

COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, February 18, 2020  
9:00 a.m.  
Bolton Building Auditorium  
1141 Bayview Avenue  
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

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Commission Members:

Mark Havard, Chairman

Ronald Daniels, Vice Chairman

Steve Bosarge

Richard Gollott

Natalie Guess

Also Present:

Joe Spraggins, Executive Director DMR

Sandy Chesnut, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

1           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I would like to welcome  
2 everybody to the Commission on Marine Resources meeting  
3 February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

4           I will first start this off with a call to  
5 order.

6           Keith Davis, do you mind leading us in the  
7 Pledge of Allegiance?

8           KEITH DAVIS: Thank you.

9           (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

10          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We weren't going to let  
11 him get away that easy.

12          I would like to recognize a moment of silence.  
13 (Moment of silence observed.)

14          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you guys for doing  
15 that.

16          Approval of the Minutes.

17          Can we get approval of the minutes for January  
18 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020?

19          Can I get a motion to approve the minutes?

20          COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll make the motion.

21          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion.

22          Do I have a second?

23          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

24          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a  
25 second for approval of the minutes for January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

1 All those in favor say aye.

2 (All in favor.)

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

4 (None opposed.)

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

6 That brings us on to C, Approval of the Agenda.

7 I would like to make a motion that we move

8 forward with the agenda as written.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS: Sir, if I could, we need to have  
10 one thing removed from the agenda, if y'all would look at  
11 it, and that is G1(a), because we have to go out for  
12 additional information. We didn't have the information  
13 back in time and I would ask, if you could, if you would  
14 entertain a motion taking that off the agenda.

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Sure.

16 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll make a motion to  
17 remove G1(a) from the agenda today.

18 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second it.

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

21 All those in favor say aye.

22 (All in favor.)

23 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

24 Any other changes that we want to make to the  
25 agenda?

1 (No response.)

2 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I think you  
3 need to have a motion to approve the agenda as modified.

4 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, can I get a  
5 motion to approve the agenda as modified?

6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: So moved.

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those in favor say  
8 aye.

9 (All in favor.)

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

11 (None opposed.)

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves. We have  
13 approval of he agenda.

14 We have some elected officials in our presence  
15 today. We have Mayor FoFo Gilich, Councilman Paul  
16 Tisdale, Councilman Robert Deming and Ms. Rebecca Powers  
17 Supervisor from Harrison County. We also have Keith Davis  
18 here representing the Secretary of State's office.

19 We appreciate all of you guys coming and joining  
20 us today.

21 That brings us down to Executive Director's  
22 report.

23 Director.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you, sir.

25 As far as employment, contracts and procurement,

1 we have nothing to report today.

2 Next up on the agenda is the Lower Pearl River  
3 Water Project, and I would like to bring Mr. Gerald  
4 Blessey up and let him brief that to you, please.

5 GERALD BLESSEY: Thank you, General.

6 Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I am  
7 Gerald Blessey, Manager of the Mississippi Sound  
8 Coalition.

9 We are here today to give you an overall  
10 briefing of our activities to date and to talk in  
11 particular about some of the initiatives, the Lower Pearl  
12 Initiative and so forth.

13 I do want to kind of bring you up to date on our  
14 activities -- Mayor Gilich is here today with us and some  
15 of our associate members -- and also to answer any  
16 questions you may have because, of course, the Department  
17 of Marine Resources and the Commission on Marine Resources  
18 are the essential state agencies that we are really here  
19 to assist and ask for your guidance on how to protect and  
20 restore the Mississippi Sound.

21 The Mississippi Sound Coalition was formed last  
22 fall. Mayor Gilich, after the devastating summer that you  
23 are all aware of from the Bonnet Carre Spillway, asked me,  
24 as special counsel for Biloxi, to get together with the  
25 local governments and try to form a coalition to really

1 take some action on behalf of the local governments and  
2 have a presence, have a voice in this issue.

3 we formed this coalition last fall and twelve of  
4 the fifteen local governments are members, city and county  
5 governments, and they elected Marlin Ladner as the chair,  
6 and I'm not sure if Marlin is here today, but Rebecca  
7 Powers is certainly a fine stand-in and substitute pinch  
8 hitting here today for the Harrison County Board of  
9 Supervisors.

10 The vice chair is Scotty Adam, the new head of  
11 the Hancock County Board of Supervisors.

12 The group asked me to serve as manager, in order  
13 to kind of keep all of the administrative side going and  
14 also to chair the Attorney Committee which is the city  
15 attorneys and the board attorneys.

16 The coalition is really just an advisory group.  
17 It is not an official political body. It is formed to  
18 study the issues and make recommendations to the  
19 individual voting bodies which are the city and county  
20 governments and to assemble associate members, and I want  
21 to really talk a little bit about that and urge all of you  
22 to consider as individuals and even as an organization to  
23 be associate members.

24 Right now, our primary associate members are the  
25 Mississippi Commercial Fisheries United, Inc., and Ryan

1 Bradley is here. Y'all know Ryan. Mr. Mavar is also an  
2 associate member.

3 Also, the Mississippi Hotel and Lodging  
4 Association, Linda Hornsby's group, is a member.

5 Of course, fisheries and tourism in particular  
6 were devastated last summer, but all of our businesses  
7 really took a hit. We will talk about that in a little  
8 bit and Mayor Gilich is here to talk to you about it.

9 I will just give you one statistic. Last  
10 August, the sales tax in Biloxi alone for one month went  
11 down by a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars year  
12 over year.

13 That is eighteen-and-a-half percent of the seven  
14 percent state sales tax. So the state took a hit, too,  
15 and that translates into over two million dollars in gross  
16 sales for the sales tax businesses, local businesses.

17 When you multiply that for the whole summer and  
18 fall -- hopefully it doesn't happen again this year, but,  
19 if it happens in the future, you can see the prospects are  
20 devastating on many levels, including to our local tax  
21 base.

22 The mission of the Mississippi Sound Coalition  
23 adopted by the twelve governments is to restore and  
24 protect the ecosystem of the Mississippi Sound and the way  
25 of life and the economies of coastal communities that

1 depend upon it, based on good science and fair public  
2 policy.

3           The good science, of course, we are on the  
4 learning curve and you have some great scientists right  
5 here, Dr. Mickle and others at the Gulf Coast Research  
6 Lab, Read Hendon and Monty Graham, and all of the state-  
7 based scientific community, we really look forward to  
8 partnering with and encouraging those studies.

9           Fair public policy is where we really are in  
10 need of great help.

11           This is a national problem, as you well know,  
12 that calls for national solutions. We have other issues  
13 looming on the horizon. The Mid-Breton Sediment Diversion  
14 for instance which is under consideration, Environmental  
15 Impact Statement going forward. We should be part of  
16 that.

17           A lot of the science that we see suggests that  
18 that is not a very good idea, that it is going to end up  
19 hurting the fisheries community. Hurting not only the  
20 Mid-Breton, but the Chandelier Sound and the Mississippi  
21 Sound.

22           The science is not all in. So, without jumping  
23 to conclusions, we are just feel that it really needs to  
24 be looked at very closely.

25           The new diversion for Lake Maurepas, is that



1 good, or bad?

2 We don't want to jump to conclusions, but we  
3 need to be involved in the loop. We, the State of  
4 Mississippi and the local governments and this agency and  
5 Attorney General and our governor and all officials need  
6 to take serious looks at these things which are permanent  
7 long-term threats to the survival of the whole Gulf Coast.  
8 The Mississippi Sound is our front door. If it dies, we  
9 die.

10 As you know, the agricultural runoff from  
11 thirty-one states and two Canadian provinces come down the  
12 Mississippi River basin and flow past the Bonnet Carre  
13 Spillway and, when it is opened, all of those nutrients  
14 and all of those toxic substances come forward and, as you  
15 well know, that was really the source of the algal bloom  
16 last summer because it went into the summer months, the  
17 warmer water. It really incubated.

18 It is the kind of thing that if it continues to  
19 happen, our economy will just be totally devastated. Not  
20 just tourism, not just fisheries which is terrible enough,  
21 but the whole economy.

22 The Federal Agency NOAA predicts the long-term  
23 increased rainfall in the Mississippi River basin will  
24 rise for the next ten to fifteen years. Rainfall will be  
25 greater and greater.

1           We think we need a Marshall Plan, something like  
2 a Marshall Plan for the whole Mississippi River Basin to  
3 reform the flood control, management and the structures in  
4 the whole basin, not just the Bonnet Carre; look for  
5 incentives and grants for sustainable land use in all of  
6 these agricultural areas, incentives and grants for  
7 agriculture to avoid, or treat, the runoff.

8           This is huge. It affects all of us. The  
9 Mississippi Delta is partly still under water right now  
10 and you can see what is happening with the Pearl River.

11           The coalition has proposed the Mississippi Sound  
12 and Lake Pontchartrain Protection Act of 2020 to the  
13 United States Congress.

14           I sent them to you and, General, I think y'all  
15 distributed those documents to the Commission.

16           JOE SPRAGGINS: We did. We put it on the portal  
17 for them to look at.

18           GERALD BLESSEY: Okay. Good. We urge you to  
19 take a look at it. It has been sent. It endorsed by the  
20 coalition. Virtually all of our members have passed  
21 resolutions in their city councils and board of  
22 supervisors meetings to endorse it and sent that  
23 endorsement on to our senators and congressmen who are, we  
24 feel, one hundred percent supportive of what we are trying  
25 to do.

1           The bill hasn't been introduced yet. The staffs  
2 are working on it up there.

3           What does it do?

4           Briefly, the most important part is it requires  
5 by law that Mississippi, the State of Mississippi have a  
6 seat on the Mississippi River Commission.

