

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, May 19, 2020
9:00 a.m.
Zoom webinar

Commission Members:

Mark Havard, Chairman

Ronald Daniels, Vice Chairman

Steve Bosarge

Richard Gollott

Natalie Guess

Also Present:

Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR

Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

1 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I would like to call the
2 meeting to order of the Commission on Marine Resources
3 Tuesday, May the 19th.

4 Mr. Spraggins, do you mind leading us in the
5 Pledge of Allegiance?

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay.

7 Ready?

8 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir.

9 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you for doing that.

11 I would like to observe a short moment of
12 silence to think about what is going on in our country
13 right now and, I guess, around the world.

14 (Moment of silence observed.)

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you guys for a
16 moment of silence.

17 That brings us to approval of the minutes.

18 First, I'm going to need approval of the Special
19 Session minutes of April 7th, 2020.

20 Can I get approval for that?

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So moved, Mr. Chairman.
22 This is Commissioner Bosarge.

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion.

24 Do I have a second?

25 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second the motion,

1 Guess.

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

4 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Natalie Guess, aye.

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Commissioner Bosarge,
6 aye.

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels,
9 aye.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those opposed say nay.
11 (None opposed.)

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

13 SANDY CHESNUT: Commissioner Havard, I didn't
14 get who seconded that motion.

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Natalie, I believe.

16 SANDY CHESNUT: Okay. Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I'm not sure that she is
18 hanging with us some. Sounded like she had a bad internet
19 connection.

20 It is still pretty bad, Natalie, if you can hear
21 us.

22 Can I get approval for the Special Session
23 minutes of April the 10th, 2020?

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll make that motion,
25 Commissioner Daniels.

1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second the motion,
2 Commissioner Bosarge.

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I've got a motion and a
4 second.

5 All those in favor say aye.

6 Aye, Commissioner Havard.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye, Commissioner
8 Bosarge.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye, Daniels.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

11 One more time.

12 Can we get approval of the minutes for the April
13 21st, 2020, meeting?

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make the motion to
15 approve the minutes for the April 21st, 2020, meeting.

16 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second.

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

19 All those in favor say aye.

20 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye, Daniels.

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Aye, Commissioner Havard.

24 The motion moves.

25 That brings us to approval of the agenda.

1 Any changes, any issues anybody has with the
2 agenda?

3 If not, can I get a motion to approve today's
4 agenda?

5 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll make that motion,
6 Daniels.

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Can I get a second?

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second, Commissioner
9 Bosarge.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a
11 second for today's agenda approval.

12 All those in favor say aye.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

14 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

16 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.
17 Motion moves.

18 That brings us to the Executive Director's
19 Report.

20 Mr. Joe Spraggins, what have you got for us
21 today?

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank y'all.

23 The employment contracts, I think you can pop
24 that up real quick. We've got Jennifer Green with Finfish
25 and Melody Chaplin with Shrimp and Crab Scientist III.

1 Those two came on before the last meeting, but we
2 didn't have an official thing for them, but we have those.
3 I think those are the only ones on that.

4 The contracts, we are working on several
5 contracts obviously with the 2011 Bonnet Carre. We have
6 done the contracts and the subcontracts and have them in
7 the system to be paid for the crab fishermen. That was
8 done last week. Staff did a fantastic job to get that
9 done, and I appreciate each and every one of them.

10 The other thing is Thursday and Friday of this
11 week, we will be doing subcontracts for the oysters and
12 hopefully get that all finished and get it done by next
13 week to get it into the system and have people ready to
14 get paid for that.

15 The crabbers were around thirty-two hundred
16 dollars, I think, each.

17 Is that right, Joe Jewell?

18 (No response.)

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: It was somewhere around thirty-
20 two hundred dollars each, and, then, some had more than
21 one license.

22 Obviously, some good money going out to the
23 people that are needing it at this time. It has really
24 been a big deal for them to be able to get some money. We
25 will have that out.

1 The oystermen wound up being a little over two
2 dollars and something a sack, after we got through with
3 four hundred and forty-one thousand sacks that qualified,
4 and we have those out and they are ready to go. As I
5 said, I signed all the subcontracts yesterday and they
6 will be signed by the oystermen on Thursday, or Friday, of
7 this week.

8 Just to give you another update, we got one
9 point five million in CARES Act. We are waiting on the
10 exact criteria, what to do with that and how to pay it and
11 what it will work from.

12 Basically, it is for anybody that had a loss,
13 but they have got to show a thirty-five percent loss and
14 that is the hard thing for us to do. We are going to have
15 to put some criteria together and decide what that thirty-
16 five percent loss is going to be.

17 Also, if a fisherman applied for any other CARES
18 Act funds and were granted the funds -- whether they
19 received them, or not -- they are ineligible. It is a
20 different system. I don't understand it. We are trying
21 to get all the stuff put together.

22 We are going to run it through the Gulf States.
23 Gulf States is going to write the checks, but we have got
24 to approve everybody. We are going to find out what
25 happens and I will keep y'all abreast of that.

1 We do have a year to pay it out, but I hope we
2 get it paid out very shortly because I would like to see
3 the people get the money as quick as possible.

4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Joe.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS: I'm sorry.

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Did you say if they
7 applied and even if they didn't get anything?

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: No. If they applied and were
9 accepted, even though they haven't received a check yet.

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: I see Commissioner Gollott is
12 trying to get on.

13 If you haven't seen the news that hit yesterday,
14 the 2019 Bonnet Carre funds, we got twenty-one point three
15 million for Mississippi.

16 We will start working on a plan now, as soon as
17 we can, and we will get a plan as to how we are going to
18 spend that money and we will send that back to NOAA, the
19 same way we will do with the CARES Act, but it is a little
20 different here because we have already established a loss.
21 Now, we have just got to find a way to establish who is
22 going to get what.

23 A good thing about it, by doing the Act that we
24 just did, we are a little ahead on states like Louisiana
25 and Alabama on that because they have not done an actual

1 payout to the fishermen.

2 If that is part of it which I hope it will be,
3 then, we will be able to pay out some more money to the
4 fishermen and help them get well from all these years from
5 2008 to 2019 and here it is in 2020, and those poor people
6 have not had a break. They have not had a break for
7 anything. Those commercial fishermen have not been able
8 to catch hardly anything.

9 Hopefully, these things will be able to bring
10 them back to life a little bit. I am hoping it will
11 anyway.

12 we will get that worked out and we will get the
13 criteria put together. Before we ever send that to NOAA,
14 we will send it to the Commissioners, to y'all, and we
15 will let you see what we are talking about, before we ever
16 send it out, and see if y'all have any issues on it, or
17 any questions.

