

1                                   **CARIBBEAN FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
2                                   **153<sup>RD</sup> REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
3                                   **Mayaguez Holiday Inn**  
4                                   **Mayaguez, Puerto Rico**

5  
6                                   August 19-20, 2015  
7

8   The Caribbean Fishery Management Council convened at the  
9   Mayaguez Holiday Inn, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Wednesday morning,  
10   August 19, 2015, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by  
11   Chairman Carlos Farchette.

12  
13                                   **CALL TO ORDER**  
14

15   **CARLOS FARCHETTE:**   If you all can have a seat so we can do a  
16   roll call.

17  
18   **MARCOS HANKE:**   Marcos Hanke, council member.  
19

20   **RICARDO LOPEZ:**   Ricardo Lopez, Puerto Rico DNR.  
21

22   **TONY BLANCHARD:**   Tony Blanchard, council member.  
23

24   **TARA PREY:**   Lieutenant Junior Guard Prey, U.S. Coast Guard.  
25

26   **MARIA DE LOS A. IRIZARRY:**   María de los A. Irizarry, council  
27   staff.  
28

29   **VIVIAN RUIZ:**   Vivian Ruiz, council staff.  
30

31   **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:**   Graciela Garcia-Moliner, council  
32   staff.  
33

34   **BILL ARNOLD:**   Bill Arnold, Southeast Regional Office, National  
35   Marine Fisheries Service.  
36

37   **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:**   Carlos Velasquez, commercial fisherman and  
38   new council member.  
39

40   **BONNIE PONWITH:**   Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA Fisheries.  
41

42   **IRIS LOWERY:**   Iris Lowery, NOAA General Counsel, Southeast  
43   Section.  
44

45   **ROY CRABTREE:**   Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.  
46

47   **DIANA MARTINO:**   Diana Martino, council staff.  
48

1 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Miguel Rolon, council staff.  
2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Carlos Farchette, soon to be council member.  
4  
5 **ALIDA ORTIZ:** Alida Ortiz, Outreach and Education Advisory  
6 Panel.  
7  
8 **GARY ROGERS:** Gar Rogers, Advisory Panel, Puerto Rico.  
9  
10 **EDWARD SCHUSTER:** Edward Schuster, DAP, St. Croix.  
11  
12 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** Julian Magras, DAP, St. Thomas.  
13  
14 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Rich Appeldoorn, SSC Chair.  
15  
16 **LYNN RIOS:** Lynn Rios, NOAA Enforcement.  
17  
18 **HOWARD FORBES:** Howard Forbes, Director of DPNR Enforcement.  
19  
20 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Kate Quigley, council staff.  
21  
22 **HELENA ANTOUN:** Helena Antoun, contractor.  
23  
24 **RICK PEARSON:** Rick Pearson, NOAA Fisheries, Highly Migratory  
25 Species Management Division.  
26  
27 **MIGUEL LUGO:** Miguel Lugo, NOAA Fisheries.  
28  
29 **SEAN MEEHAN:** Sean Meehan, NOAA Fisheries.  
30  
31 **CHRISTINA PACKAGE-WARD:** Christina Package-Ward, NOAA Fisheries.  
32  
33 **DAN CROWTHER:** Dan Crowther, Point 97.  
34  
35 **JANNETTE RAMOS:** Jannette Ramos, Sea Grant Program.  
36  
37 **LOREN REMSBERG:** Loren Remsberg, NOAA Office of General Counsel.  
38  
39 **LEDA DUNMIRE:** Leda Dunmire, Pew Charitable Trusts.  
40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you. Miguel Rolon.  
42  
43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will start the  
44 morning with the swearing of two new appointees and one is a  
45 reappointment, Mr. Carlos Farchette, and the other one is Carlos  
46 Velasquez from Puerto Rico. Then we will follow with election  
47 of officers. At this time, we would like to allow Dr. Roy  
48 Crabtree and the two Carlos's to please come forward and you

1 will be sworn in.

2

3 (Whereupon, the swearing in of new council members occurred.)

4

5 **MIGUEL ROLON:** The Honorable Carmen Guerrero, Secretary of DNR,  
6 has designated Dr. Lopez as her designee for this meeting.  
7 Then, from the U.S. Virgin Islands, the new Division Chief is  
8 Ruth Gomez. Given the short notice, she couldn't get the waiver  
9 to come to the meeting. As you know, in the case of the Virgin  
10 Islands, any government official has to ask the Governor for  
11 permission to go outside the U.S. Virgin Islands thirty to  
12 forty-five days in advance and so she will be, during the day,  
13 via Go to Meeting. She cannot vote, but she can participate,  
14 especially at the time that we discuss the species that will be  
15 included in the management unit of the U.S. Virgin Islands, St.  
16 Croix and St. Thomas/St. John.

17

18 **ROY CRABTREE:** We are going to need a letter.

19

20 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Yes, I already told her that.

21

22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We are going to do the election of officers  
23 and I think the U.S. Coast Guard will take over from here.

24

25 **TARA PREY:** Good morning. I have been directed to conduct the  
26 elections and so at this time, any nominations for Chair? Mr.  
27 Hanke.

28

29 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes, I would like to propose Carlos Farchette as  
30 Chairman.

31

32 **TONY BLANCHARD:** For Vice Chair, I would like Marcos Hanke.

33

34 **TARA PREY:** Any other nominations? At this time, we will vote.  
35 All in favor say aye. All right. Any opposition? No  
36 opposition and elections are closed.

37

38 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, Lieutenant Prey is the new designee  
39 from the U.S. Coast Guard and she will be accompanying us during  
40 this meeting and the one in December and welcome to the  
41 Caribbean Fishery Management Council and I thank you for  
42 officiating the election of the officers today.

43

44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you and I want to thank everyone for  
45 their vote of confidence as Chairman again and so there is no  
46 confusion between Carlos and Carlos, maybe you can say Carlos V  
47 and Carlos F. I think we have some changes to the agenda, but  
48 where is my agenda here? We are going for Adoption of Agenda.

1 Any additions or corrections? Graciela.

2

3

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

4

5 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Besides the National SSC Report by Dr.  
6 Richard Appeldoorn, we are also going to talk about the red hind  
7 review by the SSC and that will be very brief. Miguel, do you  
8 want me to add to the Other Business the invasive seagrass  
9 discussion for tomorrow and Tom Matthew's lobster trap  
10 presentation?

11

12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's for tomorrow also?

13

14 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That is for tomorrow under Other  
15 Business, but the SSC Report will be right after the National  
16 SSC.

17

18 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, what is the title of Dr. Carrubba's  
19 presentation?

20

21 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There is a new invasive seagrass in  
22 the Caribbean, Halophila stipulacea, and so she wants to bring  
23 that to the council.

24

25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Anyone who wants to make a motion to accept  
26 the agenda? Are there any other additions to the agenda?  
27 Hearing none, we will need a motion to accept the agenda as  
28 modified.

29

30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I would like to make a motion to accept the  
31 agenda.

32

33 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.

34

35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Motion by Tony Blanchard to accept the agenda  
36 and seconded by Marcos Hanke. All in favor say aye. Next we  
37 have the Consideration of the 152<sup>nd</sup> Council Meeting Verbatim  
38 Transcriptions. Any corrections? Hearing none, we will need a  
39 motion to accept the verbatim transcripts as written.

40

**CONSIDERATION OF THE 152<sup>ND</sup> COUNCIL MEETING VERBATIM  
TRANSCRIPTIONS**

42

43

44 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to present a motion to accept the  
45 transcript, verbatim transcript.

46

47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's for the 152<sup>nd</sup> council meeting. Do we  
48 have a second?

1  
2 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Motion by Marcos Hanke and second by Tony  
5 Blanchard. All in favor say aye. The motion carries. Now we  
6 have the Executive Director's Report and Miguel Rolon.

7  
8 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

9  
10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start with the  
11 easy part. These three ladies here are from our staff. From  
12 left to right, we have Diana Martino, Iris Oliveras, and Vivian  
13 Ruiz. The Chairman and I discussed it and we wanted to  
14 recognize these three ladies' contributions to the council  
15 beyond what is expected in their PD.

16  
17 Diana worked for a year, the last four years, putting together  
18 the Fish Fry in Washington and it's a lot of work at night in  
19 putting the whole thing together and Iris, she is the face and  
20 the voice of the council. When you call the council and we are  
21 not there, she is always there and she is always taking care of  
22 business and writing letters and getting information for  
23 Graciela and for me and even fighting with the people who  
24 service the servers and the computers and all that, because she  
25 is the one in charge of -- She appointed herself in charge of  
26 the servers and we really appreciate her work.

27  
28 Then Vivian, she is a dynamo and she is our accounting  
29 technician. When she came to work for the council, at the same  
30 time she was our auditor and she is kind of a -- At that time,  
31 she was a very scary woman and she accepted to come to the  
32 meetings to do the presentations and she is very dangerous with  
33 that camera. She takes pictures of me sleeping or anybody  
34 around here and then she laughs at us, but she is very  
35 multitalented and also she is in charge of the Go to Meeting.

36  
37 For that, we wanted to recognize the three of them. I believe  
38 that her work is really beyond what is expected and we hope to  
39 continue having her contributions and Iris and Diana for years  
40 to come at the council and so I would like you to join me with a  
41 round of applause to thank these three ladies.

42  
43 Talking about the Fish Fry, we have the opportunity of receiving  
44 a visit from Dr. Kay Sullivan and you know she is the head of  
45 the NOAA office in Washington and she came by and at this Fish  
46 Fry, for those of you who are not familiar with it, every year  
47 within the week that we have the CHOW, which is Captain Hill  
48 Ocean Week, by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, within

1 that week we have what we call the Fish Fry.  
2  
3 It's an event put together by NOAA and National Marine Fisheries  
4 Service and councils and other contributors and at that meeting,  
5 we have seafood from all over the states, from Samoa to Puerto  
6 Rico and from the Virgin Islands. It is visited by more than  
7 1,500 people and there, you have staffers and we have people  
8 from NMFS and we have people from the government.  
9  
10 We are able to exchange ideas with these people in an informal  
11 way and so it has been a successful venture for the councils.  
12 We were invited by the Western Pacific Council the first time  
13 and we have been invited every year and this time, Dr. Sullivan  
14 visited us and she wanted to make sure that we promised her the  
15 next year we will be there, too.  
16  
17 NOAA put some money into it and so NOAA is paying for some of  
18 the items that the chef bought and, to me, it's a very, very  
19 nice way of getting our word around of what the council does and  
20 what seafood we have that we can present to everybody and also,  
21 we have people from Europe that attend these meetings.  
22  
23 We have Dr. Hogarth, a former National Marine Fisheries Service  
24 Director, who came by and he wanted to make sure that we will  
25 not forget him and he said that there are some projects in the  
26 Caribbean that he will be talking to us about in the future.  
27  
28 I thought it was a very good meeting and a very good way of  
29 exchanging not only seafood, but ideas with other people. We  
30 also have been visited by a staffer from the Senate and the  
31 House and Senators and Representatives from the House also come  
32 by and say hello and it's interesting, because many people come  
33 and they don't know the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are part  
34 of the U.S. They are surprised. Really? You are under the  
35 U.S. flag? Yes.  
36  
37 It's another way of telling and probably we have been  
38 contributing to the tourism industry for these two areas.  
39 Anyway, thank you, Diana and all the people who got involved  
40 with this, our Chairman, Carlos Farchette, and former Chairman  
41 Genio Piñeiro who attended these meetings before. If we had the  
42 money for next year, we will also participate. Thank you,  
43 Vivian.  
44  
45 We have Caribbean lobster and queen conch and the chef prepares  
46 turnovers and we have risotto and we have spiny lobster soup and  
47 this time around, we had the Puerto Rican pasteles with conch  
48 and lobster, I guess. They had both of them and we also had the

1 johnnycakes from Puerto Rico.

2  
3 Anyway, the other news that we have is that the CCC, which is  
4 the councils and the executive directors national meeting, will  
5 be in the U.S. Virgin Islands next year. We have a protocol by  
6 which the council that is assigned the task of putting together  
7 the meeting with -- There are two meetings, one in February and  
8 another one in May, but they are also in charge of following up  
9 everything that we discussed at the previous meeting, plus we  
10 are also in charge of preparing the agenda for the next meeting.

11  
12 It's really a good time for people to know other councils,  
13 especially the Chair and executive directors. This meeting is  
14 attended also by the Director of the Regional Offices and so Dr.  
15 Roy Crabtree represents the Southeast Region, of course, and he  
16 always attends these meetings and so next year the meeting will  
17 be in May. It will be at the Frenchman's Reef and those of you  
18 from the Virgin Islands, if you want to stop and talk to the  
19 people from the other areas, you are welcome to.

20  
21 We are in the process now of putting together some events for  
22 this group of executive directors and chairmen and vice chairs  
23 of the other councils. We already have done this before and it  
24 is supposed to be rotated and so we have eight councils and so  
25 every seven years, you are expected to host the meeting.

26  
27 2016, it will be our chance and we will be able to show off our  
28 U.S. Virgin Islands. They love the Frenchmen's Reef, by the  
29 way.

30  
31 Enough of that and then the other thing that I wanted to mention  
32 is that the Marine Resources Education Program -- You have heard  
33 this before, but they gave a presentation at the CCC in Key West  
34 and it was well received by everybody and at that presentation,  
35 they were able to exchange questions and answers with the  
36 presenter and everybody around the table, every council, was  
37 interested and impacted by the effectiveness of this group.

38  
39 The Marine Resources Education Program was started by fishers in  
40 the New England area. It's fishers talking to fishers and  
41 around the table, we have Dr. Roy Crabtree is one of the people  
42 who attend these meetings in the continental U.S. and give  
43 presentations by the National Marine Fisheries Service and  
44 fisheries in general.

45  
46 National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region also sends  
47 people to talk to the fishers and we had, as you know, in Puerto  
48 Rico last time we had a presentation by Carlos Velasquez and

1 Marcos Hanke of the conference that took place in Puerto Rico  
2 last year.

3  
4 Now I presented the idea to the fishers who attended the DAP St.  
5 Croix and the DAP St. Thomas and they all agreed that the next  
6 time we should have an MREP in the U.S. Virgin Islands and so  
7 Helena will be working with the contact points. Julian is one  
8 of the contact points in St. Thomas and Carlos Farchette is one  
9 of the contact points in St. Croix.

10  
11 Next year, probably by the December meeting, we will be able to  
12 give you more details, but we will have the meeting in St.  
13 Thomas or St. Croix and we will bring the fishers from one of  
14 the islands to another so they can participate.

15  
16 Usually we have about twenty-five fishermen sitting at the table  
17 and in the agenda it includes enforcement and so we invite the  
18 Coast Guard and National Marine Fisheries Service, science,  
19 management, fisher's concerns that they address at this meeting.

20  
21 One product of those meetings is Mr. Carlos Velasquez. He was  
22 able to learn the ropes of what the council system is and what  
23 National Marine Fisheries Service does and what is the  
24 importance of providing you the data. The idea of this MREP,  
25 and I guess they copied it from the Bible, but you have the  
26 twenty-five apostles and they are supposed to go out and spread  
27 the word around the world.

28  
29 Then Carlos is doing so in Naguabo on the east coast of Puerto  
30 Rico and explaining to the fishermen the importance of  
31 submitting your data on time and accurate and all that. That's  
32 all I have, Mr. Chairman.

33  
34 I also said already that we have officials in the U.S. Virgin  
35 Islands and Graciela always kicks me in the head when I forget  
36 something and what is it that I forgot?

37  
38 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** You were going to mention the meeting  
39 between the SSC and the DAPs and the budget.

40  
41 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Next year, the DAPs suggested to have a joint  
42 meeting with the SSC. They wanted to know what is the process  
43 that the SSC follows for identifying species and all that. As  
44 you know, we have a process that we started that was designed by  
45 Bill Arnold and staff and we have three phases.

46  
47 The first one will be Action 1, which is to identify those  
48 species that should be in the management unit for each one of

1 the areas and you will hear from the staff today. The second  
2 phase is once you have that list of species, you have to group  
3 them together according to the science that you have behind them  
4 and the parameters that we follow, the reference points.

5  
6 The third action, we will have a discussion of possible  
7 management actions and then you will follow that with Action 4  
8 and 6 and we will talk about ecosystem-based management and all  
9 that. At each step of the way, we will have the DAPs, which are  
10 the District Advisory Panels, present and participating and so  
11 everything that we discuss here, we submit it to the group so  
12 they can give us the benefit of the practicality of it.

13  
14 Those panels, some people asked me from the public, the district  
15 advisory panels are composed of twelve members from the fishing  
16 communities and we have recreational fishers and we have  
17 commercial fishers and dealers and restaurateurs and we also  
18 have two NGOs. At this time, we have the Pew Charitable Fund  
19 and we also have TNC present and voting at the table.

20  
21 In addition, we have ex-officio members from Puerto Rico and the  
22 U.S. Virgin Islands and their task is to provide to the council  
23 the advice, from the industry point of view and from the NGO  
24 point of view, of ways that we should be managing the fisheries  
25 and how we must adapt -- The best way to adapt the fishery  
26 management to the reality of St. Croix specifically and then St.  
27 Thomas/St. John and then, of course, Puerto Rico.

28  
29 The other part was the budget and just to let you know that we  
30 have money to run the show until December 31 of this year. As  
31 you know, we were cut deep and I refer to NOAA, National Marine  
32 Fisheries Service, and, of course, the councils. We made some  
33 accommodations, Mr. Chairman, of the money, as we told you at  
34 the council.

35  
36 The way we operate, we discuss the budget in detail with the  
37 Chair and we present the budget also at every meeting in the  
38 section that we talk about administrative matters. Thank you,  
39 Graciela, and that's all I have.

40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Miguel. Earlier, I forgot to  
42 mention that we are holding our 153<sup>rd</sup> Regular Council Meeting at  
43 the Mayaguez Holiday Inn in Puerto Rico and it's August 19,  
44 2015. Now we are going to move forward with the SSC National  
45 Workshop Report. Roy.

46  
47 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think everybody probably met Iris at the  
48 December meeting, but Shepherd, who is usually with us, is on a

1 detail for six months, I think, and so Iris is going to be our  
2 attorney working on all of our issues for the foreseeable  
3 future. I don't know whether Shep will be back or what will  
4 happen, but everybody say hello to Iris and get to know her.

5  
6 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Welcome, aboard. I understand that Shep is  
7 in natural resource damage assessment for a while and I wonder  
8 if the territories can use his expertise when we have damage to  
9 our reefs from groundings and oil spills and stuff.

10  
11 **ROY CRABTREE:** I am sure you can. He is quite an expert on  
12 damage.

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Roy. Okay. We're going to go  
15 with Dr. Appeldoorn and the SSC National Workshop Report.

#### 16 17 **SSC NATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT**

18  
19 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Thank you, everybody. This is a  
20 continuation from our meeting that was held in March that we  
21 were not able to present at the last council meeting. The  
22 National SSC Workshop was looking at five main topic areas.

23  
24 The first one is to look at the ABC specification for data-  
25 limited and model-resistant stocks. The second was the  
26 implementation of National Standard 2 in the face of uncertainty  
27 and the third is evaluating existing ABC control rules, issues,  
28 challenges, and solutions. The fourth was incorporating  
29 ecological, environmental, and climate variability in stock  
30 assessment and ecosystem-based fisheries management and the last  
31 one was building habitat condition in the stock assessment  
32 process and fishery management strategies.

33  
34 To briefly summarize, although I should point out that present  
35 at this meeting was myself, Todd Gedamke, John Hoenig, and Vance  
36 Vicente from the SSC and Graciela was representing the council  
37 staff and Jim Berkson. We were well represented and we had a  
38 mix of really good stock assessment people and kind of more  
39 habitat-based people.

40  
41 Some of the conclusions that came out of this, fairly briefly,  
42 is, with respect to data limitations, it was very clear that the  
43 Caribbean and the Western Pacific were very clearly at a  
44 disadvantage compared to the other regional fishery management  
45 councils and so a lot of what was being presented was -- I don't  
46 want to say out of our league, but we just don't have a database  
47 yet that is going to address a lot of the issues that they were  
48 talking about the meeting.

1  
2 This suggests that these two councils, ourselves and the Western  
3 Pacific, could work collaboratively toward new metrics for  
4 assessment, with the first step being the development of a white  
5 paper on the issue. This was something that was spearheaded by  
6 Todd Gedamke.

7  
8 We were told that there was going to be new guidance for the  
9 National Standard 2 that may allow for alternatives and there  
10 was a presentation at the last council meeting relative to this  
11 point, to the state of where it was at that time anyway, and so  
12 in terms of allowing alternatives, one of the things that we  
13 would like to explore is the use of mean length or catch per  
14 unit effort data to monitor stocks and adjust ACLs and so this  
15 would be very much a change of what we're allowed to do now,  
16 which is very much tied to some proxy for MSY.

17  
18 Extending that approach and not just using mean length or catch  
19 per unit effort, but multiple indicators of these two and  
20 perhaps others, may give us a more robust way to track the  
21 changes in stocks over time. This approach would require an  
22 annual evaluation, but if the data are available, these  
23 evaluations would in fact be fairly automated.

24  
25 These new metrics would not replace attempts to estimate MSY and  
26 set ACLs accordingly, but it would be an interim approach and so  
27 as we are improving the quality of our data that we are  
28 collecting, we can move to start getting really good estimates  
29 of MSY, but you need like a ten-year time series worth of data  
30 to do that and so we're still a fairly long way away from  
31 getting to the point in data collection and analysis that we  
32 would like to be at and we think this is an approach, if the new  
33 guidance allows that, that we can have a more rigorous  
34 monitoring of stocks and adjusting ACLs in the interim and so  
35 that's something to be explored.

36  
37 In review of the habitat information, including the water  
38 quality parameters such as temperature, show that these could be  
39 valuable co-variables that could be used to enhance stock  
40 assessment estimates and refine distribution models and we were  
41 given several presentations that exemplified this aspect of the  
42 use of habitat information. They were in fact very impressive  
43 presentations and very powerful ways in which habitat  
44 information can be used.

45  
46 The Caribbean is relatively rich in habitat data relative to the  
47 other regional fishery management councils, largely because we  
48 have had the NOAA Coral Program and the biogeo program doing

1 extensive mapping in our region, both in Puerto Rico and the  
2 Virgin Islands.

3  
4 We are fairly rich in the data, but it's balanced by the fact  
5 that much of our reef resources are very habitat dependent and  
6 so our need for that kind of data we felt was perhaps greater  
7 than the other councils.

8  
9 At the moment, however, at least within the U.S. Caribbean,  
10 habitat information is not being used in any assessments, either  
11 in fishery-independent or fishery-dependent data. We have a lot  
12 of information and we need to start churning that out into  
13 something that we can use to improve our assessments.

14  
15 One of the bottlenecks here is that while the remote sensing  
16 information, particularly of bathymetry and rugosity, et cetera,  
17 that you can generate from that is in its raw form and has not  
18 been used to actually generate habitat models other than in  
19 small test cases like in Abrir la Sierra and so we would  
20 probably be looking forward to having that data be in forms that  
21 are more readily available to the assessments that we're using  
22 and the SEAMAP data collection methods for particularly at least  
23 our fishery-dependent could be greatly enhanced if we could  
24 stratify our collections by habitat.

25  
26 In terms of climate change, the Caribbean may have species that  
27 are more restricted in their potential for responses to say we  
28 don't have a lot of play here in terms of how our organisms are  
29 going to react to increasing changes in climate.

30  
31 Our species are thought to be near their thermal limit,  
32 particularly in the summertime. There is no continuous habitat  
33 for species adapted to higher temperature to migrate into the  
34 region or for current species to move into cooler waters except  
35 by going deeper and so it has been shown in other areas where  
36 they are having shifts in species distributions -- You know  
37 we're not going to be able to really deal with that unless we're  
38 getting larval influx from places further south that before  
39 wouldn't survive but maybe now would.

40  
41 We think we're actually fairly vulnerable to issues of climate  
42 change and when we noted that climate change impacts are already  
43 evidenced in the region, as shown by the currents and severity  
44 of coral bleaching, which has been increasing over time, and,  
45 even further back, the loss of commercial sponges in the  
46 Caribbean was thought to be due to increasing temperatures and  
47 that was thirty years ago and so this is not something that has  
48 been really recent. We just haven't been taking notice of it

1 and I think that was it for the SSC. Are there any questions on  
2 that that maybe I can answer?

3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any questions for Dr. Appeldoorn? Velasquez.

5  
6 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Hi, Richard. I don't understand for the  
7 National Standards what difference the National Standards with  
8 the U.S. for the areas of SEAMAP and I don't understand that  
9 sentence.

10  
11 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** As I understand that, and this will come up  
12 when I talk about red hind, as I understand that, the current  
13 National Standard says that the ACLs are going to be based on  
14 some estimate of MSY and the only approach we have had is to use  
15 an average catch basis, which is what we're allowed to do. It's  
16 not really an MSY, but it's something that at least draws a line  
17 that we can work with and by that, it's at least valuable in  
18 that sentence.

19  
20 To go beyond that, we really need some kind of way to do one of  
21 two things. We either need better data so we can actually  
22 estimate what the MSYs are and then set more realistic ACLs,  
23 which may be above or below, and we really don't know, what we  
24 have now or we need some way that we can alter the ACLs based on  
25 the performance of the stocks without really knowing what the  
26 MSY is and so my understanding is we have not had that latter  
27 authority in the past, but the new guidance may allow us to do  
28 that.

29  
30 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Do you know the use for the recreational data  
31 for these reports or any report of data or just for your  
32 experience of the science committee or --

33  
34 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Do we use the landings data? Certainly we  
35 do, yes. Maybe the red hind is a good example and I will get to  
36 that, about what the limitations of that approach are. We  
37 certainly look at the data and we can try to make assessments of  
38 whether we think overfishing is occurring or not and should we  
39 have -- By overfishing, I mean not relative to the ACL, but  
40 relative to the biology of the species and that we see mean  
41 sizes going way down or do we see the catches dropping without  
42 some explained reason for that.

43  
44 If we saw that, we would make a recommendation to lower an ACL,  
45 but it's really difficult with the data we have to go much  
46 beyond that and so if catches are routinely below an ACL, we  
47 actually don't know whether we've set the ACL too low or we've  
48 set the ACL properly.

1  
2 If things go wrong, you can see that in the data, but when  
3 things go right, it's a little harder to see it in the data  
4 unless we're doing a formal SEDAR assessment, in which case  
5 there's a lot more data that comes into the picture.

6  
7 You know if you saw increases in the sizes of the animals and  
8 you saw catch per unit effort going up, for what indicators we  
9 might have for that, that might be something that we could work  
10 with, but that requires a formal assessment to look at that.

11  
12 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Thank you, Richard.

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any other person have questions? Bill.

15  
16 **BILL ARNOLD:** Hi, Richard. This is not to put you on the spot,  
17 but it's just something that disturbs me greatly about the  
18 climate change concept. You mentioned that in the mid-1980s we  
19 had the sponge die-off?

20  
21 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Yes.

22  
23 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay. In the mid-1980s, we actually had the  
24 strongest low stand of sea surface temperature we've had since  
25 my records date back in 1948. During that time, we've had a  
26 tenth of a degree increase in the mean sea surface temperature,  
27 but in the mid-1980s, we had an almost five-degree decrease over  
28 the course of four years or so in sea surface temperature, the  
29 anomaly. Might that better explain the sponge die-off?

30  
31 What concerns me about this is we're talking about climate  
32 change, which is a very long-term phenomenon, whereas we manage  
33 on much shorter time periods that are much more strongly  
34 affected by climate variability and so might it be reasonable to  
35 pay more attention to the variability and while not ignoring the  
36 change, it's probably less significant on the time scales of our  
37 management and I am just curious about your point of view on  
38 that and how this might be integrated into these SSC  
39 considerations.

40  
41 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** I am going to defer you to talk to Vance,  
42 who is the sponge expert and the one who has made that argument  
43 for decades. I will pass on that one.

44  
45 In terms of the second one, I agree with your statement  
46 entirely, but while we're seeing changes that are going to be  
47 long term, you're thinking about the long-term average, but  
48 there is going to be oscillations around that and so that

1 variability that you were talking about is in fact going to be  
2 the major problem on a short timeframe and that's why we don't  
3 see bleaching every year. We see it every couple of years when  
4 we're on an upswing in that variability cycle, but those are  
5 going to become more and more common, at least according to what  
6 the predictions are.

7  
8 Yes, we need to worry about the variability, but climate change  
9 is telling us that yes, on the one hand we are having a  
10 trajectory that's going to be warmer and more acidic and the  
11 acidification issue hasn't really been dealt with well yet, but  
12 we're also going to have more variable climate and so bigger  
13 storms and peaks in temperatures and things like that.

14  
15 Yes, we have to deal both with the long-term trend and the fact  
16 that we're going to get these wild swings, but when we get those  
17 upward ticks, particularly in temperature, that's when we're  
18 going to start seeing problems, not every year, but every couple  
19 of years when we have that, but they're going to become more  
20 frequent.

21  
22 As I am sure you're aware, the Southeast Center has initiated a  
23 protocol for assessing vulnerability to climate change and I  
24 don't know if, Bonnie, you're up on the current status of that,  
25 but my understanding is the report is supposed to come out  
26 really soon and we had a workshop on this a year or a year-and-  
27 a-half ago.

28  
29 From my point of view, it was very successful and I have talked  
30 with the conveners about that and they were moving forward on it  
31 and so I think we're in a position to tackle some of this, based  
32 on the information we know, but obviously we're going into areas  
33 unknown.

34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.

36  
37 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Richard, because I have been receiving  
38 quite a number of photographs of the sargassum that is all over  
39 the place and people are concerned about the changes that it  
40 might bring, both in changes of the chemistry of the water  
41 itself and what it might do to both the coral and the fish  
42 communities, do you have any comments on that, because that's  
43 something, for example, people have told me that they've been  
44 out in the water for thirty or forty years and they have never  
45 ever seen such a sargassum event.

46  
47 In fact, I have someone who told me that they've been in the  
48 water for almost sixty-five years and they have never seen such

1 an event in the dimensions that --

2  
3 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** I am not sure what I can say about that.  
4 It's very clear that this is like the third event in like the  
5 last five years or something like that, where before we didn't  
6 have this or didn't have it at all. This is a new phenomenon  
7 and something in the larger sense of the system has changed and  
8 yes, it could have perhaps profound impacts on our resources.

9  
10 What those might be, I don't know and I think your concern about  
11 the chemistry issue is important. You know sargassum plays an  
12 important role as a kind of nursery habitat for a lot of species  
13 and some of these are species that use that and use sargassum  
14 basically as a shelter as they come inshore and then settle out.  
15 That's fine when you have a little sargassum clump.

16  
17 When your whole nearshore area is covered, you get delivered to  
18 that area, but now the chemistry might be changed such that it's  
19 no longer a suitable habitat for settlement. This is all  
20 speculation and you know I don't really know what else we can  
21 say about that, but it is a large-scale phenomenon and we expect  
22 large-scale phenomena to potentially have consequent impacts.

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Tony Blanchard.

25  
26 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I just want to touch base on what Graciela said  
27 here. I think we try to control things that we can't control  
28 instead of letting the hand play out and I was speaking with  
29 Marcos earlier and he was saying because of the sargassum coming  
30 up on the shoreline and breaking down that the lane snappers  
31 were moving and staying outside of the waters that the sargassum  
32 was actually rotting in, just like the lionfish.

33  
34 Everybody blew up the lionfish that they were going to take over  
35 everything and I see it like the hurricane. Once the hurricane  
36 gets as strong as it could possibly get, the conditions dictate  
37 that it can only get weaker and so it's going to fluctuate. I  
38 think this thing about climate change is just like anything  
39 else. You've got to let the hand play out. We can only try to  
40 adapt to it, but we can't try to change it.

41  
42 The acidification of the waters, unless we plan to stop running  
43 cars and burning emissions, that ain't changing and so let's  
44 face facts. We can't change certain things. This problem is  
45 much bigger than the council or any council.

46  
47 This is worldwide problem and so what happens upstream is going  
48 to reach downstream eventually and so the thought process of

1 trying to figure out and manipulate certain things, it ain't  
2 going to happen, because water only runs downhill. The only way  
3 it's going to run uphill is if you pump it.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Edward Schuster.

6

7 **EDWARD SCHUSTER:** Dr. Appeldoorn, is the sargassum grass -- Does  
8 it have any benefits to us, like any larval recruitment or  
9 anything like that?

10

11 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** As I said, it serves as a nursery for a lot  
12 of species, dolphinfish in particular. We don't know whether  
13 that's going to increase or decrease the eventual recruitment of  
14 these species, because yes, it brings potentially more larvae  
15 into the nearshore areas, but I don't really know whether that's  
16 the nearshore environment that these larvae need to be in and so  
17 it could be moving stuff into our area, but it could be moving  
18 things away from the necessary areas and so I don't know the  
19 impacts.

20

21 Tony is right that we're not going to be able to control these  
22 things on a large scale. What we're trying to do is anticipate  
23 what the impacts are going to be on our fishery so we are not in  
24 a situation where we have something crashing or something  
25 responding in a very positive way that we don't recognize it and  
26 respond accordingly.

27

28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I have Blanchard and, Gary, did you  
29 raise your hand? Let me get Blanchard first.

30

31 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Let me just touch base on what Ed said here. I  
32 ain't a scientist and I ain't going to pretend to be, but I  
33 think that with this sargassum problem as we see it, which it  
34 probably ain't a problem, the face of the fisheries is going to  
35 change to a certain degree. There are going to be positives and  
36 there are going to be negatives, just like anything else.

37

38 The point I'm trying to bring here is we're going to have  
39 changes and it don't necessarily mean that they're going to be  
40 bad changes, but we've just got to adapt to them.

41

42 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Yes, I agree with that entirely.

43

44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Gary.

45

46 **GARY ROGERS:** Dr. Appeldoorn, I've been an aquarium trade  
47 fisherman for thirty years and I've come across the sargassum  
48 offshore and I have snorkeled underneath them and I have seen

1 the little rough triggers and filefish and sargassum frogfish  
2 and scrawled filefish, but I have never seen this weed come  
3 ashore and I have never caught any of these species on the reef,  
4 never, and so what is happening to the recruitment if it is  
5 coming in? Is it getting gobbled up by other groupers and  
6 predatory species? Do they just disappear?

7  
8 **TONY BLANCHARD:** They're offshore with the rest of the  
9 sargassum.

10  
11 **GARY ROGERS:** Exactly.

12  
13 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Thank you. I had one quick question.  
14 Dr. Apeldoorn, in the mapping, you know when Okeanos and Nancy  
15 Foster were doing all this work around here, do you and Graciela  
16 have access to that data or is that controlled by them?

17  
18 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Certainly when the Foster does its work, as  
19 soon as those products are available, they're up online and so  
20 they are available. Okeanos was working a little deeper than  
21 what we were concerned about from that perspective.

22  
23 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That information from the deep water,  
24 really deep water, of the EEZ is available. The highlights are  
25 available online, but any other data, we do have a copy and the  
26 university has a copy and anyone who participates in these  
27 missions has a copy of the photographs and the video.

28  
29 The problem is that they are huge, because these are hours and  
30 hours and hours. I should take this opportunity to also say  
31 that the NOAA Pisces will be here in October and so they will be  
32 doing missions around Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and as  
33 soon as we have the final plan, we will let you know.

34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's good, especially for the aggregating  
36 areas or something they were looking at and I think it was the  
37 Nancy Foster. I think it's important you all get access to  
38 that.

39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** They do a lot of exploratory fishing  
41 in the EEZ and so they will be covering, most likely, some of  
42 the SEAMAP area that needs to be mapped in high resolution and  
43 also sample for deeper water species, et cetera, and so we will  
44 advise you of the -- Well, we will tell you in December about  
45 the mission.

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Great.

48

1 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** I would add there is a couple of other  
2 really exciting things that are going to happen and I think they  
3 will be talked about tomorrow when the review of proposals that  
4 were funded under various NOAA programs, but one of them is  
5 going to be bringing down a wave glider hooked with a hydrophone  
6 and that's actually going to be searching for grouper spawning  
7 aggregations based on the sounds that they produce.

8  
9 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Thank you. Any more questions for Dr.  
10 Appeldoorn? Hearing none, thank you so much.

11  
12 **SSC DISCUSSION OF RED HIND**  
13

14 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Let me then go on to the red hind. There  
15 is just a couple of slides on that. The SSC was asked to review  
16 the situation about red hind in the St. Thomas/St. John area and  
17 the first thing we noticed was that red hind was just reviewed  
18 under the last SEDAR and the SSC was very adamant, and like  
19 almost hitting me over the head on this point, that we really  
20 don't have a way to assess the status relative to the ACL with  
21 the data we have available. In other words, we cannot use that  
22 data to determine what an MSY level would be.

23  
24 We don't have a way to determine acceptable reference points and  
25 that reference point, MSY, is supposed to be the basis for  
26 setting the OFLs, which then lead to the ACLs.

27  
28 The assessment that was done in the SEDAR was hampered by the  
29 quality of the data. We had limited length data since the  
30 initial closure at the Hind Bank and the nature of the data we  
31 did have changed, because data was no longer coming from the  
32 Hind Bank and it was coming from outside the Hind Bank and those  
33 are two different groups.

34  
35 On the Hind Bank, for the most part, it was coming from the  
36 spawning aggregation and now we're looking at it as basically a  
37 different set of the species and there was a very clear shift in  
38 the length structure that, because of the timing and the nature  
39 of it, looked to be due to changes in fishing and not changes to  
40 the stock itself.

41  
42 Additionally, the survey data from the spawning aggregation,  
43 essentially Rick Nemeth's data, were equally limited, especially  
44 in recent years, where sometimes he was only able to get out and  
45 do like one transect. So we didn't have really long series of  
46 data that was acceptable for trying to make that kind of  
47 assessment.

1 We noticed that, relative to what people, I think, were  
2 interested in, the period from 2000 to 2005 was the period that  
3 was used to set the OFL and ACL and that period incorporated the  
4 increase in the spawning fish density at the Hind Bank,  
5 according to the data by Rick Nemeth.

6  
7 The increase in red hind occurred essentially from 2000 to 2004  
8 with no net improvement since 2005 and so the buildup that  
9 occurred is basically captured in the ACL and so it's not --  
10 There is no data that is suggesting that, at least from his  
11 data, that in more recent years there has been a continued  
12 buildup and that the ACLs should be adjusted to that. What  
13 we're seeing is that the ACL did in fact respond to the initial  
14 buildups from the closure.

15  
16 The overall correlation between total grouper landings and  
17 density of aggregated red hinds, this is something that was  
18 brought up by David Olsen in his study, that actually breaks  
19 down in the most recent years. He presented a nice graph, but  
20 the points that were deviant from the graph were actually the  
21 more recent years and so it was breaking down. Again, we didn't  
22 really have a good way to track what was happening recently.

23  
24 We did note, however, that the landings data themselves don't  
25 warrant an increase in the ACL, since the current landings were  
26 substantially below the ACL and dropping. We think this was a  
27 response to the drop in demand because of the economic  
28 situation, but there didn't seem to -- The drop didn't seem to  
29 be from an overfishing situation and it seemed to be from a  
30 change in fishing situation.

31  
32 On the basis of the above, there was no rationale for thinking  
33 that a higher ACL could be developed or justified. At this  
34 time, there is still only limited time series of data for red  
35 hind, specifically. There is only like three years, I think, at  
36 this point and so that time series is too short to be able to  
37 use that to try to relook at this data and the ACL using the  
38 species-specific data.

39  
40 However, we did note that red hind constitute between 85 and 91  
41 percent of the grouper catch and so it is by far the dominant  
42 species.

43  
44 We note that really there needs to be alterations to the  
45 existing -- Any alterations to the existing ACLs will require an  
46 input of new data and so as we get that species-specific data  
47 over a longer timeframe, we might be in a position to do that,  
48 especially if we can get reliable effort data with that, and the

1 one recommendation was did make was that there be an assessment  
2 of the performance of the new reporting forms to ensure that  
3 they are providing the necessary information for a future stock  
4 assessment.

5

6 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel and then Marcos and then Blanchard.

7

8 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Richard, to clarify, the forms you're referring  
9 to are the ones that are used by the U.S. Virgin Islands  
10 government to collect the information?

11

12 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Yes.

13

14 **MIGUEL ROLON:** So if the council accepts this recommendation,  
15 we, the staff, have to work and probably representatives from  
16 the SSC have to work with the local government to improve that.  
17 Of course, we need to include the fishers.

18

19 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** The first thing is to see if we're getting  
20 the data we need. If we are, we don't need to do anything and  
21 we're doing a good job.

22

23 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Who could do that and how long would it take?

24

25 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Maybe, Bonnie, you could address that a bit  
26 better?

27

28 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is a  
29 really good recommendation and this was a big change. We spent  
30 a lot of time talking about the changes to the form and I think  
31 circling back and looking at the form and having discussions  
32 about is it meeting those needs is a smart and prudent thing to  
33 do at this stage.

34

35 My suggestion for consideration would be that we have staff from  
36 the territorial governments and the federal scientists that are  
37 using these data and maybe council staff working to look at the  
38 forms themselves and look at the data that we're getting and see  
39 if it's meeting the expectations as a first cut and then coming  
40 back to the council with those results as a means to evaluating  
41 it.

42

43 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** A follow-up?

