

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

9:00 a.m.

Bolton Building Auditorium

1141 Bayview Avenue

Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

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Commission Members:

Mark Havard, Chairman

Ronald Daniels, Vice Chairman

Steve Bosarge

Natalie Guess

Also Present:

Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR

Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

*Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251*

*COURT REPORTER*

(228) 396-8788

1           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I would like to welcome  
2 everybody today to the meeting of the Commission on Marine  
3 Resources.

4           I would like to start off with The Pledge of  
5 Allegiance, and I would like Mr. Joe Jewell to lead us in  
6 The Pledge of Allegiance, if you would.

7           (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

8           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you, Joe.

9           Second on the agenda is a moment of silence.  
10          We have several unfortunate things that have  
11 happened in the Marine Resources world.

12          Mr. Joe Jenkins passed away yesterday, and he  
13 has done many things for the oyster world and our  
14 fisheries up and down the Gulf Coast.

15          Mr. Gary Hargrove passed away.

16          Joe Isom's (phonetic) mother passed away  
17 yesterday, as well.

18          JOE SPRAGGINS: Joe used to work with us.

19          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Mark, if I may, I would  
20 like to include one other person, if y'all will keep him  
21 in your prayers. We've got a charter boat captain out of  
22 Pass Christian, Mississippi, Matt Dubuisson. He had a  
23 hunting accident where he fell out of a stand about a week  
24 and a half ago. The prognosis is not looking good for  
25 him. They are thinking he will likely never walk again.

1 We need to keep him and his family in our prayers.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, I would  
3 like to recognize a moment of silence.

4 (Moment of silence observed.)

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Moving right along,  
6 approval of the minutes.

7 Can we get approval of the minutes for December  
8 17, 2019?

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Do we have a second?

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
13 second.

14 All those in favor say aye.

15 (All in favor.)

16 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

17 (None opposed.)

18 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

19 Now, we have approval of the agenda for today.

20 Can I get a motion for the approval of the  
21 agenda for today?

22 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll make a motion to  
23 approve the agenda.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion.

25 Do we have a second for the approval?

1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second that motion.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
3 second.

4 All those in favor say aye.

5 (All in favor.)

6 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All opposed like sign.

7 (None opposed.)

8 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

9 We will move on as the agenda is written.

10 Executive Director's Report.

11 Director, do you have anything today?

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: Just a few things, sir. I would  
13 appreciate it.

14 I tell you what, it has been a busy couple of  
15 weeks up in Jackson and everything getting kicked off for  
16 the new legislative session.

17 We do have a new chairman for Ports, Harbors and  
18 Marine Resources in the Senate. That is Senator Moran,  
19 and Senator Thompson is his deputy. Both are from the  
20 Coast here. We have already met with them and talked with  
21 them some and worked with them.

22 We are not sure at the House yet who they are  
23 going to appoint as far as the Marine Resources, but  
24 hopefully we will get that answer this week.

25 Everything seems to be going good.

1           where is Charmaine?

2           CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: (Indicating).

3           JOE SPRAGGINS: There she is waiving her hand.  
4 Charmaine is going to be helping us, and she is working  
5 with the Commissioners. She is also working with us in  
6 the agency, now, in the front office. So, if y'all need  
7 anything, she will be glad to help you.

8           One of our Commissioners is not here today and  
9 we just need to keep him in our prayers. He is having a  
10 couple of medical procedures, Commissioner Gollott. So we  
11 will just keep him in our prayers, please.

12           Everything else is going pretty good.

13           I've got employee contracts. As you see, we've  
14 got a few of them that we have hired, Lyman and Off-  
15 Bottom, also, and, then, we just mentioned Charmaine, and,  
16 then, Joe Chambliss is Administrative Assistant and  
17 Dispatcher.

18           The Off-Bottom, I tell you, is going good, and  
19 that is something we are going to talk more about in the  
20 very near future.

21           Any questions on the employments?

22           (No response.)

23           JOE SPRAGGINS: You see the auctions that we  
24 have done, or the contracts that we have done.

25           we have two reverse auctions for half a million

1 dollars a piece, and that is a hundred percent Bonnet  
2 Carre funds that we are using. That is to furnish  
3 deployment of approved cultch.

4 One of them is just for approved cultch. It can  
5 be different types, but the other one is oyster shells  
6 only. We have gone out with that, and we are hoping that  
7 we will have that finished shortly.

8 Then, Crystal Seas Exemption. We have that. It  
9 is a hundred percent Bonnet Carre to purchase and deploy  
10 live oysters, and we have done that.

11 We have got vendors we are working with.

12 Auburn University, we are also working on our  
13 Off-Bottom with them.

14 USM, we have a couple of contracts with them,  
15 basically to do Blue Crab.

16 Any questions on any of that?

17 (No response.)

18 JOE SPRAGGINS: If not, I think that is all I  
19 have, sir. That is it on the Executive Director's Report.

20 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good. Thank you,  
21 Director.

22 That brings us to Commissioners Report.

23 Do any of the Commissioners have anything they  
24 would like to discuss today?

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: A couple of months ago it

1 was brought to my attention. We've got a really  
2 productive reef over in the Harrison-Hancock County area  
3 that I did not know was called Square Handkerchief Reef.  
4 We have always called it Taylor Reef.

5 Gene Taylor was instrumental in getting that  
6 reef placed there and the product that was put there to  
7 create that reef, and we found out that it wasn't  
8 technically named Gene Taylor Reef. So we wanted to right  
9 that wrong and do this to make that legal.

10 Do we need to read this (indicating document)?

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes. I think it would need to  
12 be read in the record.

13 Joe, is that right?

14 JOE JEWELL: That's correct.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: "Whereas, the  
16 Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources  
17 is a duly constituted governmental entity  
18 created to serve the great State of  
19 Mississippi, and,  
20 "whereas, said service includes the  
21 management and enforcement of any matters  
22 pertaining to Mississippi's saltwater  
23 aquatic life and marine resources, and,  
24 "whereas, the Mississippi Commission on  
25 Marine Resources acknowledges

1 contributions to the betterment of the  
2 fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico through  
3 significant biological industrial  
4 legislative enforcement, or administrative  
5 activities.

6 “Whereas, Congressman Gary Eugene  
7 ‘Gene’ Taylor served as the Fifth  
8 District Representative from 1989  
9 to 2003 and as the Fourth District  
10 Representative from 2004 to 2011  
11 and contributed to the wise management  
12 of Mississippi’s Marine Resources.

13 “Whereas, Congressman Gary Eugene  
14 ‘Gene’ Taylor was born in New Orleans,  
15 Louisiana, and a graduate from Tulane  
16 University and completed post  
17 graduate work at the University of  
18 Southern Mississippi and significantly  
19 contributed to the recovery and hurricane  
20 relief to Coastal Mississippi after  
21 Hurricane Katrina, including the creation  
22 of several recreational fishing reefs and  
23 keys.

24 “Now, therefore, be it resolved and duly  
25 constituted in assembled meeting that the



1 Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources  
2 does hereby resolve to rename the Square  
3 Handkerchief Key to Gene Taylor Key.

4 "Done and resolved in this duly constituted  
5 and assembled meeting on this, the 21<sup>st</sup>  
6 day of January, 2020."

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: You have to have a motion from  
8 the Commission.

9 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, we are going  
10 to need a motion to rename the Square Handkerchief Key to  
11 Gene Taylor Key.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: And I will make that  
13 motion.

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion.  
15 Do we have a second for the motion?

16 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We've got a motion and a  
18 second.

19 All those in favor say aye.

20 (All in favor.)

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those opposed like  
22 sign.

23 (None opposed.)

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

25 There is one thing that I would like to add to

1 the Commissioners Report. We have a good group of highly  
2 decorated highly accomplished scientists in our local area  
3 here at GCRL, Mississippi State, here within the  
4 Department.

5 At Mississippi State Extension Service, we have  
6 Dr. Marcus Drymon. He is not here today, but he was voted  
7 2019 Fisheries Conservationist of the Year. That is a big  
8 award and to have him right here in our backyard to  
9 support us in what we are trying to do at the state level,  
10 we are glad to have him onboard. That is a big  
11 recognition and we are proud to have him here.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That's good.

13 Mark, if y'all will allow me, I've got two other  
14 quick items that I would like to address.

15 We recently had the Charter For-Hire Task Force  
16 meeting and there were two things that were talked about  
17 in that meeting, one of which that I have brought up in  
18 the past and we've got a charter captain here that would  
19 like to speak to the subject is our inshore reefs and how  
20 productive they are.

21 They are a huge benefit along the Mississippi  
22 Gulf Coast here, and we would like to see revitalization  
23 of the current reefs that we have. Some of them have  
24 silted over. If we could look into that and possibly new  
25 reefs being added.

1 I believe Captain Sonny Schindler would like to  
2 say a few words on that as well.

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: And Sonny has filled a out  
4 public comment sign-in form.

5 So come on up here.

6 SONNY SCHINDLER: First, thank you for the  
7 chance to speak.

8 I also wanted to thank y'all for the reefs that  
9 we have now. I know a lot of people get up here and gripe  
10 and complain about things, but I wanted to say thank you  
11 for what we have now.

12 I was born and raised, from here, Bay St. Louis.  
13 I grew up fishing, nearshore stuff. I never had boats  
14 until I was in my twenties and thirties. I am about to  
15 enter my forty-third year here next month.

16 These reefs that are there are complete total  
17 game changers for what we are doing. We used to close  
18 right after Thanksgiving, our charter service, and open up  
19 April 1<sup>st</sup>. These reefs are the sole reason that we stay  
20 open year round because the fishing is that good, that  
21 consistent, that we can hide from weather. Days like  
22 today where it is blowing its tail off and you can't get  
23 over the marsh, or can't get out to the islands safely,  
24 they are the sole reason that our charter service stays  
25 open year round, strictly for them. Thank you for the

1 ones that are there.

2           Some of the stuff that is out there, now, the  
3 ones that are on the bottom of the sea floor I guess we  
4 will say, they are good, but it seems like after a couple  
5 of years storms and the waves and the weather, they do  
6 silt over.

7           Maybe instead of focusing more time, or money,  
8 on those, the Taylor Reef, the Zimmerman Reef, the Katrina  
9 Reef, stuff like that, those seem to just knock this  
10 fishing out of the park for the nearshore stuff.

11           You don't ever have to worry about asking us  
12 anything reef related, at least our seven boats. Anything  
13 that can replenish, build more, whether they are over in  
14 Pascagoula, or in Waveland. If you build more to the  
15 east, it just takes pressure off the stuff to the west.  
16 If you build more stuff to the west, or in the south, it  
17 just makes a better and more consistent fishery.

18           Anything we can do to get more of those out  
19 there and better the ones that we have, more so the above-  
20 the-waterline stuff, we are very much in favor of and just  
21 wanted to say thank you for the ones that we've got out  
22 there, now.

23           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We appreciate that. We  
24 don't get to hear good news very often and thank you very  
25 often, but we appreciate you bringing something nice to

1 the table.

2 SONNY SCHINDLER: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Director, one last thing  
4 that was brought up there that I think we need really  
5 quick attention on is a start date for the Snapper season.

6 I have spoken with Matt. There he is. He is  
7 here. I have spoken with Matt and if it works for the  
8 Commission, I would like to make a motion to give you the  
9 power to go ahead and get us a start date for this Snapper  
10 season coming up this year.

11 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion on the  
12 table to ask -- go ahead.

13 JOE JEWELL: Can I comment just a minute?

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Absolutely.

15 JOE JEWELL: Internally the Office of Marine  
16 Fisheries, Director Spraggins and the Executive Offices  
17 have been having internal conversations about that, what  
18 the start date would be, how the program will be managed  
19 this year, now that we are not under any FMP amends 50 and  
20 50C.

21 The staff in Marine Fisheries had planned for  
22 the February Commission meeting, a proposal for the  
23 Commission to vote on. Just consider that, if y'all  
24 decide to move forward.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think what they are asking is

1 to allow me to have the ability to open it, to set a date.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: To go ahead and set a  
3 date.

4 JOE JEWELL: That was part of our proposal was  
5 to give the Executive Director the authority on the  
6 Commission's behalf for several things within the proposed  
7 management.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Part of the urgency with  
9 this is we've got guys that are getting calls from people  
10 wanting to book Snapper trips. They can't book them  
11 because they don't know. So these guys are missing out on  
12 potential income by waiting another month.

