

## STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI ADVISORY COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES  
COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 10:00 a.m.,  
Jackson County Board of Supervisors Boardroom,  
2915 Canty Street, Second Floor,  
Pascagoula, Mississippi 39567

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**COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Ronnie Daniels  
Matthew Mayfield  
Jonathan McLendon  
Jason Osborne (Via Teams)  
Cammack "Cam" Roberds

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Joe Spraggins  
Steven Eckert, Esquire (Via Teams)

**REPORTED BY:**

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich  
mburdine@sbmreporting.com

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 All right. I want to welcome everybody  
3 to the Mississippi Advisory Commission on Marine  
4 Resources meeting for Tuesday, December 16th,  
5 2025.

6 Commissioner McLendon, would you lead us  
7 in the Pledge of Allegiance, sir?

8 (Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 Thank you, Commissioner.

11 Director, would you like to lead us in  
12 the prayer this morning?

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Yeah. Before we start this morning,  
15 we'd also like to remember the people -- we've had  
16 several shootings over the last few days in  
17 different parts of the world, and remember the two  
18 military young men out of Iowa that was killed  
19 in -- overseas the other day. We just want to  
20 remember everybody.

21 This is, you know, a terrible time of  
22 the year for anything -- anybody to lose someone  
23 and because -- and then especially in the  
24 situations when it's not needed. I mean, you  
25 know, accidents happen, but these wasn't

1 accidents.

2 And so when people are taken out of this  
3 world and it's not an accident or something else  
4 that is not an act of nature, then, you know, you  
5 kind of wonder about it and it really hits hard  
6 for people. So just remember everybody and  
7 remember what we're doing. And let's go to the  
8 Lord in prayer.

9 (Moment of prayer.)

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 Thank you, Director.

12 All right. I want to acknowledge that  
13 Commissioner Osborne is joined in via Teams, and  
14 we also have Steven Eckert joined in via Teams.

15 All right. Moving forward --

16 RONNIE DANIELS:

17 We can't get started without  
18 acknowledging that today is your birthday.

19 JOE SPRAGGINS:

20 Nuh-uh.

21 CAM ROBERDS:

22 Oh, man.

23 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

24 We're going to sing later.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1                   Yeah.

2           CAM ROBERDS:

3                   Well, I appreciate it.

4           JOE SPRAGGINS:

5                   I think we all ought to sing happy  
6 birthday, don't y'all, so who's going to lead us?  
7 Who's going to lead us in happy birthday? Come  
8 on.

9           JENNIFER WITTMANN:

10                   We didn't sing to Ronnie.

11           CAM ROBERDS:

12                   Yeah, yeah. It wouldn't be fair.

13           RONNIE DANIELS:

14                   Yeah. Don't hurt my feelings.

15           CRYSTAL MATTA:

16                   She's going to have to put this on the  
17 record.

18           JOE SPRAGGINS:

19                   Oh, we didn't sing to Ronnie?

20           CAM ROBERDS:

21                   All right. Has everybody had an  
22 opportunity to review the minutes from  
23 November 18th. Is there any questions?

24           RONNIE DANIELS:

25                   Motion.

1 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

2 Second.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 All in favor?

5 (Unanimous vote.)

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 Next up, approval of the agenda. Do we  
8 have any questions on today's agenda?

9 RONNIE DANIELS:

10 Motion.

11 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

12 Second.

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 All in favor?

15 (Unanimous vote.)

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 All right, Director.

18 JOE SPRAGGINS:

19 Okay. It looks like -- I've got a  
20 couple of notes here. I'm trying to remember  
21 where I'm at, and I tell you what, just the change  
22 of scenery messes you up sometimes.

23 All right. We're going to start with  
24 our Director's report, and we're looking at  
25 employment contracts. I think that's up on the

1 screen. Connor Allen is -- started in the --  
2 contractor for the Office of Marine Fisheries.  
3 Ian Jackson is -- started in November as  
4 Environmental/Natural Resources Specialist II in  
5 Marine Fisheries, and Jacob Strickland was  
6 promoted to master sergeant in Marine Patrol. So  
7 congratulations to all of those.

8 Now, let's see. We don't have any  
9 contracts or anything for me to go over.

10 On the Agency update, cover a couple of  
11 things.

12 First off, if you've got any type of  
13 public comment, TJ is in the back. Give it to TJ.  
14 He'll get whatever we need up here.

15 Oyster season update, you know we had  
16 the -- we've been doing good. I think we're at  
17 about 17,000, somewhere in that neighborhood, in  
18 sacks that we've harvested. We had to shut down  
19 last week because we had almost six inches of rain  
20 and, you know, obviously, that doesn't help any  
21 and -- when we do that, but usually two or three  
22 inches will shut us down. But it -- we had six  
23 inches, so that definitely did it.

24 We've got good news. As of this  
25 morning, we have good reports back and I think

1 it's that they opened up certain areas this  
2 morning at -- you sent me a text. Hang on. Let's  
3 see what they were. Well -- oh, wrong button,  
4 Joe.

