

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, June 18, 2019
9:00 a.m.
Bolton Building Auditorium
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Commission Members:

Steve Bosarge, Chairman

Mark Havard, Vice Chairman

Ronald Daniels

Richard Gollott

Natalie Guess

Also Present:

Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR

Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good morning. I would
2 like to welcome everybody to our June meeting of the
3 Commission on Marine Resources.

4 I will call the meeting to order, and first up
5 on the agenda is The Pledge of Allegiance.

6 I would like to get Ms. Natalie Guess to lead us
7 in that pledge.

8 (The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Next up on the agenda is
10 the approval of the minutes.

11 I think we are going to -- our young lady here
12 had an accident, so we are going to approve the minutes at
13 the next meeting. We are going to hold that off for this
14 meeting.

15 Next up is the approval of the agenda.

16 Do we have any modifications, or changes, to the
17 agenda?

18 (No response.)

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Seeing none, do I have a
20 motion to approve the agenda?

21 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

23 Do we have a second for that motion?

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion and a second.

1 All those in favor aye.

2 (All in favor.)

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed like sign.

4 (None opposed.)

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

6 Next up in the Executive Director's report, Mr.
7 Joe Spraggins.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir. I would just thank
9 everybody and I appreciate you being here today.

10 First off, our new CFO, Ms. Leslie Brewer, is
11 here today.

12 So, Leslie, please stand up.

13 She is going to give you the briefing here in a
14 minute. I just wanted to introduce her. We are proud to
15 have you, and thank you very much.

16 A long time coming.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS: The other thing that we have, we
19 have a Governor's Task Force that has been put together
20 for the Bonnet Carre. The Governor has set it up. It's
21 with DMR, DEQ, USM, IMMS, Mississippi State and MEMA, and
22 we are all working hand-in-hand together every day to be
23 able to put out reports of what is going on with the
24 Bonnet Carre, to give updates of where we are with the
25 Bonnet Carre, and we are about to start putting out a

1 piece of -- it's called a SITREP that we did in the
2 military and they still use it, now, but MEMA is going to
3 put it out every day for us and the SITREP is going to
4 have information about the whole Mississippi River and
5 everything that is going on, anything that is happening up
6 and down the Mississippi, plus it is going to give the
7 information about the Gulf Coast and what is affecting the
8 Gulf Coast as far as any seafood, or the salinity, or
9 anything else that is happening, and we will get a copy of
10 that to y'all each time, and we will also give it to our
11 congressional staff. They are going to send it out to the
12 Mississippi congressional staff, and, then, the state
13 leaders and the cities and the mayors and all.

14 So something will go out every week, and we will
15 be able to get more information to people, so we can
16 actually keep them updated on where we are.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: And this council that is
18 being put together, have you got an idea of when you are
19 going to have your first meeting?

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Well, we met about a week ago.
21 Rick Burris and Joe Jewell are the ones mainly meeting
22 with us. It is the scientists that are basically working
23 together and they are getting together and giving
24 information, and that's what they are doing.

25 They are taking the information that we are

1 having and USM is working hard. I think Reed is here.

2 Reed is kind of heading it up for USM with us,
3 and he is doing a great job putting all the data together.

4 They are doing extra water sampling tests. They
5 are doing other tests that we are working on to make sure
6 that we get as much information as possible as we can out.

7 Then, as far as DEQ, they are doing water sample
8 tests every week, and they are sending that sampling to
9 tell us about the quality of the water, as far as being
10 able to be in the water, or if it is safe to eat the
11 seafood, or anything, in the water.

12 IMMS is working the dolphins and the turtles.
13 Mobi and them are working with them and so is Mississippi
14 State, and they are working with us and giving us any
15 data. When there is a landing of a dolphin, or landing of
16 a turtle, or anything new, they are giving us that
17 information, and, then, we are trying to work as much as
18 possible to find out what the cause of the death was, and
19 that is worked through Mississippi State.

20 We are just trying to get all the data we can to
21 put together.

22 The Governor did sign an emergency declaration
23 and that was for seafood, and he signed it the other day
24 and sent it up forward to the Secretary of Commerce, Ross,
25 and the Secretary of Commerce and him met last week, and

1 all indications are it looks like we will be fine there.

2 I don't want to get too far ahead of the curve
3 because Rick has got a good briefing on this here in a few
4 minutes, but Rick will give you the briefing on where we
5 stand exactly right now, as far as DMR, as to where we
6 stand, and this is information as of yesterday that we
7 have.

8 Matter of fact, when we are doing that, if we
9 don't mind, Reed, if you are going to be here, if there is
10 anything you want to add to it on anything that USM is
11 doing, it would be something great to do at the same time,
12 and that way we can give y'all the best information we
13 have at the time.

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Now, let's see. We've got the
16 employment contracts. They are up there. I just can't
17 see them. They are kind of light.

18 These are all interns. Obviously, we've got
19 Leslie, our new CFO, and, then, we've got the interns, and
20 we are very lucky to have our interns come with us every
21 summer and work.

22 It gives us two things. Number one, some extra
23 help to be able to learn and some new knowledge coming
24 straight out of the colleges and they are helping us to do
25 things, and just maybe somebody might want to work with us

1 one day.

2 All right. Next slide, please.

3 Our contracts, if we are looking at it, we did a
4 reverse auction for the cultch. I don't know that we are
5 going to put that cultch out.

6 Rick, am I correct?

7 We are not going to put the cultch out right
8 now. We are going to hold on that because of the water
9 quality.

10 RICK BURRIS: That's correct. Yes, sir.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS: And we will do that, look at it
12 in the fall?

13 RICK BURRIS: That's right.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: But we do have a contract paid
15 for by GOMESA, and, then, Marine Patrol, we bought some
16 motors and all for their new boats and that was done by
17 reverse auction, and, then, we have Marine Fisheries'
18 application for a worker and that is out right now, as we
19 are talking. It is a hundred percent NFWF.

20 We also have an Internal Affairs contract worker
21 that it out now to be able to look at that.

22 Other than that, that's all, sir, unless you've
23 got any questions.

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: No, sir.

25 Anybody have any questions?

1 (No response.)

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you,
3 Mr. Joe.

4 Up next is the Commissioners report.

5 Do we have anybody that wants to report on
6 anything?

7 (No response.)