7           Right now, the Commission is the one that  
8 decides what gets opened when and what gets closed when  
9 and the Corps of Engineers, or course, are members of that  
10 Commission. Mississippi does not have a lay person on  
11 that commission.

12           This bill would require the President to select  
13 from nominees nominated by the Governor of Mississippi, to  
14 put a lay person from Mississippi on there at least to  
15 have a voice when these decisions are being made and,  
16 secondly, to consult all the local governments in  
17 Mississippi, these fifteen local county and city  
18 governments, plus the DMR, plus the DEQ, plus MEMA. All  
19 of the state agencies should be consulted before these  
20 things occur, as they do in Louisiana by the way.

21           The Morganza was not opened last spring. The  
22 Corps was ready to open it and two days before they had a  
23 meeting in Morgan City and people understandably who were  
24 threatened by the flood and so forth raised a lot of Cain  
25 and it didn't get opened.

1           was that the reason?

2           I don't know. We don't know because we are not  
3 in the thought process.

4           Then, finally to fund this Act, the congress  
5 would authorize the payment to the Corps of an accelerated  
6 Environmental Impact Statement on the Bonnet Carre  
7 spillway.

8           They have not had an EIS since 1976. A lot has  
9 happened since then and we really feel that if the process  
10 for an environmental impact statement were done as  
11 mandated by congress in two years, they would have to look  
12 at alternatives to the Bonnet Carre and any other  
13 structures, any other diversions, including Mid-Breton.  
14 That is in this act.

15           Shift the burden, in other words, to the Federal  
16 Government to look for alternatives and look for  
17 mitigation.

18           This is a very powerful act. It is patterned  
19 after a precedent, the Grand Canyon Protection Act which  
20 is a similar kind of thing.

21           Now, the coalition also -- and one of the main  
22 reasons we are here today -- we endorse the Department of  
23 Marine Resources ongoing study and planning for a Lower  
24 Pearl River Water Reallocation Project.

25           Mr. Victor Mavar, Sr., who is here has been

1 working on this for years along with some members of your  
2 staff and I know it is an ongoing thing. Dr. Mickle has  
3 briefed us.

4 We really, as a group, encourage you to continue  
5 those studies and if we, as a coalition of local  
6 governments, can help lobby for whatever money you need  
7 from the state, or the federal government, to complete  
8 those studies and make a recommendation on the Lower Pearl  
9 River Reallocation Project, we are here to support that.

10 As you know, that project would consider the  
11 science and the engineering behind reallocating the Pearl  
12 River from the west to the east so that it comes back  
13 closer to a natural balance.

14 It used to be about fifty-fifty percent. Now,  
15 it is about eighty-five percent going into the west and  
16 about fifteen percent coming into the east which changes,  
17 of course, the salinity levels both south of the Rigolets  
18 and Lake Bourne and over to the Mississippi Sound. To get  
19 it back closer to a natural balance is part of the big  
20 picture.

21 We invited Pete Melby here today -- I'm not sure  
22 if he is here -- who has also been studying it from  
23 Mississippi State. Pete apparently has proposed a plan.  
24 It is somewhat separate. It is similar. It overlaps.

25 Our organization is here to urge you, the DMR

1 and your staff, to continue what you are doing and have  
2 one plan from the State of Mississippi for the Lower Pearl  
3 Project and not competing plans. Even though well  
4 intentioned, it would be better that the DMR be the  
5 clearing house that really asserts and hopefully by the  
6 summertime, or whenever you can finish those studies,  
7 there will be an engineering estimate.

8 That project would be one of many kinds of  
9 smaller solutions to the bigger process. If we don't  
10 solve the Bonnet Carre, however, it will all be for  
11 naught.

12 The coalition also endorses the three bills in  
13 congress to reform the Fisheries Disaster Laws.

14 I think we sent that resolution to you, also,  
15 Joe.

16 Ryan Bradley is here to answer questions about  
17 that.

18 Our senators and Congressman Palazzo have been  
19 at the forefront in the leadership of trying to reform the  
20 Fisheries Disaster process so that it is quicker.

21 The last time the Bonnet Carre opened, I  
22 understand it took about six years before the whole  
23 disaster funds got to where they were needed. That is way  
24 too long.

25 Finally, you probably hopefully read about this,

1 but we wanted to brief you.

2 Eight members of the Mississippi Sound Coalition  
3 decided that we could not wait any longer. We needed to  
4 file in Federal Court which we did right before Christmas  
5 a Federal lawsuit seeking injunctive relief to compel the  
6 Corps and the Mississippi River Commission to give a seat  
7 at the table to the State of Mississippi and to the local  
8 government, similar to what we are asking for in the  
9 Protection Act, but that Protection Act may take a year,  
10 or two, to get adopted, to ask the local Federal Court in  
11 Gulfport to compel the Corps to at least help us there so  
12 that our scientists and our engineering experts can show  
13 that there are alternatives that should be considered  
14 before the Bonnet Carre is opened and there is mitigation  
15 that should be considered and there are other solutions  
16 that should be worked on, plus compel an EIS as quickly as  
17 possible.

18 The eight members of the coalition have filed  
19 that lawsuit. The government has not answered yet. It is  
20 about time they answer. We are all holding our breath.  
21 The river right now has not reached quite the flood level.  
22 The flood fight has begun with the Corps.

23 We are there. We are hoping that, at least,  
24 this will compel a close look at alternatives.

25 To that extent, Mayor Gilich is here and I

1 wonder, FoFo, if you would come forward for a moment and  
2 just reflect on why this is such an imperative for our  
3 local governments.

4 FOFO GILLICH: Thank you, Gerald. Thank you,  
5 General Spraggins and thanks to the Commission for  
6 listening to us a little bit.

7 Richard and I are probably the oldest ones in  
8 this room and we have never seen anything like what  
9 happened to us last year.

10 I think, Paul, there are some indices that we  
11 talk about. Well, my indices are I talked about my sixty-  
12 four hundred and thirty-five hotel rooms that are close to  
13 that beach.

14 It happens to you once like BP, but, if it  
15 happens to us again and again, we have lost it just from  
16 that part of the deal. It is very important. We have  
17 never seen that impact.

18 I want to thank Robert, General, Ryan, everybody  
19 and the counties that have been involved because it truly  
20 is an effort to get rolling in the right direction.

21 It is a survival thing, I think, and survival  
22 economically, environmentally.

23 Every time I walk in this building I learn  
24 something and I have appreciated that.

25 I encourage you individually and as a body to



1 support the efforts.

2 I know it gets complicated when you sue people.  
3 People do things and are kind of locked up.

4 If this happened to us again and shut that whole  
5 beach down, people are not even going to look at Coastal  
6 Mississippi as an alternative. So that is another indices  
7 that we want to at least address.

8 All of the ideas that have been bounced around,  
9 it is not as complicated as Slavonian Lodge, but it has  
10 been a hell of a coalition.

11 I thank you and thank everyone there. Thank you  
12 very much.

13 GERALD BLESSEY: Mr. Chairman and members of the  
14 Commission, Robert Wiygul, as the Mayor just mentioned, is  
15 here. The coalition hired Robert as our expert legal  
16 counsel in the lawsuit that we filed. Robert is an Ocean  
17 Springs resident and lawyer, as you well know, and very  
18 well versed in this field.

19 We are here. Also, we would be glad, if you  
20 would like to ask questions about the lawsuit, or the  
21 legislation we have proposed, or anything. Ryan Bradley  
22 is here with us from the Fisheries group.

23 We certainly would welcome any questions, or if  
24 you have anything else that you would like to know from  
25 us.

1           If not, then, of course, we stand by anytime to  
2 answer anything in writing, or you can call us on the  
3 phone.

4           Once again, as the Mayor just said, anybody can  
5 be an associate member. There are no dues. All you have  
6 to do is say we support the mission of the coalition to  
7 restore and protect the Mississippi Sound based on good  
8 science and fair public policy.

9           We hope to have an ongoing working relationship  
10 with General Spraggins and the staff so we will learn more  
11 and so we will be taking positions that are well based on  
12 good science. We need your guidance, but we are here to  
13 help.

14           We think that the congress will pay attention to  
15 three hundred thousand people, three hundred and fifty  
16 thousand people living in these three Coast counties,  
17 understanding we are not going away.

18           We have an independent voice and we are here to  
19 protect our heritage and our future.

20           If there are any questions, Mr. Chairman, we  
21 would be glad to answer them.

22           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Bosarge, do  
23 you have a question?

24           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir.

25           It is nice to see your, Mr. Blessey.

1           GERALD BLESSEY: Thank you.

2           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I do appreciate  
3 everything this group has done to bring this to the  
4 forefront.

5           It truly is an issue that for whatever reason  
6 the past four, or five, years there have been multiple  
7 openings of the Bonnet Carre Spillway.

8           From what you have said and from what I see, it  
9 is something that may continue. We have got to work on  
10 this.

11           I did have a question, one question that maybe  
12 Mr. Bradley can answer better.

13           I am fairly familiar with Federal Fisheries  
14 disasters and the way that system works.

15           Could you brief us just a little bit on what  
16 changes will be made to the Federal Fisheries Disasters?

17           RYAN BRADLEY: Thank you for asking that,  
18 Commissioner. I will be glad to answer that.

19           Since this all started unfolding last year, our  
20 organization and several others, some fishing communities  
21 from Louisiana as well, we embarked on a mission to go to  
22 congress, and we have been up there several times this  
23 past year working with the congressional delegation and  
24 their staff to modify the Fishery Disaster process, the  
25 laws that govern that process.