5 It says that at 10:00 this morning,  
6 we'll open up Area II A, including Pass Christian  
7 Tonging Box; II E, including Henderson Point Reef;  
8 Area II F, including the Pass Dredging Reef; and  
9 Area II G, including the Pass Marianne Reef.

10 And it will still be at 15 sacks per  
11 vessel for tongers and 20 for dredgers, so we are  
12 back. We will be back open and maybe we'll get  
13 some oysters out here before Christmas.

14 And we're still on track. Our goal is  
15 to get 80,000-plus, so we'll see what happens  
16 there and, you know, it's all going to depend on  
17 the weather and everything as to what we do.

18 Any questions on it?

19 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

20 No, sir.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 All right. On-bottom oyster lease  
23 program, right now, we are talking with the  
24 Legislature. We've got it -- going to modify the  
25 bill, that Senate Bill, which is in the -- got a

1 request to modify that bill with the Senate.

2 And, you know, if you didn't know,  
3 Senator Delano now is our new Ports, Harbors and  
4 Marine -- for the Senate with us. Senator  
5 Thompson has moved up into another position, and  
6 Senator Delano is now going to be our  
7 representative in the Senate there. And Brent  
8 Anderson will be our representative in the House  
9 still.

10 But we're going to look at it.  
11 Obviously, still trying to get some update on  
12 what's happening. And if anybody has an oyster  
13 lease now, if you had one prior to this and the  
14 old lease type, just continue to operate, continue  
15 to do what you were doing. And we're still --  
16 we're not going to update the leases until we get  
17 an understanding of how to do it, but we're not  
18 going to take your lease away from you either.

19 So if you have a lease and you had a  
20 lease prior to this last legislation and before we  
21 went out and did more -- there was a lot of land  
22 that was for lease for years, and -- but if you  
23 have that lease already, just continue to operate.  
24 We're not going to shut you down. We're not going  
25 to do anything else, and we'll let you know

1 whenever we can renew it the way it should be  
2 done.

3 Any questions on that?

4 (No response.)

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 '19-'20, Bonnet Carré, we're doing  
7 great. I tell you what, everything that's going  
8 out. We're 93 percent of the grants for new and  
9 emerging seafood processing technologies. About  
10 3.7 million we had for that. We're about -- we've  
11 got 93 percent of the funds that have been  
12 distributed to 23 of the 24 applicants, so we're  
13 doing good there.

14 Approximately 3 million was awarded for  
15 the 2020. We have given out 10,000 for the  
16 shrimper -- I mean, excuse me, oystermen, 7,500  
17 for the shrimpers. And now we are coming back and  
18 we're doing a second portion of that and,  
19 obviously, it's by boat.

20 And then, before, we just did it if you  
21 had one -- you only got one or the other. You've  
22 got -- but now we're going to look at it and see  
23 what we can do, and so, hopefully, we'll be able  
24 to get some more money out to some of our  
25 shrimpers and oystermen and all and be able to

1 continue to help them.

2 You don't have to apply anything  
3 different, I don't think. It's already there.  
4 Traci and them will have everything. They have  
5 all of it. They're just working through it. And  
6 it's kind of like a second phase, but in the  
7 part -- in the 2020. But the idea is to be able  
8 to see if we can give more money out to some  
9 people to help them out.

10 Any questions?

11 (No response.)

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 All right. Seafood Task Force, we had a  
14 good meeting last week, on December 8th, and the  
15 Task Force itself is talking now. What we're  
16 trying to do is just get something put together to  
17 give the Legislature. House Bill 602 is going to  
18 be modified. We've already talked to  
19 Representative Anderson about that and Delano and  
20 they're going to look at it.

21 And the House Bill 602, what we're  
22 trying to do is we're trying to make it more  
23 understanding and not hurt people, but be able to  
24 get the word out. Is it imported or is it  
25 domestic? That's all we're trying to do. That's

1 our Number 1 goal, is to say is it one or the  
2 other.

3 Now, how do we do that? The biggest --  
4 one of the biggest things that we're coming up  
5 with is, obviously, we don't want you to have to  
6 reprint your menu every week. That's a lot of  
7 money. And so what we want to do is find a way to  
8 put it on a menu that we can do this and not have  
9 you -- to cause you to have to reprint your menus  
10 on a regular basis.

11 It would be something that we can do --  
12 we're working on it where it would be a little  
13 legend on the side or the top or whatever we  
14 decide to do. There is also, you know, like, when  
15 you go into a lot of the restaurants, they'll have  
16 a thing for the day or whatever and they'll have a  
17 list. Maybe they can do it that way, you know.  
18 We're going to work our -- we're just trying to  
19 figure out which is the best way, and so that's  
20 what we're looking at right now.

21 And, also, with grocery stores,  
22 especially, when you think about them, a lot of  
23 stuff is shipped from all over the world to them  
24 and they come from major warehouses back to them.  
25 Well, they're labeled in certain ways, and you

1 have -- I think it's COOL, is what it is, that  
2 basically states what you have to do. But you can  
3 have "shrimp" and then right down here, you can  
4 have "Venezuela," you know, but that's all right.