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Seeing none,
9 we will move on to Office of Marine Patrol, Chief Davis.

10 KEITH DAVIS: I am going to go straight to the
11 update on Red Snapper enforcement, unless you have any
12 questions about the report.

13 As of this morning, we have issued sixteen
14 citations for failure to register with Tails n' Scales,
15 two citations for over the limit and one citation for
16 undersize Red Snapper.

17 That's my report.

18 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal. It looks like
19 you guys were -- you might have done sixteen people, but
20 you probably checked a thousand.

21 KEITH DAVIS: Yes. So far we have, in our
22 numbers, two thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine trips,
23 and we have checked two hundred and ninety-six of those
24 boats.

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, I know. I saw you

1 guys were out doing a good job.

2 KEITH DAVIS: Thank you, sir.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Next is office of
4 Administration and Finance. Our new CFO, Ms. Leslie
5 Brewer.

6 LESLIE BREWER: Good morning Director,
7 Commissioners, legal counsel.

8 My name is Leslie Brewer, CFO. I will be
9 presenting the agency's financials for the month ending
10 May 31st, 2019.

11 At the end of May, our State Revenue was thirty-
12 one point five million dollars. Total Agency Revenue
13 forty-eight point six.

14 Our State Net Income, twenty-three million.
15 Total Agency Net Income was twenty-six million.

16 After eleven months of fiscal year 2019, we have
17 sixty-five point six percent of the operating budget
18 remaining, while the Tidelands Budget has forty-nine point
19 five remaining.

20 Also, DFA still owes the agency a million sixty-
21 five thousand dollars in State Appropriation funds which
22 will increase our state budget year net income.

23 We also got GOMESA funds received in the month
24 of May for approximately twenty-five million dollars.

25 Any questions?

1 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Any questions?

2 (No response.)

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you. It is good to
4 have you on.

5 LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Up next will
7 be Charmaine, Public Affairs.

8 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning
9 Commissioners, Director, legal counsel.

10 The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
11 was mentioned fifty-four times in local, state and
12 national media since the May CMR meeting.

13 Popular news items included the opening of Red
14 Snapper season, safe boating and the effects of the Bonnet
15 Carre spillway.

16 Marine Patrol taught two boat-and-water safety
17 classes and certified fifty-five students. So far in
18 fiscal year 19, officers have taught twenty-one classes
19 and certified four hundred and fifty-eight students.

20 Since the May meeting, Marine Patrol
21 participated in the Biloxi Shuckers Education Day, Joes
22 and Pros Trout Tournament, Biloxi Fire Academy for Kids
23 Camp and Viking Village Summer Camp at Bayou View
24 Elementary School.

25 Office of Coastal Restoration and Resiliency

1 Director George Ramseur assisted with the U.S. Army Corps
2 of Engineers' Ship Island Ground Building, and National
3 Heritage Area Director Rhonda Price took part in the
4 Crosby Arboretum Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony.

5 Fisheries Office Director Joe Jewell and his
6 team continue the ongoing monitoring and documentation of
7 the effects of the freshwater flowing from the Bonnet
8 Carre spillway.

9 Joe took part in the following meetings:

10 The Coast Mayors' meeting at the Biloxi Visitors
11 Center on May 28th.

12 The Bonnet Carre Panel at the D'Iberville Public
13 Workshop on May 30th.

14 The Save Our Coast Initiative meeting at the
15 Institute for Marine Mammal Studies on June 5th.

16 Fisheries Administrator Traci Floyd joined in
17 with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, in
18 Miramar Beach, Florida, June 3rd through the 6th, working on
19 Gulf of Mexico concerns, including habitat protection and
20 sustainable fisheries.

21 The Gulf of Mexico Alliance All Hands meeting
22 June 10th through the 14th was held in Gulf Shores, Alabama,
23 where Shellfish Bureau Scientist Alicia Carron represented
24 MDMR and provided input on marine debris.

25 Finfish Biological Program Coordinator Wade

1 Hardy participated in the Gulf States Marine Fisheries
2 Commission Red Drum Technical Task Force meeting June 12th
3 through the 13th in Mobile, Alabama, contributing to the
4 data review and distribution for this valuable species.

5 Mississippi Seafood hosted the 2019 Mississippi
6 Seafood Cookoff in Pass Christian on May 23rd, and we are
7 proud to announce that Hunter Evans with Lou's Full Serve
8 in Jackson is this year's Mississippi Seafood King and he
9 will go on to compete among other U.S. states at the Great
10 American Seafood Cookoff in New Orleans on August 3rd.

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It is amazing, all that
12 goes on in a month's time, and, then, I notice you
13 mentioned the Ship Island.

14 I don't know how many folks have actually been
15 there and seen, but I tell you what, they are doing a lot
16 of work at Ship Island, a lot of work. It is going to be
17 interesting to see how all of that maybe changes things,
18 or helps things. So, yes, a lot of work at Ship Island.

19 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Charmaine.

21 Up next will be Mr. Joe Jewell's replacement,
22 Rick.

23 RICK BURRIS: Good morning Mr. Chairman,
24 Commissioners, General Spraggins, Ms. Chestnut.

25 Obviously, I'm not Joe Jewell, but I will be

1 filling in for him today.

2 Before we get started, I just want to give y'all
3 an update on the Red Snapper season.

4 We opened up on May 24th, after y'all's last
5 meeting, and, as of yesterday, the private recreational
6 component has landed sixty-five thousand four hundred and
7 seventy-two pounds of Red Snapper. The State For-Hire has
8 landed two thousand seven hundred and forty-two pounds.
9 The Federal For-Hire is at five thousand nine hundred and
10 eighty-three pounds.

11 Any questions on Snapper season?

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Is the State For-Hire --

13 RICK BURRIS: (Interposing) Yes, sir. I'm
14 sorry. The State For-Hire did close on Wednesday.

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Okay. I was curious
16 about that.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: My understanding is we got
18 within a hundred, or so, pounds of the --

19 RICK BURRIS: (Interposing) Yes, sir. The
20 preliminary data is showing they are just over a hundred
21 pounds over the ACL which is pretty close for such a small
22 ACL.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's good.

24 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Just to be clear, though,
25 they went over the ACL, not the ACP?