1           what we have seen introduced in the senate from  
2 Wicker is the Fishery Fund Act. The key things that you  
3 need to know that that bill does is, one, it sets time  
4 lines, mandated time lines that when these disaster  
5 requests are made, it gives NOAA and Department of  
6 Commerce X amount of days to have to act on that request.  
7 It also puts in there time lines for the distribution of  
8 funds to get the money out the door.

9           It addresses the indirect costs of managing  
10 these grant dollars for both state and federal agencies.

11           The last thing that it does it would give more  
12 input from the stakeholder community in that process.

13           Now, what we have seen in the House is that the  
14 House has introduced a companion bill, the Fishery Fund  
15 Act, but they have pulled out the aquaculture component.  
16 They said they don't want anything to do with aquaculture.  
17 We are going to see how that plays out.

18           There is another bill called the Commercial  
19 Fishing and Aquaculture Protection Act which was  
20 introduced by Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, and we have not  
21 seen that bill gain much traction. We don't anticipate it  
22 to go very far.

23           If for some reason aquaculture is not included  
24 in this Fishery Fund Act, then, I would imagine the  
25 Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith's bill may become more important

1 at that time.

2 I wanted to mention that because of our oyster  
3 farms. We've got our oyster farms going well and they are  
4 doing good. They took a hit this past year. The oyster  
5 farms are covered under the USDA.

6 The Fishery Fund is Magnuson-Stevens Fishery  
7 Act. What they are doing with the Fishery Fund in  
8 congress, it will put it all under Magnuson-Stevens and do  
9 away with the interjurisdictional provisions.

10 I just wanted y'all to know that the oyster  
11 farming is covered under USDA.

12 what we have seen this past year is a lot of  
13 these farmers were not covered under the USDA program  
14 because the requirements require, I think, a minimum of  
15 two years of income to show some history before you can be  
16 eligible.

17 If possible, we would love to work with Cindy  
18 Hyde-Smith's office and address that to see if we can help  
19 some of those folks that are falling through the cracks,  
20 but I think when they talk about aquaculture in these  
21 bills, they are more worried about the big fish farms, the  
22 net pen farming that goes on on the East Coast and the  
23 west Coast and we trying to get in the Gulf.

24 That is what I know about the bills. I am happy  
25 to further clarify.

1           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That is great. I had  
2 heard a little bit about a lot of them, but the  
3 clarification is good.

4           As far as maybe the alternatives to the Bonnet  
5 Carre spillway opening, other than the Mid-Breton  
6 Diversion, have you guys kind of thought of anything that  
7 may would work?

8           RYAN BRADLEY: You hear a lot about them opening  
9 the Morganza. The more I hear about the Morganza, it is  
10 likely that thing will never be opened is what I am  
11 hearing.

12           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Any chances of maybe  
13 diverting some more down the Atchafalaya?

14           GERALD BLESSEY: I think you hit the nail on the  
15 head, Mr. Bosarge.

16           This is what we are saying. The national  
17 government must take a look at the whole plumbing of the  
18 whole Mississippi River, both above and below the Bonnet  
19 Carre.

20           Dredging for instance. Recently, our delegation  
21 got some more money put into dredging. The river is  
22 clogged like an artery. You've got below New Orleans and  
23 above New Orleans, the Mississippi River depth is higher  
24 than it is in-between.

25           We are not engineers, but we understand that to

1 some extend if you get the dredging going, then, the water  
2 flows faster.

3 There are problems and consequences. If it goes  
4 too fast, it scars out the levies and it overflows anyway.

5 As you know, the history from the great flood in  
6 1927, after that, the 1928 Act is basically what the Corps  
7 has been operating under for almost a hundred years. That  
8 whole Act and that whole regime needs to be looked at by  
9 modern science and modern engineering, and it will take a  
10 massive relook, and we think what we have started with  
11 this Protection Act and with our lawsuit is the beginning  
12 of what hopefully is a national conversation.

13 The Marshall Plan I mentioned, for instance,  
14 historically before 1927, there were a lot of flood plains  
15 in the mid west, the upper river, the lower river, long  
16 before it ever got down here. Most of those flood plains,  
17 many of them have been closed off by development, by  
18 levies and so the water keeps coming faster and faster  
19 down, instead of going into the ground water.

20 How do you reverse that?

21 It is a massive undertaking to reverse it, but  
22 it is one of many things that can be done.

23 The other thing is regardless of what is opened,  
24 or closed, if we don't clean up the water, it won't  
25 matter.

1           The hypoxia zone, the dead zone in the Gulf is  
2 growing. It is going to get worse.

3           If we don't do something about the agriculture  
4 runoff, while we are trying to replumb the Mississippi  
5 River, the United States of America, not us by ourselves,  
6 if we don't do something about the agriculture runoff, it  
7 is all going to die anyway. This is a massive problem.

8           Agriculture is exempt from the Clean Water Act.

9           Cities and counties, Mayor Gilich and his  
10 colleagues, we have to pay lots of money to have tertiary  
11 treatment, wastewater treatment from the municipal waste,  
12 but the pig farms in the upper Mississippi River -- the  
13 largest one is owned by the Chinese by the way -- they are  
14 exempt from the Clean Water Act. So that manure can get  
15 down and without being contained, it goes into the river,  
16 and that is part of what causes the algae bloom.

17           We need to raise the consciousness on this. So  
18 part of our mission as the coalition is public education  
19 locally and nationally to call attention to this.

20           We have many other communities up and down the  
21 river that are suffering just like we are from the lack of  
22 modern management of the river by the Corps of Engineers.

23           FOFO GILICH: Let me make one point.

24           GERALD BLESSEY: Sure.

25           FOFO GILICH: One of the things I learned in



1 this room, I think the gauge was twenty foot at Carrollton  
2 I believe is when they start considering opening the  
3 thing.

4 when it hits twenty foot, they start pulling  
5 slats out, but yet they let it go all the way down to  
6 sixteen.

7 I think the inundation that we saw, the volume  
8 of water -- those are the simple questions, you know, when  
9 do you open it and when do you close it.

10 I don't know how many cubic feet of water goes  
11 through it from twenty to sixteen, but, if you would have  
12 moderated that, that would have made at least a less  
13 dramatic impact.

14 Those are the questions that need to be asked.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS: Mayor, it never got to twenty.

16 FOFO GILICH: It never got to twenty?

17 JOE SPRAGGINS: No. That is what you see in the  
18 regs, but they also have other ways that they look at,  
19 when they think it may breach the levies and they look at  
20 that. It got up to seventeen and a half I think is when  
21 they opened it this year, and they closed it at fifteen  
22 point seven I think is what it was.

23 The point is it doesn't automatically work off  
24 of that.

25 FOFO GILICH: Right.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS: There are a lot of things.

2 FOFO GILICH: Yes. It is complex.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: I have spent a lot of hours with  
4 the Corps, and there are a lot of things that cause it to  
5 happen the way it is, and I brought that up to them, and  
6 they had a good answer for me that I couldn't back off  
7 from.

8 FOFO GILICH: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: It appears you guys have  
10 got a pretty good handhold on it and I applaud you for  
11 getting the group together and bringing the public's  
12 attention to the fact that we've got to work on this.  
13 Thank you.

14 RYAN BRADLEY: Just one thing I wanted to add  
15 for the record on that Fishery Fund Act -- there may be  
16 some folks in the room that were curious on this -- we did  
17 work to have specific language put in there about direct  
18 payments, where direct payments can go to the affected  
19 individuals and businesses that were impacted.

20 That has been a big issue for a lot of the  
21 fishing community and it is very important to help us  
22 sustain our coastal communities. I just wanted y'all to  
23 be clear on that.

24 GERALD BLESSEY: One final point, if I may. We  
25 appreciate your indulgence in giving us so much time.

1           As I mentioned, Robert Wiygul is here. The  
2 lawsuit that we filed, the Secretary of State has filed a  
3 similar lawsuit based on slightly different grounds asking  
4 for similar relief.

5           Keith Davis and Ray Carter are here and we  
6 really look forward to working in partnership with the  
7 Secretary of State and the state government in trying to  
8 get this not only in front of the Federal court by  
9 collaborating together, but also in the national congress.

10          I guess our request here is to please endorse  
11 the Mississippi Sound and Lake Pontchartrain Protection  
12 Act and let our senators and congressmen know, after you  
13 have thought about it and considered it.

14          We will answer any questions as you go along,  
15 but a thoughtful endorsement from this organization, this  
16 Commission and this department, I think would go a long  
17 way towards our delegation pushing that forward.

18          Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19          JOE SPRAGGINS: One quick thing. We missed a  
20 big opportunity the other day. I don't know if you knew  
21 about it, but they just appointed a new person to the  
22 Commission. It was an open seat and it was a unfilled and  
23 it came from Mr. R. D. James who had been on there 1981 to  
24 2018. He left and became the Under Secretary for the  
25 Corps and the Army and, in turn, they appointed his son.

1 So his son is now on there from Missouri, and we missed  
2 that appointment. I just wanted you to know that.

3 GERALD BLESSEY: General, Thank you. We  
4 actually were aware of it and we tried to get involved in  
5 it, but it had gotten so far down the political process  
6 that it was too late to turn it around from the White  
7 House. This is an example of why we need a constant  
8 public presence and voice from the Gulf Coast on these  
9 kinds of issues. Going forward, we hope we don't miss  
10 those opportunities.

11 Again, the Protection Act would require them to  
12 have a Mississippi resident. It seems fair to expect  
13 that.

14 The gentleman from Missouri I'm sure is a fine  
15 gentleman and all these people. This is not personal.  
16 All the Corps of Engineers, they are professionals. They  
17 do whatever the law tells them to do and the law, right  
18 now, is not telling them to pay attention to us.