5 But now, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Senator Cindy  
6 Hyde-Smith has a bill in to say that we're going  
7 to change that to where if it says "shrimp" that  
8 big, it has to say "Venezuela" that big, and that  
9 way, at least it tells people where it's coming  
10 from.

11 And I think that's good enough for us.  
12 I don't think we have a problem with that at all.  
13 The biggest thing is, you know, just to let the  
14 people know.

15 And if you've got a fresh market in your  
16 grocery store, you're still going to have to label  
17 it. If there is a fresh market in there, you're  
18 still going to have to label it the way it is.

19 If you're selling it on the side of the  
20 road, you're going to have to put a label,  
21 whatever you're doing. Whatever -- you know,  
22 we've got to put something. The whole goal is for  
23 everybody, whenever you pick up a piece of --  
24 especially any type of seafood and crawfish in  
25 Mississippi that you know where it came from. You

1 know, it's either imported or domestic. Okay?

2 Any questions?

3 RONNIE DANIELS:

4 General, quick question. On the  
5 restaurants, I know a lot of restaurants that we  
6 go to they'll have a board up "today's catch,  
7 today's special," whatever.

8 Could the restaurants not utilize  
9 something like that and have on their menu state  
10 of origin on the board above the bar where they  
11 could change it with a daily catch or something  
12 like that?

13 JOE SPRAGGINS:

14 Yeah. We're working that and trying to  
15 work it that way. Also, they can do it like a --  
16 you know, just piece of paper or something that  
17 they put out with it that -- if it's a catch of  
18 the day, you know, and that's just the way it is,  
19 but we're trying to work every way we can.

20 A lot of your restaurants, certain  
21 things -- but whenever you get to a point you  
22 can't get it anymore -- all right. Just to give  
23 you an idea, speckled trout, we have reached our  
24 limit in it, so it's hard for people to buy fresh  
25 speckled trout and so, you know -- and they can't

1 do anything about that the last few months of the  
2 year, and so they have -- they need to be able to  
3 modify that. They need to be able to modify and  
4 say what it is and not have to print \$5,000 worth  
5 of menus over, so whatever we can work out.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 I like the labeling of the -- so if it's  
8 shrimp and it's domestic, you know, the domestic  
9 or the import has to be at least the same font as  
10 the size of the shrimp lettering. I think that's  
11 a good idea.

12 JOE SPRAGGINS:

13 Yeah. And we're going to put  
14 something -- and, you know, the biggest thing,  
15 especially like jambalaya or if you take any type  
16 of a mixture of seafood, you know, a lot of that  
17 sometimes will be part of one and part of another,  
18 so how do we label that, you know.

19 So we've got to be able to make it --  
20 how do you label it, because they may not be able  
21 to get certain parts of it, and, you know, certain  
22 things may not be able to be domestic but some of  
23 them are domestic, and so how do we label those  
24 things?

25 A lot of your buffets, they're very

1 easy. They can just put it right above it, you  
2 know, and they change it as the hour goes, you  
3 know. It doesn't matter. They can just have a  
4 little thing to change.

5 So there is some things there that we're  
6 working on. I think the intent for the bill from  
7 the start was to say that it is either imported or  
8 domestic. That was the intent of the bill. Now,  
9 how do we get that over is the question, and so  
10 that's what we're working on.

11 Any more? Any other?

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 No, sir.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 All right. Our next Commission meeting  
16 is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20th at 10:00.

17 Is it 10:00 a.m.?

18 CRYSTAL MATTA:

19 9:00 or 10:00, whichever.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Huh?

22 CRYSTAL MATTA:

23 9:00 or 10:00.

24 JOE SPRAGGINS:

25 9:00 a.m.

1 CRYSTAL MATTA:

2 9:00 a.m., whichever you want.

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 It says here on the thing 10:00 a.m., so  
5 that's the reason I was looking.

6 CRYSTAL MATTA:

7 9:00.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 It's 9:00 a.m. in Biloxi this time.  
10 Okay? Do we know if -- all right. We've got that  
11 down, right? Everybody is going to Biloxi at  
12 9:00 a.m., right?

13 CRYSTAL MATTA:

14 Already on the calendar.

15 JOE SPRAGGINS:

16 All right. All right. We've got a few  
17 holiday closures. Christmas Day, obviously,  
18 Thursday and the day after, New Year's Day and the  
19 day after. And then we have Martin Luther King,  
20 Junior Day and Robert E. Lee's birthday is on  
21 January 19th, so it will be the day before the  
22 Commission meeting.

23 All right. Derelict vessels, we've got  
24 a total of 225 derelict vessels cases that have  
25 been reported; 195 have been removed; 30 are

1 pending removal; and two are in court at this  
2 time.

3 Let's see, now. Where am I at? So  
4 other than that, we do have a Gulf Council meeting  
5 next month in New Orleans and so we'll be going  
6 over some stuff on it. But anything I need to  
7 update, we won't have that till the April -- I  
8 mean, the February meeting because it's not until  
9 after that.

