into our data-management system, which is up there, and what happens politically, after that, could be out of my hands.

Commissioner Courville: So, conceptually, if we're going' out there, we're collecting, we're now collecting' that data?

Myron: Right.

Commissioner Courville: Can we send an invoice to the feds for all the other species that we've gathered data on?

Myron: If we wouldn't have a grant for it –

Commissioner Courville: Hell, we might make money on this.

Myron: Right, right, if we wouldn't have a grant –

Commissioner Courville: We can do it cheaper than they can do it.

Myron: But if they would pay us for it, I'm sure we'd happily take their money.

Secretary Melancon: If, let me answer that. I think I'm on the third time. Absolutely no funding from Commerce, NOAA, Council or anybody; that's the killer pill amendment. That's what the Chairman did it for. You don't get any money. You can do whatever you want and I, you know we've talked about well, are they still going to collect data? Yeah, they're still going to collect data. And will it be public knowledge? Yeah, at the end of the year you can get it. It doesn't do you any good all during those 12, those months before they publish it and put it out. So it may be 14 months before whatever data they collect comes out, for you to get to it, but they, the, the answer about the spending, about the funding is it's, is, as Mr. Grahald said, this is an unfunded, mandate and the perfect example of the definition.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Secretary. I, just to be clear, I, we, we're, this Commission is, as I think we're going to hear, I got a stack of white cards here an inch thick, we're going to hear from people that this Commission's been hearing from, over the last 3 weeks, and the, these questions that at least I'm asking, are, are from a perspective to give me the ability to answer some of these questions. And the questions are along the lines of we've got a Fisheries budget of, of nearly \$80 million, or so, and so if, if, what is it truly going to cost, and can that money come from other pots within the Fisheries Department, and that's the, that's the questions that are being' asked and so, to me, so that's why I'm trying' to fully understand these numbers. And, and I asked very pointed questions about the first set of numbers that we got 3 weeks ago, and that's all we're doing' now, is trying' to refine these numbers to understand, to be able to answer questions to the constituents, for, that, that call this Commission. So, that,

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that, I, I, I appreciate the answers there, Patrick, on that one and, and the next one is on enforcement. We see that there's a million dollars added for enforcement. Do, do, do, Colonel Broussard, do you want to take that one?

Colonel Broussard: Yes, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, that million dollars is for man hours and up to 50 percent of it can actually be used for equipment acquisitions, to do saltwater enforcement.

Chairman Yakupzack: And do, do, and will you please just explain for the, for the public, what saltwater enforcement you currently do, and under what, what arrangements do you, do you handle that?

Colonel Broussard: We currently have a joint enforcement agreement with NOAA, where we put man out on the Gulf to patrol in the EEZ out to 200 miles. And that covers all saltwater fisheries.

Chairman Yakupzack: Do you know the amount of that annual contract?

Colonel Broussard: Right now it is right at a million dollars.

Chairman Yakupzack: So, so in order, if, if, if somehow that was amended to remove the red snapper component out of it, it would, it would cost an additional million a year?

Colonel Broussard: Exactly.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay.

Chairman Yakupzack: –

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Courville?

Commissioner Courville: Let me, let me make sure I understood that right. So currently, the feds pay us a million dollars to patrol, and you're looking' at all species –

Colonel Broussard: That's correct.

Commissioner Courville: – of fish?

Colonel Broussard: That is correct.

Commissioner Courville: So under this unfunded mandate, what are they going to do with all the other fish in, in patrolling? I mean, are they just going to say they're on their own? I mean, are they going to stop patrol, I, I don't, I'm, I'm having' trouble. I get the unfunded mandate part of this, you know, I get that. But that sounds fine in concept, but in application you can't just close your eyes to one fish.

Secretary Melancon: Well, the only thing that I can assume, when you get no money, that's us. They're still getting their money. They'll get all the money that's supposed to come to us, but the law now says that any group associated with the Gulf Red Snapper Management Authority, will get no money, okay? So that money will just be re-budgeted and I would suspect they'll contract somebody to go and do those fisheries for me. They cannot spend it with any of the five states.

Commissioner Courville: The, so that's the way that, that you guys interpret this –

Secretary Melancon: Well that, that's the way that, that basically, when I've had discussions when I was in Congress about how these amendments work, in particular, because I've seen this amendment that withdraws funding, and there's actually an Unfunded Mandate Act, and so finally, maybe we'll get a number from the federal

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government of what that number is going to be, to the states. I would have wished I would had it out there, before we ever got to this point, but still in all, that Unfunded Mandate Act triggers actions by the Congress and staff, to produce some documents that we can all take a look at. So the Governor, myself, you, the public, CCA, everybody will get the chance to see that, at some point in time. But right now, based upon what the amendment says and does, is that no monies from NOAA can be shared with any of the five states associated with the Management Authority.

Commissioner Courville: Of red snapper? That's the way I read it.

Secretary Melancon: Management Authority, state or the Management Authority. So it doesn't matter whether it's another fish or not. They're not going to send the money. That's the intent of the amendment, is to kill the bill.

Commissioner Courville: Okay, I, I, and I interpret it a little bit differently, that's fine.

Secretary Melancon: Maybe we can get a reporter to call and talk to a parliamentarian, or maybe talk to Chairman Bishop, or Representative Young from Alaska or two other ones, Grahala from Arizona and Dingell from Michigan, because they all were opposed to it. And one of the problems with the bill is in the bill, every time it says Magnuson Stevens, and it was, the bill originally said we were going to be getting the federal funding, and when the Chairman said no you won't, Mr. Young then came in and says I would like to see Magnuson Stevens, the words completely taken out of this bill, to make sure that they don't dismantle Magnuson Stevens.

Commissioner Courville: Did that pass or fail?

Secretary Melancon: What?

Commissioner Courville: His –

Secretary Melancon: No he withdrew it - Mr. Graves would work with him, but he didn't see how he was going to be able to achieve that. Mr. Graves agreed to the same, so, you know, that's going to be problematic. You take Magnuson Stevens out of that bill and, basically, you don't have a bill. You might want to look at, I want to say for entertainment and enjoyment, but you might want to take a look at the meeting, I think it was the 15th, if I remember correctly of June, and when you get to the hearing, it starts around a Minute 33 or 34, I believe.

Commissioner Courville: Thank you, thank you, sir.

Chairman Yakupzack: Any other question or discussion from the Commission, at this time? With considering' we'll move forward. We got, we have quite a few public comments here. I'll start with the ones that do not wish to speak, I have a comment from a Ben Graham of Baton Rouge. He does not wish to speak. Says he supports state management of red snapper. Say again? Okay. You get, you get put in a bigger stack. So, next comment, does not want to, wish to speak, Mr. Scott Rainey from Lafayette, his comment is that he wants the state to manage red snapper. Next comment, Mr. Carlos Vega, I support state regulated, state-regulated snapper season, Lafayette, Louisiana. And the final comment not wishing to speak is a Mr. Charles Cheramie of 210 Ladane Lane, Lot 1. The city's not listed and he checked the box that says I am against the proposal.

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I'm not, I'm not sure, clarity. All right, so first up for public comments verbally, we'll start with Mr. Graham and, as he heads up here I'm going to let you know we used to have a giant 3-foot-diameter clock back there on the wall that we could use to help regulate this. I don't know what, maybe, if that went –

LDWF Employee: I'll see if I can get maintenance -

Chairman Yakupzack: That went out with the, with the, with our funding or what, but in any case, I'm going to pull out my phone, not to be rude, just to, to keep a time and to, kinda, keep this flowing'. I think considering' this stack of folks, we ought to limit to 3 minutes, the best we can. If you're right in the middle of a thought, I'm going to let you roll through it, but I'll have to interrupt you, too much longer than that. So, Mr. Graham, state your name and your address and have at it.

Mr. Ben Graham: My name is Ben Graham. My address is 425 Leeward Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana and I appreciate your time, Commissioner and Secretary. I appreciate you guys being' here today. I'm a recreational fisherman. I fish out of Grand Isle. I've got a couple of kids I try to take fishing', but no kids-know-how-to- fish week. Get hooks everywhere, except in the fish's mouth. I just wanted to go over a few things. I've been following' this deal for a while, because you guys know there's plenty of red snapper off the Coast of Louisiana and the Secretary brought up, you know, there's plenty here, but there's not enough in Florida. And that's been that way for a long time. We've tried to work through regional management and the Council, and it has never passed. It's never gone anywhere, you know, for whatever reason, which is, in my opinion, why the, the Graves Bill has come

up the way it has. There are plenty of fish in Louisiana. There are plenty of fish in Texas. West, east of the river, there's not quite as many fish and we know that, which, you know, we shouldn't be concerned with trying' to move the fish from here to there, but it would make logical sense to split it up and try to manage it more locally, to achieve the goal of conservation of the resources and the best solution for all user groups. And really, you know, I, I just, I want to see us have access to the fish. I want to be able to continue to make memories, my kids and my family, takin' them fishing', and at the same time being' mindful of the resource and not, you know, not over-fishing it. I just feel like, you know, the, the issue keeps coming' up about the Council wanting' to have a recreational advisory committee. Well, part of the reason that I see issue with that is, there was a snapper advisory committee that was formed, and I think 3 or 4 years ago, maybe longer. Those guys put a, and I know two guys who were on the, on that committee, they put a bunch of time in, came up with a bunch of ideas, communicated those to the Council and they all went in the garbage. They didn't do anything with any of 'them, didn't act on any of 'them. So it's kinda hard to convince somebody to go and, and I've been to probably ten Council meetings, and I was at one of them and they said well, would you be willing to serve on this committee? And my response to 'them was, yes I would, but if you're going to do the same thing you did the ideas last time, then what's the point of anybody being' on the committee. If you already have a predetermined notion of what you want to do, we're not, I mean, I took off work to come here today, and I do that when I go the Council meetings, same thing. You know, if you, I'm not going to put my time in and expect other people to do that, if you already have an idea of what you're going to achieve. But, I do support state

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management of red snapper. I think it's the right thing to do. I think it's the right thing for the people of Louisiana. You know, the sportsmen here, as well as the, you know, the communities along the coast. I appreciate your time and, hopefully we'll see you again soon.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Next up, Mr. Drew Ballard. State your name and address, please?

Mr. Drew Ballard: My name's Drew Ballard, Grand Isle, Louisiana, 104 Orleans Avenue, anyway, I, I don't support the, the Graves Bill at all. I'm a young, commercial fisherman and it could kill off commercial fishing, in general, so I, I don't support it. And I just wanted to be, let that be known. I don't really have much else to say on it, keep it short and sweet, but I wanted it to be known that I don't support it. Okay.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Ballard: Thank you for your time.

