

## STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

## COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, May 16, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Bolton Building Auditorium

1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

**COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Ronnie Daniels  
Jonathan McLendon  
Cammack "Cam" Roberds

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Joe Spraggins, Director  
Sandy Chesnut, Esquire  
Steven Eckert, Esquire

**REPORTED BY:**

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich  
mburdine@sbmreporting.com

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Good morning, everyone. We'd like to  
3 welcome y'all to the Mississippi Advisory  
4 Commission Meeting for May 16th. We're going to  
5 go ahead and call the meeting to order.

6 I would like to ask Commissioner Roberds  
7 to lead us in the pledge of allegiance.

8 (Pledge of allegiance recited.)

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 Thank you, Cam.

11 All right. Director, would you like to  
12 lead us with a prayer?

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 I would. And I just want to, first off,  
15 tell everybody that in times of this boating  
16 season and everything coming up, please be  
17 careful. Please understand that there's a lot of  
18 things can happen to you on the water. And  
19 especially for some fishermen and all, we just ask  
20 you to be safe out there because it is very  
21 dangerous and we want to pray for you.

22 (Moment of prayer.)

23 RONNIE DANIELS:

24 Thank you, Joe.

25 All right. Approval of minutes. Do we

1 have any discussion on the April 18th minutes?

2 Do we have a motion to approve?

3 JONATHAN McLENDON:

4 I'll make that motion.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6 I'll second.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 All in favor? Aye.

9 JONATHAN McLENDON:

10 Aye.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Aye.

13 RONNIE DANIELS:

14 Approval of the agenda for today's  
15 meeting. Do we have a motion to approve the  
16 agenda?

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 I'll make a motion to approve the  
19 agenda.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 I will second that.

22 All in favor? Aye.

23 JONATHAN McLENDON:

24 Aye.

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1                   Aye.

2           RONNIE DANIELS:

3                   All right. Mr. Joe, it's all yours.

4           JOE SPRAGGINS:

5                   Oakly. Let's see. First thing up we  
6           want to talk about is the employment contracts.  
7           And I'm trying to get this thing to work this  
8           morning.

9                   All right. We have got a couple of new  
10          hires. Bryan Drieling is starting -- he started  
11          in April as Law Enforcement Officer I for Marine  
12          Patrol, and then Tyler Williams started on May 8th  
13          as an ENR Specialist I with CRM permitting.

14                  We had a couple of promotions, Jacob  
15          Goff. He was promoted on April 16th to ENR  
16          Specialist III with the Grand Bay NERR.

17                  We've got several new interns that are  
18          coming in, and the list is there for you if you  
19          want to look at them and -- but we appreciate that  
20          because the one thing about the interns, there is  
21          quite a few people sitting in this agency today  
22          that were interns. I'm looking at one right now  
23          and I'm looking at a couple out there. They  
24          intern with us and they came to work with us and  
25          was able to see about the department and we was

1 able to see how they operated and in turn, we were  
2 able to be able to hire them and that's worked out  
3 very good. So I would like to continue this  
4 internship stuff. I think it's -- I think getting  
5 these kids here it's great and these young leaders  
6 and they're coming up. And I appreciate that.

7 Any questions on the contracts? I don't  
8 think there is any contracts out there. Anything  
9 else?

10 (No response.)

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 All right. Agency update. Well, let's  
13 see. We have got red snapper season coming, so we  
14 put it out the other day. It will be the first  
15 week -- the 26th, I think, of May, so that's on a  
16 Friday and we will open it up and that's before  
17 Labor -- Memorial Day. We expect a good turnout.  
18 It looks like the weather might be holding out to  
19 be pretty decent during that time.

20 We have been cut back, if you -- you  
21 know, the number of snapper is around 62,000  
22 pounds that we have right now, but we're going to  
23 look at it. And we're trying to work with NOAA  
24 and we're trying to work with some -- to be  
25 able -- the Council to be able to see if we can

1 maybe come up with some additional poundage to do  
2 what we need to do. We will start it and it will  
3 basically be open from Memorial Day weekend till  
4 at least after the 4th of July and then we will  
5 see where we're at at that point. Hopefully, the  
6 snapper are plentiful out there. From what I'm  
7 hearing, it's looking good, so let's get ready for  
8 a good snapper season.

9 Any questions on that?

10 (No response.)

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 All right. Blessing of the Fleet will  
13 be that weekend also, and so we're going to have  
14 the Blessing of the Fleet coming up. And so  
15 anybody that would like to participate in that,  
16 we'd appreciate it. And it's always a great thing  
17 to be able to ask the Lord to help us, and that's  
18 what we're doing and that's what they're doing.  
19 They're asking the Lord to bless the shrimpers and  
20 the fishermen. And so we'd just ask you that if  
21 you'd like to, you be part of that.

22 DMR will be closed on May 29th for  
23 Memorial Day.

24 And we've got a -- one thing that has  
25 happened, if you didn't notice, but Louisiana went

1 up on their license, out-of-state license, so we  
2 have done the same. And so if you look at it now,  
3 our license, I think, starts on -- is it the 1st  
4 of May, I believe it is, that it started, that  
5 if -- your basic fishing license, if your -- for  
6 Louisiana is now \$68 and salt water license is  
7 \$60, so it went up. It was 60 and 30, and so it  
8 went up to 68.

9 So we're doing that. Now we're charging  
10 \$60 and \$30, so -- for that. So if you get --  
11 anybody with any questions? The reason we went up  
12 on it is because Louisiana did and that's what we  
13 do. We just basically mirror what they do. Once  
14 they go up, we go up. Alabama did not go up, so  
15 we didn't go up with Alabama. They're staying the  
16 same.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 Just to clarify that, Joe, that's for  
19 out-of-state, not residents?

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Out-of-state, yeah. Not for in-state.  
22 Out-of-state only, yes.

23 And for the Louisiana people coming  
24 over, I hope it's not too much of an  
25 inconvenience, but we have to just follow the

1 rules, is what they are.

2 All right. A little bit on our derelict  
3 vessels. We've had 99 derelict vessel cases that  
4 have been reported. We have 65 of them that's  
5 been removed. We have got 34 that's pending  
6 removal, and we have -- we don't have any in court  
7 right now.

8 So the team is doing a great job.  
9 They're getting the vessels moved. They're trying  
10 to do the things -- if you have a derelict vessel  
11 and if you see something and you don't know if  
12 it's been reported or not, just call us, let us  
13 know and we will be definitely able to look at it  
14 and see if it is and it's already being worked on.  
15 We'll take it.

16 We have a grant that's coming to us  
17 July 1st. And we have a federal grant through  
18 GOMA that's going to help pay for this, and so we  
19 will be able to use some of that money too, along  
20 with the State. The State did give us some money,  
21 and between the two, we ought to be able -- be  
22 pretty good to be able to get to it, you know, the  
23 derelict vessels out that we need, so hopefully  
24 that will work out.

25 Let's see. I don't know of anything --



1 looking right here of anything else.

2 I think as far as the Wildlife  
3 Foundation, we met with them, and we are -- you  
4 know, once again, we're a part of the Wildlife  
5 Foundation. We're working with them and we're  
6 trying to set up a couple of things to be able to  
7 do some different type tournaments and different  
8 type events here on the Coast with saltwater and  
9 so hopefully we will be able to do that. And I  
10 don't see it happening this year because it's kind  
11 of early. You know, it takes about a year to get  
12 things put in place, so hopefully next year we'll  
13 be able to have a couple of tournaments or  
14 something that we're sponsoring on it and be able  
15 to help.

16 We are sponsoring -- we just got asked  
17 yesterday to be able to help sponsor some events  
18 for some children, and one of them is on --  
19 Charmaine, was that on 15 May? One of them is 15  
20 June, right?

21 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

22 June.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24 15 June. And then there is one in July,  
25 and then there is a women's tournament, saltwater

1 tournament that we're sponsoring also. So we're  
2 out there trying to help out. We want to get the  
3 people out and want them to be able to understand  
4 that we're working hard to get more people  
5 involved in fishing and hopefully it will work  
6 out.

7 All right. Any questions on any of  
8 that?

9 (No response.)

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 All right. Agency update. I didn't  
12 forget you this time.

13 SANDY CHESNUT:

14 You did good.

15 Okay. At the April meeting, the  
16 Commission recommended and the Director approved  
17 the -- another no wake zone for Jackson County  
18 Board of Supervisors. It was referred to as  
19 Proposed Leg 4. This was part of the package that  
20 they sent over, I think it was, June or July of  
21 last year. The -- two of the four were approved  
22 at that time and the Leg 4 was tabled for further  
23 information. That information was presented last  
24 month and it was approved. It's at the Fort Bayou  
25 Bridge in Ocean Springs. And that is all.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Anything on that? Any questions?

3 (No response.)

4 JOE SPRAGGINS:

5 All right. Patrick is coming up. We  
6 have got three resolutions that we'd like to ask  
7 the Commission to approve. And one is renaming  
8 the Danzler Tract to Secretary of State Eric Clark  
9 Coastal Preserve.

10 And the other one is a resolution to  
11 rename the Big Island to Gollott Island, and name  
12 the breakwater improvement on the south side of  
13 the island to be designated as Godfather Point.  
14 And this is in reference to our senator of over  
15 50 years, Senator Tommy Gollott, who did great for  
16 us and we appreciate him.

17 And then we also have one that we're  
18 renaming an oyster reef after -- the nature  
19 conservancy to Tony Trapani Reef in Bay St. Louis.  
20 Tony was a great -- he was a great benefit to the  
21 whole agency and the whole estuary because he  
22 worked hard every day trying to help us and we  
23 appreciated him.

24 And Tony would tell you how he felt.  
25 You didn't have to ask a question. He'd tell you

1 definitely how he felt about things, but, you  
2 know, his heart was always in the right place and  
3 that was to be able to take care of what we need  
4 as far as the estuary and take care of the  
5 conservation of the fisheries.

