SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

February 7, 2013

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COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

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TRANSCRIPT OF SPECIAL MEETING OF COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES
AT BOLTON STATE BUILDING, PUBLIC MEETING ROOM, 1141 SAVVIE
AVENUE, BILoxI, missISSIPPI, ON THE 7TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2013
COMMENCING AT 5:30 P.M. AND REPORTED BY NORMA JEAN LADNER
SOREE, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER.
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COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

[Names listed]

ALSO PRESENT:

[Names listed]

A. Call to Order

DR. ASHER: Good evening. I'd like to welcome everybody to this special called meeting of the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the replacement of our executive director.

And I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking time from your busy schedules to come out here and contribute to the process. We really do cherish your input. We are going to do the very best job that we can on this. And we need all the help we can get.

What we're going to do tonight is, I'm going to describe the process and tell you what I know about it. And we're then going to give you a chance to come to the podium and give your input on first of all what you think the process should be like, the process of searching for this person. And then next what you think this person should be like, what sort of qualities do you think this person should have. And I'm going to actually give my opinion on this later on. So for what it's worth, I am going to give you my opinion.

Let me say also that this is not a forum for venting your frustrations. I realize that we're all frustrated, and that goes for us up here on the commission, as well. We feel that we were blindsided by what happened here in this agency, and we have determined that it will never happen again, and we've determined that from here on in we are going to try to move into the future.

So what I would like you to do, please, I know you're frustrated about the past, and I know you have criticisms about the past, and I know that you feel betrayed by what happened. We all feel the same way. But tonight, let's focus on the future. Let's be as positive as we can. Let's talk about where we want to go from here and how we want to rebuild this agency, how we want to restore confidence.

And I know it's going to be an uphill battle, and I know that the person that gets hired to be this executive director is going to be -- have a massive job on his or her hands.

I want to assure you at the outset that this is an open process. We have no names on the list at this point. We have no applications. We have no pressure from anybody anywhere saying that this name is the person you ought to choose. That has not happened. Okay?

So if any of you are wondering about what you read in the newspapers, certain rumors that are going around, and that's always true in a case like this, they're not true.

Now, the process from here on in is anybody's guess. You know how things go. But I want you because you're here tonight and because you are witnessing this process, I want you to help us all keep it on a straight level, and we're going to be as open as possible with everything.

The next thing I want to do is just talk a little bit about what the executive director does. And I want to start by reading a couple of sections from the state statutes. And I'm just going to read these so that we can understand the requirements that are.

First of all, Section 49-15-11 says about the executive director: The executive director of the Department of Marine Resources shall have the authority to internally reorganize the Department of Marine Resources with persons meeting established qualifications for comparable positions of duty and responsibility, including but not limited to the executive director, division chiefs, biologists, and other personnel.

What that says is the executive director does the hiring and firing. For a period of one year -- this is -- that was something that expired. Basically, the executive director, the person we want to hire, makes those decisions.

In the Section 49-13-305 under executive director nominations, powers, and duties. The commission --

W.J. SORE, CSR #1297
1 person has got to be a manager.
2 And I'm not going down on Ph.D.s. Don't get me
3 wrong. I have a Ph.D., but because I have one, I know that it
4 doesn't mean that you're good at doing anything except research
5 in a laboratory.
6 So, keep that in mind. That's one of my
7 opinions. You can, of course, express your own.
8 So what we expect to do from here on in is,
9 we're going to accept your comments tonight, and we're going to
10 listen very carefully. I've got a little computer here. I'm
11 going to be typing things in. We're going to have a transcript
12 of all the comments that were made. It's going to be recorded.
13 And we are going to take a look at these, and we're going to
14 sift through them, and we're going to put together an
15 advertisement. The advertisement is going to go to as many
16 people as we can think of, especially in this area. It's going
17 to go to some of the publications. And we're going to look for
18 applicants to come in and basically apply for the job.
19 The final decision will be made by the five of
20 us here, but we expect to have lots of input from other people,
21 as well.
22 Just out of curiosity, this may be a mistake,
23 but show of hands, how many people here think this person
24 should have a Ph.D.?
25 Okay. I hope you come up and make your comments.

1 the Senate. Same thing here. The governor makes the
2 appointment, but it's got to be approved by the Senate.
3 And that means that one of our criteria has got
4 to be that this person is somebody that the Senate will
5 approve. And I don't see any roadblocks in any one of these
6 processes, but just so you know.
7 And the third thing is that it says an executive
8 director shall be knowledgeable and experienced in marine
9 resources management.
10 Now, that can be interpreted fairly broadly.
11 And some of the e-mails I'm getting state that this person
12 should have a Ph.D. in marine sciences or a comparable degree,
13 have an advanced degree like that. And that's not necessarily
14 required by the statute. That would be something that we look
15 for.
16 My personal feeling on this, by the way, if
17 anybody cares, is that we need somebody to manage the
18 Department of Marine Resources is a -- I guess a resource
19 management department. So we need a manager who can manage a
20 management department. We really need somebody who's good at
21 that. And that's my number one criteria, somebody who can
22 manage. Yes, they need to be familiar with our system. They
23 need to be familiar with our fisheries, the economic impact of
24 those fisheries, what our waters are like, the conditions are
25 like out there. That would be -- it's all great. But this

N.J. SOROE, CSR #1297
If you can wrap it up.

If you have questions you would like to ask,
you're free to ask those questions. I'm not guaranteeing that we will have the answers, but you're welcome to ask questions, as well.

Mr. Gollott: Mr. Chairman, one more thing. If you run out of time and you want to submit some more, you can submit it to us in writing.

Dr. Asper: Yes. And anybody who is not here tonight, you can tell your friends if they want to submit comments, submit them in writing.

And one of the easiest ways to do that is to send them to my e-mail. I am Vernon Asper. Google me, and you'll find that I'm the only one, so it's easy to find my e-mail.

Okay. First up is Ed Bake.

Mr. Bake: Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity to address the commission. And I have given my remarks to you in writing already.

After observing and working with all of the directors, deputy directors, and executive directors in the last 40 years and serving on various committees and task forces with the CNR and the PMR, I feel that I have some insight into what's gone on in the past.

And I've given you eight requisites for the new commissioner -- the new executive director. They are:

1. The candidate should have an advanced academic degree, such as a Master's or Doctor's of Philosophy degree in marine resource related field, such as marine biology, marine ecology, marine ecosystem restoration, fisheries biology, fisheries management, marine environmental science or biological oceanography.

2. The candidate should have a minimum of seven years of active employment and/or research experience in a marine resource related position in the Gulf of Mexico region.

3. The candidate should have a total of at least seven years of proven experience in the management of marine resources at the state, regional, or federal level.