13 There is no telling how many total phone calls  
14 they are going to have to send down the line, while they  
15 wait on a start date.

16 I am certainly not talking about all the  
17 parameters of Snapper season, but if we could just get  
18 them a date.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: We talked about this in-depth,  
20 what Joe is talking about, and I don't have a problem. If  
21 y'all want to go ahead and say that we can set a date,  
22 then, that just means we don't have to wait until the next  
23 meeting to do it.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: Then, what we can do is we will

1 go back with the staff and look at it very hard and say  
2 let's pick a date and let's look at it.

3 what we are looking at doing -- and I will just  
4 be up front about that already -- is that we are looking  
5 at basically getting a start date, and, then, when we are  
6 going to close it during the middle of the season, and,  
7 then, what a projected end date is, and, then, what we are  
8 looking at and exactly the reason you are asking is  
9 because if I'm in north Mississippi and I'm looking at  
10 when I want to come and I want to go Snapper fishing, when  
11 can I do it, and I want to be able to pick a date.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: People, they want to book  
13 their hotels in advance. They want to plan their whole  
14 vacation in advance. These guys having to put them off,  
15 we are liable to lose them to Alabama, or Louisiana, or  
16 anything else.

17 I'm not asking for all the parameters of the  
18 season. Let's get them a date that they can work off of  
19 for the beginning of it.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Could you put also in that  
21 motion that we will brief you at the February meeting?

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: For the rest of the  
23 season criteria.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think we have one more  
25 question down here.

1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes.

2 Ronnie, I was just kind of thinking out loud.  
3 Because -- I don't want to call it a quota -- our share of  
4 the resource is divided, would it be maybe not better to  
5 establish a start date for the Charter For-Hire Fishery,  
6 instead of opening the whole fishery up?

7 Just a thought.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: One of the things that  
9 has been discussed is possible differing seasons between  
10 those two, but personally I don't know that the likelihood  
11 is that it is going to be a different season. I mean, it  
12 is a recreational fishery either way.

13 Me, personally, I would think that the  
14 likelihood is that it is all going to start at, or on the  
15 same date.

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I would agree.

18 Is that a motion you are good with, Ronnie?

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes. I would like to  
20 make a motion to give Executive Director the authority to  
21 establish a start date for the 2020 Snapper season and  
22 brief the Commission at the February monthly meeting.

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion on the  
24 table.

25 Do we have a second for the motion?



1 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
3 second.

4 All those in favor say aye.

5 (All in favor.)

6 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those opposed like  
7 sign.

8 (None opposed.)

9 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

10 Any other things we need to talk about from the  
11 Commissioners report?

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We are good there.

14 That will bring us to Office of Marine Patrol,  
15 Assistant Chief Kyle Wilkerson.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: He is now acting Chief.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: So you are acting Chief at  
18 this point.

19 KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: You are the Chief. Very  
21 good.

22 KYLE WILKERSON: I personally extend our  
23 condolences to the families that were recognized in the  
24 moment of silence. We were close to several of them.  
25 It's a sad day.

1           Also, I want to recognize Chief Rusty Pittman.  
2 He is in the audience. He has to come check in with us.

3           The report itself for December is going to be  
4 pretty light. The only thing that really jumps out at me  
5 is the seizure of the oysters.

6           We seized twenty sacks from an individual that  
7 had an improper MSD. It states in Title that MSD has to  
8 have a tight-fitting lid, and it had a commode seat on top  
9 of it. It was pretty cut and dry.

10          We did seize the oysters, but we put them in  
11 quarantine for sixty days and they will be returned to the  
12 subject February 10<sup>th</sup>, but he is going to keep that  
13 citation.

14          Other than that, everything is pretty light.

15          If there are any questions?

16          JOE SPRAGGINS: Sir, if I can on that, too, this  
17 is something that we are working on. The off-bottom is a  
18 little different than the other things and we are trying  
19 to get a little bit better education for our off-bottom  
20 fishermen to be able to understand what they have to have,  
21 but the law requires some type of sanitation device and it  
22 has certain rules to it.

23          KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

24          JOE SPRAGGINS: We have no choice but to follow  
25 those rules. Maybe we can get them a little bit more

1 education on what we are talking about with it and be able  
2 to work it out, and we are able to keep from having to  
3 return the oysters back to the water to be able to  
4 quarantine them and give them back to them. It really  
5 didn't hurt them too bad. Hopefully we will be able to  
6 work that out.

7 KYLE WILKERSON: Correct. We are working on  
8 that with shellfish at this time. We will have kind of a  
9 tutorial for these fishermen.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good. Appreciate  
11 that, Mr. Wilkerson.

12 KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you, sir.

13 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us to G,  
14 Office of Coastal Resources Management, Jan Boyd.

15 JAN BOYD: Good morning Mr. Chairman,  
16 Commissioners, Director Spraggins.

17 We have three action items for your  
18 consideration this morning.

19 Before we get to that, Willa Brantley will be  
20 presenting a 2019 Year in Review.

21 WILLA BRANTLEY: Good morning Commissioners.

22 I just wanted to take a few minutes and show you  
23 some of our numbers from this past year, show you the hard  
24 work that you don't see very much of that the permittees  
25 are doing every day.

1           As you can see, our numbers tend to be pretty  
2 even for the past four years. Some have gone up. Some  
3 have gone down.

4           One thing it has to do with is that more things  
5 are covered by general permits now. So you see the  
6 numbers there going up, and, then, excluded activities  
7 going down a little bit. Those are things that used to  
8 fall outside the general permit guidelines. Now they fall  
9 within.

10           Another thing I wanted to point out was  
11 violations. Those numbers have gone significantly down,  
12 and that doesn't necessarily mean we are having fewer  
13 violations. We are a bit having fewer violations, but one  
14 thing that impacts that is back in 2016 and into 2017,  
15 when we got a call about a potential violation in a non-  
16 tidal wetland outside of Coastal Wetlands where we don't  
17 have direct regulatory jurisdiction, we would go out and  
18 check that out, take some pictures, see if we thought it  
19 really was a wetland, really was a potential violation  
20 that the Corps could handle, and we would send the  
21 pictures and a little short writeup to the Corps just as a  
22 way to kind of help them out because they have a field  
23 office with a couple of people here, but most of their  
24 staff is in either Vicksburg, or Mobile.

25           Back in 2017, they asked us to stop doing that.

1 They asked us to direct people to call them directly,  
2 rather than us going out and looking at it. Those were  
3 things we counted toward our numbers for our reports that  
4 don't get looked at by us anymore. That is one thing that  
5 has made that number drop significantly.

6 I just wanted to point out we only presented  
7 fifteen of these seven hundred and twenty-seven actions to  
8 the Commission. So you only see basically two percent of  
9 the work that the permitters are doing during the year.

10 Then, one thing I wanted to talk about is the  
11 Coastal Zone Consistency Determination. Some of you  
12 haven't been here when we have presented one of these. We  
13 don't do these very often, presenting them to the  
14 Commission. Usually we can make those decisions  
15 ourselves. Those are activities that impact wetlands and  
16 require a Federal permit within our Coastal Zone which is  
17 anywhere within the three coastal counties and all the way  
18 out to the outer continental shelf waters.

19 we have certain regulations and we go through  
20 the same decision factors that those have to meet.  
21 Typically, we can make those decisions ourselves. Usually  
22 it is fill a few acres of non-tidal wetlands for a  
23 subdivision, or a shopping center, or something like that.

24 This one happens to be within the Port Bienville  
25 Industrial Canal which is not State owned. Therefore, it

1 is not Coastal Wetlands. Therefore, we don't regulate it  
2 directly, but they don't meet one of those regulations for  
3 things that fall outside of our Coastal Wetlands and they  
4 need a variance, and only the Commission can approve that.

5 That is why Chris is going to be presenting  
6 that, but it is not a permit. I just wanted y'all to know  
7 when you saw the type of file that it is to understand  
8 what it is that we are presenting.

9 I will let Chris come present that and he can  
10 answer any specific questions about the project and, if  
11 you have any questions about these numbers, I will be  
12 happy to answer them.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: Real quick, Jan, you might help  
14 us, too, with this, but they are working extremely hard.

15 One of the things we get caught up sometimes is  
16 having stuff through the Corps of Engineers, even though  
17 we are able to do a lot here, and, Jan, we are still in  
18 the process of trying to find a way to hire a Corps of  
19 Engineers person to work with us full time.

20 Is that correct?

21 JAN BOYD: Yes, sir. The cooperative agreement  
22 has been back and forth between us and the Corps, and our  
23 attorneys are looking at it now. It is in our court.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: This will be great because we  
25 will have our own person that works here direct for the

1 Corps of Engineers who will be working to help us do our  
2 projects and state projects and maybe some county  
3 projects. We are looking at that as we talk.

4 Is that correct?

5 JAN BOYD: Yes, sir.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: The other thing is that we are  
7 going -- we have legislation in Jackson that we will be  
8 proposing to be able to help them with their being able to  
9 determine where they can build bulkheads because of the  
10 last court injunction that we had in the court ruling, and  
11 we are getting that straightened out. Hopefully that will  
12 happen this year, too.

13 WILLA BRANTLEY: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Good morning  
15 Commissioners.

16 As Willa described, this is a Coastal Zone  
17 Consistency Determination for the Hancock County Port and  
18 Harbor Commission, DMR-180249.

19 It is located on the Port Bienville Industrial  
20 Canal. It is in Pearlinton in Hancock County. It is in  
21 the Industrial Use District and the agent is Compton  
22 Engineering.

23 There are some wetland impacts associated with  
24 this for a total of six point nine acres, six point nine  
25 one, two point two one acres of freshwater marsh will be

1 impacted, point one four acre of tidal marsh and point one  
2 four acre of submerged aquatic vegetation.

3 The applicant is proposing to mitigate for these  
4 impacts to emergent and forested wetlands, by purchasing  
5 credits from an approved mitigation bank, and they are  
6 going to mitigate for the impacts to the freshwater marsh  
7 and tidal wetlands by permittee-responsible mitigation,  
8 and I will get into more detail of that.

9 They are also proposing a thousand linear feet  
10 of riprap that will go around a proposed keyhole slip, a  
11 bulkhead eighty hundred and fifty feet in length, a pier  
12 one hundred and four-four by thirty, a pier two hundred  
13 and fifteen by ten, and two hundred and thirty-six linear  
14 feet of wave attenuator. I will get into more detail of  
15 that, also.

16 There is going to be some dredging and  
17 excavation associated with the project. This involves  
18 eight hundred and fifty linear feet ranging anywhere from  
19 fifty to sixty feet in width within the canal. The  
20 existing depth is currently anywhere from zero to ten feet  
21 below mean low water and they are proposing to go to  
22 twelve feet below mean low water.

23 Approximately eighty-four thousand six hundred  
24 and eighty-three cubic yards of material will be removed.

25 The applicant has received a Letter of Exception



1 to the BU Statute. So this material, as of right now, is  
2 proposed to be placed onsite and will be used for daily  
3 maintenance purposes.

4 They are also proposing excavation of  
5 approximately twenty-one thousand and thirty cubic yards  
6 of material, and this includes a keyhole slip two hundred  
7 and ninety feet by three hundred and seventy feet.

8 The applicant has requested a variance to  
9 Chapter 8, Section 2, Part III.N.1.f of the Mississippi  
10 Coastal Program and to Administrative Code Title 22, Part  
11 23, Chapter 8, Section 113.01, Item 6, which states:

12 "Activities affecting coastal wetlands,  
13 but located outside of coastal wetlands  
14 must not affect...the long-term  
15 biological productivity of the coastal  
16 wetlands ecosystem."

17 The applicant had justified these variance  
18 requests under Chapter 8, Section 2, Part I.E.2.c.iv of  
19 the Mississippi Coastal Program and Mississippi  
20 Administrative Code Title 22, Part 23, chapter 8, Section  
21 118.04, by stating the activity requires a waterfront  
22 location, and there is a significant public benefit in the  
23 activity, and a public hearing was held.

24 Here is a view of the southern portion of the  
25 property. This is where the laydown yard is going

1 (indicating photograph).

2 Here is a view of the canal. It is hard to see,  
3 but there is SAV all along the shoreline there (indicating  
4 photograph).