6 So Patrick is going to read these in and  
7 then we will move forward at that point.

8 PATRICK LEVINE:

9 Well, good morning. And as Director  
10 Spraggins said, we'll be going over a couple of  
11 resolutions. The first two that I'm going to be  
12 discussing are in accordance with Senate Bill 2530  
13 that Governor Reeves signed into law April 13th,  
14 2023, and so I -- you know, it's a privilege to be  
15 able to read each of these because I did have the  
16 opportunity to know Senator Gollott for a very  
17 long time. And there's no doubt in my mind that  
18 Eric Clark was a good man, so I get the  
19 opportunity to do this today.

20 The first resolution that we'll be  
21 reading into the minutes today is Resolution  
22 Number 0518623-01. It says: Whereas, the  
23 Mississippi Advisory Commission of the Marine  
24 Resources, as a duly constituted governmental  
25 entity created to serve the great State of

1 Mississippi and said service includes the  
2 preservation of the natural state of the coastal  
3 wetlands and their ecosystems, which includes the  
4 management of Mississippi's Coastal Preserves, and  
5 the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine  
6 Resources acknowledges contribution to the  
7 betterment of the coastal wetlands throughout the  
8 Gulf of Mexico through significant biological,  
9 industrial, legislative enforcement or  
10 administrative activities.

11           And whereas, Secretary of State Eric  
12 Clark was instrumental in acquiring what is now  
13 designated as the Danzler Tract, 925 acres located  
14 in the Pascagoula River marshes in Jackson County,  
15 Mississippi. And the property was acquired in  
16 1997 with funds obtained by Secretary of State  
17 Eric Clark as Trustee of the Public Trust  
18 Tidelands and part of the Mississippi Coastal  
19 Preserves Program.

20           In accordance with the Senate Bill 2530,  
21 and in honor of Secretary of State Clark's role in  
22 the development of the program, the Commission  
23 recommends the following action: Now, therefore,  
24 be it resolved in a duly constituted and assembled  
25 meeting that the Mississippi Advisory Commission

1 on Marine Resources does hereby recommend to the  
2 Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine  
3 Resources that the tract now designated as the  
4 Danzler Tract be designated as the Secretary of  
5 State Eric Clark Coastal Preserve, effective  
6 July 1st, 2023. Done and resolved, as is duly  
7 constituted in this assembled meeting on this, the  
8 16th day of May 2023.

9 And so I know that you gentlemen already  
10 had the opportunity to look at that resolution and  
11 to be able to sign it and so effective July 1st,  
12 2023, the Danzler Tract in Jackson County will now  
13 be the Eric Clark Preserve.

14 And so we have it on the map here. And  
15 Karen, if you could pull it up, I want to go  
16 through and show y'all where this is located in  
17 Gautier near the Indian Point area. And if you'll  
18 go to the next slide, that's the Secretary of  
19 State Eric Clark Coastal Preserve.

20 And additionally, in this piece of  
21 legislation, the Mississippi Department of Marine  
22 Resources, in conjunction with the Office of the  
23 Secretary of State, are further authorized to  
24 erect appropriate markers and signs indicating the  
25 location of the Secretary of State Eric Clark

1 Coastal Preserve.

2 And we're already in motion to where  
3 we're not going to be looking at changing these  
4 signs, but already looking at an opportunity to  
5 how we're going to designate some of the kiosks  
6 and put some signage out there on the property  
7 effective July 1st.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 Yeah. And we will do an official  
10 presentation of this some time after -- around the  
11 middle of August, so that's when we have looked at  
12 it and I think we will be able to do that  
13 somewhere in the August time frame.

14 PATRICK LEVINE:

15 Yes, sir.

16 All right. The second resolution that  
17 we're going to talk about today and present is  
18 051623-02. And as I mentioned, this is the one  
19 that's going to be talking about Gollott Island  
20 and Godfather Point.

21 And, you know, having the opportunity to  
22 be with the agency quite a few years, there have  
23 been many, many times that Senator Gollott fought  
24 for this agency and not only for this agency, but  
25 for the resources on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

1 And I was able to watch that for many, many years,  
2 the contributions that he made to the Mississippi  
3 Gulf Coast.

4           Whereas, the Mississippi Advisory  
5 Commission on Marine Resources, a duly constituted  
6 governmental entity created to serve the great  
7 State of Mississippi, and said service includes  
8 the preservation of the natural state of the  
9 coastal wetlands and their ecosystems, which  
10 includes the management of Mississippi's Coastal  
11 Preserves and any matters pertaining to the  
12 Mississippi saltwater aquatic life and marine  
13 resources and the Mississippi Advisory Commission  
14 on Marine Resources acknowledges contribution to  
15 the betterment of the coastal wetlands and marine  
16 resources throughout the Gulf of Mexico through  
17 significant biological, industrial, legislative  
18 enforcement or administrative activities.

19           And in accordance with Senate Bill 2530  
20 and in honor of the role Senator Thomas A. Gollott  
21 played in the development of the Mississippi Gulf  
22 Coast, the Commission recommends the following  
23 action: Designate what is now as -- Big Island,  
24 57 acres located at physical address of zero Mouth  
25 of Back Bay and more particularly described as



1 Patent Number 1211672 Big Island, Lot 2 of Section  
2 22-7-9, a swamp and overflowed land located at the  
3 mouth of the Back Bay of Biloxi in Harrison  
4 County, Mississippi as Gollott Island.

5 Further, the Commission recommends that  
6 the breakwater improvements of the south side of  
7 the island be designated as Godfather Point.

8 Now, therefore, be it resolved in a duly  
9 constituted and assembled meeting that the  
10 Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine  
11 Resources does hereby recommend to the Director of  
12 the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
13 that the tract now be designated as -- the Big  
14 Island be designated as Gollott Island and the  
15 breakwater improvement on the south side of the  
16 island be designated as Godfather Point effective  
17 July 1st, 2023.

18 And as Director Spraggins said, we are  
19 working on signage for that location to be able to  
20 designate it, and we'll be looking at somewhere in  
21 August moving on and making sure that we  
22 recognize -- recognize that property and make it  
23 public.

24 And so like the previous, Karen, if you  
25 will look here, Big Island is located in -- inside

1 of the Back Bay.

2 And the next slide.

3 There is Gollott Island and there are  
4 the breakwater improvements. If you have been out  
5 there, DEQ has been working on a project with a  
6 lot of riprap and making a breakwater around the  
7 island on that eastern side, but Godfather Point  
8 is on that side. And so just a great way to  
9 recognize the efforts of Senator Gollott, and we  
10 will be doing a public presentation in the months  
11 to come.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Yeah. And for the ones that didn't  
14 know, back in the early '90s, we used to be the  
15 Bureau of Marine Resources and because of Senator  
16 Tommy Gollott, we're now the Department of Marine  
17 Resources. He was the one who was instrumental in  
18 getting that done for us and being able to change  
19 this agency to a standalone agency. And we owe  
20 him a lot, so we appreciate that and look forward  
21 to being -- hopefully getting to see him before  
22 that.

23 PATRICK LEVINE:

24 Well, as mentioned, both of the  
25 resolutions that we just discussed become

1 effective July 1st, 2023.

2 The resolution that I'm about to read,  
3 it can go into effect immediately, and that's  
4 Resolution Number 051623-03.

5 Karen, I'm going to have you go ahead.  
6 I'm going to change order here. If you'll go  
7 ahead and go on to the next slide, we're going to  
8 be talking about a project. This is a National  
9 Fish and Wildlife Federation funding that they're  
10 giving to the nature conservancy to put in some  
11 reef inside the Bay of St. Louis.

12 And I can say that while this project  
13 has been coming alive, it's very similar, I guess,  
14 to maybe when somebody finds out they're having a  
15 kid, like what are we going to name this thing?  
16 And lots of people have been reaching out to the  
17 agency saying that we want to make sure that this  
18 reef is named after Tony Trapani and the efforts  
19 that he has done. And it's just been numerous  
20 people that have done that and have recognized the  
21 efforts of Tony and said, you know what, even  
22 though this is -- this is in the makings, we want  
23 to make sure we know what it's going to be called,  
24 because he deserves it. We want to recognize his  
25 efforts and his love for the resources on the

1 Mississippi Gulf Coast.

2           So this resolution reads this way: The  
3 Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine  
4 Resources is a duly constituted governmental  
5 entity created to serve the Great State of  
6 Mississippi, and said service includes the  
7 management and enforcement of any matters  
8 pertaining to Mississippi saltwater aquatic life  
9 and marine resources. And the Mississippi  
10 Advisory Commission on Marine Resources  
11 acknowledges contribution to the betterment of the  
12 fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico through  
13 significant biological, industrial, legislative  
14 enforcement or administrative activities.

15           Whereas, Tony Trapani graduated from  
16 St. Stanislaus in 1982 and from Southeastern  
17 Louisiana in 1993 with a communications degree.  
18 His passion for food led him to start Trapani's  
19 Eatery in the Bay of St. Louis in 1994, now the  
20 oldest seafood restaurant on the Coast.

21           Tony was a true conservationist  
22 concerned with protecting the waters of the Gulf  
23 and served as the first president of the Bay  
24 Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association.

25           And Tony's love for the Bay was evident.

1 As an icon of the tourism industry, he left his  
2 mark on the heart and soul of all he met and  
3 loved, and he put the Bay on the map as a  
4 sought-after tourism attraction on the Coast.

5 Now, therefore be it resolved, in a duly  
6 constituted and assembled meeting, that the  
7 Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine  
8 Resources does hereby recommend to the Director of  
9 the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
10 that the oyster reef constructed by the Nature  
11 Conservancy in the Bay of St. Louis of Mississippi  
12 with the central location of latitude  
13 30.34463960 degrees north and longitude  
14 80.2894232 degrees west be named the Tony Trapani  
15 Reef. Done and resolved in this duly constituted  
16 and assembled meeting on this, the 16th day of  
17 May 2023.

18 And so effective today, this project and  
19 the future development of this project and one day  
20 just a beautiful place for people to be able to go  
21 and enjoy the resources of the Mississippi Gulf  
22 Coast will be known as the Tony Trapani Reef.