4. The candidate should have at least seven years of experience in the administration and management of personal in a marine resource agency.

5. The candidate should have at least seven years of experience in working with legislators and government officials in marine resource related efforts to promote and fund agency budgets, programs, projects, and personnel.

6. The candidate should have a proven track record of working well with the community and political leaders to satisfactorily manage, protect, enhance, and restore the marine resources of one or more of the Gulf states where they worked.

7. Number seven. The candidate should be willing to cease all outside business related activities by placing his or her existing business assets in a blind trust.

8. And finally, number eight. The candidate should have no record of arrests, fines, forfeiture, etcetera, related to marine resource use or abuse.

And finally, some of you know that I am circulating a petition to this commission asking that the commission appoint a citizens advisory council to take part in this process. So I'll be accepting anyone who wants to sign onto that petition.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Asper: Okay. Thank you, Ed.

Next we have Chris Ballus.

Mr. Ballus: My name is Chris Ballus. I'm a lifelong commercial fisherman.

At this time, I would like to give my time to Mr. A.J. Ross so he can read a letter that was sent to him.

It's going to take a few minutes for him to read it.

Thank you.

Mr. Ross: Hello. My name is A.J. Ross. I'm here on behalf of Danny Ross. Also eighth generation Fisherman who couldn't be here today because he's shrimping right now as we speak.

With the current system in place, we have been led to believe the best interest for the seafood resources, industry and public were in mind. Five minutes have been offered to us so we can convey to you what we think would be the best for our future.

This would definitely have been avoided had the truth of the intention of the board and the people in place in charge to have the transparency and oversight of why we are here today.

Every grant disaster proposal has been handled by this organization in the name of the residential commercial sector plus the public. How do we regain the trust is the battle cry over the news media. Easily it's obvious that a total reconciliation of the system is necessary. Due to the way the fishermen are used to get the funds and never (inaudible) their consideration, I should remind you that it was a group of fishermen that worked relentlessly to bring this commission to the coast, even after being told it would be used against us by a very well known politician, the fishermen and the public would be a definite step in the trust and the future of the board and the agency involved.

In the past, we were always shunned and dismissed -- sorry -- with all our thoughts and suggestions on the issues even though it was all relevant to our livelihood.
and way of life.

This is not just a job. This has always been a lifestyle choice that you have to love, so let's keep in mind the fishermen are very worried and heart felt to what happens or who takes part in these decisions.

Please remember millions of dollars are sent to this area from tangling U.S. citizens. We are challenging you to raise that after going only decisions possible for the best management and all our future.

This is necessary to elaborate on the mountain of deceitful and biased decisions over the past 20 years or more. Feel free to bring it up at workshops between knowledgeable and honest men. I'm sure everyone here would be more enlightened.

If these requests are too far reaching, then please dissand all that was said. And thank you for your time.

DR. ASPER: Thank you, D.J.

Let me just explain a little bit about how the commission works in case some of you are not familiar with who we are and why we're here.

We are volunteers. We don't get paid to do this. It's not our full-time job. We all have full-time jobs.

We are appointed by the governor for four-year terms. They're staggered. And we all represent different constituencies. I'm a non-profit environmental corporation or something like that.

I can't remember the exact words now, but we have a seafood processor. We have a recreational fisherman. We have a commercial fisherman. We have a charter boat operator.

And those qualifications are in statute, and we are appointed by the governor and we have to be approved again by the Senate.

So we've all been on here for varying lengths of time. I'm in my sixteenth year now. So I've been here a while.

One of the things you mentioned was that the fishermen were responsible for getting the commission down here on the coast. And that is really true. I remember when that happened. A lot of us were here. And we do recognize that and appreciate it.

Thank you.


P.J. Ecke.

MR. EICHE: Good evening. You all have seen me before you before.

DR. ASPER: State your name.

MR. EICHE: Oh. My name is F.J. Eiche. I'm representing the Coastal Conservation Association, in this case of Mississippi.

I've given you a statement that hopefully you will take a look at later on. And rather than read that statement, I'd like to make some related comments.

One is that CCA is a non-profit organization which means that we are involved with policy and not politics.

Currently, our membership runs roughly about 1500 in the state. We have a national membership of close to 100,000. Now, we are recreational fishermen, conservationists by nature.

Mississippi came into existence in the mid-1980s when CCA was basically a Gulf organization, coming out of Texas, since spreading to the Atlantic, and now it's the Pacific Northwest.

What we involve ourselves with is marine management at all levels. Y'all have dealt with us in terms of state issues, and we have agreed with or challenged some things that y'all might have done. There's a regional Gulf issue that the Gulf Council is meeting currently in Mobile, and we have members that are involved in that, and I was there all day yesterday.

We're at the national level pursuing policy again in terms of legislation that would be helpful to recreational fishing and to the resource.

And internationally, things like the I.C.M.R.T that is involved with pelagic species that are international in nature.

CCA therefore is very important to us and the leadership of this organization or this agency is important to us. When we look at this, we know that the marine environment is a very complex entity. Decisions that y'all make and that we support are by statute science based which leads us to the question of what this agency does, and we have a tremendous respect for a lot of the scientists that are associated with this agency at all levels.

Needless to say, it goes from the speckled trout project to other projects that we have fostered and supported in the past.

With that science base, we're trying to sustain resources. And it's only then that the commission needs to look at how it handles questions that relate to recreational and commercial fishing, the stakeholders and how that would be affected in sustaining the resource.

We can mess up a resource in short order, and I think it's pretty clear that we can. There's a fight going on in the Northeast right now about cod that some of you maybe are aware of. And if that thing keeps going, they're going to decimate the cod population in the Northeast and it's going to be gone. It's virtually gone now.

So it's only then that what we want which is more fishing and more fish to catch and the commercial sector more resource to harvest that that comes into play.

So we need a leader whose management and
organizational skills really do that possess a reputation of doing this and insist that in the people that would be under that person, whether it's a he or a she, so that DMR is very important to us. We share a mission. We share a lot of activities in terms of our children's activities, as well as some other things.

So we would like to be very supportive of DMR and are very hopeful that the next leader will be able to carry out that mission.

DR. ASPER: Okay. Your time is up. Thank you very much. And just want to let everybody know that P.J. comes to most of our meetings, so we do know him, and the OCA has been instrumental in a lot of things that we've done. They're a very valuable collaborator.

Andrew Barrett,

Mr. Barrett: My name is Andrew Barrett. I'm from Pass Christian. I'm a general contractor, avid fisherman, got a degree in archaeology. I've done a little bit of cultural resource management.

And I guess I just want to reiterate what Mr. Cake said. I think the need is for a scientist basically, somebody who understands what the goals and principles of DMR are, you know, fisheries as well as law enforcement, you know. I followed this story since November, so it seems apparent that there's trouble. I know you said we don't want to look into the past. Well, this isn't the past; this is happening right now.