44

45 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Also, I believe that once we do that and we  
46 discussing ways to modify the form, we should include the fisher  
47 representatives into the discussion, because the fishers were  
48 the ones who met with Dr. Roy Crabtree several years ago at one

1 of these meetings to come up with some real practical way to  
2 collect that information.

3  
4 **BONNIE PONWITH:** That's correct and I think right now the first  
5 step is are the data meeting the science needs? Until that  
6 question is asked and answered, then there would be no  
7 suggestion to change the form. It's only until that initial  
8 analysis is done and we get those results.

9  
10 Once we see those results, if a change is recommended, that's  
11 the ideal time to circle back and talk to the fishing community,  
12 as was done the last time around, but we're not sure that's  
13 where it's going yet.

14  
15 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** This also might play into any changes in  
16 the species under management for the different islands.

17  
18 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Marcos, Blanchard, Graciela, and Gary.

19  
20 **MARCOS HANKE:** Richard, on the number one, when you are  
21 referring to the buildup of the red hind, that species  
22 specifically, you are referring to the data on the aggregation?

23  
24 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Yes.

25  
26 **MARCOS HANKE:** Another question, following up, is those  
27 aggregations have a limited capacity to it that at some point  
28 they cannot add to it anymore and they will be aggregating at  
29 the same time in other places?

30  
31 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Yes, that's possible. In fact, we would  
32 expect that. This goes back to the fact that the more recent  
33 data that Rick has is just a couple of sites.

34  
35 You know when he was first doing the surveys, he was covering a  
36 fairly broad area of the Hind Bank and if there was an increase  
37 at the outer fringes of that, he might have been picking that  
38 up, but in the more recent years, he is right at the core that  
39 he keeps always going back to and he is only getting a couple of  
40 samples there and so he's not picking up any changes that would  
41 be occurring even at the fringes of that, no less whether any  
42 kind of new sites might be developing. That's what I'm talking  
43 about it's very limited data that you're trying to deal with  
44 there.

45  
46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Blanchard and then Graciela and then  
47 Gary and then Julian.

48

1 **TONY BLANCHARD:** You see this as a problem and I mentioned it a  
2 lot at the last meeting. We want to look for new information  
3 and then we have to look at how that information is working.  
4 Before we actually move on anything, we are probably looking at  
5 five or ten years down the road and all the time, we are still  
6 sitting on a stock that we should have been monitoring because  
7 we closed the area to begin with.

8  
9 We are monitoring a very small area on that closure and I told  
10 Rick so and Rick agreed with me. You have got a fourteen-mile  
11 stretch and you are only monitoring to the very head of the bank  
12 and then you're not consistent in the monitoring, which that was  
13 our job to make sure we go inside and find out what these closed  
14 areas were doing, which we ain't doing consistently either.

15  
16 Now, because of our failure, the Virgin Islands has got to take  
17 the penalty again and when I say the Virgin Islands, the people  
18 of the Virgin Islands, because if you ask me, he ain't doing a  
19 good job of monitoring and that's probably part of funding,  
20 because I could manipulate the size of the hind just by going  
21 high on the bank or low on the bank.

22  
23 The point I'm trying to bring here is we always come in and we  
24 need more data because we can't move in a certain direction. We  
25 need to raise the ACL because of not standing up to our  
26 commitment of going inside there and monitoring these places how  
27 we're supposed to be and we could use the excuse of money.  
28 Money is always an issue, but what about our money?

29  
30 Because our market is dictated by what the consumers on the  
31 island buy, if you even give us 100,000 pounds more hind, we  
32 gain. Once the market is flooded, it is flooded and it monitors  
33 itself and so it ain't like you ain't giving us something we  
34 can't use and when the market is flooded, it's flooded. If you  
35 are concerned with buying ten pounds of fish a week, you ain't  
36 going to buy twenty, because you can't consume that. It's based  
37 on consumption, of what the people use on the island.

38  
39 To come back to me and tell me now, with all this effort that we  
40 put into this here, that we can't do nothing with it but sit on  
41 it for another five or ten years before we could even move in a  
42 direction, if we decide to move, because we ain't doing our job  
43 on a consistent basis, and I am talking about the council, of  
44 monitoring these areas that we close and I have a problem with  
45 that and that's my statement.

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.

48

1 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Regarding the question that Miguel  
2 asked earlier about how long it would take and how much, we have  
3 been talking about this for a while. There are five years'  
4 worth of new data coming into St. Thomas/St. John, St. Croix,  
5 and Puerto Rico and so the three islands that need to be  
6 assessed in terms of the data that are coming in.

7  
8 Probably it will take between six months to a year per island,  
9 most likely, because of the number of records that are on the  
10 database right now. It would probably cost about \$40,000 per  
11 island if you are going to contract it out, but that would take  
12 care of all the information that we need, from QA/QC all the way  
13 to here is the final database that you can use and what needs to  
14 be improved.

15  
16 For example, and this is what Richard was saying about it will  
17 impact the island-based fishery management plans, because you do  
18 provide information on the areas that you fish, that the  
19 commercial fishers use for fishing, and what you are harvesting  
20 there, but that information cannot be easily extracted at this  
21 time.

22  
23 There is information there also on the species-specific data  
24 that has been provided by the fishers by gear and there is also  
25 one line that talks about the discards, but we have looked at a  
26 sample from the databases and the discards are recorded as fish  
27 that are alive and so that doesn't add any information to the  
28 species that are being discarded alive and the reason why they  
29 are discarded alive.

30  
31 To answer the very specific question, it would take probably  
32 around six months to a year per island or if you are going to do  
33 it altogether, then you need three people that are really only  
34 doing this job for about six to eight months and it will  
35 probably run around \$40,000 to \$50,000 to do this if you are  
36 contracting this out.

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Gary and then Julian.

39  
40 **GARY ROGERS:** Dr. Appeldoorn, back in the mid to late 1980s, I  
41 did red hind juvenile recruitment data for Dr. Doug Shapiro when  
42 he was running things down in La Parguera and even though thirty  
43 years have passed, I am still diving in the same spots and I am  
44 still seeing juvenile red hinds and in this computer era and the  
45 age of the internet, it wouldn't be a problem to set up some  
46 kind of data monitoring system to work with you guys down there  
47 if you are interested in doing that. He was mainly interested  
48 in location and what depth they were and what size and it would

1 be really easy to just make a grid.  
2  
3 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** We could talk about that. Sure.  
4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you. Julian.  
6  
7 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** Julian Magras, for the record. Just to  
8 piggyback here on my colleague, Mr. Blanchard, you know it's  
9 amazing and exactly what Marcos Hanke brought up. Looking at  
10 number one here on this slide, after 2004, we are not seeing any  
11 more increase.  
12  
13 There is a big reason for us not seeing any more increase in  
14 that area and it's because there is only so much food that area  
15 can provide for those species at that time and for me -- I am  
16 one of the fishermen that fish outside of this area and I have  
17 seen such an increase in the population of the red hind and the  
18 sizes of the red hind -- This is just to one side of the bank  
19 and there are several sides of the bank and we just look at  
20 what's happening inside and we're not looking at what is  
21 happening outside.  
22  
23 Before this went into emergency closure, you wouldn't have seen  
24 the quantity and the numbers that you would see by the fishermen  
25 today and I have a serious problem here, where we always go back  
26 to the data, data, data. The fishermen are tired of providing  
27 data and I am tired of it. I have been a commercial fishermen  
28 fully from 1989 and that's all we do and then we're still back  
29 to where we need to put closures in place.  
30  
31 We have all the seasonal closures in place for eleven years and  
32 nothing has been done with them, nothing. The Hind Bank has  
33 been closed for twenty years and here it is and we overran the  
34 ACL for the red hind in the first period and we had to take a  
35 decrease in catch and not taking into consideration that these  
36 closures have been in place for so long and maybe the quantity  
37 that we are seeing are the reason why the fishermen overran it.  
38  
39 We are market driven, just like Tony said. We are market  
40 driven. We can't sell more than the market can consume, because  
41 we don't export anything out of the islands, and so we really,  
42 really need to sit back and stop spending money and throwing  
43 money down the drain that we need to collect this and we need to  
44 spend another \$40,000 or \$50,000. Give that \$40,000 or \$50,000  
45 to the fishermen who are being affected and that's what we need  
46 to do, start to give the fishermen the money and we will give  
47 you more information.  
48

1 We had a program in place for collecting the data when we come  
2 in to do size measurements and quantity and everything and that  
3 went away for the last three years and now we just gave a big  
4 grant for that information and guess what? There goes money to  
5 someone else being paid to do an assessment of the fishermen and  
6 it could have been provided for free.

7  
8 You have staff that collect that and make them do their jobs to  
9 collect the data that's required for the fishermen to provide.  
10 We have always been willing to be part of the process, but we  
11 are the ones at the end of the stick that gets nothing and so I  
12 urge this council -- You know we've been quiet for a very, very  
13 long time and I am urging you guys to change some of the ways  
14 that we look at things.

15  
16 We know people out there need to make money and we need to make  
17 money too and we are the ones that always are the ones losing.  
18 We are here and sitting down in the room and guess what? Every  
19 meeting we attend, we don't make no money.

20  
21 You guys are being paid for every meeting that you attend and so  
22 we need to sit back and look at the real information that's  
23 needed and where we're going to get it from and who we're going  
24 to involve in getting it from, because there is a lot of  
25 information out there that's not being captured and it's right  
26 there in front of us, but because we are not scientists by paper  
27 and we are scientists by what we do, the trade. The information  
28 is there and it needs to start to be used. Thank you.

29  
30 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Thank you.

31  
32 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Blanchard and then Bill Arnold.

33  
34 **TONY BLANCHARD:** This is the main problem that I have. We are  
35 so quick to close down and restrict the fishermen and the other  
36 user groups and put restrictions on them and then when it comes  
37 down to our side of the bargain, we can't stand up to it or we  
38 have a failure to uphold our word to it. That's the real  
39 problem we have.

40  
41 When the Hind Bank first started, it was a very small area and  
42 the area was originally given up to the larger area because of  
43 the Monument and St. John. We didn't want a monument on St.  
44 John to begin with and just let me give you a little history.

45  
46 That was a tradeoff. I was one of them that voted in favor of  
47 it and not because I wanted an area closed off to that size it  
48 is right now, but because we didn't want St. John affected and

1 it turned around that the Governor signed off on it in his let's  
2 say under-the-table work and guess what? We got a monument in  
3 St. John too.

4  
5 The thing is the government leaves a very bad taste in local  
6 peoples' mouths because you want to take from us, but when it  
7 comes time for you to hold your word, you can't hold your word.  
8 It's like the United States and the treaty and how many treaties  
9 have been signed and how many treaties have been broken? I am  
10 going to leave us on that statement.

11  
12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

13  
14 **BILL ARNOLD:** Tony, you mentioned an increase in the ACL and  
15 you're not reaching the ACL for St. Thomas groupers now and  
16 would you expect that if you had a higher ACL that there would  
17 be a response in increased catch? I ask this for a specific  
18 reason and that is, from our point of view, we do seem to have a  
19 bit of luxury of time, in that there is no pressing need to  
20 raise or even reevaluate the ACL, since landings are coming in  
21 under the ACL.

22  
23 As part of the new fishery management plan development process,  
24 we will request to the council at this meeting that they convene  
25 their SSC this fall and initiate the process of reevaluating the  
26 annual catch limits, or at least the process for setting  
27 reference points.

28  
29 I would hope that that process takes somewhere around a year or  
30 so, and not to make any crazy predictions, but coming out of  
31 that would be new reference points, including, ideally, new ACLs  
32 and do you have time to wait or do you consider this to be a  
33 problem that cannot wait that long?

34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

36  
37 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay, Bill. Let me explain it to you in my  
38 terms. This is how I see it and you see it probably completely  
39 different. With the evaluations of the ACLs, whether they be  
40 raised or dropped, with the economy being how it is and the  
41 fishermen and them cutting back, I think it's going to actually  
42 be more of a hamper, because you're taking from us, because we  
43 have to cut back, or the mere fact of the economy and we can't  
44 sell it.

45  
46 The point for the hind is I'm not saying that we're going to  
47 even catch more hind than we're catching now, for the mere fact  
48 of, like I say, if we can't sell it, what are we going to do

1 with it?

2  
3 The bottom line is you can't keep taking from the people and not  
4 giving them something back when they deserve it, because,  
5 according to you, what I have seen, they deserve to get back  
6 something and that's the point I am trying to make.

7  
8 Just because you give me \$200 today, it don't mean I am going  
9 outside and blow it. It just means that you gave me \$200 today.  
10 If I am going to use \$50 for the day, that's what I am going to  
11 use, but you can't keep taking back and restricting and not  
12 giving them what they deserve either and we are looking at the  
13 ACLs again and, because of the economy being how it is, I think  
14 it's going to actually be a damper to us, because now we  
15 restrict ourselves from going out because we can't sell it and  
16 now we're held to these new numbers.

17  
18 It's another shot in the foot and so we need to look at how we  
19 do things and that's what I am trying to bring to the table  
20 here. It looks good on paper, but that don't mean it works.

21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

23  
24 **BILL ARNOLD:** Tony, this may not reassure you, but, as you know,  
25 the determination of reference points is not necessarily  
26 dependent -- It could be, but it's not necessarily dependent  
27 upon the most recent data.

28  
29 If we viewed the data and saw that over the last four or five  
30 years landings are down because of economic conditions, then the  
31 SSC and the scientists may determine, and Bonnie may want to  
32 comment, but they may determine that's not a good period upon  
33 which to base your reference points.

34  
35 I wouldn't put too much into the recent downturn and that  
36 automatically translating into decreases in the ACL, because  
37 it's a little more in-depth process than that, as you know.

38  
39 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Velasquez and then Hanke.

40  
41 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Tony, one question for you. The people in  
42 St. Thomas, they like the bigger red hinds or the smaller? In  
43 your experience, is the community population of red hinds, is it  
44 too much or medium size for the island or --

45  
46 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Let me see if I understand your question.  
47 You're asking me what size is the preferable size?  
48

1 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Yes.  
2  
3 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Some guys are selling them to the restaurants  
4 and they like a bigger fish, because they fillet them, but the  
5 general public, they want a fish maybe a pound or under a pound  
6 or maybe a little over a pound. That's a general rule of thumb,  
7 because you go to the restaurant and they ain't going to serve  
8 you a big fish, because it's going to cost you too much money to  
9 buy that plate of fish.  
10  
11 The consumer, he is going to stay with the smaller fish, because  
12 that way, you're going to get more for your money. If you've  
13 got a family of five, where he will get two fish to feed the  
14 five or five fish to feed the five and so it comes down to money  
15 and the trend and the market and so really it's a tossup. It  
16 depends on who you're dealing with.  
17  
18 I've got a customer that I fillet them for and I want the bigger  
19 hind. The other guy that deals with the market and deals with  
20 the individual, he wants a smaller hind, because that's just how  
21 it moves.  
22  
23 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Hanke.  
24  
25 **MARCOS HANKE:** I want to make a comment to Bill and to Tony and  
26 everybody here. Bill just mentioned that the hind didn't reach  
27 the ACL, but we have to be very mindful of this. This is a  
28 multispecies fishery and the fishermen are not fishing for red  
29 hind only all the time and they can shift the effort to  
30 different species knowing that there is an ACL cap and probably  
31 because of the ACLs, they are not fishing to the full potential  
32 that they fished in the past, before the ACLs, because they are  
33 afraid of passing and having all the troubles that that creates.  
34  
35 Once we discuss this, I think we should discuss more of the  
36 science of it and what is available and instead of the ACL based  
37 on that, not based if the industry responds or not to certain  
38 fishing levels because of what I just explained to you. It  
39 would have to be based on science and not on the market or the  
40 fishing level that much. I don't know if I'm clear on what I am  
41 saying.  
42  
43 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Julian.  
44  
45 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** Julian Magras, for the record. Just to  
46 piggyback on what Marcos has said, it's very true, but at the  
47 same time, the fishermen are keeping right there to that level  
48 and trying amongst themselves, because we don't see the numbers

1 every three months or every six months or every nine months and  
2 so the fishermen themselves, who are the real fishermen of the  
3 Virgin Islands, St. Thomas and St. John, we try to communicate  
4 and keep track of the numbers so we can keep away from having a  
5 ten or fifteen or twenty-day closure.

6  
7 Now, if the ACL was increased, will we target the species a  
8 little bit more? Yes, we would or maybe not. It all depends,  
9 but if we don't have that opportunity out there to say that, all  
10 right, they are there and we find them this year and the weather  
11 is good and we can target them a little bit harder, yes, it's  
12 all dependent on that number and it's all dependent on the  
13 weather and the economy and everything, but if you don't have  
14 that opportunity there, then you can't do anything and so we  
15 overrun and we're shut down and that's the problem the fishermen  
16 are having.

17  
18 We have been closed for so long and give us the opportunity.  
19 The science is there and I really don't know what Rick has been  
20 doing with the information he's been collecting, but we watch  
21 them and how many dives they do on the bank, because we are  
22 outside of the bank and we are watching them diving all the time  
23 and when he says he's only in the bank one or two times for the  
24 season, it's a lie, because -- At least it's a lie to us,  
25 because there is actually a commercial fisherman that takes him  
26 out to the bank and so we know that commercial fisherman that's  
27 been working with him for the last ten years plus diving the  
28 bank.

29  
30 It's a great concern to the fishermen when you see them inside  
31 the aggregation and it's not to say that weather stops them.  
32 They are out there because they have a thirty-foot boat they are  
33 going out in and so the weather doesn't stop them from diving  
34 the bank. They are out there and so we really need to weigh in  
35 on the information that is there and we need to use it and also  
36 look at the sizes of the fish that the fishermen are catching.

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

39  
40 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I think the part that we're overlooking here  
41 too is the size of the boats that we fish in. Whether they are  
42 fishing in the Virgin Islands or I'm pretty sure Puerto Rico,  
43 for the most part, weather dictates a lot of that, because of  
44 the size of the boats that we fish and the type of gear that we  
45 use. We are limited and so that in itself is a limitation to  
46 us.

47  
48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Dr. Appeldoorn, do you have more

1 slides?

2

3 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** No, that was it.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I've got a little comment. I think  
6 that -- You know I've heard that they're below the ACL, but my  
7 concern is that if a fisherman finds the opportunity to export  
8 that might become a problem. We are not prohibited from  
9 exporting, but it's just that that's not the culture of the  
10 Virgin Islands, but if that opportunity arises and a fisherman  
11 sees the opportunity to do that, I think that ACL may be reached  
12 or even passed. I don't want to spread the word that they  
13 should, but it's just a concern of mine.

14

15 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** I think some of the comments here have been  
16 right on target, especially Tony and Julian, about the rigor in  
17 which data perhaps should have been collected to assess the  
18 larger impact of the closure.

19

20 The fact is it's not being collected in that way and the data  
21 that Rick has been able to get is because he has written grants  
22 to be able to do something that an agency, usually National  
23 Marine Fisheries, has deemed worthy of doing, but that's not the  
24 council saying, hey, we did this action and what kind of data do  
25 we need over what kind of period to assess the impacts of this  
26 and sustain that over that period. That's not what's happening  
27 and I think that's one of the major complaints that Tony and  
28 Julian were voicing.

29

30 We need to kind of change the way we're doing that and there are  
31 programs, like the cooperative fishing program, that are  
32 designed to allow that to happen, but we need to get everybody  
33 together and make that a priority and design how we're going to  
34 do it and then fund it long enough to make it work.

35

36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** In Dr. Nemeth's defense, that's not the only  
37 job he has. He has got a multitude of things he is working on  
38 and so it's not just that he can concentrate and do monitoring  
39 constantly in that one site. Okay. Thank you so much, Richard.  
40 We are going to take a quick break and we'll do ten minutes.

41

42 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

43

44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Let's get back to the table, please. Thank  
45 you. Let me try this one more time. We are going to get  
46 started again. Next on the agenda is Island-Based Fishery  
47 Management: Choosing Species to be Included for Federal  
48 Management Within Each Island Group. First, we are going to

1 discuss the Outcomes from the Panel of Experts and the DAP  
2 Meetings. Who is taking the lead on this? Graciela, are you  
3 taking the lead on this? Okay.

4  
5 **ISLAND-BASED FISHERY MANAGEMENT: CHOOSING SPECIES TO BE INCLUDED**  
6 **FOR FEDERAL MANAGEMENT WITHIN EACH ISLAND GROUP**

7  
8 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** We are going to present to you the  
9 charge that the council made at the 152<sup>nd</sup> meeting, but, in  
10 addition to that, the DAPs had already looked at the list of  
11 species suggested or recommended for federal management and so  
12 we have the DAP Chairs with their reports and that you have in  
13 your briefing book.

14  
15 In your briefing book, you also have the three draft FMPs with  
16 the panel recommendation list included in that document. The  
17 council has to make some decisions today regarding some  
18 discrepancies between the panel and the DAPs and information  
19 that we don't have and we need to know if the council still  
20 wants to include those species, et cetera, and so we will go  
21 through all of that.

22  
23 This has been a process that has started a while ago and the  
24 Regional Office, Miguel Lugo specifically, has taken the lead in  
25 keeping track of everything that needs to be included in the  
26 actions and Bill and Maria and the people that you have on the  
27 Go to Meeting and so this is the summary and we need to consult  
28 with the council and we need the motions from the council for  
29 the group to go ahead and move the document forward if that's  
30 what the council wants to do.

31  
32 The charge was to develop the list of species to be included for  
33 federal management for each island separately. The story is  
34 that each island will have its own FMP, one for Puerto Rico, one  
35 for St. Croix, and one for St. Thomas/St. John.

36  
37 The SSC had recommended to the council a set of criteria that  
38 they should be looking at in order to include or exclude species  
39 from this list and so based on the last council meeting, you  
40 requested that a panel of experts composed by the Science  
41 Center, the Regional Office, council staff, and the three DAP  
42 Chairs be put together and meet to discuss the list of species  
43 to be included for federal management.

44  
45 The panel did meet on June 16 to 18 in San Juan and then the  
46 DAPs reviewed the list that the panel had prepared and made its  
47 recommendation also and so we were only looking at Action 1 and  
48 that has to do with selecting the species and there were three

1 approaches that are included, three alternatives that are  
2 included, in this action.

3

4 One of them was to bring everything from the old FMPs into the  
5 new FMPs and basically the council had already stated that  
6 that's one of the things that they wanted to do. The second  
7 approach was to use a combination of the criterion that had been  
8 developed, but the third approach, which is the one that the  
9 council had blessed from the SSC and the one to be used in the  
10 exercise by the panel was Approach Number 3.

11

12 It's a stepwise and instead of choosing any two of the  
13 criterion, you do a stepwise and then you end up with one list,  
14 whether they are excluded because they are in the state waters  
15 and they won't be in the list or they are included because they  
16 are mostly in the EEZ and they will be included. Don't despair  
17 with that one. That's just a criterion and we will go one-by-  
18 one.

19

20 Everyone is familiar with the fishery management units that we  
21 have in place. It includes -- This is just an example of the  
22 eighty-something species that we have on the list and so these  
23 are the snappers and these are the units that you have in place  
24 right now and for the ones that you also have ACLs in place.

25

26 Although they are by species in the Virgin Islands, for example,  
27 the ACLs are established for all the snappers together. In  
28 Puerto Rico, they have ACLs for Snapper Unit 1, 2, and 3 and so  
29 there is more information at the species-specific level.

30

31 As I am going to move along, and Bill and Miguel are also here,  
32 we can talk about the specifics, but one thing that I am going  
33 to keep mentioning is the limiting factors that we have when we  
34 get to any one of these criterion and steps and one of them  
35 being, as I just mentioned, that you don't have species-specific  
36 data, except for the very recent years, in the Virgin Islands.  
37 In Puerto Rico, when you do have it, you have it for some  
38 species, but not for all of the ones that you have in the FMU.

39

40 Therefore, for example, the species in the angelfish unit are --  
41 The ACL is based on all the angelfish, because there is not  
42 enough information by species for each of those. I am just  
43 going to move a little example through here of what the panel  
44 went through when they looked at the criterion and they looked  
45 at the information that was available.

46

47 To use the stepwise approach, we go first to Criterion A and  
48 Criterion A has to do with those species that are already

1 regulated, that are banned from harvest or that are under  
2 seasonal closures or have size limits.

3

4 For the snappers only, and this is the example that we are going  
5 to carry through, everything that you have in yellow here are  
6 species that are already regulated. They are managed, because  
7 they are in your fishery management unit. As a group, they have  
8 ACLs, but for species-specific information, these are the ones  
9 that have management measures in place and that specifically is  
10 for this group at the top, for the black snapper through the  
11 vermilion, it's the seasonal closure of October, November, and  
12 December in the federal waters.

13

14 For the lane and the mutton snapper, they have a seasonal  
15 closure in place also in the EEZ, as well as the mutton has a  
16 specific area closure in St. Croix. The yellowtail snapper has  
17 a size limit and so, given Criterion A, these species would  
18 automatically be included in the list.

19

20 I am just going to present the next few slides. I have all the  
21 species that are regulated. Bill, if you want to jump in, go  
22 ahead. We are going to present most of the information for  
23 Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas in that order, because  
24 that's the way that the panel proceeded and so we just kept  
25 everything the same way.

26

27 You already have a number of species that are banned in the  
28 three EEZs, because not all the regulations apply the same to  
29 the three EEZs. That is the goliath, Nassau, midnight, rainbow,  
30 and blue parrotfish. The queen conch, which is not -- It  
31 doesn't have a closure or a ban on fishing for queen conch in  
32 the EEZ in St. Croix. It has a seasonal closure, but it doesn't  
33 have a complete closure. Then ninety-four species of coral that  
34 have a complete ban on any take of soft, black, or hard corals.

35

36 For seasonal closures then, you have a seasonal closure that  
37 applies only to the EEZ in Puerto Rico. You don't have a  
38 seasonal closure that applies for St. Croix and St. Thomas.  
39 Then all the other ones are the same and so yellowfin grouper,  
40 black, red, yellowedge, tiger, silk, black snapper, blackfin  
41 vermilion, mutton, and lane snappers. They all have seasonal  
42 closures.

43

44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Don't we have a seasonal closure for red hind  
45 in Lang Bank, St. Croix?

46

47 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That's an area closure and you will  
48 see it in the next slide. We went through the exercise of going

1 through all the regulations that are in place and how they  
2 applied to the species and so that's why they are divided and we  
3 divided them to keep track of what we were doing.

4  
5 Area closures, there it is. The species that have size limits,  
6 and this is -- Already the council had been thinking in terms of  
7 managing each island separately, because when we discussed the  
8 parrotfish, the parrotfish actually did get a minimum size  
9 established in the St. Croix EEZ, but it didn't get a minimum  
10 size established in any of the other two islands.

11  
12 Here they are, all the parrotfish. The spiny lobster, since the  
13 1980s, has had the same size limit for all jurisdictions and the  
14 area closures are specifically as they were implemented for red  
15 hind, yellowfin grouper, and mutton snapper.

16  
17 That doesn't mean that there aren't other species that also get  
18 protected when these area closures go into place, but the  
19 specific target of those management measures were these species.

20  
21 Please look at the screen and don't despair, because we do have  
22 the Excel file here, but these are all the species that would  
23 automatically make it into the list of species to be managed.  
24 The checkmark means that there is specific regulation to those  
25 species. Two things that the council has to discuss today and  
26 let the staff know what they want to do. One is the redfin  
27 parrotfish for Puerto Rico and so the panel decision is on the  
28 top for Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas and the DAP  
29 decision, the recommendation to the council, is also included on  
30 this slide.

31  
32 The discrepancies would be, and you will see how the other  
33 parrotfish were included when we get to the criterion on  
34 vulnerability, but they are included here because they do have  
35 at least a regulation in one of the islands and the council  
36 needs to decide if they would be included just because they  
37 already are regulated in one of the islands in all the other  
38 FMPs or not.

39  
40 The other thing is that the redfin parrotfish, the panel had  
41 recommended that it not be included in the Puerto Rico FMP,  
42 because it's a species that is mostly in the state waters.  
43 Although it's vulnerable, as the parrotfish are, it's really not  
44 in the jurisdiction of the council and the other issue that we  
45 had was that for the yellowedge grouper, the panel from St.  
46 Croix recommended that instead of being already included in  
47 federal management that it would put it on a watch list rather  
48 than -- I mean we call it ecosystem component, but you will see

1 in a little while why ecosystem component is not really quite  
2 what we're talking about. Actually, I had brought it in.

3  
4 To be an ecosystem component species, you need to be a non-  
5 target species and you need to be determined not to be subject  
6 to overfishing or anywhere near it and not likely to become the  
7 subject of overfishing, based on the best available information,  
8 and not generally be retained for sale or personal use.

9  
10 In the case of some of the species that you will see listed,  
11 they are retained for either personal use or for sale, even if  
12 it's in very low quantities, and so that's one of the  
13 considerations that you need to keep in mind, but there is a --  
14 The description of what an EC species is, ecosystem component  
15 species is, it's what you have on the screen and so keep that in  
16 mind when we move along.

17  
18 I will go to the Excel file in a second, but this is a summary  
19 table and it tells you how many species you already have  
20 regulated in the EEZ of Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas.

21  
22 The queen conch fishery management unit is one species and it's  
23 *Strombus gigas*. That's the only one that is in our FMU and the  
24 same thing for spiny lobster. It's one species, the Caribbean  
25 spiny lobster, *Panulirus argus*.

26  
27 For the reef fish, out of eighty-one species that you have in  
28 your FMU, eighteen for Puerto Rico already would fall into the  
29 species recommended for federal management, because they have  
30 regulations in place. They have a ban on their take, et cetera.

31  
32 Twenty-four of the eighty-one would make it into the St. Croix  
33 species list for federal management and seventeen out of eighty-  
34 one in St. Thomas and all the corals that have a no take already  
35 in place.

36  
37 The three questions that we have regarding the list of species,  
38 and these are all the ones that have regulations, number one,  
39 does the council want all regulated species that are on this  
40 list included in those species that will be federally managed or  
41 not?

42  
43 We need to know if the panel recommendation of excluding the  
44 redfin parrotfish -- Do you still want to keep that as a  
45 recommendation or do you want to include it for federal  
46 management and the DAP St. Croix recommendation for the  
47 yellowedge grouper.

48

1 The panel had the expertise not only of the DAP Chairs there,  
2 but they would also call people on the phone to find out, if  
3 they didn't know anything specifically, what we needed to know  
4 to determine whether they should be included or not.

5  
6 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that in order to --  
7 Graciela, the checkmark above sixteen, from sixteen to one, does  
8 that mean that the three groups, the panels, everybody is in  
9 agreement that those species will be in the management unit?

10  
11 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes.

12  
13 **MIGUEL ROLON:** What I suggest is that --

14  
15 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** In fact, everything that you see on  
16 the screen, all the -- The panel and three DAPs decided that  
17 they should be all included for federal management.

18  
19 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Wait, wait, wait. It doesn't read that way from  
20 here. Graciela and I, we did a lot of discussion about this,  
21 but let me put it this way. Everything that is in yellow is  
22 agreeable, because -- To expedite this, I believe that everybody  
23 agreed that from sixteen to one, everybody agrees that those  
24 should be in the management unit. Let's have a motion on that  
25 one and get rid of it and we can keep discussing the rest of the  
26 species.

27  
28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I agree. Bill.

29  
30 **BILL ARNOLD:** Just a couple of things. It's not just one to  
31 sixteen. You might want to make your motion so that all species  
32 for which the panel and the DAP are in full agreement will be  
33 included in the management plan for each island. Then you've  
34 got those two. You've got that ecosystem component species and  
35 you have to remember that ecosystem component species are not  
36 managed species.

37  
38 The panel recommended that that species be managed and the St.  
39 Croix, I think it was, or St. Thomas, whoever it was,  
40 recommended that it not be managed and that it instead be an  
41 ecosystem component species. You've got to make a decision as  
42 to whether you accept the DAP's recommendation or not and then  
43 for the redfin parrotfish, the panel in Puerto Rico suggested  
44 that that not be included for management, because it's a very  
45 shallow-water species and with Puerto Rico's nine-mile domain  
46 instead of the three miles in the USVI, that's why there is a  
47 difference.

48

1 In the USVI, with only three miles, redfin still may appear in  
2 federal waters, but with that nine-mile limit in Puerto Rico,  
3 the redfin probably are not going to. The panel recommended  
4 redfin not be included and the DAP for Puerto Rico recommended  
5 that it do be included or whatever the proper English would be.

6  
7 Now, you can accept the DAP's recommendations on these or you  
8 cannot accept the DAP's recommendation, in which case, if you  
9 don't accept the DAP recommendation, then you would say we agree  
10 with the panel and we're going to go with that. I would say  
11 with the redfin, and this is just my semi-personal opinion, for  
12 simplicity that you would probably want to just say let's  
13 include all the parrotfish, but that's up to the council and not  
14 to me. I hope that helps to clarify things a little bit.

15  
16 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I believe that for the benefit of a cleaner  
17 record that we can have a motion like that. Whenever we have  
18 the advisory panel or the expert panel or whatever you call it  
19 and the three DAPs in agreement, then the council could follow  
20 suit and agree to accept those recommendations.

21  
22 You have to discuss and develop for the record the difference  
23 that Bill mentioned and go line-by-line, if you wish, for those  
24 species. The other thing is that we have to be mindful of the  
25 DAP efforts to go through this. I mean you cannot say to the  
26 DAP, well, thank you, but we don't agree with you and just like  
27 that.

28  
29 We should say we don't agree with you because and then state  
30 your rationale of why. That's why I suggested to have those  
31 species that are agreeable, as Bill mentioned, to include them  
32 in a motion that the council can adopt, if that's the wish of  
33 the council also, because you may find that some of the species  
34 you disagree entirely with the four panels, but you have to  
35 decide and decide why.

36  
37 My proposal is that we have a motion to do that and if you see  
38 in the discussion that there is any particular species that  
39 should not be there, then so be it.

40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

42  
43 **BILL ARNOLD:** I think Miguel has got it nailed pretty well. I  
44 was just going to say you could reverse this a little bit,  
45 because every species on there everybody is in agreement on  
46 except for the yellowedge grouper in St. Croix and the redfin  
47 parrotfish in Puerto Rico.

48

1 If you address those two species and determine what you want to  
2 do with them, then once you get those two settled, then you  
3 could establish a covering motion for everything and say except  
4 for or including those or depending upon the outcome of those  
5 two species, now we're going to do a motion to settle this  
6 component of the decision making process.

7

8 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

9

10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Bill, can you address those two species, for  
11 discussion's sake?

12

13 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I want to discuss those two species, but I  
14 don't know. Go ahead, Bill.

15

16 **BILL ARNOLD:** I can do it. I would certainly want Richard  
17 backing me up and Graciela and the rest of the panel and also  
18 the three DAP Chairs. I am not going to do this out on my own,  
19 because they were very instrumental in getting these developed.

20

21 I've got a better recollection, being the old geezer I am, of  
22 the redfin thing, which, as I said earlier, was because it's a  
23 shallow-water species and Puerto Rico has a wider shelf. That's  
24 how that decision was made.

25

26 As far as yellowedge and whether it's an EC or fully  
27 incorporated, I don't necessarily remember the details of that,  
28 but that's why we've got a group and not just me making these  
29 decisions.

30

31 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Before we go on, let me explain  
32 something. You are looking at this criterion-by-criterion and  
33 we thought that this would summarize it fairly easily for you,  
34 but the panel had to look at all the criteria at the same time  
35 and so redfin, in this case, was excluded because really it's  
36 not represented in the EEZ. It was also excluded because the  
37 vulnerability of the redfin in terms of the fishery itself was  
38 not something that everyone worried about.

39

40 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, at this time, what we need to know is  
41 whether they agree or not, period. Then if they have a question  
42 as to why, then we can go into that, because otherwise, we are  
43 going to be here forever discussing every little thing about  
44 these fishes. Let's take the redfin one. Why don't we want  
45 those guys there? Then if we develop a record for that and you  
46 have -- I am directing my question to the council members.

47

48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have a question. Blanchard.

1  
2 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I've got a question. Have we got a picture of  
3 this redfin parrotfish, because I want to know what I'm looking  
4 at. I don't know what it is. Do we have a picture of that  
5 fish?  
6  
7 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** While Graciela is looking for that, are we  
8 going to discuss these things before a motion or do a motion and  
9 then discuss?  
10  
11 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Let me reiterate what Bill said. If you get  
12 these two, then your motion will be to accept all of this except  
13 for these two and that will be easier.  
14  
15 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Hanke.  
16  
17 **MARCOS HANKE:** Bill, can you clarify the implication of EC in  
18 terms of management and in terms of the species and what we do  
19 with it?  
20  
21 **BILL ARNOLD:** As it presently stands, nothing really. These  
22 species are either in the management plan or they are not in the  
23 management plan. An ecosystem component species is not in the  
24 management plan.  
25  
26 However, being included in the list of ecosystem component  
27 species or, as the DAPs like to term it, on a watch list, does  
28 provide a bolding of their names to say keep an eye on these  
29 guys. In that way, it is slightly different and we could  
30 actually, as I have recently learned, institute some management  
31 measures on them to protect them, even though they are not fully  
32 managed species, but they -- Don't get too carried away with  
33 this, but they would not, for example, require annual catch  
34 limits to be set for them and so that's one of the key  
35 distinctions right there.  
36  
37 **MARCOS HANKE:** Through your experience, do you think with other  
38 groupers that will be managed that there will be any  
39 identification problem to put them apart from other groupers for  
40 the recreational sector, for example?  
41  
42 **BILL ARNOLD:** It's been shown there's plenty of identification  
43 problems across the board on these species. Some of the most  
44 common species, people would disagree as to certainly their  
45 common names. Common names are always a risk and a lot of  
46 people across the board aren't using genus species names and so  
47 confusion is always an opportunity. There is no shortage of  
48 that and that, like I said, is across the board.

1  
2 As far as whether they should be included or not, like, as I  
3 mentioned earlier, I would take these two species individually.  
4 We're not going to have to go through species-by-species and  
5 island-by-island. Most of these things are going to be -- They  
6 have clearly been agreed upon by the panel and by the DAP and my  
7 personal recommendation, based upon the time and effort that was  
8 put into these, is that the council should be very careful about  
9 disagreeing with these unanimous decisions, because, unless you  
10 want to spend the next two weeks in here going through these and  
11 understanding what the details are, you pretty much have to  
12 trust the groups you put together to make these decisions for  
13 you.

14  
15 You don't have to, but that sort of defeats the purpose if you  
16 don't and so we've got two that there is some discrepancy as to  
17 the decision that should be made. I suggest you deal with  
18 redfin first. I think they're a little bit more straightforward  
19 and deal with the yellowedge second and get those settled.

20  
21 Then, as I said, if you get those settled, you set them aside  
22 one way or the other and then you can just do a blanket motion  
23 for the rest, which may or may not include those two species,  
24 depending upon what we decide. Certainly I think we can nail  
25 all this before lunch and then get into the nitty-gritty after  
26 lunch, but that's, again, my opinion.

27  
28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I do have a concern, since you want to talk  
29 about redfin, and I know it's for Puerto Rico. I know that  
30 eventually, down the line here, we are looking for or we're  
31 hoping for compatibility in management and so what if the  
32 species occurs or is harvested, which are two different things,  
33 in the EEZ? My opinion is that they are ecologically important  
34 and I think that they should either -- I don't like the term  
35 "ecosystem component", because then you can't touch them at all.

36  
37 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Wait, wait, wait. If you look at the minutes and  
38 you see the presentation by -- I forgot his name, but he gave us  
39 a presentation and, Bill, do you remember the name of the fellow  
40 who came to give us a presentation of the guidelines?

41  
42 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Wes Patrick.

43  
44 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Wes Patrick. A question was asked to him  
45 directly if you put a species in the ecosystem component, would  
46 that die there or what happens? He said, no, you don't have to  
47 have an ACL, but you can have management measures addressing  
48 those species.

1  
2 Now, I believe that Bill just said that a while ago and so  
3 ecosystem component is not a garbage can that you dump  
4 everything there that you don't like outside. You have to be  
5 mindful of what you just asked. It's not necessarily a watch  
6 list.

7  
8 It's a species that you do not have a fishery at this time, et  
9 cetera, et cetera, but you can address it later in the process  
10 and also you have to be sure that when you send a species at  
11 this time to the ecosystem component determination or definition  
12 that you are aware of what is it that you are doing.

13  
14 To your question, it will be there and you may be able to  
15 monitor it. You don't have to have an ACL at this time, but if  
16 you need to, you may also have a set of size limits or whatever  
17 you need to to manage those species to make sure that they are  
18 treated properly.

19  
20 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay, because I do know we have a size limit  
21 for redfin on St. Croix and one of the reasons was that we're  
22 concerned about the species and its importance, but, Roy.

23  
24 **ROY CRABTREE:** Remember that if we decide one of these species  
25 doesn't have any fishery in the EEZ and so we're not going to  
26 manage it, if the territory wants to manage it, they can and  
27 they can manage it in the EEZ as well if we choose not to and so  
28 it's not like it couldn't be managed.

29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Right. How would we manage it in the EEZ?

31  
32 **ROY CRABTREE:** If the council chooses not to manage a species,  
33 the territory then can manage it and they can manage it whether  
34 it's coming out of the EEZ or not. They can only manage it to  
35 vessels that are registered to the Virgin Islands, for example,  
36 but I don't think there is any for any of these kinds of  
37 species, because the whole fishery would be mostly in  
38 territorial waters anyway, but you couldn't come in -- If they  
39 put a size limit in place, they could apply it to anybody  
40 landing if it's a species we've chosen not to manage.