Chairman Yakupzack: Next up, Mr. Buddy Guidon, is that right?

Buddy Guidon: Guidon, close enough.

Chairman Yakupzack: Guidon, sorry. Again, the same handwritten quality as myself. Representing Gulf of Mexico Re-Fish Shareholders Alliance. Will you state your address, please?

Buddy Guidon: Yes, 1902 Wharf Road, Galveston, Texas. I represent commercial fishermen from Key West Florida, Brownsville, Texas and the Graves Amendment is nothing more than a fish grab. The Coastal Conservation Association and recreational fishing organizations have

been trying to take fish away from commercial fishermen and charter boat fishermen for years. They haven't been able to accomplish that through the Council process, so now they want state management, because then they can get out from underneath Magnuson Stevens, and it actually gives commercial fishermen and charter boat fishermen protection. It keeps us in the business of fishing. As it states in the Graves Amendment, or Graves Bill that they'd be able to take 10 percent of the commercial fishery. They could take 100 percent of the commercial fishery and give it to the purely recreational fishermen. It will not give them a year-round fish. It will not give them a big bag limit. What we have to do is work out a management system for the purely recreational fishermen. Forget about trying to take fish away from the 98 percent of the people in this country that deserve access to the fish of the commercial fishery and the rides on charter boats. You have to get away from that idea and start working on a management system. The only ones that haven't come to the table to work on a management system is the pure recs. I understand they have jobs. They need to go. They need to force their representation, like the Coastal Conservation Association, to start acting instead of fundraising, on an issue that's very important to the people in these coastal communities. With that said, we have an issue of a lot of fish off the Texas coast, a lot of fish off Louisiana, a lot of fishermen over in the eastern Gulf. That's something you could address, but in essence, your Council votes aren't going to let you do that, , because there's three states that have very little fish and two states that have a lot of fish. So I think working on just a management plan for pure-rec fishermen, give them a tag where they can fish year-round. They want year-round access, a tag. You hold onto it. Instead of a derby fishery that forces people to go fish when the

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government tells them to, give them a tag, let them go fish when they want. Then the pressure that you create by having a, a very short season would go away, kinda like it does with your state season. It's much longer. You don't have the pressure for people go out in the state's -, because they have lots of time to get it done. So instead of looking for solutions and, and you, you have a great representation in Louisiana now on, on, on the Council. They're finally starting to move issues forward, where in the past, we've had deadlock. Nothing gets done, eight/nine votes. It's very frustrating for someone that's in a family business. I buy 500,000 pounds of red snapper out of Grand Isle, Louisiana commercially, to be distributed in Louisiana, Texas. That's my business. It's very frustrating to keep going to these Council meetings and seeing nothing getting done and, and since Louisiana has had a change in administration, there's actually things happening. And I think if you went with trying' to find a solution to this problem, it, instead of rebuilding it, when you take state management and divide it up five ways, you still have to figure out a way to bring that together. So that's another added cost you're going to have. Bringing all five states together to figure out the, what, what we do as a total and, and you're going to have other management shortcomings', like, like they're going to require that you have observer coverage on your commercial boats. They're going to require that you either have cameras or, or observer coverage, so not all of the costs have even been looked at. So, if you're looking' at the feds are, they're going to take all the money away from anything that touches red snapper, in the Graves Bill. So we need to forget about the Graves Bill. We need to move on to finding a solution in the recreational fishery that'll work for the fishermen. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Mr. Scott Hickman, representing Charter Fishermen's Association.

Mr. Scott Hickman: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. Thanks for letting' me, come over here and speak today. First off, I'd like to say I'm a, a founding Board member of the Charter Fishermen's Association. We're the largest federally permitted charter boat association in the Gulf of Mexico. I'm a 30-year participant in the charter boat and a new participant in commercial fishery, out of Galveston, Texas. I have hunting ranches all over Texas. We run about 2,500 people throughout our ranches and our boats every year. My wife runs the business and one of our popular trips that she books is what we call our, our south Louisiana and Louisiana tuna fishing' experience. And it's a lot of our deer hunters and stuff that come to Texas. She sets these trips to come to Venice and fish with your federally permitted boats over here. Y'all got a great resource and we appreciate it. I enjoy it myself a few times a year, as well. First off, I'm here to speak about the Graves Amendment, HR3094. Our association's adamantly against the Graves Amendment. The charter boats want no part of it. The commercial folks want no part of it. It's obvious that the plan is about taking 99 percent of America's access away from them. 99 percent of the people in Louisiana don't own offshore boats. They access the fishery through the great restaurants here in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. People come from all over the world to eat in those restaurants. Same thing with the charter boats. Charter boats offer access to this fishery to 99 percent of the population of the country that don't have these private boats, or have access to these private boats. It, it's pretty obvious that this is a fish-ground, like Mr. Gwinden said, and, you know, going'

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back, y'all talked about sector separation issues earlier, uh. The Texas charter boat captains started working', or were approached by some of the Florida captains, back about 10 years ago, and being', you know, the good Texans we were, we reached out to our friends at CCA National in Houston. Over about a year-and-a-half period of time, we asked for multiple meetings to set down with our federally permitted charter boat fleet and the folks at CCA. Not one time would they accept our invitation to set down and come up with solutions. So, that's how the Charter Fishermen's Association, kind of, got going'. It grew, and grew and grew, to where over the majority of the guys in the Gulf now, ladies, that are federally permitted, have joined the Association. Other associations have joined the Association and we have worked with the Gulf Council to find real solutions to these problems, and we, we've come a long way. We got two amendments working' through the process right now. We got electronic logbooks on, on fleets all over the Gulf right now. La Greel doing' a great job here and I think that solutions are the way to go. And the Gulf Council can do a great job. We're appreciative to have Patrick Banks on the Gulf Council now and make this new motion to fix things for the private recreational folks. They deserve the same great, sustainable, accountable access that the commercial fleet now enjoys, and that the charter boat fleet hopes to enjoy pretty soon, too. So if anything else, I just, you know, list, listen to your folks that are on that Gulf Council. I think they, they represent this Commission very well and they're going to find a, a good solution for your anglers and I, you know, right now people keep talking' about not having' access. Here in Texas we got 365 days a year, in state waters, so a lot of that Texas access is coming through state waters, for the private recreational folks. I don't know

what y'all's season's going to be in state waters this year, but I think it's close to 300 or 250 days, or something' like that, so there's, there's a lot of that access is happening' through state waters. You know, I know that the federal season would be much, much longer if we did away with the state water seasons around the Gulf, so it's not just the problem of the federal agencies that are managing these fisheries. We've all got to come together and fix the problem and, once again, I applaud Patrick Banks and his folks at the Council for, finally, getting' a motion to fix this, so thank you very much.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Next up, Mr. Shane Cantrell, Charter Fishermen's Association, or was that you? No, that's another one, Charter Fishermen's Association. Sorry. State your name and address, please?

Captain Shane Cantrell: Captain Shane Cantrell, 4424 Avenue L, Galveston, Texas. I'm the Executive Director of the Charter Fishermen's Association. We're a gulf-wide charter organization. We're the largest federally permitted charter boat association in the Gulf of Mexico. We've got members all over, from all five Gulf States. I just wanted to point out a couple things on the Graves Bill. It creates more government bureaucracy. It's not creating a smaller government. It's creating a much, much larger government. We're going to have five different plans going' five different directions, none of which have the funding to be able to do that as we, we recently found got cut. So that, that's going to create a, even a bigger hurdle than, than what we had before. The private anglers are the ones getting' caught in the middle of this. It, it's not, not going to give them anymore access. Being able to, to have these five, five Gulf states fighting over which, which direction

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to go and what to do with commercial fishery, it's not going to solve anything. What is working is through the Gulf Council. The commercial industry's gotten their house in order. The charter boats have, have got a season for the non-boat-owned public. We're developing a management system for the charter boats and the head boats and I applaud Patrick and, and the Secretary for getting the ball rolling for the private anglers, to be able to come to the Gulf Council and get something' working that, that's going to be developed from the Private Angler Advisory Panel, made up of strictly private anglers, to get the best thing that's going to work for them, instead of the same thing we, we've had for year after year, meeting after meeting, to the Gulf Council and, and pushing' from the federal government, of nothing getting done. Nothing's getting done, because the recreational representation on that Council has made it that way. It's not, because nothing can get done, it's because they've continually voted against it. We need to get something new on there and I, I really believe the State of Louisiana's going to take the lead on that and, and step forward.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Cantrell. Next up, Mr. Johnathan Walker. Johnathan Walker not here? Not at the moment, at least. Mr. Steve Leonard. Yes sir.

Steve Leonard: Steve Leonard, Clinton, Louisiana. I'm a recreational fisherman. I'm in favor of the Graves Bill. I'm astounded by the own words of the commercial fishermen, 500,000 pounds from Grand Isle, is that what I heard? Did I hear that correctly?

Chairman Yakupzack: Yes sir.

Steve Leonard: That was purchased? That's 10-pound fish, that's 50,000 fish, and we're actually having' a discussion here about recreational fishermen over-harvesting or are we worried about that? I, I'm just, I, I am so in favor of getting away from whoever is telling us that we are catching so many fish in 9 days that we're endangering the recreation of the total harvest of red snapper. And I would just like you to please consider the recreational fishermen. I'm a \$15.00-an-hour guy. I am not a rich guy, okay? I, I work for every dime I have and I, I'm glad to get out, just a little bit and enjoy this recreational harvest, but golly guys, we're hurting'. We, we're hurting' here, because we, we get 9 days in the federal waters and, and by the grace of the government, we get a 1-year, 9-mile limit. I, I mean, I just don't get that. I don't understand that. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Leonard. Mr. Joshua Duhon, you, you wish to speak?

Mr. Joshua Duhon: No sir. I, I put no.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay, no you put, actually, must've meant to put no. You put yes, but you say other. His, his comment is that he supports state management of red snapper.