And in my opinion, you know, I don't know if you need to be in a rush to appoint a new DMR head, you know. In fact, I would think there should be a hiring freeze right now, you know. Obviously there's 100 employees and they're not all corrupt. They do good things. It seems to me that you could look within those departments, find somebody within the department. If you can't find an individual, maybe you can do it by committee, people who understand their departments and what the goals are and what the goals of DMR are.

Like I said, I don't want to take up much more of your time. I know you've got a pile of paper there. That's just all I have to say. Thank you.

DR. ASPER: Okay. Thank you.

Bruce Duckett,

Mr. Duckett: Good evening. I'm Bruce Duckett. I'm an industrial engineer by education, a plant manager by profession. I've managed 24 hour a day seven day a week manufacturing plants for Fortune 500 companies ranging in size from 65 employees to 360 in Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

So I understand the problem you're faced with. I've had to hire managers and engineers for over my 30 year career.

And we're all aware of the critical needs of DMR.

Based on my experience, I think your most critical need is someone with impeccable honesty. You've got to restore the public trust, and yet this person has to manage the agency's multi-million dollar budget while resisting the temptations of those offered by those who would abuse the taxpayers' money.

I think the second most critical need given this agency has well over 100 employees is for the director to be an excellent manager of people. People are any organization's greatest asset, and they deserve to be managed with proper care.

I think the third most critical need is this person be fair minded when dealing with employees and the public. My experience has been it's far more important for the chief executive officer to be respected than to be loved.

I think it's helpful that the director would be knowledgeable of the management of our marine resources, but given the number of scientists who are currently on the staff at DMR, I don't think this is what I'd call a critical need.

It's an important need, but I wouldn't put it in the critical category, at least not today.

I think it would also be helpful if he or she was familiar with the local political environment, mostly to be aware of who not get involved with, as well as to who to team up with.

So I guess my estimation of the important qualities are in this order: impeccable honesty, good people skills, fair mindedness, an understanding of the management of marine resources and local political knowledge.

With this in mind, I think if you look within your organization, you'll find people who have these characteristics. I think currently your deputy director Danny O'Quin has these skills I've listed, and he comes from a family who has served the Mississippi coast for generations with honor and energy.

And I would encourage you to put him in your list of three people.

Thank you very much.

DR. ASPER: Okay. Thank you.

The voice of experience. That really helps.

Thank you.

Manny Skinner,

Mr. Skinner: Thank you, gentlemen. My name is Manny Skinner. I'm a commercial fisherman, tugger.

And I would like to see the next commissioner try to refurbish some of these reefs that we have that we haven't used in years, such as down around Pass Christian, and maybe somewhere in the midst of all this confusion, maybe try
to build a new reef here in the Biloxi area.
We have the White House reef, we have other
several reefs, and they've been destroyed by hurricanes; the
sand and the silt has covered them up. And these reefs have a
whole lot of different attributes that they could be used for.
We have commercial men that work for these casinos that take
these tourists out, and the only place they have to take these
people to is these oyster reefs that we ain't got no more.
Keesler reef is about one of the only reefs we got left.

And I would like to see the next commissioner
dedicate a whole lot of his time to the oyster industry. The
crabs, crabbing industry and the fishing industry and the hook and
line fishing industry pretty much stands for itself. But the
oyster industry is very delicate. And for a fact right now, since Christmas, five weeks, we've only got one week, and then it rained today, and I imagine out of the whole month of
February we will not work again.

These men are hardworking men. And I know Mr.
Walker tried to do the best he could with what he had to do with. We just got caught up in a bad situation.
But this group of people right here, they're fixing to get a lot of money. I mean he is fixing to give $20
million to the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida to refurbish basically the oyster reefs on this coast.

Now, I don't know why we can't spread it out a

I little bit and not just have all our apples in one basket down
at Pass Christian.
Thank you very much.
DR. ASPER: Okay. Thank you.
I can comment a little bit on that. One of the
challenges that we face in putting new reefs down in the
Jackson County area is simply water quality. The water quality
is not good enough to produce healthy oysters. The oysters are
fine, but we don't feel confident letting people eat them,
especially raw. So that's one of the issues we're working on.
It's a challenge that we face all the time.

But thank you very much for your input.
Della McCaughan.

MS. MCCAUGHAN: Bruce Buckett, I taught you in
1956. I recognized you.

DR. ASPER: Could you state your name for the
record, please, Della?

MS. MCCAUGHAN: He just did. Della McCaughan.

Okay. This is not to be timed right now. I want to say something to the Sun Herald, and you listen to me.

Due to the fact of a few people that have brought the
embarrassment and shame to this DMR, that needs to be corrected
by -- you know, there's so many wonderful people in the DMR,
so brilliant brains, people who know technology, people who work
their tails off. And if you want to learn a lot of marine
biology, you go around and you visit each of these people and
you talk to them, and you'll learn what all of these DMR people
are doing.

I was there for a while, and I was amazed, and I
just knew I was not technologically inclined, and I was an
idiot in a lot of things when I started talking to the DMR
people.

And another thing, the next time someone is
drowning or the boat is sinking out there, you go ask that
person if they love the DMR. Okay?

Now, my opinion is this. I have a lot of things
to say, but you give me three minutes. Bruce, you know I take
more than three minutes.

Now, you've given a lot of criteria, but let me
tell you something. When you have an executive director, that
can't be so strong to learn how to smile sometimes. I haven't seen
an executive director smile in ten years, and it's about time.
You need an open door policy, open door, greet people, learn how to say hello, come in. And when you talk to
them, you listen to the fishermen, you listen to that
eye witnesses that's dredging and pulling those trawls and working
hard. You listen to those people who work hard to make you
where you are today and to give the executive director what
they can be. Okay?

Now, I want to just say this, that the DMR was
one of the most valuable agencies in this state. We can't let
Jackson take it. Boy, they're going to be on the move to move
the DMR up there, I imagine. We want it here.

Now, commissioners, you need to get more
involved with all of these people. And you need to sell this,
too.

And another thing, with all of these millions of
dollars, you give some buses to where you give free rides to
people to learn about the Grand Bay NEVERS out there where
there's Senator Buchanan, David Pope. Do you know that they
give free lectures? They have programs for children, for
senior citizens, a wonderful, wonderful place. Very few people
in this audience tonight know all the wonderful opportunities
that would be available to these people if we spent some money
letting our people know about the wonders and the
accomplishments and all of these wonderful personnel that are
working their tails off because they're so dedicated and
they're so interested in making people realize the importance
of our marine resources.