41  
42 We've had a number of cases like that with Florida, for example,  
43 where they have extended their management of bonefish or tarpon,  
44 things that are really close to shore fisheries. They have  
45 extended it out into the EEZ. What they have normally done is  
46 just send a letter to the council asking them if they have any  
47 objections and the council said no and then they have done that.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** On the redbfin, is it that it does not occur  
2 in the EEZ or it's just not harvested in the EEZ, because there  
3 is two different things there.

4

5 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Let me put up a slide here.

6

7 **BILL ARNOLD:** Our data, based upon -- We looked at data from  
8 Todd Gedamke's trap study and we looked at data from the visual  
9 census surveys conducted by NOAA and we looked at data from Reni  
10 Garcia, who did transects off of Puerto Rico in -- I don't  
11 remember the exact depths, but like ten or fifteen or twenty-  
12 five or thirty-five or forty-five, down to fifty meters.

13

14 We looked at those data for a lot and not all of the species.  
15 For the redbfin, those data were showing that they weren't seeing  
16 these fish much deeper than about fifteen meters. When we set  
17 this up, we used thirty meters as a demarcation line and  
18 anything shallower than thirty meters -- Graciela has got a map  
19 she is going to show you.

20

21 Anything shallower than thirty meters is almost exclusively, if  
22 not exclusively, in state waters. When you start getting deeper  
23 than thirty meters, now you're starting to spill into federal  
24 waters.

25

26 For a species like snook or redbfin parrotfish that's not  
27 occurring much deeper than ten or fifteen meters or so, you  
28 figure that's pretty much a species whose life history is taking  
29 place in state waters. It's got nothing to do with catch. It's  
30 got to do with the actual species distribution and so that's how  
31 we made that determination. It is data-based.

32

33 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I saw the map, because less than thirty  
34 meters, or thirty meters or less -- You know Lang Bank has  
35 waters in the EEZ that are shallow.

36

37 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Remember that you are doing a step-  
38 wise thing and so you are excluding specifically species that do  
39 not meet the criteria. Once they are excluded at this stage,  
40 there might be some vulnerability issue that brings them back to  
41 the table, but in terms of being --

42

43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, let's stick to the two species and let  
44 them figure out what they are going to do with the species.

45

46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

47

48 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I don't figure out what I should do with it.

1 This is a shallow-water species. In the Virgin Islands, you  
2 ain't going to find no shallower water in the EEZ than maybe  
3 about ninety-foot of water and so we shouldn't even be managing  
4 this.

5  
6 **MIGUEL ROLON:** How about the other one? Number seventeen,  
7 Graciela. Does the council agree to put it in the ecosystem  
8 component, as suggested by the St. Croix Advisory Panel?

9  
10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.

11  
12 **MARCOS HANKE:** I have to defer to them, because they met with  
13 the panel of experts and the DAP and everybody worked so hard on  
14 this and I don't see any trouble of argument that we will refuse  
15 the idea of including the yellowedge grouper in EC and the other  
16 one not to be included. That's my opinion and I would like to  
17 hear some discussion to make a motion.

18  
19 **MIGUEL ROLON:** You should, based on that and the previous  
20 discussion, have a motion. The motion will be to accept the  
21 species as recommended by the expert panel and the three  
22 District Advisory Panels, except for these two. Then you  
23 discuss them.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard and then Bill and then Graciela.

26  
27 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I would have to agree with Marcos on the  
28 yellowedge grouper, because it's straight across the board that  
29 everybody agreed to it, basically, and so I really don't see the  
30 hold-up in why we're deciding to keep it on or take it off.  
31 That's just me.

32  
33 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

34  
35 **BILL ARNOLD:** All right. Just to attempt to achieve absolute  
36 clarity, with the yellowedge grouper, if you want to put them in  
37 the EC category, then you pass a motion to accept the DAP's  
38 recommendation. If you don't accept the DAP's recommendation,  
39 yellowedge grouper, based upon the panel's decision, will be  
40 included for management in St. Croix.

41  
42 Redfin parrotfish, if you pass a motion that accepts the DAP's  
43 recommendation, then, in spite of what the panel said, redfin  
44 parrotfish will be included for management in Puerto Rico. If  
45 you don't pass a motion to accept the DAP's recommendation for  
46 redfin parrotfish, then the panel's choice will go forward and  
47 the panel's choice was to not include redfin parrotfish for  
48 management in the Puerto Rico fishery management plan.

1  
2 You have to be very careful about how you're structuring your  
3 motions and making your decisions and if you have any confusion,  
4 I have none and so just ask me.  
5  
6 **MARCOS HANKE:** If I make a motion saying that I accept the panel  
7 decision that will exclude the redfin parrotfish and include as  
8 an EC the yellowedge grouper?  
9  
10 **BILL ARNOLD:** I would suggest two separate motions, to keep this  
11 stuff nice and clear.  
12  
13 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to make a motion to not include  
14 redfin parrotfish into the species list for the management  
15 units.  
16  
17 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second.  
18  
19 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Second.  
20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
22  
23 **BILL ARNOLD:** That's not how you want to structure your motion.  
24 You want to structure your motion so it says we move to either  
25 not accept the DAP's recommendation -- That's how I would  
26 structure the motion, we move to not accept the DAP's  
27 recommendation on redfin parrotfish in Puerto Rico, in which  
28 case you will be accepting the panel's recommendation, which is  
29 to not manage redfin parrotfish in the Puerto Rico fishery  
30 management plan for federal waters.  
31  
32 You don't have to write all of that. All you have to do is say  
33 we are not accepting the Puerto Rico DAP's --  
34  
35 **MIGUEL ROLON:** A point of order. You are making a mess of this.  
36 One at a time. Bill, can you dictate to Graciela and then  
37 Marcos, the owner of the motion, can accept or not the language?  
38  
39 **BILL ARNOLD:** All right. **The council moves to not accept the**  
40 **Puerto Rico DAP recommendation to include redfin parrotfish for**  
41 **management in Puerto Rico federal waters.**  
42  
43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay. Marcos, do you agree with that language?  
44  
45 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes.  
46  
47 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Carlos, the seconder?  
48

1 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Yes.  
2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
4  
5 **ROY CRABTREE:** Okay. So, Bill, if we pass this motion, how does  
6 this then become incorporated into the document? Somewhere  
7 along the way, there is going to have to be a preferred  
8 alternative chosen that reflects all of this and so how does  
9 that happen?  
10  
11 **BILL ARNOLD:** We are going to be unable to have an alternative  
12 for every species we're including or excluding and so what we  
13 would do is have the alternative to choose this list of species  
14 for management and that list of species for management, based  
15 upon panel action, DAP action, and council motions, would be  
16 this for Puerto Rico's federal waters.  
17  
18 **ROY CRABTREE:** So when we get done with these motions, you guys  
19 will go back and construct a preferred alternative that reflects  
20 the sum of all these motions or you will construct an  
21 alternative that reflects the sum of these and then we'll come  
22 in and choose it as a preferred?  
23  
24 **BILL ARNOLD:** We will construct a table of species to be managed  
25 that will be based upon the panel's decisions, the DAP's  
26 recommendations, and the council's motions in response to that.  
27 We will write it up accordingly.  
28  
29 **ROY CRABTREE:** It will have to be an alternative that we then  
30 choose as a preferred.  
31  
32 **BILL ARNOLD:** Yes and the other alternatives would be structured  
33 differently, depending upon the full panel's decisions, the full  
34 DAP's recommendations, and how that all comes out, but those  
35 would ultimately not be the preferred alternative.  
36  
37 **IRIS LOWERY:** Just to clarify, the species that we're currently  
38 discussing are under management right now, right?  
39  
40 **BILL ARNOLD:** Yes.  
41  
42 **IRIS LOWERY:** Okay and so we're essentially retaining the  
43 management measures by the island-based FMPs.  
44  
45 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** But let me clarify something. For  
46 these particular species, the size limits apply only to St.  
47 Croix and so the parrotfish unit as a whole has an ACL, but it  
48 doesn't have any size limits or any seasonal closures, et

1 cetera. It's just in the FMU, but it doesn't have a specific  
2 seasonal closure or area closure or anything. St. Croix is the  
3 only EEZ that has a minimum size in place for this fish.

4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I am looking at the motion, because if  
6 you have the redfin red for Puerto Rico, isn't it that they're  
7 saying they don't want it to be managed in the EEZ, but the  
8 motion is saying they don't want to accept the --

9  
10 **BILL ARNOLD:** The panel chose to not include redfin parrotfish  
11 for management in Puerto Rico federal waters and so it's red  
12 under Puerto Rico's column for the panel. Puerto Rico's DAP  
13 recommended that it does be included for management and so  
14 really what you're addressing here are the DAP recommendations,  
15 because you've got your panel list.

16  
17 What you're doing is determining whether you want to modify the  
18 panel's list based upon the DAP's recommendations and so what  
19 you're going to do is you're going to be going through here and  
20 the DAP made a recommendation. They made a recommendation for  
21 redfin parrotfish in Puerto Rico and your motion has to address  
22 whether you want to accept that recommendation or not accept  
23 that recommendation from the DAP.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Any further discussion? The motion  
26 reads: The council moves not to accept the DAP Puerto Rico  
27 recommendation to include the redfin parrotfish in the list of  
28 species for federal management. Motion made by Marcos Hanke and  
29 seconded by Carlos Velasquez. **All in favor say aye; any  
30 abstentions; any no's. Hearing none, the motion carries.**

31  
32 Then we go to the yellowedge. I have a question about the EC on  
33 yellowedge. I do know that we don't see the yellowedge in the  
34 markets or very rarely. However, I don't know if the species  
35 really is out there and I don't know how vulnerable they are,  
36 but I have got a question on the if we decide or somewhere down  
37 the line, because I'm looking at the future here, if a species -  
38 - Because there are going to be other species that fall under  
39 the EC.

40  
41 If the species -- If we find that it's necessary to pull it out  
42 of the EC, would that have to be an emergency rule or can that  
43 just be something that can -- I don't want to wait two years to  
44 bring something to the forefront. Roy.

45  
46 **ROY CRABTREE:** You would need to amend the plan to add it in,  
47 but if you had concerns about a new fishery had developed, you  
48 could potentially do an emergency rule to move more quickly.

1  
2 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Thanks, because I know there is a  
3 species that I am very concerned about, but when we get to it,  
4 we will discuss it. I have Blanchard and Schuster.  
5  
6 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I am going to be honest with you. This is the  
7 first time I've seen this fish here and so what do they look  
8 like when they're big?  
9  
10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right, Schuster.  
11  
12 **EDWARD SCHUSTER:** Edward Schuster, for the record. When the  
13 panel of experts met in Puerto Rico, that question was raised  
14 and that's why we decided to not exclude it, but to stick it  
15 here and monitor it and if we see the levels go up within the  
16 catch reports, you can, instead of making an emergency and going  
17 and creating this whole panel of meetings, to just grab it and  
18 start to take a look at it.  
19  
20 I know of guys that when they used to trap really deep up on the  
21 bank and divers, which those guys are pretty old now, used to go  
22 off on the drop-off, ninety-plus, and they used to bring back  
23 the yellowedge grouper. We know that it's there and it exists  
24 in St. Croix and we just decided to just not exclude it, but  
25 just take a look at it and monitor it in case there is a new  
26 group of divers or trap fishermen that decide to go in these  
27 areas and target these species in the deep water again. The  
28 species is there, but we just decided to keep it there just in  
29 Box X.  
30  
31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
32  
33 **ROY CRABTREE:** Most places I know where we have big yellowedge  
34 grouper fisheries -- In the Gulf of Mexico, we harvest a  
35 million-plus or two-million pounds of yellowedge grouper and  
36 it's all the deepwater longline fishery, which we don't have  
37 down here and so it's not too surprising to me that we're not  
38 seeing it show up very much.  
39  
40 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I've never even seen it.  
41  
42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. So we're going to ask for a motion for  
43 the yellowedge, if anybody wants to take a shot at that.  
44  
45 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like not to go around again and for Bill  
46 to help me with the language for the yellowedge, to include them  
47 as an EC species.  
48

1 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay and so the council moves to accept the DAP's  
2 recommendation to include this as an ecosystem component  
3 species. That's the DAP's recommendation. The panel's  
4 recommendation was to include it for management. The DAP's  
5 recommendation was to include it as an ecosystem component  
6 species only. If I understand it correctly, you are accepting  
7 the DAP's motion to include this as an ecosystem component  
8 species and that's how you want to structure the motion. You  
9 are accepting the DAP's recommendation.

10  
11 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Bill, can I use your brain again and you can  
12 write something for the motion?

13  
14 **BILL ARNOLD:** The council moves to accept the DAP St. Croix's  
15 recommendation to include yellowedge grouper as an ecosystem  
16 component species.

17  
18 **MIGUEL ROLON:** It's DAP St. Croix.

19  
20 **MARCOS HANKE:** That's my motion.

21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second.

23  
24 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

25  
26 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is the council moves to  
27 accept the DAP STC -- My comment on that is that we commonly in  
28 the Virgin Islands go STT and STX for St. Croix, but if you want  
29 to leave STC, that's no problem. I understand that language a  
30 little better. Okay. Recommendation to include the yellowedge  
31 grouper as an ecosystem component species. Motion by Marcos and  
32 seconded by Tony Blanchard. **All in favor say aye; any**  
33 **abstentions; any nays. Hearing none, the motion carries.**

34  
35 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Now, Mr. Chairman, with those two out of the way,  
36 we need to go back to what Bill was talking about before and  
37 this will be a motion to accept the other species as recommended  
38 by the expert panel and the DAPs. Graciela, it goes all the way  
39 to panulirus argus?

40  
41 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes and I erased the two that you  
42 already voted on and so you will have twenty-seven species in  
43 this complete list. I hid the row and not deleted them and so  
44 twenty-seven species in the table.

45  
46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

47  
48 **BILL ARNOLD:** You still need to deal with yellowedge and redfin

1 for the other areas and so they have to be captured in this  
2 motion, except for yellowedge in St. Croix and redfin in Puerto  
3 Rico. I just want to make sure we do that.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. You can dictate it to Graciela so we  
6 can get the -- I have a question. Those that don't have a  
7 checkmark, but are yellow, what's with that?

8

9 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That everyone agreed that they should  
10 be managed for all three areas and so the checkmark means that  
11 they have regulations in place. The fact that they are all in  
12 yellow is that everyone agrees on being included.

13

14 **BILL ARNOLD:** This motion, you want to say we move to accept the  
15 combined panel/DAP decision to include all remaining species --  
16 Is that Table 1, Graciela? I don't know how you want to include  
17 the first two motions, if at all, in this, but you want to say  
18 that the council moves to accept all remaining species according  
19 to the panel and DAP's agreed or consistent decision to include  
20 them for management. Obviously that's not ideal wording.

21

22 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No, I believe that your original idea was better,  
23 because this motion, if you find it, should be self-explanatory  
24 and so I believe that the motion should be the one that you  
25 mentioned before, to accept the combined species except for  
26 those two that we agreed before. Graciela, do you think the  
27 motion covers everything that we need to cover? Okay. Now we  
28 need a valiant guy to say --

29

30 **IRIS LOWERY:** Can I make a suggestion here that we say to  
31 include all species in Table 1 and maybe we also say for  
32 management in the island-based FMPs?

33

34 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think you need to better identify Table 1. Is  
35 Table 1 in our briefing book somewhere?

36

37 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** All the species that are there are in  
38 Table 1 of the draft Puerto Rico document, the draft St. Thomas  
39 document, and the draft St. Croix document. I can cut it and  
40 paste it and put it right here.

41

42 **ROY CRABTREE:** Just as long as the record is clear of where  
43 Table 1 is and what it is. It doesn't necessarily have to be in  
44 the motion, but --

45

46 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The whole table is here. It includes  
47 redfin, because it would be excluded only for Puerto Rico. It  
48 includes yellowedge, because it will be excluded only for St.

1 Croix. These are all the species in the Table 1 that you are  
2 referring to.  
3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Velasquez.  
5  
6 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** For effect to the record, all fishermen of  
7 the DAP Puerto Rico understand the green in the federal  
8 management plans? Do all guys understand that or no?  
9  
10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** We told them that to death at the meeting in  
11 Puerto Rico.  
12  
13 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** All in favor and understand or?  
14  
15 **MIGUEL ROLON:** The report that you have here is a summary of  
16 what they decided to submit to the council and at the meeting --  
17 Actually, when you left the meeting, we explained everything to  
18 them, the management.  
19  
20 Actually, their worry is not the species list, but it's what  
21 you're going to do with those species when you have them in the  
22 list and we explained to them that it will occur after Action 2  
23 and Action 3 in the process that we develop and they will have a  
24 chance -- Each step of the way, they will have a say-so, but at  
25 this time, they know the consequences and all that and actually,  
26 we are going to report to them back at the next meeting of the  
27 DAP Puerto Rico, STX, and STT. We are going to provide this  
28 information to them and actually, we are going to send an email  
29 after we finish all this to all the groups about the decision  
30 made today by the council and tomorrow.  
31  
32 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
33  
34 **BILL ARNOLD:** I would also like to remind that this is not the  
35 end of the process. This will create a draft list and this  
36 still has to go through public hearings and commenting, et  
37 cetera, et cetera. This is not going to be the last chance  
38 people get to have input on this. This is just an intermediary  
39 step.  
40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thanks, Bill. Can you bring back up the  
42 chart with the yellow stuff? Give me a second here. I want to  
43 see something. So princess and queen and those guys that don't  
44 have checkmarks is because of what again? Because they're not  
45 managed?  
46  
47 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** They are in your fishery management  
48 unit, but they don't have a specific management measure in place

1 and so they don't have size limits for the other jurisdictions  
2 and they don't have a seasonal closure, et cetera.

3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I've got you. Okay. Except for St. Croix,  
5 which we have size limits. Okay. All right.

6  
7 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** You also received a copy of the DAP's  
8 minutes and so they do have the motions and for each DAP, the  
9 information regarding the other species that you're considering  
10 now, it's there.

11  
12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The motion reads: The council moves to accept  
13 the combined panel/DAP recommendations to include all species in  
14 Table 1 for federal management, except for redfin for Puerto  
15 Rico and yellowedge for St. Croix.

16  
17 **MARCOS HANKE:** Thank you, Bill. **I accept the language and thank**  
18 **you for the help and the table underneath clarifies everything.**

19  
20 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second.

21  
22 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We have corrected it and it's the motion is  
25 the council moves to accept the combined panel/DAP  
26 recommendations to include all species in Table 1 for federal  
27 management, except for redfin parrotfish for Puerto Rico and  
28 yellowedge grouper for St. Croix. The table is on the screen as  
29 part of the motion. It's moved by Marcos and seconded by Tony  
30 Blanchard. Any discussion? **Hearing none, all in favor say aye;**  
31 **any abstentions; any nays. Hearing none, the motion carries.** I  
32 guess we will break for lunch, because if you leave it up to me,  
33 I will keep you here all through lunch.

34  
35 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Can we get one more motion to get the  
36 corals approved also to be included?

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That should be pretty fast, but we will have  
39 a 1:30 return. Thank you.

40  
41 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on August 19, 2015.)

42  
43 - - -

44  
45 August 19, 2015

46  
47 WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

1  
2  
3 The Caribbean Fishery Management Council reconvened at the  
4 Mayaguez Holiday Inn, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Wednesday  
5 afternoon, August 19, 2015, and was called to order at 1:30  
6 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Carlos Farchette.

7  
8 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Let's get started again.

9  
10 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** We also need a motion from the council  
11 regarding the coral species. You have ninety-four species that  
12 are in the fishery management unit. This one doesn't include  
13 any of the deepwater corals and so these are all regulated, one  
14 way or another, and all the panels were in agreement that they  
15 should all be included in the list of species for federal  
16 management and so do I get a motion for the corals? You have on  
17 the two screens and you have ninety-four species.

18  
19 We are working on whether they should be the family that should  
20 be included, because some of the species are really hard to tell  
21 apart, and if you look on either screen, there are some that say  
22 "SPP", meaning that it's a genus, but we don't know exactly what  
23 species it is and we have not included in this list the  
24 deepwater corals. Is it the will of the council to include the  
25 species for federal management?

26  
27 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

28  
29 **BILL ARNOLD:** At the DAP meetings, we discussed and the  
30 recommendation at, I think, at least two of them and maybe not  
31 all three, but the recommendation was rather than just to accept  
32 this list of ninety-four species or whatever is to cover it by  
33 saying we want to manage and prohibit harvest of all hard  
34 corals, soft corals, and black corals and just everything,  
35 whether we know the species or not.

36  
37 That's sort of the decisive factor here. The panel, their list  
38 includes the ninety-four species. The DAP's recommendation is,  
39 at least for two of them and we should probably look at those  
40 motions, but the DAP's recommendations were slightly different  
41 and so the council has to decide whether they want to go with  
42 the panel list or the DAP recommendations.

43  
44 **MARCOS HANKE:** What is the DAP recommendation difference?

45  
46 **BILL ARNOLD:** The DAP recommendations were, and Graciela is  
47 going to bring them up, is we do all hard corals, all soft  
48 corals, and all black corals, to make sure nothing slips through

1 the cracks and new species aren't found or something develops  
2 that leaves a species of coral exposed that the council really  
3 doesn't want to have exposed.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Dr. Ponwith.

6

7 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Just for clarification, Bill, the difference is  
8 one group went species-by-species and the other group said all  
9 of these, all of those, and all of the third and that's the only  
10 difference?

11

12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The list doesn't include the  
13 mesophotic corals, for example, or the deepwater corals and so  
14 that's why -- I just pulled up Puerto Rico. All corals, soft,  
15 hard, mesophotic, and deepwater corals be included for  
16 management in federal waters, versus the table that includes all  
17 corals.

18

19 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Graciela, do you identify the whole coral  
20 reef?

21

22 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** This is all coral species. It's not  
23 the reef itself, but it's the coral species that are within that  
24 reef in shallow, midwater, deep water.

25

26 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** How many feet? Zero feet to 200 feet or --

27

28 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Because it includes the Acropora and  
29 the Agaricia, all the corals that, even if they are in shallow  
30 water, they are already under specific protection and they have  
31 an ACL of no take. It's a zero ACL and so everything from the  
32 shallow-water species to the deepwater species and that's why it  
33 says the soft, which are the corals that move, the soft corals,  
34 the hard corals, the ones that create reef, the mesophotic,  
35 which don't necessarily create a reef, but are corals, because  
36 they are flat, and the deepwater, which tend to be solitary and  
37 so they will be rather small and create a bulk, but they don't  
38 make a reef. They don't make a hard skeleton that they leave  
39 behind.

40

41 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Not including seagrass?

42

43 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** No, this is just coral species.

44

45 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Thank you.

46

47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Dr. Ponwith.

48

1 **BONNIE PONWITH:** From a science perspective, understanding now  
2 the difference between those two sets of recommendations, I  
3 think the recommendation that is the more inclusive is the more  
4 ideal one. For clarity, that is the one that says all hard  
5 corals, all soft corals, and all deepwater corals.

6  
7 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Hanke.

8  
9 **MARCOS HANKE:** I am ready to make a motion and I would like to  
10 use the language that shows on the screen and I think it was  
11 used by Puerto Rico, that one there, yes, as my motion and once  
12 Graciela copies and pastes, I will read it.

13  
14 The council moves that corals (soft, hard, mesophotic, and  
15 deepwater corals) be included for management in federal waters  
16 of Puerto Rico. It should say the U.S. Caribbean. That's it.  
17 That's my motion.

18  
19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Do we have a second?

20  
21 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

22  
23 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The motion reads: The council moves that all  
24 corals (soft, hard, mesophotic, and deepwater corals) be  
25 included for management in the federal waters for all three  
26 FMPs. It's move by Marcos and seconded by Tony. **All in favor**  
27 **say aye; any nays; any abstentions. Hearing none, the motion**  
28 **carries.**

29  
30 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There is also, in your reef fish  
31 fishery management unit, there is a whole section called  
32 Aquarium Trade Species and these are -- There is an ACL for the  
33 aquarium trade species in general. These are basically species  
34 that are harvested on demand and we have recently received  
35 another list of fish that are part of this trade, but which we  
36 have not presented to any of the panels and so we have an  
37 additional list of species that are traded.

38  
39 For these species, you have some landings information and for  
40 others, you don't. The three District Advisory Panels also made  
41 a motion to include all the aquarium trade species, fish  
42 species, into the federal management plans.

43  
44 The local governments have regulations in place for many of  
45 these species. The Virgin Islands specifically has had  
46 basically no -- It has given out no permits for harvesting  
47 aquarium trade species in years that I know of, in years, and  
48 the government of Puerto Rico has either quotas or species that

1 are prohibited from harvest, et cetera.  
2  
3 The panels had recommended to the council to include all the  
4 species that are in the aquarium trade list under the Reef Fish  
5 FMP for federal management and not the panel, the DAPs, the  
6 three DAPs. The panel actually did not specifically address it,  
7 but they just acknowledged that there is an aquarium trade  
8 species, but there was no decision made to exclude them from  
9 federal management and so that's where we stand.  
10  
11 You have the void from the panel in terms of expressing whether  
12 they should be included or not and a recommendation from the  
13 DAPs, the three DAPs, that they all be included for federal  
14 management.  
15  
16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I have a comment on this, but  
17 Blanchard.  
18  
19 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I am going to be the brave one and take this  
20 here on. How much of these actually occur in federal waters, in  
21 the EEZ?  
22  
23 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The number specifically, I don't  
24 recall off the top of my --  
25  
26 **TONY BLANCHARD:** No, the species. How much of the species are  
27 actually found in the EEZ?  
28  
29 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Many of them do show up in the  
30 mesophotic reefs that are within the EEZ.  
31  
32 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay. My suggestion as to looking at this is  
33 we should look at what is found in the EEZ and then go from that  
34 list.  
35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill and then Roy.  
37  
38 **BILL ARNOLD:** All right and certainly this is a very lengthy  
39 list of species that the feds have and the State of Puerto Rico  
40 has a much shorter list of the species and Gary is the expert,  
41 please, and not me, by any means, and he may want to comment on  
42 this, but the State of Puerto Rico's list is shorter and the  
43 USVI basically, at least at the present time, is prohibiting  
44 aquarium trade harvest. They have permits, but they are not  
45 letting the permits.  
46  
47 The activity that does take place predominantly takes place in  
48 state waters. The feds, we can include them for management and

1 this is exactly what I explained to the DAPs. We can include  
2 them for management, but the feds are going to have an extremely  
3 difficult time having any impact at all on the aquarium trade  
4 industry.

5  
6 We don't get the data and we don't have the enforcement. The  
7 Coast Guard is not going to be able to identify X number of  
8 species of cleaner shrimp and banded goby, et cetera, et cetera.  
9 This is asking a lot of them, whereas the real management of the  
10 aquarium trade can take place onshore.

11  
12 A suggestion I would have is the management of the aquarium  
13 trade industry should be, and we have the authority to do this,  
14 should be turned over to the states to allow them to manage the  
15 aquarium trade industry.

16  
17 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy and then Graciela.

18  
19 **ROY CRABTREE:** I guess I have a question for Gary. You guys are  
20 diving, right?

21  
22 **GARY ROGERS:** Correct.

23  
24 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think we heard earlier that the depth break  
25 between territorial is something around thirty meters and ninety  
26 feet and so is most of what you do shallower than that?

27  
28 **GARY ROGERS:** The majority of species that we collect is in the  
29 thirty to fifty-foot range, but we will go down ninety to a  
30 hundred foot for certain species and anything that can be caught  
31 in state waters can be caught in the EEZ. It's all out there.  
32 There is enough shallow terrain out there.

33  
34 As far as the state regulations, just to go on record to say  
35 that at the time that those regulations were put in, we had a  
36 court order of a list of species, fish and invertebrates, with  
37 weekly quotas. When DNR put that list in the regulation, they  
38 did it illegally and it should never be in there. I think  
39 that's something that a whole lot of people don't know.

40  
41 **ROY CRABTREE:** Well, it does sort of sound to me like generally  
42 this is a territorial water fishery and it's traditionally been  
43 managed by the territories and I guess the Virgin Islands just  
44 doesn't allow it and it seems to me that makes sense in this  
45 case and so I think my preference would be to leave this one to  
46 the territories and let them manage it without us complicating  
47 it with all of these jurisdictional lines.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I do agree with that, because when it was  
2 allowed in the Virgin Islands, which is probably the mid-1980s,  
3 100 percent of the harvest was in state waters and now -- We had  
4 a director at the time from then on that, although you can apply  
5 for the permit, the permit will not -- The permit was not  
6 granted and we don't know what would happen with the new  
7 commissioner or a new director of Fish and Wildlife and if they  
8 would want to initiate something like that, but I still say 100  
9 percent of the harvest is in state waters. Gary.

10  
11 **GARY ROGERS:** Here is the thing. In federal waters, I would  
12 rather it just kind of like stay open and no regulations be put  
13 into place, because here's the thing about the regulation that  
14 was in state waters. It took no scientific knowledge to attain  
15 it, okay? The only thing that list is, it's a compilation of  
16 three years' worth of airport statistics totaled up and they  
17 took the top twenty exported species.

18  
19 That doesn't mean that anything past twenty is in decline or  
20 needs to be protected, but they just took the top twenty most  
21 popular exported species and said this is what you can catch and  
22 you can't catch anything else and that's not right.

23  
24 **ROY CRABTREE:** I mean if we do include it though, it will come  
25 with regulations, because it will have to have an annual catch  
26 limit. I hate to think about trying to do quotas for every one  
27 of those species, because I suspect some of them will be awfully  
28 low and I don't know how we get to all that.

29  
30 If we lump them altogether in one ACL, I just don't think that's  
31 the best way to do it and we would be relying on the territories  
32 to tell us what is caught anyway and it just kind of seems like  
33 that's the way to go, because it does sound like the vast  
34 majority of all this is happening in territorial waters and  
35 that's a long list of species.

36  
37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So whatever decision is made when it comes to  
38 a motion, St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John could be a separate  
39 motion, because I know that there is no harvest occurring right  
40 now, but there never was any harvest occurring in federal  
41 waters.

42  
43 I know Puerto Rico has an aquarium trade and they can make their  
44 own decision themselves, but for the Virgin Islands, I think  
45 that we want to have -- If someone wants to take on the motion  
46 for St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John separate to Puerto Rico.

47  
48 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The discussion at the DAP had to do

1 with that, that they didn't want any harvest from the EEZ from  
2 the aquarium trade.

3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** And local waters. That's for now and you  
5 never know how things change in time and if they do say, okay,  
6 we're going to allow aquarium trade, but I don't see that  
7 happening anytime soon.

8  
9 **MARCOS HANKE:** I am a little confused. What DAP or panel says  
10 about Puerto Rico waters? What was the recommendation?

11  
12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That that would have the fish that  
13 were listed under the table for the fish aquarium trade species  
14 included for federal management and so all three DAPs  
15 recommended that these species be included for federal  
16 management.

17  
18 The discussion in the Virgin Islands specifically had to do with  
19 the fact that they had a moratorium, where they had not received  
20 any permits for fishing these species in the state waters. They  
21 just wanted to have the same regulation from the shoreline to  
22 the 200 nautical miles.

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

25  
26 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I don't see what we need to do that for,  
27 because for the mere fact if the state is not giving them  
28 permits to do so -- This is an aquarium fish. You've got to  
29 bring him back to port alive in order to handle him to send him  
30 back out and so you've still got to come into state waters.  
31 Really, I don't see why it would need anything from the council  
32 dealing with the EEZ when they still can't bring it in the  
33 state.

34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.

36  
37 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I would request information from SERO,  
38 but the EEZ of St. Croix or St. Thomas or Puerto Rico, in this  
39 case, would still be open for the harvest of aquarium trade  
40 species from any American citizen and so they could conceivably  
41 come and not necessarily land in St. Thomas, but land in Puerto  
42 Rico. I am just giving you an example and I am just being the  
43 devil's advocate here, so that you know all of the discussion  
44 that went on during the DAP meetings. It would be open for  
45 harvest to anyone that doesn't necessarily -- Who doesn't  
46 necessarily is going to land in St. Thomas.

47  
48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

1  
2 **BILL ARNOLD:** This is kind of a question to Roy, but in Florida,  
3 the feds turned stone crab management over to the state in both  
4 state and federal waters and so my understanding is the state  
5 dictates management there and is that correct, Roy, and they set  
6 the rules?

7  
8 **ROY CRABTREE:** Yes and they do that for a number of species and  
9 we have a big aquarium trade in Florida, the vast majority of  
10 which takes place in state waters, but I can't say that all of  
11 it does. It's all managed by the states and the feds don't get  
12 involved in it.

13  
14 **BILL ARNOLD:** So if somebody came into federal waters from  
15 Georgia to Puerto Rico federal waters, they are not going to  
16 have a free-for-all. They are still governed by the state's  
17 management of those aquarium trade species and is that correct?

18  
19 **ROY CRABTREE:** The state management is limited to vessels  
20 registered to that state and so if you got into an issue of  
21 someone from out of state coming down and collecting the animals  
22 and then leaving and going back into another state and never  
23 entering federal waters, then you probably would have an issue  
24 you would need to deal with.

25  
26 If you think folks from Puerto Rico are going to come over and  
27 engage in the marine life trade in USVI waters and then go back  
28 and land in Puerto Rico or vice versa and that that's a problem,  
29 that may be something you would have to deal with, but in this  
30 case, if a Puerto Rico vessel -- Say it's someone in eastern  
31 Puerto Rico, Vieques and that area, and they go a little bit  
32 into the EEZ off the USVI, they would be taking those fish back  
33 to Puerto Rico and landing it and it would be subject to all the  
34 management measures that Puerto Rico would have in place. I  
35 don't know that that's a problem.

36  
37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

38  
39 **MIGUEL ROLON:** That's precisely the point that the DAPs were  
40 discussing. They want to stop or preclude that from happening  
41 in the future and that's the rationale they have for including  
42 this species in the management unit.

43  
44 They are mindful that you do not have enough fishery for them in  
45 the St. Croix and St. Thomas area, nor do you have any  
46 regulations. They thought that if you put it in the management  
47 unit and you have to do something in the future that it would do  
48 it.

1  
2 Also, if the guy from Georgia comes and fishes, or from Culebra,  
3 for that matter, and fishes in the waters off of St. Croix, for  
4 example, they said that they didn't like that, because they want  
5 to keep it for the U.S. Virgin Islanders under the regulations  
6 they have. In other words, that's the rationale they have for  
7 including it in the management unit.  
8  
9 What Roy is saying is also you can achieve the same thing by  
10 allowing the local states to rule and then do something in the  
11 federal government side that will be compatible or they will do  
12 as they do in Florida.  
13  
14 The real worry -- Carlos was there and the real worry I got from  
15 the coffee break and the people, but they don't want to say it  
16 on the record, is that they don't want Puerto Ricans to go there  
17 and fish for the aquarium trade and that's the whole thing or,  
18 for that matter, any other place.  
19  
20 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
21  
22 **ROY CRABTREE:** A question for Gary. About how many people in  
23 Puerto Rico are fishing in the marine life trade?  
24  
25 **GARY ROGERS:** Generally, on the west side here, there is  
26 probably a couple dozen that I know of and I am sure there is  
27 more in the San Juan area.  
28  
29 **ROY CRABTREE:** Is there anyone you know of who is going into  
30 Virgin Island waters and fishing and bringing them back?  
31  
32 **GARY ROGERS:** Not that I know of, no.  
33  
34 **ROY CRABTREE:** I would think the fuel costs of going like to St.  
35 Croix and back would take the profit out of it and it's probably  
36 not something that is happening and if it ever did start  
37 happening, I guess we could deal with it.  
38  
39 **MARCOS HANKE:** A question in terms of management. If this is  
40 included and let's say that we establish a zero ACL for the  
41 right reasons, that will solve the problem, correct?  
42  
43 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** If I may, you do have an ACL in place  
44 Caribbean-wide of 8,000-plus pounds for all the aquarium trade  
45 species and so you do have it in place right now.  
46  
47 **ROY CRABTREE:** You could put in place a -- You could prohibit  
48 harvest of these species if you wanted to. I mean I think you

1 would have to explain why and then the harvest could continue in  
2 territorial waters and be prohibited in the EEZ. I mean it's a  
3 real enforcement problem, quite frankly, because I don't know  
4 that we're going to be able to really enforce it effectively,  
5 but you could do that if you have a rationale for why you need  
6 to do that.

7  
8 One of the things I am trying to avoid having in this amendment,  
9 and we have some of these things now, are just unworkable ACLs.  
10 We've got some ACLs -- The one I always bring up is I think  
11 wrasse in St. Croix and it's seven pounds. We have some goofy  
12 things that resulted when we set all this and then split it  
13 among the islands.

14  
15 Graciela is right that we have an ACL of 8,000 pounds or  
16 something like that, but how we would ever really track it and  
17 know when we've hit it and all that, that's been elusive and I  
18 am not sure, Bill, if we even get landings reports for the  
19 aquarium trade that we've been able to use to track this stuff.

20  
21 **BILL ARNOLD:** The last three years, on average, have been 2,000  
22 pounds or less total reported landings. I don't know how that  
23 relates to the true total reported landings that are taking  
24 place, but I am guessing it's substantially below what's really  
25 going on.

26  
27 **ROY CRABTREE:** It seems to me, really, with the nature of this  
28 fishery, you would want to be tracking individual animals and  
29 not pounds. I mean people aren't eating this or anything. They  
30 are selling these to go in an aquarium.

31  
32 I can't, for the life of me, remember -- I guess this is based  
33 on average landings or something, but whether it's a meaningful  
34 number or not is hard to say.

35  
36 **BILL ARNOLD:** It's very screwy. Some of them are coming in  
37 through the commercial landings and some of them are coming in  
38 through the recreational landings. We don't know which ones are  
39 actually going into the aquarium trade and which ones may be  
40 used for something else. We have no way of knowing that,  
41 because they are not reporting them as aquarium trade species.  
42 They are reporting them by species and so we get eighty-three  
43 pounds of this species and 153 pounds of that species.

44  
45 Some of them reported recreationally and we don't know how big  
46 they are or anything. Some of them reported commercially and  
47 it's a very muddled thing. Like I said, really you capture this  
48 industry onshore and, as Gary mentioned, commonly at the airport

1 where everything has to be taken to be shipped and you can  
2 actually monitor the activity.

3  
4 **MARCOS HANKE:** It is very iffy, the data that you were  
5 explaining, because on aquarium trade, they don't want to weight  
6 the fish, to take the water out and to weigh and to pass through  
7 all that struggle and that complicates it even more.

8  
9 I am really confused which opinion to give about this. I was  
10 just thinking to include them, recognizing that everything is,  
11 or the majority of the industry, is made on state water and let  
12 the state water deal with it and for -- To be precautionary,  
13 leave an ACL of zero on the federal waters and just try to close  
14 the gates, for the confusion.

15  
16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

17  
18 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I don't think we need to close anything. I  
19 don't think we need to put a zero on the EEZ, because most of  
20 these here are caught in territorial waters and so we don't need  
21 to do nothing with this here but let the local government deal  
22 with it, because they've been dealing with this all along and to  
23 say that we've got to manage them and then we've got to put an  
24 ACL on them, what is that going to look like, because like you  
25 say, they ain't taking the fish out of the bag to weigh it,  
26 because then they're putting the fish under stress.

27  
28 You want these fish alive to be able to ship where they need to  
29 go and so I think if you're asking me my opinion, which I'm  
30 going to give it, leave it how it is and let the state monitor  
31 it. The reality of it is that I don't think nobody is leaving  
32 from Puerto Rico to come into St. Thomas or to go to St. Croix  
33 to go catch a fish to put in an aquarium, because they ain't  
34 profitable. At least I can't see it and so I say we leave it  
35 alone.

36  
37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill and I would like to maybe hear from  
38 Ricardo if you have an opinion on this, but Bill.

39  
40 **BILL ARNOLD:** There is a couple of things I wanted to remind.  
41 One is yes, the easiest thing to do is leave them in the  
42 management plan and set an ACL equal to zero and basically  
43 prohibit harvest. I would suggest that the aquarium trade  
44 industry has done nothing to deserve that and to the extent that  
45 they are operating in federal waters, as far as we know, they  
46 are operating sustainably and you are basically saying -- I want  
47 to be careful about my words, because I am sure I am going to  
48 choose the wrong ones, but we basically just don't want to mess

1 with it and so we're shutting it down, which is a tough reason  
2 to limit somebody's business.

3  
4 The second thing is we can go ahead and do what we've been doing  
5 and manage them in federal waters and set ACLs. The ACLs are  
6 going to have so little relationship to reality as to be  
7 pointless and our ability to manage under those ACLs or manage  
8 at all is going to be almost nonexistent.

9  
10 I wouldn't mind getting Coast Guard, because the Coast Guard is  
11 going to be the enforcement branch out there, to a large degree,  
12 and if they have something to say, I would love to hear it.

13  
14 The third thing is if we're going to truly turn this over for  
15 state management and, again, I would like to hear Roy's comments  
16 on this, but the states have to agree to that. We don't even  
17 have a USVI rep here. Ricardo, I don't know what extent to  
18 which he is comfortable with that.