Mr. Joshua Duhon: Sir? Okay. Good afternoon, gentlemen. My name is Joshua Duhon. I'm from Youngsville, Louisiana. I'm from the Vermillion Bay area and all year long we get a 9-day season, and most of the people that I know and, and talk to on a daily basis have regular jobs and, and can't take off during' those 9 days, and can, maybe, only fish the weekend. But if you looked at the weather this year and the storm, and everything that occurred, I didn't get to make it out there. I have a family that

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loves to fish and we didn't get to fish. So, I'm here today to say I do support state management of red fishing, because of, red snapper fishing, excuse me, because of the fact that we don't get to enjoy the, the 9 miles and the statewide season that most people get to enjoy in the east, because if we live in the Bay area, we have further runs to get to state red snapper grounds. So I understand with everybody, you know, wanting' to work together and everything else, but, you know, with seeing' what the Gulf Council's accomplished for recreational fishermen, I think it, it's time for the state to step up and do something', to help all the, the average people that pay each and every year to go fishing', get their license, their boats, everything else, so thank you for your time.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Duhon. Mr. James Bruce? State your name and address, please?

Mr. James Bruce: James Bruce, Cutoff, Louisiana, third generation commercial fisherman. I'm again' the Graves Bill, because it won't fix nothing'. First of all, y'all got to fix the state. The states keep it open year-round, and it goes to the TAC, it goes to the quota. So if y'all get the states in order, and follow the federal laws, then y'all get more days to fish. We don't get many days. I get maybe 10 days a year, as a commercial fisherman, but we went from, we got cut in half, when we went in 2007 to this system, and we didn't hear no, no complaining' from the commercial, because the fuel was \$4.00 a gallon. Now we doubled in our quota, and now in the last 9 years, how much more licenses are y'all selling'? So how big the pie is going to be? Not everybody can go kill a polar bear, you know? You got to have tags and all. Y'all got to get this, the recreational side straight. It's nothing' to do with the commercial.

Stop trying' to take our fish. We feed people. And if somebody could tell me why the states are open so long, I'd like to know. And they all get a long, longer season, instead of 9 days. So they got to have a meeting somewhere, instead of trying' to take the fish, get y'all house in order, the recreational. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Mr. Russell Bellard?

Mr. Russell Bellard: My name's Russell Bellard. I'm from Lafayette, Louisiana. Let's talk some numbers, just a minute. 9 days, yes, the recreational length is 9 days, that to catch 406,460,000 fish. In the Gulf of Mexico, from Florida to Brownsville, Texas, the catch, our share of the tack at two fish per man, two 10-pound fish, in 9 days, that means we would have to have 23,000 recreational anglers go out from Florida to Brownsville, and take off of work, have great weather, calm seas and each man would catch two 10-pound fish, for 9 consecutive days. Now you tell me those numbers make sense. Are there 23,000 recreational anglers going' from Florida to Brownsville to do this? Heck no. That is the numbers you get from the Gulf Management Regional Council and from the federal government. So when you want to go make camps with the feds, this is what you get. Look what the hell's going' on in Washington today. You know all the upside-down, tipsy-turvy things that are happening'. So, I'm trying' to stay brief, the federal data's flawed. Every, every number they come out with flawed. They, they, these numbers prove they're flawed. The state went out of compliance, as Texas had done in 2006, I think, I was, I was very proud of our state for finally stepping' up to the plate and telling' the feds where they could stick it. Then Florida joined us, Alabama joined us, Mississippi joined us

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and now us pushing' for state management. You can't take red snapper from the rocks and move them to the Florida rocks. This, they're not a pelagic fish. You can't put them in a boat and transport, port them over there. You have to manage what we have and our state can take care of our business; not Florida's business, our business. Texas take care of your business, Louisiana will take care of our business. All I heard is how we can't do it, how we can't raise money. Well, why do you have to spend a million dollars to go out 40 miles and check red snapper fishermen, and spend all of that money? Why don't you just stay right there by the ports? I got to come back to my port. I got to go home. You got to come back to every one of our ports, so why does the Wildlife and Fisheries have to run 40 and 50 miles out looking' for red snapper fishing', burning' all that fuel and all that money, to check just a few people, when you could check every person? Whether it's the speckled trout fishermen safety violations, you can check everything staying' close in your home ports. What about a red snapper stamp? I'm going' to lobster in' in Florida. I have to buy a lobster stamp. I know every one of us rec, recreational fishermen would contribute monies because it costs us a lot of money to go fishing'. Conclusion, Mr. Melancon, you said we get some, give some, well we been given' a lot, my friend, and we been getting' a lot and, and it hadn't been very nice. And, I think it is impossible to work with the feds. I, I've come to that conclusion. I'm 67 years old. I have ten grandchildren. I would love to take them snapper fishing'. I cannot do it right now, in 9 days I cannot do it. It's impossible, almost impossible for me to do it. I, obviously support state management of this fishery and I think our people are accountable to us, in each state, and they will do a job for it. I am very disappointed that our state seems to be wavering on such

hard work that all five states have come together to push forward. Thank you for, uh.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Mr. Wayne Werner?

Mr. Wayne Werner: Wayne Werner, 16731 Northwest Avenue, 73rd Terrace, Alachua, Florida. I've been running' my fishing' operation out of Leesville, Louisiana since 1985. 80 percent of the fish that I bring to the dock are sold right here, in Baton Rouge, New Orleans. And you know me, I'm proud to be a commercial fisherman and I'm proud that we help support the tourism here. And I think that, you know, a lot of people don't understand the whole concept. The Graves Bill, I stand against it, but it also has a statement to Magnuson Stevens. You cannot take the state and just run your state. You still have to run it with the other four states. And, you know, the reason why they wanted to drop the ball on regional management be, before Patrick got there, was real simple. They couldn't come to an agreement on how many, who got how many fish. Everybody wanted more fish. They couldn't do it. I agree. The, the state should run the private recreational angler. I just don't think it should be under the Graves Amendment. Now, as far as this costs, I have to say something' about it, because in your fishery independent data, that fishery service requires checks and balances, and part of the checks and balances on this is going to be, the observer programs, or video monitoring. They're expensive systems to run. But it's part of the checks and balances that have to go with fisheries' dependent data. The other thing that hasn't been mentioned here is, every action that's happened with the red snapper, has resulted in a lawsuit. So you might as well put that into your cost analysis, because if you think, because the state's going to run it, the, the

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lawsuits are going to stop, it's not going to happen. And, you know, I watched this Council, kind of, degrade into the situation, and I think I see a little light at the end of the tunnel, because I'm the only person I know that's attended over 100 Gulf Council meetings. And, you know, having done that you're going to see a lot of stuff happening, and I think what I see happening' now is I see a shift where we, you know, you're going to have to go in that direction. And it's pretty simple, you know, just like some of the people said, you get 46 days, if you shut down all the states from, if they all went compliant, they get the same amount days as the charter boats; 46, but that's probably not going to happen in this day and age. So, you know, I just wanted to and I'm glad that you gave me the time to come and talk to you today. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Werner. Mr. Ed Pitre?

Mr. Ed Pitre: My name's Ed Pitre, 18716 Highway 3235, Galliano. I'm a fourth-generation commercial fisherman, and charter fisherman, and I run a couple of boats out of Fourchon and Gynal. I'm against the Graves Bill. I don't think the state should get a hold of it, because the feds are doing' a pretty good job. 12-14 years ago, I seen a decrease in red snapper. It's hard to catch your limit out there. Whatever the feds did over this time, they made it happen, and so I say why throw a wrench in the spokes. Leave them, leave them do their thing. They're doing' a good job. Thank you y'all, guys.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Pitre. Mr. Steve Tomany?

Mr. Steve Tomany: I'm Steve Tomany. My address is 119 Constantine Drive in Port Fourchon, Louisiana. I grew up here in

Baton Rouge. I've been in the charter fishing business, I think I incorporated my business in 1982. I started working' on boats in the '70s. I'm also a commercial red snapper fisherman and I have been living this red snapper management, whatever you want to call it, it's been a up-and-down system, but I have seen this, this thing, as much as it's cost me over the years. I had, I used to have four boats. We used to run 150 trips a year on four boats, takin' 15-20 people at a time. I'm down to Ed that just spoke, is buying' one of my boats. I have another boat, but we had to really taper down, because of cutbacks. My business was really built real strong and squarely on red snapper fishing'. I've had to cut back, and I'm not saying' that as a complaint. I think it had to happen. We were killing' a lot of red snapper. I was about, you know, 15 years ago, about getting' ulcers about where I was going to catch the next one, for these groups of people. Everybody has big expectations, when they go on your boat and it was really tough to come back with a good, a basket or two of red snapper. That's all changed, so red snapper management has worked. Who gets what is always the thorny question, and it still is, and I started going' to Council meetings', I've always, I went to some way back in the, way back years, but I started going' 9 or 10 years ago, and I've only missed two since. That's about five a year. I go, a lot of my personal time and, and, and expense to, to go to these things and witness them, try to influence what I can influence, and I told Mr. Melancon on the first time I met him, I said I'm, I'm really tired of going' to these meetings where my state representative has his hand up against everything that we were trying' to do, in the commercial industry and the charter industry. It's really frustrating to see no follow up, no help from anybody in Louisiana. These are our businesses, this is how we make a living. Like I said, at one

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time I had four or five crews working' for me, I had a dozen people working' for me. I've shaved it on down, you know? But it, it, it had to go this way. I have been a proponent of some kind of tag system and I know nobody likes me telling' the recreational guys what they need to have, but one man was talking' about he couldn't go in June. If they get some kind of tag system you'll be able to plan your, your day. This is what we've been working for in the charter industry. We've got, we work for, and it took us 9 years to get sector separation. We have a quota of fish and we have a bunch of permitted, federal permitted charter boats and we're, you know, we tease about you're going to have to throw us in a room and take all the knives and guns away and we'll come out with how we're going to divide amongst ourselves but at least the industry's working through this council process to get it done for ourselves instead of having somebody from up above just tell us how it's going to be. At least I have input and, and it's important and sometimes we get ignored just like, you know, you don't always vote the way that everybody tells you to up here. It's, it's perfectly understandable but, but we also, our input helps, in the long run it starts helping'. And we have just seen kind of a no movement situation in the recreational fishery. And it'll happen sooner or later but there's a lot of us that put a lot of our time and our businesses depend on what we've been able to gain in the fisheries process in the council and we're very pleased to have Secretary Melancon and calling' some of the shots for us. I appreciate it.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Mr. Scott Rainey, Lafayette.