DR. ASPER: I hate to cut you off, but you're
beyond your three minutes.

MS. MCCAUGHAN: I could go 30 minutes. But I
was going to say that Jimmy Taylor could yield his time.

I think I taught him, too.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, you did. First of all, I
The Mississippi Women of the Storm is a totally bipartisan group of women from all the counties across the coast that have worked diligently on securing the passage of the Restore Act legislation, and we're very involved now in helping to ensure that the implementation of the monies go to meet the necessary projects.

A lot of people have said different things already, and some of which I totally agree with. I think the individual that you consider has to be one who exhibits an understanding of the ability to offer fiscal accountability. And that is paramount to regain the credibility of the DMR.

I think the individual should have experience in management of a work force at large as the DMR.

This person could or should have some type of degree and experience in coastal management, which would include water resources, ecology, fisheries, and wetlands. This person should have an understanding of the Mississippi coastal plan and the wetlands use plan and how it is implemented.

The wetlands use plan is critical in our current situation since Katrina, so such vacant land, people wanting to sell property, develop property, and we have to remember what those wetlands mean to us and therefore have an understanding of the plan.

This person should be capable of revamping the process that's currently in place of awarding contracts to ensure more transparent accountability and eliminate any potential conflicts of interest.

And by revamping the process, the questions need to be asked about who you know and where are they within the department.

The commission, I applaud you in undertaking this public hearing, but you need to be able to ask each candidate specific questions about their positions on potentially controversial issues that will be coming before the commission and the Department of Marine Resources.

And it's very important to reiterate this lady's comment that the commission be allowed to remain here on the coast and correct the problems that they have encountered because I remember back when DMR was under Wildlife & Fisheries, too, and the people and the citizens of the Gulf Coast did not have an avenue to express their concerns. The manner of appeal was cumbersome. At least here, we know who is sitting on the commission, and we have access to them. And I think that has to be -- that particular issue has to be conveyed to the governor that I think most people here on the coast want to see the commission remain in place.

DR. ASPER: Okay. Thank you, Nonnie.

Next is James Miller.
MR. MILLER: How y'all doing today, Mr. Vernon. I ain't had time to meet you. Yeah, you wouldn't return my call. I've left several messages for you. Mr. Bosarge, that leaves you. I'm here, Mr. Taylor.

I've had issues with you, Mr. Taylor. I've had issues with you, Mr. Richard Gollott. I've had issues with you, Mr. Shelby.

And I'm destroy (sic) that no one on this board today -- because we can't move forward because there's still some dishonesty amongst this board. And that's how I feel because the paper reads what Mr. Phil Bryant said. We might need to just wipe this board out and start over because there ain't no way eight years went by and nobody knew what my buddy Bill Walker did because I got a ninth grade education, and I ain't no dummy. Okay?

I'm a hardworking fisherman. And I am tired of being boosted around by you, Richard Gollott, because you got a Gollott name. I'm done. You done drag me the farthest I could ever go with you. And Mr. Shelby, remember that day we got in an argument in the parking lot, sir? You called me a disgruntled fisherman, you people. Sir, man. I'm not a disgruntled person. I'm just tired of y'all abusing funds that was put out for the fishermen like us that we have to starve to death and listen that there wasn't nothing there for us.

DR. ASPER: Catfish, I really appreciate --

MR. MILLER: No, you got to hear me out, Mr. Vernon, because I got a question to ask you. Here comes your question. Now. How can you trust these board members to appoint someone for us to guide us into the future? There's no possible way. You done ruined my record.

And I'll tell Phil Bryant today in the Daily Herald, the board needs to be dismantled before you can come on to put someone where Mr. Guice is. That's the way I feel. I've been here a long time, all my life a fisherman. Since I've been four years old, Mr. Richard Gollott, my daddy's fought with you. We're done. My number is (228) 297-6949, and I ain't running and hiding no more, I'm done.

DR. ASPER: Thank you, Catfish. Always a pleasure to hear your input because you never pull any punches and you tell us what you think. We always --

MR. MILLER: I always have a lot, Mr. Vernon, with this council, and I want to let y'all know that I'm not that disgruntled fisherman that y'all see me to be for the last two years of my life. You know what I'm saying? I'm here now, but I want y'all to talk to me. If there's something I disgruntled you people about, talk to me because I want y'all to hear it out because I think this economy and the DR, you know, they doing a bad job on us in the future.

And I think a lot of people's got a lot of hold on that. So it's got to start with the board. You know what I'm saying, Mr. Vernon? You need to reconstruct that board.

DR. ASPER: All right. Thank you.

Daniel Collins.

MR. COLLINS: Daniel Collins from Biloxi.

I just have a few comments. For far too many years, this department has been heavily influenced in decisionmaking by politics and politicians. We need a director who will not bow to political pressure even if it means he or she loses his job. They need to have some balls, if you excuse me, and do what's right.

We need a director who will listen to the many dedicated scientists who work for this department and make decisions based on the science and the law.

You can restore confidence in this department by picking a director who is independent, honest, a good manager, and who is very knowledgeable of our resources.

I don't necessarily see the need for an advanced degree, Ph.D., but somebody really needs to know the resources and all of the environmental conditions that we have here on the coast.

I would agree with Mr. Cate that I think the citizens advisory committee would be a good idea to assist the commission in making this decision.

Thank you.

DR. ASPER: Okay. Thank you.

Bob Osey.

MR. OSEY: Quick question before you start my time. Is it now where the executive director under statute or whatever, I thought they reported to y'all and not to the governor. Is that correct?

DR. ASPER: They actually -- this person actually reports to the governor.

MR. OSEY: To the governor directly.

DR. ASPER: To the governor directly.

MR. OSEY: I didn't understand the play in the paper about having the next executive director report directly to him. So he's the one -- he should have been overseeing.

DR. ASPER: He already does report, but we as a commission oversee the policies of the department.

MR. OSEY: I understand. I don't understand the politics coming out of Jackson, Mississippi, which that explains that.

My name is Bob Osey. I'm a real estate broker on the Gulf Coast. At age 14 and for the next six years, I earned $100 a week at $1 an hour working in shrimp factories. I understand a lot about the Gulf Coast.

My parents came here and worked for over 40 years in Baltimore.
I agree with the people that said you should remain here, but the governor needs to look at each of you and you will have to answer to him.

Now, to the second point of the executive — so, Governor, your idea to get everybody report to you directly is a bad, bad idea.

To the second point. Next executive director of the Commission on Marine Resources. There are people here tonight who've got a lot of experience in the marine area, in the biology area. I have to disagree with Ed Cade on having this degree in marine biology or some related biology area.

I think we need a person that in my opinion has a diverse background with management, organizational skills, combined with communication and administration delegation of authority should be at the top of the list.