23 And today, I believe that we have some  
24 family and friends that are here, and I don't know  
25 if any of y'all would like to share anything, just

1 a brief sharing. But another thing we would love  
2 to do is for the Commission to be able to take a  
3 picture with y'all and provide y'all a copy of the  
4 resolution. So family and friends, if y'all could  
5 stand and Commission, if it's okay --

6 RONNIE DANIELS:

7 Patrick, before we get to that, we're  
8 going to make this official real quick.

9 PATRICK LEVINE:

10 Y'all make it official.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 Do we have a motion to approve all three  
13 resolutions and renaming these places?

14 CAM ROBERDS:

15 I will make that motion.

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 I will second the motion.

18 All in favor? Aye.

19 JONATHAN McLENDON:

20 Aye.

21 CAM ROBERDS:

22 Aye.

23 RONNIE DANIELS:

24 All right. Thank you.

25 PATRICK LEVINE:

1 Thank you, sir.

2 CARY TRAPANI:

3 These are Tony's children, his daughter,  
4 Grace, and his son, Joseph, and a very -- one of  
5 his all-time fishing buddies, who is Alex Murray.

6 It's a true honor that Tommy and CCA of  
7 Bay St. Louis has approached -- and Tommy is the  
8 current president of CCA, Donnie Hughes with CCA,  
9 you know, everybody. Thank y'all for the honor.

10 And Tony is gone too soon, for sure, but  
11 the reef in his name, you guys made it happen  
12 where his memory will live on forever. And he  
13 probably kissed every fish that he let go to breed  
14 and make more. And I know it's going to be a lot  
15 of fun fishing on that reef, whether -- soon, and  
16 thank y'all very much. It's a true honor. Thank  
17 you, General Spraggins, too.

18 PATRICK LEVINE:

19 Yep.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Like I said, Tony meant a lot to us.  
22 And I tell you what, he -- many times he'd call me  
23 and give me an opinion about what needed to be  
24 done and, you know, every time it was out of his  
25 heart.

1 CARY TRAPANI:

2 Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 It was out of his heart. It wasn't out  
5 of anything else but his heart about what needed  
6 to be done. And so it's an honor to be able to do  
7 this.

8 CARY TRAPANI:

9 Thank you very much.

10 JOE SPRAGGINS:

11 We got a copy.

12 CRYSTAL MATTA:

13 I gave it to the daughter.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 We can have a copy of it and we just --

16 CARY TRAPANI:

17 Can we get Tommy in here, too, y'all?

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Yes, sir.

20 CARY TRAPANI:

21 Tommy, we'd love to have you in here,  
22 brother.

23 Tommy said something that was so cool  
24 the other day at a CCA meeting -- or at the  
25 redfish tournament that Tommy hated cleaning fish



1 when he caught them, but Tony taught him that it's  
2 the celebration and the honor that you give a fish  
3 to clean it properly and prepare it for your  
4 family for dinner. I thought that was just an  
5 awesome little note to --

6 TOMMY ELKINS:

7 Changed the way I looked at it.

8 CARY TRAPANI:

9 -- change the way you look at cleaning  
10 fish. I would like to get next to Grace and  
11 Joseph.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Come on in here.

14 CARY TRAPANI:

15 Thank you so much, y'all.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 Thank y'all.

18 CARY TRAPANI:

19 It's a true honor. Thank you.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 And Patrick, I think -- can we get some  
22 good official copies of that to send to them?

23 PATRICK LEVINE:

24 Yes, sir.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1           And if y'all will let us know, we'll  
2 send each one of you one. Okay?

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4           Patrick, next time, let's not do the  
5 coordinates. Y'all just gave away one of my honey  
6 holes.

7 PATRICK LEVINE:

8           I understand.

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10          All right.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12          I think that's all I have right now,  
13 sir.

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15          All right. Thank you, Joe. We  
16 appreciate it.

17          Commissioners' report. Do any of the  
18 commissioners got anything to report?

19          Joe, I have got one question. I don't  
20 think we have heard anything about this for a  
21 while: Where are we at with the Bonnet Carré  
22 funds money?

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24          Well, we're waiting on the -- I guess it  
25 would be NOAA, but OMB, which is -- has it and

1 they're looking at it and they're trying to decide  
2 whether or not -- Alabama's had theirs for a month  
3 and a half. And hopefully we'll -- us and  
4 Louisiana will get ours in the next month or  
5 sometime soon.

6 We have gone back to changing every  
7 little thing that we can think of and just -- you  
8 know, we're doing everything. Rick, you got any  
9 more update than that? Rick's the one that's  
10 handling it for me.

11 RICK BURRIS:

12 Yeah. I think two months ago I  
13 mentioned it was getting close. I thought it was  
14 getting close because they keep asking us to  
15 update the dates on the 424, which is the  
16 financial form. The latest updated date we have  
17 is May 1st and it's now May 16th, so I'm  
18 assuming -- I'm going to anticipate we will have  
19 to change that form again.

20 But it keeps getting -- it feels like it  
21 keeps getting closer, but we have not been  
22 contacted to say, this is your official start  
23 date. Once that's approved, we'll -- they will  
24 let us know and we'll let everybody else know, but  
25 right now, it's just kind of wait and see.

1           But like I mentioned a couple of months  
2 ago, we're a lot closer than we were. Like you  
3 said, Alabama has got theirs and ours should be  
4 coming soon.

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6           Okay. Appreciate it. Thank you.

7           All right. Nothing else on the  
8 Commissioners' report.

9           Marine Patrol, Chief Wilkerson.

10 KYLE WILKERSON:

11           Good morning. Good to see every one of  
12 y'all healthy and here with us.

13           I'm going to let Captain Michael  
14 Strickland do the citation report. And he also  
15 has some details further that you may want to ask  
16 about the air show and all that. So Michael, if  
17 you would.

18 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

19           All right. Good morning. Hopefully you  
20 had time to review the report that was uploaded.  
21 Shouldn't have any issues there to report, pretty  
22 cut and dry.

23           Director did ask me in the prep meeting  
24 if we would make a little comment and give some  
25 information about the air show that we had April

1 28th, 29th, and 30th, Thunder Over the Sound.

2 We anticipated a high volume of traffic.  
3 Keesler Air Force Base was estimating over 100,000  
4 spectators. We exceeded that. We estimated about  
5 2,200 vessels with spectators during that time  
6 frame.

7 Marine Patrol deployed 24 uniformed  
8 personnel, 12 different vessel assets, an  
9 emergency response dive team. And like I said, it  
10 was about 2,100 vessels, and with that amount of  
11 traffic, we were -- there was only one boat  
12 accident during the entire time. It was a minor  
13 accident where a vessel broke loose from anchor  
14 because of the high winds. But that's just a  
15 testament to officer presence and also the boating  
16 public doing exactly what they're supposed to do  
17 to make the show enjoyable and safe for everyone.

18 So I'll be glad to take any questions  
19 you have.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 You know, Joe touched on it earlier, but  
22 safety on the water is the biggest thing, and you  
23 guys do a great job. I got stopped the other day  
24 on the way in, very professional, very courteous.  
25 But just can't stress to people enough how quickly

1 things can go from the best day of the summer to  
2 the worst day of your life out there.

3 COMMISSIONER GUSA:

4 It can happen very quickly.

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 Got to pay attention. You know, there  
7 is one that's not listed on here, but we had a  
8 young girl lose her life on Jourdan River last  
9 month, and it's -- I believe Wildlife and  
10 Fisheries took care of that one, but --

11 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

12 It's listed on the bottom. It's just  
13 a --

14 RONNIE DANIELS:

15 Okay. I didn't see that.

16 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

17 Yeah -- a non -- just outside of our  
18 normal AOR. We assisted Mississippi Department of  
19 Wildlife and Fisheries with that. And it's still  
20 currently an ongoing investigation as well.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 Yeah. People, just, please, be safe out  
23 there. It can turn real bad real fast.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 I'll tell you what, if you went out for

1 the air show and you didn't see a blue light you  
2 have got a problem.

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 You're in the wrong place.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Yeah. They were all over that sound,  
7 Mississippi Sound, and not pulling people over but  
8 helping people and keeping people safe, so we  
9 appreciate y'all very much. Thank you.

10 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

11 Thank you.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Thank you. Y'all keep up the good work.

14 KYLE WILKERSON:

15 Thank you, sir.

16 MICHAEL STRICKLAND:

17 Yes, sir.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 All right. Office of Coastal Resources  
20 Management, giant apple snails, Sierra Ortiz. Did  
21 I say that right?

22 SIERRA ORTIZ:

23 Yes.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 Okay. Good.

1       JOE SPRAGGINS:

2                   Talking about one of my interns, she was  
3 one of them. Now look at her.

4       SIERRA ORTIZ:

5                   Okay. So this presentation is on the  
6 eight years of giant apple snails from the Coastal  
7 Preserves team.

8                   Pictured here is -- you can see the size  
9 of the apple snail and their bright pink egg  
10 masses.

11                   Giant apple overview. So these snails  
12 are freshwater snails native to South America.  
13 They are very large. They can grow up to six  
14 inches long. They have one lung and one gill.  
15 The females are larger than the males. They  
16 mature within 60 to 80 days. They produce 2,500  
17 eggs per mass, and they hatch between 10 to 14  
18 days.

19                   Their environmental impact. They strip  
20 marsh of vegetation. They change the plant  
21 community to algal based. They can be a carrier  
22 of rat lungworm parasite. They're a predator of  
23 amphibian eggs and they have very few predators in  
24 Mississippi.

25                   The pictures to the right, you can see



1 the limpkin bird. They are native to Florida, but  
2 there is very few of them in Mississippi.

3 These two maps reference the expansion  
4 of giant apple snail sightings. In 2002, you can  
5 see that they're only in Texas and Florida.  
6 Within 20 years, you can see their expansion all  
7 throughout the Southeast United States from Texas  
8 to South Carolina down in Florida.

9 The techniques over the years. In the  
10 beginning, before we knew much information, we  
11 created this device, the snailinator. We used a  
12 wire grill brush and attached it to a long paint  
13 roller handle. We were able to use this to scrape  
14 off the egg masses from trees, stumps, boats,  
15 rocks, literally anything that the snails could  
16 climb on. We have had volunteers in the past from  
17 Gulf Corps to help us scrape off the eggs.