18 Any questions on the 2019 Bonnet Carre?

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I had a question, Mr.
20 Joe, but it's not on the Bonnet Carre. Go ahead.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: We are working it and as soon as
22 we get some information -- it will probably take us
23 another month to get everything put together, but we will
24 try to get y'all something hopefully by the June meeting.
25 Before we have that June meeting, we will have information

1 to y'all of what we are trying to send to NOAA and be able
2 to get things lined up.

3 It is something Joe and them have done before.
4 The only problem is it is a little different this time
5 because the processors, I think, were included and I think
6 the charter boats were included and the bait fishermen
7 were included, as far as sales. So it is a little
8 different this time. As soon as I get the criteria on it,
9 I will let you know.

10 we do have a little bit of guidance from
11 Florida. Florida has just done the first charter boat
12 one. So they have given us guidance on how they are doing
13 the charter boats and we will be able to help people on
14 some others, and hopefully we will be able to get this
15 worked out.

16 The other thing is real quick we are on the
17 return to work and the Governor has signed an order for
18 procedures to return to work. We will probably start back
19 at a full return to work. When I say that, it is still
20 going to be a hybrid. It will be around the first of
21 June, and what we will do is basically we are going to
22 have staggered schedules as much as possible, and we will
23 do staggered schedules with a three-day workweek, two-day
24 workweek, three-day workweek. They will alternate, and we
25 will do that for a short period of time until we get

1 everything under control.

2 The biggest concern that we have is I want to
3 make sure that everybody that returns to work here is safe
4 and they feel safe and they are secure in their workplace.

5 we have a lot of different things that are being
6 put together. Everybody will have masks to wear and
7 anytime that they are not in their actual work area itself
8 they will have to wear a mask, if they are walking around
9 the building.

10 Now, as far as our field workers and all, they
11 don't have to wear a mask if they are out in a boat, or
12 something, working, but, if they are in public, or if
13 there are more than two in a vehicle, they have to wear
14 masks.

15 we've got a lot of little procedures there.
16 we've got hand sanitizers everywhere. We are going to be
17 cleaning the building. We have upped the number of
18 cleanings for the bathrooms to twice a day so we can get
19 everything cleaned there in the bathrooms.

20 we are going to have two entry and exit points,
21 when you come into the building the first time, and we
22 will be checking temperature to make sure that no one has
23 a temperature over a hundred degrees so we feel safe
24 there.

25 we are trying to do everything that we can to

1 make it as safe as possible to bring people back to work
2 and let them be able to feel comfortable, when they come
3 back to work.

4 In some of the areas, if they are working very
5 close to one another and talking back and forth, we are
6 putting plexiglass between them to be able to help there.

7 Any questions on that?

8 (No response.)

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: Mr. Bosarge, you have a
10 question, sir?

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir, Mr. Joe. It
12 relates back to the oysters and the 2011 Bonnet Carre.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Could you explain to us,
15 or to me anyway, how we got to the two dollars and
16 something a sack?

17 I thought we had all that pretty well ironed
18 out.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Well, we did. As a matter of
20 fact, we just discussed this again this morning.

21 Joe Jewell, are you on?

22 JOE JEWELL: Yes, I'm on.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: Joe, would you explain to the
24 Commissioner so I don't make a mistake with it?

25 JOE JEWELL: I can because we have had a couple

1 of questions from the fishermen this morning.

2 When we gave the presentation, we gave a series
3 of presentations to the Commission updating on the
4 perceived payout program for the fishermen.

5 we didn't know what the total universe of
6 fishermen would be. We didn't know the total amount of
7 participants that would be found eligible for the program.

8 what we did, in our initial presentation to the
9 Commission, is we took the universe of participants that
10 we knew and those were participants from our previous
11 programs that were eligible.

12 Now, those were work programs. They were
13 programs for deployment of host materials, the 2016 relay
14 activities, and not all eligible fishermen participated in
15 those activities. That is where some of the confusion is
16 coming from.

17 Now that we have this pay program, there are a
18 lot more people that are eligible. When those people were
19 found eligible, they were added to the total universe and
20 what that did is it started changing the numbers.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Joe, I thought what we
22 did -- I'm trying to wrap my head around this, but I
23 thought we said the -- we looked at the total number of
24 sacks harvested by the whole industry and divided that
25 into the total amount of what was left of the grant, and

1 that is how we came up with our sack number.

2 Do you see what I'm saying?

3 I don't understand how changing the number of
4 fishermen is going to change that number.

5 JOE JEWELL: I see what you are saying, but the
6 number of total sacks divided were those that were caught
7 by the eligible participants and that is what I'm saying.
8 That evolved as we moved into the process and there were
9 more fishermen found eligible for the process.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: But harvesting the same
11 number of sacks.

12 Correct?

13 JOE JEWELL: No. The number of sacks changed.
14 They increased.

15 when we gave the presentation to y'all on April
16 the 7th, we had X amount of sacks and X amount of
17 fishermen.

18 Since that time, we have found there have been
19 more fishermen found eligible that met the criteria and
20 they had multiple licenses. There were all kinds of
21 things that changed the formula that was originally
22 presented to the Commission.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Can you send that to me?
24 I would like to see it, if that is possible.

25 JOE JEWELL: I think Director Spraggins would

1 have to approve that, but we would have no issue with
2 that.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: He is going to send it to me
4 today, and I will get it out to all of you, as a matter of
5 fact.

6 The problem is, I think, Commissioner Bosarge,
7 the thing that was put out -- and I talked to some people
8 about it this morning. The thing that was put out on
9 April the 7th, it was what they had from a past round,
10 like, in 2016, the ones that qualified, and they were
11 using that as basically a sample to show y'all what it
12 would be if it worked out.

13 We probably should have been a little better
14 about explaining what we did there, but, once we put this
15 word out and people started qualifying and sending in
16 their information, then, we found out that there were a
17 lot of people that did not participate in the 2016, or any
18 other relay, or anything else, that decided they wanted to
19 participate in this and because of that, the number of
20 sacks went from three hundred and something thousand to
21 four hundred and something thousand, and that was because
22 those people were not counted.

23 Now, why that number, I don't know that answer
24 and I'm not trying to make an excuse, but we went back and
25 I asked them this morning and they said they could verify.

1 I think it is four hundred and forty-one
2 thousand.

3 Is that right, Joe?

4 JOE JEWELL: Yes, that's correct.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS: That is what caused it go down,
6 and there are still over a hundred thousand sacks out
7 there that people didn't qualify on top of that, that are
8 still not being counted because those people didn't
9 qualify.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I've got you.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: Sitting back and looking at it,
12 obviously, it was probably not the correct way to put it
13 to y'all on the 7th day of April.

