COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

COMMISSION MEETING

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

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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

Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251
COURT REPORTER
(228) 396-8788
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I would like to call the meeting to order of the Commission on Marine Resources Tuesday, May the 19th.

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

JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay.

Ready?

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir.

(Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you for doing that.

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

(Moment of silence observed.)

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

That brings us to approval of the minutes.

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

Can I get approval for that?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: So moved, Mr. Chairman.

This is Commissioner Bosarge.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion.

Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second the motion,
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Natalie Guess, aye.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Commissioner Bosarge, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Commissioner Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: All those opposed say nay.

(None opposed.)

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

SANDY CHESNUT: Commissioner Havard, I didn’t get who seconded that motion.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Natalie, I believe.

SANDY CHESNUT: Okay. Thank you.

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll make that motion,
COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second the motion, Commissioner Bosarge.

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

All those in favor say aye.

Aye, Commissioner Havard.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye, Commissioner Bosarge.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye, Daniels.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

One more time.

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

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

COMMISSIONER GUESS: I'll second.

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

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Aye.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Aye, Daniels.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Aye, Commissioner Havard.

The motion moves.

That brings us to approval of the agenda.
Any changes, any issues anybody has with the agenda? If not, can I get a motion to approve today's agenda?

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Can I get a second?

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I'll second, Commissioner Bosarge.

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

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.

Motion moves.

That brings us to the Executive Director's Report.

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

JOE SPRAGGINS: Thank y'all.

The employment contracts, I think you can pop that up real quick. We've got Jennifer Green with Finfish and Melody Chaplin with Shrimp and Crab Scientist III.
Those two came on before the last meeting, but we didn’t have an official thing for them, but we have those. I think those are the only ones on that.

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

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

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

Is that right, Joe Jewell?

(No response.)

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

Obviously, some good money going out to the people that are needing it at this time. It has really been a big deal for them to be able to get some money. We will have that out.
The oystermen wound up being a little over two
dollars and something a sack, after we got through with
four hundred and forty-one thousand sacks that qualified,
and we have those out and they are ready to go. As I
said, I signed all the subcontracts yesterday and they
will be signed by the oystermen on Thursday, or Friday, of
this week.

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

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

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

We are going to run it through the Gulf States.
Gulf States is going to write the checks, but we have got
to approve everybody. We are going to find out what
happens and I will keep y'all abreast of that.
We do have a year to pay it out, but I hope we get it paid out very shortly because I would like to see the people get the money as quick as possible.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Joe.

JOE SPRAGGINS: I’m sorry.

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

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

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any questions on the 2019 Bonnet Carre?

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

J O E S P R A G G I N S: We are working it and as soon as we get some information -- it will probably take us another month to get everything put together, but we will try to get y’all something hopefully by the June meeting. Before we have that June meeting, we will have information
to y'all of what we are trying to send to NOAA and be able to get things lined up.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are trying to do everything that we can to
make it as safe as possible to bring people back to work and let them be able to feel comfortable, when they come back to work.

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

Any questions on that?

(No response.)

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

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

JOE SPRAGGINS: Yes, sir.

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

I thought we had all that pretty well ironed out.

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

Joe Jewell, are you on?

JOE JEWELL: Yes, I'm on.

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

JOE JEWELL: I can because we have had a couple
of questions from the fishermen this morning.

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

We didn’t know what the total universe of fishermen would be. We didn’t know the total amount of participants that would be found eligible for the program.

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Joe, I thought what we did -- I’m trying to wrap my head around this, but I thought we said the -- we looked at the total number of sacks harvested by the whole industry and divided that into the total amount of what was left of the grant, and
that is how we came up with our sack number.

Do you see what I’m saying?

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

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: But harvesting the same number of sacks.

Correct?

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Can you send that to me?

I would like to see it, if that is possible.

JOE JEWELL: I think Director Spraggins would
have to approve that, but we would have no issue with that.

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

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

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

Now, why that number, I don’t know that answer and I’m not trying to make an excuse, but we went back and I asked them this morning and they said they could verify.
I think it is four hundred and forty-one thousand.
Is that right, Joe?
JOE JEWELL: Yes, that's correct.
JOE SPRAGGINS: That is what caused it go down, and there are still over a hundred thousand sacks out there that people didn’t qualify on top of that, that are still not being counted because those people didn’t qualify.
COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I’ve got you.
JOE SPRAGGINS: Sitting back and looking at it, obviously, it was probably not the correct way to put it to y’all on the 7th day of April.
The correct way would have been this is a sample and this is what we are working off of, and not that this was something that we thought would be the matrix because what we were trying to do was get permission from y’all to tell us that, yes, you can do this under this criteria, that you work under so many dollars per sack according to how many sacks divided into the money, and maybe we didn’t present it correctly, sir.
COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That’s fine. I thought we had gone back and looked at all the people that actually qualified with licenses.
JOE SPRAGGINS: No, sir. That was not the
truth, I don’t think, and I think they were just looking off of what had happened in the past that they knew that they could work off of, and, then, when they started going back and once we started getting the applications in, it changed things tremendously.