Mr. Scott Rainey: My name's Scott Rainey, I live at 113 La Port Circle, Lafayette, Louisiana. I'd like to thank the Commission

for the opportunity to speak again. I've got a couple of questions and refer to these points, first thing council's not working, council get, can't get anything done, and why would we create another bureaucracy? If this is not working, why wouldn't we create another bureaucracy? What you guys are doing' doesn't work so let's stop doing it. There, there's no point to continue down a path that doesn't lead anywhere. Regional management is not funded, we need \$10 million. Do a \$10.00 tag, it's funded. We paid for it. It's a very simple solution. How many recreational licenses are there out there? I mean this is a number we can easily measure, figure out what it would cost to, to fund this management system. I heard that the quota's been doubled; where did those fish go? We didn't catch them as recreational fishers. We've got 9 days to do it and I can guarantee you I'm not catching more than 4 fish a year. Is the fishery model even accurate? You know 2 years ago we were saying there are no red snapper, we got to keep it at 2 fish, the snapper population isn't increasing, and anybody that goes out there can tell you there are red snapper everywhere in Louisiana. So I, I would like to know, is the model we're using even accurate? Does this sampling that we do truly represent what's out there? The second thing or I guess the last think I want to say is, you know, and Secretary Melancon mentioned this, he said that to have a compromise, you know, nobody can walk away happy. Well the only people who are unhappy are the recreational fishermen. The commercial fishermen want to keep the system as is because you're winning. I would suggest that this is not a compromise, this is not a fish grab from the recreational side, and the quota is not going to change if we go to state management, as I understand it. So, you know, there are things that can be done; what we're doing now is not working. Thanks.

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Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Mr. Gunner Waldman of Abbeville?

Mr. Gunner Waldman: Good afternoon Commission Members and Mr. Secretary, thank y'all for the time to allow me to speak today. I've been red snapper fishing' out of Vermillion Bay, trout fishing, been a saltwater fisherman since I was about 4 years old. As most of you, we're all Cajuns, it's a way of life with us. So, I've saw the lean years growing' up back in the, early '60s and '70s and I've seen the good years. And first off, I also I, I've worked for this department as a game warden in Vermillion Patch for 13 years so I'm, I'm very versed and respected. I have much respect for this department and the Commission. But anyway, I think Magnuson Stevens, the way that the red snapper assessment, stock assessments is 30 years old. The first thing is I think it's broken. I think the, the formulations are bad, I think there are way more red snapper than, than is being' formulated and, so with that said I'd like to see Senator, I mean Gary Graves' bill go forward and pass and also I'm for the bill and for our regional and state management of red snapper. Second is something, if we don't do anything I now make my living' as a safety consultant out in the gas field. I've seen hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of platforms being' removed with thousands of pounds of red snapper being' decimated; where do they go? Most of the time in olden days they blew up a platform, they're doing less of that now but those fish are dead. We don't have scuba divers going' down there and shewing away the red snapper, all fish. And lastly I am a scuba diver and spear fisherman. I can take any one of you on my boat, actually bring you videos from YouTube that we film our dives. We can't shoot amber jack during amber jack season because sometimes the red snapper are

getting in the way. We spend way more time trying', we spend a whole tank, 50 minutes down on the bottom trying to shoot one amber jack because there are just sometimes when you go to take a shot you got to small red snapper getting' in your way. So – But to get back to my original thing, the, the, the framework in which red snapper, stock assessments are done is, is flawed. We are using old formulation and that needs to be fixed in Magnuson Stevens. And if that's done then everybody would, I think would be happy and we would get more of a sustainable stock in red snapper and be able to harvest more. Thank you for your time.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Next I have David Cresson, CCA.

David Cresson: Good afternoon, commissioners. We got here in the morning but its afternoon now. Thank you for having me, my name is David Cresson, I am the executive director of the Coastal Conservation Association. And, it's a pleasure to be with you this morning'. Commissioner Courville, you mentioned earlier that you're going to have to go to a Gulf Council meeting sometime soon, well don't bother because you've got one going' on here right now, you've got, you know our friends from Texas and Florida who are here giving' the same speeches that they give every time at the Gulf Council, so you just assume that everything you hear here today is, is what's been scripted and they've talked about a thousand times before, so, it feels a lot like a Gulf Council meeting today. You know one thing that's clear to me in listening to everything that I've heard is how few people have actually read Congressman Graves' bill. If anybody anywhere thinks that Congressman Graves would do anything to purposefully injure the commercial fisheries in Louisiana or

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anywhere else, they just simply don't know Congressman Graves or what his motives are. I should also mention that his bill has 40 some-odd co-authors from both sides of the aisle including all but one I believe of the Louisiana delegates as a co-author. So, this is not some fly by the seat of our pants, throw something' together bill, this has been worked on for years now. Even before Congressman Graves was a congressman well this is sort of the culmination. One other thing, and I want to comment on something' the secretary said earlier and, and he mentioned that the Gulf Council save, saved red snapper. I don't believe that's true. I think Gulf, Gulf red snapper were in a lot of trouble until this, the Gulf Council was sued by conservationists, including CCA, and that turned the management of red snapper to a, toward a positive direction. So, as Mr. Tomeny said, 15 years ago it was hard to find them; they got sued, they were held to, to the proper management styles and then snapper turned around. So they were failing it, got sued and now it's made a recovery. I, too much on my paper to comment on, there's too many comments made, too many corrections to try and make so I, I really just want to talk about frustration. I've been at GCA 9 years and with all due respect to our friends at the department, and they are friends, most of them have been to 2 meetings. We have been down this road, we have been asking for better management for 9 years now. The system has failed. It has failed us miserably. The secretary mentioned something about the quota nearly doubling and it has gone up but we're stuck at 9 days. So that's not working'. So after these years and years and years of frustration you can understand why it was time for congressional action. You know, an act of Congress is what they say when something' is really hard, you need an act of Congress. Well, that's what we needed; well, we got one. And

Congressman Graves stepped up, put this together, and worked with all the user groups in doing so got a lot of feedback from all of them. If anybody denies that they're just not telling' the truth, he worked with all of them to put this together and came out with HR-3094. We were thrilled, we were thrilled when Governor Edwards pledged his support to the 5-state management plan and we were thrilled to hear the secretary and so forth say the same things leading up to where we are now. You can imagine our frustration upon hearing that the department was not on board with the commission's resolution from earlier that month, and I expressed this to the secretary and I must admit I, I would say the secretary and I have a very open and honest dialogue back and forth, I told him we were disappointed about this, he explained the reasons he thought they had to be where they were. But it occurred to me that the announcement that was made was made before the commission knew that it was going to be made. It was made before any of the user groups like ours knew that it was going to be made. It was made before the governor knew it was going to be made. The only people that knew about it besides the department were some anti-recreational groups who were floating around like it was a, a, like an e-high 5, running' around in the internet world. So that was frustrating. We talked about that and understood that we just moved forward. it's also frustrating that the concerns that were, were expressed about the bill were not expressed to the congressman before they were made public, and they were not expressed to us, they were not expressed really to anybody until they were expressed to some reporter in Texas. So you can understand the frustrations that, that we feel. We have the final frustration; there's several more obviously but the final frustration is to hear that the preferred alternative is to go back to the Gulf Council.

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We've been there already; like on four members said earlier when the committees put together recommendations and the Gulf Council doesn't like them, they just ignore them. So I think in the amendment that's been put forth by the department it talks about the recreational ad hoc committee that's going to be put together; it doesn't matter what that committee says, if it doesn't fit with what the Gulf Council thinks they're going to vote it down. So, Mr. Banks mentioned that the vote for that amendment was 9 to 6 and that's strong support. Well, had Louisiana voted how they had been voting in previous it was have been 8 to 7 and it would have been one of those close votes just like it always had been. So, you know, I, I found it interesting to see how many times CCA was mentioned in the comments earlier and I think anybody would recognize that we've taken a wait and see approach on this. We've, we met with the secretary, and I talked to him the day of the announcement. We've, we've got a good rapport. We met with him and the governor later that week. We are committed to try and find a good solution to make this work. And we're going to continue to do that. But going back to square one, really, which is where we would be with the Gulf Council is just not something that any of us can afford to stomach. I mean you're talking' years and years of frustration. Amendment 39 was a good looking' piece of work when it first came out. After the Gulf Council got their hands on it for 5 years it, it was no good, it couldn't, and it was unviable. So, I could go on and on, I know I'm against the clock, my paper is filled with things I would like to say but I'll reserve those for a later day. Again, I thank you for your comments, we do very much look forward to working' with the department, we've got a great relationship with them in a number of ways, and we hope we can work through this one as well. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Second call for Johnathan Walker. Okay. That concludes the public comments on Agenda Items 13, a couple of these comments are strictly for, are, are also include 14 which, is Mr. Blanchet going to come up and complete that part now? So I'll formally read it. Agenda Item 14 is to hear an update on the red snapper season. Presenting, Mr. Harry Blanchet.

Mr. Harry Blanchet: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission. Let's see if I can get this thing working. Okay, that's the right one. Hmm, I show it here, I don't see it up there.

Mr. Harry Blanchet: There we go. Okay. You just have to push the button hard. This is a relatively brief update, we've had a recreational season that has been open since early in the year. This year was a little bit different because the feds actually agreed that we've got 9 miles off shore which is a nice benefit to some people, not so much as some people have pointed out in the western part of the state. So a little bit, I'm sorry for the spaghetti but I could not, I wanted to show as much detail as possible, where we are. This actually is through the 26th of June, so these are, these data have, include the information from the red snapper recreational private boat season. I don't know if this is going to show up or not, no, it's not. This year, the, the federal season typically is a time when we have our, most productive week. This year was not as productive as many other years has been. There was a lot of rough weather. It wasn't that people could not catch their two fish, it was that there weren't that many people that really wanted to buck that weather and go get those two fish. So as a result what you have there is the data for 2014 in the black, 2015 in the, I guess that's green and the red

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is 2016 and each of those numbers is the pounds landed by recreational fishermen through the same date. And, the two then go forward. So trying to estimate where we might be relative to where historically, we would normally be, this is our historic fraction of the overall recreational, allowable harvest. And so at 545,000 pounds through the 26th, you can see we're relatively close to our overall, average. For the, for our sector, they have been following very closely with where they were last year, when they also had an extended season. There's two more weeks of their season to go, they've run through, oh, I'm sorry, there's three more weeks of their season to go, they run through Week 28. And so our projections are that they will do a little bit better than they did last year, I'm sorry, not as good as they did last year. Oh, no, a little better than they did last year. And then we have, so that's our projection of that basically through the end of the year. I put them all together and here's where we stand compared to, the prior 2 years. The main difference for 2014 of course is that much smaller, charter season and, but you can see that even so this year we're falling, we're a little bit behind both the other years. And this is, I, I will say that what we have here is one projection but depending upon what kind of, parameters you might put into your model, this is very much like showing just one model of the hurricane centers, projections where, you know, you really have a spaghetti and so I would say that unless, I would not put a whole lot of faith in the, total harvest being at exactly 1.116 million pounds on, at the middle of October. But we will be able to continue monitoring this, as we, as we progress forward and I'll be glad to take any questions.