14 The correct way would have been this is a sample
15 and this is what we are working off of, and not that this
16 was something that we thought would be the matrix because
17 what we were trying to do was get permission from y'all to
18 tell us that, yes, you can do this under this criteria,
19 that you work under so many dollars per sack according to
20 how many sacks divided into the money, and maybe we didn't
21 present it correctly, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's fine. I thought
23 we had gone back and looked at all the people that
24 actually qualified with licenses.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS: No, sir. That was not the

1 truth, I don't think, and I think they were just looking
2 off of what had happened in the past that they knew that
3 they could work off of, and, then, when they started going
4 back and once we started getting the applications in, it
5 changed things tremendously.

6 We went through a lot of different ways of
7 trying to find any way in the world to qualify anybody to
8 make sure if they were.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Oh, yes.

10 well, if you can send me that, I would
11 appreciate it, Mr. Joe.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: We will, sir.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: Anything else for me?

15 If not, then, that is all I have, Commissioner
16 Havard.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All right. That brings us
18 to the Commissioners Report.

19 Do we have any Commissioners that would like to
20 talk to anything?

21 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I've got one thing I
22 would like to bring up real quick.

23 Several months back, I don't know if y'all
24 remember, but I had some folks over here around the Bay
25 area come to me complaining about debris in the water that

1 boats were hitting, and we went out.

2 I got on the boat with a Marine Patrol officer
3 and we went out and identified it and identified it was a
4 very shallow area, or the concrete came up and made it
5 very shallow, very hazardous, and a temporary marker was
6 put out.

7 That has since long gone and I am getting
8 complaints again that people are hitting this stuff and
9 tearing boats up.

10 If you don't mind, Joe, I would like to look at
11 possibly getting some type of permanent marking put in
12 place over there in the Bay because somebody is going to
13 end up getting hurt over there. It is in a bad location.
14 It is in an area where a lot of people think they have
15 enough water to run, but some of this concrete on a low
16 tide is only six, or eight, inches under the water.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think we have looked at some
18 of that before.

19 Kyle, are you on?

20 (No response.)

21 JOE SPRAGGINS: Patrick, are you on?

22 PAUL MICKLE: Just give them a minute.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: Brady has to give them
24 permission.

25 BRADY SMITH: They are online.

1 KYLE WILKERSON: Excuse me, Director. We are
2 on. Just trying to get this thing unmuted.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: Kyle, would you look at that for
4 us and get with Commissioner Daniels and let's make sure
5 that we can mark what we need to?

6 KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, indeed. I need to make
7 contact with him, and we will work on that.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Just contact the Commissioner
9 and find out what it is and make sure that we need to mark
10 that according to what we can do.

11 KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir. We will handle it.

12 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Kyle.

13 KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Marking those underwater
15 structures, or even shrimp boats that are sticking out of
16 the water, I think we really need to focus on that from a
17 safety standpoint. Anytime any structure like that is
18 reported, we need to take it serious and get it marked
19 permanently, or get it removed.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir. Commissioner Havard,
21 we did take care of that, and I think we looked at the one
22 that you were talking about before.

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very Good. I appreciate
24 it and so does the general public.

25 Anything else guys?

1 (No response.)

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us on to
3 Office of Marine Patrol, Assistant Chief Kyle Wilkerson.
4 What have you got for us?

5 KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning Commissioners,
6 counsel, Director.

7 Everything is going well with Marine Patrol. It
8 has been a light month, once again, due to the fact of
9 this pandemic that is going on, even though Marine Patrol,
10 we never stop working.

11 As you can see on the report itself, it is
12 showing three oyster violations. Those violations were to
13 the same individual, same business. They were, as you can
14 see, No Certified Shucker Re-Packer License, Illegal
15 Oysters, Untagged Oysters.

16 I can field any questions on that, before we
17 carry on.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS: Hang on one second.
19 Does anybody see the screen, other than the
20 agenda?

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: No, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: No, I cannot.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: Brady, can you get Marine Patrol
24 up so they can look at it?

25 BRADY SMITH: Director Spraggins, we don't

1 normally show the citations report, but I can pull it up.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, would y'all like
3 to see that, or do you have a copy of it in front of you?

4 BRADY SMITH: It is usually available on the
5 Commissioners portal and I think that is how they review
6 it.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: We don't normally do it on the
8 actual meeting?

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: No. I looked at it.

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I can pull it up on my
11 phone and look at it, Joe. I've got it right here.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: Do any of the Commissioners have
13 any questions on it?

14 BRADY SMITH: I can pull it up and show it on
15 the screen, if you need me to.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: Go ahead. I want people to be
17 able to see it because it doesn't have names on it anyway.

18 BRADY SMITH: Can you see it, now?

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Not yet, Brady.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Kyle.

21 KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have looked at it
23 several times. It looked like it was a really light
24 month. I was just curious.

25 I know over my way anyway with everybody being

1 home, there has been a lot of fishing going on, a lot of
2 folks out on the water. I would have figured there would
3 probably have been more -- you know, in other words, more
4 action than what I see on the report. People must be
5 doing a pretty good job of staying within the law.

6 KYLE WILKERSON: They are. What you are looking
7 at, April 19th, that is going to be the prior month.

8 Now, this one may be a little more busy, this
9 next one coming up in June.

10 Guys and girls are out in force. I would say
11 the last month itself, it has been the most boat traffic I
12 have seen in years, due to the fact that everybody is home
13 and they don't want to be cooped up in the house, so they
14 get out on the water.

15 It is kind of a fluid situation. It is nothing
16 that we can't handle, but it is a lot of boat traffic, a
17 lot of fishing. We are going with the CDC mandate of the
18 six-foot rule. That is kind of challenging to enforce,
19 but now that the Governor has upped the group from ten to
20 twenty people, it is a little easier to make sure the
21 boats are not loaded, more than twenty folks.

22 These sandbars do get a little challenging on
23 the weekends.

24 The weekend, as you know, is coming up. We have
25 snapper season kicking off on Friday. We are going to

1 have all hands on deck. All shifts will be working. We
2 have the plan for that, and it should be hopefully a safe
3 and productive weekend.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I just figured I would
5 see an uptake in your activity, with the activity I see on
6 the water. There are a lot of boats, a lot of boats.

7 KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, indeed. I agree.
8 People are playing by the rules.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Kyle, this is Commissioner
11 Havard. If you would, give me a call when the meeting is
12 over, please.

13 KYLE WILKERSON: Will do.

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Any questions on Marine Patrol,
16 Commissioners?

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: No, sir. I think that is
18 a good explanation. We appreciate the good work.

19 KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Office of Coastal
21 Resources Management, no presentation this month.