Now, I understand it's your job and you already stated to make three recommendations. I would hope as I had read this gentleman over here make, I would hope that you would consider making one of the recommendations after you look many times and recommend the present acting director, Mr. Danny Guice.

No one asked me to come here today. I just know of the Guices. I know Mr. Guice. He has an exemplary career as a Justice Court judge. He was a state legislator and a parole board member, and he's now serving as deputy director.

Let me state something about the parole board. It is state statute, unless that needs to be changed for this position, I would have received an appointment after leaving the legislature, but I could not because I'll just tell you, I owed so much money that I had to make money. I had five kids in Mississippi State at one time. I could not accept that job. I would have had to not have any other outside interest.

He has already been doing that for the number of years he served on the parole board. He cannot have any other outside interest. If it is, then he probably needs to go to jail.

DR. ASPER: Bob, I'm afraid your time is up. If indeed Danny applies for the job, as we assume that he will, you are welcome to write a letter in support of him. That would be very useful.

MR. USEY: Okay. One statement quick. There are all kind of politicians: elected, selected, anointed, and appointed. If you've ever coached little league ball, been involved in the Girl Scouts or anything else, you are a politician. You better be a good one.

DR. ASPER: Thank you.

Amanda Kennerly.

MS. KENNERLY: Dr. Asper, don't count this yet, but I read in the paper I had five minutes and timed my speech with a microwave. Do I have three or five?

DR. ASPER: You have three, but several people have been running over a little bit, so...

MS. KENNERLY: It did say five, sir.

DR. ASPER: It did.

MS. KENNERLY: Well, I'm Amanda Kennerly. I'm an attorney from Ocean Springs. I've lived on the coast since 1982 right on the water of the Ocean Springs harbor.

Friends, employees, countrymen, lend me your ears. I come not to bury Mr. Guice, but to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones. And I believe that in a very short time and under extenuating circumstances, he has done much good.

My experience with both Mr. Guice and the OMR has been limited. But in the words of the card: Here I am to speak what I do know.

No one asked me to come. You on the commission may remember the first time I came before you. I came five months ago with a group called the Friends of the Ocean Springs Harbor to protest the trading of the Harbor Landing property, and what we saw was an attempt to circumvent both CIPF deed restrictions and court rules obtained by our group after almost three years of litigation, shutting down the bar and inappropriate development on Harbor Landing.

This land swap was proposed and almost
successful under the cloak of secrecy passed from willing ear
to willing ear.

I know I spoke to some of y'all in an attempt to
discover how far this plot had gone and where the property was
even located.

I was met with opposition and secrecy by certain
people at the highest level, as well as my own city officials.

Many of the staff still here were willing to
help, but hardly anybody knew anything. It was tense, and I
was terrified that our effort would be undermined by the old
regime of insiders who appeared hell bent on concealing their
dealings from the public and from most of their own employees.

Through the efforts of many, and God bless the
free press, those days are behind us and a new era is at the
helm. But Mr. Guice is not a new man to me. Although I have
no personal association, I have known Mr. Guice for years and
his wife. I believe he is someone worthy of my trust and the
trust of the public.

I have had occasion to contact him as an
attorney while he was serving on the parole board, and his
response was immediate and accurate.

Since his appointment, Mr. Guice and I, on
behalf of our group, met with Mr. Guice about returning the
CIAP purchased Harbor Landing to public use. I found him to be
well-informed about the CIAP properties and the purpose of

Their acquisition, and he was open, honest, and approachable.

In short, after 20 years, I was really glad to
see him. Yes, he has been a politician. But despite his
chosen career, I think he is sincere in his desire to keep this
agency up and running while dealing with the mess his
predecessors made.

It seems he has done some major housecleaning in
a very short time, and that can not have been easy.

I think he knows that the vast majority of
employees here do their jobs and have no part in monkey
business. Besides, his wife and kids already have jobs.

Mr. Guice is from the coast and has always kept
a home here. He understands the way we feel about the water,
the wildlife, and hopefully the barrier islands and the
importance of their continued preservation.

If a science background was a guarantee of
integrity, we would not be here tonight.

I am aware of some of you would prefer a marine
biologist, but let me say I would be frightened by tossing a
newcomer into this situation.

I was only required to research one small issue:
the ability of CIAP purchased property be sold and the
restrictive easements for preservation eliminated. And people,
this took me months of reading reams of paperwork, grants, laws,
regulations, both federal and state.

The Byzantine complexity of funding and
regulations and policies and procedures here at this agency is
not easy to grasp, even for an old state and federal trained
lawyer like me. But Mr. Guice has grasped and understood much
under extreme duress.

This is no job for someone who can't sell the
land sharks from the land dolphins.

In closing, I give y'all three examples of why I
advocate retaining Mr. Guice in his position.

Think of a hospital. When a hospital
administrator runs it, most docs dislike him or her, but the
job gets done. Hand the hospital to a doctor, and the
priorities shift, and not in a good way. Liability and
ambiguities come into play.

The President has just appointed Sally Jewell as
our new Secretary of the Interior. Like Conly, she had jobs
preservationists and ecologists hate: petroleum engineer and
banker. That's the double death. But she crossed over, and
Mr. Guice is doing that, as well.

So Mr. Guice, I am happy to see you here.
Please smile for us sitting there and hope you will still be
dhere in the future.

I have one request, Mr. Guice, something that is
dear to my heart and important to many of us is protecting the
barrier islands from risky and too profit of drilling.

If you can seriously consider and hopefully
support the goals of the Twelve Miles South Coalition in
restricting drilling around our islands and natural preserves,
you could use your expertise as a politician and leader to
persuade those feds at the Bureau of Ocean Management to give
us the same relief as other states have.

DR. ASPER: You're over time. Your comments
have digressed from dealing with specifics. Thank you very
much for your comments.

MS. KOWNERLY: Thank you for your time.
DR. ASPER: The next person is Tao Vu.
NS. Vu: Good evening, Dr. Asper and commission.
My name is Tao Vu. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to
express my views.

I'm a member of the Mississippi Coalition for
Vietnamese American Fisher Folks and Families. We are a
non-profit organization.

First of all, I strongly support Dr. Gale's
summary of the eight qualifications and credentials that I
think that the commission should seriously consider.
And I also support the formation of a citizens
council to help inform in this process.

There is a significant number of commercial
fishermen behind me, not just Vietnamese American, but other
community.
And particularly since the BP oil spill, and this is not a mere spill, but has been a tremendous disaster, many of the commercial fishermen have expressed serious concerns about livelihood sustainability and their ability to continue fishing and provide support for their families. And I use the example of the oyster reefs that for almost three years now have been closed. It’s only been open for a limited number of days in 2011, and last year was open approximately maybe a month. And what has happened to the livelihoods of these oystermen.