1 RICK BURRIS: That's correct.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

3 RICK BURRIS: Preliminary data, yes, sir.

4 Any more questions?

5 (No response.)

6 RICK BURRIS: We've got three agenda items
7 today. First up is going to be Matt Hill with the
8 establishment of the new saltwater fishing record.

9 MATT HILL: Good morning Commissioners, Director
10 Spraggins, Sandy and Kim.

11 I do want to say something about the State For-
12 Hire guys. We did roughly around a hundred pounds.
13 However, we did -- in our QA/QC, we found one mistake
14 where there was a Federal For-Hire vessel that was listed
15 as a State For-Hire. It was an oversight. So we are
16 going to be much closer than that. We are looking at
17 maybe fifteen to twenty pounds, once everything is said
18 and done.

19 That was an excellent job by my staff to keep
20 that where we needed to be.

21 We will try to get through this as quickly as
22 possible. I know everybody is looking forward to Rick's
23 presentation.

24 This is establishing a new state record
25 category, option three.

1 A little bit of background. In the May 2019 CMR
2 meeting the following motion was made:

3 Staff to come back to the June meeting
4 with a Notice of Intent outlining option
5 three which adds an all tackle category
6 to fishing records.

7 Through some internal discussions, it was
8 determined a NOI is not necessary to establish this new
9 category. So this presentation will outline the options
10 for adoption.

11 The reason the NOI is not needed, it is not
12 written in our rules and regulations about the state
13 records. So it is just something we would implement.

14 Some of the program highlights.

15 It will be open for all legal recreational
16 methods of take per current regulations as approved by the
17 CMR at the time of the record submission.

18 Must be larger than the current conventional
19 tackle record, including fly fishing.

20 We would administrate conventional tackle, fly
21 fishing and all tackle record categories, along with the
22 newly established youth category.

23 Here is what it looks like when an angler comes
24 in with the State Record Rules, and we have highlighted.
25 it is a little tough to see here, but I will read the one

1 addition to the current rules we would have.

2 "Records will be kept for the largest
3 fish caught with any legal recreational
4 method of take per regulations and
5 approved by the CMR."

6 I do want the Commission to realize that you
7 will still have the option, when we bring them in front of
8 you, to adopt them, or to not adopt them, if we don't feel
9 like something is quite right with it. So they will
10 always be in your hands.

11 The initiation of the program.

12 The proposed start date by Marine Fisheries
13 staff will be August 1st, 2019.

14 It will be administered by members of our Marine
15 Fisheries staff.

16 It will be open for all species of marine fish
17 landed in Mississippi.

18 A formal review process will be conducted by our
19 internal review committee for proposed adoption of all
20 tackle records by the CMR.

21 This is a very similar certificate to what all
22 of our record categories already get. The only difference
23 is the certificate for saltwater fishing record and with
24 the colon there, it would say "All Tackle".

25 what will be required would be a motion to adopt

1 State Record All Tackle Category with a proposed start
2 date of August 1st, 2019.

3 Any questions?

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have one.

5 Is there going to be a place where all legal
6 recreational methods will be listed?

7 MATT HILL: We have those in our book right now.

8 In our rules and regulations, it is not clearly
9 defined what is legal.

10 Like, bow fishing for example. That is not in a
11 rule, or regulation, anywhere.

12 We do have a list of that, and that is why I am
13 trying to put in here that what would be legal and adopted
14 by the CMR at the time of the submission.

15 We are trying to look into the future, and we
16 may not allow some things and allow other things. So, as
17 we go, it will be more of a dynamic process, but we
18 currently do not, in our rules and regulations, have a
19 list of approved recreational methods of take.

20 We do have it in our manual, just as a guide for
21 people. It is just the more common methods of take that
22 we have accepted over the years.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So if it is a method that
24 you consider questionable, I guess you guys will say yea,
25 or nay?

1 MATT HILL: No. We would bring forth all
2 records, and we would maybe give some options to the
3 Commission, say we haven't seen this piece of gear before,
4 it is not deemed illegal, or legal, in our rules and
5 regulations, and we would leave it up to the Commission to
6 either adopt that record, or not adopt that record.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right.

8 Any more questions?

9 (No response.)

10 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: If we don't have any more
11 questions, I would like to make the motion to adopt State
12 Records for All Tackle Category.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. We have a
14 motion.

15 Do we have a second for that motion?

16 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a
18 second.

19 Any further discussion?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All those in favor aye.

22 (All in favor.)

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed like sign.

24 (None opposed.)

25 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

1 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: There he is.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Commissioner Havard is
3 actually on the phone with us.

4 Good to hear you, Mark.

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So the motion carries.

7 MATT HILL: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Matt.

9 RICK BURRIS: Good morning again.

10 I will be giving the Bonnet Carre update.

11 The past few months when Joe has given it, it
12 has had a lot of historical information and a lot of
13 mechanical information on how the spillway is operated.

14 we think you got all of that previously, so
15 today we are just kind of going to go over the impacts
16 that we have been seeing so far, and just keep in mind
17 that we are still in the middle of this process. These
18 aren't the end impacts. These are just what we are seeing
19 right now.

20 we do anticipate these impacts to increase, as
21 the spillway remains open.

22 This chart here, we presented to you last time.
23 It shows the spillway openings going back to 2008, just
24 the days they were open and the discharge that they were
25 putting out.

1 This purple line here is the second opening of
2 the 2019 Bonnet Carre Spillway. It is currently at about
3 a hundred and forty-seven thousand cubic feet per second.
4 It has been averaging -- right here on this line here, you
5 can't see it, but it is about a hundred and fifty thousand
6 CFS.

7 The first opening from February to April was
8 forty-four days.

9 So far the current opening is thirty-nine days,
10 which gives us eighty-three days total opened. The
11 previous record was seventy-five.

12 Actually, I don't know if we ever saw much of a
13 drop off between the two openings, between the first
14 closing and the second opening. So we are kind of
15 considering this one long opening. It exceeds a hundred
16 days, when you are looking at it that way.

17 These two charts are from our USGS hydrological
18 monitoring stations that are stationary out in the Sound
19 to the west.

20 The first one to your left is the Merrill Shell
21 which is basically right around Pass Marianne Light. We
22 just wanted to show you the salinity change.