22 Coastal Restoration and Resiliency, no
23 presentation.

24 There is always a presentation by Finance and
25 Administration.

1 Ms. Brewer.

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

4 My name is name is Leslie Brewer, CFO.

5 Next slide, please, Brady.

6 I will be presenting the agency's financials for
7 the month ending April 30th, 2020.

8 At the end of April, our State Revenue was four
9 point five million. Our Total Agency Revenue was sixty-
10 three point nine million.

11 Our State Net Income was negative one million
12 and Total Agency Net Income was forty point six million.

13 Next slide, please.

14 After ten months of fiscal year 2020, we have
15 fifty-three point seven percent of the Operating Budget
16 remaining, while the Tidelands Budget is at nine point
17 four remaining.

18 Any questions?

19 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Can you explain the
20 negative budget, state negative budget?

21 LESLIE BREWER: I looked at last year. Of
22 course, I wasn't here at this time, but that is pretty
23 normal. We are still waiting for our state appropriations
24 of one point one million. That comes probably about
25 September. It is the norm for this time of the year.

1 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Okay.

2 Any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think we're good.

5 Thank you, Leslie?

6 LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, while we are on
8 that subject of finances, we have frozen all hiring in the
9 agency right now.

10 I have been talking with the Governor's staff
11 and the legislature. They have asked us to basically look
12 at all the expenditures for state funds and the hiring and
13 anything for state funds.

14 Until they can get something and decide where
15 they are by the end of this fiscal year which will be next
16 month, we are looking at it and basically putting a freeze
17 on everything, until we find out where we are.

18 In case you get calls about why we are not
19 hiring something, that is why.

20 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

21 That brings us on to Public Affairs, Ms.
22 Charmaine.

23 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning
24 Commissioners, Director, Ms. Chesnut.

25 The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

1 was mentioned twenty-eight times in local, state and
2 national media since the April CMR meeting.

3 Popular news items included the 2019 Bonnet
4 Carre spillway effects in Mississippi, the closing of
5 shrimp season and the State record for Yellowfin Tuna.

6 Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area
7 received twenty-three applications totaling close to five
8 hundred thousand dollars for the Heritage Community
9 Grants. Those projects will soon be announced.

10 The National Heritage Area project "Embrace Our
11 Cultural Story, Your Mississippi Coast" has been completed
12 and will be released by the Mississippi Coast National
13 Heritage Area Facebook and Instagram.

14 National Heritage Area also attended several
15 Mississippi Tourism Association and Southeast Tourism
16 Association Webinars, as well as continuing Embrace the
17 Gulf 2020, Paddle the Gulf, Oceans 2020 and Gulf of Mexico
18 Alliance monthly conference calls and Zoom meetings.

19 It is a little shorter this month.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal, Charmaine.

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good. We appreciate
22 you keeping us informed.

23 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Office of Marine
25 Fisheries, Mr. Joe Jewell.

1 What have you got for us, Mr. Joe?

2 JOE JEWELL: Good morning Commissioners.

3 We have five items on the agenda for your
4 consideration. Several of these are regulatory changes
5 that are just follow ups and the State Saltwater Finfish
6 records.

7 First up will be Mr. Matt Hill. He will be
8 presenting both items 1 and 2 on the agenda.

9 Matt, are you there?

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: I know he is awake because I
11 talked to him a while ago.

12 MATT HILL: Can you hear me now?

13 JOE JEWELL: Yes.

14 MATT HILL: I will get right into it. The first
15 item will be Title 22 Part 9: Regulatory language changes
16 to the Charter For-Hire reporting requirements, and this
17 is up for final adoption.

18 A little bit of background. At the March 31st
19 meeting, a motion was made to table this until the April
20 meeting without any changes to how we currently operate
21 the program.

22 Then, at the April 21st meeting, the item came up
23 again and a motion was made to adopt staff's
24 recommendation Option 1 as presented by staff.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Matt.

1 MATT HILL: Yes, sir.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Just for a little
3 background, can you tell us how we actually -- you were
4 there and I was there.

5 Can you tell us how we actually came to having
6 that language in that statute?

7 MATT HILL: The language that required was from
8 a previous program before we were doing our MRIP. Back
9 then, it was on MRFSS surveys. So we did not have any
10 type of reporting for the charter community, or for-hire
11 community.

12 We developed some questionnaires and we would go
13 down to the docks. Actually, we didn't do any phone
14 calls. We would just basically do surveys down there, but
15 they were required to talk to us at the time.

16 That was a state-funded program. It was part of
17 the Creel Survey.

18 Then, MRFSS came along, a NOAA-funded program,
19 NOAA-sponsored program. We accepted the funding and part
20 of that was for the for-hire reporting in that program
21 and, as we all know, now MRIP is a voluntary program. It
22 was a carry over from the previous program.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That was the first time
24 that language was put in there, and, then, the second time
25 we changed it was when we did the Tails n' Scales, if you

1 remember correctly.

2 MATT HILL: Yes. We changed it further down in
3 that section. We didn't change the language in that
4 paragraph, but we did add language in Section 101.01 and
5 02, I believe.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, to try to get their
7 information from the charter for-hire.

8 Correct?

9 MATT HILL: That is correct.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you,
11 Matt.

12 MATT HILL: Yes, sir.

13 We will move along. As you see here, the CMR
14 passed the Notice of Intent on April 21st. The Notice of
15 Intent was filed with the Secretary of State on the same
16 day. The web page notice appeared on April the 22nd, and
17 the legal notice appeared in the Sun Herald on April 23rd.

18 To date, no public comments have been received
19 on this regulatory change.

20 I will read it into the record as it will read,
21 if it is finally adopted:

22 "Chapter 11, Recreational Fishing Language
23 Reporting Requirements.

24 "Charter and Head Boat Reporting.

25 "Charter Boat and Head Boat captains

1 operating in Mississippi waters may
2 complete questionnaires furnished by
3 the MDMR. Completed questionnaires
4 shall be furnished to an information
5 confidentiality officer upon request.

6 "In addition to the reporting required
7 pursuant to this paragraph, the following
8 reporting is also required" --

9 And that is the language that we added that
10 Commissioner Bosarge was talking about with the Tails n'
11 Scales Program.

12 Required is a motion to proceed with final
13 adoption of regulatory changes to Title 22 Part 9 Chapter
14 11: Recreational Fishing Landings Reporting Requirements.

15 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: If nobody has any
16 objections, I would be happy to make that motion.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I've got a motion on the
18 table.

19 Do we have a second for the motion?

20 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, second.

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

23 All those in favor say aye.

24 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

25 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.

3 Did everybody get a chance to vote?

4 Steve, did you get a chance to vote?

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I was waiting for you to
6 ask for those opposed.