We would like in addition to some of the suggestions that have been brought forth in terms of integrity, honesty, scientific background or expertise, organization and financial management experience, is that this person is willing to sit down and listen, seriously listen, to the needs of the community. I think that’s a very important, very, very important trait that this person -- actually this person needs to have, you know. It’s been a very, very difficult challenging post BP for these fishermen to interact with this agency. And it’s beyond mind boggling why it should be an adversarial position.

We need to be able to sit down together, you know, in a respected manner, and truly listen to each other and learn what the respective roles, responsibilities of the community, as far as their needs and how to address these issues we have in our communities.

Our Gulf is a national treasure. It’s our home. And we need to restore it properly. We need to engage folks who have practical knowledge and experience of the Gulf, and not only depend on academic knowledge alone. And we would like this new executive director of this agency to be able to sit down and work with commercial fishermen and to bridge this gap and to give their meaningful involvement engaged in coastal restoration efforts.

Thank you.

DR. ASPER: Carol Lightener.

MS. LIGHTENER: I’m from Biloxi, Mississippi.

First, thank the Sun Herald for the work they’ve done.

And I had to rewrite my notes because I couldn’t voice all the opinions that I had.

And the tentacles of this reaches from Washington, D.C., to Jackson, Mississippi, Harrison County, Jackson County, and even Biloxi. They have misused money for restoration of the Gulf, wetlands, everywhere, and the people that were actually affected by the disasters.

Our whole ecosystem, our way of life, has been -- so much is destroyed.
has an idea where — what happened to it or what.

And it's not about the fishing. And it is.

It's all about the cash. And the cash is disbursed. And if anybody in here can break down how many millions has disappeared and where it went, that's what I would like to know.

And if you think that this gentleman hired everybody on his road and there's no collusion, no nepotism, then I need to go get another drink, gentlemen, because I am done.

I love this place. I came down here to live here. And I dealt with the entities, not just from this, to the voter district, to every entity. They answer to no one. They are entity in themselves.

And it's just amazing — it's like a hydrant. Everybody is separated so you can't kill it, so nobody has responsibility.

And I love this place, and I will die here, gentlemen. And I hope I don't die broke.

Thank you very much.

GR. ASPER: Chuck Stein.

MR. STEIN: My name is Chuck Stein. I'm a long time lifelong resident of the Gulf Coast. And I am here on behalf of a good friend of mine, Danny Guice, who has met the qualifications that I think the people that really matter, the people that live here, the people that work here, the fishermen who are shrimpers that have made their way of life off of the water, Danny has always been an open door policy guy. He's always been a guy that you could call, you could talk to. The short time he's been here, he's rallied the troops. He's let them know that they can get back to their jobs, they don't have to worry about losing their jobs, that this isn't about them.

So on a personal note, when I was president of the Chamber of Commerce of O'Heriville, I had a friend, schoolemate, lost her mother and father, at the O'Heriville-Sanpension T-110 interchange before a light was there. So I took it upon myself to go and get letters from all our elected officials, and I called Danny and asked him for a letter, and he asked me to hold up a minute. Put down the phone. The next time he came back, he had the high school commission on the phone with me, explained what happened, said he had constituent down here that was really trying to push this through to get this done.

That's what Danny Guice can do. Danny, as far as qualifications, sure, a lot of people say, well, you have to have a degree for this, a law degree. A lot of us came up in the school of hard knocks. Richard, you could attest to that. We've learned by mistakes. We've corrected them. We've moved on. We've tried to help people. That's what Danny Guice does.

Danny has been a legislator. He's made laws for the betterment of the community and the state. He's been a Justice Court judge and enforced those laws. And now he's in a leadership where he needs to stay and do a good job for the rest of us. And I applaud him for taking it because I know it can't be a job that was fun to walk into.

But again, I'm for Danny. I hope Danny applies for the job. I think there's a lot of support for Danny in this room and on this coast. Thank you very much.

GR. ASPER: Thank you.

MAXINE RAMSEY: My name is Maxine Ramsey. And as a citizen, voter, and a taxpayer, I'm exercising my democratic rights of speaking tonight.

Since so many people so far have praised Mr. Guice, I do not know him personally, but I know his record.

We need a person friendly to the environment, and Mr. Guice has a proven record that he is not that person. He sided with the notorious former oil lobbyist Governor Haley Barbour of wanting to drill offshore in sight of locals and tourists alike.

Also, it's reported that he was with the group that wanted to — for economic development to close off and dump up Bluff Creek.

Being on the parole board is no cut for this position's requirements.

Being selected by former Director Walker paints Guice with the same brush in the public's eye.

Was the deputy director position advertised? Was there three candidates who were interviewed for the position?

Governor Bryant has jumped on board with his suggestion for a director by the name of Ashley Edwards. We do not need another career politician or a good old boy but will mean business as usual at DMR.

We need a nationwide search for a candidate that is experienced in marine and environmental sciences.

You have a written job description already, so use it.

Choosing Mr. Guice will not satisfy the public or employees of DMR. Choose the most qualified applicant and not the most politically connected person such as he.

You may think I'm a little biased against Mr. Guice, but he has used the media for free advertisement to sell his position, wanting the executive director's position, so as a taxpayer and a voter, I'm using this public meeting to sell the fact that we need a qualified executive director, and in my books, Mr. Guice is not it.

Mississippi is Number 50 in everything bad. Let us do one good thing and get DMR off the front page of the Sun Herald.
By the way, our thanks go to the Sun Herald for their excellent investigative coverage of the DMR story because without their reporting, the public would still be in the dark as to what occurred at DMR. And may your group of journalists win the Pulitzer Prize this year because you will deserve it.

Commissioners, thank you for this opportunity to speak on how our tax dollars are spent with the hope of a democratic selection of a new executive director.

I'll leave you with one statement: If you select Danny Wilner, Jr., or Ashley Edwards, which is Governor Bryant's choice, you have failed to represent the people.

DR. ASPER: Thank you, Maxine.

Marvin Flowers

MR. FLOWERS: Good evening. My name is Marvin Flowers. I was born and raised here in Biloxi for 38 years, and I've never seen a mess like this.

And I came tonight to throw everybody under the bus, but there don't seem to be any more room so there's not much else for me to say. I yield the rest of my time to the next speaker.

DR. ASPER: Next is Tom Becker.

MR. BECKER: Good evening. My name is Tom Becker, president of the Mississippi Charter Boat Captains Association and also president of the National Association of Charter Boat Operators, so I'm dealing with problems all over the country, also, with their problems and trying to back them up.

We had a meeting last night, and we discussed this at length about what we wanted to see of the new DMR. And one of the things that they all said was we do not want to see a politician in that seat. We want somebody that is like yourself, Mr. Asper, a doctor, and knows the fisheries.