19 We think we need a seat at the table.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: Good part about it is he is a  
21 Mississippi State graduate.

22 We've got a couple other things in the Executive  
23 Director's report. Next up is Melissa Ryan and I will  
24 turn that over to legal.

25 KIM PAPANIA: Good morning Commissioners,

1 Director and legal.

2 This is being brought today for a suspension of  
3 a commercial license for failure to pay fines which was  
4 presented to you guys in September of 2018. It was when  
5 we presented seven, or eight, spotted Seatrout violations.  
6 The Commission ordered fines.

7 In this case, Ms. Ryan never has paid any of the  
8 fines.

9 On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the Commission ordered a fine in  
10 the amount of three thousand six hundred and ninety-seven  
11 dollars with six months to pay. The CMR did authorize a  
12 payment plan.

13 Ms. Ryan never made a payment and an enforcement  
14 action was filed in Pascagoula Chancery Court.

15 Judge Tanya Hasbrouck confirmed the Commission's  
16 decision and ordered payments of a hundred dollars a  
17 month, starting September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, and ending when the  
18 fine amount of three thousand six hundred and ninety-seven  
19 dollars was paid in full.

20 Payments were still never made to the MDMR.

21 A Motion for Contempt was filed with Pascagoula  
22 Chancery Court in December. On January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a  
23 hearing occurred on the Motion for Contempt and Judge  
24 Hasbrouck held Melissa in Contempt of Court and issued a  
25 Judgment lien on her commercial vessel.

1           The Pascagoula Chancery Clerk mailed a Notice on  
2 January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, informing Ms. Ryan that she had ten  
3 days to pay the amount due under the payment plan, or it  
4 would be presented for the Commission to suspend, or  
5 revoke, her license pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated  
6 49-15-325.

7           This is the Notice that was sent by the Court to  
8 Melissa informing her that if it was not paid in ten days  
9 that her privileges would be suspended, or revoked  
10 (indicating slide).

11           Mississippi Code Annotated 49-15-325 states:

12           “If a person does not comply with a  
13 summons, or citation, or does not pay  
14 a fine, fee, or assessment, for  
15 violating a seafood law, or regulation,  
16 the Commission may revoke the applicable  
17 license of that person.

18           “when a person does not comply, or fails  
19 to pay, the clerk of the Court shall  
20 notify the person in writing by first  
21 class mail that if the person does not  
22 comply, or pay, within ten days from  
23 the date of mailing, the Court will  
24 notify the Commission and the  
25 Commission will revoke the license of

1           that person.

2           “The cost of notice may be added to the  
3           Court costs. If the person does not  
4           comply, or pay, as required, the Court  
5           clerk shall immediately mail a copy  
6           of the Court record and a copy of the  
7           Notice to the Commission.

8           “After receiving the Notice from the  
9           Court, the Commission shall revoke the  
10          applicable license of that person.”

11          And three states:

12          “A person whose license has been revoked  
13          after subsection 2 of this section shall  
14          remain revoked until the person can show  
15          proof that all obligations of the Court  
16          have been met”, which would mean paying  
17          up all of her fines.

18          The previous notice is the notice that complies  
19          with that statute.

20          Do you have any questions?

21          COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Just one just for  
22          clarification.

23          You said Spotted Seatrout violations. I think  
24          it was actually a failure to report.

25          KIM PAPANIA: Yes, sir. It was a failure to

1 report Spotted Seatrout.

2 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, what do we  
3 need, a motion to move forward?

4 SANDY CHESNUT: Yes. You will need a motion to  
5 revoke Melissa Ryan's license until she has paid the fines  
6 as ordered by the Court.

7 KIM PAPANIA: Pursuant to Mississippi Code  
8 Annotated 49-15-325.

9 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I will make that motion.

10 SANDY CHESNUT: We are going to write that on  
11 the board.

12 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'm just curious. The  
14 law that we are using now, that is the law we just passed.  
15 Correct?

16 KIM PAPANIA: I'm not sure when it was passed.  
17 Let's see. I don't think it was passed, like, within the  
18 past year.

19 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: No, it's not.

20 Steve, I asked Sandy about that this morning,  
21 and I think she said this was something that was already  
22 in place prior to that. The law that we just recently  
23 passed would not apply to this because it was passed after  
24 the offense occurred.

25 KIM PAPANIA: It was approved March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



1           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Sandy explained to me  
2 this morning the law that we just passed is not applicable  
3 to this because it was passed after the offense occurred.  
4 This was something that was already there.

5           KIM PAPANIA: Correct.

6           COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you.

7           KIM PAPANIA: Any more questions?

8           SANDY CHESNUT: Do you need anything else in the  
9 motion?

10          KIM PAPANIA: I would say to revoke Melissa  
11 Ryan's commercial license.

12          SANDY CHESNUT: Okay. Commercial fishing  
13 license.

14          KIM PAPANIA: Other than that, I think it is  
15 fine.

16          COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: If she wants to buy a  
17 recreational fishing license, I don't think she ought to  
18 until she pays this fine.

19          KIM PAPANIA: The Commission can vote to do  
20 that, if you guys want to do that, but it has to apply to  
21 the license that was used for the violation.

22          SANDY CHESNUT: The statute says applicable  
23 license. I think the applicable license here would be  
24 here commercial fishing license.

25          KIM PAPANIA: Right.

1           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Gollott, is  
2 that okay with you?

3           COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: That's good.

4           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion on the  
5 table.

6           Do I have a second for the motion?

7           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

8           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a  
9 second.

10          All those in favor say aye.

11          (Commissioner Daniels, Commissioner Gollott,  
12 Commissioner Guess, Commissioner Havard in  
13 favor.)

14          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

15          (Commissioner Bosarge opposed.)

16          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

17          KIM PAPANIA: Thank you.

18          JOE SPRAGGINS: Sir, I have a couple of things.  
19 Real quick, we have a public comment, if I could under  
20 this area. Ms. Julie Garrett with the SBA would like to  
21 spend a couple of minutes to brief the Commission about  
22 what they are trying to do to help the fishermen.

23          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good.

24          JULIE GARRETT: Good morning.

25          I'm Julie Garrett. I'm from the Small Business

1 Administration Office of Disaster Assistance. I am here  
2 to talk about the Blue-Green Algae Disaster Declaration.

3 We are here in Mississippi. We are working in  
4 partnership with the state and counties to help businesses  
5 and nonprofits impacted by the algae bloom.

6 Businesses in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson  
7 counties, as well as the adjacent Mississippi counties of  
8 George, Pearl River and Stone are eligible to apply for  
9 economic injury disaster loans from SBA.

10 Disasters don't stop at county, or state, lines.  
11 Businesses in Mobile County in Alabama and St. Tammany  
12 Parish in Louisiana are also eligible.

13 Small businesses, small agricultural  
14 cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and  
15 most private nonprofit organizations can apply for these  
16 working capital loans.

17 These loans help businesses meet their ordinary  
18 and necessary financial obligations that cannot be met as  
19 a direct result of the disaster.

20 Some examples of eligible industries would  
21 include, but are not limited to commercial fishermen,  
22 shrimpers, crabbers, bait and tackle shops, seafood  
23 wholesalers and processors, charter boats, hotels and  
24 marinas, owners of rental property, restaurants, retailers  
25 and souvenir shops, a whole gamut of eligibility.

1           We strongly encourage anyone to apply, and our  
2 loan officers will determine their eligibility.

3           The figures are people may borrow up to two  
4 million dollars for alleviating economic injury caused by  
5 the disaster and the actual amount of each loan is limited  
6 to the economic injury to the business.

7           Interest rates are no more than four percent for  
8 businesses and two point seven-five percent for  
9 nonprofits.

10          Terms are up to thirty years, and the loan  
11 amounts and the terms are set by the SBA and are dependent  
12 on the applicant's financial condition.

13          Collateral is not required on loans of twenty-  
14 five thousand, or less, and that seems to be of great  
15 interest here. So I am making that point.

16          How can you apply?

17          Right now, people can apply online at  
18 [disasterloan.sba.gov](http://disasterloan.sba.gov). They can call our customer service  
19 center at 800-659-2955 and request a paper application  
20 through the mail, and people can also go into any SBA  
21 office, or to our resource partners such as SCORE, or  
22 SBDC, for free assistance in creating an application.

23          Businesses in your community, if you need to  
24 recover from the algae bloom, should submit an application  
25 to the SBA to be considered for disaster loan assistance.

1           The deadline is not until October 16<sup>th</sup>. They  
2 have a lot of time to apply, but we encourage them to  
3 apply as soon as possible. Thank you.

4           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I've got one question for  
5 you on that.

6           JULIE GARRETT: Okay.

7           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: In one of the emails I  
8 received, I believe the offices assisting with that closed  
9 last week.

10          JULIE GARRETT: Yes.

11          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: But you said they could  
12 go into any SBA office.

13                 Is there another location here on the Coast?

14                 It seems like some of this could get pretty  
15 confusing for some of these guys.

16          JULIE GARRETT: I understand that.

17                 There is an SBA office here in Biloxi. There is  
18 an SBDC office in Biloxi. They can also call a SCORE  
19 office, anything connected with that and, if they go to  
20 our website, there is a location finder so they can just  
21 put in their information and it will show them all the  
22 different offices and how close they are.

23                 Also, Ryan, Mr. Bradley has set up a special  
24 session tomorrow for your commercial fishermen. We are  
25 going to be working one-on-one with them tomorrow morning.

1           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Ryan, is that limited  
2 just to commercial fishermen?