5 Here is an aerial. You can see there is Highway  
6 90. This is the Pearl River and the Industrial Canal  
7 (indicating).

8 Here is a zoomed-in aerial. All the warehouses  
9 will be through here. The keyhole slip will be right  
10 here, and, then, this is going to be the mitigation area,  
11 the permittee-responsible mitigation area (indicating).

12 This was all in your writeup packets. You can  
13 probably see it better in them, but these are the wetland  
14 impacts associated with the project (indicating diagram).

15 This is the keyhole slip with the riprap and the  
16 piers (indicating diagram).

17 This is the dredging and excavation (indicating  
18 diagram).

19 This is the mitigation area (indicating  
20 diagram).

21 Currently there is some tidal marsh within here,  
22 but, right now, there is an earthen berm that goes across  
23 this area and a road crossing along this area. What the  
24 applicant is proposing to do is take out that berm and  
25 road crossing which will allow the tidal flow to get back

1 into that area and stormwater runoff to get back into the  
2 area (indicating slide).

3 Currently within the wetlands on this site is  
4 twenty-nine acres. There is twenty percent invasive  
5 species. All of those invasive species are going to be  
6 removed and, if needed, they will do plantings with native  
7 species.

8 The SAV that is proposed to be impacted along  
9 here for the keyhole and the dredging, that is going to be  
10 removed, placed in baskets, and, then, it will be  
11 replanted in this area (indicating slide).

12 This is the area that the SAV will be replanted  
13 in, and this is the two hundred and thirty-six linear feet  
14 of wave attenuator. This is going to help break up the  
15 wave action from the barges that will be passing through  
16 there so it doesn't tear up the meshes planted (indicating  
17 diagram).

18 Notification of the project appeared in The Sun  
19 Herald on August 18<sup>th</sup>, the 25<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> of 2019,  
20 and in The Sea Coast Echo on August 17<sup>th</sup>, the 24<sup>th</sup> and the  
21 31<sup>st</sup> of 2019.

22 One public comment was received. They had  
23 concerns about loud noises during construction and  
24 operation activities, and they requested that noise levels  
25 be taken into consideration, especially late at night.

1           We held a public hearing on Tuesday, September  
2 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. This was at the Port and the commenter that  
3 made this comment did show up, but, after talking to the  
4 applicant and the consultants, they decided to rescind  
5 their previous comment. They felt like everything was  
6 going to be fine.

7           DEQ is currently reviewing the project.

8           Archives and History has no objections.

9           Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks recommends best  
10 management practices.

11           The Secretary of State's office did note that  
12 the project is adjacent to the Hancock County Marsh  
13 Coastal Preserve and asks that all reasonable measures be  
14 imposed to protect the integrity of the ecosystem.

15           Based on departmental review and evaluation of  
16 the decision factors in Chapter 8, Section 2, Part 1.E.2.  
17 of the Mississippi Coastal Program, it has been determined  
18 that the project will allow significant expansion of the  
19 port and benefit the economic development of Hancock  
20 County.

21           Therefore, staff recommends approval of the  
22 requested variance and the proposed project contingent on  
23 clearance from DEQ.

24           There is a lot more detail in the packets y'all  
25 received. I can go over any of that, if y'all need me to,

1 and the environmental consultant is here, if y'all have  
2 any questions.

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, I think we  
4 have been given all the information that we need, unless  
5 the other Commissioners have any questions, or concerns.

6 At this time, I believe Chris needs a motion to  
7 move forward.

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Chris, I read what you  
9 presented and it sounds like an awful lot of work has gone  
10 into this to get it to this point. It looks like you have  
11 covered most of your bases.

12 with that, I will make a motion that we accept  
13 the staff's recommendations.

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
16 second.

17 All those in favor say aye.

18 (All in favor.)

19 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those opposed like  
20 sign.

21 (None opposed.)

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

23 CHRIS PICKERING: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Appreciate that, Chris.  
25 Mr. Greg comes up next, Jackson County Port

1 Authority.

2 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Good morning everyone.

3 Greg Christodoulou. I will be presenting the  
4 next two projects for Coastal.

5 The first one is a request for an exclusion by  
6 the Jackson County Port Authority. The location is in  
7 wetlands adjacent to the Escatawpa River in Moss Point.  
8 It is in the General Use District. The agent is Compton  
9 Engineering.

10 The purpose of the project and need is more  
11 efficient rail transport of goods and the abandonment of  
12 existing railroad crossings.

13 Impacts associated with the project. There is a  
14 total of four point eight nine acres of wetlands. Three  
15 point seven three acres are tidal and tidally-influenced  
16 marsh. The remainder of wetland impacts is one point one  
17 six acres of forested wetlands, non-tidal.

18 Mitigation for the project is the creation of  
19 three point eight acres of tidal and tidally-influenced  
20 marsh immediately adjacent to the project area.

21 There are several variance requests for the  
22 project from the Mississippi Coastal Program, as well as  
23 Title 22, Part 23.

24 If you want me to go through all of them, I can,  
25 but they have been justified by stating that no feasible

1 alternative sites, or construction techniques, are  
2 available; there is a significant public benefit in the  
3 activity; and a public hearing has been held.

4 Basically, the justification is that this will  
5 more efficiently transport goods, a lot of those which are  
6 essential to the nation's energy policy, and the increase  
7 in public safety by the abandonment of those railroad  
8 crossings that right now go through Moss Point and  
9 Pascagoula.

10 Some diagrams of the project area. The area is  
11 green is the location of the new rail line. This red is  
12 the existing rail line that does come up from Bayou  
13 Casotte from the south. It goes into the old  
14 International Paper Plant, and, then, it starts moving  
15 back to the west (indicating diagram).

16 Here are just a couple closeups showing the  
17 route. These are going to be the forested wetlands in  
18 this area, and, then, we start moving into the brackish  
19 marsh areas, and finally joining in with the existing line  
20 just south of the river (indicating).

21 This is a diagram of the mitigation area. The  
22 rail line will actually cross just to the north of the  
23 mitigation area. The area in blue is the area that will  
24 be created. It is going to be created from upland areas.  
25 They will be graded down to marsh elevation, and, then,

1 planted with the appropriate species that are in the area.  
2 They will also do management of invasive species as well  
3 (indicating diagram).

4 This yellow area here is just a buffer zone of  
5 upland area between the marsh creation area (indicating  
6 diagram).

7 It is kind of hard to see and you can probably  
8 see it better in your drawings, but all the red dots are  
9 the location of rail crossing that currently these trains  
10 have to traverse through. All of these rail crossings  
11 will be able to be abandoned (indicating).

12 Alternatives. We always look at alternative  
13 layouts for things. Currently there is a rail line that  
14 does go into the existing track that crosses the river.  
15 However, after much deliberation and prodding on my part  
16 why this existing track could not be used, the reason is  
17 the curvature of the track.

18 This area of track, I learned, has been  
19 abandoned by the railroad. They do not use it any longer.  
20 It is only used for storage of cars, and the reason is  
21 because of the tight turn that has to be made and the size  
22 of these trains that are going to be using this area, they  
23 can no longer use this section of track.

24 A couple of alternatives they looked at were  
25 moving the track line to the south. However, what they



1 ran into with this is they have to have a certain vertical  
2 clearance for the trains and, by moving it down here, it  
3 would be in conflict with the bridge, the road bridge that  
4 goes to Highway 63. Also, it would require the purchase,  
5 acquisition of all these private properties. So those  
6 alternatives were taken out (indicating).

7 The project did appear on public notice June  
8 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019, as required. We received no  
9 public comments.

10 DEQ is reviewing the project.

11 Archives and History had no objections.

12 Secretary of State has said a rent exempt lease  
13 will be required.

14 Staff has reviewed the project and we believe  
15 that the project would allow for more efficient movement  
16 of goods by rail from Bayou Casotte and the Port of  
17 Pascagoula, as well as allow for the abandonment of  
18 approximately twenty-one railroad crossings in areas of  
19 Pascagoula and Moss Point which would increase public  
20 safety.

21 Therefore, staff recommends approval of the  
22 variance requests and permit, contingent on clearance from  
23 DEQ.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: One question I have, Greg,  
25 is when they talk about abandoning the railroad, are they

1 going to leave the tracks there, or are they going to  
2 clean it up and kind of put it back to a natural state?

3 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: That is a question. There  
4 is a program called "Rails to Trails" where they take  
5 abandoned railroad areas and turn them into, like, walking  
6 paths, or bike paths. Now, I'm not sure what the plan  
7 with that is.

8 The consultant is here. I don't know if they  
9 have any knowledge of that. They don't have knowledge of  
10 what is going to happen.

11 I think that would be a good program that they  
12 could look into doing that.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That was actually my  
14 question, also, because I remember when they did that what  
15 used to be 63 which is now 613, and they took the swing  
16 bridge out and put the high rise bridge over, that's what  
17 they did was to go back in there and take the road out  
18 that led to that swing bridge and bring it back down to  
19 the elevation to make marsh.

20 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: I think that would be a  
21 really good idea to do something along those lines, with  
22 all those abandoned rail lines.

23 Commissioner Bosarge, what was your question  
24 about?

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Well, that was mine, the

1 same one as the Chairman's questions.

2 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Hopefully, if they are  
4 going to abandon that line, at least make it a positive  
5 abandonment.

6 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Sure.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I have just got to say  
8 with getting rid of twenty-one rail crossing with the  
9 amount of people that get hit by trains each year, that  
10 jumps out at me. That sounds like a great benefit to the  
11 public.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Do we have a motion to  
13 move forward with the staff's recommendation?

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make a motion that  
15 we move forward with the staff's recommendations.

16 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion.  
17 Do we have a second?

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

19 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
20 second.

21 All those in favor say aye.

22 (All in favor.)

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All opposed like sign.

24 (None opposed.)

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

1 Mr. Greg, you've got one more.

2 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: I've got one more.

3 Final project for Coastal today is a permit  
4 request by Gulf LNG Liquefaction Company, located on Bayou  
5 Casotte in Pascagoula. It is in the Industrial  
6 Development Use District. The agent is Jacobs  
7 Engineering.

8 The project purpose is to expand the current  
9 facility to allow for the export of natural gas.

10 The current LNG facility that is at Bayou  
11 Casotte is only capable of importing natural gas. This  
12 would add some directionality to the facility.

13 Impacts with the project are approximately  
14 twenty-seven point eight acres of tidal and tidally-  
15 influenced wetlands, a total throughout of ten point nine  
16 acres of non-tidal wetlands.

17 There are two marine off-loading facilities, one  
18 on the north and the south part of the property. That is  
19 to allow heavy machinery and fill, aggregate, things like  
20 that to be moved into the site without using industrial  
21 road which is basically the only in and out to the  
22 facility.

23 The North Marine Off-loading Facility will be a  
24 permanent fill of point nine one acre of waterbottoms.

25 The South Marine Off-loading Facility will be a

1 fill of point one five acre of waterbottoms. This is  
2 going to be temporary. Once construction is finished, the  
3 docks and the fill will all be removed.

4 There will be a total of thirteen hundred and  
5 fifty linear feet of sheet-pile wall for the fill  
6 containment at both marine off-loading facilities. Again,  
7 the southern one will be temporary.

8 The final impact is fill of fifty acres of  
9 unvegetated, state-owned waterbottoms for the mitigation  
10 for the expansion of the facility.

11 There will also be dredging for the marine off-  
12 loading facilities of two hundred thousand cubic yards.  
13 That material has already been tested and has been found  
14 suitable for Beneficial Use.

15 The mitigation for the project, as I explained  
16 earlier a little bit about it for the tidal marsh portion,  
17 is the creation of fifty acres of tidal marsh at the mouth  
18 of Bayou Casotte.

19 For the permanent fill of the state-owned  
20 waterbottoms, there will be a one-time payment in the  
21 amount of one hundred and seventeen thousand two hundred  
22 and sixty-eight dollars and four cents to the DMR Coastal  
23 Preserves Bureau so that they can acquire, preserve and  
24 obtain properties and manage properties that they have.

25 Also, there will be the purchase of the

1 mitigation credits for the non-tidal wetlands from a  
2 Mobile District Corps approved bank.

3 Then, the Secretary of State will also require a  
4 lease not only for the expansion of the facility, but also  
5 for the mitigation area.