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Okay.

8 All those opposed say nay.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Nay, Bosarge.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

11 MATT HILL: On to the next agenda item, K.2,
12 Charter For-Hire Captain and Crew Spotted Seatrout Limits,
13 and this is also up for final adoption.

14 At the March 31st meeting, the CMR was presented
15 three motions passed by the Charter For-Hire Task Force at
16 its March 5th meeting.

17 The CMR did address the first two motions at
18 this particular meeting, but did not consider the motion
19 by the task force to move Red Snapper and Amberjack to
20 disallow captain and crew from keeping their limit and
21 correct Spotted Seatrout placement.

22 This item came up at the April 21st meeting and a
23 motion was made to proceed with a Notice of Intent for
24 regulatory changes to Title 22 Part 7 Chapter 7, regarding
25 changes to captain and crew limits for Spotted Seatrout,

1 Red Snapper and Greater Amberjack.

2 CMR passed the Notice of Intent of April 21st at
3 their meeting, Notice of Intent was filed with the
4 Secretary of State on the same day, web page notice
5 appeared on April 22nd and the legal notice appeared in the
6 local newspaper on April 23rd.

7 To date, no public comments have been received
8 on this regulatory change.

9 The change did occur to Part 7 Chapter 7, and I
10 will read it into the record now. The actual change
11 occurred in Section 104:

12 "Charter vessel captain and crew are
13 prohibited from keeping a recreational
14 bag limit of Red Snapper, Greater
15 Amberjack and Spotted Seatrout."

16 The rest of the changes were just some
17 housekeeping changes that needed to be made with the
18 numbering system and some deletions.

19 What is required from the Commission is a motion
20 to proceed with final adoption of regulatory changes to
21 Title 22 Part 7 Chapter 7: Charter Boat Exemptions from
22 Certain Bag Limits.

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I would be happy to make
24 that motion, as well, if nobody has any objections.

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion on the

1 table.

2 Do I have a second?

3 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, second.

4 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a
5 second.

6 All those in favor say aye.

7 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

9 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

11 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

13 That says a lot for what kind of charter boat
14 captains that we have out there guys, that they do the
15 little bit of conservativeness to preserve the resource
16 for all their clients and every other resident in the
17 state. That is good stuff.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Mark, one of the things
19 is a lot of these captains have been self-implementing
20 that on themselves for quite sometime now, especially I
21 know on Spotted Seatrout.

22 One thing I would like to ask you, Matt, can we
23 put that in the ticker on Tails n' Scales with snapper
24 opening up?

25 I mean, I think most everybody knows that, but

1 just to make sure it is out there.

2 MATT HILL: Yes. Actually, Trevor and I are
3 sitting right here. We are looking at the ticker now
4 making a few changes. It takes a little while for them to
5 accept the changes, but we will go ahead and add that to
6 it. That is not a problem.

7 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

8 TREVOR MONCRIEF: Are you ready for the next
9 item?

10 JOE JEWELL: Yes, Trevor. I'm sorry.

11 TREVOR MONCRIEF: Good morning Commissioners.

12 We are going to go over the changes to Title 22
13 Part 7 Chapters 8 and 9. This is the length limit
14 increase for Cobia. This is final adoption.

15 At the April 21st, 2020, meeting, CMR passed the
16 following motion:

17 Motion to proceed with a Notice of Intent for
18 regulatory changes to Title 22 Part 7 Chapters 8 and 9,
19 regarding the changes to the minimum size limit of Cobia
20 for Federal compliance. This passed unanimously.

21 The Notice was passed on April 21st, the Notice
22 was filed with Secretary of State on the 21st, it appeared
23 on our web page on April 22nd and a legal notice appeared
24 in The Sun Herald on April 23rd.

25 To date, no public comments have been received

1 on this item.

2 I will read the language. It is going to appear
3 in Title 22 Part 7 Chapter 8, Recreational Bag, Possession
4 and Size Limits at 102.03:

5 "Cobia, thirty-six inches fork length."

6 In Chapter 9, Commercial Size, Possession and
7 Catch Limits:

8 "It shall be unlawful for any commercial
9 fisherman to possess any Cobia smaller
10 than thirty-six inches fork length, or
11 to possess more than a daily bag limit
12 of two Cobia per person."

13 what will be required is a motion to proceed
14 with Final Adoption of Regulatory changes to Title 22 Part
15 7 Chapters 8 and 9: Compliance with Federal Rule Changes
16 for Cobia, increasing the total length from thirty-three
17 to thirty-six inches fork length for both commercial and
18 recreational.

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll make the motion,
20 Matt.

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion.
22 Do we have a second for the motion?

23 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second that.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a
25 second.

1 All those in favor say aye.
2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye, Bosarge.
3 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.
4 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.
5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.
6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.
7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.
8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Matt, are you still on?
9 MATT HILL: Yes.
10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Just a quick question and
11 just to update, if we could.
12 where are we at on our Spotted Seatrout stock
13 assessment?
14 I think we were supposed to get that in
15 September, or October, of last year.
16 MATT HILL: We received the final document from
17 Robert this past week. Joe and myself have set a deadline
18 for this Friday for the internal review committee to
19 accept the changes. He has addressed all of the comments
20 that we received from our peer review, from the peer
21 reviewers that participated in it. He has addressed them.
22 He has also prepared a document on how those were all
23 addressed.
24 The document is complete. We are just reviewing
25 the language now and we should have all the comments in,

1 like I said, by this Friday. Hopefully by the middle of
2 next week, we will have a final document.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good.

4 JOE JEWELL: I will second that, Commissioner
5 Bosarge. It is our intent to present this at the next
6 Commission meeting in June. That is our hope. We fully
7 anticipate that happening.

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right.

9 Are we going to get to see the comments and the
10 reviewers?

11 JOE JEWELL: Well, it is a peer-reviewed
12 process.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Correct.

14 So we will get a list of those reviewers and
15 their comments?

16 JOE JEWELL: Matt, do you want to address that?

17 MATT HILL: Yes. We talked to all the reviewers
18 and we did pose that question to them, that our
19 Commissioners would like to see that information and they
20 have agreed.

21 We can provide that, with approval from Director
22 Spraggins.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'm pretty sure that is
24 what you did last time.

25 MATT HILL: It is. Just as a courtesy, we like

1 to ask the reviewers and get them to sign off on it and
2 agree to that, and they all have done that.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: Matt, you will have that by next
4 week.

5 Right?

6 MATT HILL: Yes, sir. We have the document in
7 our hand right now. Like I said, we are just going
8 through it internally, but all of the major concerns have
9 been addressed. Dr. Leaf has done an excellent job in
10 addressing them.