Chairman Yakupzack: Harry, thank you for your presentation. Just as a point of clarity I

have a question, I note that the, the numbers are different, in the, in the packet that was sent to us, Tuesday than, than are in the packet that we were given today.

Mr. Harry Blanchet: Correct.

Chairman Yakupzack: Did, did anything change other than you've got an additional –

Mr. Harry Blanchet: We actually –

Chairman Yakupzack: – week worth of data?

Mr. Harry Blanchet: – added one week's data.

Chairman Yakupzack: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Courville: Yes, Mr. Chairman, before we leave this, sir, I sort of viewed 13 and 14 together. I, I do have a couple of follow-up questions and, and it's really just a request more than, more than questions. Mr. Banks, at some point can we get sort of some clarification of what that independent data, looks like in your, in your budget estimate, and then to, to go again with my, question earlier, if we can find out perhaps even through a, a freedom of information request from the feds what they're currently spending on, on snapper. I'd also like a, you know, we heard some things today, perhaps, I know you guys have a full plate to deal with but, I would be interested in an analysis by whomever is the appropriate party, to get an analysis of what the Graves bill will, will do, potentially to the commercial and the for-hire industry. and then my last question, I think, actually no, I've got a couple, but my last request would be how soon will we see, a draft, if you will, of what this amendment at the Gulf Council's going to look like as far as a solution for the recreational snapper issue. I'd like to put a, yeah, the, the amendment

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was, open-ended, if you will, and open-ended amendments to me look like placeholders as opposed to, to tasks. I would like to know, and I'm not asking' you today to give me a number, I'd like to know how soon, perhaps maybe even at the next Commission meeting how soon will we see, that language, that it's going to look, and then what is it going to look like? ideally, and again, I know you guys, have a lot to do, I know this thing has a long sordid history, but I, I think, if, if inevitably we, we go that route, which I'm not suggesting one way or the other, it'd be good to know if it's an option then we need to know what it's going to look like. I would, I would be in favor of that. and, and then I heard today and, and maybe this isn't the setting for that but I heard a lot of tag discussion for the recreational folks, and perhaps we could have an update on what a tag system might look like, for the recreational folks if that's what it, what it appears that the commercial sector is in favor of. I'd like for the public to have a chance to get their handle, and myself for that matter on what a tag program would actually look like. I've got my, my thoughts on it and, I'm all over the place but, somebody with some experience can, can share with us and the public what a tag program would actually look like. and I, I guess my last question is, we've heard a lot of statements by a lot of folks, the money fell from heaven tomorrow, to manage snapper, would that change this current department position? If it wasn't an unfunded mandate.

Secretary Melancon: If –

Chairman Yakupzack: Let's say, let's say Mr., Mr., the Honorable Mr. Bishop, I can't remember if he's a congressman or a senator so –

Secretary Melancon: He's, he's a congressman.

Chairman Yakupzack: – I don't want to mislabel him. If he said, no, I was just kidding', here's your money. Would that change, um how, how we view Congressman Graves' bill?

Secretary Melancon: If the Congress passed a law and it was put into effect and the money fell from the sky then that's what we would do, because that would be the law.

Commissioner Courville: Okay. So I, I'm not asking' for answers on all those other questions, Patrick, Mr., Mr. Banks, sorry, maybe, maybe next month, or something' like that. I didn't give you obviously adequate time to prepare for any of those.

Patrick Banks: Thank you.

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Yakupzack: Commissioner Sunseri?

Commissioner Sunseri: Thank, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, I was wondering', I know this is no action item or anything but I'm wondering' if we could ask the department to maybe try to do something' in maybe trying' to get the groups together, the commercial fishing, the recreational fishing, the charter fishing people together, the department biologists and everything and get them in a room and see what might be able to come out of that, that could be good to go to the council with. I, I, you know, I, I premise this by saying' I'm a solutions guy and, I, I think that there's something' that could be hammered out where we could go to the council and make it happen. But you need to get the people in a room to go ahead

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and, and make it happen, and make, make this, because we don't have this Graves bill thing in hand. We got the council, that's who we've got to work with right now. So get the Louisiana guys in a room, along with whatever commissioners want to participate and, see, see what can come out of it that can be useful and to bring forward to the, the Gulf, Commission. That, that's a suggestion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you. Any other, question or discussion on Agenda Item No. 14? Moving' forward we have Agenda Item 15, to set the November 2016 meeting date. Looks like the first Thursday of the month is, November 3rd. Is that, appear to be fine for everyone? Okay, so moving' forward we're, we're going to let the minutes reflect that we're going to have the meeting on November 3rd, that's the first Thursday of the month. We now have, Agenda Item No. 16, to receive public comment. I would like to remind you, that those of you who are going to leave early to, to please exit quietly so we can finish up this agenda. First up for public comment I've got Mr. Barry Rogers from Terrebonne Parish.

Mr. Barry Rogers: Good afternoon, Secretary, Commission members. I'm here to express concerns on the appointment of Bob Samanie to the Commission Board. He is the vice president of Lafitte Frozen Foods which has been known to import frozen shrimp and repack in Louisiana boxes. Louisiana, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries and the Seafood Promotion Board has spent millions of dollars on promoting authentic Louisiana shrimp. I see a conflict of interest between someone that imports shrimp and the State of Louisiana which is trying to promote our business. I've also had comments and meetings with you and spoke with you and you have spoken to me as a

fisherman from a processor that you hold my head down under water till I almost drown, you let me up for a breath of air.

Commissioner Samanie: *muffled noise*

Mr. Barry Rogers: Yes, you have.

Commissioner Samanie: No, I haven't.

Mr. Barry Rogers: Yes, you have. You might not remember but yes, you have. We are drowning. The shrimping' industry is drowning. We have went through the worst year of brown shrimp season in history. We do not need someone like you on this Board that imports shrimp and puts it in Louisiana boxes. I'm not here to argue with you, I just have concerns.

Commissioner Samanie: Well, do you have any proof or documentation –

Mr. Barry Rogers: The man that works on the back deck –

Commissioner Samanie: You're making' slanderous statements –

Mr. Barry Rogers: I'm not making' a – The man that works the back deck of my boat used to work your dock.

Commissioner Samanie: You'll have to prove this one.

Chairman Yakupzack: Come on, let's do it.

Commissioner Samanie: Yeah.

Mr. Barry Rogers: I'm sorry, it's just the way I feel. I have concerns. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Rogers. Louisiana Shrimp Association,

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Acy Cooper. Again, we're going to limit comments to still on our 3 minute time.

Acy Cooper: How you doing'? Acy Cooper, Louisiana Shrimp Association. I have a lot, a lot of people calling' me and like I have to do what I have to do. A lot of fishermen are worried about which way ya'll going to vote when it comes time to open and close seasons. Last year we had a problem with open earlier, close late and they wanted the season open early and, later. And the processors wanted to open early. So, and they kinda feel that, and I aren't got nothing' against you personally, Mr. Bobby, that with that influence on the panel it may lean a certain way. So hopefully the rest of ya'll take everybody's in account when we ask, the fishermen come up and ask about a later date, take it into account. Just don't let one may sway ya'll vote one way or the other. And that's the main concern that they have. That last year we did have a big problem, they all wanted it closed, the fishermen wanted to go longer, the processors wanted to open early because of the smaller shrimp. They held it back, that did it good and it worked out right. So that's the main thing that we're concerned about. It doesn't sway ya'll vote and lean towards the wrong way. Thank ya'll.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Next up, Dean Blanchard. Dean Blanchard? Next up, Warren Delacroix. State your name and address, please.

Warren Delacroix: Warren Delacroix, 1012 Helois, Louisiana. I happen to be – Mr. Melancon, secretary and Members of the Commission, thank ya'll for letting' me speak. I happen to be a member of the Louisiana Crab Task Force, I'd like to put a comment on a couple of different issues. First off, while Mr. Cresson is still here, if he's still present with the CCA we've had

some different discussions as ya'll know with the Crab Task Force and, and issues about over fishing' and the stock assessment. I'd like to open Wildlife and Fisheries and the secretary and Mr. Cresson to give us some type, and even you, Mr. Sunseri with the Oyster Fisheries some type of fin, finfish fishery, drum or sheepshead via trammel net or haul seine and I'm not asking' for it immediately but just get the Commission to come on board and have a group conversation. You said you are, you are, you know, you, you're trying', you'd like to get everybody to get along but that's an issue that needs to be resolved for your industry, especially with the oyster fishermen and especially our industry with the crab fishermen. Another thing I want to bring up is the recent appointment of Mr. Samanie to the Commission. He works for Lafitte Frozen Foods, Mr. Paul Poon who has been in violation several times of repacking' processed, foreign shrimp in domestic boxes. He was basically run out of Lafitte, now he's in Lafitte in Saint Bernard Parish doing' the same thing and I don't think it's a, it's a good deal for the State of Louisiana for this Board or the commercial fishermen or anybody in here to have somebody like that represent our industry and the fishermen of the state of Louisiana. Thank you.

Secretary Melancon: Mister, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Yakupzack: Secretary Melancon,

Secretary Melancon: I've had reports of, such comments would be made this week and I made several calls around to people to ask about what was being alleged. I found that it seems that the, the accusations came from a, one source, the industry has been bifurcated or worse over the years. Unless somebody brings some documents that are notarized to attest to what the accusations

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are I, I'll have to just say that I did not get a bad report. I did find out from one shrimp processor and their competitor that Mr. Samanie's company was one of the largest shrimp processors in the state of Louisiana, if not on the Gulf Coast, was heavily involved in, dollar wise, in funding the anti-dumping suits in the years past. It kinda, I guess the question that I, that it puts in my mind is how would a person who's putting money to defend importation, against illegal importations or why would it be putting money into defending themselves if they're doing the opposite? But I, I think that, it's, it's a sad day that, this kind of thing comes to the Commission but at the same time, if there's documentation, I think that needs to be presented and Mr. Samanie at some point in time will be able to, have a clear, clear, clear chance at serving if it's just alleged rumors. Thank you.