6 We have three variance requests from the  
7 Mississippi Coastal Program and three variance requests  
8 from Title 22, Part 23.

9 The justification for the project is the  
10 activity requires a waterfront location, there is a  
11 significant public benefit and a public hearing will be  
12 held.

13 We have significant economic impact associated  
14 with the project.

15 It will help decrease dependency on foreign  
16 countries for energy.

17 It will reduce global greenhouse gas emissions  
18 by burning a lot cleaner natural gas.

19 Then, we have the additional tidal marsh habitat  
20 which will be better quality than what is being impacted  
21 and the containment structure for the mitigation should  
22 help reduce coastal erosion in that area.

23 Diagrams of the project. Again, the project  
24 location is at the very tip of Bayou Casotte (indicating  
25 diagram).

1           Here is an aerial view of the facility. The  
2 area outlined in red is where the work will be taking  
3 place. There will also be a construction support area to  
4 the north here. This is where most of the non-tidal  
5 wetland impacts will be created. This is Chevron property  
6 here (indicating).

7           One thing to take note of is with the expansion  
8 of the facility, they tried to really get into this dredge  
9 disposal area as much as they could to use as much of the  
10 upland as possible.

11           The reason why they couldn't do more in this  
12 area is because the Port Authority and the Corps of  
13 Engineers have an agreement. It's like a fifty-year MOU  
14 to manage dredge material at this site. That was probably  
15 the max that they could give up and still be able to  
16 manage the material at that disposal site.

17           This is an outline of just where everything will  
18 be related, as far as buildings. These are going to be  
19 the off-loading facilities to the north and the south; the  
20 wetlands impacts associated with each area (indicating  
21 diagram).

22           One thing I want to direct your attention to is  
23 there will be a flare structure. It will not be in  
24 constant use like you see with some wells that are  
25 constantly flaring. This will only be used at certain

1 times. When it is in use, it will impact the vegetation  
2 of the marsh around it.

3           However, as part of the mitigation plan, this  
4 was already factored into it. While the impacts will only  
5 be really temporary, when the flare goes off and the marsh  
6 does regrow, it will be permanently accounted for. You  
7 will still have marsh coming back up in these locations,  
8 but it will be permanently mitigated for with the new  
9 site.

10           Just an up-close look at the north marine off-  
11 loading facility, the fill associated with it and the  
12 dredge area, and the south facility (indicating).

13           This is the area of non-tidal wetlands and the  
14 construction-support area to the north on the Chevron  
15 property (indicating slide).

16           This is the footprint of the marsh-creation area  
17 for the project, a total of fifty acres (indicating).

18           Then, the last diagram is hard to see, but just  
19 a small amount of detail that went into the design of the  
20 mitigation for this project. These are the tidal channels  
21 and canals and creeks that will need to be put in there to  
22 help generate the type of marsh creation that is needed to  
23 account for the impacts (indicating diagram).

24           Notification of the project did appear as  
25 required. The first public notice we had was back in



1 2016. This project has been around a long time. It had  
2 to go through an EIS process with the Federal Government  
3 through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

4 Since the project lasted so long, we felt it  
5 would be only right that we run the public notice again  
6 and this was done November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of 2019.

7 Received comments from two respondents in 2016.  
8 When we put the notice back out again in 2019, we  
9 specifically sent notice to the commenters originally, and  
10 one responded that they didn't have any new comments and  
11 the other one never responded. We also gave them notice  
12 that there would be a public hearing for the project as  
13 well.

14 The public comments that were received with the  
15 first public notice:

16 A residential group on the other side of Bayou  
17 Casotte said that a loss of flood protection and storm  
18 water control would result in permanent wetland impacts  
19 and the mitigation proposed would not replace these  
20 important wetland functions.

21 Response to that was, based on the modeling that  
22 was completed for the project and the mitigation, that the  
23 project and associated tidal wetlands would have  
24 negligible affect on flood stages capacity in Bayou  
25 Casotte.

1           Another comment was that a detailed, well-  
2           reasoned, more robust mitigation plan is needed and should  
3           be shown before the project can proceed.

4           well, this was back in 2016. This was in the  
5           early stages of development of the mitigation plan. There  
6           is a full-blown mitigation plan now that has been put out  
7           and has been approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory  
8           Commission, as well as the Corps of Engineers.

9           One comment was also they were skeptical of the  
10          success for the mitigation plan, due to its direct  
11          exposure to the Mississippi Sound.

12          Again, this is not going to be just a bunch of  
13          marsh that is thrown out there on the Sound. It is going  
14          to have a containment structure. It will have a riprap  
15          containment structure very similar to what the Greenwood  
16          Island site has now. It will be riprap containment. The  
17          marsh will be inside.

18          The mitigation plan was designed, again, per the  
19          latest Corps of Engineers manuals for Shore Protection and  
20          Coastal Engineering.

21          The next comment, it is in your write-up, but  
22          basically it is questioning the use of so many variances.

23          Again, if you want me to go into detail on that.

24          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I don't think there is a  
25          need, Greg, unless you just want to.

1           GREG CHRISTODOULOU: If you don't think there is  
2 a need, then, I will go ahead and go forward.

3           Also, reduce the barge berths from two to one to  
4 avoid wetland impacts.

5           One if these, again, is going to be temporary.  
6 However, they need to have increased accessibility to the  
7 site, both the north part and the south part because, in  
8 this area, if anybody has ever been down to Chevron, or  
9 been to the LNG, or been to any of those plants down  
10 there, there is only one way in and one way out. All of  
11 these trucks, all of these delivery vehicles, all these  
12 contract workers, they have to go in this way. It reduces  
13 the traffic on Industrial Road. That is why they wanted  
14 two off-loading facilities adjacent to the plant.

15           A public hearing was held on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019,  
16 and we received no public comments.

17           DEQ is currently reviewing the project.

18           We had no objections from Archives and History.

19           A Tidelands Lease will be required for both the  
20 mitigation area and the plant expansion.

21           The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission also  
22 known as the FERC issued a certification this summer after  
23 an approximate five-year EIS process. It has really been  
24 vetted fairly highly already.

25           The Corps of Engineers issued their Provisional

1 Permit.

2 Based on staff review, the project would allow  
3 both the import and export of natural gas at the Bayou  
4 Casotte Terminal.

5 The project would create a significant amount of  
6 economic activity, by creating jobs directly associated  
7 with the plant, as well as construction employment.

8 The project would be in support of the nation's  
9 energy policy, by reducing dependence on foreign countries  
10 for energy.

11 Staff recommends approval of the variance  
12 requests and permit, contingent on clearance from DEQ.

13 If you have any really specific questions, we  
14 have people here who can answer those, but I will do the  
15 best I can, if you have any questions.

16 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Steve, this is kind of in  
17 your backyard.

18 Do you want to talk to it at all, or do you see  
19 any concerns there?

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: No. Greg and I have  
21 talked about this in the past and I have watched it  
22 through the years, the original permit process and how  
23 long it took, and they finally got the import facility  
24 built. By the time from beginning to end, the whole  
25 market had changed and there was no longer really a need

1 for an import facility. I am just glad to see this moved  
2 to this point where we can go ahead and try to get this  
3 approved and let them move forward.

4 If anybody has been involved in it and I have  
5 watched it through the years, being here and talking with  
6 these guys, there is a lot of work, as you can see, just  
7 trying to figure out how to make all of this work and  
8 still be environmentally friendly. That has been a  
9 challenge.

10 I applaud you guys for doing everything you have  
11 done up to this point to get this to a point where we can  
12 look at it and say, okay, yes, this will work. We have  
13 done our job.

14 with that being said, if there are no more  
15 questions, then, I will make the motion to approve the  
16 staff's recommendation.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion to move  
18 forward with the staff's recommendation.

19 Do we have a second?

20 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second the motion.

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
22 second.

23 All those in favor say aye.

24 (All in favor.)

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

1 (None opposed.)

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

3 We appreciate that, Greg, and all of the long  
4 hard work it takes to get to this point.

5 GREG CHRISTODOULOU: Thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us to Office  
7 of Coastal Restoration and Resiliency, Mr. George.

8 GEORGE RAMSEUR: Thank you, Chairman Havard,  
9 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, counsel.

10 I appreciate the opportunity to give y'all an  
11 update about what has been going on in Coastal  
12 Restoration.

13 I am going to give kind of a broad geologic and  
14 time span overview of what we have been working on, and,  
15 then, that will lead into a discussion by Dr. Mickle on  
16 some of the newest areas of focus.

17 In kind of the long-term big picture setting, we  
18 are looking at geomorphic change, but we are also looking  
19 at the historical freshwater inputs and some not so  
20 historical ones.

21 Up here on this image you see arrows in blue  
22 indicating rivers flowing into Lake Pontchartrain, the  
23 Pearl River, Jourdan River, Wolf River, and, then, in  
24 yellow you see some human-induced hydrologic issues that I  
25 will talk about in a second.

1           In the blue, the more or less historic inflows,  
2 the Pearl River is of particular interest right now  
3 because years ago they tried to balance out the flow of  
4 freshwater into the Sound with the walkiah Bluffs. That  
5 didn't work and the river is flowing about on average  
6 seventy percent into Louisiana right.

7           Paul is going to give you a lot more detail on  
8 that, but we are looking at the possibility that  
9 reapportioning that water may improve our estuary and  
10 fishery situations.

11           The other big one on here is Bonnet Carre  
12 Spillway and that has really, as everybody knows, been a  
13 big impact over the last year and it has impacted the way  
14 we are looking at restoration particularly in the western  
15 Sound.

16           The other two yellow arrows, the little one in  
17 the middle represents the MRGO which they closed in two  
18 stages in 2009 and 2011, and the system is still adjusting  
19 to that. That is one of the hydrodynamic factors we are  
20 keeping an eye on.

21           Then, the little yellow arrow over on the right  
22 side represents the Mid-Breton Sound diversion which has  
23 been the topic of a lot of discussion, and the question  
24 mark there means we still need to assess the potential  
25 impact of that for the Mississippi Sound and our

1 resources.

2 Now, you-all have seen this image before. I  
3 have updated it at bit, but kind of on the broad scale of  
4 long-term geologic side of the picture, our estuary is  
5 formed by the barrier that runs from Mobile Bay all the  
6 way to Lake Bourne. That is the barrier islands and  
7 Biloxi Marsh (indicating).

8 Just in a real course way of looking at it, the  
9 open water passes through that barrier that opened from  
10 twenty-three miles in 1850 to thirty-three miles in 2016.

11 Now, the latest update is that they succeeded in  
12 closing Camille Cut on Ship Island and brought that back  
13 down to about thirty miles.

14 The main thing is that we've got a very clear  
15 trend from 1850 onward of significant erosion in the  
16 barrier that controls the mixing with saltwater and gives  
17 us our estuary.

18 This is paralleled and backed up by some of the  
19 recent imagery that Karen Clark has run in the GIS  
20 Department on behalf of Coastal Preserves and others that  
21 essentially indicate that the rate of shoreline loss, land  
22 loss in Mississippi which is averaging a bit over two  
23 hundred acres a year at this point really doubled starting  
24 in the early 1900's, and that loss is fetch related.

25 You see the broadest bands, the purple area of



1 loss lines up with our primary southeast fetch, and that  
2 happens to be where a lot of these openings in the barrier  
3 are getting bigger out there in Biloxi Marsh and in the  
4 barrier islands (indicating).

5 That has caused other variations and what we  
6 have is a trend of geologic change in the barriers. We  
7 are seeing that reflected in the Hancock County and mostly  
8 the Grand Bay marshes because our beaches stay apparently  
9 pretty stable, since they are being renourished all the  
10 time.

11 Then, that has led to some early confirmation,  
12 as Paul will talk about, of some of the potential for  
13 those changes to cause variations in the estuary and to  
14 cause problems for oysters and other resources.

15 I am going to turn this over to Paul to talk  
16 about the newest areas of focus related to this variation  
17 and some of the projects tied to that.

18 PAUL MICKLE: Thank you, George.

19 Good morning Commissioners, Director, Ms.  
20 Chesnut.

21 I would like to present to you a Pearl River  
22 project concept that you actually requested last meeting.

23 Although this is just a concept, I would like to  
24 share it to illustrate a strategy that I have been working  
25 on and sharing with folks in our state, as well as our

1 neighboring states, because we are all in this together to  
2 deal with issues that George has talked about here today,  
3 and we've got some solutions, but it is a complicated  
4 problem.