11 As you know, this is the first time we ran this
12 particular model. So we had some hiccups, but we feel
13 very confident in the product we have now.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay. We ought to be able to
15 get it out to the Commissioners next week sometime.

16 Is that right?

17 MATT HILL: I like to think by the end of next
18 week we can have it for them to look at.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Matt.

21 JOE JEWELL: Next up for consideration is an
22 update on the 2020 shrimp season by Mr. Jason Saucier.

23 JASON SAUCIER: Good morning Commissioners.

24 I will provide to you an update, our annual
25 update for shrimp season.

1 Just as a reminder to all the Commissioners, our
2 inside waters, those waters in light blue located north of
3 the ICW did close at the end of December, and, then, all
4 waters located south of the ICW and west of Gulfport Ship
5 Channel closed at the end of April (indicating map).

6 Currently the only waters open to shrimping in
7 the state are those waters south of the ICW and east of
8 Gulfport.

9 Just an update on our landings and values. You
10 will see 2019 is down for the previous years as to be
11 expected. You will see the average there. We've got an
12 average that shows from 2005 to 2019 for value in green
13 that is around seventeen million, and, then, we've got our
14 average landings from 2005 to 2019 in blue there. You
15 will see it is a little bit higher -- I'm sorry. That
16 value is around fifteen. Landings is a little bit higher
17 (indicating graph).

18 We were below average on both landings and
19 values, and that is mainly attributed to our brown shrimp
20 landings being down. The spillway opening ultimately was
21 what caused that.

22 Just our historical opening dates. You will see
23 last year was late compared to previous years. We do have
24 some late openings in the past and, as you recall, last
25 year's opening, we came back to you in June and asked for

1 the Commission's guidance and approval on our opening
2 based on sampling conditions being what they were. We
3 weren't seeing that steady trend increase in size on our
4 brown shrimp like we typically do. So we had a little bit
5 of a different situation last year. Again, that was
6 attributed to the Bonnet Carre opening (indicating graph).

7 we do count shrimp boats on our opening day
8 every year. We go out and do a flyover and we go out and
9 do some interviews on the water just to see what folks are
10 catching.

11 As you will see, last year was significantly
12 down about half of previous years and, again, the same
13 situation. We are attributing that to the opening of the
14 Bonnet Carre Spillway (indicating graph).

15 Go ahead, Brady.

16 Just as a reminder, we do sample in the spring
17 to determine our opening. First, we do our post larval
18 sampling. That is something that we start in February.
19 It actually starts probably a little bit earlier than
20 that, but we really start evaluating in February, using
21 that beam plankton trawl, and that kind of helps us look
22 at when the shrimp should start showing up in the trawl
23 samples.

24 Trawl sampling does happen from April to June.
25 We use the standardized method with our sixteen-foot

1 trawl. We've got sample points that are fixed that we go
2 out and sample at every sampling event. We basically
3 monitor growth of brown shrimp to help us determine when
4 they will get to that legal size.

5 Next slide, Brady.

6 Here are our sample points. We've got ten
7 across the Sound (indicating map).

8 Go ahead, Brady.

9 And here is just an example of some samples we
10 got earlier in our sampling period, and that is really it
11 (indicating photograph).

12 Just as a reminder, when we come to the
13 Commission every year, we ask for the Commission to give
14 the Director the authority to set the opening based on
15 what our sampling shows that the shrimp are legal size,
16 brown shrimp specifically.

17 Just as a reminder, too, that photo of that
18 previous slide was back in April. We are sampling
19 biweekly. We've got a sample crew out today sampling. We
20 are trying to keep up with growth in as realtime as
21 possible.

22 what we would require at this point would be a
23 motion to give the authority to the Executive Director to
24 open the 2020-2021 season, when sampling shows that those
25 shrimp get legal size.

1 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, this is
2 Gollott. I would like to make that motion.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: And I'll second his
4 motion.

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a
6 second.

7 All those in favor say aye.

8 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

9 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

12 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

13 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, all indications
15 are that is probably going to happen before the first of
16 June, if things go the way they are going right now.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That was my question to
18 Jason.

19 what are your samples looking like, Jason?

20 JASON SAUCIER: They are growing definitely. I
21 don't know that we've got enough data right now to commit
22 to a date, but I would say we've got a lot more consistent
23 growth trend than we did last year for sure, Steve. I'm
24 pretty confident in the data that we've got, but we are
25 trying to pick up a couple more samples, today's sample

1 and at least one more, before we make that decision so
2 we've got high confidence in the data.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I guess my question was
4 more in volume that it is in size?

5 JASON SAUCIER: Speaking of volume, we have
6 looked at that a little bit compared to previous years.
7 We tried to do a CPUE based on our previous samples. Last
8 year was significantly down, if you recall from that
9 presentation. I think it was in June where we talked
10 about our catch in this net, and we were looking at a
11 decrease on the order of ninety percent, or greater, in
12 the Western Sound of a typical year.

13 We are about double that this year on what we
14 are seeing on average so far up to week seven, which was
15 last week of our sampling.

16 If you look at it compared to previous averages,
17 we are still significantly down from the ten-year average.
18 I would say we are probably on the order -- and we really
19 look at this by week, Steve. So it kind of varies, but we
20 are probably eighty percent down for last week's samples,
21 as far as volume goes, weight compared to the five-year
22 average, and, then, about sixty percent down on the ten-
23 year average, and that average does include last year. So
24 we had some really good years.

25 All that being said, we have looked at is there

1 a correlation between that and landings for a year, and
2 there is not necessarily a direct correlation.

3 You can't really compare our sampling data.
4 Last year definitely there was a correlation, but, if you
5 look at previous years, there isn't a correlation.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I can imagine, Jason,
7 because a lot of the landings are bigger boats.

8 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Mark, I think you are not
9 on mute.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Jason, I appreciate that.
11 You answered the question, especially with the five-year
12 and ten-year average.

13 We kind of felt like that the conditions were
14 pretty good for recruitment this year, but I guess maybe
15 some of the Bonnet Carre is still having an effect on it.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, we are probably
17 going to find out just what you are talking about, what
18 the effect last year did have because that was one of the
19 questions that we had, too, was were there enough of the
20 adult shrimp out where they could spawn and bring back the
21 crop.

22 You may be exactly right. We may have a lot
23 less numbers, even though they may grow better, but there
24 will be a lot less numbers this year and it will probably
25 be as a result of the what happened last year.

1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, and what has
2 happened this year so far.

3 Thank you, Jason.

4 JOE JEWELL: Our final agenda item is the State
5 saltwater Finfish records and Mr. Matt Hill will do those
6 presentations.