Commissioner Samanie: Thank you, Mr. Melancon.

Chairman Yakupzack: the final card that I have here, unless, I, Mr. Blanchard appears to be gone, I don't see him in the crowd, the final card I have is Ron, Mr. Ronald Coco from Moreauville, Louisiana with regard to Spring, Spring Bayou Wildlife Management Area –

Mr. Ronald Coco: Yeah. Secretary, Commissioners.

Chairman Yakupzack: You got 3 minutes. You're the last one.

Mr. Ronald Coco: I'm going to cut it short, I'm going to cut it short. Spring Bayou has a team of, Spring Bayou Restoration Team that was formed in 2007. None of ya'll was on the Commission at that time. This is a varied group of people that get involved and they're very involved in Spring Bayou.

When Spring Bayou was going' down after the high water of '73 they got involved with it. First then they came Wildlife and Fish, they wanted to do draw downs. They were actually organized as a group of citizens against the draw down program. They came over here and challenged Wildlife and Fisheries to put grass carp. They worked with them, they still got denied, and they kept comin' back until grass carps were finally put into Spring Bayou. At the present date over 60,000 grass carps have been put in Spring Bayou. The sprayin' has continually gone and it has actually opened up the whole complex. There's 12, over 12,000 acres of land, over 40 percent in the summertime is usually water. In the wintertime, spring it's actually more. The problem now is alligators... People are fishin' in there. In the last 3 years the area has developed a lot. Years ago there was at least 25 bass tournaments on the lake, on the whole complex. It went down to one. The National Guard was the only one that's stayed with Spring Bayou. This year we went up to six tournaments. The fishin' was excellent in there, people were fishin' bass, brim, the Wildlife and Fisheries have actually stocked it with bass and brim also. But the problem is now the alligator population has spread all over this thing. People are going' fishing', if you're going to cast your line out there you better draw it in quick if you got a fish on the end of it because it won't get back to your boat. Just like you do with the alligators nowadays, these alligators are friendly. They'll come up right against the boat and stay there. I think at the present time, how many times you been, how many times you get them? Probably a hundred tags. People open frog season and go out there, they stop their boats, wait a few minutes, turn the light on, they count as many as 40 to 50 alligators in one little search, so it's very over populated. And they would like to see if the Wildlife

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and Fisheries could go in there and even make an estimate. They did call and told 'me that no surveys had ever been made in the area, all surveys are made down south. So this doesn't have nothing' to do with the coast, this has to do with Central Louisiana and they would like to see if the season could be extended or give more tags out. Actually by the first week of the season people are limited out over there. That's how big the population is. Now these people will be coming to the meeting. I was asked – They had a meeting last night and I was asked to come and bring this before ya'll. They will be coming' and, they are a determined group of people, they're not going to give up. So I mean the season's over with right now, it's something' to start thinking' about, something' needs to be done with this, population of alligators in this area. And so I mean ya'll got plenty of time to think about it and it'll be coming', like I said, they'll be coming' over here and coming' before the Commission to talk more about it.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. –

Mr. Ronald Coco: And, and another thing, Johnathan brought up was the chronic, chronic waste disease, we working' to have a meeting' in Avoyelles Parish at the Ag Building on Highway 1. And we work with LSU and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and any other people that want to get involved in it. There was one held in Alexandria but it was held like 2:00 in the afternoon, people couldn't attend. So this one will be scheduled for a nighttime meeting. And it'll be targeted for Central Louisiana people to come in so to tell the people more about the diseases and hog control and everything also. And I will be letting you know and tell everyone about it and if ya'll want to come to it ya'll more than welcome to come to it, also.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Coco, I think Commissioner Courville has –

Commissioner Courville: Mr. Chairman, uh –

Chairman Yakupzack: – more questions.

Commissioner Courville: – I might weigh in on your, alligator, request, have you made a formal request of the department for a, a, a consideration –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: They called –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: for an alligator –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: several people, they were transferred back and forth to several different people in Wildlife and Fisheries.

Commissioner Courville: Let me, let me make a suggestion, obviously you've got staff here that can do a fine job of it as well but I would, so tag allocations occurring currently –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Mm hmm.

Commissioner Courville: so if you have a desire to increase your tag allocation in that region it needs to be done now.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Now? Okay.

Commissioner Courville: I would recommend that if you, have a chance to maybe visit with Mr. Edmond Mouton –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Yeah.

Commissioner Courville: and then he can direct you –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: We did, we did talk to Mr. Mouton.

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Commissioner Courville: He's in New Iberia but, if you wait till August, the August Commission meeting you, you might be a little bit behind schedule so, uh –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: They're waiting' for me to call them back to give them some kind of a response because, I mean they rang me twice since I've been here.

Commissioner Courville: I would, I would recommend that you make a move on it now.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Okay, I'll get with them on that.

Commissioner Courville: Because August will probably be too late because –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Okay.

Commissioner Courville: those tags will have already been allocated and assigned and it's a, it can be a challenge.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: They, they started a kayak program in the thing, they have, one, it goes up to 15 mile kayak trips on the, on the whole complex. When they first started people were going' in, kids were going' in and now the people are pulling' out, it's too many alligators in the complex.

Commissioner Courville: One, one –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: They don't want to bring their kids up in there with the alligators, with the size of the alligators they got up in there.

Commissioner Courville: One thing I do want to comment on and applaud the department, for their response in a lot of, in an increase in alligator, nuisance calls if

you will based on some, you know, obvious, the obvious activities that have occurred in the news. Fortunately, for Louisianans we've learned how to sort of adapt and live – Because we live in the midst of a lot of alligator habitat and there's a lot of folks that are making' a lot of, knee jerk type reactions. They see one and, and they, they all of a sudden are fearing' for their lives. The department has done a, an excellent job and if I'm not mistaken recently put out a press release on how to deal with alligator encounters.

That said, and I'm not saying' I'm advocating for or against it, but, a re-evaluation of, of the alligator population in the Spring Bayou area would probably be appropriate. Um –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Well, well that's what they wanted. If they could have somebody come in there and make an estimate of the alligators and study –

Commissioner Courville: And –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: study the situation and see what the problem is.

Commissioner Courville: And, and it may or may not result in an increase –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Yeah.

Commissioner Courville: in tag allocation but what I would hope the department would not do, and I've got the utmost confidence that they won't do it, is have a, a knee jerk type reaction, and have these incredible tag increases, the alligator recovery is a success story. Are there some nuisance ones? Absolutely. Or some inappropriate behaviors by individuals, almost taming them? Absolutely that happens. So we've got to find that balance. But at a minimum I have the utmost confidence that the

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department's staff will do a fair assessment and it may or may not result in a tag increase.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: But they just, they just, uh –

Commissioner Courville: But you need to do it now.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Well they just harvested one or killed one, 11-1/2 foot in a man's front yard.

Commissioner Courville: There is a good nuisance program in addition to –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Yeah.

Commissioner Courville: to potential increase in tag allocation. So, like I said, I think the department has the tools to address safety concerns of, of human life. But it, it, it, if you're going to make a move, you need to do it now.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: It has to be now because August is coming' up.

Commissioner Courville: You, you're going to, you won't have time if you wait till the August –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: I know.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Commission.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: I mean –

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: I, I would do it now.

Mr. Ronald Cocoa: Okay. All right. Thank you.

Chairman Yakupzack: Thank you, Mr. Co, Coco. Any further comment? With that I'll take a motion to adjourn.

Captain Samanie: So moved.

Chairman Yakupzack: Motion moved by Captain Samanie.

Commissioner Sunseri: Seconded.

Chairman Yakupzack: Meeting adjourned.



FALL SHRIMP PRESENTATION

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Baton Rouge, LA

August 4, 2016

Declaration of Emergency will:

- Set the opening date for the Fall Inshore Shrimp Season

Gives authority to the Secretary to:

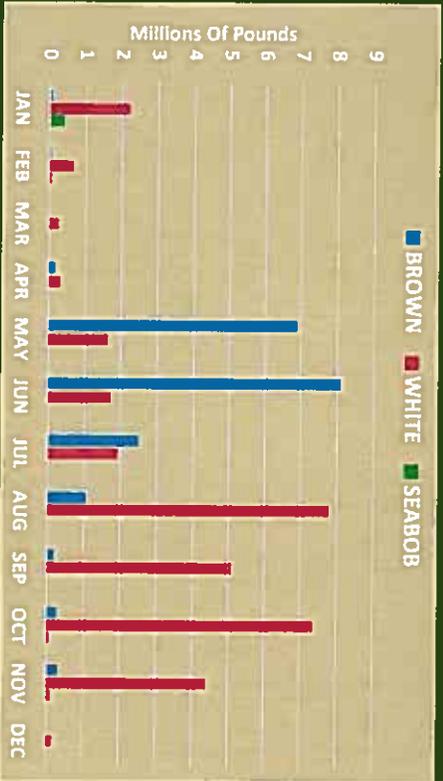
- delay or advance opening dates if biological and technical data indicate the need
- close inside waters to protect small white shrimp or if enforcement problems develop
- open any area, re-open any closed area, and open and close special shrimp seasons