10 All right. Any other questions on that?

11 If not, Steven, are you on?

12 STEVEN ECKERT:

13 Yes, Director. I'm here.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 Can you give the actions updates?

16 STEVEN ECKERT:

17 Yes, sir. Regarding the actions  
18 updates, we have some -- some of the fishing  
19 records and those fishing records -- I apologize.  
20 I lost them on my screen here.

21 JOE SPRAGGINS:

22 We can see them, Steven.

23 Did we lose him?

24 STEVEN ECKERT:

25 I'm here, Director. I apologize. When

1 I put my microphone on to answer you, it knocked  
2 me off my screen there. Apologies. I do have  
3 them. Right here. Okay. Just one second, folks.  
4 Apologies.

5 JOE SPRAGGINS:

6 Steven, we can see them. They're on the  
7 screen there and we can read them.

8 STEVEN ECKERT:

9 Yes. Yes, sir.

10 So we had a motion to recommend approval  
11 of the following state saltwater finfish records  
12 being a conventional tackle of a rock hind, being  
13 four pounds, 4.8 ounces for Nicholas Lewelling.  
14 There was also a youth conventional tackle for a  
15 silver perch being 3.52 ounces for Cresson  
16 Vancleave, and, finally, a gulf hake of six  
17 pounds. The record belonged to James Williams.

18 And that's all the actions updates that  
19 we have from November.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 Okay. Any questions?

22 If not, Commissioner, that's my report.

23 CAM ROBERDS:

24 All right. Thank you, Director. I  
25 appreciate all the information.

1 Do any of the Commissioners have  
2 anything they want to report on today?

3 Nothing. Okay.

4 Well, it looks like Chief Wilkerson, the  
5 report on citations, Marine Patrol.

6 KYLE WILKERSON:

7 Good morning. How's everybody doing  
8 today?

9 CAM ROBERDS:

10 Good morning, Chief.

11 KYLE WILKERSON:

12 I like to seat myself in Biloxi, so I'm  
13 going to stand here and lean on the post here.

14 It's pretty self-explanatory, the report  
15 itself. The guys have been -- and girls have been  
16 working extremely hard.

17 We just made a large sheephead case  
18 last night and kind of -- we're having issues with  
19 Facebook. It was showing on -- posting on  
20 Facebook. Do know that we have been working that  
21 several months, so we were able to maybe put some  
22 paper on some individuals that were catching over  
23 the limit, extremely over the limit of sheephead.

24 Had a few oyster violations. Some old  
25 oysters that were in Biloxi Small Craft Harbor, I

1 believe it was -- or it may have been the  
2 commercial. I'm really not completely sure, but  
3 several, several thousand oysters were seized  
4 there and dumped in a disclosed area back in the  
5 water.

6 Other than that, I mean, we're looking  
7 at about 1,500 stops for a cold November, so the  
8 girls and the guys are doing phenomenal work. I'm  
9 impressed with them every day.

10 So any -- I'll field any questions if  
11 you have any.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 You know, Chief, I didn't know how much  
14 we could or couldn't say about what just happened.  
15 But, you know, people like to get on Facebook and  
16 "Where is DMR? Where is Marine Patrol?" But they  
17 have no idea the work that you guys are putting  
18 in. Y'all are doing a phenomenal job.

19 I started finding out about the  
20 sheepshead thing over the weekend. I called  
21 Bryce, asked him about it. That's something y'all  
22 have already been working on.

23 KYLE WILKERSON:

24 Yes, sir.

25 RONNIE DANIELS:

1                   And people want to get on there and  
2                   they -- I invite them to come down and see the  
3                   amount of stops on this report, right, if they  
4                   think y'all aren't doing anything because your  
5                   guys are doing a great job and they're out there  
6                   whenever other people don't want to be. And just  
7                   because they are not seeing action immediately,  
8                   y'all are working on cases, right?

9                   KYLE WILKERSON:

10                   Yes, all the time.

11                   RONNIE DANIELS:

12                   Y'all are making sure you get it right,  
13                   so keep up the great work. And, you know, I'm  
14                   always happy and confident to know that y'all are  
15                   doing the right thing whenever I see these things  
16                   pop up on social media.

17                   KYLE WILKERSON:

18                   Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for  
19                   the praise there. We're -- we never sleep. We're  
20                   always out there, always working.

21                   CAM ROBERDS:

22                   Well said, Commissioner Daniels.  
23                   Appreciate it, Chief.

24                   Any other questions?

25                   JONATHAN MCLENDON:

1                   No, I'm good.

2           MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

3                   Thank you.

4           CAM ROBERDS:

5                   All right. Thank you, sir.

6                   Moving to wetlands permitting, Alicia.

7           ALICIA CARRON:

8                   Good morning.

9           CAM ROBERDS:

10                   Morning.

11           ALICIA CARRON:

12                   So this is a request for a federal  
13 consistency review by the Keesler Air Force Base,  
14 DMR25-000445. The location is Back Bay Biloxi  
15 from Keesler Air Force Base shoreline to the VA  
16 Medical Center shoreline in Harrison County,  
17 Mississippi.