7 MATT HILL: Are we ready?

8 JOE JEWELL: We are ready.

9 MATT HILL: Item K.5 is State Saltwater Finfish
10 records.

11 Our first is an all tackle record. It was
12 harvested with a spear. It is an Ocean Triggerfish with a
13 new record of five pounds nine point six ounces, and the
14 angler was Mr. Harley J. Havard.

15 Here is a picture of the fish and here is a
16 picture of Mr. Havard with the fish.

17 Next we have another all tackle record with the
18 gear harvest being a spear, a Spanish Hogfish with a new
19 record of one pound fourteen point zero eight hours and,
20 again, the angler is Mr. Harley J. Havard.

21 Here is a picture of the Hogfish and a picture
22 of Mr. Havard with the Hog Fish.

23 Next is another all tackle with the gear being
24 spear, also. It is African Pompano. A new record of
25 thirty-seven pounds one point four four ounces. Again,

1 the angler is Mr. Harley J. Havard.

2 Here is a picture of the fish and, again, a
3 picture of Mr. Havard with the fish.

4 Last, but not least, another all tackle record
5 with a cast net. It's a Highfin Goby with a new record of
6 point seven eight ounces, and the angler is Ms. Abigail
7 Daniels.

8 Here is a picture of the Goby and a picture of
9 Abigail with the fish.

10 what is required now from the Commission is a
11 motion to adopt these new State Saltwater Finfish records.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I'm going to have to talk
13 to Mr. Harley Joe Havard about his work schedule it looks
14 like. I think it's great. It is always good to see
15 people out in the water and knowing what they are shooting
16 and knowing what they are casting for and different
17 things.

18 At this time, I would like to make the motion to
19 adopt the new State Saltwater Finfish records.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second that, Mr.
21 Chairman.

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I've got a motion and a
23 second.

24 All those in favor say aye.

25 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

3 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Guess, aye.

4 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

5 Motion moves. We've got some new records on the
6 books.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think that Abigail is
8 Commissioner Daniels' daughter.

9 Is that correct?

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: She is. She sure is.

11 A funny story about that. I made her throw that
12 fish back originally and every day for about thirteen days
13 she threw her cast net trying to recatch it, once I found
14 out what it was and it was a possible state record, and
15 she caught it again.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS: Well, it probably gained an
17 eighth of an ounce by that time.

18 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: She wanted to let it grow
19 up a little bit, I guess.

20 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That's awesome.

21 That moves us on to other business.

22 Do we have any other business that we want to
23 talk about?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, I've got a

1 little something I want to talk about. My appointment,
2 when I was appointed four years ago, I got on the
3 Department of Marine Resources Commission. I didn't know
4 a whole lot about what went on within the department.

5 I have learned a tremendous amount in the past
6 four years thanks to all the folks that have answered my
7 many questions and spent time with me to get rid of some
8 of my ignorance, or lack of knowing.

9 I have opted not to be reappointed and the sole
10 reason is the same reason that I got on the Commission.
11 It is because of my two boys. I have two boys. One is
12 thirteen and one is sixteen, now. I wanted to make sure
13 that this resource was here for them the best that I can.

14 when they get older, they still go fishing and
15 they act like it is the first time they have ever been
16 fishing and it is the nine thousandths time they have been
17 fishing, and that is why I am getting off the Commission
18 as well because they are at critical ages right now.

19 with the sixteen year old, I'm lucky if I've got
20 the next four years with him under my roof because they
21 reach a time where they all grow up and they grow up
22 really fast.

23 It has always a joy working with people within
24 the department and outside the department that love what
25 they do for a living. They are passionate about it and it

1 is always good to leave the meeting with a bunch of
2 positive folks.

3 I appreciate the trust that the state has put in
4 me to take this position and the time that everybody has
5 worked with me and I have enjoyed almost all of it. It
6 has been a good experience.

7 I am not going to disappear by any stretch, but
8 I am going to spend the next four years with my boys just
9 as much as I possibly can, enjoying the great resource
10 that Mississippi has in our waters.

11 I just want to say thank you to everybody for
12 the opportunity and the time that they have spent teaching
13 me all of their knowledge that they have and answering my
14 many questions.

15 Like I said, I have enjoyed it and I might be
16 back on the scene one day in some capacity. Who knows,
17 but that is about all I have.

18 Does anybody else have any other business?

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Mark, it has been a
20 pleasure working with you. We are going to hate to see
21 you go, but I understand your reasoning.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Same here, Mark. It has
23 been a pleasure.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you guys for that.
25 It was a hard decision to make, but it was one

1 of those that I thought that it was in the best interest
2 of my kids and that is the sole reason for me accepting
3 the appointment to start with. It makes sense.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have one other thing on
5 other business, if we could. I don't want to cut anybody
6 off.

7 with everything that is going on with the Bonnet
8 Carre monies and the different monies that are coming in,
9 is there anyway we could go ahead and get an Oyster Task
10 Force meeting up and get some input from that industry?

11 I guess that would be to Joe.

12 JOE JEWELL: Commissioner Bosarge, as you
13 recall, back almost a year ago the Commission voted to
14 reestablish the Oyster Task Force.

15 We were in the process of trying to conduct a
16 meeting. The participants are not always available, but
17 we were in that process, and, then, the COVID-19 virus
18 hit. So we were unable to convene the meeting because of
19 the requirements of the CDC for public gatherings, but we
20 will certainly look into that of conducting a meeting
21 remotely as quickly as possible.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes. Let's do a Zoom
23 meeting.

24 Thank you, Joe.

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Any other business?

1 JOE SPRAGGINS: This is Joe Spraggins, and
2 Commissioner Havard, it has been a pleasure working with
3 you and I do appreciate everything you have done. I
4 appreciate you stepping up to the plate and being a part
5 of this team, and you have done a great job and we thank
6 you so much.

7 I know it had to be tough, especially starting
8 four, or five, new businesses with the company you are
9 with and having to work as much as you did, and yet you
10 took the time to be a part of us and we appreciate it. We
11 thank you so much.

12 Hopefully Commissioners, we will be able to
13 bring him back in maybe July, or some time frame, and give
14 him an official send off because we can't do it on the
15 virtual side of it. Mark is probably not going to be able
16 to make the meeting next month is the reason we are
17 talking today, but I do appreciate everything you have
18 done. Thank you so much for your time.

19 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir. Thank you.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: We do have public comments, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Let's take the first
22 public comment we've got, Brady.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS: It should be Mr. Don Gaddy and
24 he has a comment on Cat Island netting.

25 BRADY SMITH: Don Gaddy, your mike is live.

1 DON GADDY: Can you hear me?

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir.