3           RYAN BRADLEY: That is anybody from the  
4 community. It is open to anybody. We took it upon  
5 ourselves to try to get that meeting set up because they  
6 closed all of those facilities and we still had a lot of  
7 guys asking questions that wanted to apply for this  
8 opportunity. Anybody is welcome.

9           The meeting is going to be at the MSU Coastal  
10 Research and Extension Center at 1815 Popp's Ferry Road in  
11 Biloxi. That will be in room A102, and that starts at  
12 9:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

13           Representatives from the SBA will be on hand to  
14 provide a presentation, an overview of the application  
15 process and answer any questions anybody has.

16           COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you for doing that.

17           RYAN BRADLEY: Thank you.

18           JULIE GARRETT: By the way, tomorrow we will  
19 actually have our computers set up and start helping  
20 people create their applications as well.

21           Any other questions?

22           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good. Thank you for  
23 bringing that to our attention.

24           JULIE GARRETT: Thank you.

25           JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank you, Ms. Garrett.

1           Also, real quick. If you have any public  
2 comments, make sure you get it to Charmaine, and, then,  
3 she can get that filled out for you.

4           This is taking way longer than I thought it  
5 would on the Executive Director's side of it, but a couple  
6 of things.

7           I have a meeting. It is either going to be this  
8 Friday of this week, or Monday of next week. It is going  
9 to be with Major General Toy who is the commanding General  
10 of the Corps of Engineers for the Vicksburg area and also  
11 the commander of the New Orleans and commander of  
12 Vicksburg District, along with the governor's office, and  
13 we are going to meet and sit down and talk about the  
14 situation with the Bonnet Carre.

15           I will brief y'all as soon as I get anything on  
16 that and let you know what happened.

17           The other thing is I have a meeting this  
18 afternoon with DEQ and Milton Segarra with tourism, and we  
19 are going to talk about how to better put out information,  
20 if we do have another problem with the Bonnet Carre, if we  
21 do have another problem with blue-green algae, if there is  
22 anything else that happens here. We are going to find a  
23 way to be able to bring that out and bring it out in a  
24 better form than what we have had in the past.

25           we learned a lot of lessons this last year and

1 we want to make sure that we take those lessons and use  
2 them in a wise way.

3           Hopefully, if we do have any issues, we will  
4 bring it out a little different than what we have in the  
5 past.

6           Next week I am headed to D.C. for the Gulf  
7 states and I will be there. We will meet with all the  
8 congressmen and senators from all five states. We will  
9 meet with them and I can promise you that this will be a  
10 very hot topic on it as to what we can do to help resolve  
11 that.

12           Now, one last thing. I know this might make  
13 some people happy and I can't promise everybody. I talked  
14 with Mr. Joe Jewell and we sat down and looked at it. He  
15 went to NOAA. NOAA has given us permission to be able to  
16 take one million dollars of the Bonnet Carre funds and  
17 divert it to pay the fishermen that were affected and the  
18 oyster fishermen that were affected by the Bonnet Carre.

19           That was used for cultch. I was able to  
20 backfill that with some GOMESA funds. The governor had  
21 given me GOMESA funds to backfill the cultch so we don't  
22 lose the cultch. We will still get it, but we are going  
23 to be able to look at all the applicants that were  
24 available.

25           If you remember 2016 when we did the relay,



1 anybody pretty much that was involved in that as far as  
2 the fishermen I think is what we will look at. We have a  
3 big list and we will look at it and we are going to be  
4 able to help and, with the Commission's permission, we are  
5 going to take one million dollars of the funds and divert  
6 them to being able to direct pay the oyster fishermen to  
7 help them get by some of this situation that have happened  
8 in the past and to be able to try to help them get by what  
9 they are facing right now.

10 Joe, is there anything I missed on that?

11 JOE JEWELL: No, sir. I think you got it all.

12 I would just point out these are the 2011  
13 disaster funds.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS: You had to have a license the  
15 year of and at least two years prior.

16 Is that right?

17 JOE JEWELL: That's right. They have to meet  
18 the eligibility requirements to participate in the  
19 program.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS: We will be able to look at that.  
21 It is a situation that we are trying to find any way in  
22 the world we can to help our fishermen.

23 I'm sorry it is not for shrimpers. It is only  
24 for oystermen, but that is the only thing that we could  
25 use that money for.

1 Is that correct, Joe?

2 JOE JEWELL: Yes.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS: Commission, I would ask if you  
4 would approve that.

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Do we need to do that in  
6 the form a motion?

7 JOE SPRAGGINS: I would appreciate it. That way  
8 we at least have it.

9 I think we have a question though. Wait just a  
10 minute.

11 FROM THE FLOOR: Actually, I have a comment more  
12 than a question.

13 My family has been --

14 COURT REPORTER: (Interposing) No.

15 FROM THE FLOOR: I'm sorry. I will come all the  
16 way up.

17 COURT REPORTER: You need to give your name.

18 ALYCIA MILLER: Alycia Miller.

19 My family has been in the oyster industry my  
20 entire life. My grandfather was an oysterman. My father  
21 is an oysterman.

22 I understand that you are going to allocate a  
23 million dollars to pay the fishermen, or the oystermen,  
24 however you want to say it, but I don't feel that it is  
25 right.

1           You have three hundred licenses out there for  
2 people who have steady everyday jobs that only go  
3 oystering one, or two, days a week.

4           They are going to get the same amount of money  
5 as somebody who depends on their six-day-a-week oystering?

6           JOE SPRAGGINS: Ma'am, I can only do what the  
7 law allows me to do, and that is what NOAA has given us  
8 the permission to only do it for oystermen, and that is  
9 the only reason because that was part of the Bonnet Carre  
10 that was going to be utilized to put cultch and we asked  
11 them to help us and be able to do it, since I would be  
12 able to backfill the cultch.

13           ALYCIA MILLER: I understand that and that is  
14 great that you are just going to do it for oystermen, but  
15 I am talking about real oystermen. I'm not talking about  
16 the fake oystermen that just buy a license to buy a  
17 license to reap the benefits when things like this happen  
18 because there are people out there that just buy a license  
19 just to have one in their wallet that don't even own a  
20 boat, that don't even hit the reef, that don't go out  
21 there and work every day just to try to make their money  
22 through the winter to pay their bills, to pull their boats  
23 up to fix things.

24           There are people out there that are chefs in a  
25 kitchen that cook every day, and, then, decide they are

1 going to go oystering to get five sacks off the reef and  
2 they are good.

3 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I doubt it is going to be  
4 equally split.

5 ALYCIA MILLER: That is what I feel. That is my  
6 question.

7 JOE JEWELL: Let me provide a little bit of  
8 clarity there. People that have licenses within the last  
9 couple of years are not eligible.

10 To be eligible for this program, they had to be  
11 active fishermen in 2011, and to be considered  
12 participants in 2011, you had to have X number of trip  
13 tickets, not once a week, or once a month.

14 All of that criteria was established back in  
15 2014 and 2015, when we initially implemented the program.

16 Those criteria that allowed the fishermen to  
17 participate in that in 2016 are the same ones that were  
18 approved by NOAA and the same ones that will be used now.

19 If there are new entrants into the program the  
20 last few years, they are not eligible.

21 ALYCIA MILLER: Thank you, sir.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS: We are just doing the best we  
23 can to try and find a way to do anything we can to help  
24 the oystermen, the fishermen and anyone out there.

25 ALYCIA MILLER: And I appreciate that. Thank

1 you.

2 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

3 SANDY CHESNUT: We have a draft motion up here,  
4 Joe. If you could take a look at it and make sure it  
5 covers everything.

6 JOE JEWELL: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I will make the motion to  
8 authorize the MDMR to utilize the 2011 Bonnet Carre  
9 spillway funds to distribute to oyster fishermen who  
10 qualify for the program as established by MDMR guidelines  
11 and approved by NOAA.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS: If I could real quick, could we  
13 have that say "not to exceed one million dollars"?

14 SANDY CHESNUT: Sure.

15 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: And not to exceed one  
16 million dollars.

17 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

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

20 All those in favor say aye.

21 (All in favor.)

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

23 (None opposed.)

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion so moves.

25 We missed one public comment here, Frank Parker.

1 Frank, do you still want to talk for just a  
2 moment?

3 FRANK PARKER: Yes.

4 Good morning Commissioners. I appreciate the  
5 time to talk.

6 One thing I would like to point out, what the  
7 item was concerning Melissa Ryan.

8 A few weeks ago when I was in Tampa, Florida, I  
9 was at a meeting and we had some NOAA and National Marine  
10 Fisheries Service representatives there.

11 while I'm not making a stand for IUU fishing, or  
12 anything like that, it was brought to my attention by NOAA  
13 -- seeing how all of this is from late trip ticket  
14 reporting, that is all the violation was and I understand  
15 it is a quota fisheries, but according to NOAA what they  
16 told me and everybody in that public meeting was that this  
17 state is always late reporting their landings.

18 what is good for the goose is good for the  
19 gander. If the fishermen have to get a fine, then, what  
20 is the kickback for the state?

21 I understand that it goes to the amount of  
22 dealers you have, as far as public information, but for  
23 proper fishery management we need proper reporting.

24 I just figured I would bring that to you because  
25 I'm sure a lot of you Commissioners don't know that.

1 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you, Frank.

2 JOE SPRAGGINS: Sir, I think that is all for the  
3 Executive Director's report.

4 GILBERT RAMSEY: No, it isn't. I put my  
5 paperwork in.

6 JOE SPRAGGINS: Under Executive's Report?  
7 You put it under J.

8 GILBERT RAMSEY: Oh. I'm sorry. I will pay  
9 attention.

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us on to  
11 Commissioners Report.