We have the laws that we have to deal with with NOAA. And we have them for the state here. It's a problem that we try to work with and try to make a living at.

In the Sun Herald on Sunday, there was a very neat article about the DMR. The last part is all I'm going to read. The more we learn about DMR, the more convinced we are that the next executive director will be forced to make significant changes at the DMR, both in personnel and in policies.

And that convinces us that a political figure, whether in or out of office, or connected to someone in or out of office, should not be chosen because DMR is far beyond the point where political skills alone will restore public trust and confidence.

I have talked to Dr. Walker many times, have asked him about certain issues. We're working on it; that's all I would get. I want the next executive director to explain what you are doing.

That's why I'm asking the question. That's all I have. Thank you.

DR. ASPER: Thank you, Tom.

Tom Walters. Not here?

Teresa Collins.

MS. COLLINS: Good evening. My name is Teresa Collins. I live in Biloxi. I feel like I'm screaming in the mic. I'm here to represent Gulf Islands Conservancy. And I thank y'all for opening the door to all of us.

I think one thing that we have found out over the past few years is that the commission has not welcomed us the way we had been in the past, and I hope this is a change for the better. And I thank you very much for having us here.

I support a lot of comments that have been made tonight. I, too, think that the advisory committee should be appointed. But to the point of the director's job, I think the person should have demonstrated prior experience in successful technical program management related to natural resources and marine resource sciences and wetlands management with a Master's degree or at least ten years of prior experience that would make them qualified. And that's stuff that we can get into later.

They should be knowledgeable and experienced with critical aspects of marine resource management, management of fisheries, management of wetlands, protection of wetlands, coastal beaches and islands, vulnerable marine life like our dolphins and turtles, and fisheries.

The potential director should not have taken or had held past positions or taken actions which could be in conflict with the rules, regulations, guidelines and procedures of the Mississippi Coastal Program, the wetlands use law, the wetlands use plan, the fisheries regulations, the federal grant programs and requirements. All of these things are very complicated and time consuming, and we need a director that understands these things.

This agency seems to have put wetlands into a back seat because if you look at the weeks, it doesn't exist any more. And that used to be the guiding force of this agency. And I don't know what happened to it other than Dr. Walker removed it. And we would like to see that change back to being a guiding force for how you manage this agency.

There should be a broad search for the candidate. It could be a national search. But that candidate should have knowledge of the Gulf living of Mississippi coastal waters and resources. It's a major important issue that they understand our problems and our resources.

So whether they're from here or not is not
important. It's what they know about this region and how they
can control it. And they should understand the political
problems. But if they have the experience that are outlined by
what I said in your guidelines, then that shouldn't be a
problem.

Again, I support the comments that will be made
by GRN, Nississippi Women of the Storm which I am a member of,
Ed Case, and some other people, that matters not at this point.
The director should be willing to protect the
resource, even if his job is on the line. We've had
that problem before. I worked with GRN, which was the
predecessor of GRN, when we had Jackson telling us what to do.
And we had directors whose jobs were threatened by Jackson.
And they took stands which could have cost them their jobs.
And that is not happening any more.

We need a director that will listen to the
staff about what the staff is saying or not. You
have a very qualified staff here. You need to use them.
If they disagree with the director, the director should allow
them to make their opinions known. Then you can decide
whether you want to take that opinion or not.

But this staff is qualified, and you hire them
for a reason. We're paying for these people. Listen to them.
Let them give you their opinions, and you decide there. That
has not been the case in many years. And it's time to support
your staff.

Transparency and oversight is the bottom line,
has to start with you. And you need to start asking the tough
questions and not just abdicate your authority to the director.
He wants more than anything to keep the OH. We
ought to get OH. The commission is more important than you
can ever understand because driving to Jackson to talk to three
people, one might have something to do with the coast, was a
very difficult thing and was unfair to the coastal people and
taxpayers. So let's keep the OHR, but open yourselves up to
listening to anyone of us.

I've called some of you and have not gotten
phone calls back, either, maybe because you don't like me. I
don't care if you like me or not. It doesn't matter. Listen
to me or listen to everybody. It's not just me, it's everyone
here. There are people -- I can tell you people that did not
come to this meeting tonight because they think this is
preordained and it's a done deal. And you can't convince them
otherwise. And we have to change that opinion.

And I would like to say one thing in support of
what's happened, and she's going to kill me for doing this, but
Susan Perkins is now the director of public relations or
whatever you call it. That was a brilliant move. She is a
very qualified, honest, hardworking person, and I think you've
done a great job putting her in that position. And I think

that opens the door for transparency. And I can't thank you
enough for that.

I know you're about to shut me off.

DR. ASPER: Yes, we are.

MS. COLLINS: Three more things. Follow the
GRN's process for interviewing a director or the OHR process
where they let the staff interview your candidates, also, which
would give your staff a chance to look at these people. And
be aware that we have a lot of money coming down from BP we
talk. We have wasted a lot of money on this coast because of
the things that are going wrong here. We don't want that to
happen again. We want the money to go to restoring the
resources. If you restore the resources, you will restore our
economy.

And thank you again for letting us all voice our
opinion.

DR. ASPER: Thank you.

Mark Stewart.

MR. STEWART: How y'all doing tonight?

Mark Stewart, commercial fishermen.

A lot of points have been touched on here
tonight. Some of them haven't.

One thing is that I don't think this board here
wants to hear anything the fishermen had to say. They don't
like what the fishermen have to say, and they don't want to
hear it. Come in here and ask questions, and no comment, and
that's the answer. I don't think that cuts it.

You know, as far as our resources and all up and
down this coast, it's pitiful, pitiful. I don't know who's
been think they doing their job, taking up with the oysters and
all. I just come off the reefs a few weeks ago, and it's the
worst I've ever seen them in my life. And if they stay like
that, I ain't going back. How am I going to make any money?

How are the rest of the fishermen going to make any money if
there ain't nothing done about this?

Just read an article last night where
Louisiana's got pristine oysters, best ones around here, due to
like the Pearl River and stuff coming out. Every time the
Pearl River comes up, we're out of work. Louisiana says that's
why their oysters are the best.

All across the coast here, we got oysters all
over the place. Yet we're over here in this one little prison
yard over here. It ain't right. Alabama's got the cleanest,
most pristine oysters anywhere. Where at? Soon as you cross
our state line where ours are polluted, theirs are the best
ones around. They catch them all year.

DR. ASPER: Could you please talk about the
situation at hand?