18                   The use district: General use district.

19                   Agent: Mississippi State University,  
20 Eric Sparks. We do have a representative here in  
21 the audience should you have further questions  
22 after the PowerPoint.

23                   Project purpose and need: Create a  
24 living shoreline along the Keesler Air Force Base  
25 and the Veterans hospital to prevent high rates of

1 erosion due to wind-driven waves and boat wakes.

2 This project will stabilize the shoreline.

3 The project description: Fill of  
4 coastal wetlands for the installation of a  
5 1.35-mile-long breakwater for a living shoreline.  
6 The breakwaters are 100 feet long, nine feet wide  
7 at the base and four feet tall; maximum of 30 feet  
8 from mean high water, with approximately 25 feet  
9 between each breakwater; crest height at a maximum  
10 of one foot above mean high water; maximum of  
11 8,195 cubic yards of riprap with 2,021 cubic yards  
12 of total riprap to be placed above mean high  
13 water; one and a half acres total fill.

14 Project location: The black polygon is  
15 Keesler Air Force Base. The red is the VA Medical  
16 Center. And then the Hiller Park, in green, was  
17 previously permitted May of 2024.

18 Project area: This is the description  
19 of the breakwaters and where they will sit along  
20 the shorelines of Keesler Air Force Base and the  
21 VA Medical Center.

22 Variance request: 22 Mississippi Admin  
23 Code Part 23 of the Mississippi Coastal Program,  
24 Rule 8.15.A, permanent filling of coastal wetlands  
25 below the ordinary high water mark is not

1 authorized.

2 Justification: Rule 8.19.A, the impacts  
3 of coastal wetlands would be no worse than if the  
4 requirements were followed. The overall intent of  
5 this project is to reduce shoreline erosion and  
6 enhance shoreline vegetation that provides immense  
7 amount of ecosystem services for Coastal  
8 Mississippi.

9 Public and agency notice and comments:  
10 Public notice, notification for the proposed  
11 project appeared in *The Sun Herald* on  
12 September 18th, October 5th and October 12th,  
13 2025. Notification of the proposed project  
14 appeared on the MDMR website from September 25th  
15 through October 20th, 2025. No public comments  
16 were received.

17 Agency notice and comments continued:  
18 MDEQ, no comments. MDAH, no comments. MDWFP, no  
19 comments. Mississippi Secretary of State, a rent  
20 example lease will be required. MDMR Fisheries,  
21 no comments. MDMR Office of Marine Patrol, no  
22 comments. City of Biloxi, no comments.

23 Staff recommendation: The staff of the  
24 Department of Marine Resources has conducted a  
25 thorough evaluation of the project and has made

1 findings on decision factors in accordance with  
2 the Title 22, Part 23 of the Mississippi Coastal  
3 Program. The project would serve a higher public  
4 interest by protection of existing marsh habitat  
5 providing additional shoreline protection for the  
6 Keesler Air Force Base.

7 Therefore, staff requests a motion that  
8 the Commission recommend to the Executive Director  
9 to approve the requested variance and certify that  
10 the proposed project be consistent with the  
11 Mississippi Coastal Program as requested.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 All right. I have just one -- I'm just  
14 looking at this and I'm thinking -- and, look,  
15 obviously, this stuff is eroding. It erodes  
16 quick, these shorelines. And it's just, you know,  
17 dirt material on the banks and just the wave  
18 action is going to continue to scour and pull the  
19 material into the water.

20 But at what -- and I understand this is  
21 definitely going to be the fix here, but, I mean,  
22 you've got the entire, you know, Back Bay of  
23 Biloxi all the way through the Industrial Canal  
24 and there's erosion everywhere, and I'm just  
25 wondering if there's any kind of -- is there any

1 other opportunities as we continue to add these  
2 rock shorelines to stabilize the slopes all the  
3 way through like the Back Bay? I know this works.  
4 I'm just thinking at some point we're going to  
5 have rock all the way through the -- from Biloxi  
6 to Gulfport.

7 I don't know if there is other  
8 solutions, but I just wanted to ask.

9 ALICIA CARRON:

10 It depends on the project location.  
11 Willa.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Willa.

14 WILLA BRANTLEY:

15 Yes. There actually are other materials  
16 that they can use that are more environmentally  
17 friendly. Sometimes because of the amount of  
18 waves they're getting those don't work as well, so  
19 they go with the rock because the rock is -- has  
20 been studied enough that the engineers can put  
21 their stamp on it and know it's going to last.

22 And they don't feel as comfortable with  
23 the newer technologies yet, but there are some  
24 places -- I think that Mississippi State is trying  
25 some of those newer technologies. DEQ has done

1 some of the RESTORE projects with those newer  
2 technologies like reef balls and things like that  
3 that are more modeled after the natural state. So  
4 it really just depends on the location and the  
5 wave energy.

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 I'm assuming -- yeah. Somebody has got  
8 to be behind the scenes, you know, like you said,  
9 Mississippi State or some of the other engineers  
10 and trying to figure other options out.