23 I'm going back to May the 1st. You can see
24 around the 1st of May it was decently high around seven
25 parts per thousand, but, then, it started dropping, and,

1 then, increasing again about the 4th of May, and, then,
2 right around the time of the second opening, it started
3 dropping again and stayed below two until the 1st of June,
4 and, then, last week, as I'm sure you have all heard, we
5 had a real large spike in salinity. At that area, it got
6 up to, it looks like, about sixteen parts per thousand,
7 and, then, it dropped back down again.

8 The same thing happened at a similar station in
9 Gulfport which is just to the east of the Gulfport ship
10 channel. Again, this is May 1st to June 17th. The
11 salinity, again, got up a little higher. Then, when they
12 opened it again, it dropped down to below two. Then, it
13 started to increase the 1st of June, and, then, last week
14 it was higher than it has been in the past couple of
15 months, and, then, it started to drop back down again.

16 We think that this could have been due to
17 prevailing north winds we had last week pushing that
18 freshwater out, but we are really not sure why that spike
19 in salinity happened, but it has started to go back down
20 again.

21 However, we do not see that at the station at
22 St. Joe. This station is right off of St. Joe Point, and
23 I am going to chart this all the way back to February 15th.

24 You can see around February the 16th it was up
25 around thirteen parts per thousand. They opened the

1 spillway on the 27th, and this is March the 2nd. It started
2 dropping down here, and it has pretty much stayed
3 consistently below two; most cases below one part per
4 thousand the whole time. We never saw that spike in
5 salinity last week at that area.

6 Then, to the right is the water temperature
7 charted out for the same time frame. As usual, you expect
8 it to be colder back in February. You see a few cold
9 fronts here, and, then, it increasingly goes up as we get
10 into the summer months. Right now it is pretty warm,
11 anywhere between eighty and ninety degrees Fahrenheit.

12 I mentioned last week we had kind of a different
13 environment condition. We had those north winds, we had
14 really warm water and a really low tidal range. We had a
15 neap tide on Wednesday, I think.

16 A couple of things that we noticed that were
17 documented from this event. The first thing we saw a
18 really large freshwater algal bloom near Bayou Caddy. It
19 was first spotted on June the 12th. We took some samples
20 on June the 12th. We, then, came back on June the 13th and
21 took these aerial photos.

22 You can probably see it better on your screen,
23 but this is Bayou Caddy right here. Looking at it from
24 the south, you can see this big green streak right here.
25 There is another streak right here, and, then, this is

1 looking at it from the north. Again, some more streaks,
2 and, then, a real large area of green here.

3 It was estimated about two miles wide. A really
4 large bloom. We sampled it until Friday. Friday, the
5 winds switched from the south, I believe, and it got a
6 little choppy and broke it up and we didn't see any more
7 bloom after that.

8 Another occurrence that happened on the same
9 day, on June the 13th, we had a low DO event. A fish kill
10 was associated with it from Hewes Avenue around Courthouse
11 Road. The fish kill occurred that morning of June 13th,
12 and we responded to it that afternoon.

13 They noticed about seventeen different species.
14 Several thousand fish were caught in that area of low DO,
15 and we presented to the Commission before what a jubilee
16 is. That is basically what had happened.

17 The north wind made the waters real calm. There
18 wasn't any wave action, so there wasn't any DO that was
19 prevalent, and, then, once the high tide came in, it
20 brought in some more higher oxygenated water and the fish
21 that weren't caught up in it, were able to move back out.
22 We did document that event as well.

23 We had noticed the beginning of the week some
24 dead crabs in some crab traps, and that is usually the
25 first thing that happens. You start seeing those low DO

1 events and the crabs get caught in the crab traps, and,
2 then, next we will see some eels and some crabs show up on
3 the bank, and, then, usually the next day is when we have
4 those big fish kills.

5 we wanted to make y'all aware of those two
6 situations from last week.

7 As you know, once the spillway is operated, we
8 have a sampling protocol that the Office of Marine
9 Fisheries does. We sample all of our oyster reefs. We
10 sample shrimp, crabs and finfish. We have a protocol. We
11 have been sampling weekly ever since February 27th.

12 As General Spraggins mentioned, in the past few
13 weeks the research lab started doing some expanded
14 monitoring and getting some extra samples, on top of what
15 we have, to gather more information to see what the
16 effects of the spillway opening is overall.

17 Some of the preliminary data that we have.

18 These are our oyster mortalities. It is hard to
19 see on here, but this chart up here shows oyster
20 mortalities per reef.

21 This over here is Henderson Point. As of last
22 week, the sample we took last week, there is a ninety-one
23 percent mortality on Henderson Point.

24 Pass Christian Dredging. We've got a ninety-
25 seven percent mortality.

1 Pass Christian Tonging was a hundred percent.
2 Pass Marianne is eighty-seven percent.
3 St. Joe and St. Stanislaus were also at one
4 hundred percent.

5 So adding all those up combined, last week's
6 sample was a ninety-five percent mortality.

7 This chart over here shows each day we sampled
8 since February 26th which was the first day. You can see
9 this trend starting to go up. This is the percent
10 mortality, and these are the number of days.

11 Each sample, the trend continues to go up, and,
12 then, right around the seventieth day, it just started
13 going straight up and now we are at that ninety-five
14 percent mortality for our oyster reefs.

15 We also take a look at landings. As General
16 Spraggins mentioned, the Governor requested a fisheries
17 disaster be declared, and there are certain thresholds you
18 have to meet to get that fisheries disaster.

19 Down here at the bottom, just taking a quick
20 look. Our crab landings for 2019, this blue bar is the
21 five-year average and the red bar is the landings for this
22 year.

23 For January, we were up, but February, March and
24 April, we were down. February, we were down forty-five
25 percent. March, we were down about twenty-five percent.

1 In April, we were down another forty percent. Last month,
2 we were down just slightly, but overall we are sitting at
3 about thirty percent loss of landings for crab.

4 Shrimp is very similar, although it is hard to
5 decipher this particular time of year, why the shrimp
6 landings are down.

7 what we do want to point out is, as we talked to
8 you last time, we are currently in our shrimp sampling
9 efforts for the opening of the 2019 season.

10 The first thing we started to look at is overall
11 biomass of shrimp that we have been catching, shrimp that
12 we have been seeing throughout our samples.