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Oh, yes.

Well, if you can send me that, I would appreciate it, Mr. Joe.

JOE SPRAGGINS: We will, sir.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Anything else for me?

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

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

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

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

Several months back, I don’t know if y’all remember, but I had some folks over here around the Bay area come to me complaining about debris in the water that
boats were hitting, and we went out.

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

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

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

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

    Kyle, are you on?

    (No response.)

    JOE SPRAGGINS: Patrick, are you on?

    PAUL MICKLE: Just give them a minute.

    JOE SPRAGGINS: Brady has to give them permission.

    BRADY SMITH: They are online.
KYLE WILKERSON: Excuse me, Director. We are on. Just trying to get this thing unmuted.

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you, Kyle.

KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.

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

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

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

Anything else guys?
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That brings us on to Office of Marine Patrol, Assistant Chief Kyle Wilkerson. What have you got for us?  
KYLE WILKERSON: Good morning Commissioners, counsel, Director.

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

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

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

JOE SPRAGGINS: Hang on one second.

Does anybody see the screen, other than the agenda?

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: No, sir.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: No, I cannot.

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

BRADY SMITH: Director Spraggins, we don't
normally show the citations report, but I can pull it up.

   JOE SPRAGGINS: Commissioners, would y'all like to see that, or do you have a copy of it in front of you?
   BRADY SMITH: It is usually available on the Commissioners portal and I think that is how they review it.
   JOE SPRAGGINS: We don't normally do it on the actual meeting?
   COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: No. I looked at it.
   COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I can pull it up on my phone and look at it, Joe. I've got it right here.
   JOE SPRAGGINS: Do any of the Commissioners have any questions on it?
   BRADY SMITH: I can pull it up and show it on the screen, if you need me to.
   JOE SPRAGGINS: Go ahead. I want people to be able to see it because it doesn't have names on it anyway.
   BRADY SMITH: Can you see it, now?
   JOE SPRAGGINS: Not yet, Brady.
   COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Kyle.
   KYLE WILKERSON: Yes, sir.
   COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I have looked at it several times. It looked like it was a really light month. I was just curious.
   I know over my way anyway with everybody being
home, there has been a lot of fishing going on, a lot of folks out on the water. I would have figured there would probably have been more -- you know, in other words, more action than what I see on the report. People must be doing a pretty good job of staying within the law.

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

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

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

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

    These sandbars do get a little challenging on the weekends.

    The weekend, as you know, is coming up. We have snapper season kicking off on Friday. We are going to
have all hands on deck. All shifts will be working. We have the plan for that, and it should be hopefully a safe and productive weekend.

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

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal.

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

KYLE WILKERSON: Will do.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

JOE SPRAGGINS: Any questions on Marine Patrol, Commissioners?

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

KYLE WILKERSON: Thank you.

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

Coastal Restoration and Resiliency, no presentation.

There is always a presentation by Finance and Administration.
Ms. Brewer.

LESLIE BREWER: Good morning Director, Commissioners, legal.

My name is Leslie Brewer, CFO.

Next slide, please, Brady.

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

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

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

Next slide, please.

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

Any questions?

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

LESLIE BREWER: I looked at last year. Of course, I wasn’t here at this time, but that is pretty normal. We are still waiting for our state appropriations of one point one million. That comes probably about September. It is the norm for this time of the year.
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Okay.
Any questions?
(No response.)

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I think we’re good.
Thank you, Leslie?

LESLIE BREWER: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.
That brings us on to Public Affairs, Ms. Charmaine.

CHARMAINE SCHERMUND: Good morning Commissioners, Director, Ms. Chesnut.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
was mentioned twenty-eight times in local, state and national media since the April CMR meeting.

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

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

The National Heritage Area project “Embrace Our Cultural Story, Your Mississippi Coast” has been completed and will be released by the Mississippi Coast National Heritage Area Facebook and Instagram.

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

It is a little shorter this month.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Good deal, Charmaine.
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Very good. We appreciate you keeping us informed.
CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Office of Marine Fisheries, Mr. Joe Jewell.
What have you got for us, Mr. Joe?

JOE JEWELL: Good morning Commissioners.

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

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

Matt, are you there?

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

MATT HILL: Can you hear me now?

JOE JEWELL: Yes.