19  
20 That doesn't mean we couldn't do it and that doesn't mean we  
21 couldn't revisit in December, et cetera, et cetera, but I want  
22 you to be aware that it's a two-way street and we don't just say  
23 you have to do this.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

26  
27 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think the territories only have to agree with  
28 it in the sense that they're on this council and get to vote,  
29 but we can decide -- I mean the question is, is there a need for  
30 federal management of this? I tend to agree with Tony that I  
31 don't really see it. That really drives the decision here, but  
32 I am presuming that the territories would be -- They are  
33 managing the fishery now and they would be happy to continue to  
34 do so without our complicating matters.

35  
36 From a conservation point of view, I don't know that it's going  
37 to make a lot of difference, because I really don't expect that  
38 the Coast Guard -- I don't know of any cases made on aquarium  
39 trade harvest issues and I doubt there is going to be much of  
40 that and so my guess is that the fishery is not going to change  
41 dramatically, regardless of what we do here, because it's mostly  
42 operating outside of our jurisdiction.

43  
44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Gary.

45  
46 **GARY ROGERS:** Dr. Crabtree, I would just like to say that the  
47 ornamental fishery here in Puerto Rico has been run so well that  
48 it's very rare that we even have to venture in the EEZ. I can

1 catch the majority of my fish that I need less than five miles  
2 from my boat ramp and I do.

3

4 I venture out into the EEZ five or ten times a year, mostly out  
5 of boredom. I just want to get out and see some new places and  
6 when the weather is nice, I want to go offshore.

7

8 Now, I understand how Bill says that you should have state  
9 regulations and federal regulations so they match so that  
10 everybody is on the same page, but what bothers me is we have  
11 sat back with this DNR regulation and just left it alone. Okay?

12

13 Now, if the EEZ wants to mimic what DNR did in state waters,  
14 then today when I go home, I'm going to have to dust off my  
15 court order and bring it to my lawyer and I'm going to have to  
16 get DNR back in court again to get this fish list taken out of  
17 the fisheries, which I don't want to do. I am tired of that. I  
18 have been through the ringer with these guys and I just don't  
19 want any more problems.

20

21 **ROY CRABTREE:** What I am hearing from you is the way things are  
22 now works pretty good.

23

24 **GARY ROGERS:** Yes, things are nice.

25

26 **ROY CRABTREE:** So there's not a need for us to come in and mess  
27 it up.

28

29 **GARY ROGERS:** There is still a lot of species that are in demand  
30 and there's a huge pet store trade on the island which takes  
31 everything. There is no restrictions on them. I am restricted  
32 of what I can export. I would like to export more and if it's a  
33 matter of having to go back to court in order to do that, I  
34 guess I'm going to have to do that, but I don't want to see  
35 regulations put in the EEZ that will stick and be permanent and  
36 that won't be able to be changed in the future.

37

38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Dr. Appeldoorn.

39

40 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Just for the record, to my knowledge there  
41 have been two studies that have been in the field looking at the  
42 status of species that are being collected under the aquarium  
43 trade and both of those have basically not been able to detect  
44 any impact on the resource. The stocks of the most abundant  
45 species are well, well above whatever the harvest limits are and  
46 so there doesn't really seem to be pressure on the resource, as  
47 Gary is saying. Let's say I am agreeing with Gary's statement.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.  
2  
3 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I am going to have to say like Mr. Crabtree  
4 said and we're beating this thing here to death and so I'm going  
5 to put a motion on the table that we let the state manage these  
6 species like they have been doing before and that this is a  
7 state issue. I would like to ask Bill to help me out with the  
8 wording there. Yes, that's it.  
9  
10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's one of the questions I had. Does this  
11 aquarium trade include corals, soft or hard or --  
12  
13 **GARY ROGERS:** No.  
14  
15 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Are they allowed to harvest those?  
16 Bill.  
17  
18 **BILL ARNOLD:** There are two lists. There is, within the Reef  
19 Fish Fishery Management Plan, a list of reef fish that are  
20 included as aquarium trade species. Then in our Corals and  
21 Reef-Associated Plants and Invertebrates, there is a separate  
22 list of invertebrates that are included in the aquarium trade  
23 species list.  
24  
25 What Graciela's motion is capturing is just the list of species  
26 in the Reef Fish FMP. What you have to ask yourself is do you  
27 want to do just the reef fish and treat the invertebrates  
28 separately or do you want to bundle these into a single motion  
29 and say all the reef fish and all the invertebrates that  
30 comprise the total aquarium trade species list defined by the  
31 feds? Do you want to include them all or how do you want to  
32 handle that? But you need to be aware there are two separate  
33 lists.  
34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Gary, do you harvest soft or hard  
36 invertebrate species?  
37  
38 **GARY ROGERS:** At the moment, I just shrimp and crabs and that  
39 type of stuff. No corals and no plants and no nothing.  
40  
41 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I propose you keep it separate. It's easier to  
42 follow the record with the tables that you have and so deal with  
43 the fish now and anything that is not a fish second.  
44  
45 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There are fifty-seven species here of  
46 fish that you had on the two screens.  
47  
48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay and so we have a motion there somewhere,

1 right? Okay. The motion is the council moves that all fish in  
2 the aquarium trade species in the Reef Fish FMP below be managed  
3 by the governments of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.  
4 That motion was by Blanchard and we have a second by Hanke. Any  
5 discussion? **Hearing none, we will take it to a vote and all in**  
6 **favor say aye; any abstentions; any nays. Hearing none, the**  
7 **motion carries.**

8  
9 **IRIS LOWERY:** Just to clarify the intent of the council on the  
10 record, and I think you did a nice job of discussing this, but  
11 the purpose of this motion is then to not include the aquarium  
12 trade species in the island-based FMPs, correct?

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Right.

15  
16 **IRIS LOWERY:** Okay.

17  
18 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Under the Coral FMP now, you already  
19 dealt with the corals, soft and hard and black and deepwater and  
20 mesophotic corals. You also have a list of species that  
21 includes sponges and includes the shrimp and it includes some  
22 clams and it includes all the invertebrates associated with the  
23 coral reef.

24  
25 These were included here, because, at the time, there was live  
26 rock trade going on and most of these species are really  
27 anchored on the reef and so you would have to take part of the  
28 reef with you or find a way of pulling them out, but there is  
29 also some, like the shrimp, that live freely on the reef and so  
30 you can harvest them with dip nets and take them out, et cetera,  
31 and they are all -- Not all, but some of them are part of the  
32 aquarium trade species, but they are all associated with the  
33 reefs.

34  
35 It includes many that are listed, like the cucumbers, by genus  
36 and it includes the species that are present in the area. The  
37 sea urchins, they are all included on this list. Some of them  
38 are part of the ornamental trade and some of them are not. Some  
39 of them, like the cucumbers, when it was brought to the council  
40 two meetings ago, are harvested commercially in the state  
41 waters.

42  
43 Most of them do occur, if not all, in the EEZ, but, again, I  
44 mean the information that's available is recently for the  
45 cucumbers that were harvested on the state waters and so the  
46 DNER keeps track of that. They are harvesting in the Virgin  
47 Islands also and so these are species that are included in the  
48 Coral FMP and you need to let us know how you want us to handle

1 this.  
2  
3 The DAPs, the three DAPs, actually included all the species in  
4 the Coral FMP listing to be included for federal management.  
5 Again, some of the discussion had to do with the fact that some  
6 of them are permitted by the states and so in the Virgin Islands  
7 they have not been given permits in recent times and so they  
8 would like compatible regulations with the federal government.  
9 Others have to do with considering that they are part of the  
10 ecosystem, for example the cucumbers, and they should not be  
11 taken without any kind of monitoring and so forth.  
12  
13 The DAPs had agreed on including them for federal management.  
14 The panel recognized that there was a coral invertebrate list  
15 other than the corals themselves to be dealt with, but there was  
16 no inclusion or exclusion, per se, of the species that are  
17 listed here and so you have most of the species on the screen.  
18  
19 **MARCOS HANKE:** What is the opinion of the panel?  
20  
21 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The panel just recognized that there  
22 was such a list and that they are invertebrates associated with  
23 reefs that were included in the Coral FMP, but there was no  
24 recommendation specific to the council to exclude them or to  
25 include them for management in federal waters.  
26  
27 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
28  
29 **ROY CRABTREE:** I apologize if you said this and I missed it, but  
30 how are they treated now? Are these included in the current  
31 aquarium trade ACL or -- Bill.  
32  
33 **BILL ARNOLD:** Yes, they are. We take any landings we get from  
34 any species listed in the reef fish or invertebrates list and we  
35 add them all together and that's where we got the ACL and that's  
36 where we get the landings to compare against the ACLs. These  
37 two are so totally intertwined that it would be -- Not to put  
38 words in your mouth, but it would be extremely difficult to say  
39 yes to one and no to the other. They're really a single unit.  
40  
41 **ROY CRABTREE:** That was going to be my next question. Doesn't  
42 almost everything we just said about the aquarium trade fishery  
43 apply to this as well?  
44  
45 **BILL ARNOLD:** Yes.  
46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Hanke.  
48

1 **MARCOS HANKE:** Maybe not. The thing is that there is the case  
2 of the sea cucumber that we have a fishery that is already  
3 happening in Puerto Rico and it's used for consumption, for  
4 commercial use. We saw also on the record already established  
5 that there is people making tryouts with the sea urchins to see  
6 the possibility of using them as a resource.

7  
8 In my opinion, at least those two groups, that group of species,  
9 should be included for that reason, because they are used for  
10 consumption.

11  
12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

13  
14 **ROY CRABTREE:** Is most of that though happening in territorial  
15 waters, right?

16  
17 **MARCOS HANKE:** In Puerto Rico, yes, but in the USVI, there is a  
18 potential of happening in federal waters.

19  
20 **ROY CRABTREE:** But as far as we know, it's not happening in the  
21 Virgin Islands right now, but I do remember this coming up in  
22 Puerto Rico, but that was my memory, that it was mostly in the -  
23 - Did the territory ever do anything with sea cucumbers in terms  
24 of shutting it down or --

25  
26 **MARCOS HANKE:** I have an update on that. On the next advisory  
27 panel for the Secretary, this will be visited, to see if we need  
28 to state a new administrative order to stop the fishery until  
29 better data comes up or to create a special permit or the  
30 Secretary can jump in and say no fishery, but we are in the  
31 process of deciding that.

32  
33 **ROY CRABTREE:** At least for now, it seems like the Secretary and  
34 the territory are dealing with this in a pretty responsible way.

35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Bill and then Lynn Rios and then Gary.

37  
38 **BILL ARNOLD:** I just wanted you to be careful about intertwining  
39 a commercial fishery and Marcos's point is a good one, but it  
40 almost argues even more strongly, because the way to deal with a  
41 commercial harvest of sea cucumbers or sea urchins or anything  
42 else is radically different from how you want to deal with these  
43 aquarium trade species.

44  
45 We never actually got the data, but my understanding was that  
46 that sea cucumber harvest in Puerto Rico under that special  
47 permit was about 120,000 over the course of a year-and-a-half.  
48 Based on that, that would take that 8,000 pound total aquarium

1 trade ACL and completely blow it out of the water, to the point  
2 we would probably have to shut the fishery down and we're not  
3 just shutting the sea cucumber fishery down. We would shut down  
4 the aquarium trade fishery until we got this thing solved.

5  
6 The idea we had was no, this is a commercial harvest of a  
7 species for consumption and if we've got a problem with it, we  
8 institute an emergency rule to close the fishery until we can  
9 understand and get regulations in place. They weren't be  
10 harvested for aquarium trade and getting the two concepts mixed  
11 up is going to create confusion that is completely unnecessary.

12  
13 **MARCOS HANKE:** I agree with you. The problem here is that we  
14 are judging an industry that is based on unit of the fish itself  
15 and the parameter or the way to measure in pounds is not correct  
16 for the aquarium trade. It creates big problems and the sea  
17 cucumber and the whatever is sold for consumption is dealt with  
18 in pounds, in weight. Maybe we should include them in some  
19 other list of invertebrates for consumption and use the right  
20 parameters for it and not -- Go ahead.

21  
22 **BILL ARNOLD:** Let me respond to that, Marcos, and that's a good  
23 point. We are going through and developing this list of species  
24 to be managed within each of these fishery management plans.  
25 The panel has developed a draft list.

26  
27 The DAPs have had a chance to review those draft lists and  
28 provide recommendations and provide the rationale for their  
29 recommendations. That does not preclude the council from also  
30 making, and passing by motion, recommendations for species to  
31 include.

32  
33 If we go through this and you find that the panel didn't address  
34 sea urchins and the DAPs didn't address sea urchins, but the  
35 council wants to address sea urchins, the council has full  
36 freedom and authority to do that.

37  
38 We may find that when we go out to public hearings that somebody  
39 in the public is going to say you need to add sea urchins and so  
40 remember, as I've said earlier, these are draft lists and  
41 primarily to create the framework, but not the absolute -- This  
42 is not in cement. This is in silly-putty and it can be changed  
43 and adapted and I expect it will be and if you guys feel like  
44 sea cucumbers need to be added as a fishery management species,  
45 then that option is available to you.

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Lynn Rios and Gary.

48

1 **LYNN RIOS:** I just wanted to mention that earlier this year I  
2 remember reading a document where the Secretary of the  
3 Department of Natural Resources had issued an administrative  
4 order stopping all harvest of all sea cucumbers and sea urchins  
5 on the island for commercial or aquarium trade.

6  
7 Right now, there is nobody supposed to be harvesting any of  
8 those until a study was conducted to establish what the impact  
9 had been on that one time that they gave some permits to I think  
10 three fishermen to harvest and everything pointed towards that  
11 they had overharvested the resource in such a short time and so  
12 that's why she put the administrative order.

13  
14 Also, for the record, sea cucumbers, it is something that has  
15 taken off in other countries and so it's something that we've  
16 got to be thinking about, because illegal harvest might be  
17 taking place in order to export this stuff that's going to China  
18 right now.

19  
20 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Gary or --

21  
22 **MARCOS HANKE:** Thank you for your support and ideas from your  
23 side of the table. That is very important for this issue and  
24 one of the main reasons I think the federal waters should be  
25 included, even though it could be a minimal harvest in federal  
26 waters, is to create an even playing field of regulations for  
27 the management of those species, to make it easier for you guys  
28 to enforce. Basically, those are the lines that I'm looking  
29 for, to prevent problems with those organisms.

30  
31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I have Gary and then Graciela.

32  
33 **GARY ROGERS:** On our state permit, we have a list of seven  
34 invertebrates, assorted shrimps, crabs, and starfish. As far as  
35 I know, there is no invertebrate collection going on in the EEZ  
36 here on the west coast. I haven't heard of anything.

37  
38 On a personal note, anything that is cemented to the bottom,  
39 either a feather duster with a secretion or a flame scallop or  
40 anything, that needs to be left intact. Shrimp and crab and  
41 anything that moves around is fine, but anything that is  
42 actually attached to the bottom should be considered the bottom  
43 and left alone.

44  
45 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I have Graciela and then Dr.  
46 Appeldoorn.

47  
48 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** If I may suggest, one thing that you

1 could do, because you also have the octopus species here and  
2 there are four or five other species that is not octopus  
3 vulgaris that are actually harvested commercially.

4  
5 The cucumbers and the sea urchins, you could in fact take them  
6 out of the aquarium trade species and request that staff look  
7 into them, to see if there is any another kind of harvest going  
8 on, commercial or recreational.

9  
10 The EEZ really will have the highest percentage of cucumbers,  
11 but they are in really deep water and so unless there is some  
12 specific vacuum cleaner that can be going around at a thousand  
13 meters and pulling these out, the reality is that most of them  
14 do occur in the state waters.

15  
16 Given that you could take these three groups and set them aside  
17 and exclude everything else, the sponges and the snapping  
18 shrimps and things like that, the way you did with the fish, and  
19 then keep the ones that could be commercially exploited, the  
20 ones that I just mentioned, and I would have to include the  
21 stone crabs, because we have had two phone calls from commercial  
22 fishers wanting to find out if there is stone crab in the EEZ  
23 here. That might be one way of splitting the list.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Richard.

26  
27 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Just a follow-up on what Bill was saying,  
28 so there's no confusion about the issue. These are species that  
29 neither the SSC or the panel or the APs considered at all,  
30 because our starting point was a list of species that have ever  
31 showed up in any kind of catch report and those weren't on the  
32 list and so it's not that we don't think they're important, but  
33 it's just that they weren't on the list we were working off of  
34 and perhaps that was an oversight of anything else out there  
35 besides what's on the list that we should have been thinking of.

36  
37 It is something that is in front of you now and don't think it's  
38 not there because we thought it wasn't important, but it just  
39 wasn't on the list we were working off of.

40  
41 **MARCOS HANKE:** I will ask for Graciela as guidance -- What you  
42 explained makes sense to me, because it's solving some of the  
43 problems of how to manage or to create regulations for them as a  
44 commercial species for consumption.

45  
46 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I didn't mention anything about  
47 regulations. What I said is that you can direct staff to look  
48 into these species that might be commercially exploited and

1 determine if we have any information that we can bring back to  
2 the table that will include them or exclude them from being a  
3 fishery in the EEZ.

4  
5 I am not thinking in terms of any kind of management in the  
6 fishery. I am just saying from these species that we have here,  
7 we recognize that there are a number that could be commercially  
8 exploited other than the aquarium trade and I couldn't tell you  
9 right off the top of my head right now if there is a big fishery  
10 in the EEZ or not and so it would have to be looked at.

11  
12 **MIGUEL ROLON:** There is no information regarding that thing. If  
13 we had information, we would have figured it out already. I  
14 mean I went around with a Chinese guy several years ago looking  
15 for sea cucumbers, all around Guanica and La Parguera and all  
16 those places and everything was caught within the area of  
17 jurisdiction of Puerto Rico.

18  
19 At that time, we were talking about only three miles and not  
20 it's -- There was no, at that time, no sea cucumbers or sea  
21 urchins and, actually, they were after the white one, by the  
22 way, in any area beyond La Parguera or Guanica all the way to  
23 the area of jurisdiction of Puerto Rico and that's all the  
24 information I know. I mean it was hearsay, because I was with a  
25 guy and, actually, they decided not to pursue the venture  
26 because there was no monetary return or enough for them to make  
27 a profit.

28  
29 Now, I understand that they are exporting sea cucumbers and  
30 Marcos is saying he has got some information regarding the local  
31 government, but the question still remains do we have that in  
32 the EEZ and should we include it in the management unit or what?

33  
34 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The information that we have from some  
35 of the mesophotic reefs and the deepwater work shows that there  
36 are sea cucumbers and there are sea urchins in quantity in the  
37 EEZ, harvestable by diving. That might not be the case, because  
38 it will be very deep diving. I am talking about fifty, seventy,  
39 ninety-meter depths. That is divisible. I mean you could  
40 potentially do rebreather-type of diving to harvest them and  
41 then the rest is really off into the ROY type of harvest.

42  
43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I believe, Mr. Chairman, the question is the fact  
44 that you have an animal in the EEZ doesn't mean that you have a  
45 fishery. We all know that. At this time, the question is  
46 should we keep it in the management unit for the future or just  
47 leave it out?

48

1 **MARCOS HANKE:** I have a question for you, Miguel. The  
2 instruction that Graciela suggested that is a possibility for  
3 the staff to analyze which ones can have the potential to be  
4 commercially used --

5  
6 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Anything on that list is potentially useable.

7  
8 **MARCOS HANKE:** For consumption?

9  
10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Yes. If some crazy guy comes up and gives you  
11 enough money to get it out of the water and sell it, they will  
12 do it. My point is at this time we don't have that information  
13 and I don't think that digging a little bit more will have  
14 somebody under a rock that is already fishing for that.  
15 Actually, the only new fishery I know about is the golden crab.  
16 There is a guy who wants to come and fish for the golden crab  
17 here, but I don't know anything else regarding these species. I  
18 believe the question is -- Remember, we are only talking about,  
19 at this stage, to include something in the management unit or  
20 not.

21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Dr. Ponwith.

23  
24 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's an  
25 important conversation about aquarium trade versus commercially-  
26 exploited and I think that that's a valuable thing to look at  
27 and one thing that I would raise just for consideration, as  
28 you're thinking about the question on sea cucumbers and urchins,  
29 is that Mexico has a situation now where this was a species that  
30 was used on the reef locally in small quantities and the fishery  
31 managed itself for years and years.

32  
33 The interest in exporting these animals to Asian markets now is  
34 quite high and there is a lot of money involved and very, very  
35 quickly that fishery has gotten completely out of control and  
36 they're having a hard time now managing it to make sure that  
37 they are able to tend those species and keep ahead of  
38 understanding the population.

39  
40 I think that these discussions are certainly valuable and I do  
41 think it's important to think about that species both from the  
42 aquarium trade standpoint and from the commercial exploitation  
43 standpoint.

44  
45 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I know that I can speak for St. Croix. I  
46 plan to work on our St. Croix Fisheries Advisory Committee to  
47 have the harvest level at zero for white, black and sea urchins  
48 and sea cucumbers. I don't know what's going to happen with

1 this EEZ thing here, but I am working to prohibit the harvest of  
2 all those species. Roy.

3  
4 **ROY CRABTREE:** It seems to me for now -- I mean I think I'm  
5 getting general consensus that we don't want to manage this long  
6 list as aquarium species and so we want to not include that,  
7 basically, but there is some concern about fisheries developing  
8 for consumption purposes for a few things, sea cucumbers mostly  
9 and maybe urchins, but we're not convinced yet whether that  
10 really requires our attention.

11  
12 I agree with Miguel that just because an animal is out there, it  
13 doesn't mean we have to manage it. In fact, if you look at  
14 National Standard 7, one of the first sentences in it is that  
15 the principle that not every fishery needs regulation is  
16 implicit in the Standard and so just because it's there, it  
17 certainly doesn't mean we need to manage them and even if there  
18 is a fishery, it doesn't necessarily mean we need to manage  
19 them. It might be more appropriately left to the territories.

20  
21 I think we could take this list out and then we can ask staff to  
22 see if they can find anything else or we can ask for public  
23 input on the sea urchin issue and we could always, before we're  
24 done with this, say we're going to prohibit the harvest of these  
25 sea cucumber species and that we felt like it's necessary.

26  
27 I haven't really seen a lot to make me think it is at this point  
28 and it seems like that Puerto Rico has dealt with this fishery,  
29 but we could, over the next couple of meetings, return to this  
30 issue with more input and deal with it again.

31  
32 **MARCOS HANKE:** One point is that the commercial international  
33 activity changes because of the depletion of the sea cucumbers  
34 and where they traditionally harvest. If the market keeps  
35 growing, the price keeps going up and the things that we think  
36 that is not doable right now can be doable in the future and you  
37 guys have been seeing that and that precautionary approach on a  
38 coral reef system and places in which those invertebrates are  
39 important should be taken into consideration.

40  
41 **ROY CRABTREE:** I agree with that and so I think maybe we can  
42 deal with this and talk about this issue a little more, but I  
43 think it does need to be separated out from the aquarium trade  
44 and so whether we're going to manage cucumbers or not, I guess  
45 that's to be decided, but we don't want to manage this long list  
46 of aquarium species. I think we're all together on that.

47  
48 **MARCOS HANKE:** Will there have to be a motion for that?

1  
2 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I wanted to add to my previous statement that  
3 I am also working on the prohibition of harvest of sponges,  
4 because Vance Vicente made it clear one time that Frederiksted  
5 Harbor has a very large, beautiful area of sponges that he  
6 believes should be protected and I am also working on that, but  
7 it's all state waters.  
8  
9 **ROY CRABTREE:** That's another fishery that we have in Florida.  
10 There is a sponge fishery. They go out in these boats and they  
11 stand in them and they get the sponges, but we have never had to  
12 deal with it federally. We have let the state deal with it.  
13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So are we going to take a look at a motion?  
15 Roy.  
16  
17 **ROY CRABTREE:** The other part of this though, I guess, is as we  
18 do the hearings would be to raise the issue of the sea cucumbers  
19 and get input as to whether they think there is a need for us  
20 to, I guess, preemptively prevent the development of any kind of  
21 food fishery for them.  
22  
23 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I don't know whatever happened to our  
24 sea cucumbers, but when I was in my teens, there were quite a  
25 bit of sea cucumbers in shallow water, but they are no longer  
26 around. I think the habitat might have changed.  
27  
28 We have a motion. The council moves that all species of  
29 invertebrates other than corals in the Coral FMP FMU listed  
30 below be managed by the governments of Puerto Rico and the U.S.  
31 Virgin Islands, not to include the species below in the island-  
32 based FMPs.  
33  
34 **ROY CRABTREE:** Did anyone actually make that?  
35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** No, it's just someone can move it.  
37  
38 **MARCOS HANKE:** I want to read it to see if it's correct.  
39  
40 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
41  
42 **BILL ARNOLD:** You have really got two separate issues in that  
43 motion. Whether they're assigned for management to Puerto Rico  
44 and the USVI is sort of a separate issue from what's in the  
45 brackets. I think it should say be managed -- Instead, just say  
46 not be included in the IBFMPs. The list of species in the table  
47 not be included in the island-based fishery management plans.  
48 Whether they end -- If we assign management to the states is a

1 separate issue that has to be dealt with later, I think.  
2  
3 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The reason why I put this in is  
4 because the discussion that you were having had everything in it  
5 and so, you the council, has to tell us how you want to divide  
6 it up.  
7  
8 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So are we going to change that to what Bill  
9 recommended, not be included, or not to include is the same  
10 thing? Bill, is that --  
11  
12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** You either turn it over as you did  
13 with the -- I am not making a recommendation. I was just  
14 suggesting that from the list, since you were discussing  
15 cucumbers and sea urchins as being commercially exploited rather  
16 than for the ornamental fishery, that the council could say to  
17 take out the sea cucumbers and the sea urchins and the octopus  
18 species that you have there and put them in a separate list.  
19 Those, you don't want them included yet, but the management is  
20 not on the states. For the other ones, leave the management to  
21 the states.  
22  
23 **MARCOS HANKE:** In this motion, we have to make sure that we make  
24 a note or a clarification that the intention is to include them  
25 in another list or something like that.  
26  
27 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Okay and so you want us to take out  
28 the octopus, the sea cucumbers, and the urchins?  
29  
30 **MARCOS HANKE:** Correct.  
31  
32 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
33  
34 **BILL ARNOLD:** That's not what you want to do. You have got an  
35 aquarium trade list here. This is strictly for aquarium trade  
36 really, as it's interpreted and meant in the FMP. If you don't  
37 want to manage these as aquarium trade species, then don't  
38 include them in the fishery management plans.  
39  
40 If separately you want a motion that says we want to include  
41 these urchins and these sea cucumbers, or however you want word  
42 it, in the FMPs, the same way you made your decision on your  
43 redfin parrotfish and the same way you made your decision on  
44 yellowedge grouper, then that would be a separate motion  
45 specific to those, but this has to do with the complete list of  
46 aquarium trade species included in the Coral FMP.  
47  
48 I think it's pretty cut and dried that you say we don't want to

1 include this table of species in any of the three island-based  
2 fishery management plans.  
3  
4 **MARCOS HANKE:** For the aquarium trade. I think in the motion it  
5 doesn't specify that.  
6  
7 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** So tell me what you want me to type in  
8 the motion.  
9  
10 **MARCOS HANKE:** I am reading and I am trying to -- That list  
11 mentions the aquarium trade anyplace besides the list?  
12  
13 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
14  
15 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay and technically no, but it is listed as  
16 aquarium trade in the existing FMP, but if you want to interpret  
17 it that way and you want to make a combined decision that we are  
18 not going to include any of these but these urchins and sea  
19 cucumbers, then inherent in that you are making a decision to  
20 include cucumbers and sea urchins.  
21  
22 The understanding I had from the conversation is you wanted to  
23 look into these and consider whether they should be included for  
24 management, which would be a separate decision down the road,  
25 but it's up to you guys what you want to. I mean if you want to  
26 include them now as part of the same motion, then that's your  
27 decision.  
28  
29 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.  
30  
31 **MIGUEL ROLON:** You have enough confusion now with the way it is.  
32 Just have a motion of what is it that you want to do. If you  
33 want at this time to postpone including or not including the sea  
34 urchins and the sea cucumbers and octopus, say so. Actually, I  
35 encourage you to do that now and then you can deal with the  
36 rest, because you are in hot pursuit of the topic, but do  
37 something.  
38  
39 **MARCOS HANKE:** The thing is that we have to finish with this  
40 motion.  
41  
42 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No, actually you don't have a motion on the  
43 table. You have Graciela and the staff and me talking about  
44 this. You can have a motion now and say I want anything with  
45 spines out of the picture and we want to -- It's your meeting  
46 and it's your motions.  
47  
48 **MARCOS HANKE:** No, I understand. Let's do a motion and don't

1 erase that one, but another motion prior to that, if I  
2 understand the right way of expressing myself correctly.  
3  
4 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay. What is that you want to do with the sea  
5 cucumbers?  
6  
7 **MARCOS HANKE:** The wording for that will be to include sea  
8 cucumbers and sea urchins --  
9  
10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** In the management unit for the FMPs?  
11  
12 **MARCOS HANKE:** In a management unit for the FMPs.  
13  
14 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay. If that's what you want, then you need to  
15 have a second and then you can discuss it further.  
16  
17 **MARCOS HANKE:** That's my motion.  
18  
19 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Then you go back to the list and my understanding  
20 is whatever you do with the whole list will not include sea  
21 cucumbers and sea urchins in the same way, because you are  
22 already treating it this other way.  
23  
24 **MARCOS HANKE:** Now it's clear. Thank you.  
25  
26 **MIGUEL ROLON:** That's the motion on the table. By the way,  
27 Graciela is putting all the motions in sequence.  
28  
29 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The first motion is the council moves  
30 to include sea cucumbers and sea urchins in an FMU in the  
31 IBFMPs.  
32  
33 **MARCOS HANKE:** The motion should include the three areas.  
34  
35 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No, that is already included in IBFMPs.  
36  
37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Island-based FMPs.  
38  
39 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Then you need to have a second.  
40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Is there a second?  
42  
43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Before you discuss anything, you have to second  
44 the motion or drop it.  
45  
46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Is there a second?  
47  
48 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Second.

1  
2 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Now discuss it again to death and then you vote.  
3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Discussion? Velasquez.  
5  
6 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** I propose one thing. Why not separate for  
7 the aquarium trade for the species of invertebrates? Why not  
8 separate?  
9  
10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** It's already separate. What they are doing now  
11 is out of those invertebrates, Marcos is proposing to include  
12 sea cucumbers and sea urchins in the FMU and so, in other words,  
13 the following motion will exclude all that from the FMU, all  
14 these other species. What you are trying to do here is securing  
15 what he wants. It doesn't mean that you are going to vote for  
16 it, but the discussion is whether you as a council will accept  
17 that or not.  
18  
19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
20  
21 **ROY CRABTREE:** So do we know -- I mean what species exactly are  
22 we talking about, sea cucumbers and sea urchins? Do we have a  
23 list of what that means?  
24  
25 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The black sea urchin, the purple  
26 urchin, the pencil urchin, the pincushion urchin, the sea egg,  
27 and then Holothuroidea species, which includes Holothuroidea  
28 Mexicana and Holothuroidea -- Two other species of  
29 Holothuroidea.  
30  
31 **MARCOS HANKE:** Being the Mexicana the most valuable.  
32  
33 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.  
34  
35 **TONY BLANCHARD:** We have these listed as aquarium trade species,  
36 correct?  
37  
38 **MIGUEL ROLON:** At this point, yes.  
39  
40 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay. So I understand what Marcos is trying to  
41 bring forward. I think where you're going to run into a problem  
42 is when you have to come up with the ACLs on them. I think just  
43 by leaving it as an aquarium trade that they would have to  
44 acquire a special permit stating that they're aquarium trade,  
45 correct?  
46  
47 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No, what you're doing now, in the previous  
48 discussion, is that all the species that we call aquarium trade

1 invertebrates at this time will be moved to the realm of the  
2 local governments and it would not be managed by the federal  
3 government in the EEZ. At least it would not be included in the  
4 management unit of those island-based FMPs.

5  
6 What Marcos is suggesting at this time is that he agrees with  
7 that, except for the sea urchin species and the sea cucumber  
8 species that Graciela just mentioned the names of.

9  
10 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Let me see if I understand what is happening  
11 here. You are saying that you want these managed by the --

12  
13 **MARCOS HANKE:** As a commercial species that if you --

14  
15 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Right, but you have no commercial landings and  
16 so where are you going to come up with the ACL?

17  
18 **MARCOS HANKE:** We have commercial landings reported to Puerto  
19 Rico and we don't have it anymore because the fishery is closed,  
20 but there is the potential of happening again something that I  
21 don't see it as a good thing for the environment or for the  
22 health of the reef and so on.

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy and then Bill.

25  
26 **ROY CRABTREE:** I agree with you that I don't see it as being  
27 good either and so my guess would be what we would do, Tony, is  
28 include them and prohibit harvest of them until we had some  
29 basis for deciding there is some sustainable level of harvest  
30 and some interest in a fishery that we would want to allow, but  
31 I am taking it that what we're doing here is saying for now at  
32 least we don't want this fishery to develop and we're going to  
33 prevent it from developing.

34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

36  
37 **BILL ARNOLD:** A couple of comments. One is technical on the  
38 motion. Don't put in an FMU, because we haven't decided yet,  
39 and that's going to be Action 2, exactly how or if we're going  
40 to structure FMUs. You might want two separate FMUs and this  
41 motion is dictating okay and so that's that.

42  
43 The second thing is I don't object to putting these things in  
44 the actual fishery management plans and I have no problem with  
45 setting them up as prohibited harvest. I would advise that we  
46 are covering all sea cucumbers and we're only covering a  
47 specific list of sea urchins.

48

1 Graciela can comment as to whether that's all the sea urchins  
2 that are out there. There may be another sea urchin that's not  
3 on that list that could become extremely valuable commercially  
4 and you haven't covered it at all. It's a free-for-all and so,  
5 as with the corals, you might want to say all in the class of --  
6

7 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** In this one, you are just saying sea  
8 cucumbers and sea urchins and you are not even mentioning the  
9 list below and you are just saying all sea urchins and all sea  
10 cucumbers.  
11

12 **BILL ARNOLD:** The list you have is going to disappear and you're  
13 just going to say that.  
14

15 **MARCOS HANKE:** That's the intention of the motion.  
16

17 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Because in fact, there are like five  
18 other species of sea cucumbers that are not even there that  
19 occur in the EEZ.  
20

21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Iris, did you have something to say?  
22

23 **IRIS LOWERY:** I was just also going to raise the point that it  
24 seems like maybe the intent here is also to sort get comments  
25 and to further develop this idea and figure out -- Get some more  
26 information and so I don't know the best way to go about that,  
27 but maybe if there is some hesitancy to actually include it at  
28 this point, just sort of remember that too, that this is very  
29 much a draft list and you're seeking input.  
30

31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Blanchard and then Roy.  
32

33 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I understand what you're saying, Marcos, and I  
34 understand what you're saying, Roy, but how I look at it is this  
35 way. We talk about if we include it in a different list and if  
36 there is interest in making it a fishery and that we would deal  
37 with it at that point in time, but how would you develop a  
38 fishery if you're not allowed to take it and to put it on the  
39 market? How are you going to develop a fishery that way?  
40

41 **ROY CRABTREE:** That's a good question and I don't know the  
42 answer to it. We issue exempted fishing permits, for example,  
43 and things like that and so there might be a way to do a trial  
44 fishery along those lines. We have done that in some places.  
45

46 I mean I will go ahead and support the motion for now, Marcos,  
47 because I would like to hear what people say about it, but at  
48 the end of the day, I don't know where I am going to be on it.

1 I kind of have mixed feelings and I am okay with trying to  
2 anticipate future problems and head them off, but you know you  
3 can't foresee everything that is going to happen down the road.

4  
5 **TONY BLANCHARD:** It's like the lionfish. Everybody thought the  
6 lionfish would be a problem and it is a problem to a certain  
7 degree, but now we're trying to develop a market for the  
8 lionfish and so I see the sea cucumber and the sea urchins  
9 potentially being a market at some point in time that could be  
10 managed, but what I'm saying is if we shut off everything  
11 completely, you can't develop a market if you can't put it on  
12 the plates of people.

13  
14 **ROY CRABTREE:** Well, if I could, I mean that's a good point and  
15 so there's things on both sides of this. If we don't include  
16 it, the fishery could take off and then by the time we could  
17 catch up, we could be way behind. If we shut it down, we could  
18 prevent it from ever developing to begin with when there might  
19 be a sustainable fishery that could come out of that and be good  
20 for people and I don't know. There is things to weigh on both  
21 sides of this, like most everything else we do.

22  
23 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** You know the only thing that you're doing here is  
26 like you remember the old movies where the guy sticks his head  
27 and it was full of arrows and there was Indians and then when he  
28 came clean, there was no Indians. This is your hat for the  
29 arrows.

30  
31 If you go to the public hearings and people crucify you because  
32 of cucumbers and then we have the golden cucumber that we didn't  
33 know about it, you will have some elements of judgment to decide  
34 whether you will pursue this further or not. At this time, at  
35 this stage that we are at right now, it's just listing species.

36  
37 Actually, if you don't list it, nothing will happen, unless the  
38 Chinese discover it is more aphrodisiac to eat black sea urchin  
39 than the other one and, again, do you want more Chinese in this  
40 world?

41  
42 Anyway, Mr. Chairman, like I said, you have had enough  
43 discussion and just vote on it yea or nay and move to the long  
44 list that Graciela has.

45  
46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is the council -- I already  
47 read the motion, right? All right. We will vote on it.  
48 **Anybody in favor say aye; any abstentions, one; any nays.**

1 **Hearing none, the motion carries.**  
2  
3 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, it's obvious, but just for the  
4 record, neither Puerto Rico nor the Virgin Islands is voting.  
5 There was a last-minute problem in the Virgin Islands and so she  
6 wanted to be excused and in the case of Ricardo, because of the  
7 letter and legal problems, Ricardo will be participating all the  
8 time, but not all the time will be voting. I just wanted to  
9 cover Ricardo's rear-end when you go back home. You owe me  
10 something.  
11  
12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** But feel free to make --  
13  
14 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Sorry to interrupt, but we do have to  
15 list the motions and so it would be one abstention, one absent,  
16 Puerto Rico, but that doesn't include Puerto Rico.  
17  
18 **MIGUEL ROLON:** That's it.  
19  
20 **ROY CRABTREE:** Puerto Rico is not voting and so abstention.  
21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Ricardo, although you can't vote, feel free  
23 to make comments. We had another draft motion that -- It's not  
24 really a motion, but it was something, just a draft, to help  
25 out.  
26  
27 **MIGUEL ROLON:** It's the language for the following motion.  
28 Graciela, can you very quick remind us what this is all about?  
29  
30 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** You have the rest of the invertebrates  
31 that are associated with the Coral FMU and whether you want to  
32 include them for federal management or not. From this list, we  
33 will be taking these species out, because you already voted on  
34 those. Do you want all those species of sponges and anemone and  
35 shrimp, snapping shrimp, and clams, tubeworms, crinoids, sea  
36 stars, brittle stars out of the list for federal management?  
37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have a question on octopus, because that's  
39 a commercial species, unless you're being specific about a  
40 different one that's for aquarium trade, but there is a  
41 commercial species of octopus, the common octopus.  
42  
43 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** In fact, there are five other species  
44 of octopus in the area and they are harvested commercially.  
45 These octopus species, because they were not identified at the  
46 time when the list was created, it exempts the common octopus,  
47 which is thought to be the most prevalent species in the area,  
48 but there are four others that are also part of the fishery in

1 the U.S. Caribbean. The question is -- I mean this would be for  
2 the aquarium trade only.

3

4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Where are we now?

5

6 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** If you accept the language that is on  
7 the screen, someone moves it and seconds it and discuss it.

8

9 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to move the motion as written. So  
10 moved.

11

12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Do we have a second?

13

14 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

15

16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any discussion? The second was by Blanchard.  
17 Wait a second. The motion is the council moves that all species  
18 listed as species of invertebrates for the aquarium trade in the  
19 Coral FMP FMU listed below not be included for federal  
20 management in the IBFMPs. Motion by Marcos and seconded by Tony  
21 Blanchard. Any discussion? **Hearing none, I will take a vote**  
22 **and all in favor say aye; any abstentions; any nays. Hearing**  
23 **none, the motion carries.**

24

25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, what's next?

26

27 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** You still have a list of species that  
28 the panel and the DAPs wanted to exclude, because of Criterion  
29 B, and other species that they would like to include because of  
30 Criteria C and D. Do you want to go through B first? This one  
31 should be fairly straightforward. Okay.

32

33 As we mentioned this morning, most of what you're dealing with  
34 is the EEZ and so the panel looked at the thirty-meter depth  
35 contour as being the separation between the state and the  
36 federal waters.

37

38 We looked at quite a number of datasets that were available. We  
39 looked at the commercial landings and the recreational landings  
40 and anything that was available for that. What the panel did is  
41 that yes, there are many species that occur in the EEZ, like the  
42 ones that you see in green on the screen, the wenchman, the  
43 cardinal, and the queen snapper, that don't have any regulations  
44 in place, but there are others that only occur in the state  
45 waters and so those were listed as being excluded just because  
46 of Criterion B. Either they don't occur in the EEZ or most of  
47 the landings are from the state waters and that's the case, for  
48 example, of the gray snapper.

1  
2 What we've done is that we've created lists for Puerto Rico, for  
3 St. Thomas, and St. Croix. I have the Excel file, so you will  
4 be able to read what's on the screen, of all those species that  
5 the panel recommended to the council to exclude from federal  
6 management. If you see a "B", Criterion B means that they are  
7 state fisheries or they are only in the state. The ones that  
8 are left blank is because they didn't meet any of the criteria  
9 that you had set up for deciding whether they should be in the  
10 list of federally-managed species or not.