13 Again, similar to this graph, these blue bars is
14 the five-year catch-per-unit effort. What that means is
15 we standardized it to this blue bar represents the average
16 number of biomass of brown shrimp caught per trawl.

17 If you will look at the overall catch-per-unit
18 effort in these blue bars for the five-year average, we
19 were catching anywhere between two and three pounds of
20 shrimp per trawl, brown shrimp per trawl.

21 For this year, we haven't even caught a half a
22 pound yet.

23 The western Sound is even lower. It looks like,
24 on week nine, we were averaging about four pounds of
25 shrimp per trawl. For week nine, we caught two grams of

1 shrimp. I don't even know what that equates to in pounds.
2 It is pretty low.

3 Overall we have seen about an eighty-three
4 percent reduction in brown shrimp production.

5 In the west, we have seen about a ninety-six
6 percent loss of production.

7 I wanted to show you the results of yesterday's
8 shrimp sample. If you remember, we talked about it last
9 month. We have ten stations we sample twice a week. This
10 was yesterday's sample.

11 We have three stations to the west of Gulfport
12 and those three stations, the average, the count was
13 ninety-eight per pound.

14 To the east, we have seven stations, and those
15 seven stations averaged a hundred and fourteen per pound.
16 Those are just the brown shrimp.

17 You are looking at an overall sample yesterday
18 of a hundred and twelve count.

19 I wanted to show you this. We plotted all our
20 samples going back to when we first started showing brown
21 shrimp in our samples, which was the 1st of May. We
22 typically see them around the middle of April, but we
23 started seeing them the 1st of May.

24 This is what you typically see. You see just a
25 gradual progression up to that sixty-eight count.

1 This is sixty-eight count. This is the count,
2 this are the days we sample, and this line here is where
3 we are trying to get to.

4 You typically see this progression up and, at
5 some point, you are going to hit it. Usually within a
6 week, we can look ahead and say, on this date they will be
7 legal. So that's when we open the season.

8 Now, these little marks like this are typical.
9 You've got some ups and downs, and this is what we
10 normally see is this uprise.

11 Here, starting the second week of June, last
12 week everything started going backwards. The week before
13 that, we were at about eighty-five count. So we were kind
14 of projecting it looked like we could probably open
15 somewhere around this week, but the following week, on
16 June the 10th, we were seeing the ninety count. Then,
17 three days later on June the 13th, it went back down to a
18 hundred count.

19 we thought it could be due to the low DO we had
20 in those particular areas, but we sampled yesterday and
21 they went down again to a hundred and twelve count.

22 That's where we are sitting at today. We
23 typically don't see this continuous down trend. It is
24 usually up, but right now we are kind of going backwards.

25 If you want to stop here and discuss it a little

1 bit, we can.

2 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I think we had public
3 comments.

4 I have one question.

5 In your sampling because you are not seeing very
6 many shrimp, as the size fell, what was the quantity?

7 RICK BURRIS: The quantity has also been going
8 down. We never saw a lot to begin with, but progressively
9 we have seen less and less shrimp, brown shrimp.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So in those most recent
11 samples, how many shrimp did you actually catch?

12 Do you recall?

13 RICK BURRIS: The most shrimp we caught was
14 twenty-five. That was in one ten-minute pull with a
15 sixteen foot trawl and, like I said, we usually catch a
16 pound, up to four pounds, per trawl.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right.

18 Are you at a stopping point right now?

19 RICK BURRIS: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I think Ryan Bradley
21 would like to comment.

22 RYAN BRADLEY: Thank you, Commissioners.

23 Ryan Bradley, the Executive Director of the
24 Mississippi Commercial Fisheries United.

25 while Rick was talking here about the shrimp

1 season, we wanted to bring up a request that we have heard
2 from numerous shrimpers across the state, across the
3 Coast.

4 They would like to go ahead and open up the
5 shrimp season, citing Section 49-15-64.1 section 2 which
6 states:

7 "If a natural, or manmade, disaster has
8 the potential to adversely affect the
9 shrimp fishery, the Commission by majority
10 vote may open legal shrimping areas."

11 what we are seeing essentially is there is just
12 so few brown shrimp, not enough really to worry about, but
13 there are some big white shrimp out swimming around. We
14 know because they are coming into Louisiana. They are
15 catching them in Alabama. We know they are around,
16 unusually high numbers of white shrimp -- I would not say
17 high, but higher than they normally would be this time of
18 year, and these are our valuable, larger, jumbo shrimp.
19 So there is an opportunity for these guys to mitigate some
20 of this adverse impact that we are seeing from the Bonnet
21 Carre right now.

22 It would be our recommendation just to go ahead
23 and open that up, let's catch these white shrimp because
24 we are very concerned about, well, we are going to have
25 low DO here in the coming months, or we are going to have

1 these algal blooms growing. We may get a complete
2 shutdown of these fisheries perhaps. We really don't know
3 what is in store.

4 We would like to weigh the pros and cons of
5 opening this season like this and, when weighing these
6 pros and cons, we considered the potential for Bonnet
7 Carre spillway mitigation, or disaster fund, and, in
8 speaking to our attorneys, they felt that it would be
9 easier for us to make the case of damages from the Bonnet
10 Carre spillway if the season was open and we can show and
11 document a lower reduced catch.

12 Now, I think staff attorneys may have a
13 different opinion on how that may work out, but it should
14 also be noted that you we open the reason right now, it
15 technically would not be considered a late opening.

16 When you look at the average opening dates over
17 the past twenty years, we are really not late right now so
18 to say.

19 We would recommend, if the Commission does move
20 to open the season, that they cite this statute and this
21 section that allows for this -- I wouldn't call it an
22 emergency, but allows for this opening due to this natural
23 manmade disaster which is the Bonnet Carre Spillway.

24 With that being said, it is our prediction this
25 year that likely in the next coming months in the inshore

1 shrimp fishery, we probably are going to see very low to
2 no catch over the next couple of months.

3 It is going to be easy, we feel, to document
4 loss from this. That's where we stand on it.

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have given it a lot of
6 thought, too, and like you say, because there are very few
7 browns, me, I tend to want to err on the side of caution
8 and keep it closed and protect the browns, but I'm with
9 you on this particular instance. There are no browns and
10 for good reason, for all the freshwater we have had, the
11 influx of freshwater. It's just the conditions aren't
12 there and not going to be there and won't be there and, at
13 the same time, we don't know exactly what the future is
14 going to hold for white shrimp.