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Matt.
MATT HILL: Yes, sir.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MATT HILL: That is correct.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: All right. Thank you, Matt.

MATT HILL: Yes, sir. We will move along. As you see here, the CMR passed the Notice of Intent on April 21st. The Notice of Intent was filed with the Secretary of State on the same day. The web page notice appeared on April the 22nd, and the legal notice appeared in the Sun Herald on April 23rd. To date, no public comments have been received on this regulatory change.

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

“Chapter 11, Recreational Fishing Language Reporting Requirements.

“Charter and Head Boat Reporting.

“Charter Boat and Head Boat captains
operating in Mississippi waters may
complete questionnaires furnished by
the MDMR. Completed questionnaires
shall be furnished to an information
confidentiality officer upon request.
“In addition to the reporting required
pursuant to this paragraph, the following
reporting is also required” --
And that is the language that we added that
Commissioner Bosarge was talking about with the Tails n' Scales Program.

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I’ve got a motion on the
table.

Do we have a second for the motion?

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, second.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a
second.

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.

Did everybody get a chance to vote?

Steve, did you get a chance to vote?

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Okay.

All those opposed say nay.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Nay, Bosarge.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Charter vessel captain and crew are prohibited from keeping a recreational bag limit of Red Snapper, Greater Amberjack and Spotted Seatrout.”

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion on the
table.

Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, second.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

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

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

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

I mean, I think most everybody knows that, but
just to make sure it is out there.

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

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Thank you.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Are you ready for the next item?

JOE JEWELL: Yes, Trevor. I’m sorry.

TREVOR MONCRIEF: Good morning Commissioners.

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

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

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

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

To date, no public comments have been received.
on this item.

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

“Cobia, thirty-six inches fork length.”

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

“It shall be unlawful for any commercial fisherman to possess any Cobia smaller than thirty-six inches fork length, or to possess more than a daily bag limit of two Cobia per person.”

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I’ll make the motion, Matt.

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

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll second that.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a second.
All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Aye, Bosarge.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Commissioner Havard, aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Matt, are you still on?

MATT HILL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Just a quick question and just to update, if we could.

Where are we at on our Spotted Seatrout stock assessment?

I think we were supposed to get that in September, or October, of last year.

MATT HILL: We received the final document from Robert this past week. Joe and myself have set a deadline for this Friday for the internal review committee to accept the changes. He has addressed all of the comments that we received from our peer review, from the peer reviewers that participated in it. He has addressed them. He has also prepared a document on how those were all addressed.

The document is complete. We are just reviewing the language now and we should have all the comments in,
like I said, by this Friday. Hopefully by the middle of next week, we will have a final document.

COMMISIONER BOSARGE: Good.

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

COMMISIONER BOSARGE: All right.

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

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

COMMISIONER BOSARGE: Correct.

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

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

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

We can provide that, with approval from Director Spragins.

COMMISIONER BOSARGE: I’m pretty sure that is what you did last time.

MATT HILL: It is. Just as a courtesy, we like
to ask the reviewers and get them to sign off on it and agree to that, and they all have done that.

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

   Right?

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

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

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

   Is that right?

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

   JOE SPRAGGINS: Okay.

   COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Thank you, Matt.

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

   JASON SAUCIER: Good morning Commissioners.

   I will provide to you an update, our annual update for shrimp season.
Just as a reminder to all the Commissioners, our inside waters, those waters in light blue located north of the ICW did close at the end of December, and, then, all waters located south of the ICW and west of Gulfport Ship Channel closed at the end of April (indicating map).

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

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

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

Just our historical opening dates. You will see last year was late compared to previous years. We do have some late openings in the past and, as you recall, last year’s opening, we came back to you in June and asked for
the Commission's guidance and approval on our opening based on sampling conditions being what they were. We weren't seeing that steady trend increase in size on our brown shrimp like we typically do. So we had a little bit of a different situation last year. Again, that was attributed to the Bonnet Carre opening (indicating graph).

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

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

Go ahead, Brady.

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

Trawl sampling does happen from April to June. We use the standardized method with our sixteen-foot
trawl. We’ve got sample points that are fixed that we go out and sample at every sampling event. We basically monitor growth of brown shrimp to help us determine when they will get to that legal size.

Next slide, Brady.

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

Go ahead, Brady.

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

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

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

What we would require at this point would be a motion to give the authority to the Executive Director to open the 2020-2021 season, when sampling shows that those shrimp get legal size.
COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Mr. Chairman, this is Gollott. I would like to make that motion.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: And I'll second his motion.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: We have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Commissioner Guess, aye.

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Motion moves.

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: That was my question to Jason.

What are your samples looking like, Jason?