5 I think a few of the Commissioners have already  
6 seen me present this at certain forums and workshops, but  
7 I have added a little bit to it, and I want to make sure  
8 everybody understands because it is a large endeavor to  
9 take these issues on and it is always good to have support  
10 everywhere.

11 It really started with oyster production. We  
12 talk about oysters a lot, but talking with our Marine  
13 Fisheries Office, in those reefs such as Telegraph and  
14 Pass Marianne, the data that they get out of their square  
15 meter samples, as well as just the fishermen themselves  
16 saying that our southern reefs, Telegraph and Pass  
17 Marianne, they might catch spat every year, but they lose  
18 them throughout the summer.

19 When I talk about the Pearl River Project, some  
20 people will come up and say, "why are you talking about  
21 more freshwater? We don't need more freshwater."

22 This is the Pearl River concept to restore  
23 historical flows. We are not adding any water to  
24 anything. This is just getting the Pearl River to do what  
25 it used to do to get us back to where we used to be when

1 we had high levels of production.

2 Just to get some science, I will keep the  
3 nerdiness to a minimum, but just to talk real quick this  
4 is conductivity and salinity in the western Sound, and  
5 over ninety percent of our oyster production on our  
6 harvestable reefs are in the western Sound and that is the  
7 focus here today.

8 If you look at it, the conductivity and salinity  
9 in the western Sound, there is a lot of natural variation,  
10 and this is data from 1999 to 2019, and there is a gap  
11 here after Katrina because it actually wiped out all the  
12 equipment, but you can see here there is natural variation  
13 in salinity and conductivity, but it seems pretty steady.  
14 There is no trend of it going up and down. That is annual  
15 salinity (indicating).

16 If you get into the details and talk about the  
17 variation of that salinity of the needle swinging from  
18 really fresh down to really salty, the needle swinging  
19 back and forth over time, and this is this figure here is  
20 going up (indicating graphs).

21 This is one of the scariest analyses I have ever  
22 done. We have initiated a manuscript to publish this, but  
23 I wanted to share it with you here today because it is so  
24 really scary to think about the variation over time is  
25 increasing.

1           when you think about variation increasing, this  
2 is an incredible amount of osmotic stress on our aquatic  
3 organisms, including oysters.

4           when oysters have to deal with highly freshwater  
5 times of the year and highly saline times of the year,  
6 they are osmotically stressed and it really reduces their  
7 ability to reproduce, to grow, to survive. Natural  
8 mortality rates increase, spawning potential decreases and  
9 this is what they have been going through for the last  
10 twenty years.

11           You can see in 2017, they didn't have a Bonnet  
12 Carre opening. We had one year of kind of normal  
13 variation, but, in management we need fifteen to twenty  
14 years of normal, what an estuary is supposed to do with  
15 natural variation (indicating).

16           That is the problem I am trying to dial down on,  
17 all these conversations such as Jordan has brought up of  
18 land loss, what I'm going to talk about here very quickly  
19 about the Pearl River.

20           We may never get the western sound to look like  
21 it used to, but I believe we can get it performing like it  
22 used to. I believe in that here which I would like to  
23 share.

24           Don't let it share you. This is just called a  
25 principal component analysis. All you need to know about

1 it is that two dots on this figure, the closer they are  
2 together the more similar they are in water quality.  
3 Two dots that are very far distance from each other are  
4 very different in water quality (indicating).

5 No numbers. This is just showing you that we  
6 know what the Mississippi Sound can work at.

7 In the years of 1999 to 2004, there were no  
8 Bonnet Carre openings. Those years had fairly high years  
9 of oyster production, of natural mortality levels, of what  
10 we have historically seen of low natural mortality  
11 relatively so in oysters in the Western Sound.

12 We have identified water quality for the Western  
13 Sound at what works, and that is what we are all here to  
14 see. We want to see the Mississippi Sound to do what it  
15 used to do from a water quality perspective.

16 I believe, if we get the water quality right,  
17 everything is going to start going our way, all the way  
18 from oysters down to finfish, crabs, shrimp, everything.

19 By this figure, we are identifying exactly what  
20 water quality, from a salinity and temperature perspective  
21 of what the Sound needs from its historical production.  
22 We had a target to work for. That is the goal.

23 This is 2019. These are the water quality  
24 measurements measured on a daily basis in 2019. You can  
25 see here there is very little overlap. Most of these dots

1 are way out here and most of these dots are in blank space  
2 which we have never seen water quality before in these  
3 years of 1999 to 2004 (indicating).

4 No one is going to disagree that 2019 was a  
5 catastrophic year from a water quality perspective in the  
6 Sound, but we are quantifying what we should not -- the  
7 direction we should not be going.

8 We know where we need to get to. It's no longer  
9 fish stories and conversations. We have the quantitative  
10 justification for where we want to go.

11 The Pearl River is a really important river.  
12 Everyone agrees that it is the driver of our salinity  
13 regimes in the western Sound. It is our largest river in  
14 our state. Mississippi River borders it and it is a  
15 different animal obviously, but the Pearl River is  
16 actually almost twice the size of Pascagoula. It is a big  
17 river in our comparison of all of our state rivers.

18 It is so important to the salinity regimes that  
19 our sister agency, DEQ, has really invested some money  
20 from the NFWF perspective of building models on the main  
21 stem of the Pearl itself and the entire western Sound. So  
22 we have these tools now to understand how important this  
23 river is and its impacts on water quality in the western  
24 Sound.

25 Just a background about the river. It is a

1 heavily manipulated system. It has a large impoundment on  
2 it. It has been used for navigation, flood control,  
3 industry, access and agriculture, all of those things that  
4 have impacted certain things on the river and flow  
5 regimes.

6 I'm going to talk about the eastern and west  
7 Pearl. The main stem of the Pearl is right here at the  
8 top of the screen and it breaks just due west of Picayune.  
9 Picayune is off the screen to the right, but it splits to  
10 the East Pearl and the West Pearl (indicating).

11 what actually happened was in the sixties and  
12 seventies, flows started decreasing in the Eastern Pearl.  
13 what happened was the water started slowing down in the  
14 Eastern Pearl, sediment started dropping out. Just in  
15 positive feedback, it got shallower and shallower.

16 The western Pearl is actually at lower  
17 elevation. That is what this map shows here. So it was  
18 capturing more and more water really around the fifties,  
19 sixties and seventies (indicating map).

20 It became such an issue that the State of  
21 Mississippi, the State of Louisiana which this river  
22 borders as you know, and the Army Corps of Engineers  
23 stepped in and created a structure called the walkiah  
24 Bluff Structure.

25 The Corps wanted to help everybody out. They

1 put in a structure right here at Walkiah Bluff to split  
2 the flows and create a fifty-fifty match between the east  
3 and west Pearl River. That was the historical discharge.  
4 That is what the Pearl River had done all the way to that  
5 point and it was good intent (indicating).

6 The problem was when they built the structure,  
7 they are actually forcing water to go uphill and when you  
8 force water to go uphill versus downhill, what is going to  
9 happen is it is going -- here is an image of the Walkiah  
10 Bluff structure itself which the Corps put in. Here is  
11 the Eastern Pearl and the Western Pearl (indicating).

12 What happened was when you are forcing it to go  
13 uphill, it actually backs up on itself, creates back  
14 pressure. It busted through the swamp here and made its  
15 way back downhill.

16 The old proverb, you can't make water go uphill  
17 is a hundred percent true.

18 It is a catastrophic failure now in certain  
19 months of the year when we need the water the most and all  
20 of you will probably agree. In August and September, we  
21 are getting literally eighty-five percent down the Western  
22 Pearl and around fifteen percent down the Eastern Pearl.

23 There is a massive disparity from good  
24 intentions, but a complete failure in infrastructural  
25 support on returning flows.



1           This is nothing new, but what I am proposing  
2 here today is a project concept of reevaluating this  
3 because we know what we need, as far as water quality and  
4 the Pearl's role in that. What we need is to get fifty-  
5 fifty split again which it really had for a long, long  
6 time until the fifties and sixties when it became changed.

7           what we would like to see and what I have been  
8 proposing is on the Coastal plain -- here is I-10. It  
9 goes into New Orleans. Right here, this is all level.  
10 The western Pearl right here is no higher than the Eastern  
11 Pearl (indicating).

12           If there was a structure put in here to create  
13 the fifty-fifty split, we believe that the water would  
14 come out of the east at fifty-fifty and create that  
15 historical water quality which we enjoyed so much in the  
16 distant past that I believe could be restored again  
17 (indicating).

18           Now, the Eastern Pearl dumps out right here.  
19 Here is our state waters. He is St. Joe Reef and all of  
20 our big public reefs here (indicating).

21           The western Pearl dumps over here. It actually  
22 gets sloped back and forth because it is such a large Lake  
23 Pontchartrain pulling and disillusions it.

24           The oyster fishermen in Louisiana I have talked  
25 to are in support of this project. The oyster fishermen I

1 have talked to here in Mississippi are definitely in  
2 support of it.

3 We have met with the Army Corps of Engineers.  
4 The Marine Fisheries Office was present in that meeting.  
5 Everyone in that meeting was in support of it. They are  
6 in support of it to a level of requesting a proposal which  
7 I constructed and submitted last year that we are waiting  
8 on, but actually to have a structure put in here there are  
9 a lot of steps to take and I would really like to get your  
10 input here today on what you see as a good thing, or a bad  
11 thing, any issues that you see because this is a major  
12 undertaking, but it is a restoration project that I feel  
13 and that the Director has keyed in on is a major piece of  
14 that puzzle.

15 Dealing with land loss, dealing with river  
16 discharges, this is all a complicated issue.

17 Bonnet Carre, if anyone disagrees, is the  
18 largest problem we have with water quality. I am not  
19 saying it is not. It is definitely the largest. That is  
20 a problem that we've got to take on, but we've got to take  
21 on these other problems, too, to get that historical  
22 salinity regime back to what it was when we had  
23 production.

24 This is my last slide. I just wanted to use  
25 that Pearl River Project to bring up kind of a strategy

1 that I would like to share with y'all and maybe you could  
2 share in support of identifying the habitat suitabilities,  
3 that water quality. Identify that water quality, what the  
4 western Sound needs for oysters, crab, brown shrimp and  
5 finfish for both production and natural mortality, not  
6 elevated levels of manmade situations where we have  
7 excessive mortality.

8 Our oysters were pretty much wiped out last  
9 year. That is a problem, but, again, we have lost reefs  
10 because of other long-running historical problems that  
11 don't have anything to do with Bonnet Carre.

12 we have a salinity regime problem in the western  
13 Sound which I have shown here today with some data and  
14 analyses.

15 what I would like to present here today is a  
16 concept of that figure which is probably a little  
17 confusing, but, if we can get the water quality to do what  
18 it did in 1999 to 2004, we will get headed in the right  
19 direction. I firmly believe that.

20 Take concepts of does Mid-Breton Sound hurt, or  
21 help, the water quality in the western Sound by these  
22 metrics?

23 The Bonnet Carre. What openings can the western  
24 Sound take? When can we not ever have the Bonnet Carre  
25 open? When does that mortality show up? A what levels?

1 what are tipping points that cause mortality with  
2 freshwater from that structure?

3 All of these different projects. Louisiana has  
4 a lot of projects in their plan, a lot of them, and we  
5 need to take into account, in my opinion, this strategy of  
6 allowing the HSI's, the water quality that our aquatic  
7 organisms need in our jurisdictional state waters drive  
8 the way of what should be done and our support, or non  
9 support, of those projects outside of our state, as well  
10 as inside our state.

11 That is pretty much all I had here today, and I  
12 will answer any questions that you have. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Can you back up just a  
14 little bit and explain just a little bit more where you  
15 talked about the facility that was put in place to do this  
16 fifty-fifty split?

17 PAUL MICKLE: Yes. walkiah Bluff.

18 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Right.

19 PAUL MICKLE: It is right there. You can still  
20 see the structure itself (indicating slide).

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Then, I think in the next  
22 slide, show us again where you said it made its natural  
23 bypath?