15 Everybody that I have talked to, yes, that is
16 what they are making their night's work on is white
17 shrimp.

18 RYAN BRADLEY: And I agree.

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Ryan, in reference to whether or
21 not it is going to hurt, as far as your declaration and
22 being able to qualify, I think once we show the loss, what
23 we are looking at, that that's what is going to happen, we
24 can say, well, they didn't shrimp at all because we closed
25 the season and they never got to. That is a hundred

1 percent loss, but we are never guaranteed anything on
2 that.

3 That's the way I look at it. We are not
4 guaranteed to get any of that money and, if a shrimper can
5 go out and make a little bit of a living, it's just like I
6 talked to the Commissioners a while ago. If it cost you
7 more to get the shrimp than you can sell them for, you are
8 not going to go get them.

9 RYAN BRADLEY: Absolutely.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: So it is going to be documented,
11 too. I think it is a good idea, and I think our staff is
12 that way, too, sir. I think the staff is the same way
13 that y'all are thinking, and I will let Rick speak to
14 that.

15 RYAN BRADLEY: And I appreciate that, sir, and I
16 just wanted to add I spoke to a shrimp dealer in Pass
17 Christian, and he said year to date compared to last year
18 he is down two hundred and fifty thousand pounds in shrimp
19 at this time.

20 We are already showing significant decrease and
21 like you said, none of this disaster funding is guaranteed
22 and it will be probably five to ten years down the road,
23 if we do see it, and we will be lucky if we do see any of
24 it.

25 That would be our recommendation is to go ahead

1 and open it, if you feel like legal agrees that the
2 Commission has that authority to do so.

3 we would also want to know how soon. If you do
4 move to open it, how soon can you open it, how much notice
5 has to be given to do that.

6 I will leave that there. Thank y'all.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. So I guess
8 that question would have to be asked.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think the biggest thing -- as
10 far as notice, I think to be fair to everybody we would
11 have to give them a little bit of time, maybe a day, or
12 so, notice so everybody would have an equal shot of being
13 able to go out equal at the same time.

14 RYAN BRADLEY: I agree.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think they have to get ice and
16 fuel and get things set up.

17 My recommendation would be probably Thursday
18 morning, or something, if that would work.

19 Is that all right with you, Rick, if that would
20 work with the staff and with the Commission that y'all
21 look at it?

22 RICK BURRIS: That's fine.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So what is the feeling of
24 the Commissioners?

25 RYAN BRADLEY: Thank y'all. If you have any

1 questions, let me know.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS: Real quick.

3 Chief Davis, is there any issue with that with
4 y'all?

5 would that be a problem?

6 KEITH DAVIS: We are discussing that right now.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay. Please let me know if
8 there is.

9 RICH BURRIS: As Ryan said, we have been seeing
10 some white. We have been marking a lot of white shrimp,
11 large white shrimp in our samples, too.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Chief Davis, are you okay
13 with it?

14 KEITH DAVIS: Yes, sir.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Sandy, can y'all put something
16 up with a motion to be able to use that statute so they
17 can have the emergency on record, showing that it is an
18 emergency declaration?

19 SANDY CHESNUT: Yes. We are working on it right
20 now.

21 RICK BURRIS: I do want to point out, when we
22 are talking about this damage assessment, or the fisheries
23 disaster, it is in the guidelines that we can use trawl
24 data. We do show that eighty-three percent, ninety-six
25 percent loss of production that I showed you earlier. So

1 we are going to have that information along with the
2 landings which we anticipate there will be a big loss in,
3 as well.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I think Mr. Joe would
5 like for Reed to come up and just give us a little -- pass
6 on some information you may have.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes. While we are waiting on
8 them to put that motion together, Reed, if you can just
9 give us an update of what USM is doing extra now, so that
10 the Commission knows this to be able to get any samples,
11 or anything else, so that we can have to be able help with
12 that declaration that we are working with.

13 REED HENDON: Absolutely.

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: State your name.

15 REED HENDON: Reed Hendon, University of
16 Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Lab.

17 well, we have obviously been -- we have had
18 several discussions with DMR over the last couple of
19 weeks.

20 At the direction of the Governor and in
21 conjunction with DMR, we are out sampling weekly. We have
22 brought together ten to fifteen of our faculty researchers
23 and senior researchers.

24 The big focus right now is on water quality. We
25 are sampling sixteen stations on a weekly basis, getting

1 everything from primary productivity, general temperature,
2 salinity levels, phytoplankton abundance, anything that we
3 are going to need to help us understand what the effects
4 are that we are seeing at the fisheries level.

5 Some of the impacts are obviously going to be
6 very obvious, some not so obvious and some we may not see
7 for a year, or two, down the road, and that is where we
8 are working through the stock assessment panel and with
9 DMR to try to understand. We may have some missing age
10 classes moving forward. So making sure that we have all
11 the data on hand to understand that.

12 From the water quality perspective, everything
13 starts from the bottom up. If we get too many nutrients
14 in, if we get the wrong kind of nutrients in, we are going
15 to see phytoplankton blooms which can certainly lead to
16 those fish kills, but changes in the phytoplankton
17 community structure could be detrimental to what is left,
18 in terms of the oysters out there as well.

19 From the fisheries perspective, were talking
20 about doing some expanded crab trap sampling from the
21 fishery independent side so we have some numbers on
22 population estimates, or at least some relative abundances
23 independent of effort.

24 As well as oysters are a big concern, getting
25 some settlement plates out so we can see if there is

1 enough resource out in the western Sound, when this goes
2 away, to repopulate and what efforts may be required
3 there.

4 Then, a big part of that is going to be, as the
5 data comes in and once they are compiled, working with USM
6 and DMR to aggregate all of that because we have probably
7 fifteen, or twenty, different analyses being run on every
8 water sample we are taking.

9 We are taking about ten liters of water at each
10 station each week, and, then, processing it for a variety
11 of components.

12 Bringing that together, and, then, pulling that
13 together for a general assessment of what the damages are
14 to the eco system, and, then, how those tie back to the
15 socioeconomic perspective as well.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Reed, is anybody looking
17 at what the freshwater is doing to our seagrasses?