11  
12 Going back to the Excel file, we will begin with the ones to  
13 exclude from Puerto Rico and this would include two snappers,  
14 the grunts, the goatfish, the porgies, the squirrelfish, the  
15 tilefish, the jacks. This you dealt with already and so let me  
16 just get it out of here.

17  
18 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, the table that you are reading now is  
19 those species recommended by --

20  
21 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Both the panel and the DAP Puerto Rico  
22 to be excluded from federal management.

23  
24 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay. That does not include St. Croix and St.  
25 Thomas?

26  
27 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** We are going to do Puerto Rico, St.  
28 Croix, and St. Thomas separately, because they are not the same  
29 species.

30  
31 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, so the motion will be to accept the  
32 recommendation from the expert panel and the DAP Puerto Rico to  
33 exclude these species from the management unit in the waters off  
34 Puerto Rico? Is that it? That is Marcos's motion.

35  
36 **MARCOS HANKE:** That is my motion.

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second.

39  
40 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

41  
42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Second by Blanchard. Any discussion on this  
43 list? We will take it to a vote. **All in favor say aye; any**  
44 **abstentions; any nays. Hearing none, the motion carries.** Now  
45 we will do a ten-minute break.

46  
47 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)  
48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Let's get started again.  
2  
3 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Should I start again?  
4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes, we're good.  
6  
7 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Now we're going to look at the same  
8 list for St. Croix. What you are seeing on the screen is the  
9 first half on the left and the second half on the right. What  
10 we've done is we've compared what the panel has to say, which is  
11 the panel decision, to what the DAP specifically said about  
12 these species that the panel recommended be excluded.  
13  
14 As you can see, there are new species that were not in your  
15 original fishery management unit for the reef fish, like the  
16 cubera snapper, but for which there are landings and for which  
17 there is additional information from the mesophotic reefs, et  
18 cetera, and so these were included for discussion and to  
19 determine whether they should be, in the end, included for  
20 management for any one of the districts or not.  
21  
22 For St. Croix, what you are looking at is all the species that  
23 are being excluded. Again, it's most of the grunts, the  
24 goatfish, the porgies, the squirrelfish, the tilefish, the  
25 jacks, either because they were mostly state-water fisheries or  
26 they did not meet any of the other two criteria that we looked  
27 at.  
28  
29 Now, this is a little bit different from the summary that you  
30 received from the DAPs and the reason for that is they went back  
31 and forth between putting species in the ecosystem component  
32 list or not, but, at the same time, they mentioned that they  
33 were vulnerable species for either a developing fishery, because  
34 people harvested them and not reported them. For whatever  
35 reason, they thought those species were vulnerable.  
36  
37 You are going to see another list that only looks at those  
38 species that made it into the list because they were vulnerable  
39 and so for this, what we need from the council is we need you to  
40 tell us if we should exclude these species from federal  
41 management in St. Croix.  
42  
43 There are landings and there is information on the biology that  
44 was taken into consideration during the panel of experts  
45 discussion and the conclusion was that the recommendation to the  
46 council was to exclude all these from federal management for St.  
47 Croix.  
48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Where is the queen snapper there? I can't  
2 see that good.  
3  
4 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The queen snapper makes it because of  
5 another criterion and so the DAP recommended that it be put into  
6 an ecosystem component for St. Croix, but economically it's very  
7 important, and so that Criterion D, and so it actually makes it  
8 into the list.  
9  
10 This is a complex process and it wasn't one thing or the other.  
11 You had to go stepwise into determining what species would be  
12 included or not.  
13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
15  
16 **ROY CRABTREE:** I am curious -- They include the pompano dolphin,  
17 but not the dolphin dolphin, which is the opposite of what I  
18 would be inclined --  
19  
20 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** This is for exclusion and so they are  
21 including the big dolphin and they are excluding the smaller  
22 species.  
23  
24 **ROY CRABTREE:** So they're excluding that one?  
25  
26 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes and so we have the dolphin that is  
27 mostly harvested here, the larger species, included, but they  
28 are recommending to exclude -- Most of the landings will just be  
29 dorado.  
30  
31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
32  
33 **BILL ARNOLD:** I want to make sure I'm clear on this, Graciela,  
34 and for the council. This list here is basically the species  
35 that would be considered based upon -- We have determined that  
36 they do occur in the EEZ or they don't occur in the EEZ or these  
37 are the ones that do occur in the EEZ, but don't meet any of the  
38 other criteria?  
39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** It's both. It's B, that they might  
41 not -- They are in the EEZ, but the fishery, the largest  
42 landings, the largest percentage of the landings, does not come  
43 from the EEZ.  
44  
45 Also, they don't meet any of the other criteria of being  
46 vulnerable or being economically in the top percentage of the  
47 landings, et cetera. Most of them, these are completely  
48 excluded for all reasons.

1  
2 **BILL ARNOLD:** Right, but there's another list for St. Croix that  
3 we will discuss that are species that should be included and  
4 that's where you would find your mahi?  
5  
6 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That's correct.  
7  
8 **BILL ARNOLD:** So we'll get to that?  
9  
10 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes.  
11  
12 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay.  
13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Where is the rock hind?  
15  
16 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The rock hind, again, we're going to  
17 look at the vulnerability of the species. Rock hind is a  
18 hermaphrodite and it takes a long time to grow, et cetera, and  
19 so it is a species of concern, because it's vulnerable. You can  
20 see, from the minutes of the DAP, that they went back and forth  
21 in terms of the ecosystem component and how vulnerable they were  
22 and they actually state that --  
23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So the yellow is what the panel of experts  
25 recommends and the red is what the DAP recommends?  
26  
27 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The yellow is because they are new  
28 species that were not in the FMU originally.  
29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Bill.  
31  
32 **BILL ARNOLD:** All right and so the yellow are ones that were  
33 added by the panel, right, Graciela, and suggested to be  
34 included for management?  
35  
36 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** During the first round of discussion.  
37 After discussing everything, the panel decides that they should  
38 not be included for St. Croix, but I have them highlighted  
39 because they are new and they have not been part of the FMU  
40 before. These are new species that were not part of the FMUs at  
41 any time.  
42  
43 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay. Again, correct me if I'm wrong, but instead  
44 of asking where species are that aren't on this list, you should  
45 just focus on this list, because, and this is an  
46 advertisement/preview, another list is on the way and that's  
47 probably going to capture the species you think are missing,  
48 like mahi and rock hind and some of the others.

1  
2 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Okay and so the same thing that we did  
3 for Puerto Rico. Does the council want to exclude from federal  
4 management all these species in this table for St. Croix?  
5  
6 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.  
7  
8 **MARCOS HANKE:** The pompano dolphin, how many people can tell  
9 them apart from the hippurus?  
10  
11 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I don't think that many people really  
12 can, but if they were trained they could, but the landings are  
13 going to be for one species, dolphin, period.  
14  
15 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** But the pelagic fishers know the difference.  
16  
17 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Exactly. You see the other problem is  
18 that we looked at the forms. We studied the forms and we got  
19 data from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center online and  
20 ongoing as we were discussing this and you go through the  
21 process of finding out how many pounds were landed for any one  
22 of these species.  
23  
24 Anything that had one pound landed anytime during the history of  
25 the commercial landings or recreational landings was looked at,  
26 but it might be that it was a million pounds of dolphinfish and  
27 two pounds of these pompano dolphin. We are not presenting here  
28 all the details, but there are tables and tables of what  
29 percentage they made and what part came from the EEZ and what  
30 didn't, if we had that information, and so the conclusion is  
31 this is the information that we have. Based on a species-  
32 specific management regime, you are just going to get dolphin,  
33 most likely the hippurus species.  
34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So we're going to see another list?  
36  
37 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** This is to exclude them from  
38 management and you don't want them in the list for federally-  
39 managed species.  
40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** But there is another list that recommends  
42 some of those be included?  
43  
44 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** None of these for St. Croix. Once  
45 they are excluded, they are excluded.  
46  
47 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I propose, Mr. Chairman, to get this off the  
48 table and if you disagree with what the panel and the DAP St.

1 Croix said, so be it, but now you have to decide if you accept  
2 what they are recommending or not. In other words, we need  
3 another motion and keep going with this.  
4  
5 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** What you have in the --  
6  
7 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.  
8  
9 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I make a motion to accept the list that the DAP  
10 decided to exclude.  
11  
12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** A point of clarification. The DAP St.  
13 Croix or the panel, everything that's in red on the screen?  
14  
15 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
16  
17 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Because when you don't see any color -  
18 -  
19  
20 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, the motion is the DAP St. Croix and  
21 just write it up there and then any discussion and they decide  
22 to amend it or not.  
23  
24 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The DAP St. Croix --  
25  
26 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, write what he said and then we will  
27 discuss it. We need to have the motion and then we have to --  
28 He said DAP St. Croix.  
29  
30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
31  
32 **MIGUEL ROLON:** We need a second and then you discuss it.  
33  
34 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.  
35  
36 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Now, Graciela, go at it.  
37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any discussion?  
39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Who seconded it?  
41  
42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.  
43  
44 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** What you are doing is you are just  
45 basically saying that these species that the DAP St. Croix, what  
46 I am pointing to on the screen, mentioned that they should be in  
47 the ecosystem component species. They didn't speak to any of  
48 the other species that are in white here and so what you're

1 doing is that you're taking these species that the DAP St. Croix  
2 recommends be put in the ecosystem component list and you are  
3 not speaking to any of the exclusion from the federally managed  
4 list.  
5  
6 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay and now, with that discussion, Tony and the  
7 council, do you wish to include the panel of experts'  
8 recommendation to exclude all the red ones? That row, they are  
9 excluded.  
10  
11 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Everything that you see in red means  
12 delete from the list of species.  
13  
14 **TONY BLANCHARD:** That's my suggestion.  
15  
16 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Now you can add "and the panel of experts".  
17  
18 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** But then I cannot say "and DAP St.  
19 Croix".  
20  
21 **MIGUEL ROLON:** That's what we are saying. That's the essence of  
22 the wish, Tony, of what you want to do?  
23  
24 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
25  
26 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Marcos agrees?  
27  
28 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes.  
29  
30 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** So you want everything that it's in  
31 red on this list to be put in --  
32  
33 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any discussion? Iris.  
36  
37 **IRIS LOWERY:** I would agree with Graciela that the current  
38 language doesn't really make the council's intent clear, because  
39 the DAP did not exclude species, right, and it wanted -- It  
40 looks like, from the spreadsheet, that the DAP included certain  
41 species as ecosystem component and the panel said to exclude all  
42 those species and those are two different things.  
43  
44 **MARCOS HANKE:** Just following up, I think, Tony, we should  
45 mention just the recommendation by the panel of experts. It's  
46 going to be much more clear, the intention, if it is to exclude  
47 the --  
48

1 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Wait, wait, wait, wait. That's not what you  
2 said. You know when you started the DAP STX -- That's what  
3 Graciela is trying to -- I stopped Graciela because of this. I  
4 wanted so you will understand it each step of the way.

5  
6 Graciela, can we go to the top, when you have the panel of  
7 experts in red and the EEZ -- Okay. Look at the first three  
8 there. If you go by the motion that you have, you will exclude  
9 them and you will not put into the ecosystem component those  
10 three species. If you want to split it and then include those  
11 three in the -- You are not following the panel of experts. You  
12 have to follow either one.

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy and then Bill.

15  
16 **ROY CRABTREE:** Let's see the motion, Graciela, because I think  
17 the motion is ambiguous. **I am going to offer a substitute**  
18 **motion that the council moves to exclude the species recommended**  
19 **by the panel of experts from federal management.** I think that's  
20 clear then.

21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

23  
24 **BILL ARNOLD:** So the DAP did agree with the panel to exclude  
25 these species for management. They may have identified some to  
26 be included in the ecosystem component category, but that's not  
27 in the list of managed species.

28  
29 Ecosystem component species are not managed species. They are  
30 separate and will be dealt with later by a separate action, if  
31 the council agrees with our planned scheme for developing these  
32 FMPs/EISSs.

33  
34 **ROY CRABTREE:** Right and so I'm figuring we'll come back to that  
35 at a later point.

36  
37 **BILL ARNOLD:** But the panel did say -- The original motion is  
38 correct. The panel agreed and I mean the DAP agreed with the  
39 panel of experts that they don't want these included for  
40 management.

41  
42 **ROY CRABTREE:** Then I am confused then, because that wasn't how  
43 it came across to me.

44  
45 **BILL ARNOLD:** But they said but we would like to put them on the  
46 watch list, so to speak, and include them as ecosystem component  
47 species. They're not species that are going to have to have  
48 ACLs. They're not managed species in that sense, but we just

1 want them to be considered for the ecosystem component category.  
2

3 **ROY CRABTREE:** Are you saying then that my substitute motion is  
4 the same as the original motion?  
5

6 **BILL ARNOLD:** Essentially, except that the DAP did agree with  
7 the panel that these species would not be included for  
8 management.  
9

10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, you know this is -- What I am going  
11 to say is almost PR, but I like the first one, because it  
12 includes the DAP and the final result will be the same.  
13

14 **ROY CRABTREE:** Okay. I would like to withdraw my motion then,  
15 because I am getting old and I was confused. I should have  
16 known better than to ever go contrary to Mr. Blanchard.  
17

18 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All in favor say aye; any nays; any  
19 abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.  
20

21 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** St. Thomas was a little bit different,  
22 because in St. Thomas, the panel of experts asked the DAP St.  
23 Thomas to actually come up with a recommendation for the  
24 council.  
25

26 We had a phone call to go over the information that the DAP had  
27 provided and so this one is a little bit different, because you  
28 are going to see that the panel recommends one thing and  
29 whatever you see the DAP and the question mark is that question  
30 being passed on to the DAP so that we could get some information  
31 back and then to actually accept the recommendation of the DAP  
32 as that of the panel. That's why when it says "DAP?" and it's  
33 in red here, it's the recommendation that it's being discussed  
34 by the DAP and actually given back to the council as a final  
35 recommendation to exclude these species from management.  
36

37 There were two specific that the DAP St. Thomas did not discuss  
38 and those were the sand tilefishes, and so that's why they are  
39 left blank here, and then everything else the DAP agreed with  
40 the panel or made a recommendation that that's the one we're  
41 turning over to the council. All the species that you see in  
42 red now will be excluded from federal management for St. Thomas.  
43

44 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, what happened to the ones that are in  
45 white?  
46

47 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** They were not specifically addressed  
48 by the DAP by species name in terms of the exclusion or that

1 they accepted the recommendation of the panel, but there is --  
2 For some species, there was no specificity as to really exclude  
3 them from federal management and that's why they are white here.  
4 The panel made the full recommendation for exclusion and the DAP  
5 reviewed most of these, but they did not speak specifically to  
6 these species.

7  
8 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, is there any species that the DAP St.  
9 Thomas did not agree with the panel and do they have a rationale  
10 for that disagreement?

11  
12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Specifically, the ones that you see  
13 with an "EC" again are species that they would like to see on  
14 the watch list. Then that becomes -- The issue then for the  
15 panel was to look at why they would like them to be in the  
16 ecosystem component and then if they become -- If they are  
17 vulnerable or ecologically significant, then that was part of  
18 the review.

19  
20 When the panel then again reviewed some of the information that  
21 came back, in terms of the EC component, then if they are not in  
22 the EEZ -- If they're excluded because they are not part of the  
23 EEZ fisheries, then the panel doesn't accept that recommendation  
24 from the DAP.

25  
26 They can be on an ecosystem component list down the road, but,  
27 as of right now, they would be deleted from the list of species  
28 to be federally managed.

29  
30 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Could this be the same way we did it with the St.  
31 Croix DAP and a motion that we will agree with the DAP St.  
32 Thomas and the expert panel to exclude the list of species that  
33 you have on the screen?

34  
35 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes.

36  
37 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Can we just copy it and then just substitute  
38 "STT" for "STX"?

39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** One thing that I have to mention is  
41 you have looked at the species on the screen, but the lists are  
42 not exactly the same. There are species that have been included  
43 and excluded from the various EEZs.

44  
45 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Can we get that motion again and then we can  
46 worry about the other species, because, remember, guys, this is  
47 a process that, as Roy mentioned before, you are beginning this  
48 process and you have to take this to public hearings and you

1 will have to discuss it further and at the end, you will have a  
2 clean list, if I must say, of species that you will include in  
3 the management unit in the EEZ of each one of the areas.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So we need someone to move this motion.

6

7 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.

8

9 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Do we have a second?

10

11 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.

12

13 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion reads: The council moves to  
14 exclude species recommended by the panel of experts and the DAP  
15 St. Thomas/St. John from federal management, listed below.  
16 Motion by Tony Blanchard and seconded by Marcos Hanke. Is there  
17 discussion?

18

19 I have a discussion. I am concerned that the justification of  
20 ciguatoxin, or not targeting, is the reason for exclusion and I  
21 am just -- I can be corrected, but I am not sure if that's --  
22 Graciela.

23

24 **MIGUEL ROLON:** In the case of ciguatera, you already did that a  
25 long time ago when you had the Reef Fish FMP. You excluded some  
26 of the species from the management unit and you also excluded  
27 them from the actual OY, about 20 percent of the species that  
28 the fishermen told us that there was ciguatera. There is a  
29 precedent there and the second one is what of your concerns?

30

31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Not targeted.

32

33 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There are a couple of things. One is  
34 that the panel of experts looked at the actual data and the  
35 information and the biology of the species and the distribution  
36 from the landings that we have, et cetera.

37

38 The second is that the DAP are experts when they are out in the  
39 field and so they if they are not targeting the species, it's  
40 not in the form and we couldn't find it in the database, but we  
41 found it in such minimal amounts that they didn't amount to  
42 much.

43

44 The DAP, the people who are out doing this every day, are  
45 telling you that they are not in the former and they are not in  
46 the landings because they are not targeting them, because they  
47 don't sell them because they are ciguatoxic.

48

1 That information, that's the other side of the information,  
2 because it's expert information that is being presented to the  
3 council and made into a recommendation that they should not be  
4 listed for federal management, because there is not going to be  
5 any information. No one brings them in and no one wants them.

6  
7 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** But what about their ecological importance?

8  
9 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Ecological importance, for example,  
10 you do have a number of species that were included because they  
11 are top predators. Now, there have been changes in the fishery  
12 and you do have some top predators for which you probably have  
13 to watch out, because they are top predators for a reason. They  
14 eat a lot of other fish that are in the ocean and so that needs  
15 to be looked at in the future.

16  
17 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

18  
19 **BILL ARNOLD:** Let's use barracuda as an example. You've got two  
20 species of barracuda up there and they are in the fishery,  
21 because we have some level of landings for them historically and  
22 that's how we define whether they were in the fishery or not.

23  
24 As Graciela explained earlier, one pound in 1987, it's in the  
25 fishery and so we included them on the list. When the panel  
26 looked at the barracuda, they said, okay, they do occur in the  
27 EEZ and even though they are not landed and not targeted and  
28 they are not biologically vulnerable, but they could be  
29 ecologically important for exactly that reason. They are top-  
30 level predators.

31  
32 The panel suggested that, okay, because they are top-level  
33 predators and could be ecologically important, we recommend they  
34 be included. The DAP then looked at that and said that may be  
35 the case, but we don't target them because they're ciguatoxic  
36 and so we're not harvesting them and for that reason, we  
37 recommend that they not be included for management, because  
38 you're going to end up with an ACL of eight pounds or something  
39 like that, because they're simply not harvesting them.

40  
41 That's how, in the case of barracuda, even though the panel  
42 said, well, they might be worthy of inclusion, the DAP said for  
43 these reasons, experts on the water, we recommend you don't  
44 include them.

45  
46 You are making the decision as to whether you agree with the  
47 panel that they're ecologically important, even though they're  
48 rarely caught, or with the DAP that because they are rarely

1 caught they're not really a key component of the fishery and we  
2 don't think they should be managed.  
3  
4 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Additionally, they are included for  
5 Puerto Rico and they are excluded for St. Thomas/St. John. This  
6 is part of the differences that you find among the islands,  
7 because in Puerto Rico they will fish for them and they will  
8 bring them in and they might not be able to sell them, but they  
9 are part of the fishery.  
10  
11 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So my question is, and I am really looking at  
12 something like rock hind, because --  
13  
14 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** These are the ones that you are  
15 excluding from federal management and you are not going to look  
16 at them anymore until you take the process out to the public and  
17 maybe someone will bring one of those back in and tell you why.  
18 Right now, we are just making the draft list and excluding these  
19 species from federal management for St. Thomas/St. John.  
20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Still, you're going to take those that say  
22 "EC" and put them somewhere else?  
23  
24 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes. Once you do that, then this goes  
25 on, because if they are not in the form, which is another  
26 problem that we have, they have to be written in. If they're  
27 not written in, then you're not going to get any information on  
28 them and so it becomes --  
29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Bill.  
31  
32 **BILL ARNOLD:** The case of this list from St. Thomas, it's  
33 probably most important that you look at the yellow ones. The  
34 yellow ones are ones that were added by the panel, and correct  
35 me if I'm wrong, Graciela, and suggested for inclusion and then  
36 the DAP looked at those and said no, don't include them. They  
37 provided a rationale. The rationale may or may not be on the  
38 board, but the DAP did provide a rationale as to why they should  
39 not be included.  
40  
41 For example, look at tripletail. You could say, well, okay, the  
42 panel said here's one that possibly could be included and I  
43 believe because of biological vulnerability. Richard, do you  
44 remember that?  
45  
46 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes.  
47  
48 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay and so biological vulnerability and the DAP

1 again said for this reason, which isn't listed, but they said  
2 that it's not caught or whatever it is and don't include it and  
3 so you have a decision to make there. Specifically with the  
4 ones in yellow, are there any you see in there that you would go  
5 with the -- Basically, your motion is going to accept the -- You  
6 have to be a little more careful here.

7  
8 Your motion, if you cover the entire list, is accepting the DAP  
9 recommendations. If you wanted to pull any out, then you would  
10 do that at this time and say, well, we think tripletail should  
11 be included, et cetera, et cetera. I hope that helps.

12  
13 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Again, it's different for Puerto Rico  
14 and different for St. Croix and different for St. Thomas and so  
15 that's why --

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Let's concentrate on St. Thomas.

18  
19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes, that's what we're working on.

20  
21 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Are you ready to vote? Do you have  
22 any more questions?

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any further discussion? Hearing none, we  
25 will take it to a vote. **All in favor say aye; any nays; any**  
26 **abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.**

27  
28 **BILL ARNOLD:** I hate to be a fly in the ointment, but this  
29 motion really should read just the DAP STT/STJ, because, in some  
30 cases, as I just mentioned, the DAP disagreed with the panel and  
31 you guys, by saying we're excluding all of these, are going with  
32 the DAP and not with the panel.

33  
34 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** No.

35  
36 **BILL ARNOLD:** Are you sure?

37  
38 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes, I am sure. You were asking about  
39 vulnerable species and other species that you didn't see in any  
40 of the lists but that should be included in this list and so  
41 here we are.

42  
43 This is Puerto Rico now and so we're dealing with one island at  
44 a time. For Puerto Rico, again, both the panel and the DAP were  
45 in agreement that these species, because of their vulnerability,  
46 should be included for management in the federal waters.

47  
48 You have the complete list on the two screens and you actually

1 have one additional recommendation by the DAP Puerto Rico to  
2 include two of the eagle rays in the list, because they are  
3 vulnerable and they are predators and their recommendation is  
4 that you should include them and they are actually harvested,  
5 because they are used for --

6  
7 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, one question regarding right where you  
8 have the cursor. The panel of experts didn't say anything  
9 regarding these three species?

10  
11 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** No, because they had not been brought  
12 to the -- We had discussed them and, in fact, we had talked  
13 about the eagle rays, but they didn't make it into the criteria  
14 that we were considering.

15  
16 The DAP looked at the fact that they are being used to replace  
17 the boxfish and the trunkfish and so they are harvested, even if  
18 we don't get the information, to fill in the popovers and a lot  
19 of those go into that meat and so they wanted to put them in the  
20 list.

21  
22 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay and so they wanted to include them, but they  
23 also wanted them to be an ecosystem component category?

24  
25 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Because they discussed the fact that  
26 there might not be enough information available for them in  
27 terms of the commercial or recreational landings and that's why  
28 they had decided that maybe they should be in that list rather  
29 than for complete inclusion, but other than those, everything  
30 else they agreed on that they should include all those species  
31 for management.

32  
33 **MARCOS HANKE:** A question to Graciela. Graciela, why picudilla  
34 on the barracuda are not included in the discussion?

35  
36 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Which one?

37  
38 **MARCOS HANKE:** The third species.

39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Again, I mean the panel of experts  
41 looked at the commercial landings and recreational landings, the  
42 transect information that we have from any fishery-independent  
43 survey that had been conducted, the exploratory fishing  
44 information, and you have to move down the criteria of  
45 information that we had and whether they made it or not into the  
46 list and if it's not on the list, then it didn't make the cut.  
47 You can add them and you can put them in, but does it occur in  
48 the EEZ? Is most of the fishery in the EEZ for the third

1 species?

2

3 **MARCOS HANKE:** My question is the guachancho is reported to be  
4 present in the EEZ?

5

6 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I don't know off the top of my head,  
7 but they made it past the criterion that the panel looked at.

8

9 **MARCOS HANKE:** The reason of my comment is that those two  
10 smaller species of barracuda in Fajardo, in the case of Fajardo,  
11 they are fished and they catch them. The majority of the people  
12 catch them instinctively and most of them don't know how to  
13 identify them and they just think it's a great barracuda and  
14 keep them, but they are part of the fishery and maybe there is a  
15 problem with misidentification of them, but they are part and  
16 they are abundant and present there and, actually, there is a  
17 few restaurants that are using them to sell, because they are  
18 delicious to eat and they are not -- They believe they are not  
19 ciguatoxic.

20

21 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** This doesn't prevent the council from  
22 saying we need these other species to be added to the list and  
23 so you can actually bring that one species into the list to be  
24 considered for federal management.

25

26 **MARCOS HANKE:** The only gap in my mind, in terms of listing or  
27 not listing in federal waters, is the presence of them in  
28 federal waters. I know in state waters and in the vicinity of  
29 federal waters they are captured and they catch them, but I  
30 don't know in federal waters. If there is a fish that is soon  
31 going to be included in any preparations on the restaurants in  
32 the Fajardo area, it's those guys.

33

34 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I mean there is a problem with species  
35 identification, number one, but then we also looked at the TIP  
36 data. The TIP data has the port agents going out and  
37 identifying the species that are harvested and the other thing  
38 that we looked at is how much of the percentage of the total  
39 catch came from which side, the state or the EEZ.

40

41 In most cases, we had a very high percentage of unknowns. Then  
42 that brings in the expert information and that brings in the DAP  
43 and so this is what they recommend. If you want that species  
44 included, I mean that's no problem and we will look into it and  
45 it will be part of the process and then at the end you can  
46 decide whether it would really be part of the federally-managed  
47 species or not.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have a question on this. That guachancho,  
2 is that the sennet?  
3

4 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There are two sennets and so this is  
5 one of them. In fact, there is an additional problem, because  
6 the landings are reported under one name and then they get  
7 transferred to a code and another name and so we explored the  
8 whole database and looking to see where they fit.  
9

10 If you direct staff to look into these other species, we can put  
11 it in and make it part of the process and then do you want all  
12 these other species to be included in the Puerto Rico island-  
13 based FMP?  
14

15 **MARCOS HANKE:** For two reasons, I think that they should be  
16 included, one and three. One, that I know that they are there  
17 and they are fished and they are part of the fishery. Second,  
18 there is a problem of misidentification, either by the way we  
19 collect the information, by the fishermen when they make their  
20 report, and so on.  
21

22 The other thing is that one of the strategies we can use once we  
23 manage them is to group the barracuda in a single group of  
24 management and if you exclude one that is part of it, it's going  
25 to create a problem. It's better to include all of them at the  
26 same time and that will give us the opportunity to manage them  
27 as a group.  
28

29 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I am checking on the eighteen species just for  
30 the record. The guaguanche is guaguanche and the two other  
31 sennets are guaguanche. You've got the southern sennet and the  
32 northern sennet, just to clarify that.  
33

34 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Exactly and so in the database, it  
35 would be southern and northern sennet and they might or might  
36 not have been included. This one specifically, what's the -- We  
37 will just put the third barracuda, because I really don't know  
38 what the third species is.  
39

40 **MIGUEL ROLON:** At this time, you don't know which one it is and  
41 you say all the species of barracuda present in the U.S.  
42 Caribbean. Then we need to hear from you why it --  
43

44 **MARCOS HANKE:** One is the problem of misidentification by the  
45 people and through the system and they are part of the fishery.  
46 I see them every day the way I fish and we need to clarify which  
47 waters they are predominant or not, if that data is available,  
48 and there is a big potential of developing on an important

1 fishery over time and many people are consuming those and not  
2 the great barracuda, but those smaller species and loving them.  
3  
4 There is people that fish specifically for them and they have a  
5 market already developed and we should include them and also, it  
6 will help, in case we want to manage the barracuda group in the  
7 future, to include all the three species and not to have a  
8 loophole leaving out one species that is very common.  
9  
10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So we need a second.  
11  
12 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** I second.  
13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is to include all species  
15 of barracuda present in the U.S. Caribbean in the species to be  
16 included for federal management in Puerto Rico. Motion by  
17 Marcos Hanke and second by Carlos Velasquez. Any further  
18 discussion? Carlos.  
19  
20 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Remember one thing, guys. These barracuda,  
21 all species of barracuda, in the commercial sector is for use  
22 for the bait to catch the snappers. As I know here to consider  
23 the data -- Using the species for the bait for the barracuda.  
24  
25 **MARCOS HANKE:** Actually, that's another point of the use, in  
26 terms of management to include them, all of them. When I was  
27 fishing for queen snapper, those two species of the smaller  
28 barracuda was my main bait.  
29  
30 **ROY CRABTREE:** Did you cut them up?  
31  
32 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes, as filets. Not the great barracuda, but the  
33 other ones. I have another question for Graciela.  
34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** After we vote on this.  
36  
37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Iris.  
38  
39 **IRIS LOWERY:** Just a small point of clarification. Should we  
40 say "in the U.S. Caribbean EEZ"?  
41  
42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Right. That's a good point, because we're  
43 only speaking about Puerto Rico right now, right? Caribbean EEZ  
44 off of Puerto Rico, okay. Any further discussion? Miguel.  
45  
46 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Just for the record, to help Graciela, we are  
47 talking about Sphyraena guachancho, Sphyraena barracuda, and  
48 Sphyraena picudilla, which are the three species of barracuda

1 present in the Caribbean waters. You don't have to write it,  
2 but just with the motion that we have now.

3

4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any further discussion?

5

6 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** One question for Graciela. Graciela, do you  
7 not have that catch of barracuda in federal waters of Puerto  
8 Rico and no data for the reports of catch of barracuda in the  
9 commercial sector and no regulations?

10

11 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I didn't say that we didn't have them.  
12 I said that we had looked at the information that we had from  
13 the commercial catch and whether the information was coming from  
14 the EEZ or the state waters. That information, whatever is  
15 available, we looked at and so off the top of my head, they were  
16 not excluded, because they do apparently show up in quantities  
17 in the EEZ and so now the next criteria was if they are  
18 vulnerable or they are top predators and so they should be  
19 included and then we stopped looking.

20

21 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** But at this moment, nothing, nada, nothing,  
22 at this moment?

23

24 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** We do have landings for the barracuda.  
25 Yes, we do. That's why they are on this list. Otherwise, they  
26 wouldn't show up.

27

28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any further discussion? Hearing none, we  
29 will take it to a vote. **All those in favor say aye; any nays;**  
30 **any abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.** Marcos.

31

32 **MARCOS HANKE:** Graciela, I don't see it and maybe because I  
33 cannot read it well, but the machete. I don't remember the name  
34 of the species, but is it included in there anyplace anywhere?

35

36 In the meantime they are looking for it, the reason I am putting  
37 it up is on the south of Puerto Rico it was and in some ways it  
38 is a traditional fishery for it and also for the baitfish around  
39 the world, it is used on the juvenile size or the smaller size  
40 as bait. There is industries or people that prepare them to  
41 sell as baitfish, for kingfish and for other things.

42

43 It's something that we should consider, because maybe it's not a  
44 big deal right now, but it's right there and I just spoke to  
45 Ricardo and he told me that he had been seeing them in the south  
46 the way they would show up. There is a seasonality that they  
47 show up on the shoreline and they are catching great, great  
48 quantities and people appreciate them as a source of food.

1 There are some moons that they get into the channel and people  
2 catch them and also in Fajardo it's the same. It's part of the  
3 fishery and something that there is a big potential of  
4 developing as a resource with including for export. The  
5 Japanese love them.

6  
7 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Can I move this forward a little? We  
8 need a motion, if you want to use this language. You need to  
9 tell us if you want all these species included for federal  
10 management or not. Both the panel and the DAP Puerto Rico  
11 recommend that they be included and so if the language is  
12 agreeable, it's on the screen. I recommend that we kind of move  
13 forward and we will keep track of the machete as soon as I find  
14 out what species it is. I will look at the database.

15  
16 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes, that's my intention and not to miss the  
17 opportunity to do it right. **I will move the language written on**  
18 **the screen as a motion.**

19  
20 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second.

21  
22 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The motion is the council moves to include  
25 the species recommended by the panel of experts and the DAP  
26 Puerto Rico for federal management, as listed below, in the  
27 Puerto Rico EEZ in the Puerto Rico IBFMP. Motion made by Marcos  
28 Hanke and seconded by Tony Blanchard. Any further discussion?  
29 Hearing none, we will take it to a vote. **All in favor say aye;**  
30 **any nays; any abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.**

31  
32 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** This is a much smaller list. This is  
33 for St. Croix. The panel recommended that for St. Croix the  
34 coney, graysby, rock hind, all the other groupers that had been  
35 originally questioned be included for management.

36  
37 The St. Croix DAP instead recommends that they be put into the  
38 ecosystem component list, either because they are not targeted  
39 and some of them do not show up until the very recent -- The  
40 very near present, because they were not part of the form and so  
41 they might have just shown up in the past few years.

42  
43 The acanthurids and the surgeonfish and the angelfish have been  
44 documented by the SSC to be species of high ecological value and  
45 so therefore they were included kind of de facto. They do have  
46 a higher buffer than the other species in terms of the ACL and  
47 so what's the pleasure of the council? Would you like to  
48 include all these species for management in federal waters of

1 St. Croix?

2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I will say something on that. I do believe  
4 that, because of their importance, they should be included and I  
5 also think that all the angelfish should be included and also  
6 the rock hind. I can't see some of those names there. Coney  
7 for sure and squirrelfish, I think they can stay in the EC, but  
8 blue tang, surgeonfish, doctorfish, queen angel, French angel,  
9 all those species, because of their ecological importance, need  
10 to be included in the management unit and not in the EC. That's  
11 my opinion. Roy.

12  
13 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think I agree with you and that's why we put  
14 those bigger buffers on their ACLs in the ACL amendment. I  
15 agree with you that they need to remain in management.

16  
17 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I don't have a problem with the graysby and  
18 the misty and the bluestriped grunt and longspine squirrelfish,  
19 but everything else on that list -- I can't see that good and is  
20 that the same list? Okay. That's big enough. I guess we would  
21 need a motion for that, unless somebody wants to contradict.  
22 Marcos.

23  
24 **MARCOS HANKE:** I like the language written and along with the  
25 tables underneath that specify the species.

26  
27 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I need a second.

28  
29 **MARCOS HANKE:** Do I need to read it? The language will be read  
30 by the Chairman.

31  
32 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. We need a second.

33  
34 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.

35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The motion is that the council moves to  
37 include the species recommended by the panel of experts for  
38 federal management, listed below, in the St. Croix IBFMP.  
39 Motion by Marcos and seconded by Tony Blanchard. Any  
40 discussion? Iris.

41  
42 **IRIS LOWERY:** I just want to point out that this list includes  
43 species that I think you just provided some rationale for not  
44 including and so I don't know if you want to address that.

45  
46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The ones that I said can stay out, some  
47 rationale?  
48

1 **IRIS LOWERY:** Yes.  
2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. When it comes to graysby, I'm not very  
4 familiar with it and so I really shouldn't have said much, but  
5 the misty grouper is a species that is in very deep water and  
6 there isn't very much landings and although I do err on the side  
7 of maybe they do have a little ecological importance -- I am not  
8 really sure, but a scientist can maybe tell me more about that.  
9 Bill, did you want to say something?  
10  
11 **BILL ARNOLD:** Yes and the concern was they are biologically  
12 vulnerable. Deepwater grouper species are hermaphrodite and  
13 it's risky to not properly manage them, in spite of the low  
14 landings.  
15  
16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. If you want, we can include those two  
17 and I know -- I think that grunts or the graysby. Just include  
18 graysby and misty in there too then. The grunts, and I think I  
19 remember Dr. Appeldoorn, when I was in the Go to Meeting, said  
20 that the grunts are a pretty healthy stock and maybe that's my  
21 justification, from what I heard Dr. Appeldoorn say. Bill.  
22  
23 **BILL ARNOLD:** If I remember correctly, bluestriped grunt was  
24 include because its landings are relatively high. I think it  
25 was in the top 90 percent of landings and that pretty much got  
26 you in.  
27  
28 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** I need a point of clarification. So  
29 you want the coney deleted from this list?  
30  
31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I want to add the graysby and the misty and I  
32 err to Bill when he talks about the grunts, bluestriped grunt,  
33 and so we will add that too.  
34  
35 **MARCOS HANKE:** Then include everything that is in there, like  
36 the motion said?  
37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The squirrelfish, really --  
39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Again, the landings were high and that  
41 one was discussed by the DAP and, actually, it was included  
42 because of the DAP.  
43  
44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** For EC, right?  
45  
46 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** For EC, but it has high landings.  
47  
48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Does high landings necessarily mean that it

1 should be managed? I have no problem including it all.  
2  
3 **BILL ARNOLD:** If you were in the first 90 percent of landings,  
4 you were included.  
5  
6 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Got you. Okay. Then we will list them all.  
7  
8 **MARCOS HANKE:** Like the motion says.  
9  
10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Like the motion says, yes. Okay. Any  
11 further discussion? Hearing none, we will take it to a vote.  
12 **All in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions. Hearing none,**  
13 **the motion carries.**  
14  
15 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** St. Thomas, the same thing applies.  
16 The panel of experts requested the DAP to look at the species  
17 that they couldn't recommend 100 percent for inclusion and so  
18 these are the ones that are in white with a question mark. On  
19 the right-hand side, under Tab E, you have the recommendations  
20 of the DAP St. Thomas.  
21  
22 Whenever you see the same color and the EC, it means that they  
23 should be included because they are vulnerable, but they might  
24 not have the landings that we're looking for, et cetera, and so  
25 they might be considered for an ecosystem component species  
26 rather than for management.  
27  
28 In this case, the council has to decide which of these are going  
29 to be included for management in federal waters and this one  
30 has, more than anyone else, discrepancies between the panel of  
31 experts and the DAP, but, again, these that I am pointing to  
32 right now, the ones that are shadowed, the bluestriped grunt,  
33 the jolthead porgy, the seabream, the sheepshead porgy and the  
34 pluma, have an issue with the identification of the species and  
35 the reporting of the species.  
36  
37 The panel asked the DAP to make the recommendation and the DAP  
38 came back and said they should be -- They are not targeted and  
39 they are vulnerable, they think, and they should be included as  
40 part of the ecosystem component list of species. That was the  
41 same case for the white grunt and this is St. Thomas only.  
42  
43 Although the panel didn't ask the St. Thomas DAP to talk about  
44 the hogfish specifically and to make a recommendation to the  
45 council, there is also discrepancy in terms of the hogfish and  
46 that they should not be included for management, but should be  
47 put in the ecosystem component.  
48

1 Specifically for the yellowmouth grouper, the panel recommends  
2 to the council that it be included for management in the federal  
3 waters and the DAP recommends that it should not be included and  
4 that it's not really targeted.

5  
6 Now, the issues that are brought up with this list are the  
7 following. Number one is species identification. It might be  
8 completely, especially for the grouper and any of the porgies --  
9 You know they can be just reported as part of another grouper  
10 landing.

11  
12 Number two is the panel believes that the groupers are, in  
13 general, vulnerable. They aggregate for spawning and most of  
14 them are hermaphrodites and it takes a very long time for them  
15 to grow to maturity and given all of that, that they should be  
16 included for management in federal waters.

17  
18 Specific questions are which of these species, and I think you  
19 can see them now on the right-hand side, does the council want  
20 to include for federal management in the EEZ in St. Thomas?  
21 What we can do is we can go down the list and you can tell me  
22 yes or no and I will just make a column here and I will put  
23 council decision here. So coney for St. Thomas, should it be  
24 included for federal management?

25  
26 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.

27  
28 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Okay. Misty grouper?

29  
30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.

31  
32 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yellowmouth grouper?

33  
34 **TONY BLANCHARD:** No. The yellowmouth grouper really ain't  
35 targeted and so I really don't see the need for managing it and  
36 the same as well as some of the species that ain't targeted  
37 because of the ciguatera or other reasons.

38  
39 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** But what about their vulnerability or their  
40 ecological importance?