18 Later, we started developing the  
19 software to help us better understand where these  
20 snails are coming from, their migration pattern  
21 and how many snails were actually being captured.

22 DMR's IT department and Coastal  
23 Preserves team developed an app to help us with  
24 data collection.

25 Lastly, we partnered with environmental

1 Management Services, National Fish and Wildlife  
2 Foundation and MDEQ to help us control the apple  
3 snails. Environmental Management Services created  
4 this modified crawfish trap to help us capture the  
5 snails.

6 This graph shows the number of egg  
7 masses destroyed by month and year. You can see  
8 that each year was a growth, but in 2021 and 2022  
9 was the most impactful. This was because of our  
10 partners.

11 This graph shows the snails captured by  
12 month and year. In the beginning, it was  
13 difficult to capture the snails, as they would  
14 drop in the water as soon as we got close. This  
15 biggest impact was year 2022, with the modified  
16 crawfish traps, with a peak of 6,500 captured  
17 within September, October.

18 This success rate that the Coastal  
19 Preserves team have had. More than 65,000 egg  
20 masses were destroyed. Over 5,300 snails were  
21 removed by hand. With the improved trapping and  
22 methods that we have, 21,577 snails were removed  
23 from trapping.

24 Future plans that we have. Coastal  
25 Preserves Program wants to ensure we do everything

1 in our power to help control the snails against an  
2 infestation. We plan to continue monitoring and  
3 trapping. We want to improve our trapping  
4 equipment and the bait that we use. Lastly, we  
5 want to broaden our monitoring of early detection  
6 of new infestations.

7 Thank you.

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 Good job. That's a lot of snails.

10 SIERRA ORTIZ:

11 It's been eight years in the process and  
12 hopefully we'll keep doing it.

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 She's not only killing snails. They do  
15 a great job on salvania, which is a -- go out and  
16 try to help keep it under control. I don't think  
17 you can ever eradicate it, but, you know, you can  
18 keep it under control.

19 But they're also working in  
20 Bay St. Louis in -- what is the grass over there?  
21 Are you working on that, Sierra?

22 SIERRA ORTIZ:

23 Yes. We have part of our team over  
24 there right now working on it.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1                   Trying to get it -- I'll tell you, these  
2 things come into the Gulf and they get into these  
3 canals and other areas, and when the fresh water  
4 gets to a certain level that can let them grow,  
5 they grow and they can grow rapidly.

6 SIERRA ORTIZ:

7                   Yes.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9                   And so being able to get control of it,  
10 it's very hard.

11                   And I'll tell you what else, you don't  
12 want to mess with her with a chainsaw either  
13 because she's pretty good with that. And so they  
14 do a great job. Thank you very much.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16                   I'm just really curious. What do you  
17 bait the traps with?

18 SIERRA ORTIZ:

19                   We use commercial crawfish that's in the  
20 form of a pellet.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22                   All right. Cool. Thank you.

23 SIERRA ORTIZ:

24                   Thank you.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1 All right. Next up, we're going to have  
2 wetlands permitting with Willa Brantley.

3 WILLA BRANTLEY:

4 Good morning. I have something a little  
5 bit different this morning than you're used to  
6 seeing from permitting. It was new for me, so it  
7 was a learning experience for me, as well,  
8 preparing this.

9 We have a request for a special  
10 management area designation and development of a  
11 special management area plan by the Hancock County  
12 Port and Harbor Commission.

13 The location -- there's two locations  
14 actually. It's a split between Port Bienville  
15 Industrial Park and Stennis International Airport  
16 and Airpark. Serving as their agent is Cypress  
17 Environment and infrastructure.

18 This is an overview of the two sites.  
19 You can see Stennis Airport in the north and Port  
20 Bienville in the south. There are over 5,700  
21 acres at Port Bienville available for designation.  
22 And at the airport there are over 2,400 acres  
23 available for designation.

24 Okay. We're not moving forward. Sorry.

25 Okay. This is -- it's a little hard to

1 see, but this is a close-up of the Port Bienville.  
2 If you can see over to the northwest, that is  
3 where the canal is. On the opposite side of the  
4 canal, there is some marsh and tidal wetland  
5 areas. Most of the area, the wetlands present on  
6 the site would be nontidal wetlands, so we would  
7 be able to move mitigation efforts over to that  
8 northwest side where we have tidal marsh.

9 And then this one shows Stennis  
10 International Airport. Again, you have got mostly  
11 nontidal wetlands, but you do have the riverine  
12 system on the north side, the Jourdan River, so we  
13 could have some tidal wetlands up there and focus  
14 our mitigation efforts to the north and -- when we  
15 create the plan.

16 So the goals of the planning process for  
17 the special management areas are to apply the  
18 general provisions of the coastal program to a  
19 specific geographic area to streamline regulatory  
20 decisions through planning for and resolving  
21 permit conflicts in advance of individual  
22 development projects being implemented. We'll  
23 also be able to coordinate federal and state  
24 regulatory decisions with efforts of the coastal  
25 program and local governments and provide

1 assistance to local government and state agencies  
2 to plan for public facilities and services.

3 And I quoted from the coastal program a  
4 sentence that I really liked. It said that a  
5 distinguishing characteristic of SMA plans is that  
6 there will be a marriage of regulation and  
7 affirmative development efforts. So we all know  
8 that there is going to be development. We want to  
9 use our coastal resources wisely, and that's what  
10 the SMA planning process will hopefully allow us  
11 to do.

12 So since we haven't done one of these, I  
13 think the only one that's been designated -- or  
14 the only plan that has been developed was  
15 developed back in 1985, so I wanted to go through  
16 some of what an SMA plan does and doesn't do and  
17 what the process would be.

18 So it does define boundaries, as you saw  
19 on the maps earlier. It describes how the  
20 physical development is to be managed. It  
21 recognizes environmental and economic factors,  
22 specifies implementation responsibilities of the  
23 different agencies involved, includes necessary  
24 interagency agreements and similar instruments and  
25 includes analysis of all the environmental impacts

1 and alternatives if we want the plan to prevail  
2 over the coastal program.

3 Some of those management concerns that  
4 we would be looking at include wetlands  
5 protection, industrial expansion and efficient  
6 waterfront utilization, conservation of water  
7 resources and air and water quality, historical  
8 and archeological preservation, scenic  
9 preservation and the natural interest.

10 A couple things that an SMA plan doesn't  
11 do. It does not allow DMR or any other state or  
12 federal agency to impose new regulatory authority,  
13 so this is not a way that we can sneak in new regs  
14 without them being reviewed the normal way. And  
15 it doesn't require local governments to agree to  
16 the plan. Meaning that DMR is not going to adopt  
17 the plan and require it to be followed unless the  
18 local government buys into it.

19 So the Port and Harbor Commission's  
20 intent in requesting the SMA designation is to  
21 increase economic growth in Mississippi through  
22 jobs and investment by ensuring the state's  
23 purposes of economic development and protection of  
24 coastal resources are balanced, keep the  
25 environmental impacts contained within the two



1 industrial sites, mitigate any necessary impacts  
2 ahead of development so future permitting is  
3 streamlined and predictable and facilitate  
4 coordination between all the regulating agencies  
5 at the state, local and federal level that are  
6 involved in permitting of developments.

7 We would -- the plan would detail and  
8 describe clear guidelines and requirements for the  
9 environmental impacts. Hancock County Port and  
10 Harbor Commission has been given a grant to get  
11 ready -- as many shovel-ready projects as they can  
12 that are 100 acres or more, so that's their intent  
13 with this plan, is to make sure that those are  
14 coordinated among all the agencies and well  
15 developed.

16 So a little more specific justification:  
17 Port Bienville Industrial Park was actually  
18 designated as a special management area in the  
19 Coastal Program. Stennis Airport was not, but it  
20 does follow the same industrial and commercial  
21 uses as the Industrial Park.

22 The Port of Pascagoula plan was the one  
23 that was approved in 1985. We did have several  
24 industrial and commercial areas, recreation areas  
25 that were designated in the Coastal program in the

1 mid '80s.

2 It says plans -- management plans for  
3 all of those areas were supposed to be developed  
4 one or two a year, but in my research, I don't  
5 think any of that planning was funded, so it never  
6 took place past the Port of Pascagoula plan, which  
7 also expired in 2005.

8 It will help decrease uncertainty of  
9 individual project planning. It will increase  
10 predictability of economic investment that's  
11 required. It will provide for protection of  
12 priority wetlands and consolidation of on-site  
13 mitigation. Meaning, we can pick an area that  
14 would be higher quality and lump all of our  
15 mitigation in that area and hopefully be more  
16 successful. And it will address the potential  
17 conflicts ahead of project development.

18 So the next steps, if approved, DMR and  
19 responsible local government, which would be the  
20 Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, would  
21 enter into an agreement to develop the SMA plan.  
22 We would coordinate with federal, state and local  
23 agencies to create the draft plan. We would have  
24 a public hearing on that draft plan. And based on  
25 any comments that we received through that public

1 hearing and public notice, we would revise the  
2 plan. The final plan would be presented for DMR,  
3 local government and appropriate federal agencies  
4 for concurrence, and there would be a public  
5 notice of the approval of that plan.

6 And some of the stakeholders that  
7 would -- that could be involved in the creation of  
8 the plan would be the Mobile and Vicksburg  
9 District of the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and  
10 Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries  
11 Service, U.S. EPA, the Mississippi Development  
12 Authority, NASA's Stennis Space Center,  
13 Mississippi Department of Transportation's office  
14 of Intermodal Planning, Department of Archives and  
15 History, Department of Environmental Quality and  
16 the Hancock Board of Supervisors.

17 So some of the major elements of the  
18 plan would be the area development plan, and  
19 that's where we establish the limits of the  
20 development and the guidelines for development for  
21 the area. Some examples of the guidelines include  
22 acreage and/or quality of wetland that could be  
23 developed, so we could say that only 25 percent of  
24 the wetlands -- total wetlands on-site could be  
25 developed. We could say that only low and medium

1 quality wetlands -- those are things that we would  
2 work through. We could also talk about the cubic  
3 yardage of dredging allowed and circulation  
4 requirement for the water quality. Those are just  
5 examples of things that could go in the plan.