18 REED HENDON: That is one component that we have
19 put in a little one-page proposal that we are discussing.

20 The marsh grasses is one component. Seagrass,
21 we already have Dr. Kelly Darnell. She was already
22 contracted to do some seagrass work through DMR starting
23 in the fall. I believe she got out yesterday and kind of
24 kicked that forward. So we are looking at that.

25 Marsh grass is another concern, particularly in

1 the western Sound that we have some ideas on what we can
2 look at, and, then, benthic enfauna which is -- everybody
3 is familiar with Gulf Sturgeon. This being critical
4 habitat, that is because of all the little critters that
5 live in the sand. what are the impacts there that are
6 another foundation, or level, of the food web here.

7 Then, we were talking about we were seeing the
8 spikes in salinity last week that we think is attributable
9 to that north wind.

10 we have really good modeling components out at
11 Stennis Space Center with our Marine Science folks that
12 can bring together the atmospheric modeling together with
13 the water circulation modeling to help us better
14 understand that.

15 A key component to what we are doing with the
16 water quality is based on the oxygen isotopes there. We
17 can determine if that water is Mississippi River water
18 versus normal discharge that we get, so that is really
19 going to help us tie back to direct impacts from the
20 Bonnet Carre.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have the algal blooms,
22 but I always under the impression that was more a
23 saltwater algal bloom.

24 Does all this freshwater increase the odds of
25 algal blooms?

1 REED HENDON: well, you just get different
2 communities and it depends on what is happening there at
3 the time, and it is really the nutrients coming out that
4 feed those algal blooms, but you will get freshwater algal
5 blooms as well, and we are taking samples of those and we
6 are determining what type of algae they are as well.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Either type of algal
8 bloom is just bad as the other one. In other words --

9 REED HENDON: (Interposing) If they get too big
10 and they die off and sink to the bottom, that is where you
11 get the low dissolved oxygen events.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I know it is just
13 disturbing seeing where our oysters are. We have been
14 fighting this battle for a long time.

15 REED HENDON: We weren't in a good spot to start
16 out with and it is just getting worse for sure.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS: On that algal bloom, like last
19 week, we were working with DEQ, too, and everyone about it
20 and at the point about to put out a statement to say, we
21 are concerned about it, when it all broke up, and it
22 started working better, things worked better for us.

23 So rather than alarm everybody for no reason, we
24 just worked with the scientists.

25 I just want to thank Reed and I want to thank

1 USM for taking the lead to help us with this. Y'all are
2 doing a fantastic job. I tell you what, it is very nice
3 to be able to take that, and we have a luxury in South
4 Mississippi of having several universities and USM being
5 one that is very versed in what we are doing, as far as
6 DMR, and we appreciate you.

7 REED HENDON: We thank y'all. That is what we
8 are here for.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Reed.

10 REED HENDON: Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: One more question and,
12 Joe, you may be able to answer this.

13 I got a question last night from one of our
14 renters that is in from out of town.

15 where can the public find the water sampling on
16 line to say that the beaches are okay?

17 Somebody at Walmart told them they couldn't get
18 in the water, and I had to spend twenty minutes on the
19 phone clearing that up with them.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: I will let them address that
21 better, but DEQ puts that out as far as the water quality
22 as far as getting into it.

23 I think they do it daily, don't they?

24 RICK BURRIS: DEQ has a beach monitoring program
25 and those updates are available online. We can get you

1 that website and you can share it. That would be great.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: I think they've got the motion.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir.

5 KEITH DAVIS: Mr. Chairman, one thing about the
6 motion that Sandy has, there is no time on it.

7 would you make sure that we have the time that
8 you intend to have it open?

9 RICK BURRIS: Have it at 6:00 a.m.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS: Midnight?

11 RICK BURRIS: 6:00 a.m.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: 6:00 a.m.?

13 RICK BURRIS: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I would
15 like to make that motion.

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Turn your speaker on,
17 Commissioner Gollott.

18 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I would
19 like to make the motion that is on the board.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. I am going to
21 read it into the record.

22 "Due to the potential adverse effect on
23 the shrimp industry caused by the
24 Bonnet Carre Spillway, open the shrimp
25 season under the authority of MCA

1 49-15-64.1(2) effective Thursday, June
2 20th, 2019, at 6:00 a.m.”

3 Is that correct, Commissioner Gollott?

4 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: That’s correct.

5 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

6 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I’ll second it.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a second for that
8 motion.

9 Any further discussion?

10 (No response.)

11 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All those in favor aye.

12 (All in favor.)

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed like sign.

14 (None opposed.)

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

16 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Aye.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Mark, we got your aye.

18 Thank you, sir.

19 RICK BURRIS: We just have one more slide.

20 RYAN BRADLEY: I just want to say thank you
21 Commissioners for your thoughtfulness and compassion for
22 our shrimp industry. Thank you very much.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Bradley.

24 RICK BURRIS: We’ve got one more slide showing
25 satellite imagery from Sunday and, again, it is difficult

1 to see, but that bloom we were talking about is actually
2 now in the lower part of Lake Borgne. You can see it. If
3 you look on your screen, it is really green, and at the
4 northeast side of Lake Pontchartrain. I just wanted y'all
5 to see that.

6 If you have any more questions about anything
7 that we have pertinent to the spillway opening, I will be
8 glad to answer them now.

9 We are going to give you another update,
10 obviously, next month on what we are seeing because it is
11 going to be a continuation, I'm sure, by then.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: Sir, we will update y'all
13 weekly, as we get it. I send y'all information, I think,
14 every week now, but, once we get it, we will get that
15 information to you.

16 We will give you an overall next month, and the
17 one other thing, some of our local leaders went and met in
18 Washington last week with the Corps of Engineers and they
19 also talked about what we can do with the Bonnet Carre.

20 I did meet with the Corps last week, and they
21 are starting a study to see what can be done, and that
22 study is a study -- it is probably a two- to three-year
23 study, but they have been trying to get this for several
24 years, and just received the funding. So they are going
25 to be able to look at it and tell us what can be done.

1 Is it better to put more water down one way than
2 another?

3 Is what we are doing correct?

4 They don't know either a hundred percent.

5 This is ninety-year old information. So we are
6 working on the new world today on it, and some people are
7 looking into it.