MR. STEWART: I am. The whole situation -- I'll
tell you about it. You want to know about it. I think this
whole board needs to be abolished. Y'all don't listen to us. You don't care. You got one fisherman on the board; he don't even count. Y'all don't listen to him. He don't even matter. Y'all call him up and tell him what's going on. You don't ask his opinion.

I know what's going on. Everybody else does, too. There's people in here that don't even represent the American fishermen, you know. You know, what is this? The DNR partners? You know, I keep hearing about BP and their partners and their partners. I keep reading it and checking out. Well, the DNR is their partner. How is that?

You know, can you tell me? It ain't right. And the reason is the DNR is partners with BP because, well, BP is the only one got any money given to y'all.

One of y'all's that's on that board up there told me that. I don't think it is.

But, Mr. Quince, I don't know you, but I ain't heard you taking up for making the resources better for our fishermen, commercial fishermen or recreational, either one. I know you've been blooding your horn and, you know, bragging on everybody that works here which there's a lot of good people work here, I'm sure.

But I guarantee, there's a bunch of them tangled up in that mess with that one that left here. Need to find who the rest of them are and get them out of here.

And if this board can't listen to the fishermen, what good is it? Can't listen to the people, get rid of them.

DR. ASPER: Thank you, Mark. The last sheet I have here is for Julia O'Neal. If you're here and you want to speak but haven't filled one of these out, please do so and get it up to us because we want to hear everybody.

MS. O'NEAL: My name is Julia O'Neal, and I'm from Ocean Springs, but I'm speaking for the Gulf Restoration Network.

Founded in 1994, GRN is a network of groups and individuals committed to empowering people to protect and restore the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

GRN has long been critical of the purposes of some coastal impact assistance program projects administered by DNR that seem to destroy habitat rather than to restore it, such as the City of Pass Christian dredging public beaches to expand its harbor.

In addition, we are concerned that under Dr. Walker, DNR failed to take a hard look and ask tough questions about how MDA's proposal to open up oil and gas drilling in state waters could impact the marine environment.

The recent revelations over DNR's use of CTAP funds in questionable ways have only served to amplify these concerns.

Some housecleaning is in order, and we are heartened that the DNR has called this meeting and expressed an interest in conducting a transparent and wide search for the next director of DNR.

I urge you to follow through on this commitment and conduct the nationwide search for qualified candidates.

The letter of the law says that the DNR director should be knowledgeable and experienced in marine resources management. In addition to a background in marine science, the next director must have experience as an administrator and the ability to oversee a large agency like DNR which deals with millions of dollars in grants and other funding every year.

Plus, any candidate to take over as the new executive director should be motivated by solid science and a desire to protect the health of Mississippi's coast, not politics.

As Mississippi's share of billions of dollars of BP fines from the Restore Act and MDA begins to roll in, DNR will play a central role in distributing and overseeing these funds. The public needs to know that this money will be used wisely and effectively on restoring the coast, not pork barrel politics.

The new leader at DNR must be committed to greater accountability and transparency, but the commission must also better exercise their powers over the director when necessary, including through oversight.

Finally, the Marine Resources Foundation should be either dissolved or some kind of reliable firewall should be created between DNR and the foundation. Public monies meant for DNR should under no circumstances flow to the foundation or another similar organization in the future. Too many ethical problems exist in the present arrangement.

Most of the staff at DNR are exemplary public servants committed to their work and the health of the coast communities and environment. But the recent revelations about some members of DNR's leadership have been a black eye for the agency. We urge the commission to choose candidates for executive director with the management skills, scientific background, and commitment to protecting the health of the Mississippi Sound that is needed to restore the public trust in DNR.

Thank you.

DR. ASPER: Thank you. Let me comment, the others who brought written comments, be sure we get a copy of those.

We have one more sheet here. Don Joost.

MR. JOOST: My name is Don Joost, commercial...
fisherman, and I’m here on behalf of the Mississippi Gulf Coast
Fisherman’s organization.

And I see where you’ve heard some of the
frustration that these people are feeling. I mean, it’s hard
enough trying to make your living. But when we look at a new
director, we need someone who understands modern fisheries
management. And it’s not just managing the resource. We have
to manage it now in such a way that people can make a living
from it.

And we haven’t felt that in the last few years.
That’s why you’ve seen attendance drop off at meetings and just
like that. It doesn’t matter to us really what the person’s
management experience is. I mean, I don’t see any ladies up
there, and I’ve sure learned a lot from them tonight, you know.
I mean, we need to look at that.

We have tremendous resources here with military
personnel, and no one is going to get more organized than that.
But the point is, we just can’t continue in the
same old same old. These policies are mixed in the 1950s, and
we have to come to the 21st Century.

Thank you.

DR. ASPER: Okay. I believe that’s all of the
shoots.

Does anyone want to change their mind and speak?

If not --

MR. FREY: I’d like to. I haven’t filled out a
sheet.

DR. ASPER: Come up to the podium and say your
name, please.

MR. FREY: My name is Rob Frey. I’ve always
been under the idea that a commission would control the person
that was under it. And what is the point in having a
commission if you don’t control the man that’s under you?

Another thing, why should Jackson be involved in
something on the coast here? We need to control everything
that’s on the coast. Jackson don’t know a damn thing about
what’s going on down here, and they don’t even care.

Years ago, they sent three experts they called
them down here to examine how many deer we had per acre. They
were so stupid they didn’t realize that it was a mating season,
and a buck was messing around with his girlfriend and had all
kinds of tracks. So what they did -- this is funny -- they
said there were so many deer per acre that it would ruin the
whole herd of deer. Like I said, they didn’t realize that a
buck was fooling around. So they opened up a doe season, and
they killed off more does.

I mentioned to these idiots, why didn’t you give
out so many permits if you wanted so many deer killed?

Anyway, I’m finished with my statement. Once
again, I think the commission should get off their butts and
control the person that’s under it.

Thank you for your time.

DR. ASPER: Thank you.

That concludes the public comment section.

Is there any other business? Or is there a
motion that we adjourn?

MR. DRUMMOND: I make a motion that we adjourn.

MR. GOLLOTT: Second.

DR. ASPER: We’re adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned 8:05 p.m.)

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COURT REPORTER’S CERTIFICATE

I, Norma Jean Laderoe Soroe, Certified Shorthand
Reporter, do hereby certify that to the best of my skill and
ability I have reported the special meeting of the Commission
on Marine Resources and that the foregoing 63 pages constitute
a true and correct transcription of said special meeting held
on the 7th day of February 2013.

I do further certify that my certificate annexed
hereto applies only to the original and certified transcript.
The undersigned assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of
any reproduced copies not made under my control and direction.

Witness my signature this the 26th day of February
2013.

[Signature]

NORMA JEAN LADEROE SOROE, CSR #1297
Certified Shorthand Reporter

N.J. SOROE, CSR #1297