6 Then we would come up with a dredged  
7 material plan that would look at long-term  
8 maintenance dredging schedules and dredged  
9 material handling. For example, would it go to  
10 beneficial use? Would it be considered unsuitable  
11 for beneficial use and need to designate a  
12 disposal site? And in planning for dredging, we  
13 will be able to consider the site itself, as well  
14 as the channels that lead up to it for navigation.

15 And then we would come up with the  
16 mitigation program so that potential investors and  
17 developers could know in advance what type and  
18 amount of mitigation would be necessary for  
19 specific impact types and amounts and  
20 strategically plan for any on-site mitigation that  
21 may be needed.

22 I believe it's been a couple of years  
23 that we had a project over there that impacted  
24 some tidal marsh and SAV and they had to do  
25 on-site mitigation. So any future projects that

1 would cause those kinds of impacts, they would  
2 already know, they would already have a place set  
3 aside to do mitigation and know what the economic  
4 investment would be required.

5 And when you put all those together,  
6 that would remove some of the uncertainty and  
7 individual project planning and it would make the  
8 economic investment more predictable.

9 So our requested motion is for the  
10 Commission to recommend approval of Hancock County  
11 Port and Harbor Commission's request for a Special  
12 Management Area designation at Port Bienville  
13 Industrial Park and Stennis International Airport  
14 and Airpark, and then we would move forward with  
15 forming a task force and coming up with that draft  
16 plan.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 That's a lot of information.

19 WILLA BRANTLEY:

20 It is.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 I thought we were talking about leasing  
23 to people to go hunting whenever I saw management  
24 area.

25 WILLA BRANTLEY:

1           No. But if you have any questions, I  
2 can try to answer them. Also, their agent is here  
3 to answer any specific questions you may have  
4 about plans.

5 CAM ROBERDS:

6           I understand the overall development,  
7 trying to get a scope early on so you're not, you  
8 know, spinning your wheels. But whenever the  
9 individual portions of the project come up, would  
10 they come back for approval, or is that something  
11 you guys would do in-house once the plan -- the  
12 whole program is approved?

13 WILLA BRANTLEY:

14           They would. You probably hear us talk  
15 about general permit guidelines a lot up here and  
16 for piers and boathouses. The way I'm looking at  
17 it is it will be something like that for these  
18 larger developments. So if they come in and meet  
19 the guidelines that are set up in the plan, they  
20 should be able to move right along through the  
21 permitting process pretty quickly and easily.

22           If they wanted to do something or needed  
23 to do something that didn't meet the plan, doesn't  
24 mean they can't do it, it would just get a more  
25 rigorous individual evaluation.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Blaine's here. Maybe explain what this  
3 is going to do for Hancock County.

4 BLAINE LaFONTAINE:

5 Morning, Director, Commissioners.

6 So obviously a lot of details and just  
7 realized that I'm asking to take action to do  
8 something that was last put in place before I was  
9 even born, so it's lot to take in.

10 But the purpose of today to getting to  
11 your recommendation and approval is that as we're  
12 dealing with record amounts of investment related  
13 to infrastructure and for us having more than  
14 5,500 acres, trying to grow jobs, assess value,  
15 economic impact for the Coast and the region and  
16 the County, to be able to define a lot of these  
17 conditions through that SMA plan on the front end  
18 will really help us attract, we believe, private  
19 industry. And more importantly, as we're working  
20 on building out infrastructure at Port Bienville  
21 and the airport, it will help us be able to  
22 expedite and streamline that regulatory  
23 requirement.

24 So again, I think the next decade having  
25 this will allow us to prosper, grow, be able to

1 communicate effectively on the front end and work  
2 really effectively with Mississippi DMR, as well  
3 as any other regulatory agencies. So we  
4 appreciate it, if you take this recommendation and  
5 approval, but I think it is a good tool and  
6 resource for us to effectively do our job to grow  
7 industry and jobs and investment.

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 So the overall hope of this is to take  
10 some land that we didn't think we could do much  
11 with and promote industrial growth in Hancock  
12 County?

13 BLAINE LaFONTAINE:

14 Yes. And I'll give some examples. If  
15 you look at other ports throughout the state,  
16 other airports, they don't deal with the volume  
17 of -- one, they don't have the land that Port and  
18 Harbor has under public control, but one of the  
19 conditions of that is about 62 percent of our land  
20 typically qualifies as some type of wetlands. So  
21 being able to identify that and program it, we  
22 believe, will help us grow the industrial base.

23 In addition, as we have dealt with the  
24 individual chemical manufacturing prospects,  
25 warehouse distribution, we often find that they



1 want to have aggressive timelines and we're not  
2 able to effectively communicate all the  
3 requirements on that on the front end. But we  
4 believe if we had this plan, it would help us  
5 obviously close some of these deals and lead to  
6 better opportunities for the region.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Okay.

9 JOE SPRAGGINS:

10 You know, this is -- working on the  
11 Airport Commission here for the Gulfport-Biloxi  
12 International Airport, I know they have the same  
13 thing that they're looking at. Anytime that you  
14 can have something that simplifies the amount of  
15 time that you have to go through the process, that  
16 makes it a lot better for the person that's coming  
17 to look at it to be able -- whether or not they  
18 want to invest into property and invest into that  
19 area and do what they need to do.

20 So I think this will greatly help that,  
21 and I think it greatly -- it will give them a  
22 chance to say that, you know, you're going to be  
23 streamlined. It's not going to take near as long  
24 to get the process done, and so I think that makes  
25 a lot of difference in what we're looking at.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 So we're essentially going to -- I guess  
3 simplified terms, we're going to cut out a lot of  
4 the beforehand leg work of somebody that would  
5 potentially invest into this area?

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 Right, right.

8 RONNIE DANIELS:

9 We're going ahead and figuring out the  
10 wetlands stuff and all that so you can hand them a  
11 packet and say, this is what you can and can't do.

12 BLAINE LaFONTAINE:

13 And just to build on that, it doesn't  
14 just stop here, right? We're also trying to work  
15 with our agent, Cypress, on looking at Section 214  
16 permits with the Corps of Engineers as another  
17 step and a secondary tool.

18 And we also -- what makes Hancock County  
19 unique, right, is we have a 130,000-acre buffer  
20 zone. No other county in the state has that and  
21 being able to work on a mitigation bank or a  
22 mitigation plan utilizing land that can't be  
23 developed anyway, it makes it -- Hancock County a  
24 really unique application to move forward with an  
25 SMA plan.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 And getting it as close as you can to  
3 shovel-ready, that's the way you've got to be.

4 BLAINE LaFONTAINE:

5 Right. Any other questions?

6 JOE SPRAGGINS:

7 Brian, can you state your name and spell  
8 it for her so she can be able to put it in the  
9 record?

10 WILLA BRANTLEY:

11 Blaine.

12 BLAINE LaFONTAINE:

13 Yeah. Blaine, B-l-a-i-n-e, LaFontaine,  
14 L-a-F-o-n-t-a-i-n-e. Thank you.

15 RONNIE DANIELS:

16 Thank you, Blaine.

17 All right. Anything else?

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 I guess we need a motion.

20 RONNIE DANIELS:

21 Yeah. I'm just making sure we don't  
22 have any more questions.

23 Motion to recommend approval of Hancock  
24 County Port and Harbor Commission's request for a  
25 special management area designation at Port

1 Bienville Industrial Park and Stennis

2 International Airport and Airpark.

3 I will be happy to make that motion. Do  
4 we have a second?

5 JONATHAN McLENDON:

6 I will second it.

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 All in favor?

9 JONATHAN McLENDON:

10 Aye.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Aye.

13 RONNIE DANIELS:

14 Aye.

15 All right. Thank you.

16 WILLA BRANTLEY:

17 Thank you.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 I got off. Where are we at?

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 We are at Bureau --

22 JONATHAN McLENDON:

23 Finance.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 Finance.

1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 Ms. Leslie.

3 LESLIE BREWER:

4 Good morning, everyone. I'll be  
5 presenting the financials for April 30th, 2023.

6 At the end of April, our state revenue  
7 was 5.4 million. Our agency was revenue  
8 64.7 million.

9 Our state net income was a negative  
10 1.1 million, and our agency net income is  
11 35.7 million.

12 We did get our GOMESA funding in April  
13 which was 41 million 470, so that's why that's  
14 hiked up the way it was.

15 Okay. After 10 months of 2023, there is  
16 82.8 percent of the operating funds in the budget  
17 and the tidelands is 38.5.

18 Any questions?

19 RONNIE DANIELS:

20 No, ma'am. Thank you.

21 All right. Public affairs,  
22 Ms. Charmaine.

23 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

24 Good morning, Commissioners, Director  
25 Spraggins, Legal.

1           The Mississippi Department of Marine  
2 Resources had 15 media mentions since the April  
3 MACMR meeting. News items included shrimp season  
4 closing, the announcement of red snapper season  
5 opening on May 26th and the acceptance of GOMESA  
6 proposals through July 31st.

7           Marine Patrol participated in a career  
8 fair at North Bay Elementary School on May 20th,  
9 field day at Nichols Elementary School on May 11th  
10 and career day at Gautier Elementary School  
11 May 15th.

12           The Finfish Bureau's John Barr  
13 participated in lunch with alumni at Petal High  
14 School on April the 19th. The Aquaculture  
15 Hatchery assisted with the Mississippi Bass  
16 Federation tournament in D'Iberville May 6th and  
17 7th. Katie Nelson in the Office of Coastal  
18 Resources Management represented the agency with a  
19 table at Eco Day at Infiniti in Hancock County on  
20 April 22nd.

21           Each bureau in the office of Marine  
22 Fisheries, the NERR, Coastal Resources Management  
23 and Marine Patrol traveled to the Mississippi  
24 Museum of Natural Science in Jackson on May 6th  
25 for the first ever Marine Discovery Day. Our

1 agency, along with Mississippi State, USM and IMMS  
2 took part in the event providing fun and  
3 educational activities for attendees. The event  
4 served as a great opportunity to share information  
5 about our local species, ecosystem and waters  
6 within the state and near our marine resources.