12 March the 17<sup>th</sup>, we need to make a motion where we  
13 can move the meeting. We have one in Jackson County and  
14 one in Hancock County. This is the time that we need to  
15 make a motion that we move the meeting on March the 17<sup>th</sup>,  
16 2020, to the Hancock County Board of Supervisors  
17 Boardroom, located at 854 Highway 90, Suite A, Bay St.  
18 Louis.

19 At this time, I would like to make a motion that  
20 we move next month's meeting to the Hancock County Board  
21 of Supervisors Boardroom.

22 SANDY CHESNUT: Mr. Chairman, I would just like  
23 to ask are you going to keep the same time, or are you  
24 going to move the time?

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We will change it to

1 10:00. I think that follows suit with what we have done  
2 in the past.

3 SANDY CHESNUT: Okay. We will add that to the  
4 motion.

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Sure.

6 COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I'll second that motion,  
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
9 second.

10 All those in favor say aye.

11 (All in favor.)

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

13 (None opposed.)

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

15 We are going to have a meeting in Hancock County  
16 next month.

17 Office of Marine Patrol, Assistant Chief Kyle  
18 Wilkerson.

19 Any other Commissioners have a report?

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, sir. I just wanted  
21 to kind of brief you guys a little bit on the Spotted  
22 Seatrout Stock Assessment that came out for Louisiana.  
23 I'm sure Joe is probably pretty familiar with it.

24 It seems like these days all I do is spend my  
25 time reading stock assessments.



1           The Louisiana Stock Assessment was pretty  
2 interesting for Spotted Seatrout. Quite a few things.  
3 They've got some problems. It shows that the Spotted  
4 Seatrout is overfished and undergoing overfishing and has  
5 been since 2014.

6           It shows that overfishing was occurring six out  
7 of the last ten years.

8           It shows the spawning stock biomass has been  
9 declining since 2009 and that the spawning stock biomass  
10 is currently at the lowest level observed in Louisiana  
11 Department of Wildlife and Fisheries assessment history.

12           We have been doing this management for a long  
13 time and I have been involved in a lot of commercial  
14 fisheries management, and we have been able to pretty much  
15 figure out a way to right the ship so to speak, but the  
16 next bullet point that I got out of the assessment is one  
17 that kind of concerns me the most. It says:

18           "Despite the recent decrease in  
19 recreational Spotted Seatrout landings,  
20 fishing effort continues to rise."

21           On the commercial side it was always when the  
22 stock went down, usually the fishermen quit fishing it  
23 because they could no longer make a profit at it. So it  
24 helped the stock to rebuild.

25           I don't know just what we are going to do. Our

1 stock assessment is yet to come, but in Louisiana it is  
2 going to be tough, how to right the ship when you still  
3 have effort on the increase.

4 They've got some pretty big issues and, if you  
5 look up and down the whole Gulf of Mexico, Spotted  
6 Seatrout is in a world of hurt.

7 I'm looking for my paper here. They have  
8 actually decreased landings in every state, most of them.

9 I think Texas now is five fish throughout the  
10 whole state.

11 Louisiana started in the western part of the  
12 state. They moved from twenty-five to fifteen fish.

13 We are still at fifteen.

14 Alabama, I think, is down now to six.

15 Florida is two to five, with no take from  
16 basically Tampa to Fort Myers.

17 We just need to watch. We need to keep an eye  
18 on things, and I am looking forward to when we get our  
19 stock assessment.

20 Anyhow, just to kind of brief you guys and know  
21 what we are up against on what may be coming our way.

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Do we have any other  
23 Commissioners who would like to report anything?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Now that brings us to

1 Office of Marine Patrol, Assistant Chief Kyle Wilkerson.

2 KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning Commissioners,  
3 Director, legal.

4 Before I get started, do you need a break?

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Carry on.

6 KYLE WILKERSON: Marine Patrol, we don't do  
7 things for pats on the back. We try to do a good job for  
8 the state.

9 I would like to give props out to three of my  
10 officers.

11 On January 25<sup>th</sup>, a duck hunter unfortunately fell  
12 out of his boat and stock in the mud around the Ansley are  
13 over towards Pearl River.

14 He was stuck up to his chest. Could not get  
15 back in his boat. It was low tide.

16 I'm not to say the tide would have come in and  
17 he would have drowned, but emergency services could not  
18 get to him. They were within six hundred yards of him.

19 Two of my officers, Lieutenant Mike Yonce and  
20 Jack Husley, with the help of Hancock County and some  
21 EMT's, trekked six hundred yards through the marsh with a  
22 harness to hook up to this guy and pull him out of the mud  
23 which is outstanding.

24 Your air boat responded and with Chris Collins  
25 (phonetic) driving, was able to put him back in the boat

1 and get him back to safety.

2 They are not here, but I would like to give them  
3 a hand.

4 (Applause.)

5 KYLE WILKERSON: They don't do that for that,  
6 but I would like to give them a pat on the back.

7 Let's see about this report. There are several  
8 little things that stick out in my mind pertaining to  
9 oysters.

10 Commissioners, if you have any type of questions  
11 about it, I will field them at this time.

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Doesn't look like we have  
13 any questions.

14 KYLE WILKERSON: Good enough.

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think everybody is good.  
16 I appreciate you bringing that up and telling us about  
17 your guys. It is always good to hear something positive,  
18 as opposed to what the normal media picks up. That sounds  
19 good. We appreciate it.

20 KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Office of Coastal  
22 Resources Management, Mr. Jan Boyd.

23 JAN BOYD: We only had one item and it was  
24 removed from the agenda.

25 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That is what we removed.

1           JAN BOYD: Yes, sir.

2           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Mr. George doesn't have  
3 anything.

4           Office of Finance and Administration. Ms.  
5 Leslie Brewer is going to tell us what kind of financial  
6 condition we are in.

7           LESLIE BREWER: Good morning director,  
8 Commissioners, legal.

9           I am Leslie Brewer, CFO. I will be presenting  
10 the agency's financial statements for the month of January  
11 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

12           At the end of January, our State Revenue was  
13 four point two million. Our Agency Revenue was twenty  
14 million.

15           Our State Net Income was three hundred eighty-  
16 five thousand, and our Total Agency Net Income was five  
17 point one million.

18           After seven months of fiscal year 2020, we have  
19 seventy-four point six percent of the Operating Budget  
20 remaining, while the Tidelands budget was at fifty-seven  
21 percent.

22           Do anyone have any questions?

23           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: No, Leslie. It looks  
24 good.

25           LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

2 Ms. Charmaine, Public Affairs.

3 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Good morning  
4 Commissioners, Director Spraggins, Ms. Chesnut.

5 The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
6 was mentioned twenty-five times in local, state and  
7 national media since the January CMR meeting.

8 Popular news items included the announcement of  
9 Red Snapper season's opening date, Amendment 50 regarding  
10 Red Snapper and Director Spraggins serving as the keynote  
11 speaker for the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce's  
12 Annual Meeting.

13 In January, Director Spraggins attended a  
14 meeting at IMMS with NOAA officials from the Protected  
15 Resources Office in Washington, D.C., the Gulf of Mexico  
16 Fishery Management Council Meeting in New Orleans, a  
17 meeting with the Governor's staff in Jackson and with the  
18 SBA regarding disaster assistance. This month Director  
19 Spraggins attended the Senate Finance Committee Budget  
20 Hearing in Jackson.

21 Marine Patrol attended Career Days for Harper  
22 McCaughan Elementary School and St. Martin High School.  
23 They also participated in the Kids 101 area of the Biloxi  
24 Boat Show.

25 The Artificial Reef Bureau in the Office of

1 Marine Fisheries also provided an agency booth at the boat  
2 show for the whole weekend.

3 National Heritage Area is leading a project to  
4 interview people of the Mississippi Gulf Coast who have  
5 important and interesting stories to tell that help  
6 communicate the significance of this region as it relates  
7 to the nation.

8 Individuals who participate are residents of the  
9 six coastal counties and have agreed to tell their story  
10 and it be shared on video and through photography.

11 Interviews were held at the Biloxi Visitors  
12 Center, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce and the  
13 Picayune Train Depot this past week.

14 Finfish Bureau's Jon Barr facilitated the first  
15 Mississippi Commercial Shark Endorsement Identification  
16 and Safe Handling Workshop on February 6<sup>th</sup> at MDMR which  
17 included eleven participants.

18 In addition, Jon Barr, Jarred Mitchell and Miles  
19 Barras received training on this subject February 13<sup>th</sup> at  
20 the Protected Species Safe Handling, Release and  
21 Identification workshop in Gulfport presented by NOAA  
22 Fisheries and Angler Conservation Education.

23 On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Office of Marine Fisheries  
24 Director Joe Jewell conducted fisheries educational  
25 outreach that included cast net demonstrations for

1 students at Our Lady of Fatima Elementary School in  
2 Biloxi. Shellfish Bureau's Erik Broussard and the Public  
3 Affairs office also assisted.

4 The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
5 met the week of January 27<sup>th</sup> in New Orleans. Finfish  
6 Bureau's Carly Somerset presented Mississippi's Red  
7 Snapper "State Management Performance Report for the 2019  
8 Private Angling Red Snapper Fishing Season" and was joined  
9 by Bureau leaders Matt Hill and Trevor Moncrief in sharing  
10 our state's success story at the meeting.

11 At the Gulf Coast Ecosystem and Oil Spill  
12 Conference in Tampa, Florida, February 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup>,  
13 Carly presented, "Improving Management of Mississippi's  
14 Recreational Red Snapper Fishery Using the Tails n' Scales  
15 Electronic Reporting System", as part of the informative  
16 session, "Outcomes From Large-Scale Fishery Monitoring  
17 Projects following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: What  
18 Have We Learned, and Where Do we Go From here?"