41  
42 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** They are one of the largest groupers  
43 still around and how big is the population in St. Thomas? I  
44 couldn't tell you. We couldn't tell you. The fact that they  
45 are not targeting it doesn't mean that it's not in the EEZ. We  
46 don't know, or at least I don't recall, any of the literature  
47 having recorded aggregations of yellowmouth grouper in the  
48 Virgin Islands, but it's here because at some point it was

1 either part of the TIP or part of the commercial landings or  
2 part of the recreational landings or part of the survey that was  
3 conducted independent from the commercial fishery.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

6

7 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay, but even if it shows up twice in the  
8 landings, in the TIP landings or whatever landings, it would  
9 show up in this chart, correct?

10

11 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Whatever is landed would show up.

12

13 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Even if it shows up once? Okay.

14

15 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The reason why the panel included  
16 these here is because it's a vulnerable species and so it made  
17 it into the list. Now, the council can decide whether they want  
18 to follow the panel or the DAP recommendation, which is not to  
19 include it in the list for federal management.

20

21 **MARCOS HANKE:** Tony, this is your waters and the only thing I  
22 see there is that, for the same reason of the misidentification  
23 and remember that we are dealing with recreational people and  
24 other people that don't have the expertise that you guys  
25 probably have to identify them, and that should be taken into  
26 consideration, because they are big groupers, to include them.  
27 This is what I think, but I am deferring to you that you know  
28 your waters and I want to listen to your opinion.

29

30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** In my opinion, just like Graciela said, there  
31 is no information as to aggregations and this is a species that,  
32 from the time I have been fishing, you really don't catch them  
33 in numbers. I couldn't tell you the last time I've seen one,  
34 but the bottom line is this. If we ain't targeting them, I  
35 really don't see the need to manage it.

36

37 I will tell you one of the reasons that isn't up there it ain't  
38 being targeted is the ciguatera too. That's the fact that they  
39 failed to put in, just as well as the tiger grouper and some of  
40 the other groupers. The tendency is not to bring them in  
41 because of the ciguatera.

42

43 **MARCOS HANKE:** Graciela, you want to definitely decide now or do  
44 you want to go over and then go back to the ones that we cannot  
45 decide?

46

47 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** We can finish the list and think about  
48 it and then when we come back, we will hit that one. Okay.

1 White grunt, yes or no?  
2  
3 **MARCOS HANKE:** In my opinion, yes.  
4  
5 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Margate.  
6  
7 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
8  
9 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Bluestriped grunt.  
10  
11 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
12  
13 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The porgies, jolthead porgy.  
14  
15 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Just like Graciela said, most people couldn't  
16 tell you one porgy from the next and I've got the same problem.  
17 A porgy to me is a porgy and so I think this is a problem we  
18 have here.  
19  
20 We can't identify what type of a porgy it is, because a porgy to  
21 us is a porgy and so I think a big problem that we're going to  
22 run into here is the misidentification of what type of porgy it  
23 is and so we're going to find people putting their information  
24 under the wrong fish.  
25  
26 **MARCOS HANKE:** Tony, maybe fix it and including all the porgies,  
27 because if they are part of the fishery, include all the  
28 porgies.  
29  
30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I agree.  
31  
32 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
33  
34 **BILL ARNOLD:** Are they being caught in federal waters, Tony?  
35  
36 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
37  
38 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Longspine squirrelfish?  
39  
40 **TONY BLANCHARD:** No.  
41  
42 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Blue runner?  
43  
44 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
45  
46 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Then the blue tang, the ocean  
47 surgeonfish, the doctorfish, those will be included, because the  
48 council has already -- Okay. Hogfish?

1  
2 **TONY BLANCHARD:** That's iffy. Let me explain myself why.  
3 Because just like some of the groupers, depending on where you  
4 catch the hogfish and depending on the size of the hogfish, you  
5 don't want to bring it in, because you are running a risk of  
6 poisoning somebody and that's the last thing you want to do. I  
7 would say that's basically up on the table, because it depends  
8 on the size and the area that you fish in.  
9  
10 **ROY CRABTREE:** I would say if it's iffy for now to put it in.  
11  
12 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes, I would prefer to put it in too.  
13  
14 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** So we're back to the yellowmouth  
15 grouper, the last one we have here.  
16  
17 **MARCOS HANKE:** Tony, I will defer to you, because you know  
18 better your fishing, but my opinion is that should be included.  
19 If it's not present, but it's part of the big group of species,  
20 it's like a message that we want to protect them and we want to  
21 have all the tools to manage them and that's basically my point.  
22  
23 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay and I understand that, but remember we're  
24 coming back to putting an ACL on a fish that is not really  
25 targeted and let's remember that and so what kind of an ACL are  
26 we going to be looking at?  
27  
28 **MARCOS HANKE:** How much of those?  
29  
30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I couldn't tell you the last time I see one,  
31 because I really don't target that type of fish.  
32  
33 **ROY CRABTREE:** It will likely be put into a group ACL with other  
34 species of grouper. I mean that's what we do now.  
35  
36 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes, it probably would be.  
37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Iris.  
39  
40 **IRIS LOWERY:** Can I just ask for a point of clarification from  
41 Mr. Blanchard? I believe you said no on squirrelfish. I might  
42 have missed it, but did you provide a basis for excluding it?  
43  
44 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I didn't. The longspine squirrelfish, if it's  
45 the type of squirrelfish I am thinking about, it's not really a  
46 targeted species. They get to a certain size and they ain't  
47 going to show up in the traps unless it's the common  
48 squirrelfish and I really don't think they need to be monitored,

1 for the mere fact that that squirrelfish is mostly caught in  
2 traps and you're catching the biggest of the biggest  
3 squirrelfish in that trap because of the size of the mesh.

4  
5 When the trap comes to the top of the water and she breaks the  
6 surface, they are skirting through the mesh if they can pass and  
7 so really, you are catching the biggest of that species of fish  
8 and so that would be my big argument as to even looking at that  
9 and when I think the traps is deciding that we're only taking  
10 the biggest squirrelfish out of the population.

11  
12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There is a mesh size of two-inch  
13 square that has been in place in St. Thomas for probably over  
14 twenty years now.

15  
16 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Quite a while.

17  
18 **IRIS LOWERY:** Thank you. I just want to make sure that we have  
19 the record established for that decision.

20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. We're good? Okay.

22  
23 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second.

26  
27 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.

28  
29 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is the council moves to  
30 include the species recommended by the panel of experts and the  
31 DAP St. Thomas/St. John, except for longspine squirrelfish, for  
32 federal management, as listed below, in St. Thomas/St. John  
33 IBFMP. Moved by Tony Blanchard and seconded by Marcos Hanke.  
34 Any further discussion? Hearing none, I will take it to a vote.  
35 **All those in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions. Hearing**  
36 **none, the motion carries.** Miguel.

37  
38 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay, Graciela. What is next after this one?  
39 While she looks, for the record, the machete fish is not that.  
40 It's a cutlass fish and I gave that to Graciela.

41  
42 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** There was one additional criterion  
43 that the panel and the DAPs looked at and that had to do with  
44 the economic importance of the fishery and what percentile they  
45 were part of in terms of commercial or recreational landings.  
46 The main thing was the economic importance and that's why some  
47 of these species that might not have made it before made it into  
48 the list.

1  
2 That's the reason why, for example, species that are not part of  
3 the management units as of right now in the Caribbean EEZ, like  
4 the dolphinfish and the tunny and the wahoo and the jacks, made  
5 it into this list. They are either high in the percentage list  
6 of species landed or they are mostly from the EEZ or they are  
7 important in the recreational fishery. This is the last part of  
8 the species that needs to be included or excluded, as the  
9 council wishes to do.

10  
11 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, this is for Puerto Rico only or it  
12 includes all three DAPs?

13  
14 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Again, we are going Puerto Rico, St.  
15 Croix, and then St. Thomas.

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** That will finish the lists?

18  
19 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Then you have baitfish and I don't  
20 know what the council wants to do with that, but yes.

21  
22 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay, but we have three more tables and the  
23 baitfish?

24  
25 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes.

26  
27 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay.

28  
29 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

30  
31 **BILL ARNOLD:** Just a couple of comments here. One is some of  
32 these species were included because they are bycatch and that's  
33 cardinal snapper in particular. They don't really target  
34 cardinal snapper, but when they're doing the queen snapper  
35 fishery, they bring cardinals up and so that's just an example  
36 of a bycatch species.

37  
38 The other comment is regarding little tunny and blackfin tuna.  
39 Rick Pearson is here and he is the HMS representative. Correct  
40 me if I'm wrong, Rick, but HMS's recommendation on that is  
41 they're not managed by us and they're managed or something with  
42 CITES and they advised us against including them for management  
43 in our council management plan, but, again, if I am wrong, Rick,  
44 let me know.

45  
46 **RICK PEARSON:** They are not highly migratory species under the  
47 Magnuson Act and so the council could manage them. However,  
48 ICCAT, the International Commission for the Conservation of

1 Atlantic Tunas, does collect data on these species. It would be  
2 similar to how king mackerel are managed by other councils.

3

4 One of the questions that we would have is would any management  
5 measures for little tunny and blackfin tuna affect fishermen in  
6 other regions, as king mackerel regulations do?

7

8 The other question that we had is that these are, while not  
9 considered highly migratory species, they are migratory and so  
10 there might be minimal benefit to implementing management  
11 measures for these species, because they are going to be  
12 impacted throughout their range.

13

14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.

15

16 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Some of the comments that -- I mean  
17 they do show up in very high landings and that's the main reason  
18 why they are here and they do provide revenue for the fishers.  
19 It might not be as high as some other species, but these are  
20 species that are used, the little tunny, for example, as  
21 baitfish for even more productive, in terms of economic  
22 importance, fisheries, such as the queen snapper.

23

24 They are harvested in numbers and the panel and the DAPs  
25 recommended that the council include them for federal management  
26 and remember that this is not the end of the road. We are  
27 creating a list.

28

29 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, so the question to the council, again,  
30 is those species that are depicted in yellow are recommended for  
31 addition to the management units of Puerto Rico by the panel and  
32 by the DAP Puerto Rico?

33

34 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** They are not -- They have never been  
35 part of a fishery management unit for the council.

36

37 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I am not saying that. I am saying they are  
38 recommending that for the management unit of the FMPs?

39

40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Everything, from Line 8 to 110. All  
41 those species are recommended to be included for management.

42

43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** The question to the council is would you agree  
44 with the panel and the DAP Puerto Rico?

45

46 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes, I agree and I want to make a comment. In  
47 case of the blackfin tuna, there is a big market being developed  
48 around them for the sushi market and for fresh fish tuna

1 consumption in the Caribbean. I would like to present the same  
2 motion that includes this list, if you can state it there again.

3

4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Anyone providing a second on this motion?

5

6 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Second.

7

8 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion reads: The council moves to  
9 include the species recommended by the panel of experts and the  
10 DAP Puerto Rico for federal management, as listed below, in the  
11 Puerto Rico IBFMP. Moved by Marcos Hanke and seconded by Carlos  
12 Velasquez. All in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions.  
13 Hearing none, the motion carries.

14

15 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** It's a smaller list for St. Croix.  
16 Again, the panel recommends that these species that are on the  
17 screen right now be included for management in federal waters,  
18 including the dolphin and the wahoo that have never been part of  
19 the management units in the U.S. Caribbean, but the DAP actually  
20 recommends that they will be put into the ecosystem component  
21 list.

22

23 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, this is a clear distinction between  
24 the two, except for one of the species the panel recommended  
25 should be added in the management unit and the St. Croix DAP  
26 recommended for inclusion in the ecosystem component section of  
27 the FMP. Now you have to decide which is which, go with the  
28 panel or go with the other guys.

29

30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

31

32 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I've got a question. The wahoo and the dolphin  
33 wouldn't be included under the HMS?

34

35 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** No, they are coastal pelagics.

36

37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

38

39 **ROY CRABTREE:** Don't dolphin and wahoo have fairly substantial  
40 landings and value in St. Croix?

41

42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes.

43

44 **ROY CRABTREE:** It seems to me we ought to manage those two  
45 anyway. I don't know enough about the other ones to have a  
46 strong opinion about them, but it just seems to me if there are  
47 a lot of them being landed that we ought to be managing them.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So we need a motion to include these. I did  
2 want queen snapper for sure, because I think it could be -- It's  
3 not a big fishery in St. Croix, but it could be a developed  
4 fishery and so I wanted to include queen for sure. Schuster.

5  
6 **EDWARD SCHUSTER:** What was mentioned here that became a back-  
7 and-forth was actually a lot of the dolphin and the wahoo and  
8 they were landed on St. Croix's catch reports, but they were  
9 actually coming from Gibbs Bank and it was a back-and-forth with  
10 one of our DAP members, which was Roy Pemberton, and some other  
11 fishers that are on the DAP.

12  
13 Actually, there is no FADs around on St. Croix that attract  
14 these species unless some of the fish are on the shelf edge and  
15 that was some discussion, lengthy discussion, that took place.  
16 Gibbs Bank actually lies in the Venezuelan waters, but it was  
17 landed on the catch report of St. Croix.

18  
19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Go ahead.

20  
21 **ROY CRABTREE:** I am not sure how to sort that out. I guess my  
22 inclination would still be that if they're landing a lot of them  
23 that we ought to manage them.

24  
25 **MARCOS HANKE:** Even though you don't have the FADs and the usual  
26 fishery for them, it's still a very significant landing  
27 possibility fishing for wahoo on the drop-offs of St. Croix.  
28 You require more effort, but for the tourism, for the charters  
29 and the recreational fishermen, they are still going to land  
30 them and have another source of landing for the wahoo, which is  
31 the smaller wahoo on the floating debris that you catch a great  
32 amount of them. It doesn't matter the magnitude, but it's still  
33 enough to justify to include them, in my opinion.

34  
35 **ROY CRABTREE:** In these landings, we don't even include the  
36 recreational component.

37  
38 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Exactly. In the U.S. Virgin Islands,  
39 we don't have information from the recreational component.

40  
41 **ROY CRABTREE:** I would suspect that they're among the most  
42 important species landed down there recreationally.

43  
44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Except that Fish and Wildlife does collect  
45 from tournaments. They have landings information from  
46 tournaments. One of the concerns of one of the DAP members on  
47 St. Croix was that he was concerned that if we manage wahoo and  
48 limit their -- If you've got to make an ACL for them, he is

1 saying St. Lucia harvests 600,000 pounds a year and if it's the  
2 same stock, he feels that we're going to be impacted, but it's a  
3 free-for-all for them. He wasn't sure which way to go.

4  
5 **ROY CRABTREE:** I get that and I can see, but I don't think the  
6 fact that another nation is not properly managing their fishery  
7 means that we aren't going to manage. That seems like a race to  
8 the bottom. It seems to me like we ought to set the example for  
9 how to do things, if we can.

10  
11 **MARCOS HANKE:** For the same reasons, because of the nature of  
12 this fishery, more than any other fishery, the three islands of  
13 the region that we have are dealing with the same resource, the  
14 same as other countries. It would be nice to have everybody  
15 managing them.

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** In the case of the dolphinfish, it's a dream that  
18 you are going to manage this species from here and make any dent  
19 in the biology of this species. However, you also have the  
20 responsibility to manage the socioeconomics of the species and  
21 you have to allocate by sector and all of that. As Roy said,  
22 they are landed and they should be managed.

23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Appeldoorn.

25  
26 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** When we talked about this in the expert  
27 panel, we were really making a recommendation to force the  
28 council to address the issue of what to do with these species.  
29 It's very clear from the available data now that for Puerto Rico  
30 and St. Thomas that all those fish are part of a larger stock  
31 that is fished by the Dominican Republic and Cuba and Haiti and  
32 the United States, similar to Mexico, et cetera. It's a huge  
33 international and it may be a coastal pelagic, but it's a highly  
34 migratory coastal pelagic.

35  
36 It spends a good chunk of its time out in the middle of the  
37 Atlantic as it does its annual circuit around. There is some  
38 evidence to support the idea that there is another stock that is  
39 circulating around the Lesser Antilles and so it sounds like St.  
40 Croix has access to that stock by going to the south and so  
41 there may be a two-stock issue here, but you've got a species  
42 that's -- Yes, it's highly productive, but it is in fact  
43 probably overall the most important species in Puerto Rico,  
44 where we have both recreational and commercial data.

45  
46 If you were to put those together, it's probably the most  
47 important species and so you have something that's very highly  
48 valuable, but it is fished throughout the region and how you

1 want to deal with it is another story, but we were certainly of  
2 the opinion that it has to be dealt with and that's why we  
3 wanted to make sure that it was brought to the attention of the  
4 council.

5  
6 Whether you want to get it into ICCAT or do a multi-council plan  
7 or take it on individually, that's what you guys need to  
8 discuss, but it needs to be addressed.

9  
10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. We have a motion already up there or  
11 language for a motion if anybody wants to volunteer and do a  
12 one-up on that one.

13  
14 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Guys, we need a motion one way or the other.  
15 Either you accept the panel or not. We need to close in five  
16 minutes.

17  
18 **MARCOS HANKE:** I move the language on the screen.

19  
20 **ROY CRABTREE:** Second.

21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All those in favor say aye; any nays; any  
23 abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.

24  
25 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** St. Thomas is a much shorter list and  
26 so queen snapper, longspine squirrelfish, blue runner, queen  
27 triggerfish, dolphin, and wahoo.

28  
29 There is a bit of discrepancy between the DAP and the panel  
30 decision, specifically for the longspine squirrelfish and the  
31 blue runner and the dolphin and the wahoo. They recommend that  
32 they just become ecosystem component species. The queen snapper  
33 was one that they had debated whether to include it just as an  
34 ecosystem component or actually keep it on the list for  
35 management.

36  
37 **MARCOS HANKE:** Graciela, to understand, either panel doesn't  
38 want to include the queen snapper?

39  
40 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** No, the DAP had the discussion whether  
41 it should be included or not. It could be an ecosystem  
42 component, but if you look at the minutes, then they would  
43 include it in federal management and so the council has to  
44 decide what to do with it.

45  
46 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to make a motion to include the  
47 recommendation of the panel.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We need a second for discussion.  
2  
3 **ROY CRABTREE:** Second.  
4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Second by Roy Crabtree. Is there discussion?  
6 Blanchard.  
7  
8 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I say we move the longspine squirreelfish,  
9 because of the reasons I gave before. I would say the blue  
10 runner and this is my mindset on the blue runner. Especially  
11 now with all the sargassum, the small schools -- The smaller  
12 fish are moving with the sargassum weed and so this is a highly  
13 migratory fish, if you're asking me, to put it into perspective,  
14 because it moves with the bait and it moves with the weed. I  
15 think by us managing it's like managing the dolphin on them,  
16 which I don't think we've got a grasp on that, because the  
17 school of blue runner could be here now and the next thing you  
18 know they're in BVI waters and how are you going to manage it  
19 there?  
20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
22  
23 **ROY CRABTREE:** Marcos made the motion and so let's hear what  
24 he's got to say.  
25  
26 **MARCOS HANKE:** I agree partially with what you are saying, but  
27 you are talking to the life stage where they are juveniles and  
28 they are more structure related on floating debris and so on,  
29 but my experience with the blue runner in Fajardo is their  
30 seasonality of bait that will gather the bigger ones and they  
31 can stay as part of the fishing as a main school when fish is  
32 feeding on the same area for six or eight months, the same group  
33 of fish, as long as the bait and the source of bait is in there.  
34  
35 In this way, they behave different than the mahi, because of  
36 that matter. The mahi is less resident than the blue runner and  
37 less present throughout the year. Throughout the year you can  
38 catch blue runner of every size.  
39  
40 **TONY BLANCHARD:** But you just proved my point. They could stay  
41 here for six months, depending on the bait situation, or they  
42 could move off with the weed or with the baitfish.  
43  
44 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes, but they are much more available than mahi  
45 throughout the year. You can catch them at night fishing the  
46 yellowtail anytime and it's very hard for me to say that that  
47 fish is there, but the resource is available all the time and  
48 less available throughout the year than mahi, compared to the

1 mahi. I understand your point and I am validating your point  
2 especially on the juvenile size, but on the bigger ones, they  
3 are available throughout the year, from what I see on the water.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

6

7 **ROY CRABTREE:** Would it work if we kind of split the difference  
8 and would you be willing to modify the motion to exclude the  
9 squirrelfish, but we leave the blue runner in?

10

11 **MARCOS HANKE:** I don't have any problem with that. I think it  
12 would be the smarter idea, to validate Tony's point, but the  
13 blue runner, I really think that should be there.

14

15 **ROY CRABTREE:** Is that good enough for you, Tony?

16

17 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I would like to hear what Mr. Magras has got to  
18 say on this.

19

20 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** As Tony was saying, as far as when we're looking  
21 at the blue runners, the blue runners -- There is two different  
22 schools of fish that actually passes through the islands. There  
23 is one that we catch floating at night and then there's another  
24 school that also moves with the baitfish and there are only  
25 certain periods of times of the year that we catch these fish.  
26 It's not a fish that runs all year-round. It's a seasonal fish.

27

28 Have we seen them in higher numbers? Yes, we have. Have we  
29 seen them in different sizes? A lot more with the sargassum  
30 passing through, but, again, it's market driven and you know  
31 right now it's the season for them. We call it a season that we  
32 are seeing them heavily, but we have to scale back because the  
33 market is completely blocked for them.

34

35 I see no reason for us to have to be managing this particular  
36 species of fish and also, on that same note, the longspine  
37 squirrelfish. Those, because of the size mesh that use in the  
38 traps, those numbers are just part of the numbers that you  
39 actually see, because the smaller juveniles just go in and out  
40 of that two-inch mesh.

41

42 Now, when we used to use the inch-and-a-half mesh, those numbers  
43 were a lot greater, but because of us putting those measures in  
44 place, we only catch the adults when it comes to the  
45 squirrelfish and we're not catching any of the juveniles or the  
46 reproductive size squirrelfish and so I don't see any reason for  
47 us to be managing those two species right now.

48

1 Then if we look at the queen triggerfish, the abundance of them  
2 that we have right now and we have just been releasing them,  
3 because of the size that is sold in the market.

4  
5 Anything over two-and-a-half pounds, we have been releasing them  
6 and Mr. Blanchard can tell you, if he's been keeping track like  
7 I've been keeping track, we have released thousands of pounds of  
8 triggerfish over the period of this year and we are still  
9 releasing them. They are still in high numbers being caught and  
10 we don't know what's going on, because we have never seen them  
11 in these numbers like we are seeing them right now.

12  
13 We know at one point the sea urchins had disappeared for a while  
14 and they came back and since they came back, the queen  
15 triggerfish came back in very, very high numbers and so we  
16 listened the scientists and we listened to the reasons behind  
17 why we should manage them, but, at the same time, we need to  
18 take into consideration the reason that the fishermen put forth,  
19 that we don't see right now a reason to manage them and we  
20 should just keep them on the EC list to be looked at and in the  
21 event we see something unusual going on with that, let's go back  
22 and revisit them.

23  
24 At that time, we can made a decision what we should do with  
25 them. We're not saying just get it out of there and don't  
26 manage them. We are saying let's keep them on the EC list and  
27 we can come back and revisit them if we see something unusual  
28 going on.

29  
30 **MARCOS HANKE:** Still my position is to include the blue runner,  
31 because my experience is a little different than them. I cannot  
32 say for sure that we are managing two different schools or two  
33 different groups of fish.

34  
35 Maybe it's just a behavior of class ages and the way they behave  
36 and where they go and where they feed and so on and also, there  
37 is another element of the species that use the blue runners are  
38 also used as baitfish and the growth of the sport in  
39 recreational fishing is going to increase the use of the blue  
40 runners as a baitfish.

41  
42 **ROY CRABTREE:** Do you want to modify the motion to exclude the  
43 squirrelfish? Then I would say let's vote it up or down.

44  
45 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to modify my motion to exclude the  
46 longspine squirrelfish.

47  
48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion reads: The council moves to

1 include the species recommended by the panel of experts, except  
2 the longspine squirrelfish, for federal management, listed  
3 below, in the St. Thomas/St. John IBFMP. Motion by Marcos and  
4 seconded by Roy Crabtree. Julian, do you have a comment?

5  
6 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** Just one more comment. You know this is one of  
7 the main reasons for us separating and going to island-specific  
8 plans and here it is we are speaking from St. Thomas/St. John  
9 experience that we want them to stay on the EC list and not to  
10 go on a management list and that was one of the main reasons for  
11 us separating the islands, because in different fisheries --  
12 Puerto Rico has what they would like to see and St. Croix has  
13 what they would like to see and I want everybody here in this  
14 room that's going to be voting right now to take into  
15 consideration this is what St. Thomas/St. John wants to see.  
16 Thank you.

17  
18 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.

19  
20 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** However, one of the considerations  
21 that's needs to be accounted for is that Puerto Rico, especially  
22 the east coast, and St. Thomas share the same platform and the  
23 depth between these two areas will allow for exchange of adult  
24 fish to move back and forth and there is a part of the EEZ that  
25 is shared by the south part of Vieques and the MCD, the Hind  
26 Bank, et cetera. That is in the EEZ.

27  
28 **MARCOS HANKE:** Maybe one other point is the question of the blue  
29 runner, the quantity of them landed in St. Thomas/St. John is  
30 very significant, right? It's a major part of the fishery?

31  
32 **BILL ARNOLD:** I don't think we have any species-specific data  
33 for blue runner in the St. Thomas/St. John area. I don't know  
34 that we have species-specific data. I could look real quick.

35  
36 **MARCOS HANKE:** I will ask them. Julian, how important, in terms  
37 of for the industry, the landings on them?

38  
39 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** It's very important, because it's for mainly  
40 caught by hand line and it's also caught by the net fishermen,  
41 which is two different species. Since I was able to speak  
42 again, I want to just go back to the statement Graciela made  
43 about the shelves being joined together and everything.

44  
45 Yes, I totally agree. We have three-square-mile territorial  
46 water, where Puerto Rico has a nine-square-mile territorial  
47 water and so we're going to protect over in St. Thomas to  
48 continue to feed in Puerto Rican waters and that's where we go

1 back to the same arguments from eleven years ago.  
2  
3 This is why we always end up in a back-and-forth, back-and-  
4 forth, because there seems to be no leniency when it comes to  
5 what the fishermen are recommending for St. Thomas/St. John.  
6 Again, I urge everyone that's going to be voting to please take  
7 into consideration the St. Thomas/St. John DAP and its group  
8 recommendations in this vote. Thank you.  
9  
10 **MARCOS HANKE:** I have a question. What about the bar jacks?  
11  
12 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** The bar jacks are all caught in territorial  
13 waters. They are part of the net fishery also and so they are  
14 not caught outside. It's all a net fishery and not caught in  
15 traps and they are not caught by hand and that's what we call  
16 karang and those are also a fish that passes through, but they  
17 are all caught in territorial waters.  
18  
19 **MARCOS HANKE:** Thank you.  
20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Any more discussion? Hearing none, we  
22 are going to take it to a vote. **All in favor say aye; any nays;**  
23 **any abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.** Roy.  
24  
25 **ROY CRABTREE:** This is one where it seems like there is more  
26 disagreement than I have seen on most of them and so bear in  
27 mind none of this is final and we'll get some more input on  
28 this.  
29  
30 **TONY BLANCHARD:** (The comment is not audible on the recording.)  
31  
32 **ROY CRABTREE:** You know I might come around to you on blue  
33 runner. I don't have strong feelings about that one. It seems  
34 like the olewife we do probably need in there. That's the one I  
35 buy at the restaurants all the time when I'm up there, but I am  
36 flexible on the blue runner. We'll see how it all comes out and  
37 come back to it next time.  
38  
39 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I think that we're done.  
40  
41 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** One last one. We do have an issue  
42 with the baitfish and the baitfish, the source of information is  
43 both from surveys that were conducted in the 1980s, but also  
44 from information that is in the landings data, specifically the  
45 commercial data for all islands, at least for some species, and  
46 from the recreational catch in Puerto Rico.  
47  
48 Basically, what we have done, in terms of the panel and the

1 DAPs, is to look at the information that is available for the  
2 baitfish. These are the specie on the screen. They are mostly  
3 harvested from the state waters.

4  
5 They might be used for the fisheries in the EEZ and they are  
6 both baitfish and forage species for other fisheries in the EEZ  
7 and so right now, we just have one table that says these are the  
8 baitfish that have been identified. For some of them, like the  
9 halfbeaks, et cetera, we do have landings data.

10  
11 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, what does the staff need from the  
12 council regarding baitfish?

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

15  
16 **BILL ARNOLD:** NMFS is developing an ecosystem-based fishery  
17 management policy that will ultimately, if the policy goes  
18 through, and I think it will, largely intact, create the fishery  
19 ecosystem plan concept as an overarching plan and not really a  
20 management plan, but an ecosystem plan to govern. To make this  
21 quick, that's where these baitfish belong. They don't belong  
22 under management. As Graciela said, they're almost exclusively  
23 in state rather than federal waters and the feds are just going  
24 to be able to do practically nothing to affect their fate.

25  
26 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

27  
28 **ROY CRABTREE:** Well, just looking at that, there are some  
29 species on there that seem -- I mean they're more inshore  
30 estuarine things that I sure don't really think we need to  
31 manage, but without something more and this late in the day, I  
32 don't know how to get this sorted out.

33  
34 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.

35  
36 **MARCOS HANKE:** I agree. For example, the mullets and a few  
37 species of ballyhoo, they are more related to the shoreline and  
38 so on, but, at the same time, because, since a long time ago the  
39 tendency is for the ecosystem-based management, to have -- There  
40 is some, and I am not in a position to give any specific opinion  
41 now, but we should include a few baitfish that is the base of  
42 the fishery, the ones that are mostly used and most present on  
43 the area. We don't have any information about those, even  
44 though we know that they are extremely important.

45  
46 Once we manage and we give an opinion about why the landings go  
47 up or go down, having information about those bait will be very  
48 helpful. I think that's the link that we are losing now and we

1 should be very responsible and careful about it.  
2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.  
4  
5 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Just to mention that these are species  
6 that are used for highly migratory and for coastal pelagic  
7 fisheries and for deepwater grouper fisheries, in some cases,  
8 like some of the sardines and the tiger grouper off of Vieques  
9 and things like that. They are part of EEZ fisheries in the  
10 sense that they are the main bait for that fishery and so this  
11 is an open question.  
12  
13 **MIGUEL ROLON:** If we do nothing at this time with the baitfish  
14 and just watch it on the screen, will that be okay, Bill, and  
15 then whenever appropriate at another time you will be requesting  
16 the council to pronounce one way or the other with this group of  
17 species when we get into the ecosystem-based whatever?  
18  
19 **BILL ARNOLD:** I would not be recommending that they be included  
20 in these fishery management plans right now. Maybe after we go  
21 through public hearings and get some input that urges we do  
22 include them, but right now, there is no good reason to include  
23 them for management.  
24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I don't think that you need a motion for that.  
26  
27 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to see them included, if it's  
28 possible, in the public hearings, to hear the comments.  
29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.  
31  
32 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think staff could highlight that this is  
33 something the council is considering and get public opinion on  
34 them, but I think right now none of these species are in the  
35 FMP, right? So if we just move on without a motion here, then  
36 they're not going to be included, but you can always ask the  
37 public what they think about it.  
38  
39 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That sounds good.  
40  
41 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Hold on a second. Remember when you go to public  
42 hearings that the staff has to prepare a document that will say  
43 this is something that we considered and the council adopted  
44 this and rejected that and you have the whole ball of wax  
45 present to the group, including that list of bait species.  
46  
47 If you do nothing now, in order to save some time, the staff  
48 will carry on with this and you will be able to get more input

1 from the public at some other time.

2  
3 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** A point of clarification. I mean you  
4 do have the option of doing scoping before you do anything else  
5 to clear up the list finally and just get it out of the way from  
6 the public standpoint, because public hearings are a ways away.

7  
8 **MIGUEL ROLON:** That's my point. We stick to the darned list and  
9 let the process go and the staff will tell you and then will  
10 have to come back and tell you we now have to go to scoping  
11 meetings or public hearings or workshops or whatever. The most  
12 important part is that you are satisfied with the list that you  
13 have. That's the key.

14  
15 **MARCOS HANKE:** I am satisfied with the list to follow the  
16 process and to get opinions on public hearings and get intake  
17 and I want to mention that Cedar Garcia at the University of  
18 Humacao, he collects samples from the use on the east coast of  
19 Puerto Rico and I can get ahold of that list, at least to have a  
20 starting point on maybe some species that can be indicative of  
21 species that we should start with on the baitfish management and  
22 we can give also information about the presence of them in  
23 offshore, off of our shelf, sometimes in different situations,  
24 the presence of them in the EEZ basically is what I am trying to  
25 say.

26  
27 Sometimes on very tiny juvenile size that not necessarily is  
28 very easy to identify, but they move in and out with the  
29 activity and the tide. We can get some information on that that  
30 I can give to you, Graciela, and maybe start off with some key  
31 most common species.

32  
33 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

34  
35 **BILL ARNOLD:** I think that's a great debate for later, but I do  
36 want to remind the council there are more things on today's  
37 agenda. There is the Comprehensive Amendment for Application of  
38 Accountability Measures.

39  
40 I am just making a suggestion that you could, since it's late in  
41 the day, consider that one for tomorrow after lunch, because I  
42 think it's going to be a relatively quick conversation and  
43 resolution, but there is also that we need guidance from the  
44 council on next steps in developing these island-based plans. I  
45 would urge that we get that done. It may be relatively simple,  
46 but this was Action 1 in our FMP/EIS development.

47  
48 We have also got Action 2, which is making determinations as to

1 how these species are going to be grouped into complexes, and  
2 Action 3, which is how to develop reference points, including  
3 annual catch limits. Maybe an Action 4 and maybe that's where  
4 you address ecosystem component species, but we do need some  
5 guidance so we can move forward in starting to develop the  
6 public hearing draft for the island-based fishery management  
7 plans. That's what we're asking and then we can finish this up.

8  
9 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

10  
11 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Bill, thank you a lot, because I was going to ask  
12 the same question and you answered it. I feel like Jeopardy. I  
13 believe that, Mr. Chairman, that the council just needs to  
14 reaffirm and to allow the staff to continue work with Action 2  
15 and Action 3 and other needed actions.

16  
17 We have also a need to allow the staff and the team that is  
18 working on this, Graciela and Bill and everybody else at the  
19 Regional Office and Southeast Region, to continue the process.  
20 Probably Action 2 will be the next step. It could be this year  
21 and it all depends on the complexities of the document that we  
22 have to present and everything. If not, it will be the first  
23 part of 2016.

24  
25 That will be followed -- By the way, in each one of the actions,  
26 we need the SSC and the DAPs and, of course, the council and so  
27 that will be the next step.

28  
29 Third will be the actions and the reference points. Those are  
30 when we start talking about the information that you have for  
31 ACLs and for ABCs and all that. That will take some doing, some  
32 more time, and that will fall into 2016 also.

33  
34 Other needed actions, we cannot tell you at this time  
35 specifically what are those, but we will be able to provide that  
36 list or outline in 2016 and then I agree with Bill to suggest  
37 that you as a council to move this part of the agenda to the  
38 first part after lunch, so that we can have the five-minute  
39 presentations that we are supposed to give the public today.

40  
41 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.

42  
43 **BILL ARNOLD:** All I really want from the council is freedom for  
44 the staff to develop, further develop, those PHDs, including  
45 Action 2 and 3. We will bring you something back in December  
46 that you can sink your teeth into if you will acknowledge that  
47 we have the freedom to do that.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Feel free.

2  
3 **ROY CRABTREE:** I move Bill have freedom.

4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Feel free, Bill. Okay.

6  
7 **MIGUEL ROLON:** For the record at this time, I don't think that  
8 you need a motion, but just the council intent is to allow the  
9 staff to continue this process.

10  
11 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So moved.

12  
13 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Now can we have the five-minute public comment  
14 period for each person. It's not five minutes for all the  
15 comments.

16  
17 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Right. For each person. I don't know if we  
18 have a list. Do we have a list? Anybody who wants to raise  
19 their hands? Nobody raised their hand. Okay. We are going to  
20 go administrative matters. After the budget and other  
21 administrative business, we have a closed session.

22  
23 **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, this is really very quick. I  
26 already said we have money to finish 2015 and then we are now in  
27 conversations with the National Marine Fisheries Service  
28 regarding 2016.

29  
30 All the council executive directors are going to have a phone  
31 call in September and at that phone call, we will be addressing  
32 2016. In other business, as I said before, the Caribbean  
33 Council will host the Chairman and Executive Directors, called  
34 the CCC, meeting in May and we will also be helping the  
35 coordination of the February meeting with the National Marine  
36 Fisheries Service of the same group.

37  
38 The only two things that we are contributing this year is that I  
39 asked for the staff for National Marine Fisheries Service and  
40 the council to include in the February meeting only those issues  
41 that cannot wait until May or that need to be taken into  
42 consideration between February and May for the council to make a  
43 contribution to the discussion and they -- So far, they agree.

44  
45 The meeting will take place in St. Thomas at the Frenchmen's  
46 Reef and already Diana has secured the venue and the contract.  
47 The CCC will cost some money. Just to give you an idea, the  
48 venue costs about \$12,000 just for those days and Angie and I

1 have been discussing this and we have some money that we can --  
2 Whatever money we save from this year, we will put it into the  
3 CCC. That's it, Mr. Chairman.

4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Thank you, Miguel. We are going to  
6 have a closed session and just the members of the council will  
7 stay.

8  
9 (Whereupon, the meeting went into closed session on August 19,  
10 2015.)

11  
12 - - -

13  
14 August 20, 2015

15  
16 THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

17  
18 - - -

19  
20 The Caribbean Fishery Management Council reconvened at the  
21 Mayaguez Holiday Inn, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Thursday morning,  
22 August 20, 2015, and was called to order at 11:26 o'clock a.m.  
23 by Chairman Carlos Farchette following the ABT Public Hearing.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We are going to get started with the regular  
26 council meeting. Can everybody have a seat and we can get  
27 started? We are going to get started. I am missing a couple of  
28 council members, Marcos and Carlos Velasquez.

29  
30 Continuation of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Regular Council Meeting being held at  
31 the Mayaguez Holiday Inn, August 20, 2015. It is now 11:26 a.m.  
32 We will do a roll call and I am going to start on my left with  
33 Vivian.

34  
35 **VIVIAN RUIZ:** Vivian Ruiz, council staff.

36  
37 **MARIA DE LOS A. IRIZARRY:** María de los A. Irizarry, council  
38 staff.

39  
40 **TARA PREY:** Lieutenant Junior Guard Prey, U.S. Coast Guard.

41  
42 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Tony Blanchard, St. Thomas, council.

43  
44 **RICARDO LOPEZ:** Ricardo Lopez, Puerto Rico DNR.

45  
46 **MARCOS HANKE:** Marcos Hanke, charter operator, Puerto Rico, Vice  
47 Chair.

48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Carlos Farchette, Chair, CFMC.  
2  
3 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Miguel Rolon, council staff.  
4  
5 **ROY CRABTREE:** Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.  
6  
7 **IRIS LOWERY:** Iris Lowery, NOAA General Counsel, Southeast  
8 Section.  
9  
10 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA Fisheries.  
11  
12 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Carlos Velasquez, commercial fisherman and  
13 council member.  
14  
15 **BILL ARNOLD:** Bill Arnold, NOAA Fisheries.  
16  
17 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Graciela Garcia-Moliner, council  
18 staff.  
19  
20 **DIANA MARTINO:** Diana Martino, council staff.  
21  
22 **LYNN RIOS:** Lynn Rios, NOAA Enforcement.  
23  
24 **HOWARD FORBES:** Howard Forbes, DPNR Enforcement.  
25  
26 **RICHARD APPELDOORN:** Rich Appeldoorn, SSC Chair.  
27  
28 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** Julian Magras, DAP, St. Thomas/St. John.  
29  
30 **EDWARD SCHUSTER:** Edward Schuster, DAP St. Croix.  
31  
32 **GARY ROGERS:** Gary Rogers, DAP, Puerto Rico.  
33  
34 **ALIDA ORTIZ:** Alida Ortiz, Outreach and Education Advisory  
35 Panel.  
36  
37 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Kate Quigley, council staff.  
38  
39 **RICK PEARSON:** Rick Pearson, NOAA Fisheries.  
40  
41 **MIGUEL LUGO:** Miguel Lugo, NOAA Fisheries.  
42  
43 **CHRISTINA PACKAGE-WARD:** Christina Package-Ward, NOAA Fisheries.  
44  
45 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Tom Matthews, Florida Fish and Wildlife  
46 Commission.  
47  
48 **LOREN REMSBERG:** Loren Remsberg, NOAA Office of General Counsel.

1  
2 **SEAN MEEHAN:** Sean Meehan, NOAA Fisheries.  
3  
4 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Kate Quigley, council staff.  
5  
6 **HELENA ANTOUN:** Helena Antoun, contractor.  
7  
8 **JANNETTE RAMOS:** Jannette Ramos, Sea Grant Program.  
9  
10 **EVEN TUOHY:** Evan Tuohy, graduate student, University of Puerto  
11 Rico.

12  
13 (The public hearing participants also identified themselves and  
14 were not transcribed into the record.)

15  
16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you. We agreed yesterday that after  
17 lunch we would continue the Comprehensive Amendment: Application  
18 of Accountability Measures in the Council Fishery Management  
19 Plans.

20  
21 **VIVIAN RUIZ:** (Names the Go to Meeting attendees.)