7 We held the 2023 Mississippi Seafood  
8 Cookoff in Gulfport last Thursday in conjunction  
9 with the Gulfport Chamber of Commerce, Taste  
10 Rattle and Roll, at Centennial Plaza. It was a  
11 great night with five chefs competing for the  
12 title. And we're proud to announce that Calvin  
13 Lipe from Island View Casino is this year's  
14 Mississippi Seafood King, who won with his  
15 softshell crab dish, which was panko fried and  
16 stuffed with shrimp, crab and mushrooms, served  
17 with a shrimp and corn maque choux, jalapeno  
18 tomato jam, crystal beurre blanc and topped with  
19 toasted pecans and jumbo lump crab. He will go on  
20 to compete amongst other U.S. states and  
21 territories at the Great American Seafood Cookoff  
22 in New Orleans on August 5th.

23 That's it.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 All right. Thank you. A lot going on.

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 We're going to have a South  
3 Mississippian representing us in the seafood  
4 cookoff this time, right?

5 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

6 Yes.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 What's his name again?

9 CHARMAINE SCHERMUND:

10 Calvin Lipe.

11 JOE SPRAGGINS:

12 Yeah. Out of Island View Casino.

13 RONNIE DANIELS:

14 All right. Marine Fisheries, shrimp  
15 season update, Jason.

16 JASON SAUCIER:

17 Good morning, Commissioners.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Morning.

20 JASON SAUCIER:

21 I'm giving the annual update on shrimp  
22 season.

23 JOE SPRAGGINS:

24 A lot of money in shrimp.

25 JASON SAUCIER:



1 Yes, there is. Pretty good update.

2 All right. So we go through a few of  
3 the historical metrics with y'all every year.  
4 This is historical opening dates for the shrimp  
5 season. Average opening date is the 8th of June  
6 and that goes back to 1975, but we do have  
7 historical openings in May, as well as late June.

8 This is our opening day vessel count.  
9 We do aerial surveys and on-water interviews with  
10 the fishermen on opening day. Last year was our  
11 lowest on record. Last year was also a pretty  
12 windy day and there was some severe weather  
13 pushing through, so that affected the numbers but  
14 we do see a consistent decline in effort.

15 This shows our historical license sales  
16 back to '13, '14, so the last 10 years. We see a  
17 consistent decline in commercial and rec license  
18 sales. We're looking at about just under 400  
19 licenses sold for the last year for commercial,  
20 and this is pretty consistent with what we see  
21 across the Gulf state license holders and federal  
22 as far as effort in the fishery.

23 So just to get in a little bit of what  
24 we do in the spring to determine when to open the  
25 season. Gulfport Research Lab helps us out with

1 post-larval sampling beginning in February, using  
2 a beam plankton trawl and that really gives us an  
3 indication of when the small brown shrimp  
4 post-larvae are moving into the Bay, into the  
5 nursery area.

6 And then April, we begin our trawl  
7 sampling and at our 10 fixed stations. In April,  
8 that's once a week, and we do ramp up frequency to  
9 twice a week in early May. This sampling, we do  
10 chart data points on a plot and look at growth,  
11 daily growth and that helps us project to when  
12 they'll get to legal size.

13 So this is from our trawl samples to  
14 date. We did sample yesterday. This is just a  
15 comparison of what we catch in those samples  
16 across the last few years just to kind of show you  
17 there is a pretty good bit of variability. But  
18 generally when we see high catch, it's not a  
19 one-to-one comparison with what we see in landings  
20 data, but it does give us an indication that the  
21 brown shrimp are here.

22 You will see in 2019 through 2021, we  
23 know we had pretty poor seasons, but that was  
24 associated with Bonnet Carré and a couple of years  
25 that followed there. And the CPUE is in per

1 minute of trawl time.

2 So these are our trawl stations that we  
3 historically have sampled in April and May. They  
4 are across the Sound. They go out to the ICW, as  
5 far south as the ICW, and we do average --  
6 catch our count size at all these stations and  
7 that's a weighted average that gives us a size of  
8 the shrimp on that sample day.

9 So in case you didn't already hear, we  
10 did put out the opening order yesterday. We set  
11 the season for Monday, May 22nd. Shrimp will be  
12 legal size, 68 count, by that date, and we're  
13 looking forward to a good season.

14 Just as a reminder -- I didn't put the  
15 map up here, but Karen, can you go to the map?  
16 Just to make sure there's no confusion there,  
17 because we have gotten some confusion from some of  
18 our fishermen, the area that -- we're opening all  
19 of those areas inshore of the ICW and south.

20 The area that stays open till the end of  
21 December is everything north of the ICW. However,  
22 areas south of the ICW, if you see the black line  
23 in the middle at the west side of Ship, that area  
24 closes at the end of April by statute. However,  
25 everything east of there stays open year round, so

1 these -- this area is always open and available to  
2 the fishery to catch.

3 And I just wanted to make that clear. I  
4 think there is some confusion among some of the  
5 shrimpers that -- historically, we did close  
6 everything south of the ICW, but since 2017 that  
7 has changed.

8 Karen, if you can go back to the  
9 PowerPoint.

10 And then the last slide. Sorry. Just  
11 wanted to remind everybody we do have a skimmer  
12 trawl TED reimbursement program that's ongoing  
13 through the end of July 2024 for those folks that  
14 were affected by the NOAA change -- rule change  
15 that required all vessels 40 foot and larger to  
16 have TEDs. So there is an application process  
17 there. I have got a link there, but they can  
18 always call the Office of Marine Fisheries and get  
19 information on that program. And I will take any  
20 questions that you have got.

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 I don't really have a question, but just  
23 a comment. But your chart looked like what I have  
24 been seeing. We have been seeing a ton of bait in  
25 the water out there. It looks good.

1 JASON SAUCIER:

2 Yeah. We're pretty excited about this  
3 year. Hopefully we will see that reflected in the  
4 catch over the next weeks, so --

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 I've been telling people for months now  
7 I'm seeing more shrimp in the water than I have  
8 seen in years out there.

9 JASON SAUCIER:

10 Yeah.

11 JONATHAN McLENDON:

12 Is that shrimping map available on the  
13 website because I think there is some confusion?

14 JASON SAUCIER:

15 It is. It's on our shrimp and crab  
16 homepage, which is available under the Office of  
17 Marine Fisheries tab. If they just scroll down,  
18 that's right there and they can actually print it  
19 out.

20 But certainly, yeah, there is some  
21 confusion because it's sort of a recent -- not  
22 really a recent change. It's been in place for  
23 about five years, but we want to make sure people  
24 are aware that they can still shrimp after  
25 April 30th in some of our waters, so --

1 JONATHAN McLENDON:

2 And I certainly appreciate the job you  
3 guys do. A lot of these states do it differently.  
4 They set individual dates, but, you know, the way  
5 Mississippi is doing it, it's allowing the inshore  
6 fleet to go out there and catch those shrimp  
7 before they migrate off to federal waters, so, you  
8 know --

9 JASON SAUCIER:

10 Right.

11 JONATHAN McLENDON:

12 And we need all of them to make it  
13 happen.

14 JASON SAUCIER:

15 Right. That's right.

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 One other thing. I know this is going  
18 to happen before the Blessing of the Fleet and I'm  
19 sorry, but, you know, we have to go ahead and let  
20 it happen. Just as Jonathan said, you know, we  
21 need to be able to catch those shrimp and not let  
22 them migrate out to the south of the islands or  
23 wherever, and so this really helps our fishermen.  
24 So it's more for them than anything and -- to be  
25 able to get the -- and also, I'll tell you what,

1 it's going to be great to have a lot of fresh  
2 shrimp on Memorial weekend.

3 JASON SAUCIER:

4 Yeah. We encourage everybody to get out  
5 and buy it at the dock if they can, you know, and  
6 support our fisherman, so --

7 RONNIE DANIELS:

8 Absolutely. Thank you.

9 JASON SAUCIER:

10 Thank y'all.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 All right. Next up. Oyster leasing.

13 JASON RIDER:

14 Good morning, everyone. My name is  
15 Jason Rider. I'm the Shellfish Bureau Director.  
16 Today, I will be reviewing the edits and  
17 amendments to Title 22, Part 1 to conform with  
18 Senate Bill 2544.

19 I will go over the substantive changes  
20 within the document today. The nonsubstantive  
21 changes and the language have been provided to you  
22 in your packets and we'll make those changes  
23 available on the website for public comments. But  
24 mainly, we're going to go over the added language  
25 in Chapter 10, the definitions and then the

1 amendment requirements for the leasing procedures.

2 I will read a decent amount of this  
3 information, so please bear with me. But if you  
4 have any questions, feel free to ask at any time.

5 So the first that we did is we did have  
6 to define some new definitions -- or insert some  
7 new definitions. The first one we did was  
8 approved cultch material. That's where we just  
9 identified what we classified as approved cultch  
10 material.

11 The second term was event of default,  
12 and this is a circumstance where the leaseholder  
13 fails to fulfill their contractual obligations or  
14 breaches the terms and conditions of the lease  
15 agreement for oystering production.

16 The next definition that we added was  
17 on-bottom property classifications. We did this  
18 because we did identify different areas in our  
19 Mississippi waters for -- eligible for leasing.  
20 We classified them as three different things.

21 I will read this definition. The  
22 categorization or classification of submerged  
23 lands or waters -- or water bottoms that are  
24 suitable for leasing or cultivating molluscan  
25 shellfish. As of July 1st, 2023, the



1 classifications are as follows: Class I,  
2 substantial shellfish resources and its recently  
3 improved bottoms; Class II, minimal shellfish  
4 resource/improved bottoms; Class III, no resource  
5 or unimproved bottoms.

6 Additional definitions: Oyster spat,  
7 the early juvenile stage of an oyster, which is  
8 larval oyster that has settled and attached to  
9 hard substrate such as a shell or rock.

10 Plat, a detailed map drawn to scale,  
11 used to show the divisions, boundaries of a piece  
12 of land. It identifies the corner coordinates,  
13 describes the piece of land, its boundaries and  
14 gives a description of the approved cultch  
15 material and the amount to be deployed.