11 WILLA BRANTLEY:

12 Yeah. They've done some intertidal  
13 reefs, some low water reefs. They have done some  
14 with reef balls, different things like that.  
15 There are devices called WADs. They're the  
16 pyramid-shaped ones that you might see with the  
17 holes in them. They're -- it stands for wave  
18 attenuation devices. There's different ones. It  
19 just really depends on the location, what the  
20 engineer thinks will actually stand up to the wave  
21 energy.

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 Got ya.

24 RONNIE DANIELS:

25 This looks very familiar to what they

1 did over in Hancock County and that's held up very  
2 well and that's a lot of wave action that that  
3 shoreline gets.

4 WILLA BRANTLEY:

5 Yes, yes.

6 RONNIE DANIELS:

7 But it also even appears that it's  
8 rebuilding marsh behind those rocks there.

9 WILLA BRANTLEY:

10 The last I heard from it, the last  
11 monitoring, it had built some marsh.

12 RONNIE DANIELS:

13 Yeah. It's definitely got shallower and  
14 narrower in a lot of spots since they put it in.

15 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

16 And this is like -- this reminds me of  
17 the Gollott Island, which y'all did right there in  
18 the Back Bay.

19 WILLA BRANTLEY:

20 Right, very similar.

21 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

22 It's right next to the channel, gets a  
23 lot of wave action, same thing. Have -- like, you  
24 know, has that been in place long enough to like  
25 quantify like how much these things are helping?

1 WILLA BRANTLEY:

2 I haven't any monitoring on that. I  
3 don't know exactly how long it's been in place. I  
4 know they're going to monitor every year, so that  
5 report, I think, goes to NOAA. I'm not sure who  
6 else it will get to, but I usually do hear back  
7 from it.

8 JOE SPRAGGINS:

9 I think it's been about a year and a  
10 half.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Yeah, it's been a while.

13 WILLA BRANTLEY:

14 Yeah.

15 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

16 Yeah.

17 CAM ROBERDS:

18 Yeah. I think -- I'm not saying that  
19 there is any issues. I mean, look, we have to  
20 protect our shoreline for sure. The only other  
21 real opportunity would be trying to, you know,  
22 reduce boat speeds and that -- I don't think  
23 anybody wants that because everybody wants to be  
24 able to travel and be able to reach.

25 JOE SPRAGGINS:

1                   We've got to slow Ronnie down.

2           CAM ROBERDS:

3                   Yeah, slow Ronnie down.

4           RONNIE DANIELS:

5                   Now, I don't ever get over that way.

6           CAM ROBERDS:

7                   He just plows. He plows and makes a big  
8 wave.

9           RICK BURRIS:

10                   Yes. So to answer your question on the  
11 Big Island project, we're tasked with monitoring  
12 that and we've seen some pretty significant  
13 recruitment of all your invertebrates and things  
14 like that. I can't remember what the quantitative  
15 amount was supposed to be, but it's like five to  
16 ten times greater than what that minimum threshold  
17 is.

18                   And so it's -- it is -- you can't see it  
19 visually, but it is very productive and it's  
20 providing habitat for a lot of smaller species.

21                   And then as that -- as y'all mentioned,  
22 it's not just about wave attenuation. It's about  
23 building back that marsh behind it. Once you do  
24 that, then you're going to have some significant  
25 recruitment for all the species that we love to

1 catch and all the species that are important for  
2 the Sound and the estuary.

3 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

4 Yeah. I look at it daily. It seems  
5 like it's doing real well and there's always a  
6 steady group of fishermen on it.

7 CAM ROBERDS:

8 Oh, really.

9 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

10 Yeah.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Oh, yeah. It must be producing, then,  
13 for sure.

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 The idea is, I think the big part about  
16 it is trying to do natural, as much natural as we  
17 possibly can.

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 Yeah.

20 JOE SPRAGGINS:

21 And, you know, the good Lord put these  
22 things in nature's way to be able to do that and  
23 so -- and if you go back the same way that he  
24 works with it, it might help a whole lot more than  
25 us building a bulkhead or something else against

1 it, you know, which will stop the erosion, but it  
2 doesn't benefit the estuary the same way.

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Yeah. And probably a maintenance issue  
5 down the road too. That rock will be there for a  
6 while.

7 JOE SPRAGGINS:

8 Yeah. Well, the main thing is the  
9 estuary itself. It's not feeding anything, you  
10 know. That bulkhead is not doing anything.

11 CAM ROBERDS:

12 Uh-huh. Agree.

13 All right. Any other questions for --

14 JOE SPRAGGINS:

15 We need a motion on that?

16 CAM ROBERDS:

17 Yeah, we'll need a --

18 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

19 I'll make a motion that we approve the  
20 requested variance and certify the proposed  
21 project to be consistent with the coastal program  
22 as requested.

23 MATTHEW MAYFIELD:

24 I'll second.

25 CAM ROBERDS:

1 All right. All those in favor?

2 (Unanimous vote.)