24 PAUL MICKLE: Yes, sir. Here is a natural  
25 bypass. The water was slowed down and forced to a higher

1 elevation this way. It caused the river to slow down and  
2 back up on its itself. It wanted to find a way downhill.  
3 So it broke through and got to the west right there  
4 (indicating slide).

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I got you.

6 when you talk about what you can see now as a  
7 way to split the flow fifty-fifty, can you go into just a  
8 little more detail on that, Paul?

9 PAUL MICKLE: Sure. The concept is to come down  
10 to the level area on the coastal plain where the East and  
11 the West Pearls are at the same elevation and look at some  
12 scenarios.

13 Here is the West Pearl coming down. In August  
14 it is retaining eighty-five percent of the flow at base  
15 flow. This is mostly ground water at base flow and, at  
16 this low base flow, it is eighty-five percent going down  
17 the West Pearl (indicating slide).

18 we would like to look at some model scenarios  
19 where we can actually maybe infuse a very small structure  
20 that we would have control over with the State of  
21 Louisiana to allow water to go into the Eastern Pearl to  
22 mimic historic levels.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: And where would you  
24 suggest putting that structure?

25 PAUL MICKLE: That is a great question because

1 that brings up a point I probably should have made  
2 clearer.

3 At this point, we need to run those models that  
4 I presented that DEQ had done with NFWF, those two models.  
5 We need to know exactly how much water we need to come out  
6 of here, first. That is the beginning point. I don't  
7 have an exact number of water we need in July and August  
8 and September to have a positive impact on our salinity  
9 regimes in the western Sound.

10 Once you get that number of exactly what we need  
11 each month of the year to mimic historical salinities,  
12 then, you start looking with engineers on where you could  
13 actually do that, bringing in all sorts of scenarios of  
14 costs, of usership between the states, land issues, user  
15 groups issues. It spins up very complicated.

16 I'm optimistic because of the support we have  
17 gotten to this point. Everyone is in favor of this, at  
18 least to this point.

19 It is a scenario where it all starts on  
20 understanding how much water we need to get those  
21 historical levels to have that positive impact to get us  
22 back to what it potentially used to be, and, then,  
23 allowing those numbers to drive the engineering behind it,  
24 exactly spatially where a potential structure would go.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So where are you at in

1 that process, now?

2 PAUL MICKLE: It is early in the process. The  
3 models are complete. That is the good news. They took  
4 years to create. As you know how models work in our  
5 fisheries world, when we do our stock assessments. Once  
6 the model is built it is like a car. You just put gas in  
7 it and start using it for what you want.

8 I have met with DEQ and their consulting group  
9 to look at exactly how capable the models are, and we have  
10 identified that they are perfectly capable of looking at  
11 these scenarios with some really valuable information on  
12 exactly what we would need.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So, I guess, as this  
14 process goes, you will keep us abreast?

15 PAUL MICKLE: Absolutely. This is not going to  
16 happen next year.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: No. No. I'm sure.

18 PAUL MICKLE: I make that clear.

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Those wheels turn very  
20 slowly, but there is a lot that has to be taken into  
21 consideration when making these decisions.

22 PAUL MICKLE: Absolutely.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So, I guess, as we go  
24 along, you will keep us abreast of any changes, especially  
25 positive changes.

1           PAUL MICKLE: Absolutely.

2           I guess the next step would be to initiate model  
3 runs, identify exactly what kind of discharge we need each  
4 month, and, then, approach the Corps, approach the State  
5 of Louisiana on looking at spacial considerations and  
6 design. So design conversations would be next, once we  
7 understand.

8           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It looks like where that  
9 first placement was for the diversion, this one here would  
10 be a much longer space to have to go to do that diversion?

11           In other words, it looks like if you are going  
12 to get back up to where they are both even?

13           PAUL MICKLE: Yes. That's a good question.

14           Looking at scenarios here, we know how much  
15 water comes down here in the summer months when we need  
16 it.

17           You actually do depth profiles, or sediment  
18 profiles, in these little backwaters here and see where it  
19 would be most efficient, and that is what the engineers  
20 kind of take over and bring in.

21           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, to probably utilize  
22 canals that are already there.

23           PAUL MICKLE: Absolutely. It is going to work  
24 its way through the process. This is really just a  
25 concept at this point.



1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Good information, Paul.  
3 We appreciate you taking the time and briefing us on that.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: I don't know what you know about  
5 it, but, when they started making diversions out of the  
6 Mississippi River, one was supposed to go through Lake  
7 Pontchartrain and it was going to be a diversion.

8 Basically it came into the Sound to bring  
9 freshwater in, and that might have been a great thing and  
10 it didn't happen.

11 I don't know that answer, but this was back  
12 fifty years ago we are talking about.

13 The thought here is to try to find a place that  
14 will do it. I have been working with Paul on this, and  
15 Paul came up with the idea of a point south down here  
16 where we could look at it because everybody was looking  
17 north, thinking about trying to drill and do everything in  
18 the world coming through there.

19 The Corps of Engineers is all for this. I  
20 believe you are a hundred percent right. They are for  
21 this and they want to do this.

22 This vision came out of Mr. Nick Mavar, big  
23 Nick. He gave me the vision right off the bat one day,  
24 when he gave me 101 Mississippi.

25 The point I'm getting at is he gave us that

1 vision of what to do with this and how to make it work,  
2 but he didn't give us this vision. He gave us the one of  
3 the Mississippi and how to do it.

4 we have modified that to this vision, and  
5 hopefully it work.

6 what was it, Paul, two or three hundred yards,  
7 something like that?

8 PAUL MICKLE: It is between four and five  
9 thousand feet, but they actually will identify. The  
10 engineers will find out exactly where the best place is,  
11 but the real unknown factor is what the structure would  
12 cost because I would really insist that it is not just a  
13 structure that sits there and you can't open and close  
14 because we don't have problems with freshwater in certain  
15 months of the year.

16 The Pearl River at high flows, it really is  
17 fifty-fifty between the two. We need water in August and  
18 September, and that is when the salinities get so high.

19 we need the base flow scenarios to be looked at.  
20 So that plays into where it needs to go.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: Also, Louisiana is onboard with  
22 us to a point with this because they want to take some of  
23 the water away from them.

24 PAUL MICKLE: That's right.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: They are getting too much in

1 those months that we need more water, and this seems to be  
2 a workaround all the way to make it work.

3 PAUL MICKLE: The Lake Pontchartrain folks and  
4 the fishermen in Lake Pontchartrain are saying it is too  
5 fresh in summer months. The river is out of whack from  
6 historical production levels.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: The walkiah, if we do anything  
8 south of there, or anywhere else, it is just going to  
9 divert to the west anyway.

10 PAUL MICKLE: Yes.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: The land is lower to the west.  
12 So no matter what, it is going to divert.

13 Is that correct?

14 PAUL MICKLE: Sure. They looked at some other  
15 scenarios. If we had done it a little bit further down,  
16 like a mile down from the walkiah Bluff, it would have  
17 failed again because, again, you are making water go  
18 uphill. I don't see a reason why we should want to fight  
19 that.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes. You can't fight  
21 that.

22 PAUL MICKLE: Thank you very much.

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good, Paul. Thank  
24 you.

25 That brings us to Office of Finance and

1 Administration, Ms. Leslie Brewer, to give us an update on  
2 where we are.

3 LESLIE BREWER: Good morning Director,  
4 Commissioners, legal.

5 My name is Leslie Brewer, CFO. I will be  
6 presenting the financials for December 2019.

7 At the end of December, our State Revenue was  
8 four point one million. Our Total Agency Revenue was  
9 nineteen point four million.

10 Our State Net Income was nine hundred and fifty  
11 thousand, and our Agency Net Income was six point five  
12 million.

13 After six months of fiscal year 2020, we have  
14 seventy-eight point nine percent of the Operating Budget  
15 remaining, while the Tidelands Budget was at sixty-five  
16 point four.

17 Does anyone have any questions?

18 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think that looks good.

19 Does anyone have any questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

22 LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Next is Tidelands Award  
24 Overview, Ms. Sonja Slater.

25 SONJA SLATER: Good morning Commissioners,

1 Director, legal.

2 I just wanted to give a brief update on our  
3 Tidelands activities for our 2021 funding cycle.

4 We have already accepted all of our 2021  
5 applications and we have set up our 2022 schedule. It is  
6 the same schedule we do every year where we accept  
7 applications at the end of May to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

8 We put that on the website. We notify everybody  
9 around the middle of May to let them know to start putting  
10 in applications.

11 For our 2021 application cycle, we received a  
12 hundred and twenty-one applications. Fifty-seven thousand  
13 dollars was of application requests we received.

14 Fifty-five of the applications were public  
15 access applications for a total of forty-six thousand, and  
16 sixty-six were managed projects applications for a total  
17 of eleven thousand.

18 We were appropriated eleven million dollars, in  
19 2020, through our Tidelands Appropriation Bill.

20 I broke down the cities, counties and  
21 miscellaneous projects for you, if you want to look at  
22 those, also (indicating slide).

23 I also provided y'all with a Tidelands book that  
24 has every application that was submitted through the 2020  
25 cycle for your review.

1           In 2020, we were allocated through the  
2 legislature to award six point four million dollars in  
3 public access funding.

4           This pie chart shows you how we split it up.  
5 Four point four million went to the cities. One point  
6 four million went to the Board of Supervisors. Five  
7 hundred and forty-five thousand went to our miscellaneous  
8 projects which, again, are our nonprofits, or whatever  
9 does not fall into the Board of Supervisors, or city,  
10 realm (indicating slide).

11           We were allocated to spend, in our managed  
12 projects for 2020, three point five million. We had one  
13 million towards our bond payment. One point eight million  
14 went towards MDMR projects. A hundred and eleven thousand  
15 went to USM projects. Two hundred and twenty-two thousand  
16 went to MSU projects. We had one point one million go to  
17 miscellaneous projects. We still have nine hundred and  
18 thirty thousand of the three point five to distribute in  
19 the Managed Projects Program.

20           Do y'all have any questions?

21           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I don't think we do.  
22 We appreciate it, Ms. Sonja.

23           SONJA SLATER: Thank you.

24           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us to Public  
25 Affairs, Ms. Charmaine.

1                   what have you got for us today?

2                   CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning  
3 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Counsel Chestnut.

4                   The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
5 was mentioned fifteen times in local, state and national  
6 media since the December CMR meeting.

7                   Popular news items included the release of the  
8 MDMR 2020 calendar, off-bottom oyster aquaculture and a  
9 prescribed burn on Deer Island.

10                  Director Spraggins took part in the January 6<sup>th</sup>  
11 Harrison County Board of Supervisors Board Meeting to  
12 discuss the Coffee Creek Outfalls Project.

13                  During the first week of the legislative  
14 session, Director Spraggins attended the swearing in  
15 ceremonies for Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann,  
16 Secretary of State Michael Watson, Attorney General Lynn  
17 Fitch, State Auditor Shad White, State Treasurer David  
18 McRae, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy  
19 Gipson, Commissioner of Insurance Mike Chaney and the  
20 Senate and House of Representatives.

21                  On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Director attended Governor  
22 Tate Reeves' swearing in ceremony and the inaugural  
23 events.

24                  So far in Fiscal Year 20, Marine Patrol has  
25 taught six boat-and-water safety classes and certified one

1 hundred and fifty-six students.

2 The Office of Information Technology's Karen  
3 Clark and Robert Gruba spoke to students at Gulfport High  
4 School on January 16<sup>th</sup> about marine technology and coastal  
5 ecology.

6 On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the Grand Bay NERR education  
7 staff took guests from the Biloxi VA for a kayaking trip  
8 at the NERR and, on January 9<sup>th</sup>, D'Iberville Middle School  
9 seventh graders came to the NERR for a field trip as part  
10 of the K through 12 On-The-Road Program.

11 while at the reserve, they kayaked and learned  
12 how to throw a cast net, how to identify the fish they  
13 caught, native plants and other information regarding our  
14 marine resources.

15 Also at the NERR, Kim Cressman won the National  
16 NERRS Technical Service Award at the annual meeting in  
17 November. This is a prestigious award to recognize people  
18 who have made an outstanding contribution to the NERRS  
19 system.

20 Kim has been working on a NERRS Science  
21 Collaborative project this past June that analyzed the  
22 system's Sediment Elevation Table data and provided  
23 outreach materials.