19 Shrimp and Crab Bureau's Jason Saucier  
20 participated in the Coastal Working Group meeting as part  
21 of the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership in New  
22 Orleans last week and discussed ongoing coastal programs  
23 throughout the region, as well as funding opportunities,  
24 available resources and planning tools. This year the  
25 focus was on aquaculture programs in each state.



1           The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Mississippi Chapter of the  
2 American Fisheries Society Meeting was held in Gulfport  
3 last week. The Office of Marine Fisheries had excellent  
4 representation, including five presentations by staff:

5           Emily Satterfield presented Species Abundance  
6 and Richness of Mississippi Artificial Reefs According to  
7 Reef Composition.

8           Courtney Walker presented Pilot Survey to Assess  
9 Fishing Behaviors and Methods of Data Collection among  
10 Mississippi Saltwater Fishing License Holders.

11           Josh Waters presented Monitoring Southern  
12 Flounder in the Mississippi Sound using Fyke Nets.

13           Katya Jagolta presented Collecting Stakeholder  
14 Interests Based on a Survey of Mississippi Red Snapper  
15 Fishery.

16           Eric Gigli presented Pop-up Satellite Tagging of  
17 Atlantic Tripletail in the Northern Gulf of Mexico for  
18 Winter Migratory Pattern Research.

19           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very Good. You definitely  
20 keep us all informed of what is going on out there and we  
21 always appreciate that.

22           CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: You are welcome.

23           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We've got a couple of  
24 public comments.

25           Alycia Miller.

1 ALYCIA MILLER: How are you doing again?

2 I'm a little bit better this time.

3 I appreciate what y'all are going to do for the  
4 fishermen. I really do.

5 I know my dad has been working really hard  
6 trying to talk to everybody, trying to fix the situation,  
7 but I think personally that it might need some more  
8 publicity on it because not only are we trying to save our  
9 economy, just like Mr. Blessey said, we are trying to save  
10 our heritage. We have a heritage of fishing on the Gulf  
11 Coast.

12 We are the sea of the United States and with the  
13 Bonnet Carre Spillway being opened and ruining it every so  
14 many years, it is killing us.

15 If our fisheries fall, our whole Gulf Coast is  
16 going to fall. We are not going to be able to swim on the  
17 beach because that is part of fishing.

18 I am a fisherman myself. I own a fishing  
19 license. I own a crabbing license, a recreational one, to  
20 go out there myself. I couldn't do that with the Blue-  
21 Green Algae Bloom. You couldn't eat the fish. You deemed  
22 it unsafe.

23 Who wants to come visit the Gulf Coast, when  
24 everything about it is no good?

25 I think that the fishing industry really needs

1 to be backed up on this.

2 I understand that everybody else's worries are  
3 if the casinos are going to make it. The casinos are not  
4 going stand, when our economy falls. They are going to  
5 fall harder. They are going to make everything worse  
6 because so many people have jobs everywhere down here, but  
7 the fishing industry is the core of all of those jobs.

8 without a fishing industry, we have nothing.  
9 without fishermen, we have nothing, and our fishermen are  
10 struggling. None of them can pay their bills.

11 I applied for the SBA loan for my father. I was  
12 denied for him before I left the parking lot. Within  
13 seven minutes of his application going through, we were  
14 denied for assistance.

15 I feel it is wrong that they even have to apply  
16 for an SBA loan because the government opened the Bonnet  
17 Carre spillway. They destroyed the fishing industry.  
18 They destroyed the oyster industry.

19 why is it their fault that they can't pay their  
20 bills, that they can't go to work?

21 were they just supposed to go get another job  
22 somewhere else?

23 How hard would it be for a fifty-five year old  
24 man just to start over?

25 You can't. It is something he was born and bred

1 to do like most of the fishermen are on the Gulf Coast.

2 The SBA loan, to me, it is just crap. It is  
3 just a way for them saying, oh, well, are trying to help  
4 you.

5 what fisherman do you know has credit?

6 what fisherman do you know goes and buys  
7 something off of credit, or has credit, or good credit?

8 No one, and I think that the SBA loan is not  
9 going to work for the fishermen.

10 we need some more help. I think it needs to be  
11 publicized more that the fishermen are hurting and they  
12 are in need. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you for bringing  
14 that to the table, Ms. Alycia.

15 Next we have Gilbert Ramsey.

16 Mr. Gilbert.

17 GILBERT RAMSEY: Good morning Mr. Joe, Ms.  
18 Chesnut, Commission.

19 My name is Gilbert Ramsey. I have been  
20 recognized as a military veterans outreach specialist.

21 I am introducing land acquisition with your  
22 strategic plan. Your strategic plan identifies a  
23 statewide goal of economic development, enhancement of the  
24 public use of the marine environment.

25 what I am introducing is education, recreation,

1 employment, accessibility. Accessibility tourism. Tribal  
2 council education.

3 what we are introducing is bait and fuel shops,  
4 cabins for economic development opportunities.

5 what we are introducing is public trust,  
6 economic and recreational coastal resource management and  
7 land acquisition like I mentioned, and once you recognize  
8 the disabled community doesn't have an opportunity to  
9 clean up the beaches.

10 I want to give them an opportunity to clean up  
11 the beaches with y'all with track wheelchairs. I want to  
12 take them into nature with track wheelchairs. We want to  
13 retrofit their boats for tourism, for assisted tourism.

14 For what?

15 Tournaments. Tournaments are coming, fishing  
16 tournaments.

17 My corporate representatives will be here the 4<sup>th</sup>  
18 through the 6<sup>th</sup>. We are going to introduce it in all three  
19 counties. We are going to educate people appropriately  
20 with twenty personnel at each county.

21 The Seabees are with me and Keesler is with me,  
22 their public affairs representatives and all of their  
23 assistance.

24 we have a veterans bottle water company.

25 YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, everybody knows me.

1 I am going to Washington with another  
2 initiative.

3 I am here to make sure that we accommodate our  
4 disabled community appropriately and represent Mississippi  
5 more appropriately instead of Mississippi burning.

6 At my church, we have a new historical thing  
7 coming up on the 29<sup>th</sup>, Heritage Methodist in D'Iberville.  
8 It is about black history. It is about stamps. It is  
9 about they were never recognized when there were slaves.

10 The lady that is doing it is an eighty-something  
11 year old woman, Ms. Marianne, and she is my nonprofit  
12 organization personnel for my organic gardening outreach I  
13 am doing to feed the homeless. I have organic gardening  
14 with floral arrangement and fertilization. I am coming  
15 into all three counties to introduce this to feed the  
16 homeless.

17 I am coming to ask Mr. Jamie Miller for  
18 assistance for the land acquisition, including y'all. I  
19 need y'all to participate and to acquire this property  
20 appropriately with the Choctaw Indians, American Legion in  
21 Gautier, at those two locations, including D'Iberville,  
22 including Bay St. Louis.

23 I have all of this composed in my heart and my  
24 head for y'all.

25 I can go to the United States Chamber of

1 Commerce and introduce it more appropriately and educate  
2 them. I have funds.

3 I have been invited to Switzerland, Israel,  
4 Germany, Canada and everything.

5 General Hammond is waiting on me at the  
6 University of Southern Mississippi to introduce things.

7 I have this composed for y'all because of what  
8 y'all represent, our heritage and our passion.

9 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you, Mr. Gilbert,  
10 for bringing that to the table today. You ran out of  
11 time.

12 GILBERT RAMSEY: Yes, sir. Thank you very much  
13 for your time and your assistance.

14 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir. Thank you.

15 Mr. Joe Jewell, would you like to tell us a  
16 little bit about Marine Fisheries?

17 JOE JEWELL: Thank you, Commissioner.

18 We have two items for the Commissioners'  
19 consideration this morning.

20 First up will be Mr. Matt Hill. He will present  
21 a brief update of the 2020 Recreational Red Snapper  
22 Season.

23 MATT HILL: Good morning Commissioners, Director  
24 Spraggins, Sandy.

25 It will be brief. I'm sure there will be a few

1 questions.

2 The presentation is the Mississippi 2020  
3 Recreational Red Snapper Season Update.

4 A little bit of background.

5 At the January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, meeting the following  
6 motion was made, to give the Executive Director the  
7 authority to establish start date for the 2020 snapper  
8 season and brief the Commission at the February monthly  
9 meeting. This passed unanimously.

10 An initial press release was issued announcing a  
11 start date with an end date for the first segment of July  
12 the 12<sup>th</sup>. The start date was May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

13 A corrected press release was then issued on  
14 February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, that properly reflected this motion  
15 with only the start date of May 22<sup>nd</sup> included.

16 Any questions?

17 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Matt, just so everybody  
18 is aware, we've got a Charter For-Hire Task Force meeting  
19 coming up March 5<sup>th</sup>, I believe it is.

20 MATT HILL: March the 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in this  
21 building.

22 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: That will be based on the  
23 State For-Hire Snapper Season that we will be talking  
24 about.

25 I would like to ask if you could present us next



1 month with some ranked options that come out of that  
2 meeting for that sector?

3 MATT HILL: Yes. We can definitely put together  
4 a presentation with some of the options that have come out  
5 and obviously some of the more popular options, and there  
6 will possibly be a resolution that would come from that  
7 task force that the chairman, or he can appoint someone to  
8 come and represent the task force to read, or to brief you  
9 some, but we can also have an additional presentation on  
10 everything that was discussed and all the options talked  
11 about.