3 DON GADDY: This is Don Gaddy.

4 Good morning to all you Commissioners and DMR
5 personnel. I appreciate you accepting my comments today.

6 I am the owner of a house and some property and
7 lots on Cat Island, and this pertains to your last couple
8 of special meetings and the resolutions that you passed
9 about non-support of the two bills affecting the netting
10 around Cat Island.

11 I think I can represent all, or, if not all of
12 them, almost all of the private property owners on Cat
13 Island.

14 We feel that we unfortunately have not attended
15 any of these recent meetings in the past, or any of the
16 meeting farther back, and I think that we have not been
17 able to represent our feelings about the netting very near
18 Cat Island because of that.

19 For numerous reasons, we all support these
20 proposed bills in the House and Senate to restrict netting
21 that goes on very close to Cat Island.

22 Many of us have been owners and frequent
23 visitors and inhabitants of Cat Island since the 1960's,
24 and we personally witnessed the injuries to the fishing
25 and the damage to the sanctuary of the island and the

1 frequent harm to the resources around the island.

2 We would like you to consider trying to support
3 restricting all netting, except maybe cast nets and hand
4 nets, but all netting anywhere within at least one half
5 mile of the island.

6 This will be much like the rules around all the
7 other barrier islands and shoreline, and we feel this will
8 help protect the resources of the island and all the
9 citizens of Mississippi that own a good portion of that
10 island.

11 We, the private owners on Cat Island of some of
12 the property on Cat Island, will try to be more present
13 and vocal at these meetings in the future and we
14 understand some of the issues that the commercial
15 fishermen want to have access to netting near this one
16 island in Mississippi, but we feel that it is too much
17 damage to Cat Island resources and they can continue to
18 harvest their fish in deeper waters away from Cat Island
19 as they do in avoiding close proximity to the other
20 islands.

21 We appreciate the work y'all are doing and the
22 time and effort that y'all put in. We certainly
23 understand that y'all put in a lot of time and effort and
24 you have to listen to a lot of different people, and
25 unfortunately we haven't been as vocal, or talking about

1 our opinions, but we hope to do that more in the future
2 and we appreciate anything you can do to help us try to
3 protect those resources out at Cat Island. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you very much for
5 speaking up. We look forward to you guys being more
6 involved in the future.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I had some questions for
8 him.

9 DON GADDY: Sure.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I understand where you
11 are coming from and this issue has been before the
12 Commission quite a few times and now at the legislature.

13 You have some science that you want to present
14 to us that shows what harm is being done?

15 I mean, we got all the science we could and we
16 never could come up with any science.

17 DON GADDY: I understand that you need to look
18 at the science behind it and I do think that I can get you
19 some information about that.

20 I mean, we have had some recent meetings; in
21 fact, one with General Spraggins recently and involved the
22 studies that the Ocean Springs study group over there that
23 have been studying the fish and the sanctuaries around
24 different areas along the Coast, and I think they could
25 help us get that science and talk about the breeding areas

1 around Cat Island.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: If you could because up
3 to this point, we have had no science.

4 I understand you own property on Cat Island, but
5 you don't own the water rights to Cat Island, and it is
6 the same way. I own property here, also, and I'm a
7 commercial fisherman and I would love to be able to stop
8 maybe recreational fishing out in front of my house, but
9 I'm going to do that because everybody has got a right to
10 fish.

11 If you truly believe there is damage being done
12 and that we should take the rights away from the
13 commercial fishermen and apply them all to the
14 recreational fishermen, please present us some science,
15 something we can use to make a rational decision because
16 that is what we use. We use science.

17 DON GADDY: I understand what you are saying,
18 but do you think that there is not some science behind
19 them restricting the other islands?

20 I mean, the other islands all have those same
21 restrictions, and it is obvious that they feel like that
22 it can damage the sanctuary of the island, not just the
23 fishing, not just the fishing resources, but the other
24 breeding areas around the shallow water of the islands.

25 I will be glad to try to get you some more

1 information about that and I will be glad to give it to
2 you, but, I mean, I think this just makes sense to try to
3 do along the shoreline and along the other islands.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'm with you and, if you
5 can find that science, I would appreciate it because I
6 don't believe there was ever any science presented for
7 that either.

8 Yes, sir, do your homework. See if you can come
9 up with some science for us, please.

10 DON GADDY: All right. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

12 We've got one more public comment.

13 Is that right, Mr. Spraggins?

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir. It is Mr. Christopher
15 Rhodes and he is in public comments reference oysters.

16 CHRISTOPHER RHODES: This is Christopher Rhodes
17 and I am a participant in the Oyster Aquaculture
18 Fundamentals class, and I just wanted to give a big shout
19 out to everyone involved, Jason, Dale, Ellen. They have
20 done a jam-up job teaching the class, bringing us through
21 the does and the don't, keeping us away from things that
22 other people have done in the past. They have brought in
23 many resources from outside.

24 I would like to thank the legislature, as well,
25 and Secretary of State's office, along with Phil Bryant,

1 past governor, and the current governor Tate Reeves for
2 continuing support.

3 My second thing I need to say is that I feel
4 like, from hearing this last public comment, that I think
5 we are trying to become a more independent nation for
6 seafood source.

7 On whitehouse.gov, it looks like eighty-five
8 percent of seafood is imported. If that gets shut down,
9 I'm just wondering where we would get a resource from. I
10 know that they wouldn't be importing it. That is the
11 final part of my comment.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Mr. Rhodes, we appreciate
13 that.

14 Do we have any other public comment?

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: No, sir. I have no other public
16 comments, at this time.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, can I get a
18 motion to adjourn?

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll make that motion.

20 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second that motion.

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

23 All those in favor say aye.

24 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye, Gollott.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

2 COMMISSIONER GUESS: Guess, aye.

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

4 Motion moves. Until next time, guys, y'all be
5 safe out there.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: I will update y'all on any of
7 the information and, Commissioner Bosarge, I will get
8 everyone all the information on the oysters. So we can
9 get that. I will get you that today.

10 Also, I will get you the information that I had
11 to send. We had a public comment thing asking for public
12 information for the senator's office in Jackson, and I
13 will send you that information, too, about how many fish
14 were caught with nets over the last three, or four,
15 months. I think y'all will be surprised at that number.
16 Very low numbers.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I imagine so, Mr. Joe.
18 They've got no place left to fish. Thank you.

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CERTIFICATE

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2
3 I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter,
4 do hereby certify that the above and foregoing 58 pages,
5 including this page, are a true and correct transcription
6 of the Zoom Webinar of the May 19, 2020, meeting of the
7 Commission on Marine Resources, to the best of my skill
8 and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative,
9 employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor
10 financially interested in the cause.

11
12
13 S/ _____

14 Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251
15 Court Reporter
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