24 The Office of Restoration and Resiliency took  
25 part in GOMA Embrace the Gulf meeting in Jackson on



1 January 9<sup>th</sup> and attended the Bay St. Louis City Council  
2 meeting where the City received the Embrace the Gulf 2020  
3 Proclamation.

4 National Heritage Area hosted four tours of the  
5 Charnley-Norwood house in Ocean Springs, as well as having  
6 seventy-five people attend the Charnley-Norwood Christmas  
7 Open House.

8 They also partnered with Mississippi Gulf Coast  
9 Community College to serve off-bottom oyster aquaculture  
10 oysters at the Gulf Coast Legislative Reception in Jackson  
11 on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

12 Agritourism is part of the Nature-Based Tourism  
13 Plan and National Heritage Area partners with MGCCC's  
14 culinary program to provide a farm-to-table experience  
15 using products grown and sold through agritourism  
16 businesses.

17 A rehabilitated and satellite-tagged sea turtle  
18 was released on the south side of Ship Island by MDMR and  
19 IMMS on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Office of Marine Fisheries staff  
20 Mike Brainard and Alicia Carron worked with IMMS to secure  
21 the satellite tag to the Kemp's Ridley and assisted with  
22 the successful release.

23 Released sea turtle tracks can be followed on  
24 our Protective Species page on our agency's website.

25 The Gulf of Mexico Alliance meeting was held in

1 Mobile January 16<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>. Office of Marine  
2 Fisheries Harmful Algal Bloom Response Team members  
3 Kristina Broussard, Megan Fleming, Alicia Carron and  
4 Tiffany Weidner took part in the Water Resources Division.  
5 Shrimp and Crab Bureau's Jeremy Timbs represented the  
6 agency on a Wildlife and Fisheries Team.

7 The Office of Marine Fisheries hosted USM  
8 student Olivia Cole on January 8<sup>th</sup> as she job shadowed  
9 various staff to experience a showcase of programs and  
10 interact with each bureau.

11 On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Shellfish Bureau's Jason Rider  
12 provided an Oyster Aquaculture presentation for the public  
13 at the Margaret Sherry Library in Biloxi. He included  
14 information on the growing industry's current status and  
15 future potential opportunities for Mississippi.

16 The U.S. Food and Drug Administration Program  
17 Element Evaluation Report prepared by FDA Shellfish  
18 Specialist John Veazey, describing the 2019 evaluation of  
19 the Mississippi Shellfish Sanitation Program Control of  
20 Harvest Element was received January 10<sup>th</sup>, and we are  
21 pleased to report that the Mississippi Shellfish Program  
22 Control Harvest Element is in conformance with National  
23 Shellfish Program guidelines, resulting from the  
24 coordination and teamwork between the Office of Marine  
25 Fisheries and partners.

1                   COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Speaking of the Grand Bay  
2 NERR, Dr. Gray and her staff do a fantastic job over  
3 there.

4                   CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: They do.

5                   COMMISSIONER HAVARD: They did a star gazing  
6 event several weeks ago that I think was a huge success.  
7 It was open to the public, and they do a ton of  
8 educational experiences over there. She and her staff do  
9 a great job.

10                  CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: They do, and their events  
11 are very highly attended. Everybody looks forward to  
12 them.

13                  COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Right.

14                  JOE SPRAGGINS: Usually you have to get on a  
15 waiting list to get on them. I will be honest with you.  
16 They fill up every time.

17                  COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good.

18                  COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Charmaine, one other  
19 thing. You do those daily news clips. I going to tell  
20 you what, I can't speak for the rest of the Commission,  
21 but you keep us informed, let us know what is going on and  
22 I appreciate that. Thank you.

23                  CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.

24                  COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you, Charmaine.

25                  That brings us to Office of Marine Fisheries,

1 Mr. Joe Jewell.

2 JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioners.

3 Before I get started, I wanted to make a couple  
4 of comments. I certainly want to echo the condolences for  
5 all of those that were mentioned in our moment of silence.

6 I particularly want to mention Mr. Joe Jenkins.  
7 I knew Joe when he came originally to the Coast and  
8 started up his business as an oyster processor, and, then,  
9 he developed that business into one of the largest oyster  
10 processors here on the northern Gulf Coast. His family  
11 was always involved in it. His daughter Jennifer Jenkins  
12 became very knowledgeable. She is the commercial rep from  
13 Region V on the executive board at the ISSC. It is a  
14 family practice and a family business. He has worked  
15 always well with our Commission and Department of Marine  
16 Resources, in managing any concerns for the marine  
17 resources, and he will be greatly missed here as a leader  
18 within our industry.

19 I also want to mention Ms. Ruth Posadas. Ruth  
20 will be retiring at the end of the month, after almost two  
21 decades of service to public safety and health with the  
22 seafood industry.

23 As many of you may know, in the history of our  
24 agency, there have only been three directors of the  
25 Seafood Technology Bureau. First, was Dr. Cornell Ladner,

1 and I replaced Dr. Cornell Ladner on an interim basis for  
2 about a year and a half until we hired Ms. Ruth.

3 Ruth has led that department and this agency to  
4 compliance for almost twenty years of uninterrupted and  
5 unbroken service, and I just wanted to acknowledge the  
6 service that she has done for the State of Mississippi.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Joe, is she not here?

8 I think she and her husband both are here.

9 Could we get them up here?

10 JOE JEWELL: I'm sorry.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: She and her husband both, I  
12 think, are here.

13 Could we not bring them forth?

14 JOE JEWELL: If y'all would like to come up?

15 RUTH POSADAS: No, thank you.

16 JOE JEWELL: Thank you as always.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you, Ruth.

18 JOE JEWELL: With that being said, we've got two  
19 agenda items for consideration to the Commission this  
20 morning.

21 First up we have the Final Adoption of  
22 Commercial Tarpon Regulations.

23 As the Commission may recall, this initiated  
24 back in September where the motion was made for a Notice  
25 of Intent, and, then, at the October meeting, the Notice

1 of Intent was withdrawn for some further considerations by  
2 the Commission.

3 Then, at the December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, the  
4 Commission proceeded with new and updated language for a  
5 Notice of Intent.

6 The Notice of Intent passed on December 17<sup>th</sup>. It  
7 appeared on the Secretary of State's Administrative  
8 Bulletin on December the 19<sup>th</sup>. It was posted on our web  
9 page on December the 20<sup>th</sup>. Legal notice appeared in The  
10 Sun Herald on December the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

11 The public comment period was December the 19<sup>th</sup>  
12 through January the 13<sup>th</sup>. It was a total of twenty-six  
13 days. To date, no public comments were received.

14 Then, to refresh the Commission, this is the  
15 regulatory language that was considered in the Notice of  
16 Intent and it is part of the final adoption (indicating  
17 slide).

18 Required would be a motion to proceed with the  
19 Final Adoption for regulatory changes to Title 22, Part 7,  
20 Chapter 9, regarding commercial rules for Atlantic Tarpon.

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, I would like  
22 to make a motion to proceed with final adoption for  
23 regulatory changes to Title 22, Part 7, Chapter 9,  
24 regarding commercial rules for Atlantic Tarpon.

25 Do we have a second for the motion?

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those in favor say  
3 aye.

4 (All in favor.)

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

6 (None opposed.)

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I did have one question.  
9 It was brought to my attention a week, or so,  
10 ago that there was actually a picture of a tarpon taken  
11 and put online, recreational tarpon, where the guy is  
12 holding the fish up to take a picture.

13 Is that something that you guys are aware of?

14 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I did see that picture on  
15 Facebook over this past week. I don't know the story  
16 behind it.

17 Supposedly from what I read, it was caught in  
18 Back Bay, I believe. It was a juvenile fish.

19 Does enforcement know anything about that?

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: I haven't seen anything.

21 The only thing I saw was an older picture that  
22 somebody had caught one. The question was, was it exactly  
23 long enough, or not, and I don't know that answer, but I  
24 haven't seen anything new.

25 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I don't know if that is

1 what Steve is talking about, but that is not the one that  
2 I have seen over the past week, or so.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'm just curious. We  
4 just need to make sure that we do our due diligence to try  
5 to protect these fish.

6 KYLE WILKERSON: We will check on it.

7 MATT HILL: I haven't seen it.

8 JOE JEWELL: I haven't either.

9 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Enforcement, if you guys  
10 would look a little bit further into that, and we will  
11 move on.

12 JOE JEWELL: With that being said, the next  
13 agenda item for consideration is State Saltwater Fishing  
14 Records. Mr. Matt Hill will be doing that presentation.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Steve, is this somebody  
16 that is related to you with all these records?

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I guess that would be a  
18 second cousin. It's my cousin's son. So, yes.

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Either way,  
20 congratulations. I love seeing these kids.

21 MATT HILL: He turned in three this month.

22 Good morning Commission, Director, legal.

23 For a little clarity, the way the regulation  
24 does state -- I haven't seen the picture of the tarpon  
25 that y'all are speaking of. If it is below forty inches,



1 it is allowed to be taken out of the water to take a  
2 picture and returned immediately to the water. That is  
3 allowed through the regulation. I do want the  
4 Commissioners to keep that in mind, but I have not  
5 personally seen the picture.

6 we will move right into the presentation for the  
7 State Saltwater Finfish Records.

8 All three records for consideration do occur in  
9 the Youth Division and they are by the same young angler.

10 The first is a Knobbed Porgy with a new record  
11 of one pound four point eight ounces with the angler Mr.  
12 Blake Bosarge.

13 Here is a picture of the fish. Here is a  
14 picture of Blake with the fish (indicating photographs).

15 The second one up for your consideration is a  
16 Spanish Flag with a new record of ten point nine eight  
17 ounces. Again, the Angler is Mr. Blake Bosarge.

18 It is a beautiful fish. Here is a picture of  
19 the fish and a picture of Blake with the fish (indicating  
20 photographs).

21 Last is a Vermilion Snapper with a new record of  
22 two pounds nine ounces. Again, this is Blake Bosarge.

23 Here is a picture of the fish and a picture of  
24 young Blake with the fish (indicating photographs).

25 what will be required is a motion to adopt these

1 new State Records.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think it is great to see  
3 these kids get to go out on the boats because these are  
4 not shallow water fish typically. These are deep water.  
5 Most of them are over a hundred feet, before they even get  
6 a chance to catch them. It is nice to see that somebody  
7 is bringing a kid out on a boat multiple times to catch  
8 these fish. That is awesome.

9 At this time, I would like to make a motion that  
10 we adopt the new State Records by Mr. Bosarge.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second that motion.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those in favor say  
13 aye.

14 (All in favor.)

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

16 (None opposed.)

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves. It will go  
18 in the record books.

19 MATT HILL: Thank you.

20 JOE JEWELL: That concludes Marine Fisheries,  
21 unless there are any other questions.

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good. Thank you.

23 JOE JEWELL: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us down to  
25 Other Business. We are getting a briefing today on the

1 TruSportsman App by Mr. Neil Gryder.

2 NEIL GRYDER: Good morning Commissioners,  
3 General Spraggins.

4 My name is Neil Gryder. I own TruSportsman and  
5 I am also owner of Relentless Sport Fishing out of Venice,  
6 Louisiana. We do a bunch of offshore charters about a  
7 hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty days a year down  
8 there, and I have seen the lack in data collection, or  
9 accurate data collection for both economic side of  
10 charter-for hire charter fishermen and for recreational  
11 fishermen on the biological side.

12 we have a mobile app that we have been  
13 developing for both catch data and for economic data  
14 recording.

15 It will have the realtime rules and regulations  
16 for government organizations and agencies both online and  
17 offline for each state and each state agency.

18 we will have the weather API for forecasting and  
19 entry logging for weather statistics logged with each  
20 entry, indefinitely with the life of the entry.

21 It will have the ability to search all local  
22 launches and fuel docks within each state, and multi-state  
23 license stamps permit sales showing proof of purchase with  
24 the user ID number and QR code for each individual user,  
25 and you will also have a renewal program on there, as

1 well.

2 We will have different safety features such as  
3 the offline distress pinpoint system that will pinpoint  
4 users offline for both hunting and fishing, offshore as  
5 well, and a GPS tracker log.

6 It will allow better survey access for both DMR,  
7 wildlife and Fisheries, and any other state agency,  
8 depending on what state we're in.