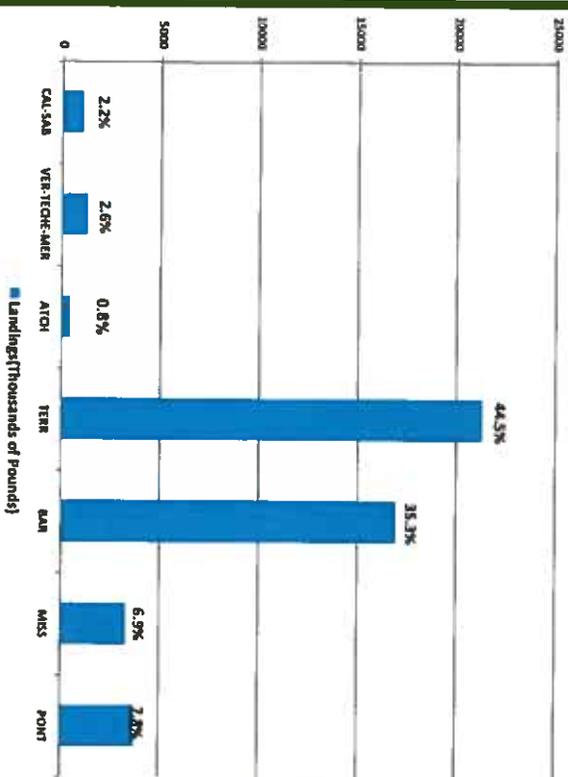
LOUISIANA ESTUARINE BASINS



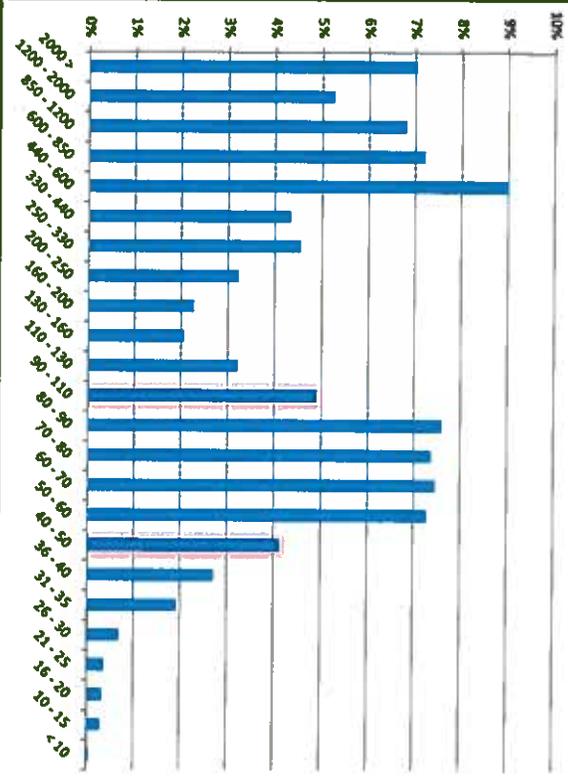
LOUISIANA 2015 SHRIMP LANDINGS (Heads-Off Weight)



2015 WHITE SHRIMP LANDINGS BY BASIN



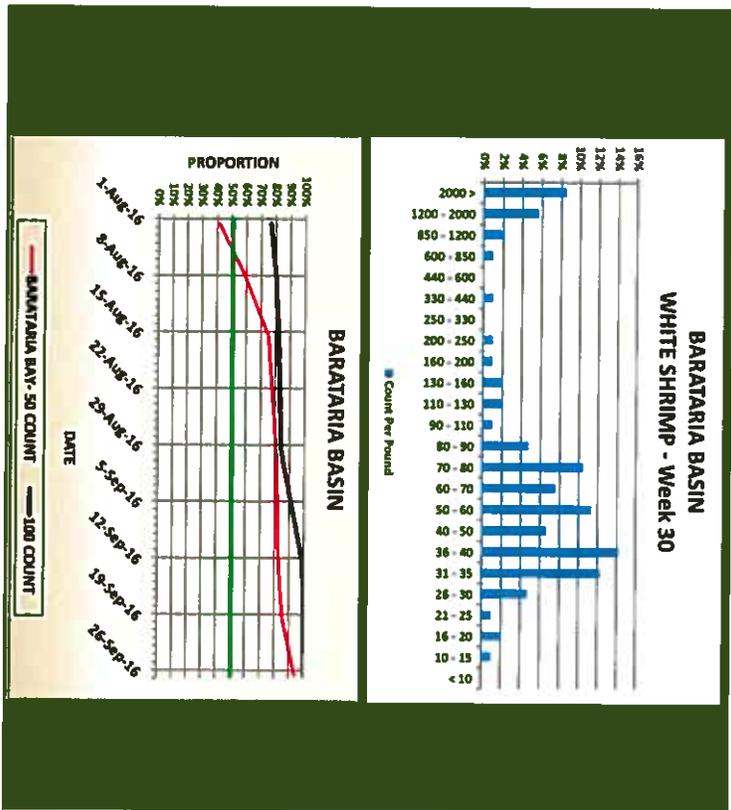
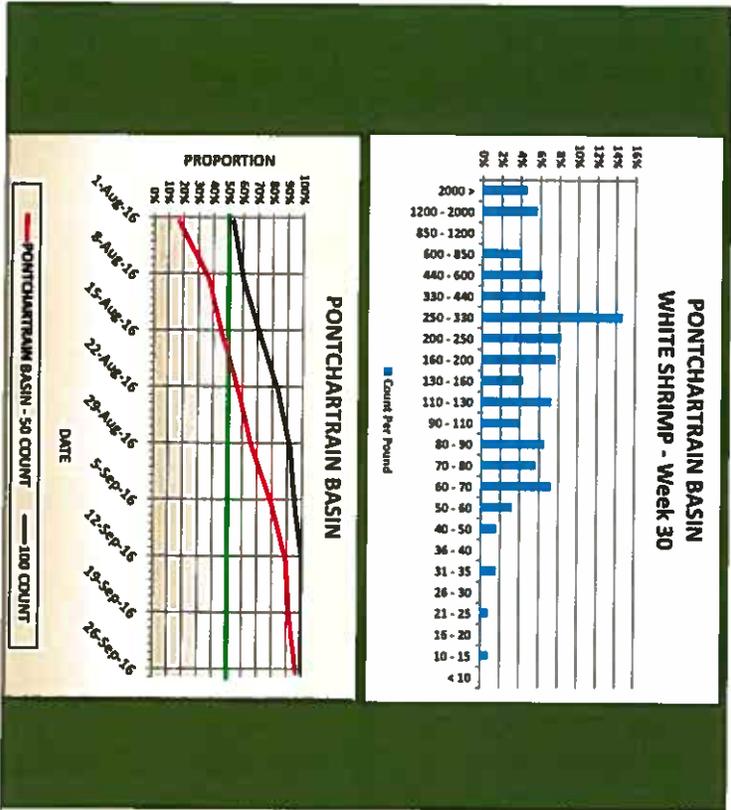
Statewide - Week 30 White Shrimp

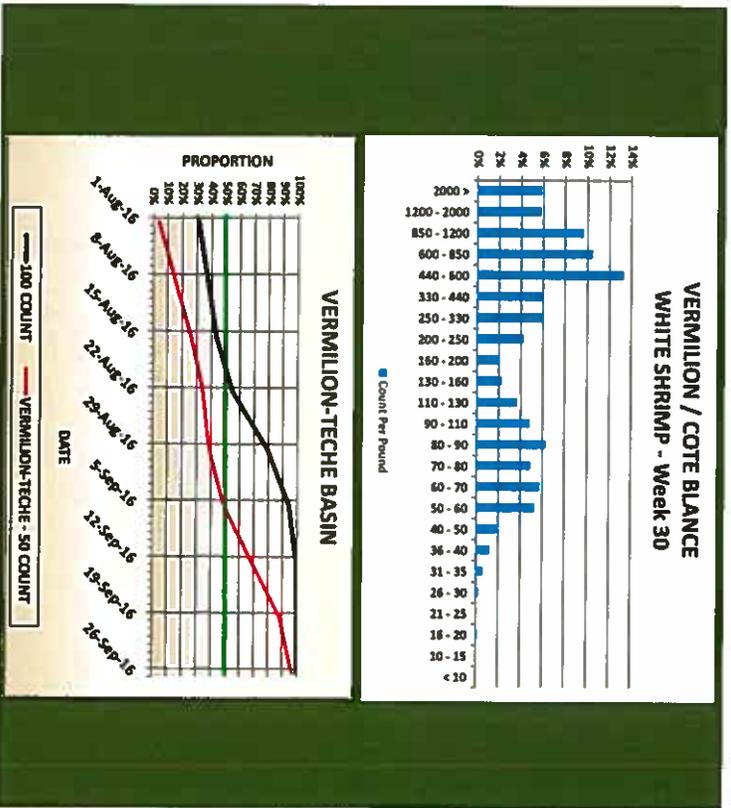
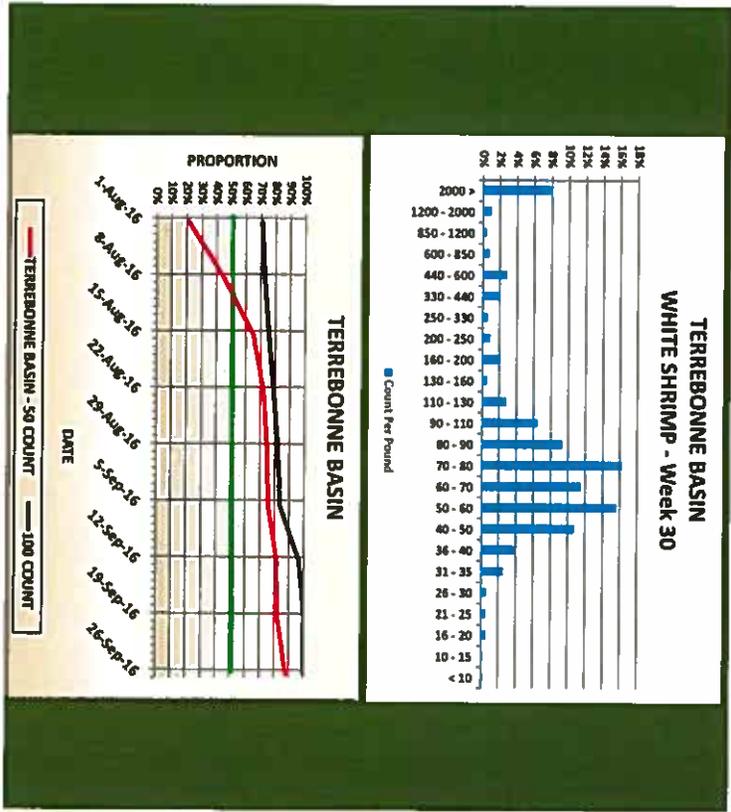