3 CAM ROBERDS:

4 Thank you.

5 Down to Public Affairs, Ms. Charmaine.

6 CHARMAINE SCHMERMUND:

7 Good morning. The Mississippi  
8 Department of Marine Resources had 14 media  
9 mentions since the November MACMR meeting. News  
10 items included fish records, the seafood labeling  
11 law, MDMR's Marine Information Calendar being  
12 available and DMR receiving 6.3 million in  
13 Tidelands funds from the Secretary of State.

14 The Office of Marine Patrol participated  
15 in the Sea Santa Sail-a-bration on December 7th.

16 Marine Patrol and the Artificial Reef  
17 Bureau took part in Pathways 2 Possibilities  
18 November 19th and 20th at the Mississippi Coast  
19 Convention Center. Marine Patrol was stationed in  
20 the Law and Public Safety Pathway, and the  
21 Artificial Reef Bureau had their booth in the  
22 Marine Science Pathway. The two-day event had  
23 thousands of students participating from  
24 throughout the southern part of the state.

25 CSO Rick Burris gave a presentation at

1 the Gulf Coast Joint Venture - Mississippi/Alabama  
2 Initiative Team Meeting in Mobile on December 2nd.

3 The Ocean Springs High School  
4 aquaculture program took a tour of the Lyman Fish  
5 Hatchery on November 20th. Students were able to  
6 view all the different labs and facilities  
7 throughout the hatchery.

8 Megan Fleming and MaCayla Dixon in the  
9 Finfish Bureau assisted the West Jones Science  
10 Club with their field trip to Biloxi on  
11 November 21st. There were 35 seventh through  
12 twelfth graders who participated in the field trip  
13 where Megan and MaCayla showed them how to throw  
14 cast nets and talked about the species that were  
15 caught in the nets.

16 Finfish Bureau's Trevor Moncrief and  
17 Eric Gigli also gave presentations at the  
18 Sportfish Restoration Angler Workshop on December  
19 4th at the Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum in  
20 Biloxi. At the workshop, fisheries experts from  
21 DMR, Mississippi State University Extension Center  
22 and the University of Southern Mississippi shared  
23 results from the Sportfish Restoration-funded  
24 projects.

25 Emmett Carstens at the Grand Bay NERR

1 gave a presentation on the Gulf Coast Phenology  
2 Trail at the Louisiana Master Naturalists of  
3 Greater New Orleans Workshop on December 5th in  
4 New Orleans.

5 Director Spraggins gave a presentation  
6 to the Leadership Mississippi class during their  
7 Gulf Coast visit on December 2nd at the Marine  
8 Education Center in Ocean Springs. The  
9 Mississippi Seafood program also hosted a tasting  
10 of local off-bottom oysters and seafood dishes for  
11 attendees.

12 The cooking team cooked dinner for the  
13 Mississippi/Alabama All-Star High School Football  
14 Game at the Camp Shelby Mississippi Armed Forces  
15 Museum on December 10th.

16 And then we also have calendars and  
17 Coastal Markers, the most recent issue, available  
18 up here if anybody wanted to pick any up.

19 CAM ROBERDS:

20 Any questions for Ms. Charmaine?

21 (No response.)

22 CAM ROBERDS:

23 All right. Appreciate it. Thank you.

24 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

25 Thank you.

1 CAM ROBERDS:

2 All right. It looks like next up is  
3 Ms. Ayesha Gray with a Grand Bay NERR update.

4 AYESHA GRAY:

5 All right. Well, Director put the  
6 challenge out and the NERR delivered, so we had a  
7 record Star Party. So all the shade I got about  
8 not having stars at the Star Party is gone.

9 So we had 405 people that attended. The  
10 weather was perfect. It wasn't too cold. It  
11 wasn't too hot. There was no fog. Fog didn't  
12 roll in until 9:00 p.m., so I don't know who you  
13 were talking to, but he did a good job.

14 There were too many stars to count. We  
15 had dozens of meteor sightings. We had many owls  
16 heard. 144 family photos were taken and 253  
17 crafts were made, so we just made countless family  
18 memories.

19 The vibe at the Star Party is just  
20 really low key. People just come because they  
21 want to -- they want to sit down with their  
22 families. They want to have some soup. They want  
23 to enjoy our interpretive center. They want to  
24 kind of check out what we've got. We've got some  
25 games in the front yard with the cornhole. We

1 have the owl walks. We did not see that owl.

2 That's just an example.

3 But we had five different kinds of soup.  
4 Most of the time, I saw people just sitting with  
5 their families and having conversation, talking,  
6 listening to the stories. We had family photos  
7 with Santa. Mrs. Clause story time was a big hit,  
8 so that was going on in the large classroom. And  
9 lots of kids came to hear stories and families  
10 too.

11 We had the ice your own cookie table so  
12 we could get all our kids jazzed for making their  
13 own cookies, and everybody loves making crafts. I  
14 like the idea that they're taking home of a piece  
15 of the Reserve and they're hanging it on their  
16 tree, and they might be doing this year after year  
17 for many years.

18 We had an employee volunteer sweater  
19 contest, and Jeneil won by six or seven.

20 We had hayrides and stargazing. We had  
21 a really long ride for the hayrides. I did have  
22 to turn some folks away for the hayride. About 20  
23 people didn't make it on, but we'll fix that next  
24 year when we get a third trailer.