22  
23 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is one of the  
26 easiest reports from a public hearing, because you were all  
27 here, but basically you have heard the deponents and Graciela is  
28 summarizing the number of people who addressed the council at  
29 this public hearing. We have an envelope that has several  
30 signatures that were handed to us by the wife of one of the  
31 fishermen.

32  
33 We also have a written statement from Pew Charitable Trusts and  
34 we have another one from Mr. Font and it was distributed to you  
35 and it's in Spanish. For the record, very quickly, he wanted me  
36 to read this to you at the opening of the council. You have  
37 your gizmo for translation and that will save me some time.  
38 This is addressed to Carlos Farchette, President of the  
39 Caribbean Fishery Management Council and it reads:

40  
41 (The letter was read into the record.)

42  
43 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Miguel.

44  
45 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Also, Mr. Chairman, Graciela has a summary of the  
46 comments received and, Graciela, would you like to read that,  
47 just those two tables?  
48



1  
2 There are a number of issues regarding the economics of the west  
3 coast of Puerto Rico and that information is also available by  
4 town and by species harvested for these towns and, whenever  
5 possible, what species are fished at Bajo de Sico, Tourmaline,  
6 and Abrir la Sierra. That, in a nutshell, because you were all  
7 present, is the information that was presented.

8  
9 There is also an indication of the changes that have taken place  
10 in the environment off the west coast, in the oceanographic  
11 environment off the west coast, including the heavy presence of  
12 sargassum that has been a repetitive event over the past years  
13 and the impact that that might have on the local fisheries and  
14 that it actually has, because divers, for example, cannot go out  
15 and sargassum gets tangled in the engines, et cetera.

16  
17 There was also comments about the changes that are taking place  
18 due to climate variability and climate change and the impact  
19 that that will have on the fisheries in the near future and one  
20 last thing was most of the fishers that you had present at the  
21 meeting were from Cabo Rojo, which is the number one town for  
22 local tourism and the appreciation of the fresh market for fish  
23 in the area was definitely something that everyone mentioned as  
24 they spoke.

25  
26 The weather off the west coast was also mentioned as one of the  
27 natural closures that the fishermen suffer, because we have had  
28 a number of fronts moving in through the area and definitely the  
29 changes that have taken place in the past few years, considering  
30 that most of the fishers go out in skiffs that are about twenty-  
31 two feet in length and are open. It's a consideration and that  
32 was brought to the attention of the council.

33  
34 Safety issues are also a concern of a number of divers, because  
35 that's one of the changes that have taken place in the fishery  
36 off the west coast. It has changed from trap fishing to a  
37 diving-based fishery and also safety issues are a concern at  
38 these sites because of the depth and it was actually presented  
39 at the council that there have been a number of deaths  
40 associated with diving four to six tanks at the depths that  
41 Abrir la Sierra, Tourmaline, and Bajo de Sico present.

42  
43 This information has been considered in the document. It's in  
44 the document and you have both short-term and long-term impacts  
45 that the council would cost, depending on the alternative that  
46 is chosen. I think that I have covered most of the comments, in  
47 a nutshell, that have been made that addressed the issues that  
48 we're discussing here today of Abrir la Sierra, Tourmaline, and

1 Bajo de Sico and modification to the regulations that are in  
2 place.

3  
4 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Thank you, Graciela. Excellent summary in two  
5 seconds that you had to prepare. I have also a document from  
6 the Pew Charitable Trusts that was sent to Mr. Carlos Farchette  
7 and mostly the document addressed the interests on Bajo de Sico.  
8 We also received a document that was sent to Carlos Farchette  
9 from Dr. Michelle Scharer and do you want to address that?

10  
11 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** This is from Michelle Scharer. It says: Dear  
12 Carlos Farchette, I am currently not in Puerto Rico and so I  
13 won't be able to accompany you at the Mayaguez meeting.  
14 Nonetheless, I wanted to make sure you had access to the latest  
15 scientific evidence that supports the preferred alternative  
16 selected at the last CFMC meeting regarding Bajo de Sico.

17  
18 My take-home message is that the Bajo de Sico seamount includes  
19 habitats of special ecological importance and based on current  
20 and hopefully continued research at this site, the right time to  
21 protect these habitats is when there are higher than usual  
22 concentrations of spawning groupers, December to May, which is  
23 also six months in duration, as it is in current regulations at  
24 this site.

25  
26 I trust you will be able to emphasize the value of this  
27 information when the discussion regarding this particular case  
28 arises. Since the St. Thomas closure of the Red Hind Bank and  
29 Grammanik Bank have demonstrated significant results to the  
30 grouper and reef fish fisheries, perhaps with guidance the west  
31 coast fishers will someday have a chance to reap similar fishery  
32 benefits from protected areas of significance.

33  
34 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Just for the record, the conclusion of the  
35 position, the written position, by the Pew Charitable Trusts is  
36 that the evidence overwhelmingly supports year-round protection  
37 of Bajo de Sico to foster the recovery of spawning Nassau  
38 grouper and other rare and wonderful species of reef fish and  
39 corals. In a nutshell, that's the document that we are going to  
40 include in our records. Mr. Chairman, at this time, what we  
41 need to hear from the council is what is your reaction and what  
42 is your intention of what you would like to do next.

43  
44 **ABRIR/BAJO/TOURMALINE: REVISION OF MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS IN**  
45 **FEDERAL PORTION OF EACH AREA**

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Tony Blanchard.

48

1 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Good morning, folks. For most of you who don't  
2 know me, I am a fisherman just like you and so I understand the  
3 situation that you are there sitting in right now. One of the  
4 same problems that we have is the lack of representation from  
5 our government, our government of fishers, which I'm looking  
6 around and I really don't see anyone here except for the mayor.

7  
8 Now, a big issue that is here on the table is the people that  
9 are being affected and I think oftentimes we just overlook them  
10 and we don't realize the impact that is being made by the  
11 decisions that we make, but I am glad to see that we have a full  
12 room and a full house and people that are actually willing to  
13 step forward and speak to what they have to defend.

14  
15 I really don't think this is my decision to make. I really  
16 think this decision should fall on the representation of Puerto  
17 Rico, but I am going to put it out there, because, like I say,  
18 and I say it on a lot of the issues, because I am in your same  
19 shoes.

20  
21 I think we need more representation from Puerto Rico as for the  
22 governor and the mayors and everybody else that has been  
23 affected because of the impact this is going to bring on Puerto  
24 Rico. This is not going to bring any impact on the USVI and so  
25 really, this decision falls on Puerto Rico, because you are  
26 directly affected, especially with the economy that so many  
27 people are moving off of Puerto Rico that is a failing economy  
28 by the looks of it and the crisis that you guys are in.

29  
30 Really, like I say, this decision is yours and I think we need  
31 to take into consideration all the people that are being  
32 affected, because this is a handful here.

33  
34 You've got to multiply these guys by how much, because this  
35 translates a lot bigger than a room of 150 people, especially in  
36 the situation like I see with the economy how it is here.  
37 Marcos, Carlos, I am going to let you take the lead on this,  
38 because you have to live with this decision.

39  
40 Something else that I wanted to bring to the board that I  
41 overlooked, and I never really noticed, but Puerto Rico has nine  
42 nautical miles and correct me if I'm wrong, but just like in the  
43 USVI, if we have three nautical miles that is territorial waters  
44 around any of our keys, we also have three nautical miles.  
45 Puerto Rico has nine and why is the map according to how it's  
46 done in St. Thomas -- I don't know why the regulations changed,  
47 but with nine nautical miles, these islands would have been  
48 incorporated into territorial waters.

1  
2 **MIGUEL ROLON:** The map that you have there depicts the lines  
3 from Puerto Rico west coast to nine nautical miles and so that's  
4 why, in the case of Bajo de Sico, because of the nine nautical  
5 miles, you have a shared responsibility for Bajo de Sico as well  
6 as Tourmaline.

7  
8 If you look at Abrir la Sierra, it's outside the nine nautical  
9 miles and it's considered, of course, federal jurisdiction in  
10 the EEZ and that's why it's so important that whatever we do in  
11 the federal zone should be mimicked by the local government to  
12 make it enforceable, because right now, if you put a Coast Guard  
13 vessel in Bajo de Sico, the frontend will be in the federal zone  
14 and the back will be in the local government jurisdiction.

15  
16 We need to hear from Puerto Rico sometime in this process,  
17 whenever they are ready. They don't have to adopt everything  
18 that we say and actually, in the case of Puerto Rico, some other  
19 management that they have in place are stricter than the ones  
20 that we have in the EEZ.

21  
22 The council set up to harmonize these three areas in terms of  
23 the management measures that you have in each one of them. If  
24 we do nothing at this time, Graciela already mentioned that we  
25 will have the same regulations that we have now. Anchoring is  
26 permitted with the gizmo that will pull the anchor and you have  
27 six months in Bajo de Sico and three months in the other.

28  
29 What we need to hear from you at this time, after this public  
30 hearing and all the documents that you have received, what is  
31 the pleasure of the council on how to move?

32  
33 You are supposed to take final action at this time, but that can  
34 be changed. If you need more time, you can move it to the  
35 December or March meeting.

36  
37 We also said that whatever final action we take will be in front  
38 of the local fishermen on the west coast of Puerto Rico and so  
39 if you don't take final action today, the next meeting will be  
40 in December and so your final action we will switch March and  
41 August and so we will meet in Puerto Rico in March and we will  
42 meet in St. Croix in August of 2016. The staff now will keep  
43 quiet until you tell us what to do next.

44  
45 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.

46  
47 **MARCOS HANKE:** What I am going to say now and it's very  
48 important, because I have been very involved on trying to

1 balance all the information that we as council members receive  
2 to balance the scientific part, the socioeconomic aspect, and  
3 the fishing dynamic.

4  
5 Due to many reasons that I don't think is pertinent to go  
6 through all of those right now, the presence of the people  
7 behind me allowed the council to have a support on whatever  
8 support or not any support to the decisions we make.

9  
10 If we engage the fishermen behind us with a decision that they  
11 believe in and that we are balancing on the major way on all the  
12 elements that we have to judge, they are going to be the ones  
13 enforcing the regulations and that's a big issue right now.  
14 They will feel part of this in the water and for me, that is  
15 very important as a fisherman, to believe in something that we  
16 fight for and that we're going to keep it as our baby or part of  
17 our decision or something that they participate very active to  
18 it.

19  
20 Once that is said and also giving -- To validate what the  
21 previous decision of the council for the regulations the way it  
22 is and, more than anything, for the letter I have in my hand  
23 that what Graciela presented on the board presents different  
24 twists of what they think should be done, but on the end of the  
25 run, they decide to sign up with a proposal that everybody can  
26 agree with and can feel part of it and endorse, which is to stay  
27 the same, the way it is.

28  
29 Addressing the issue that for me is very important to keep the  
30 six -- Because the way it is, it's the six months, the way it is  
31 in Bajo de Sico and the three months in Tourmaline. Just the  
32 business as usual. I am ready to support this letter of the  
33 fishermen that they signed.

34  
35 Right now, I am giving it to the Chairman and we have eighty-six  
36 people that signed up on those forms that was present here and  
37 fifty submitted the comment today on the public hearing, but  
38 more than those agree on this overall proposal, which is staying  
39 the same, what it is.

40  
41 I am just giving this to the Chairman to include on the  
42 documents that we have and I want to hear Carlos Velasquez and  
43 whoever else has something to say and for them to follow up.

44  
45 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Tony Blanchard and then Carlos  
46 Velasquez.

47  
48 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Let's remember the whole reasoning behind

1 dealing with this situation here was for compatible regulations  
2 and to make things easier across the board, straight across the  
3 board, for enforcement.

4  
5 Really, the issue is this. Just like Marcos said, you want  
6 people to enforce the law? You've got to have them buy into it.  
7 If they are willing to buy into what they have already, they are  
8 enforcing the law and so he said he's got eighty-six signatures.

9  
10 Like I said, I am not going to vote. I will go with these two  
11 guys to decide their own fate, but remember why this was put on  
12 the table. It was basically for enforcement issues, to make it  
13 easier and compatible regulations. That's really how this  
14 started, unless I am completely off base.

15  
16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Carlos Velasquez.

17  
18 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** My dialogue is in Spanish. (The comment was  
19 not transcribed.)

20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Carlos. Miguel.

22  
23 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Just for clarification, I asked Graciela to put  
24 on the screen what it means to leave -- This is what the  
25 fishermen signed for. I want to make sure that people  
26 understand what it means.

27  
28 Graciela, this table has present regulations and if we do  
29 nothing, those regulations will be in place, as they are now.  
30 Is that right?

31  
32 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** That is correct.

33  
34 **MIGUEL ROLON:** If we follow what the fishers are saying, leave  
35 them as is, you will have Bajo de Sico October 1 through March  
36 30, a six-month closure. You will have Tourmaline December 1  
37 through the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, three months, and you will have  
38 Abrir la Sierra December 1 through the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

39  
40 Some of the fishers would like to see Bajo de Sico also with the  
41 same three-months as Tourmaline and Abrir la Sierra. That's  
42 another point.

43  
44 Gear ban, you have traps and pots and bottom longlines and nets  
45 are prohibited year-round in both the area of jurisdiction of  
46 Puerto Rico and the EEZ. In the case of the spear species, gear  
47 managed during seasonal closures, we have all fishing  
48 prohibited, including pelagic lobster, reef fish, and queen

1 conch. In Puerto Rico, we have no management measures at this  
2 time.

3  
4 Anchoring will be prohibited in Bajo de Sico, both by Puerto  
5 Rico and the federal government. In the case of Tourmaline and  
6 Abrir la Sierra, present regulations allow anchoring with a  
7 retrieval system and the same goes for Abrir la Sierra. You  
8 allow anchoring with a retrieval system. It is prohibited in  
9 Puerto Rico for Bajo de Sico, the same as for Tourmaline and  
10 Abrir la Sierra, but in the case of Abrir la Sierra, that is  
11 federal and so Puerto Rico doesn't have any jurisdiction really  
12 there.

13  
14 Seasonal closures, you have red hind December through February  
15 and species managed October through December, et cetera, and so  
16 this is what status quo means and this is probably -- If you  
17 want to discuss this as Marcos's presentation, then you discuss  
18 it as that.

19  
20 The question to Puerto Rico is if Puerto Rico is willing and  
21 able to change any of the regulations to make it compatible with  
22 the federal zone. The reason for that is for enforcement  
23 purposes.

24  
25 You know we cannot overemphasize the need to be able to enforce  
26 it uniform. It is impossible to enforce the regulation in a  
27 place like Bajo de Sico, where you have a six-month closure and  
28 Puerto Rico doesn't have any closure. If a fisherman is fishing  
29 there, the only thing he has to do is move a little bit to  
30 Puerto Rico until the Coast Guard disappears and then move back  
31 into the fishing area. Prey will be very upset with that.

32  
33 Mr. Chairman, I believe that if you are ready that you can  
34 discuss this one and then the other alternative that you have.  
35 The other thing that we need to know is if you are ready to take  
36 final action at this meeting or you prefer to extend the process  
37 until next year.

38  
39 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to hear from Roy before we make any  
40 motion or any decision.

41  
42 **ROY CRABTREE:** Well, this is a tough one. I mean I really --  
43 You know one of the purposes of the amendment is to strengthen  
44 the protections in these areas and I am concerned about Nassau  
45 grouper in particularly Bajo de Sico and I really would like to  
46 see us do something to strengthen the protections for those  
47 fish.

48

1 At the same time, I don't recall when I've seen a turnout of  
2 fishermen like this at a Caribbean Council meeting and we've got  
3 some of the environmental groups asking us to go to year-round  
4 protection at Bajo de Sico and we've got a lot of fishermen here  
5 asking us to go to a much shorter closure in Bajo de Sico and I  
6 don't know how we reconcile all that.

7  
8 I did hear from a lot of folks that just don't change anything  
9 and it's working and we're seeing improvements and all that and  
10 so I am not sure at this point that -- Perhaps our best move is  
11 just to leave things the way they are for now, because I think  
12 it's going to be difficult for us.

13  
14 I don't want to see us lose ground and back up, but we sure  
15 don't have any real -- I've got a lot of concerns about making  
16 the changes and staying with the current preferreds that we  
17 have.

18  
19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

20  
21 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Let me just put this question out to you.  
22 What's the downfall of staying how it is? We've already got  
23 eighty-some supporters that is here. What's the downfall?

24  
25 **ROY CRABTREE:** Of staying where we are?

26  
27 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Exactly. We've already got eighty-something  
28 supporters in this room. It's been working so far and that's  
29 the point I'm trying to make here. It's been working so far and  
30 why change it? I understand it was put on the table because of  
31 enforcement reasons, but it can't fall on the fishermen's backs  
32 all the time. If you have to bring in more enforcement, then  
33 you have to bring in more enforcement. Yes, it becomes an issue  
34 for the government, but then it becomes an issue for them. Do  
35 you understand what I am saying?

36  
37 We can't always look at one side of the table and we have to be  
38 fair across the board, as fair as fair could be. I understand  
39 what these guys are going through, because I am a fisherman  
40 myself and I don't feel the burden should fall on the fishermen,  
41 the handful of fishermen, all the time.

42  
43 I mean everybody has a role to play and if enforcement is the  
44 issue, that don't necessarily mean because the simplest thing to  
45 do is to have compatible regulations. Maybe you need a bigger  
46 enforcement force, which will cost money, but it's costing them  
47 money.

48

1 I am just putting it out there, because I call it how it is and  
2 a lot of people ain't going to agree with me, but they are  
3 entitled to their opinion too.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.

6

7 **MARCOS HANKE:** Also, I want, for the record, to say that the  
8 closed season in the management measures done for the red hind,  
9 which is basically what two of the closed areas are looking for,  
10 it showed an improvement and the fishermen recognized that  
11 improvement.

12

13 Another thing that I would like to say and ask for Ricardo to  
14 take to the Secretary and I will have also the opportunity to  
15 take it and that is that make it compatible to Bajo de Sico and  
16 extend the protection that much without hurting the fishermen so  
17 much.

18

19 We are going to accomplish much more by doing that and following  
20 the fishermen's recommendation than trying to twist a little bit  
21 on the federal waters only and creating a big problem. I will  
22 have an opportunity to explain that to her.

23

24 Another thing that I want to say to the fishermen, and I have to  
25 talk very loud because the microphone is here, but, guys, we  
26 keep hearing -- (The rest of the comment is in Spanish and was  
27 not transcribed.)

28

29 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

30

31 **MIGUEL ROLON:** What I am hearing around the table is the  
32 inclination to adopt the status quo as our next move and that  
33 will include, for example -- I asked Graciela to make sure what  
34 I was going to say.

35

36 In the case of the gear that is allowed, and we were talking  
37 about spearfishing, it will be allowed except for the time where  
38 you have the closure, the closed season. The gear that will be  
39 restricted will be the gear that will be affecting the bottom of  
40 those areas. Those gear will remain unallowable. We are  
41 talking about traps and other gear.

42

43 The rationale for you -- Remember, you always have to have a  
44 rationale for doing whatever you do. Just because you are  
45 impressed with the numbers, it doesn't mean that you will do  
46 whatever they tell you to do, but in this case, not only do they  
47 have the numbers, but they also have a valid reason for the  
48 council to pursue what they are stating today, that what is

1 already in place is working for the protection of the groupers  
2 and snappers that we are after for protection to.

3  
4 My personal concern is Puerto Rico. If we keep waiting for  
5 Puerto Rico to do something and they do nothing, and they have  
6 been proposing to do this for the last five or ten years, we  
7 will have the same problem with enforcement and it's a  
8 disservice to the fishermen community in this area and I am  
9 talking about Puerto Rico and not to Ricardo or Daniel here.

10  
11 We have to allow whatever we do today, allow Ricardo and the  
12 professionals that are here from the Department of Natural  
13 Resources to go back to the Secretary and see if Puerto Rico  
14 will follow suit with whatever we decide here.

15  
16 Remember that Puerto Rico has authority of the nine miles and we  
17 cannot force Puerto Rico unless there is a need for preemption  
18 and preemption is a word that at least Dr. Crabtree doesn't want  
19 to hear now, but we need to harmonize and work together to have  
20 this harmonization there and so you have heard today if this is  
21 approved by the council that it is supported by the majority of  
22 the fishers. It is supported by the majority of the people who  
23 didn't come here, but they sent signatures supporting the  
24 document here.

25  
26 It might not be supported by all scientists, but that's what you  
27 are here for, to take the hard decisions and make a judgment.  
28 It doesn't mean that this will be locked in concrete forever,  
29 because if in the future we find that the fishermen are  
30 violating their own compromise that they made today, their own  
31 commitment, then we will have to come back and react to the  
32 whole issue again. Mr. Chairman, I believe that you are ready  
33 to do something, but I need to know what that something will be.

34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

36  
37 **ROY CRABTREE:** I think if your decision is you want to just  
38 leave things the way they are and not make a change, which is  
39 what I heard at least from Tony, I think all you really need to  
40 do to do that is just pass a motion telling staff you're not  
41 going to proceed with this framework action and you're done with  
42 it.

43  
44 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I agree and I believe that we need somebody  
45 to develop some language for a motion. Marcos.

46  
47 **MARCOS HANKE:** That will be a very easy motion. Roy, can you  
48 help me with the language to make sure it complies with the

1 legal aspect of it?

2  
3 **ROY CRABTREE:** I don't think there is a whole lot of legal  
4 aspect with not taking an action. I think all you have to do is  
5 just basically make a motion not to proceed with the framework  
6 amendment.

7  
8 **MARCOS HANKE:** My motion is not to proceed with the framework  
9 amendment and to leave it as it is.

10  
11 **ROY CRABTREE:** It seems clear to me, unless my attorney has a  
12 comment.

13  
14 **IRIS LOWERY:** No comment here.

15  
16 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Do we have a second?

17  
18 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Not to. For ABT. For the public, ABT means  
19 Abrir la Sierra, Bajo de Sico, and Tourmaline.

20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Do I have a second?

22  
23 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Second.

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is not to proceed with the  
26 framework amendment for Abrir la Sierra, Bajo de Sico, and  
27 Tourmaline. The motion was by Marcos Hanke and seconded by  
28 Carlos Velasquez. Any further discussion? Dr. Ponwith and then  
29 Roy.

30  
31 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is -- I  
32 appreciate the public testimony around this. This is a very  
33 difficult issue and closures are a difficult issue. We learned  
34 a lot from the fishers that came and spoke this morning about  
35 how beneficial the existing closure has been and that they are  
36 actually sensing, in their businesses, the benefits of that  
37 closure, the conservation benefits of that closure, which is  
38 actually encouraging and is strong and helpful feedback for this  
39 council.

40  
41 As you contemplate your vote on this, this is a challenge,  
42 because you have to weigh the economic impacts that changes have  
43 to the people who are fishing and also the gains that have been  
44 reaped from the existing closures, but also the other thing that  
45 was talked about at length was a large purpose of this is to  
46 create consistency between the EEZ regulations and the  
47 territorial regulations.

48

1 I think it's important to think about confusion and challenges  
2 that may exist by those regulations not being compatible and if  
3 those are having a negative impact both on what you're trying to  
4 accomplish by the closures that you do have in place and also in  
5 conflicts between the people who are charged with the challenges  
6 of enforcing those regulations and the people who are doing that  
7 fishing.

8  
9 We heard from one person testifying that being intercepted by  
10 the Coast Guard had a negative impact certainly on that fishing  
11 trip, but I think that those are things that need to be taken  
12 into consideration as you weigh your decision in this vote.

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Dr. Crabtree and then Marcos and then  
15 Blanchard.

16  
17 **ROY CRABTREE:** Well, we talked a lot about trying to bring the  
18 consistency at the last meeting, but the trouble is when  
19 consistency for enforcement purposes is great, but not so great  
20 if it means you have to bring the conservation value down to the  
21 least protective site, particularly when you're talking about  
22 Bajo de Sico. It's the last known spawning aggregation site for  
23 Nassau grouper in Puerto Rico.

24  
25 Given all that, it seems that the goal we originally had of  
26 trying to bring consistency to all these just isn't really  
27 attainable at this time.

28  
29 I think we do need to bear in mind that we put out a proposed  
30 rule to list Nassau grouper as threatened under the Endangered  
31 Species Act last fall and so there will be -- The comment period  
32 we've been through and we have all the comments now and so we  
33 will be making a decision, a final decision, on that probably in  
34 the fall, I suspect before our next council meeting in December,  
35 and so that's something we all need to be concerned about,  
36 because we haven't seen the kind of recovery of Nassau grouper  
37 that I think any of us would like to see and the council is  
38 going to need to be involved with the recovery as we move  
39 forward.

40  
41 Given where we are and given the really passionate testimony and  
42 feelings that folks have about it, I, with some reluctance, I  
43 think I'm going to vote to support the motion at this point. It  
44 probably seems to me that this is our best course of action,  
45 given all the circumstances, for right now.

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos and then Blanchard.

48

1 **MARCOS HANKE:** Just addressing what Bonnie just mentioned about  
2 the consistency and the -- I want to stress the need for the DNR  
3 and I will make sure that this voice gets heard and make a true  
4 effort to do it.

5  
6 The problem is that if the compatibility, especially in Bajo de  
7 Sico, is not taken into consideration, maybe the federal waters  
8 will try to compensate for that by doing other things and that  
9 is unfair for the fishermen.

10  
11 If the government of Puerto Rico steps up to the plate and makes  
12 consistency, something that is doable that actually happens,  
13 it's going to help on the enforcement and on the beneficial  
14 effects of the management and there is many things involved in  
15 this and I just want to make that comment to support that.

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Ricardo, how -- You know your crystal ball. If  
18 we approve this and not to proceed with the amendment -- By the  
19 way, it's not a framework, but the amendment for ABT, then you  
20 go back to the table that Graciela presented and what are the  
21 chances that Puerto Rico will have compatible regulations with  
22 the federal government if we adopt this motion?

23  
24 **RICARDO LOPEZ:** The Secretary made a commitment with the  
25 fishermen and she wanted not to close the area for more than  
26 four months and so I believe that everything will work together.  
27 Does that answer your question?

28  
29 **MIGUEL ROLON:** What area are you talking about?

30  
31 **RICARDO LOPEZ:** Bajo de Sico.

32  
33 **MIGUEL ROLON:** If Puerto Rico decides that and you have  
34 compatibility -- If you adopt the same as the federal, you will  
35 need to promulgate a regulation or an amendment to the  
36 regulations so that you have in Tourmaline -- In Tourmaline  
37 especially, three months, because you don't have jurisdiction  
38 over Abrir la Sierra. Then Bajo de Sico will be in conflict,  
39 because you will have six months in one area and four months in  
40 the other and that may not cut it and so you have to go back and  
41 consult with the Secretary.

42  
43 As I said before, you don't have to do any of this if Puerto  
44 Rico is not ready, based on your science and your management  
45 policies, but, in all honesty, this thing has been discussed  
46 since twenty years with fishers and scientists and so forth and  
47 the fishermen supporting all the way and you have heard today  
48 that that's what they support.

1  
2 I encourage the local government to follow suit and see if you  
3 can do as much as possible to bring this to compatibility. I am  
4 sure if the Secretary of DNR is presented with the right  
5 rationale and with the elements of judgment that she can  
6 honestly decide that okay, this is what I want for Puerto Rico's  
7 side of the fishery that she will do so, because she has told  
8 that to us many times and she did it on the record. It will be  
9 a matter of for you to take this table and present it to her if  
10 this motion is adopted.

11  
12 **RICARDO LOPEZ:** We are going to do that. We are going to do  
13 that. I am going to do that with Marcos and possibly with  
14 Carlos and together we are going to talk to her and see what she  
15 has to say.

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** One last thing. Thank you, Ricardo, for bringing  
18 your people over here, because I know that the way that we  
19 operate in Puerto Rico that you do not give permission for  
20 people to get out of the office that often and as many as I have  
21 seen -- I have seen so many familiar faces and new people.

22  
23 One of them is everything that is going wrong, according to some  
24 Facebook things, but she has been clarified and so for that, I  
25 am very thankful and also the fishermen in the back. Now that I  
26 am talking, I can say this. This is the first time I have seen  
27 a mayor get into action and work with the fishers and as I told  
28 Mayor Ramirez, he will talk to other mayors and they can emulate  
29 him.

30  
31 In numbers, there is a force, as we say, but you have shown here  
32 what you can do if you unify yourselves, but also you have shown  
33 that you didn't come here to shout and you didn't come here to  
34 threaten anybody and you didn't come here to insult anybody.  
35 You came here with the truth and you came here with your  
36 experience and I believe that that has been the key to make a  
37 difference and I promises that the next time we discuss  
38 something like this that we will have a bigger room.

39  
40 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Tony Blanchard and then Marcos Hanke.

41  
42 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I think a lot of what is being overlooked here  
43 is the size boats that these guys fish out of and the distance  
44 from shore, as well as the weather conditions. That in itself  
45 is a controlling factor, to a certain degree.

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.  
48

1 **MARCOS HANKE:** I want to comment about the speech that Ricardo  
2 just gave and something that I have to bring to the Secretary is  
3 that now the people behind here -- They are much better educated  
4 and they have all the elements to support any change on the  
5 state waters, because they understand the implications and those  
6 commitments and those voices have to be heard and they have to  
7 be very active on that and I don't know what they're going to  
8 do, but they have the whole scenario ready to make an informed  
9 opinion and that's something very positive from today's meeting.

10  
11 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Now I am going to do a roll call for a  
12 vote with those members that are present and able to submit a  
13 vote. I am going to start on my left with Blanchard.

14  
15 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.

16  
17 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes.

18  
19 **ROY CRABTREE:** Yes.

20  
21 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Yes.

22  
23 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes. **Any nays; any abstentions. Hearing**  
24 **none, the motion carries.** A quick question. Since we changed  
25 the motion to remove the word "framework", do we have to put  
26 that on the record? Okay. The motion is not to proceed with  
27 the amendment for Abrir la Sierra, Bajo de Sico, and Tourmaline.  
28 Motion by Marcos Hanke and seconded by Carlos Velasquez and the  
29 motion carries and so it remains the same.

30  
31 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I believe that applause also includes that we're  
32 going to have lunch now.

33  
34 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes, we are breaking for lunch. Thank you.

35  
36 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on August 20, 2015.)

37  
38 - - -

39  
40 August 20, 2015

41  
42 THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

43  
44 - - -

45  
46 The Caribbean Fishery Management Council reconvened at the  
47 Mayaguez Holiday Inn, Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Thursday afternoon,  
48 August 20, 2015, and was called to order at 1:30 o'clock p.m. by

1 Chairman Carlos Farchette.

2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** We are going to get started again. We're  
4 waiting for Graciela to power up here. We have to go back to  
5 what we didn't finish yesterday, the Comprehensive Amendment:  
6 Application of Accountability Measures in the Council Fishery  
7 Management Plans.

8  
9 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** This is language that needs to be  
10 changed in the amendments and FMPs and so give us a second.

11  
12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Are we good to go? Okay, Bill.

13  
14 **COMPREHENSIVE AMENDMENT: APPLICATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES**  
15 **IN THE COUNCIL FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS**  
16 **REVIEW DRAFT AMENDMENT/SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**  
17

18 **BILL ARNOLD:** This one should be pretty easy, but you can make  
19 it as complicated as you wish. In the text that we have in our  
20 fishery management plan, it says that we will apply  
21 accountability measures. As you know, accountability measures  
22 are what we do in response to an overage of the annual catch  
23 limit.

24  
25 If there is an overage, we apply accountability measures that  
26 basically involve shortening the season following determination  
27 that there was an overage by the number of days necessary to  
28 ensure that the accountability measure is not again exceeded.

29  
30 There is no penalty associated or no payback or nothing like  
31 that, but just set the length of the season so that you still  
32 catch the ACL and you just don't go over it. In that text, we  
33 have language that says, and you can see it down in Alternative  
34 2 right here, the needed changes will remain in effect until  
35 modified by the council, but that's not what we're doing.

36  
37 The council doesn't do that. They don't file any formal rule.  
38 They don't set a rule that says, okay, we are now rescinding  
39 this accountability measure. If that were the procedure that is  
40 employed, then these accountability measures would continue year  
41 after year until the council actually took action.

42  
43 Based on our understanding of the council's motives when they  
44 set up the 2010 and 2011 Caribbean Annual Catch Limits, which is  
45 where this language is contained, they intended for  
46 accountability measures to last one year and be applied in that  
47 year and then to end. If you needed an accountability measure  
48 in the next year, you would establish a new accountability

1 measure and that accountability measure, the determination as to  
2 whether the annual catch limits were exceeded or not, is based  
3 on a new three-year average, because we've got a rolling three-  
4 year average.

5  
6 In 2014, we used 2010, 2011, and 2012 average landings. In  
7 2015, we will use 2011, 2012, 2013 landings for this 2015 year  
8 and next year, we will use 2012, 2013, and 2014 landings.  
9 Really, it would be inappropriate, regardless, to maintain those  
10 accountability measures, because they reflect a different  
11 averaging period and would not really capture the needed or not  
12 needed changes to the length of the fishing season.

13  
14 What we've done is set up three alternatives that the council  
15 can choose from. The first alternative, as always, is the no  
16 action alternative and we don't address this issue. Our General  
17 Counsel would advise against that, because then you have an  
18 inconsistency between your fishery management plan and the  
19 regulations that are the outcome of that fishery management  
20 plan, the regulations that reflect what is contained in the  
21 fishery management plan.

22  
23 The regulations do not say until rescinded by the council or  
24 whatever the language is and the needed changes will remain in  
25 effect until modified by the council. That is not contained in  
26 our actual regulatory text. So, like I said, Action 1, leave it  
27 as it is with the inconsistency between the two and that's not  
28 really an advisable outcome.

29  
30 Alternative 2 would be to remove that language from the fishery  
31 management plans, from the amendments, and there is two of them.  
32 There is the 2010 Caribbean Annual Catch Limit Amendment and the  
33 2011 Caribbean Annual Catch Limit Amendment. The language is  
34 contained in both and so Alternative 2, the council would advise  
35 to remove that language.

36  
37 Alternative 3, the more complex outcome, is don't remove the  
38 language from the FMP. That's how the council wanted this to be  
39 done and so modify the regulatory text and modify the procedure  
40 and start doing things different from the way we've been doing  
41 them, so that at the end of the year or sometime during the  
42 year, the council says we are actually going to end this  
43 accountability measure application or we're not, in which case  
44 it would continue to the next year.

45  
46 Taking Snapper Unit 2 as an example, accountability measures  
47 were required for Snapper Unit 2 certainly in 2013, because they  
48 had that extensive overage, but that overage went way down and

1 so we had a three-month closure in 2013 due to almost doubling  
2 of the allowable catch, but that wasn't the case in 2014.  
3  
4 Had the council followed this until removed provision, then that  
5 AM would have been applied in 2014, or else you would have had  
6 to specifically take action to end the accountability measure.  
7 Like I said, if you didn't, you would have a closure that's much  
8 longer than what would be necessary to properly manage the  
9 fishery and the catch coming out of that fishery.  
10  
11 That's really what the issue is. As I said, it doesn't have to  
12 be complex. Personal guidance on this would be that you choose  
13 Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative and, contained within  
14 this meeting, that you give us authority that -- I don't know if  
15 you have to have -- This could be our public hearing on this and  
16 then the council provides final approval to move this forward  
17 for secretarial review and hopefully secretarial approval.  
18 That's what we would like to see happen so that we can get this  
19 language cleaned up and get this thing out of the documents.  
20  
21 Now, associated with this, there are a couple other language  
22 modifications, some minor details that are contained in  
23 regulatory text. Unlike -- Of course, depending, if you choose  
24 Alternative 2, there will be no change to the regulatory text.  
25 If you choose Alternative 3, we will modify the regulatory text  
26 and you will have to deem the text and we'll have to go through  
27 that process and we will have to do a much more in-depth  
28 analysis of the outcomes, because now you've got potentially  
29 significant impacts.  
30  
31 Regardless, say you, for example, choose Alternative 2 as your  
32 preferred alternative and we go with that. We still have some  
33 regulatory text we would like to modify, the first of which is  
34 in the regulations for the queen conch minimum size limit.  
35  
36 There are two available minimum size limits for queen conch.  
37 You can either do nine inches from tip to tip, and so basically  
38 maximum length, and that's one alternative or you can have a  
39 three-eighths-inch lip thickness. You can meet either one of  
40 those and be legal. You could have a conch that that's big and  
41 if it's got a three-eighths-inch lip thickness, it's legal. You  
42 could have almost a paper-thin lip, but a nine-plus-inch conch  
43 and that also is legal.  
44  
45 The way the regulatory text reads, it says -- In one spot, it  
46 says "and" instead of "or" and we want to get that "and" out of  
47 there and replace it with "or". It's not really legally a  
48 problem, but it can be a perceptual problem and so we just want

1 to make sure that for everybody that reads the text, including  
2 fishermen and lay people, that they will have a clear  
3 understanding and enforcement officers, too. Everybody has a  
4 clear understanding of what the rules are. You don't have to  
5 meet both of them, but you meet either or.

6  
7 The second item is that when we apply an accountability measure  
8 to close a season that we need to specifically state in our  
9 regulations what we mean by closing the season and so it's just  
10 a little bit of text we're going to add into our regulations.  
11 It really is very minor and it simply says when we close this is  
12 what it means and we prohibit harvest for the period of time for  
13 which the -- We want you to make a decision as to what your  
14 preferred alternative is and then we will need you to basically  
15 deem that codified text that we are going to incorporate into  
16 the regulations, assuming you guys are supportive of this  
17 approach.

18  
19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. I guess the members can discuss it if  
20 you need. I am ready to say so moved, but let's discuss.  
21 Carlos Velasquez.

22  
23 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Bill, for that --

24  
25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Hold on. Before discussion, we need a motion  
26 to accept -- I don't want to put words in your mouth of  
27 Alternative 2.

28  
29 **MARCOS HANKE:** I would like to move Alternative 2 as the  
30 preferred alternative.

31  
32 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I need a second.

33  
34 **ROY CRABTREE:** Second.

35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is to move Alternative 2 as  
37 preferred. It's moved by Hanke and seconded by Roy Crabtree. I  
38 guess we've got to put as preferred to what, right? Now  
39 discussion from Carlos Velasquez.

40  
41 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Bill, the minimum size of queen conch, for  
42 the data or the history or what for the minimum size of the  
43 queen conch?

44  
45 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The queen conch minimum size dates  
46 back to 1997 and so the minimum size has been in place since  
47 that time and so it's nine inches in total length and three-  
48 eighths of an inch in lip thickness. That hasn't changed since

1 that time and so there are scientific studies that show that  
2 reproduction increases as the size of the shell increases and  
3 then after they reach reproductive size -- It doesn't have to be  
4 nine inches and that's why the three-eighths of an inch in lip  
5 thickness is there. Then they start getting the fat lip and so  
6 it's either one or the other, which means that at both sizes  
7 they have reached sexual maturity.

8  
9 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Is it the same law in state waters of Puerto  
10 Rico or no?

11  
12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Yes.

13  
14 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** I don't understand, but in the same law of  
15 Puerto Rico and the federal waters, but the history you based  
16 the data or implemented that data from the state waters or no?

17  
18 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Back in 1997, when the administrative  
19 order of DNER came into being, along with the fishery management  
20 plan, we had data on the size of reproduction, the size that was  
21 being harvested. We had discards and high incidence of small  
22 conch being landed and so there were specific studies conducted  
23 in a number of years to determine the size of reproduction and  
24 the season also at the time.

25  
26 We also used the landings, the commercial landings, data from  
27 that and that applies to the -- The queen conch specifically  
28 applies to those waters that are still open in the EEZ to  
29 fishing for queen conch, which is just in St. Croix. Everything  
30 west of 64 degrees, 34 minutes west is closed for harvesting  
31 queen conch.

32  
33 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, we need better language for the motion.  
34 It says to move that Alternative 2 be considered as preferred  
35 for the comprehensive and all that jargon, because it doesn't  
36 make much sense. Mr. Chairman, can you read it for the record?

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's the verbiage I was asking about. To  
39 move that Alternative 2 be considered as preferred in the  
40 Comprehensive Amendment: Application of Accountability Measures  
41 in the CFMC FMPs. It's moved by Hanke and seconded by Crabtree.

42  
43 I've got a question here, Bill. I know that you mentioned -- I  
44 know for this motion, but you also mentioned about removing  
45 "and" from the conch thing and we already took care of that in  
46 some other meeting, right? Didn't we move to change that?

47  
48 **BILL ARNOLD:** We're going to move through this step-wise, the

1 three things. The first thing is deal with this preferred  
2 alternative and then we'll discuss the two changes to the  
3 regulatory text.

4  
5 **BILL ARNOLD:** Okay. Is there further discussion? **Hearing none,**  
6 **all in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions. Hearing none,**  
7 **the motion carries.** Okay, Bill.

8  
9 **BILL ARNOLD:** Number two will be the modification of the  
10 regulatory text regarding queen conch. Give Graciela a second  
11 and we'll get that up there. The text on the screen is the text  
12 that will be modified. That was "and" and we're changing it to  
13 "or". We're all about details.

14  
15 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Do you need a motion for that or just we trust  
16 you to just go ahead and do it, because we already discussed it  
17 in previous meetings.

18  
19 **BILL ARNOLD:** Unless Iris tells me different, I don't think we  
20 need a motion. I think we're just letting you guys know we're  
21 doing this.

22  
23 **IRIS LOWERY:** I would agree we can move forward with that.

24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Next.