12 I do want to also let all the Commissioners know  
13 we did reach out to all of you last time. There will be a  
14 call-in option again. We do encourage you to participate.  
15 It was a very good meeting, the last meeting we had. If  
16 you would like to participate in person, you are more than  
17 welcome to, but you can also call in and listen.

18 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Matt.

19 MATT HILL: Yes, sir.

20 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I was just going to ask a  
21 question while she is doing the motion.

22 At the task force meeting, are you going to talk  
23 anything about the reporting for the charter for-hire?

24 MATT HILL: Yes. We touched on that some at the  
25 last meeting. Obviously, it was dominated by the

1 structure of the state for-hire meeting. We can obviously  
2 include that on the agenda, or recommend that.

3 We have looked at some options. We have some  
4 costs. Right before I came to this meeting, we were  
5 talking again with Bluefin Data on some options on adding  
6 it to the current vessel program.

7 The ball is rolling on that. The structure will  
8 be in place. It will then be the Commission's decision on  
9 how we implement that, if we implement that, and the  
10 regulations around it, but we are putting the  
11 infrastructure in place.

12 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I was wondering because I  
13 thought you were supposed to bring it back to us.

14 MATT HILL: I think we had ninety days and I  
15 think my ninety days are up in March. I think I've got  
16 one more month.

17 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good for you.

18 MATT HILL: We do currently have the information  
19 and I can say what we are looking towards now is the  
20 vessel program which is the commercial trip ticket program  
21 that we are swapping over to.

22 South Carolina already utilizes that program for  
23 their for-hire reporting. So we are going to mimic that.  
24 We are not going to try and reinvent the wheel. It is a  
25 very successful program and we are working with Bluefin

1 Data in creating this program for the Commission's  
2 decision to implement it.

3 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal. Thank you.

4 MATT HILL: Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Do we have a motion?

6 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion on the  
8 table.

9 Do I have a second the motion?

10 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second it.

11 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a  
12 second.

13 All those in favor say aye.

14 (All in favor.)

15 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

16 (None opposed.)

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

18 MATT HILL: Thank you.

19 JOE JEWELL: Next up on the agenda is an update  
20 on the Oyster Task Force meeting for the Commissioners'  
21 consideration. Mr. Erik Broussard will present that.

22 Before we move into that presentation, I want to  
23 bring to the attention of the Commission -- Charmaine  
24 mentioned it -- at last week's AFS meeting, they held  
25 election of officers for the local chapter and as a

1 testament to the leadership of Marine Fisheries and this  
2 agency, Mr. Rick Burris was elected as the President Elect  
3 for the following year. I would like to congratulate him  
4 on that honor.

5 (Applause.)

6 ERIK BROUSSARD: Good morning Commissioners,  
7 Director Spraggins, Ms. Chesnut.

8 This morning I have prepared for you an update  
9 on the Oyster Task Force.

10 On September 18, 2018, the Commission passed a  
11 motion to reestablish the Oyster Task Force. As a part of  
12 that motion, there was an effective period of one year.

13 The Oyster Task Force had its inaugural meeting  
14 February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. We let the one year run from that  
15 initial meeting because it took several months to get the  
16 membership comprised.

17 We were contacted a few weeks ago about having  
18 another meeting. Unfortunately, the time had expired.

19 We wanted to bring that back to the commission  
20 for some directive.

21 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I guess what you are  
22 looking for is possibly a motion from the Commission to  
23 continue on with the task force.

24 ERIK BROUSSARD: To either reestablish, or  
25 continue, the task force, or dissolve it.

1           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think it is very  
2 important that we reestablish these task forces,  
3 especially on the oyster side. There are so many things  
4 we've got changing right now..

5           COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I have to disagree with  
6 you, Mr. Chairman.

7           we have a task force. That is this Commission,  
8 and we should be able to sit down and come up with a way  
9 to help this oyster industry.

10          Listen to our fishermen, but a task force, I  
11 don't think it is necessary.

12          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Unfortunately, outside of  
13 this room, we are not able to all sit down and talk about  
14 things.

15          Task forces, in my opinion, are valuable in  
16 making recommendations to us to provide information.

17          That is just my two cents on it.

18          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think if we do not do a  
19 task force, it is going to be one-sided going in.

20          If we do a task force, everybody is going to be  
21 well represented within the room.

22          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Do we have a motion to  
23 help give Mr. Broussard some direction?

24          COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Let me back up just one  
25 second.

1                   who did you say requested another meeting?

2                   ERIK BROUSSARD: Members of the task force had  
3 requested.

4                   COMMISSIONER DANIELS: So the task force is  
5 wanting to be involved?

6                   ERIK BROUSSARD: Yes.

7                   COMMISSIONER GUESS: So it would be continuing,  
8 or reestablishing?

9                   COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Will we continue the same  
10 membership, or would we reestablish a whole new task  
11 force?

12                   ERIK BROUSSARD: We would continue. They only  
13 had the one meeting. I think there is a good  
14 representation.

15                   COMMISSIONER GUESS: Yes. I think continue  
16 instead of reestablish.

17                   COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Should they meet once a  
18 quarter, semi-annually?

19                   Annually just doesn't seem to be enough.

20                   ERIK BROUSSARD: Semi-annually would be probably  
21 more appropriate, at a minimum.

22                   COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, I would think at a  
23 minimum.

24                   JOE SPRAGGINS: If you could maybe put something  
25 in there under the authorize the staff to continue with

1 the Oyster Task Force at the current Oyster Task Force. I  
2 think would be what we need to do.

3 JOE JEWELL: The bylaws and standard operating  
4 procedures for the Oyster Task Force, like all the rest of  
5 the task forces, gives the task force the authority to  
6 meet so many times a year, or more than that, if they  
7 choose to do so.

8 That option is already available in their  
9 operating procedures. The issue was they only met one  
10 time and that one year ticked out.

11 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: So required biannually,  
12 unless otherwise needed.

13 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Sandy, do we want to put a  
14 time frame in there as well?

15 SANDY CHESNUT: That is up to you. If you want  
16 to have it for another year, that is fine.

17 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We will just leave it open  
18 ended.

19 SANDY CHESNUT: who made the motion?

20 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I don't think anybody has  
21 yet.

22 SANDY CHESNUT: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll make the motion.

24 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion as  
25 written on the board.

1 Do we have a second for the motion?

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I'll second it.

3 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a  
4 second reestablishing, or continuation of our Oyster Task  
5 Force.

6 All those in favor say aye.

7 (Commissioner Bosarge, Commissioner Daniels,  
8 Commissioner Guess, Commissioner Havard in  
9 favor.)

10 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

11 (Commissioner Gollott opposed.)

12 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

13 ERIK BROUSSARD: Thank you, Commissioners.

14 JOE JEWELL: That completes the presentation by  
15 Office of Marine Fisheries.

16 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you, Mr. Jewell.  
17 Other Business.

18 COMMISSIONER GUESS: I would like to make a  
19 motion to go into closed session to discuss the necessity  
20 of going into executive session about prospective  
21 litigation.

22 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion.

23 Do we have a second?

24 COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I will second that  
25 motion.



1           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion and a second to go  
2 into closed session.

3           All those in favor say aye.

4           (All in favor.)

5           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

6           (None opposed.)

7           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

8           We will be back.

9                           MEETING STANDS IN RECESS

10          COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We are finished with  
11 executive session.

12          Sandy, do you want to read?

13          SANDY CHESNUT: Yes, sir, I will give a report.

14          The Commission went into closed session upon  
15 motion in open meeting to discuss prospective litigation.  
16 That was at 10:30.

17          At 10:37, after a short briefing from the  
18 Director, the Commission made a motion to go into  
19 executive session. Commissioner Guess made the motion.  
20 Commissioner Gollott seconded it, and it was unanimous.

21          At that meeting, Mark Havard, Ronnie Daniels,  
22 Richard Gollott, Steve Bosarge, Natalie Guess, myself  
23 Sandy Chesnut, Executive Director Joe Spraggins and Chief  
24 Scientific Officer Paul Mickle were present. Discussion  
25 was had over prospective litigation.

1           At 11:33, there was an amended motion made to  
2 also discuss personnel matters. That motion was made by  
3 Commissioner Guess and seconded by Commissioner Gollott.

4           Paul Mickle left the room, and, then, personnel  
5 matters were discussed. There were no motions made.

6           At 11:40, a motion was made by Commissioner  
7 Gollott, seconded by Commissioner Bosarge to end executive  
8 session and come back into open session.

9           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us to M,  
10 Public Comments.

11           Do we have any public comments?

12           HUNTER DAWKINS: (Indicating).

13           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: You have one?

14           HUNTER DAWKINS: Yes, sir. Hunter Dawkins, The  
15 Gazebo Gazette Newspaper.

16           Y'all went into executive session for quite some  
17 time.

18           Was there any action taken?

19           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: No. It was informing us  
20 of information that we were receiving.

21           HUNTER DAWKINS: Thank you. Appreciate it.

22           COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Anybody else for public  
23 comment?

24           (No response.)

25           COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, I would

1 like to make a motion that we adjourn.

2 COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I will second that.

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

5 All those in favor say aye.

6 (All in favor.)

7 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Opposed like sign.

8 (None opposed.)

9 COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

10 Meeting is adjourned.

11 (Whereupon, at 11:48 o'clock, a.m., the February  
12 18, 2020, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources  
13 was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, to hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the February 18, 2020, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned matter in shorthand, with electronic verification, and later reduced to typewritten form to the best of my skill and ability; and, further, that I am not a relative, employee, or agent, of any of the parties thereto, nor financially interested in the cause.

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