25 But it was a beautiful starry night,

1 just tons and tons of stars. And lots of great  
2 pictures and just a beautiful view being down  
3 there at the Reserve and lots of family memories  
4 and photos were taken, so it was a great time.

5 And this is our -- we're going to aim to  
6 do about the same exact thing next year. We're  
7 going to add just a few things, fix just a few  
8 things, but we think four or five is our sweet  
9 spot for inviting folks to our house.

10 CAM ROBERDS:

11 That's beyond impressive. What an  
12 attendance right there. Is that a record  
13 attendance?

14 AYESHA GRAY:

15 I think it's not quite a record because  
16 I do believe that we had a year that had 440,  
17 so -- but it's pretty close to the record.

18 CAM ROBERDS:

19 Y'all are representing well.

20 AYESHA GRAY:

21 Yeah. And it definitely was much  
22 smoother than the last time we had that many, so  
23 yeah.

24 CAM ROBERDS:

25 All right. Any questions?

1 AYESHA GRAY:

2 Any questions?

3 JOE SPRAGGINS:

4 They delivered.

5 AYESHA GRAY:

6 Yep. It was a good night. It was a  
7 really good night.

8 CAM ROBERDS:

9 Without a doubt. Thank you.

10 AYESHA GRAY:

11 Yep.

12 CAM ROBERDS:

13 Appreciate it.

14 All right. Moving on, is there any  
15 other business?

16 JOE SPRAGGINS:

17 The only one thing I have is if you --  
18 the Governor did make an announcement the other  
19 day. We've got a hundred million worth of  
20 projects that is going to be done across the  
21 southern part of the state here. A lot of it is  
22 in the southern part. Some of it is in the  
23 northern part of the state, but a lot of it is  
24 RESTORE Act and GOMESA.

25 But some of the GOMESA projects is, you

1 know, we're doing -- they did announce Long Beach  
2 to be able to help rebuild the harbor at about two  
3 and a half million dollars there and some areas  
4 that needed to be done.

5 Hancock County, there was a sewer system  
6 this is finally finishing up. This is the last  
7 phase of a big project going down that's going to  
8 redo a lot of the sewer system in Hancock County  
9 on Highway 603.

10 In Jackson County, over at Escatawpa,  
11 we're doing the sewer project there to be able to  
12 help with that.

13 And all these sewer projects, whenever  
14 we talk about them, everything that we correct  
15 there has some effect on what happens into the  
16 Mississippi Sound or either the Bay or whatever  
17 because the water goes in there, you know. If we  
18 get sewage into that, that's just bad for us and  
19 that's bad for the estuary so everything that we  
20 can do to correct that.

21 And the other project that we're doing  
22 is -- they gave Pearl River Community College the  
23 money to buy some drones and they're going to be  
24 able to use those drones to be able to teach  
25 hydrography and they're going to teach students

1     how to be able -- now they're just using piecemeal  
2     stuff that they have and, hopefully, this will  
3     make it work for them. But they're going to be  
4     able to take those and be able to map the whole  
5     Mississippi Sound with us and stuff like that  
6     they're going to do with it, and it's going to be  
7     a lot of great things that comes out of it.

8             And if you haven't seen the hydrography,  
9     you ought to talk to USM and Pearl River. And,  
10    matter of fact, Mississippi Gulf Coast, I think,  
11    has a program too, so all three of them have one.  
12    And so they have a program, and, basically, a lot  
13    of them are getting their first two years at Pearl  
14    River or somewhere and then going to the USM for  
15    the other part, but -- and it is a -- it's a good  
16    program. It's part of the future of the blue  
17    economy and that's something that's going to be  
18    big in the Mississippi Gulf Coast for a long time,  
19    is blue economy. So we're glad to be able to do  
20    some of those things.

21             And I would like to just wish everyone a  
22    Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope  
23    y'all have a safe one.

24    CAM ROBERDS:

25             Thank you, Director.

1 I would like to wish everybody a Merry  
2 Christmas as well.

3 And I guess no public comments?

4 TJ MORAN:

5 (Shaking head negatively.)

6 CAM ROBERDS:

7 Okay. Well, then do we have a motion to  
8 close?

9 JONATHAN MCLENDON:

10 Motion.

11 RONNIE DANIELS:

12 Second.

13 CAM ROBERDS:

14 All in favor?

15 (Unanimous vote.)

16 (Adjourned at 10:39 a.m.)

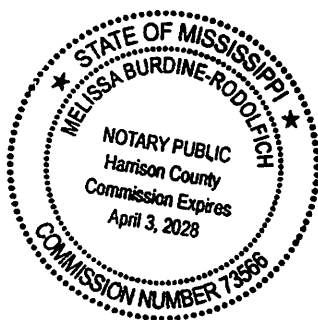
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**CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER**

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 public hearing(s), as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated, to the best of my skill and ability.

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 13<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026.



Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich

Melissa Burdine-Rodolfich  
My Commission Expires 4/03/28