8 It is not going unnoticed this time. Let's just
9 put it that way. People are really looking at it.

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That's good.

11 I, for one, don't know what the answer is, but
12 there are a whole lot of good minds out there. I know you
13 can help us figure a way around some of this.

14 I have one question, Rick.

15 RICK BURRIS: Sure.

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Joe is okay?

17 He will be back?

18 RICK BURRIS: Yes. I think he is coming back in
19 tomorrow.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good.

21 Any more questions?

22 (No response.)

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Rick.

24 RICK BURRIS: Last, Matt Hill has got a state
25 record for your consideration.

1 MATT HILL: Good morning, again. I haven't
2 gotten to do one of these in a little while.

3 We do have a State Saltwater Finfish Record for
4 your consideration. It is in the Youth Division with
5 conventional tackle.

6 The Youth saltwater Fishing Record is for Red
7 Drum. The old record is twenty-six pounds eight ounces.
8 The new record is twenty-eight pounds thirteen point six
9 ounces.

10 The angler is Mr. Sam Bullen. Here is young Sam
11 with his Red Drum (indicating photograph).

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That is a big fish.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS: Matt, what is the overall state
14 record for that?

15 If the youth is that one, what is the overall?
16 Do you know?

17 MATT HILL: Fifty-four pounds. That is the
18 overall State record, fifty-four pounds.

19 That is a pretty good one for a child right
20 there.

21 what will be required to adopt this new Youth
22 record would be a motion to adopt the new State record.

23 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right.

24 Do we have a motion?

25 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll make a motion to adopt

1 the new State record.

2 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second it, Mr.
3 Chairman.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion and a
5 second.

6 All those in favor aye.

7 (All in favor.)

8 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed like sign.

9 (None opposed.)

10 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion carries.

11 MATT HILL: Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Matt.

13 We are going too quick here today.

14 Is there any other business?

15 (No response.)

16 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Seeing none, do we have
17 any public comments?

18 THAO VU: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. We have one
20 public comment.

21 THAO VU: Good morning Director Spraggins,
22 Commissioners and staff here.

23 My name is Thao Vu. I'm with the Mississippi
24 Coalition for Vietnamese-American Fisher Folks and
25 Families.

1 Please pardon. I am sick. I have been sick a
2 great deal. So my voice my be hoarse.

3 Several things. This whole Bonnet Carre
4 spillway opening -- oh, my gosh -- is a nail in the coffin
5 for the fishing community.

6 I cannot reiterate and underestimate how -- this
7 is another major disaster, just like the BP Oil Spill,
8 that has happened to our really unique Mississippi Sound
9 beautiful ecosystem. It is really heart breaking. It is
10 really heart breaking what is happening out there.

11 The fishing communities, particularly the
12 commercial oyster harvesters -- you know guys. All the
13 Commissioners, the agencies know full well how decimated
14 our reefs in the Western Sound are, and this is just a
15 nail in the coffin. This is it. We know it.

16 We know that mortality is not just seventy,
17 seventy-five, or eighty percent. We know it is a hundred
18 percent. We know for a fact it is all mortality.

19 We greatly recommend that the agencies have more
20 -- take more proactive strategies.

21 We are not here to disparage, or take over your
22 role and the agency's role, but take more proactive
23 strategies. Engage with the fishermen on the front end.
24 Get their input.

25 Why can't we mitigate some of this stuff?

1 what kind of preparedness plans do we need to
2 have in place?

3 what kind of data do we need that the fishermen
4 could help share with you?

5 There are some dead fish. They have seen a lot
6 of unusual things. They know that something is seriously
7 wrong just by the color of the waters. It is orange-red.
8 It is unnatural. They know there are areas with low
9 dissolved oxygen. They are seeing dead fish, things that
10 are floating.

11 A lot of that of that is there from traditional
12 ecological knowledge that we really haven't fully tapped
13 into.

14 I just came in when you granted the motion for
15 emergency shrimp season opening this Thursday, but other
16 things need to be done.

17 They need some direct assistance right now,
18 emergency assistance right now.

19 we know there is not going to be an oyster
20 season, not with that kind of mortality. We know that.

21 They need some assistance now. With the shrimp
22 season opening, it is still going to be very difficult,
23 with the shrimp being so tiny and very sparse. That is
24 going to be highly challenging.

25 I ask that the agency and Commissioners come up

1 with something, you know, some kind of emergency
2 assistance program to help the fishing community.

3 Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Ms. Vu.
5 Any other public comments?

6 (No response.)

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir, Mr. Joe.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS: All of you, the fishermen, or
9 anyone else, if we are looking for anything, please take
10 down as much data as you can possibly do to get to us
11 because, when it comes time for this disaster, once the
12 Commissioner sends it back to the Governor, he is going to
13 ask for data. He is going to want to know what kind data
14 do we have and he is going to ask what can we do to prove
15 what we have lost.

16 So, please, anything you have and, if you are a
17 charter boat fisherman, if you have lost business because
18 of it, if it cost you more money to do this than it has in
19 the past, put that down.

20 If you are a commercial fisherman and it has
21 cost you because of what you have lost, put it down.

22 Show us something. Give us some kind of records
23 to prove with, but be able to back it up, too, in case
24 they come and ask us. We want to give them every bit of
25 the information we can.

1 Once it gets to about eighty percent on
2 anything, I think we are pretty close with a disaster, and
3 I know we are with oysters, now, and we are getting that
4 close with shrimp and we are getting close with crabs.
5 There are some issues going to happen.

6 So let's look at all of it and, please, put any
7 data you can and get it to us, and we definitely will
8 appreciate it and it will help us get what we can for you.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Mr. Joe.

10 All right. There are no other public comments.

11 Do we have a motion to adjourn?

12 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll make that motion,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: We have a motion.

15 Do we have a second?

16 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Motion and a second.

18 All those in favor aye.

19 (All in favor.)

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Opposed like sign.

21 (None opposed.)

22 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Meeting adjourned.

23 (Whereupon, at 12:05 o'clock, p.m., the June 18,
24 2019, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources was
25 concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter,
4 to hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true
5 and correct transcript of the June 18, 2019, 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.

13
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15 _____
16 COURT REPORTER
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Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251
COURT REPORTER
(228) 396-8788