16 The final definition that we added was  
17 state-owned reefs. So in the past, we had public  
18 reefs and most of those have been transitioned  
19 into state-owned reefs. This is a designated area  
20 within the state's tidal water that is set aside  
21 for the protection, propagation and management of  
22 oyster populations for the benefit of the  
23 environment and oyster industry.

24 The next update that we made was to  
25 Chapter 3. Because 49-15-39 was repealed, the

1 tonging line is no longer applicable, so we did  
2 delete that definition -- or that Rule 3.4.

3           Following in Chapter 3, we did update  
4 the shellfish growing waters openings and closings  
5 for state-owned reefs and private leases. We  
6 wanted to include both types so we could identify  
7 and control those as needed. We also added  
8 allowable gear type.

9           Whoop. Sorry. That's that slide. I  
10 apologize.

11           In Chapter 4, we identify the  
12 state-owned reefs that I just -- that I -- the  
13 definition that I just read out. Those reefs will  
14 be listed in our titles and parts. The high  
15 points of this are we do have Henderson Point  
16 state-owned reef, Pass Christian Reef, Pass  
17 Marianne Reef, Biloxi Bay Reef, Shearwater Reef,  
18 Pascagoula West Reef and Pascagoula Causeway Reef.  
19 We will have maps and coordinates available for  
20 the public to review.

21           Moving on to Chapter 4. We added  
22 harvest language for on-bottom private leases and  
23 we wanted to include all permits and regulations  
24 that were applicable to private leaseholders.  
25 Also, we wanted to make sure everyone understood

1 the availability to harvest will be open year  
2 round, but the waters will be subject to sampling  
3 and will be closed when the conditions do not meet  
4 harvest classification -- or conditions. So  
5 that's what C is referencing.

6 Moving on to Chapter 5, we do have some  
7 tagging requirements. Rule 5.5, we did update it,  
8 private leases and state-owned reefs, again. On  
9 Section A, all on-bottom and off-bottom molluscan  
10 shellfish lessees must adhere to the labeling and  
11 tagging rules and regulations outlined in the  
12 lease contract, lease permit and the most current  
13 version of the NSSP model ordinance.

14 Again, we updated state-owned reefs from  
15 public, and then we did delete Rule 5.6 and 5.7  
16 because they're no longer needed.

17 Moving on to Chapter 10, this is where  
18 the meat of the additions came from or the  
19 revisions came from. I do have to read quite a  
20 bit of this. If you have any questions, please  
21 bear with me.

22 So on Chapter 10, Rule 10.3, the first  
23 one that we updated was lease applications. We  
24 updated it from MDMR Director of Marine Fisheries  
25 to the authority -- to give the director the

1 authority to execute these leases. We increased  
2 the -- or we updated the application fee to \$50.  
3 That will be rendered at the time of submission.

4 They do have to submit a plat showing  
5 the proposed lease area using decimal degrees, and  
6 they also have to describe the cultch material and  
7 the amount to be deployed on their application.

8 Number 6 states: Upon initial leasing  
9 of new areas pursuant to Senate Bill 2544, 2023  
10 regular legislative session, the MDMR will issue a  
11 Request for Proposals. The response to which must  
12 include the following information, in addition to  
13 the application: Identification of the  
14 classification of the property for lease -- that  
15 references the definition we stated earlier --  
16 evidence of the applicant's financial stability,  
17 proposed acreage to be leased, the amount of  
18 proposed acreage to be cultched and seeded, the  
19 time frame for which the cultivation and proposed  
20 lease will occur and then the experience of reef  
21 development for the applicant.

22 For the application review, we added  
23 this language: The MDMR authority will review and  
24 evaluate each lease application based on the  
25 information provided through the Request for

1 Proposals.

2 Two states that the approval of lease  
3 applications will be based on the criteria  
4 established by the Request for Proposals and the  
5 evaluation of the information provided in the  
6 response.

7 Next, Number 3, MDMR authority may  
8 request additional information from the applicant  
9 or conduct site visits as part of the evaluation  
10 process.

11 Number 4, upon approval of the lease  
12 application, the applicant will be required to  
13 enter into a lease agreement with the MDMR, which  
14 will outline the terms and conditions of the  
15 lease, including rental rates, lease duration and  
16 reporting requirements.

17 Number 5 states: Leaseholders must  
18 comply with all applicable federal, state and  
19 local laws and regulations including environmental  
20 and conservation requirements throughout the terms  
21 of the lease.

22 And then finally, we did add Number 8,  
23 that MDMR will either grant or deny the lease  
24 application and the applicant will be notified in  
25 writing of the action on their lease application

1 no less than 30 days after the action proposal.

2 Continuing with Chapter 10, Rule 10.3,  
3 and these are the lease conditions. Senate bill  
4 updated the leasing terms and the amounts. We --  
5 it went from five years to 15 years from the term  
6 of the lease, so we updated that. And then we  
7 also -- the leases expire on December 31st now.

8 And then finally, the leases have  
9 increased. They have to be leased for one acre to  
10 2,500 acres.

11 And we deleted Rule Number 11 of that  
12 section.

13 The lease conditions, this is, again,  
14 just modifying language to match the senate bill.

15 Twelve, we updated state-owned reefs.

16 And then on Number 13, we wanted to  
17 include ensuring maximum cultivation and  
18 propagation of all -- of oyster leases -- of  
19 oysters on their lease. This is language from the  
20 senate bill that we wanted to match in our  
21 regulations.

22 Section D of Chapter 10, Rule 10.3, this  
23 is the cultivation and propagation requirements.  
24 I will have to read this. Number 1, lessee shall  
25 propagate no less than 50 percent of the total

1 bottom area leased within the first five years of  
2 the lease with a minimum of 20 percent being  
3 propagated by Year 2 of the lease agreement. A  
4 minimum of 10 percent per year shall be propagated  
5 for each year thereafter. This provision will not  
6 apply to Class III of the on-bottom property  
7 classifications.

8 Number 2, the minimum planting density  
9 shall be no less than 60 cubic yards of approved  
10 cultch per acre or no less than five cubic yards  
11 of approved cultch material within a minimum of  
12 75,000 oyster spat per cubic yard.

13 Number 3 states that, must only culture  
14 species native to the Gulf of Mexico. Polyploid  
15 native species are prohibited. Imported shellfish  
16 seed to be used for grow-out in Mississippi waters  
17 must be descendants of the broodstock originated  
18 in the Gulf of Mexico. The hatcheries where the  
19 aquaculture seed was produced must provide  
20 documentation of broodstock origin.

21 Number 4, in instance of extreme  
22 environmental conditions designated by the  
23 department that are not conducive to oystering  
24 recruitment or survival, the cultivation  
25 requirements may be waived until favorable

1 conditions resume.

2 Number 5, planting, harvest and  
3 cultivation activity shall be reported to the MDMR  
4 annually by December 31st.

5 Number 6, MDMR staff will inspect cultch  
6 material and volume prior to deployment to ensure  
7 conditions of the USACE permit are adhered to.  
8 Failure to meet the above requirement may be  
9 deemed an event of default.

10 These are all the cultivation  
11 requirements that go with executing a lease  
12 agreement with the DMR.

13 Moving on to Section E of Chapter 10, we  
14 updated the language to reference -- to match  
15 January 30th of each year, as the house -- as the  
16 senate bill says and then we updated the  
17 terminations and waivers of the lease agreements.

18 This was outdated language, subdivisions  
19 that were included in title and part -- Title 22,  
20 Part 1 that were no longer applicable, so we  
21 removed this. This is subdivisions.

22 Next, we're moving on to Chapter 11.  
23 We're cleaning up language again. Bonding has  
24 been removed out of the senate bill, so we removed  
25 it out of our titles and parts. And then the five



1 years resident was removed, so we removed it out  
2 of the titles and parts.

3 So with this, this is all the language  
4 in our title -- in Title 22, Part 1 that reference  
5 leases -- references leasing to the private  
6 individuals -- oyster leasing to private  
7 individuals. It should match the new senate bill.

8 At this time, I think we will make a  
9 recommendation to the Executive Director that the  
10 proposed changes to Title 22, Part 1 be sent to  
11 the Secretary of State's office for notice of  
12 intent.

13 Does anyone have any questions? I know  
14 it was a lot.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 The big thing about this, you know,  
17 obviously if we approve through this and I sign  
18 it, then we send it forward. We can get it out  
19 then and put it out for 30-day public notice so  
20 people can have a chance to comment and be able to  
21 see what we need to do and if there's an issue on  
22 it.

23 And Sandy, tell me if I'm right or  
24 wrong. After that point, depending on whether --  
25 how many people asked for public, you know,

1 comments, we will decide about a public hearing  
2 and be able to decide when we would do that. The  
3 goal, if we can get this passed, is to try to get  
4 it done sometime in July if that would be right  
5 and if we could, we would be glad to do that. And  
6 maybe the July meeting and it might work perfect  
7 for that if everything works great.

8 Commissioner, we also have a public  
9 comment on this. Before you vote, I would ask  
10 that you bring that up.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 Yeah. That's what I was fixing to bring  
13 up. So we do have a public comment on this, Mr.  
14 Ignacio Lopez.

15 IGNACIO LOPEZ:

16 Good morning, everybody. I'm Ignacio  
17 Lopez. I'm the aquaculture instructor at Moss  
18 Point.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 Could you turn that mic on right there?

21 RONNIE DANIELS:

22 It's on.

23 IGNACIO LOPEZ:

24 Can you hear me all right?

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1                   If you don't mind, would you spell your  
2 name for her, please?

3           IGNACIO LOPEZ:

4                   I-g-n-a-c-i-o L-o-p-e-z. I'm the  
5 aquaculture instructor at Moss Point High School  
6 at the vo-tech center over there.

7                   And we're looking to do fully vertically  
8 integrated oyster gardening on steroids. Right?  
9 So what we're actually trying to do is lease -- or  
10 sort of -- nonprofit organization that leases the  
11 private land or leases this land to cultivate  
12 oysters for restoration purposes and conservation  
13 purposes, not necessarily for harvest.