JASON SAUCIER: They are growing definitely. I don't know that we've got enough data right now to commit to a date, but I would say we've got a lot more consistent growth trend than we did last year for sure, Steve. I'm pretty confident in the data that we've got, but we are trying to pick up a couple more samples, today's sample
and at least one more, before we make that decision so we've got high confidence in the data.

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

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

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

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

All that being said, we have looked at is there
a correlation between that and landings for a year, and there is not necessarily a direct correlation.

You can't really compare our sampling data.

Last year definitely there was a correlation, but, if you look at previous years, there isn’t a correlation.

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

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

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

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

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

You may be exactly right. We may have a lot less numbers, even though they may grow better, but there will be a lot less numbers this year and it will probably be as a result of the what happened last year.
COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Yes, and what has happened this year so far.

    Thank you, Jason.

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

    MATT HILL: Are we ready?

JOE JEWELL: We are ready.

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

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

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

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

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

    Next is another all tackle with the gear being spear, also. It is African Pompano. A new record of thirty-seven pounds one point four four ounces. Again,
the angler is Mr. Harley J. Havard.

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I’ll second that, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I’ve got a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Gollott, aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.
COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.
COMMISSIONER GUESS: Guess, aye.
COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.
Motion moves. We’ve got some new records on the books.

JOE SPRAGGINS: I think that Abigail is Commissioner Daniels’ daughter.
Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: She is. She sure is.
A funny story about that. I made her throw that fish back originally and every day for about thirteen days she threw her cast net trying to recatch it, once I found out what it was and it was a possible state record, and she caught it again.

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: That’s awesome.
That moves us on to other business.
Do we have any other business that we want to talk about?

(No response.)

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: At this time, I’ve got a
little something I want to talk about. My appointment, when I was appointed four years ago, I got on the Department of Marine Resources Commission. I didn't know a whole lot about what went on within the department.

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

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

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

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

It has always a joy working with people within the department and outside the department that love what they do for a living. They are passionate about it and it
is always good to leave the meeting with a bunch of positive folks.

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

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

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

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

Does anybody else have any other business?

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you guys for that.

It was a hard decision to make, but it was one
of those that I thought that it was in the best interest of my kids and that is the sole reason for me accepting the appointment to start with. It makes sense.

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

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

I guess that would be to Joe.

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

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

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

Thank you, Joe.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Any other business?
JOE SPRAGGINS: This is Joe Spraggins, and Commissioner Havard, it has been a pleasure working with you and I do appreciate everything you have done. I appreciate you stepping up to the plate and being a part of this team, and you have done a great job and we thank you so much.

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir. Thank you.

JOE SPRAGGINS: We do have public comments, sir.

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

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

BRADY SMITH: Don Gaddy, your mike is live.
DON GADDY: Can you hear me?

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Yes, sir.

DON GADDY: This is Don Gaddy.

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

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

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

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

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

Many of us have been owners and frequent visitors and inhabitants of Cat Island since the 1960's, and we personally witnessed the injuries to the fishing and the damage to the sanctuary of the island and the
frequent harm to the resources around the island.

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

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

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

We appreciate the work y'all are doing and the time and effort that y'all put in. We certainly understand that y'all put in a lot of time and effort and you have to listen to a lot of different people, and unfortunately we haven't been as vocal, or talking about
our opinions, but we hope to do that more in the future and we appreciate anything you can do to help us try to protect those resources out at Cat Island. Thank you.

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

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I had some questions for him.

DON GADDY: Sure.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: I understand where you are coming from and this issue has been before the Commission quite a few times and now at the legislature. You have some science that you want to present to us that shows what harm is being done?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DON GADDY: All right. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Thank you.

We've got one more public comment.

Is that right, Mr. Spraggins?

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

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

I would like to thank the legislature, as well,
and Secretary of State's office, along with Phil Bryant,
past governor, and the current governor Tate Reeves for continuing support.

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

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

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Mr. Rhodes, we appreciate that.

Do we have any other public comment?

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

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

COMMISSIONER DANIELS: I’ll make that motion.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: I’ll second that motion.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: I have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

COMMISSIONER GOLLOTT: Aye, Gollott.

COMMISSIONER BOSARGE: Bosarge, aye.
COMMISSIONER DANIELS: Daniels, aye.

COMMISSIONER GUESS: Guess, aye.

COMMISSIONER HAVARD: Havard, aye.

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

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

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

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

I, Lucille Morgan, Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing 58 pages, including this page, are a true and correct transcription of the Zoom Webinar of the May 19, 2020, meeting of the Commission on Marine Resources, 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.

S/ ________________________________

Lucille Morgan, CSR 1251
Court Reporter