9 Just for the news feed, it will automatically  
10 change while crossing state lines. If you take your phone  
11 and you cross over from Mississippi into Louisiana, it  
12 will automatically update to Louisiana wildlife and  
13 Fisheries. When you come back into Mississippi, it will  
14 have DMR and wildlife and Fisheries over here as well.

15 It will update with the government's agencies,  
16 upload to their site from their RSS feed in the back end,  
17 such as season closures, commission meetings and public  
18 notices.

19 with entries, the automatic date and time of  
20 each entry as it is made will be logged on there  
21 automatically, and, then, pictures of a total harvest,  
22 measuring tools for catching. You will be able to measure  
23 the catch using the camera on your phone. So you take  
24 that picture on there. You are allowed up to three  
25 pictures with each entry.

1           Each state has it's own state water zones broken  
2 down in there to state lines. It will also have an  
3 offshore zone. So it is kind of a broad spectrum. It is  
4 not like we are pinpointing where anything is coming from.  
5 It is just trying to get a better understanding of where  
6 these fish are being harvested from.

7           Then, each agency has their choice of data they  
8 would like to receive when logging.

9           For example, we have water clarity on there from  
10 a zero to ten scale. So you will be able to choose what  
11 you are actually asking.

12           Each user will have their own specific user ID  
13 number indefinitely for the life of the app. It is  
14 basically like a driver's license number that you can  
15 check with your law enforcement as well.

16           Each user will be able to search through species  
17 under management within the harvesting tab and select up  
18 to the maximum quantity per person per species in each  
19 state under that state's regulations.

20           Each species will be entered back-to-back, but  
21 be able to differ from harvest and discard.

22           Users will have the ability to make multi-person  
23 and multi-date entries. Using the QR code, you are  
24 allowed to connect from users and disburse the data evenly  
25 with each entry across each user's panel.

1           The statistics. Each user will be able to keep  
2 track of their own personal statistics indefinitely, both  
3 harvest and discard, along with each zone they  
4 participated in.

5           The weather statistics will be recorded for that  
6 zone they have chosen within each entry for the life of  
7 the entry at the time of the entry that it is made.

8           At the end of each trip that you log it, it will  
9 actually keep that weather statistic indefinitely as well.

10          Again, up to three pictures recorded.

11          In addition, each user will have a calendar much  
12 like Google calendar to keep up with days that you  
13 participated in both hunting and fishing. Again, the  
14 capability of weather and zone record statistics, as well  
15 as logging each trip with a tracker.

16          A track line can be attached to each entry so  
17 you can actually press "start" and track where you are  
18 going. You don't have to, but you can log it with each  
19 entry for your own personal use.

20          The admin panel, we will create for each state  
21 agency. We will create the admin panel for each state  
22 agency which will allow agencies to access data pertaining  
23 to their agency.

24          For example, the DMR will have access to all  
25 Mississippi saltwater license holder statistics that are

1 harvested within the state waters, as well as coming back  
2 into Mississippi.

3 You will have the user statistics, the species  
4 statistics, each zone's statistics also pertaining to each  
5 species within that zone, and the seasonal statistics such  
6 as Snapper season, or Amberjack season, and things like  
7 that.

8 The admin panel user search. We will build the  
9 admin panel so that the DMR law enforcement has access to  
10 scan a QR code of each individual user onsite to check  
11 their licenses, statistics, as well as their violations  
12 within using life with TruSportsman.

13 We are currently beta testing with two hundred  
14 users right now. We are on version two point three on  
15 both android and IOS.

16 Just for the future development side of things,  
17 in the economic data on our for-hire program, we are  
18 currently building separate forms of entries to where our  
19 charter captains can log their revenue generated, expenses  
20 and passenger quantities within an entry, but separate  
21 from the biological data being entered. The data will  
22 stay within the user's profile and connect the data of  
23 each entry, but not be submitted into the admin, unless  
24 the charter captain chooses to do so.

25 I'm sure that there are a few questions.

1           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Neil, one of the  
2 questions that has come up is who is going to be able to  
3 look at where I have been catching all my fish?

4           NEIL GRYDER: who is going to be able to look at  
5 it?

6           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes.  
7 Is it going to show them exactly?

8           NEIL GRYDER: No, not exactly. No, sir. The  
9 only person that is going to be able to see exactly where  
10 you are going is if you enter the track line and that is  
11 specific to your profile.

12          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: And your catches are  
13 broken down by zones.

14          Correct?

15          NEIL GRYDER: By zone and species.

16          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Not exact points?

17          NEIL GRYDER: Not exact points. No, sir.

18          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I've got tell you. I  
19 told somebody the story this morning. As a charter boat  
20 captain, whenever I started out and even through now, I  
21 thought I'm going to keep these real detailed logs and I'm  
22 going to be able to go back and look. I've done a real  
23 good job from about January until about the beginning of  
24 June every year.

25          NEIL GRYDER: I was going to say maybe until the



1 summer. That is how it always is.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: When we get busy, I just  
3 can't keep up with it, and I have always thought it would  
4 be really nice to have an all-inclusive app.

5 NEIL GRYDER: Within each entry, you also will  
6 have a description, like, a little spot that you can put  
7 in specific details that you would like in there  
8 pertaining to what you did throughout that day. It will  
9 have a few different bells and whistles.

10 Like I said, we are still in beta testing, but  
11 we are rocking and rolling. We would like to try and get  
12 it out as fast as possible just to more testers so we can  
13 keep producing more data and figuring out the bugs that we  
14 are working out.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: And this will have state-  
16 by-state regulations as well, as far as size limits --

17 NEIL GRYDER: (Interposing) Correct.

18 If you make an entry and say we are going out  
19 after Yellowfin Tuna out of the State of Mississippi, you  
20 are only allowed three regardless of where you are, but  
21 you come back in and you make your entry. If you try to  
22 enter four into it, it will hit a red flag. It will not  
23 allow you to enter that.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Is there any way to see  
25 that, prior to catching that fourth one?

1 NEIL GRYDER: Yes. You will have offline access  
2 to all of your rules and regulations.

3 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: It looks like a very good  
5 app that I think we all should take advantage of in the  
6 future. I appreciate you bringing that to the table,  
7 Neil.

8 NEIL GRYDER: Thank you very much.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I just wanted to make one  
10 statement.

11 NEIL GRYDER: Yes, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Not so much talking to  
13 Ronnie's concerns, in my industry, the shrimp industry,  
14 and you are talking about who can see where you are  
15 fishing and with his app, it would be advantageous to get  
16 onboard to try to set up the schedule you want and the  
17 program you want.

18 whereas, in my industry with AIS, we were  
19 mandated to have AIS aboard the vessels. Now, anybody can  
20 see where we fish. In other words, it is public, and not  
21 only that, it's amazing because of technology. With AIS  
22 now, I can be sitting at the dock with my computer plotter  
23 going with AIS interfaced onto it and actually draw  
24 somebody's track where they are actually working.

25 It is pretty invasive and we, as an industry,

1 have always had a problem with that, but that is where we  
2 are. That came to us without us being able to do anything  
3 about it.

4 At least, with this gentleman, you have the  
5 ability to kind of write in what you want and not have  
6 somebody push it down on you.

7 NEIL GRYDER: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I didn't realize shrimp  
9 boats are required to run that. I've got AIS on my boat.  
10 I see the pogy boats and I see some of the barges, but I  
11 very rarely see any commercial boats show up on there.

12 NEIL GRYDER: Well, you can turn it off. You've  
13 got a switch to where you can actually turn your AIS off.  
14 I don't know if you are allowed to.

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I don't know which AIS  
16 you have because the one we have is a receive and  
17 transmit, but there are some that just receive, but most  
18 of the AIS is not required until you get outside of three  
19 miles.

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: When you get in the EZ  
22 and over sixty-five feet, I think it is, then, you are  
23 required to have AIS.

24 NEIL GRYDER: Obviously I'm not trying to  
25 reinvent the wheel here, but this is something that I see

1 fitting for my industry, as a charter boat captain  
2 already.

3 Like Commissioner Daniels said, I was always  
4 trying to keep up with a log the whole time throughout the  
5 year and about summertime, June and July, it just falls  
6 off because we are so busy.

7 If I can do this every day and keep up with all  
8 of that information, even aside from the biological side,  
9 with the for-hire sector, the economical data coming in  
10 will stay on that person's phone. It will not go into the  
11 admin panel.

12 Say a natural disaster comes in such as Bonnet  
13 Carre and they are trying to show how much they have made,  
14 they can't go back and edit that entry. It will be on  
15 their phone connected to the date that the entry was made,  
16 but it will not actually go into the admin panel because I  
17 know that is a huge bugaboo with everybody, not trying to  
18 show all of their income, what they are making.

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: There is also another.  
20 We are tracked in many ways. Transponders. We are  
21 actually required to have transponders --

22 NEIL GRyder: (Interposing) Yes, sir. We are  
23 voluntary for that as well. We've got that on our  
24 vessels.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I don't mind that one

1 quite as much in that the public can't access it, but  
2 Fisheries and Law Enforcement can.

3 NEIL GRYDER: Exactly.

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: Just real quick, Neil had come  
5 to me -- it has been almost two years ago, now, hasn't it,  
6 that he has been talking with me about this?

7 NEIL GRYDER: It has been a while.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Please explain, number one, this  
9 is not costing DMR anything.

10 NEIL GRYDER: Sir?

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: If this program comes into  
12 effect, it does not cost DMR anything.

13 Correct?

14 NEIL GRYDER: No.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: It is not going to conflict with  
16 Tails n' Scales and I want that to be brought up.

17 Tails n' Scales, we have one of the greatest  
18 things in the United States and I don't want to mess with  
19 that.

20 From my understanding, this does not conflict  
21 with it at all, but one of the major things, what people  
22 have told me about it was if I'm sitting in Georgia and I  
23 want to come fishing in Mississippi, I can go buy my  
24 license. I do everything right there online. I can do  
25 everything, and I can do it all at one place.

1 Correct?

2 NEIL GRYDER: You said "cost".

3 Correct?

4 JOE SPRAGGINS: Right.

5 NEIL GRYDER: What we are talking about doing is  
6 a lease program. It would be a flat rate cost per agency,  
7 but it would be nothing exponential. It would be, say, a  
8 dollar per user annually, but that would just be it.

9 It would not be anything coming out, pumping up,  
10 y'all trying to build it. We would build the whole  
11 program for you. So y'all would have access to the data  
12 coming in that pertains to this agency.

13 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: So it would be a benefit  
14 at a minimal cost.

15 NEIL GRYDER: Yes, sir.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: The one thing I looked at, you  
17 know, we are always trying to find a way to say, okay, how  
18 do we figure out how many recreational fishermen, or  
19 anything else, that we catch with, like, speckled trout,  
20 or Redfish, or anything else, and this could be an avenue  
21 to go that way to where we could get some kind of idea of  
22 what we are talking about and be able to do it.

23 NEIL GRYDER: Right.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: Tails n' Scales is extremely  
25 expensive to do it. I know that.

1           NEIL GRYDER: I'm not saying that we would  
2 absorb it automatically, but we are trying to do the same  
3 concept, but on a larger scale.

4           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Would it be possible to  
5 integrate it where people could register for Tails n'  
6 scales, register at the same app --

7           NEIL GRYDER: (Interposing) Correct, and that  
8 is where we are working towards to do the same thing. I  
9 mean, y'all would be getting the same data stream plus  
10 some.

11          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Sounds good. We look  
12 forward to seeing it in the future.

13          NEIL GRYDER: Awesome. Thank y'all so much.

14          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We don't have any public  
15 comments at this time that I am aware of.

16          I make a motion that we adjourn.

17          Do we have a second to that motion?

18          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

19          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those in favor say  
20 aye.

21          (All in favor.)

22          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

23          Adjourned.

24          (Whereupon, at 11:05 o'clock, a.m., the January  
25 21, 2020, meeting of the Commissioner on Marine Resources

1 was concluded.

2 CERTIFICATE

3 I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter,  
4 do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true  
5 and correct transcript of the January 21, 2020, meeting of  
6 the Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the  
7 time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned  
8 matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and  
9 later reduced to typewritten form to the best of my skill  
10 and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative,  
11 employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor  
12 financially interested in the cause.

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14  
15 \_\_\_\_\_  
16 LUCILLE MORGAN, CSR 1251  
17 COURT REPORTER  
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