14                   And so we would like to lease Lake  
15 Catch-em-all or part of Lake Catch-em-all in the  
16 Pascagoula River Estuary to create a floating  
17 oyster nursery. This would help the students in  
18 boating education, oyster aquaculture education  
19 and potentially post-graduation employment  
20 opportunities.

21                   Additionally, we would like to lease  
22 restricted waters or prohibited waters that are  
23 near shore and/or urbanization to create these  
24 reefs for restoration in a more fuel efficient and  
25 time efficient manner. We would like to harvest

1 part of the shellstock to disburse mature and  
2 gravid oysters throughout various restoration  
3 leases and potentially into harvestable leases as  
4 well.

5 It's not clear necessarily what is and  
6 what isn't approved as cultch material, and we  
7 would like to propose alternatives to the  
8 standards. I know that plastic isn't necessarily  
9 approved, but actually people believe to -- use  
10 PVC trees and PVC forests for bass habitat, and we  
11 think that that would be a great way to keep  
12 oysters off the bottom.

13 So yeah, that's -- that's what I would  
14 like to contribute to this, is potentially lease  
15 the nonapproved waters to cultivate oysters for  
16 restoration purposes and environmental benefits.

17 JOE SPRAGGINS:

18 We met with Mr. Lopez over at the  
19 school, I guess, what, two weeks, three weeks ago?

20 IGNACIO LOPEZ:

21 Three weeks ago tomorrow, yeah.

22 JOE SPRAGGINS:

23 Yeah. And he's got a great program.  
24 He's trying hard and he's trying very hard to be  
25 able to put something together to be able to teach

1 students how to have a future. And, you know,  
2 some of these students don't have an opportunity  
3 to do things, and he is trying to be able to put  
4 together something that would be able to allow  
5 these students to have a trade that they can take  
6 once they leave high school and they can take it  
7 and operate it into the business world in some  
8 form or some fashion, whether they start their  
9 business or whether they work for someone in that  
10 business and that's what he's looking at.

11 Wet storage is one of the things he's  
12 looked at. He's looked at that and trying to be  
13 able to understand and teach how to do it. He's  
14 got a great little operation that they have set up  
15 by theirselves. I mean, they have absolutely set it  
16 up by theirselves and they did all the work  
17 theirselves to be able to -- the students building  
18 it.

19 We're working through some things to try  
20 to help them to be able to get permitted to do  
21 different things there. But I'll tell you, he is  
22 trying hard and, you know, anything that -- you  
23 know, we will look at it -- any way we can to try  
24 to help him. And if there is a way to be able to  
25 grow some oysters in a nonharvestable area, that

1 would be great, you know, because we can at least  
2 get that for the oysters themselves and what's  
3 going to happen.

4 But I think that, you know, they're  
5 trying to the best they can and he's doing a  
6 wonderful job in trying to do the best he can to  
7 help the students to learn.

8 Now, we have this at St. Martin, I  
9 think, now and we have it at St. Stanislaus and we  
10 have it at Gulfport -- I mean, not Gulfport, but  
11 Ocean Springs and now Moss Point. And I'll tell  
12 you what, what better than to get some young  
13 students learning about the aquaculture, and I  
14 want to help him.

15 I'm trying to work out a way to get him  
16 a grant, and so I'm trying to work out a way to do  
17 that, to give him some type of a grant to be able  
18 to help them with this and -- because I think it's  
19 a great deal, and, you know, I guess the -- now  
20 that -- what you're asking for is to be able to  
21 look at this being able to lease some, and we  
22 might be able to look at that. If it's for a  
23 nonprofit organization and a school, maybe we can  
24 lease it and get the legislature to let us not  
25 have to even charge for that lease, you know, to

1 be able to do something like that.

2 RONNIE DANIELS:

3 How many acres are you wanting?

4 IGNACIO LOPEZ:

5 The key thing is not necessarily having  
6 to, you know, go way off offshore where it might  
7 be cost prohibitive. The 60 cubic -- cubic yards  
8 of material per acre is pretty high, especially if  
9 you have to purchase it. So, you know, kind of  
10 change or add that to the Title 22 as a  
11 potentially other -- other alternative to going  
12 about this oyster aquaculture, not necessarily for  
13 harvest work, human consumption.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 And I don't know. I guess it's legal to  
16 mention that you're working on something, too,  
17 about carbon monoxide credits, right?

18 IGNACIO LOPEZ:

19 Well, that's where the revenue from this  
20 project would come from. That's how it would  
21 become self-sustaining, not necessarily through  
22 grants, but selling the carbon offsets that these  
23 oysters provide.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 You know, oysters absorb and take quite

1 a bit of that. I learned a lot from him in a few  
2 hours. I sat there and I came out of there with a  
3 question in my head of like, what? You know, what  
4 is this, you know, carbon monoxide credits?

5 Well, I mean, you know, it's  
6 something -- and then I have been talked to by  
7 several people after that. It's a situation,  
8 especially in the northwest and the northeast,  
9 that it's being utilized, but -- these carbon  
10 monoxide credits. And basically, big industry  
11 puts out a certain amount and so they're buying  
12 credits. And what better way than to be able to  
13 buy credits by using oysters and then the oysters  
14 turn around and then feed the estuary and do the  
15 same thing that they're doing.

16 So we're working hard. Don't think  
17 we're not. All right?

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Thank you.

20 IGNACIO LOPEZ:

21 Thank you.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Wow. That's interesting.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 Yes.



1 RONNIE DANIELS:

2 All right. So back -- we need a motion?

3 SANDY CHESNUT:

4 Yes.

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 We got a motion to recommend the Notice  
7 of Intent?

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 I will make that motion.

10 JONATHAN McLENDON:

11 I'll second.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 All right. All in favor? Aye.

14 CAM ROBERDS:

15 Aye.

16 JONATHAN McLENDON:

17 Aye.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 All right. Great. Thank you.

20 JASON RIDER:

21 Thank y'all for y'all's time.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 Thank you.

24 All right. So do we have any other  
25 business today?

1 JOE SPRAGGINS:

2 Just a couple of things. The two  
3 commissioners, one on the right and one on the  
4 left, have been reappointed, so Commissioner  
5 Daniels and Commissioner McLendon have been  
6 reappointed, so we appreciate that. And thank  
7 y'all for -- Cam is not up for reappointment.  
8 That's -- so it's not that we have left him out.  
9 All right? He's not up for reappointment, but we  
10 do appreciate that.

11 And the other thing, the Trapani family,  
12 thank y'all so much for coming today. And it's an  
13 honor to be able to do this in his name, to be  
14 able to have something that people will remember  
15 for the rest of your life and it will stay here  
16 long -- even after you young ones are gone. It  
17 will be here, you know, it will be here forever,  
18 and we appreciate y'all and it's an honor to do  
19 that.

20 CARY TRAPANI:

21 Thank you, Board.

22 RONNIE DANIELS:

23 We're happy to be able to be a part of  
24 that.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1           And the other thing, too, on this bill  
2   that we're talking about, it was Senator Moran and  
3   Senator Thompson and House Member Ladner and  
4   Felsher, the ones that are chairing this and  
5   pushing this very hard and -- to do the on-bottom  
6   leases, so I think it's a great deal. Louisiana  
7   and Texas are doing it, and, you know, it's worked  
8   out great for them and hopefully it will work out  
9   great for us. And to be able to put somebody --  
10   because when you think about this and you think  
11   about the on-bottom, you say, well, wait just a  
12   minute. But if I have got a business and I have  
13   invested my money and my time into this, then I'm  
14   going to try to make it work hard.

15           The State of Mississippi doesn't have  
16   the money and the Department of Marine Resources  
17   to manage 8- or 10,000 acres of oyster land, you  
18   know, bottom, but individuals can manage it. And  
19   we will still be able to have our own. We'll have  
20   20 percent of it that we'll keep and we'll still  
21   manage that and be able to work it.

22           But I don't know how much you know about  
23   oysters, but it's probably the one that keeps the  
24   estuary going and it feeds more than anything in  
25   the estuary. And so getting people to be able to

1 grow these and be able to put their money into it  
2 -- and they'll be able to harvest them and then  
3 they'll be able to do it. And it will be a  
4 year-round operation.

5 The only time the Department of Marine  
6 Resources will get in the middle of that and try  
7 to do anything is if, Number 1, the water quality  
8 gets bad, you know, in the area. We will have to  
9 do it and we will work with them on that, but they  
10 don't want to do that. They don't want to put an  
11 oyster out that's going to hurt anybody anyway.  
12 So I think it's going to be fantastic, and I look  
13 forward to seeing a lot of quite -- a lot of  
14 businesses starting with this and hopefully we can  
15 move forward.

16 Thank you, sir.

17 RONNIE DANIELS:

18 Sounds great. All right. No other  
19 business. We took care of the public comments.

20 Jonathan, would you like to close us  
21 today?

22 JONATHAN McLENDON:

23 Yes, sir. We would like to close in  
24 honor of Mr. Arny Gollott, Jr. He recently passed  
25 away a few weeks back. Mr. Arny was a long-time

1 contributor to the automation of the shrimp  
2 processing industry here on the Gulfport Coast,  
3 and our thoughts and our prayers are with his  
4 family.

5 RONNIE DANIELS:

6 All right. Do we have a motion to  
7 adjourn?

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 I will make a motion to adjourn.

10 JONATHAN McLENDON:

11 Second.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 All in favor? Aye.

14 CAM ROBERDS:

15 Aye.

16 JONATHAN McLENDON:

17 Aye.

18 RONNIE DANIELS:

19 Everyone have a nice day. Thank you.

20 (Meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.)

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**CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER**

I, MELISSA BURDINE-RODOLFICH, Court Reporter and Notary Public, in and for the County of Harrison, State of Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing pages, and including this page, contain a true and correct copy of my stenotype notes and/or electronic tape recording of the testimony of the witness, as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated, to the best of my skill and ability.

I further certify that I placed the witness under oath to truthfully answer all questions in this matter under the authority vested in me by the State of Mississippi.

I further certify that I am not in the employ of, or related to, any counsel or party in this matter, and have no interest, monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome of the proceedings.

Witness my signature and seal, this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich  
My Commission Expires 4/28/24