COUNT PER POUND

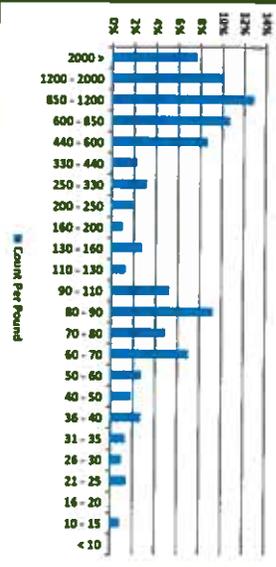
Samples taken July 25-28



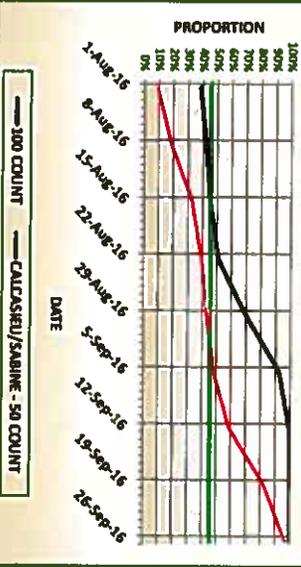




**Mermentau/Calcasieu/Sabine
WHITE SHRIMP - Week 30**

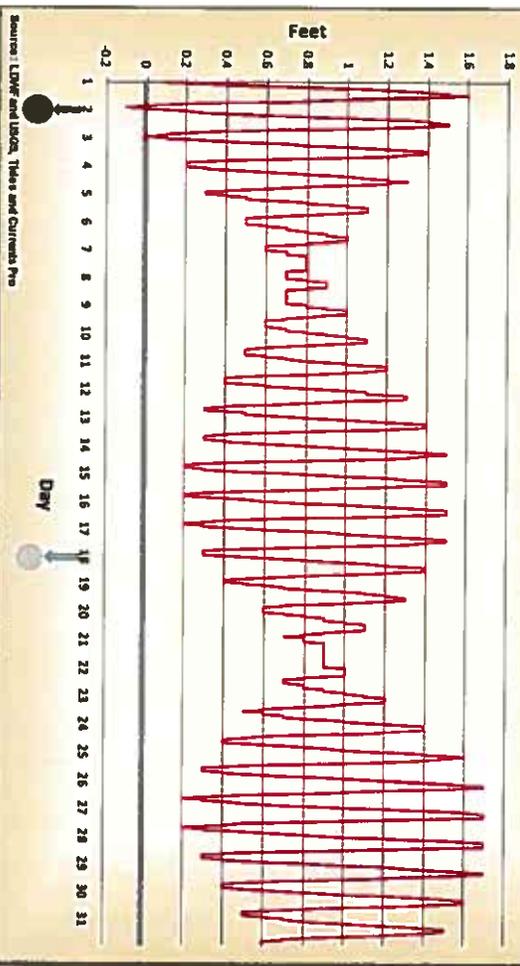


CALCASIEU/SABINE BASIN



**Louisiana Department of
Wildlife & Fisheries**

**Predicted August 2016 Tidal Range
Barataria Pass, Louisiana**



Source: LDFW and Udon, Tides and Currents Pro

PERCENTAGE BIGGER THAN 100 CT PERCENTAGE BIGGER THAN 50 CT



RECOMMENDATIONS

Opening from MS/LA state line westward to the Atchafalaya River on August 15th at 6pm.

Opening from Atchafalaya River westward to LA/TX state line on August 22nd at 6am.



QUESTIONS?



DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Fall Inshore Shrimp Season Opening Dates
August 4, 2016

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953 of the Administrative Procedure Act which allows the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency procedures to set shrimp seasons and R.S. 56:497 which provides that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission shall fix no less than two open seasons each year for all or part of inside waters and shall have the authority to open or close outside waters and to increase the minimum mesh size provided in R.S. 56:499 for any trawl, skimmer net, or butterfly net for the duration of any special shrimp season or regular shrimp season extension, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby set the 2016 Fall Shrimp Season in Louisiana state waters to open as follows:

That portion of state inside waters from the Mississippi/Louisiana state line westward to the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line to open at 6:00 pm August __, 2016; and,

That portion of state inside waters from the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel at Eugene Island as delineated by the River Channel Buoy Line westward to the Louisiana/Texas state line to open at one-half hour before sunrise August __, 2016.

The Commission also hereby grants authority to the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to delay

or advance these opening dates if biological and technical data indicate the need to do so, and; to close any portion of Louisiana's inside waters to protect small juvenile white shrimp if biological and technical data indicate the need to do so, or enforcement problems develop. The Secretary is further granted the authority to open any area, or re-open any previously closed area, and to open and close special shrimp seasons in any portion of state waters. Notice of any opening, delaying or closing of a season by the Secretary will be made by public notice at least 72 hours prior to such action.

Bart Yakupzack, Chairman
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries
Commission

Date Signed

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Cervid Carcass Importation

(LAC XIX.V.1.119)

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission do hereby give notice of its intent to establish rules and regulations in relation to the importation of cervid carcasses.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part V. Wild Quadrupeds and Wild Birds

Chapter 1. Wild Quadrupeds

§119. Cervid Carcass Importation

A. Definitions

Cervid—any animal of the family *Cervidae* including but not limited to white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, caribou, fallow deer, axis deer, sika deer, red deer, and reindeer.

B. No person shall import, transport or possess any cervid carcass or part of a cervid carcass originating outside of Louisiana, except: deboned meat, antlers, clean skull plates with antlers, cleaned skulls without tissue attached, capes, tanned hides, finished taxidermy mounts

and cleaned cervid teeth. Approved parts or deboned meat transported from other states must be legally possessed from the state it was taken. Approved parts and deboned meat from other states must contain a possession tag with the hunter's name, out-of-state license number (if required), address, species, date and location (county and state) of harvest. All cervids transported into or through this state in violation of the provisions of this ban shall be seized and disposed of in accordance with Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and Department of Wildlife and Fisheries rules and regulations.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with the Louisiana Constitution, Article IX, Section 7, R.S. 56:1, R.S. 56:5, R.S. 56:6(10), (13) and (15), R.S. 56:20, R.S. 56:112, R.S. 56:116.1 and R.S. 56:171 et seq.

The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent and the Final Rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statements, the filing of the Notice of Intent and final Rule and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

Family Impact Statement

In accordance with Act #1183 of 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Poverty Impact Statement

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S. 49:973.

Provider Impact Statement

This Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session.

Public Comments

Interested persons may send comments until 4:30PM, Monday, August 22, 2016 to Johnathan Bordelon, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA, 70898-9000, or jbordelon@wlf.la.gov.

Bart Yakupzack

Chairman

PROHIBITION ON IMPORTATION OF CERVID CARCASSES AND PARTS SUPPLEMENTAL

Comments and Supplemental Information

Examples of Bans under different scenarios.

Currently 37 states and 2 Canadian Provinces have CWD

7 of the 37 states prohibit importation from all states with the exception of approved parts listed in regulation. 3 of the 7 allow exceptions for taxidermist and meat processors.

Arkansas, Arizona, California, Illinois*, Indiana*, New York, and Missouri*.

Taxidermy and Processor Exemption * (Taxidermist and Processors are required to dispose of out-of-state deer parts in an approved landfill and notification of the agency is required.)

Example for Missouri: (Exceptions for taxidermy and meat processors)(CWD Positive State)

As of March 1, 2010 the following verbiage has been added to the Wildlife Code of Missouri "Wildlife legally taken and exported from another state or country may also be shipped into Missouri by common carrier, except cervid carcasses or cervid carcass parts. The importation, transportation, or possession of cervid carcasses or cervid carcass parts taken from or obtained outside of Missouri is prohibited, except for meat that is cut and wrapped; meat that has been boned out; quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached; hides or capes from which all excess tissue has been removed; antlers; antlers attached to skull plates or skulls cleaned of all muscle and brain tissue; upper canine teeth; and finished taxidermy products. Carcasses or parts of carcasses with the spinal column or head attached may be transported into the state only if they are reported to an agent of the department within twenty-four (24) hours of entering the state and then taken to a license meat processor or taxidermist within seventy-two (72) hours of entry. Licensed meat processors and taxidermists shall dispose of the discarded tissue in a properly permitted landfill.

Example Arkansas: (Total Ban)(CWD Positive State)

Not allowed to import, transport or possess any portion of a cervid carcass from any area outside the boundaries of Arkansas except: antlers and/ or antlers attached to clean skull plates or cleaned skulls (where no meat or tissues are attached to skull), meat with bones removed, cleaned teeth, finished taxidermy products, hides, and tanned products. Regulation also applies to any cervid taken from a captive facility or from within any enclosure regardless of state.

30 of 37 states prohibit importation from CWD Positive States only with the exception of approved parts. In addition, 2 of these states allow taxidermy and meat processor exceptions regardless of state of origin. (Wyoming and Wisconsin)

Example Georgia: (CWD Positive States Only w provision for quarters)(CWD Negative State)

It is unlawful to import or possess a whole cervid carcass or cervid carcass part from any state having a documented case of a cervid infected with chronic wasting disease, except for one or more of the following parts: (1) Boned out meat; (2) Portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached; (3) Hide with no heads attached; (4) Clean skull plates with antlers attached; (5) Clean antlers; (6) Finished taxidermy heads: and (7) Clean upper canine teeth (buglers, whistlers, ivories)

Ex. West Virginia: (CWD Positive States Only)(West Virginia is CWD Positive)

Importation of cervid carcasses and carcass parts from a state or province or a designated CWD Containment or Disease Management Area which has diagnosed chronic wasting disease or from captive cervid facilities in any state or province is prohibited, except the meat from which all bones have been removed, the cape, the antlers or antlers and skull plate from which all meat or tissue has been removed, cervid canines, and finished taxidermy heads may be imported. Hunters in West Virginia are prohibited from transporting dead cervids or their parts beyond the boundary

of the CWD Containment Area which includes all of Hampshire County and portions of Hardy and Morgan counties except for the following: meat that has been boned out, quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached, cleaned hide with no head attached, clean skull plate with antlers attached, antlers with no meat or tissue attached, and finished taxidermy mounts.

States with a prohibition from CWD Positive States include: Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, W. Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, N. Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and Oregon.

13 states have no ban and include:

Oklahoma, Louisiana, Nebraska, Kansas, New Jersey, Connecticut, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, South Dakota, Maine, Hawaii, and Alaska.

Colorado repealed their importation ban. They have been battling CWD for almost 50 years. Their prevalence rates and distribution rates are high. The disease is considered widespread and prevalent at this time for Colorado.

The Canadian Provinces of Manitoba and Ontario both have restrictions on cervid carcass importation from any area outside of the province except for approved parts listed in regulation.

24 Positive States:

Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Colorado, South Dakota, North Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana.

Proposed Cervid Carcass Importation Ban

Summary of Comments 8/1/16

Comments

- **Support: 2 (1 phone, 1 email)**
- **Neutral: 3 (Questions regarding proposed regulation)(2 phone, 1 email)**
 - Questions regarding disease transfer regarding cervid carcass parts and clarification of proposed regulation.
- **Negative: 24 (24 email)**
 - Primary complaints involve possession requirements in other states, reciprocal properties located in two states, difficulty in taxidermy requirements, concerns regarding the effectiveness of this regulation, and inconvenience.