26  
27 **BILL ARNOLD:** This one is in each of our FMPs we simply add  
28 language that says -- It basically outlines that the council and  
29 the National Marine Fisheries Service have the authority to  
30 implement these closures. It's a detail, but it's an important  
31 detail to have in there and so the regulatory text will be  
32 modified accordingly in reference to each of the four fishery  
33 management plans: Reef Fish, Corals, Queen Conch, and Lobster.

34  
35 Now, queen conch is a little different, because we don't close  
36 queen conch following the same accountability measure rules, as  
37 you know. We have a season for queen conch in the areas in  
38 federal waters where queen conch is allowed to be harvested and  
39 that's time-based, but it's also quota-based.

40  
41 Just kind of overall, all three of these things we're  
42 discussing, each of them has no impact on the way we're doing  
43 things. Everything is going to be done exactly the same way,  
44 based upon your choice of Alternative 2 as a preferred  
45 alternative for the first one. That's important to have on the  
46 record and to understand. All we're doing is verifying what we  
47 do anyway and so I don't want there to be any angst in that  
48 regard.

1  
2 **MIGUEL ROLON:** With that, are we finished?  
3  
4 **BILL ARNOLD:** Yes.  
5  
6 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right. We're back on track here.  
7  
8 **BILL ARNOLD:** We do need to ask you to take final action on the  
9 preferred alternative on that amendment to the fishery  
10 management plan, the accountability measure guidelines  
11 amendment, comprehensive amendment. The council has to actually  
12 develop a motion and say we take final action on this with the  
13 preferred alternative that we identified. Then we can finish  
14 this up and you won't see it again.  
15  
16 **MARCOS HANKE:** Okay and in order to expedite the process, can  
17 you help me with the language you need, Bill?  
18  
19 **BILL ARNOLD:** The council moves to submit for secretarial  
20 review and approval the comprehensive amendment.  
21  
22 **MARCOS HANKE:** So moved.  
23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Do we have a second?  
25  
26 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Second.  
27  
28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is to move to submit for  
29 secretarial review and approval the Comprehensive Amendment:  
30 Application of Accountability Measures in the CFMC FMPs. Moved  
31 by Marcos and seconded by Velasquez. Go ahead, Iris.  
32  
33 **IRIS LOWERY:** I guess the one thing I would add is we can say  
34 the Comprehensive Amendment: Application of Accountability  
35 Measures Preferred Alternative 2, just to make it clear. I  
36 would put "Preferred Alternative 2" after "FMPs".  
37  
38 **MARCOS HANKE:** Change in language accepted.  
39  
40 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right. Move to submit for secretarial  
41 review and approval the Comprehensive Amendment: Application of  
42 Accountability Measures in the CFMC FMPs Preferred Alternative  
43 2. Moved by Marcos and seconded by Velasquez. **All in favor say**  
44 **aye; any nays; any abstentions. Hearing none, the motion**  
45 **carries.**  
46  
47 Okay. Moving forward with the agenda, Timing of Accountability  
48 Measures-Based Closures Amendment. That will be Kate Quigley.

1  
2 **TIMING OF ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES-BASED CLOSURES AMENDMENT**  
3

4 **KATE QUIGLEY:** At the last council meeting, the council had  
5 directed staff to go and take the options paper that exists and  
6 create a public hearing draft and so that's what council and  
7 NMFS staff did and so I am just going to review things rather  
8 briefly. Many of you are already familiar with these actions  
9 and alternatives and I will go through it as briefly as I can  
10 and tell you kind of what we're looking for at this point.

11  
12 If you recall, the amendment consists of two actions. The first  
13 action is to modify the timing for implementation of AM-based  
14 closures in the EEZ and so if there has to be a closure, then  
15 we're creating the structure under which that will occur.  
16 Action 2 is to specify how often to revisit the approach  
17 selected in Action 1.

18  
19 Just the four alternatives that we have for Action 1, Number 1  
20 is no action. As we have it right now, if an ACL is exceeded,  
21 then the AM kicks in and you need to have a closure to make up  
22 for the lost poundage from December 31 going backwards. This is  
23 for all FMUs and so December 31 going backwards and so it's  
24 going to be different for each FMU, depending on how many pounds  
25 need to be made up for.

26  
27 Alternative 2 has been identified by the DAPs as the preferred,  
28 which is September 30 going backward. They prefer that to  
29 December 31. Alternative 3 is January 1 going forward. The IPT  
30 went and put this in in order to create a broader range of  
31 alternatives, so we had something from September 30 going  
32 backwards and we had December 31 going backwards and we needed  
33 something more in the beginning of the year.

34  
35 Even though this might not be preferred, because you've got Lent  
36 and Holy Week and tourism season, we needed to have a wider  
37 range of alternatives and so January 1 going forward was put in.

38  
39 All three of those apply to all FMUs across the board. Then  
40 we've got Alternative 4 and there are three subalternatives  
41 under Alternative 4, which I will go over in just a minute, but  
42 it's different fixed dates for individual or a group of FMUs on  
43 each island or island group. We have these three  
44 subalternatives and I will go into those in just a minute and so  
45 we'll get into specifics.

46  
47 This is just the exact wording. I know you've all seen it  
48 before, but it just explains what I said just a moment ago about

1 how things operate right now. It's December 31 going backwards.  
2 This is the full language for September 30, which is  
3 accountability measure-based closures resulting from an ACL  
4 overage will begin on September 30 of the closure year and go  
5 backwards into the year for the number of days necessary to  
6 achieve the required reduction in landings.

7  
8 This closure start date would apply to all FMUs for each of the  
9 three island or island groups and Caribbean-wide for certain  
10 species. If for any FMU in any year the number of days left in  
11 the year is not enough to achieve the required reduction in  
12 landings, then those additional days would be captured in the  
13 opposite direction.

14  
15 So if September 30 going backwards, if there is not enough days  
16 to make up for that, then you're going to go forward from  
17 September 30 towards the end of the year and so it just makes  
18 sure that you've got all your bases covered. Alternative 3 is  
19 the same thing, but with regards to January 1 and you're only  
20 going forwards.

21  
22 Alternative 4 is where we get a little more complicated. We are  
23 establishing a fixed fishing closure start date for the  
24 implementation of AMs for each FMU and so this for species or  
25 species complex or island or island group.

26  
27 A different start date may be chosen for each FMU and so the  
28 three previous alternatives are for all FMUs across the board.  
29 Alternative 4 though says that you can have a different start  
30 date for a closure depending upon the species or species group  
31 and it can differ among the islands.

32  
33 For these, the start date would begin on the last day of the  
34 identified month and go backwards toward the beginning of the  
35 year.

36  
37 Here is the subalternatives and this is going to be pretty much  
38 the same for each of the islands or island groups. Alternative  
39 4a is closure to start the last day of the month with the  
40 highest average landings. The thought process is if you choose  
41 the month with the highest average landings that you're going to  
42 have a shorter closure than you would otherwise, because you are  
43 cutting out more pounds if you take a look at historically  
44 what's been landed.

45  
46 Alternative 4b is a closure to start the last day of the month  
47 with the lowest average landings and so the thought process is  
48 if you do the lowest average landings, it's going to be a less

1 important time of the year and so you might have a longer  
2 closure, but not as many people would have been on the water  
3 anyway.

4  
5 Then we have Alternative 4c, which is a closure to start the  
6 last day of the month with the least negative social, cultural,  
7 and economic effects. The thought was we want the DAP to  
8 identify when that is. The DAP basically said no -- The DAPs  
9 basically said no, we want September 30 going backwards and they  
10 declined to identify what Alternative 4c would be for each of  
11 the FMUs and island and island groups.

12  
13 As of right now in the document, we don't have identified dates  
14 for Alternative 4c and so there is a little star there that says  
15 "not yet specified" and I will show you what I mean. Here we  
16 have Puerto Rico, the exact language I just talked about, and  
17 the highest landings would be based on the most recent three  
18 years of available landings data and the lowest landings would  
19 be based on the most recent three years of data.

20  
21 Here we just -- I know it's a little bit hard to see, but you  
22 can see that there are three columns. There is the FMU  
23 basically identified in the first column and so the FMU  
24 identified in this first column and Subalternative 4a and so you  
25 see that we looked at the highest landings for the past three  
26 years of data and we identified for each FMU what those were and  
27 then we have lowest landings for the average past three years of  
28 data available and then we have 4c, TBD, to be determined,  
29 because we don't have dates.

30  
31 That's a very difficult thing to come up with and the DAPs said  
32 we prefer September 30 going backwards anyway and so they  
33 declined to identify those dates, which we were hoping to get  
34 from them.

35  
36 We do have economic information and social information and  
37 cultural information, but it affects everybody differently and  
38 so what might be the least negative economic, social, and  
39 cultural effects in one area for a specific FMU might be  
40 different for another area of Puerto Rico or another group of  
41 fishermen in St. Thomas and so there's a lot of diversity in  
42 what 4c could be.

43  
44 As you can see, right here what I want to convey is that 4a and  
45 4b, those second and third columns, have got different dates for  
46 each FMU.

47  
48 Then we have separation and we have Puerto Rican commercial and

1 Puerto Rican recreational and here we've got different dates for  
2 those as well, based upon the MRIP data. This is all in the  
3 document and so I am not going over specific dates, but then St.  
4 Thomas/St. John we have dates identified. Again, it's for the  
5 last day of the month and going backwards for as long as is  
6 necessary and then St. Croix.

7  
8 Now, there are some situations that you see, and this is for all  
9 of the islands, you've got no landings sometimes and so for  
10 boxfish, no landings and so we have tried to identify highest  
11 landings and lowest landings, but for certain species there are  
12 no landings or there is very, very little data.

13  
14 You see for wrasses we've got no landings for nine months of the  
15 year and so that left us with just three months and very small  
16 amounts to go with.

17  
18 Then we have Caribbean-wide species, tilefish and aquarium trade  
19 species. We took a look at the aggregate data and identified  
20 the last day of the month going backwards, but, again, we've got  
21 no landings, you know no landings for certain spans of time.  
22 Again, it's very difficult to identify 4a, 4b, and 4c in all  
23 situations.

24  
25 What's the summary of effects? If you take a look at the  
26 document, you've got physical effects and biological and  
27 administrative and then you've got economic and social. The  
28 biological and physical and administrative -- Well, the  
29 biological and physical, basically there aren't any effects.  
30 You have the same ACL and you're still going to maintain the  
31 same ACL for each of these alternatives and so the physical and  
32 biological effects, we don't expect to see any direct or  
33 indirect effects or insignificant indirect effects.

34  
35 Then we've got the economic and social effects and there are  
36 some differences. For Alternative 1, we've got December 31  
37 going backwards right now. What we are seeing is little impact  
38 for Puerto Rico with this situation and larger impacts for the  
39 USVI, because there is potential for supply shortages and loss  
40 of markets due to imports.

41  
42 This is largely because we have seen that in the USVI seafood is  
43 a high-demand product during the Christmas seasons, whereas not  
44 so much in Puerto Rico, where pork is the preferred menu item  
45 during that time of the year.

46  
47 Under Alternative 2, September 30 going backwards, this we see  
48 as the least likely to result in supply shortages and revenue

1 and market losses, because you don't have tourism season going  
2 on right then and you don't have Lent and Holy Week. There is  
3 just no huge events that are occurring at that point in time and  
4 it's not the peak of tourism season.

5  
6 Alternative 3, January 1 going forward, this is most likely to  
7 result in supply shortages during tourism season in the USVI and  
8 loss of markets to imports during Lent and so the fear is if you  
9 can't deliver the fish, you are going to lose the market and the  
10 hotels and restaurants will have to rely upon imports and then  
11 people perhaps aren't going to go back, because you don't have  
12 that reliable supply.

13  
14 Alternative 4 varies by FMU. It depends on the closure date.  
15 If you have a closure date during the beginning of the year,  
16 there is going to be a loss for supplying the tourism market and  
17 all these things that we just talked about and so it's largely  
18 dependent on what's happening on that island or island group for  
19 that period of months, what typically happens during those  
20 years.

21  
22 Action 2, we're specifying how often the approach to set the  
23 timing of AM-based closures selected in Action 1 should be  
24 revisited and so we choose something in Action 1 and now we have  
25 to decide how often are we going to review this.

26  
27 Now, of course the council can review this approach that we're  
28 describing in Action 1 anytime that they want. Someone can  
29 bring it up and it can be changed and a new document can be  
30 written. Right now, it's not specified how often this approach  
31 for a December 31 closure going backwards should be revisited.

32  
33 Alternative 2 though is to review the approach selected no  
34 longer than three years from implementation and Alternative 3 is  
35 review every five years, no longer than five years from  
36 implementation. Reviewing the approach that sets the timing for  
37 AM closures can involve reviewing the dates selected, criteria  
38 for choosing the dates, or any other aspect of the rule that  
39 exists.

40  
41 The effects, basically the physical and the biological effects,  
42 was -- It's kind of indifferent. The council right now can go  
43 ahead and choose to review an approach at any time and so you're  
44 not going to have effects from that or the effects are unknown,  
45 because we don't know how often it's going to occur under  
46 Alternative 1 that the council will review this. All we know is  
47 that it's going to happen more often under Alternative 2 than it  
48 is under Alternative 3.

1  
2 Three years is shorter than five years and so you're going to  
3 review it more often and so administratively it's a little more  
4 expensive, perhaps.

5  
6 Economic and social are almost the same thing and we just worded  
7 it in a different way. In general, neither Alternatives 2 or 3  
8 increase or decrease the likelihood of a better outcome compared  
9 to the other or Alternative 1, since the council can revisit the  
10 approach taken under Action 1 at any time anyway.

11  
12 Possible next steps are to review the public hearing draft. I  
13 just went and gave you a general overview of the effects and  
14 where the actions and alternatives stand right now and I can  
15 scroll back through so we can think about it a little bit more,  
16 but the opportunity exists now for the council to revise the  
17 alternatives as you guys see necessary.

18  
19 What we're looking for is to select preferred alternatives so  
20 that we can move ahead and start fleshing out some more of those  
21 economic effects and bring this out to public hearings for fall  
22 of 2015. Here is our timeline. Right now we're in this little  
23 pink area right here. The council is reviewing the public  
24 hearing document and selecting preferred alternatives and  
25 approve for public hearings.

26  
27 Then in December, the council will discuss the outcomes of the  
28 public hearings and the council revises and approves the  
29 codified text and approves the amendment for secretarial review.

30  
31 In the spring, early spring, amendment and proposed rule comment  
32 period and then NOAA publishes the comprehensive amendment final  
33 rule in late spring or early summer. What I can do is scroll  
34 back now to under Action 1, so you can just take another look at  
35 the wording and decide if there is action that you would like to  
36 take on any of the alternatives or motions or choose preferreds.

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Thank you, Kate. It's open for  
39 discussion, but I can already see what we're looking at, because  
40 we have spoken to all the fishermen in all the districts. We  
41 would need somebody to make a motion for Alternative 2, I would  
42 assume, but I don't want to put words in people's mouths here.  
43 Blanchard.

44  
45 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I would like to make a motion that Alternative  
46 2 be the preferred alternative.

47  
48 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.

1  
2 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right. We will wait until it goes up on  
3 the board.  
4  
5 **IRIS LOWERY:** Who seconded it? Can I just also suggest that you  
6 specify Alternative 2 to the name of the -- I guess this is an  
7 amendment.  
8  
9 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I guess there needs to be timing of  
10 accountability measures somewhere in there, in that verbiage?  
11  
12 **IRIS LOWERY:** Right. Sorry. That's what I meant.  
13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Timing of Accountability Measures-Based  
15 Closures Amendment. Okay. It's move to make Action 1,  
16 Alternative 2 the preferred for Timing of Accountability  
17 Measures-Based Closures Amendment. Moved by Blanchard and  
18 seconded by Hanke. **All in favor say aye; any nays; any**  
19 **abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.** I guess we will  
20 move to the next one.  
21  
22 **KATE QUIGLEY:** I guess my next question is what would you like  
23 to do about Alternative 4c? If you recall, we have not  
24 specified anything to include in 4c. One option is to include  
25 something in 4c. If this is not an alternative that appeals to  
26 folks and you don't want to include anything in 4c, then --  
27  
28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
29  
30 **BILL ARNOLD:** A question to Kate. Do we need Alternative 4 at  
31 all? If so, would you like to include Subalternatives 4a and  
32 4b, but just eliminate Alternative 4c? The reason I ask is  
33 because Alternative 4c is going to require a huge amount of  
34 analysis and comparison and it's going to make our job much,  
35 much tougher than it has to be and it's going to accomplish  
36 nothing to leave it in here.  
37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Kate.  
39  
40 **KATE QUIGLEY:** There is a sufficient range of alternatives  
41 without 4c and I am saying that because 4a and 4b include  
42 different ranges for each FMU and then we have pretty much the  
43 year covered with Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. There is a  
44 sufficient range of alternatives without 4c and so if you were  
45 to get rid of it, it would be okay.  
46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.  
48

1 **MIGUEL ROLON:** For the record, if that complies with NEPA  
2 requirements for alternatives, I believe that we are happy with  
3 it and so we have to be careful to say it will be a lot of work.  
4 We have to say it will comply with NEPA requirements at this  
5 time, please.  
6  
7 **KATE QUIGLEY:** My understanding is that it would comply with  
8 NEPA requirements.  
9  
10 **MIGUEL ROLON:** You don't need any further action from the  
11 council and just the license to drop 4c or do you want to have a  
12 motion?  
13  
14 **KATE QUIGLEY:** I think it would be nice to have a motion, just  
15 so we don't forget about it and there is nothing to be unsure  
16 about.  
17  
18 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay and so the motion would be to delete Action  
19 4c of the document.  
20  
21 **KATE QUIGLEY:** We just need a council member to make that  
22 motion. That makes sense to me. Graciela, do we have a  
23 considered but rejected appendix typically in our documents?  
24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Okay. The phrase "considered but rejected" is in  
26 every document that you have. You have several alternatives  
27 that the council considered, but rejected as preferred. From  
28 the selection of alternatives, you prefer one, but also, you  
29 have a section where you don't even include them in the  
30 alternatives and just reject that and you don't put it there,  
31 but you have to make sure that if somebody from the public wants  
32 to read about the tracking of what you have done, that person  
33 will go to that part and will read what you rejected.  
34  
35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Does somebody want to make the so move on the  
36 motion?  
37  
38 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.  
39  
40 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.  
41  
42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The motion is Action 1, Alternative 4c  
43 to the considered but rejected section in Timing of  
44 Accountability Measures-Based Closures Amendment. Any  
45 discussion? **Hearing none, all in favor say aye; any nays; any**  
46 **abstentions. Hearing none, the motion carries.**  
47  
48 **KATE QUIGLEY:** The only other thing we need is if you would like

1 to approve this document for public hearings and the plan was to  
2 kind of hold the public hearings in the fall, but that would be  
3 up to scheduling by the council.

4

5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Did you say it has to go to public hearing?

6

7 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Well, that's the next step. The document has  
8 been written and the effects have been evaluated, although we're  
9 going to expand upon that a little bit, but yes, the next step  
10 would be to bring it to public hearings, perhaps in the fall.

11

12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So what we did to gather that information was  
13 scoping meetings?

14

15 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Scoping was held and an options paper was written  
16 and now we have a public hearing draft and so now the public  
17 hearing draft would be brought out to the public hearings.

18

19 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thanks. Miguel.

20

21 **MIGUEL ROLON:** We will work with Kate and then we will schedule  
22 with the Chair the appropriate timing for the public hearings,  
23 hopefully outside of hurricane season. Anything else, Kate, on  
24 that document? With that, Mr. Chairman, we are finished that  
25 part of the agenda.

26

27 **KATE QUIGLEY:** I think we probably want a motion to approve for  
28 public hearings.

29

30 **MIGUEL ROLON:** To take it to public hearings?

31

32 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Before you move on to the public  
33 hearing, Action 2 needs -- It has a three-year and five-year  
34 review and do you have a preferred alternative for those?

35

36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes.

37

38 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Which one do you like?

39

40 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** She will bring it up on the screen for you to  
41 see. Blanchard.

42

43 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I just think we should add in another  
44 alternative, a two-year alternative, because my thinking is we  
45 don't want to be held accountable for three years because that  
46 was what the alternative was that we agreed to. I think if it  
47 ain't working by two years that we need to think about what  
48 we're doing first and whether we need to continue down that road

1 or change and take another course.  
2  
3 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes and I think that's why Alternative 1  
4 gives us the option to just do it whenever we want instead of  
5 waiting three years or waiting five or two. Bill.  
6  
7 **BILL ARNOLD:** You don't need an amendment action or anything  
8 else. The council can check this thing whenever they feel like  
9 it. You have that authority.  
10  
11 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.  
12  
13 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay. I understand that, but you see I think  
14 by us putting on a time limit that we are held accountable to a  
15 certain amount of time that we look into it, because if we say  
16 we're going to check it any time, that could be next year and  
17 then next year we could decide the year after, but we need to  
18 hold ourselves accountable to what we're agreeing on.  
19  
20 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Anyway, Mr. Chairman, if we do this, it will be  
21 kind of a framework approach to this. Let's say you take it  
22 every three years and so you make sure in the document that  
23 after two years you are going to review this and that's what  
24 you're saying?  
25  
26 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Yes.  
27  
28 **MIGUEL ROLON:** You are entitled to move that, to add under  
29 Action 2, Alternative 3, or change any of those three that you  
30 have there from three to two. That will ease off the discussion  
31 or the preparation of the document. Your motion could be that  
32 Alternative 3 be changed to no longer than two years rather than  
33 three, if you so desire.  
34  
35 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I would like to have that change.  
36  
37 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Let Kate write it up and then we'll get a second  
38 and we will move on.  
39  
40 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
41  
42 **BILL ARNOLD:** I have discussed this with the staff and I'm not  
43 sure what Kate is say and they probably have a perfectly good  
44 reason that I am wrong, like usual, but this is -- The way it's  
45 set up, it's a one-time review. You review it three years from  
46 implementation and you don't necessarily ever review it again.  
47  
48 The question is do you want to review it every three years or do

1 you just want to review it once? As you know, the council can  
2 review it whenever they feel like it and so you don't have to do  
3 this and I just want to make sure it's clear to everybody the  
4 way it's set up is only a one-time review of where you are with  
5 this.

6  
7 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I remember -- Remember, I don't have any stake in  
8 this, but I remember when we discussed this with the fishers at  
9 a scoping meeting outside the record and everything and they  
10 were of the idea that if you have a timing for reviewing that  
11 they will not be locked into something today that may be not  
12 that good in two or three years and that was -- The mechanism of  
13 how we do it, as Bill is saying, you as a council can open up  
14 anything at any time, but I personally believe if you go to the  
15 public, public hearings, and you give them a very strong and  
16 straightforward indication as to how you're going to measure  
17 this and how you're going to review it that they will be better  
18 informed, I believe.

19  
20 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I just -- I may be looking at this the wrong  
21 way, but I don't want to be restricted that I cannot review  
22 something until the two years. Maybe I am looking at it wrong.  
23 Or the three years. I want to be able to review it when we say  
24 it needs to be. Blanchard.

25  
26 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Well, that ain't what we're saying. I ain't  
27 saying that we've got to wait two years to review it, because if  
28 we go down the road the first year and it ain't working, we  
29 could choose to review it then, but I don't want us going down  
30 the road and saying that we're going to review it and then every  
31 year we step over it because we feel there's something else  
32 pressing and we're going down the same road that it ain't  
33 working, just like the data that we have, that it just can't fit  
34 in in certain places and we're shooting ourselves in the foot  
35 all the time doing nothing but just going down the road because  
36 that's what we said we were going to do.

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Miguel.

39  
40 **MIGUEL ROLON:** With that language, you can review it the next  
41 day that you implement the measure. It's just that you have a  
42 cap of no longer than two years for reviewing. We understand  
43 all that and just go ahead and vote on it, because I believe  
44 that Tony is right. You have to set your language straight so  
45 you know when and how you're going to modify these plans.

46  
47 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** So let me ask then. If I say no longer than  
48 two years, then it will never be reviewed again or should it be

1 every two years or no longer than every two years?  
2  
3 (The comment is not audible on the audio recording.)  
4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right. I am good. I've got it. We need  
6 somebody to make the motion.  
7  
8 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.  
9  
10 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.  
11  
12 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Is there discussion? Bill.  
13  
14 **BILL ARNOLD:** I am just not real clear. Do you want to do it  
15 every two years or do you want to do it every three years or  
16 just do it one time, because you've got to get that "every" in  
17 there if you want to force yourselves to review this thing  
18 periodically.  
19  
20 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, I don't think that you have now any  
21 crystal ball that will tell you to review it every two years or  
22 every three years or every one year, but that language that you  
23 have, you ensure that you will review it whenever you need to  
24 review it, period.  
25  
26 When you review it, you can say, well, we will review it every  
27 other month and that would be one extreme or we will review it  
28 every hundred years and that will be the other extreme, but the  
29 language that you have here, if I understand you correctly,  
30 Tony, and you are the owner of the motion, you want to make sure  
31 that no less than two years we will do something with that and  
32 we will review it.  
33  
34 **TONY BLANCHARD:** No more than two years.  
35  
36 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No more than two years.  
37  
38 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I ain't saying that's when we're going to  
39 review it, but I don't want to be sitting on this for five years  
40 and it ain't working. That's what I mean.  
41  
42 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Bill.  
43  
44 **BILL ARNOLD:** Poor little horsey. So the way you want these  
45 alternatives to read is review the approach selected no longer  
46 than two years from implementation and every two years  
47 thereafter?  
48

1 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No, that's not what they are saying. Every two  
2 years and at that time, they will decide when and how they want  
3 to review it. Maybe in two years they will find that it works  
4 so well that they don't have to touch it again and they just  
5 want to have the timing for them to get the information and so  
6 they will decide within this period what will be the next step.

7  
8 If you do it every two years and you complain that you have a  
9 lot of work, you will have more work every year and so, anyway,  
10 I know what you are saying, but --

11  
12 **BILL ARNOLD:** You can either put the burden on yourself or not.  
13 If you put the burden on yourself, you can change that burden,  
14 too. If you don't put the burden on yourself, I assure you this  
15 thing will be forgotten and it will just sit out there and roll.

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Yes and that's why we don't want to forget it  
18 this way. Bill, you have the experience on all this and what  
19 will be the best way of doing this?

20  
21 **BILL ARNOLD:** Obviously the way I said, but, seriously, that's  
22 the way I would word it.

23  
24 **MIGUEL ROLON:** I am serious too. Is that the way it works? I  
25 mean he is shooting himself in the foot and so accept that and  
26 do it every year until something comes different. You would add  
27 what? No longer than two years from implementation and then  
28 every three years or every one year? Go ahead and --

29  
30 **BILL ARNOLD:** As I said, I am not real clear on the period of  
31 time you guys prefer. It seems like Tony prefers two years and  
32 so you say review two years after implementation and every two  
33 years thereafter.

34  
35 You could say review two years after implementation and every  
36 three years thereafter. You can word it however you want, but  
37 if you don't have the "every" in there, then it's going to be a  
38 one-time review and then after that you have somehow got to  
39 remind yourselves that you have to review this.

40  
41 If you just put it in there, you have created an obligation for  
42 yourselves, the council. The council is doing the reviewing.  
43 You have created an obligation for yourselves to review it and  
44 if you want to change that review period, you can change that  
45 review period down the line, but at least you have created the  
46 obligation.

47  
48 It's really a question as to whether you want to create the

1 obligation to periodically review or you don't want to create  
2 the obligation and you just want to create an obligation to  
3 review it one time after you implement it. That's the  
4 difference.

5

6 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Did you get all that?

7

8 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.

9

10 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay. Let me explain myself, because I think  
11 you've got the idea behind it. I ain't sure if we've got the  
12 wording and so I am going to explain it to you and I'm going to  
13 have either you or Iris help me put the wording together.

14

15 What I want is to be able to review it two years from the time  
16 it's implemented. We look at it and if it's working, fine, but  
17 after that, we could review it at any time, because if we go  
18 another year from then and things ain't working how we thought  
19 they would have been working, guess what? We need to review  
20 this, at least in my opinion.

21

22 What I don't want to be is held to something that ain't working.  
23 I don't want to restrict myself to holding on to something that  
24 is dead weight. That's basically what I am trying to push  
25 across here, but I feel if I don't put it out there that we  
26 obligate ourselves to check on it and to monitor it and nothing  
27 ain't going to happen and I think that's as frank as frank could  
28 be. I don't know how to word it and so I am going to either  
29 allow you or Iris to help me out with it.

30

31 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Tony, what Dr. Arnold is saying is exactly  
32 following your train of thought. You will -- Where are we in  
33 the language?

34

35 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** No longer than two years.

36

37 **MIGUEL ROLON:** When you say no longer than two years and every  
38 one year or every two years thereafter, that will take care of  
39 your worry, because you will be forced to review this at such a  
40 period of time and so probably what we should do is work on the  
41 extra language that Dr. Bill Arnold is suggesting, so you can  
42 say from implementation and every two years thereafter.

43

44 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Okay. Bill, I welcome your language.

45

46 **BILL ARNOLD:** Are you sure, Tony, because what it sounded like  
47 you were saying is we're going to review it two years after  
48 implementation and then we'll decide if we're happy with it and

1 we're just going to leave it forever or if we want to set up  
2 another review period.  
3  
4 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Correct.  
5  
6 **BILL ARNOLD:** Then just leave the original language and Kate  
7 wins and I lose.  
8  
9 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Don't do that, Bill. I mean Tony. If you do  
10 that, I bet you that when we get to two years that nobody will  
11 be around to remember what the hell we talked about today and  
12 when you get to that point, we will be talking again about --  
13 Maybe we won't have fishermen here and maybe they will talk  
14 about ABT again and so what you want is you have that mechanism  
15 -- Actually, it doesn't make any sense now, but at least you  
16 make sure that you have one milestone there that you have to  
17 check every two years or every one year. Don't leave it open.  
18  
19 **TONY BLANCHARD:** That's what I'm saying, to obligate ourselves  
20 to it.  
21  
22 **BILL ARNOLD:** So I win and Kate loses.  
23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That way, when we're no longer on the  
25 council, we can hold whoever is here accountable to making sure  
26 that these things were reviewed.  
27  
28 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Look at the screen now and see if --  
29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Say "so moved".  
31  
32 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.  
33  
34 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.  
35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right. It's moved to change in  
37 Alternative 2 in the Timing of Accountability Measures-Based  
38 Closures Amendment to read "review the approach selected no  
39 longer than two years from implementation and every two years  
40 thereafter". It's moved by Blanchard and seconded by Hanke.  
41 **All in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions. The motion**  
42 **carries.**  
43  
44 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Okay. So you have reworded Alternative 2. Now,  
45 Alternative 3 still says to review the approach selected no  
46 longer than five years from implementation. It does not say  
47 "and every five years thereafter" and so the question that I  
48 have for the council is do you want to change the wording of

1 Alternative 3 as well?  
2  
3 **MARCOS HANKE:** Yes.  
4  
5 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes, that makes sense. That's to take to  
6 public hearing, right? Okay. So we have got to move on this  
7 one too. Blanchard.  
8  
9 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.  
10  
11 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.  
12  
13 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** The motion is move to change Action 2,  
14 Alternative 3 in the Timing of Accountability Measures-Based  
15 Closures Amendment to read: Review the approach selected no  
16 longer than five years from implementation and every five years  
17 thereafter. Moved by Blanchard and seconded by Hanke. **All in**  
18 **favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions. Hearing none, the**  
19 **motion carries.**  
20  
21 **KATE QUIGLEY:** Okay. My next question is if you have a  
22 preferred for Action 2. Do you have a preferred?  
23  
24 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes. Can you bring it up there a minute?  
25 Right, which would be Alternative 2. Blanchard.  
26  
27 **TONY BLANCHARD:** The preferred Alternative 2.  
28  
29 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. The language is move to make Action 2,  
30 Alternative 2 the preferred alternative in the Timing of  
31 Accountability Measures-Based Closures Amendment.  
32  
33 **TONY BLANCHARD:** So moved.  
34  
35 **MARCOS HANKE:** Second.  
36  
37 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. That's moved by Blanchard and seconded  
38 by Hanke. **All in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions.**  
39 **Hearing none, the motion carries.**  
40  
41 The next language is move to approve the Timing of  
42 Accountability Measures-Based Closures Amendment for public  
43 hearings.  
44  
45 **MARCOS HANKE:** So moved.  
46  
47 **TONY BLANCHARD:** Second.  
48

1 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** It's moved by Hanke and seconded by  
2 Blanchard. All in favor say aye; any nays; any abstentions.  
3 Hearing none, the motion carries.

4  
5 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** So you are done with this one?

6  
7 **KATE QUIGLEY:** That's it. Thank you.

8  
9 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Kate. Now we go to Saltonstall-  
10 Kennedy Funding Program: Caribbean Projects and Dr. Ponwith.

11  
12 **SALTONSTALL-KENNEDY FUNDING PROGRAM: CARIBBEAN PROJECTS**

13  
14 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While the  
15 presentation comes up on the screen, I will begin by saying that  
16 it is a pleasure to be able to get caught up with you a little  
17 bit on some funding opportunities that have come available over  
18 the course of the year and those funding opportunities have  
19 resulted in some significant investments in data collections,  
20 both fishery-independent and fishery-dependent. They are going  
21 to, I think, strongly benefit the efforts that the council is  
22 doing here. I sent the wrong thing. Hold on.

23  
24 **MIGUEL ROLON:** While you are working with your presentation, we  
25 will allow Julian to address the group. He has to leave to  
26 catch a plane. Julian, go ahead.

27  
28 **JULIAN MAGRAS:** Just it was a very good meeting and productive.  
29 I have to leave, but for the December meeting, the St. Thomas  
30 Fishermen's Association would like to host all the members of  
31 the council and whoever else is present at the meeting.

32  
33 We are going to do a little fish fry with some lobster and fish  
34 and the whole works. We did it a couple of years back for  
35 Christmastime and so on the first day of the council meeting, we  
36 would like to host everyone down at the Frenchtown Community  
37 Center. I am going to set everything up and send out the  
38 information to Miguel and the team, but we would like to host an  
39 event for you guys where we're going to cook and have some food  
40 and have some drinks and enjoy that evening and so we want to  
41 welcome you guys out to that, whoever can make it. Please come  
42 out and join us.

43  
44 At the same time, between the St. Croix Commercial Fishermen's  
45 Association and the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association, for the  
46 May meeting where the seven councils will be getting together,  
47 we would also like to plan something where the boat associations  
48 and if there is a group from Puerto Rico that wants to join us,

1 we would be more than happy to. When they are in the Virgin  
2 Islands, we are going to do something similar, where the  
3 fishermen and their families can come out and actually meet some  
4 of the other councils and the people who are part of the  
5 management process.

6  
7 I am putting it out there for everyone that we want to do this  
8 and so we look forward to the full support, which we have always  
9 had, from the council and we look forward to seeing you guys  
10 there. Thank you and for the rest of the meeting, may it be  
11 productive and I will see you guys very soon.

12  
13 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Thank you, Julian. We will take on that  
14 invitation and we will be honored to go to your place and meet  
15 the other fishers and we will do the same in May.

16  
17 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I also want to extend my thanks to both  
18 associations there and I will be more than happy to help you  
19 coordinate with Diana Martino, who is the logistician. It's  
20 like UPS. We love logistics, but I love rolling out red carpets  
21 for guests and so I will be more than happy to help.

22  
23 **BONNIE PONWITH:** All right. Back on track. Thanks very much  
24 for the opportunity to deal with some technical issues. Again,  
25 what we're going to do is walk through some projects that were  
26 funded through MARFIN, which is the Marine Fisheries Initiative.  
27 This is an open competition for projects that help the council  
28 be able to make good decisions by underpinning those decisions  
29 with science.

30  
31 The first project has been awarded to Dr. John Hoenig and he  
32 will be looking at an assessment of maturity in commercially and  
33 recreationally-important reef fishes. One of the scientists  
34 from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center also got some  
35 additional resources and we are going to leverage those, to be  
36 able to work in both the Virgin Islands and in Puerto Rico for  
37 this work. It will be doing biological sampling and  
38 understanding the life history of those animals.

39  
40 The second project is from a researcher at the University of  
41 South Carolina and they're going to be working on age, growth,  
42 and reproduction of queen triggerfish and four species of  
43 parrotfish, which is also quite an important topic area.

44  
45 Then we will move on to the Saltonstall-Kennedy, the SK grants.  
46 If you will remember, there was a special topic within that  
47 grant call for projects that actually did help the U.S. Virgin  
48 Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Western Pacific region.

1  
2 With the SK projects, we've got one and Dr. Nemeth is going to  
3 be working on the management of red hind spawning aggregations  
4 and we will tackle looking at what the most effective option for  
5 stock enhancement is going to be.

6  
7 Dr. Jerry Ault from the University of Miami is going to be doing  
8 some capacity building for the design and the analysis of  
9 fishery-independent surveys of reef fishes in Puerto Rico and  
10 the U.S. Virgin Islands. Again, this helps us make important  
11 decisions and if we have money, how would we set up those  
12 surveys to get the most out of them as we can.

13  
14 Dr. Ault also got a second proposal funded and that's extending  
15 fishery-independent surveys for reef fishes in Puerto Rico to  
16 mid-depth and deep reefs. Currently, there are some cooperative  
17 sampling programs using dive surveys to look at the shallower-  
18 water species and what we want to do is capitalize on this work  
19 to extend those down into some of those undivable areas.

20  
21 We have a suite of economists who are going to be working on a  
22 project assessing the viability of a commercial lionfish fishery  
23 in the U.S. Virgin Islands and, finally, Dr. Ruiz is going to  
24 look at the sustainability and recovery of groupers in Puerto  
25 Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

26  
27 Those SK funds are, again, a very significant investment in  
28 answering some of the problems that we have of having the data  
29 we need to make good decisions here and so we're really quite  
30 excited about this.

31  
32 In addition to that work, there are two projects within the  
33 Southeast Fisheries Science Center that I wanted to bring to  
34 your attention. In 2014, Steve Turner and his group received  
35 some resources to do a study, to fund a study, to design a  
36 really strong port sampling program for the commercial industry  
37 in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

38  
39 In 2015, beginning this fall, there is also the study  
40 implemented a pilot scale. It will start in one place this fall  
41 and the other place in March and they will use the results of  
42 the pilot study to actually set the tone for how this would be  
43 implemented at the operational scale, which we're lining  
44 ourselves up to do in 2016.

45  
46 We have heard so many times that we need the length data or we  
47 need better landings data and this is going to go a long way to  
48 helping to meet those needs and so the concept is to use those

1 samples from this survey in conjunction with the commercial  
2 catch records data, which is already being collected, to have a  
3 stronger feel for what the landings trends are over time.

4  
5 Then, finally, the last project that was mentioned in our first  
6 day of the meeting is that the NOAA Fisheries survey vessel  
7 Pisces is going to be in the region this fall, the  
8 October/November timeframe, to conduct some fishery-independent  
9 data collections in the area. They will be working off the  
10 north coast of Puerto Rico and then off of St. Thomas/St. John  
11 and also St. Croix.

12  
13 They will be using three different kinds of camera systems to  
14 collect visual images. These will be, for the most part, video  
15 surveys. In addition to that, they will be using bandit gear.  
16 This will be used to collect catch per unit effort data on the  
17 species that bite a hook and then also to collect specimens for  
18 biological samples and then at night, when they can't be doing  
19 that type of work, they will be doing acoustic surveys to map  
20 and characterize bottom habitat, which is really important to  
21 helping us stratify sampling once we do get a more steady source  
22 of funding for that fishery-independent sampling.

23  
24 Knowing what the bottom type is like helps us to sample more  
25 efficiently in those habitats and so, again, that's just an  
26 update on some exciting opportunities to improve the data that  
27 we've got and I would stop there and see if there are any  
28 questions.

29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Any questions for Bonnie? I have one. The  
31 Pisces, are they actually going to take the images in  
32 aggregating areas or this is not just deepwater research again?

33  
34 **BONNIE PONWITH:** I don't know what the depth strata are, but  
35 they've got something like between 200 and 250 stations that  
36 they are going to be working off of. Again, I am not certain  
37 what the depth strata will be.

38  
39 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** If there were any suggestions to sites that  
40 we may want them to look at specifically, where maybe I can  
41 gather information where some fishermen think that something is  
42 happening here, and you maybe need to look at that habitat in  
43 that area and can that be done?

44  
45 **BONNIE PONWITH:** The cruise plan for the survey is under review  
46 right now, but if there were additional suggestions of areas  
47 that would be valuable to visit, I certainly wouldn't turn down  
48 advice.

1  
2 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Graciela.  
3  
4 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** We've been in contact with the Pisces  
5 group and putting together the cruise plan and, for example,  
6 some of the sites would be the SEAMAP areas, because the cameras  
7 have a limitation of one of them to 500 meters and that's the  
8 deepest that it can go and so the SEAMAP areas will be very  
9 important to have high-resolution bathymetry and good habitat  
10 information, because you have so much information from the fish  
11 side that it would be really nice to correlate it to the  
12 habitat. The whole list of sites that we have, we keep passing  
13 it along until we finally complete them.  
14  
15 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Blanchard.  
16  
17 **TONY BLANCHARD:** I would like to see the MCD, the Hind Bank, the  
18 video on that, since we are always talking about it and we can't  
19 get a diver down and maybe we need to take a picture.  
20  
21 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's a good idea. Also, when you mentioned  
22 about the FY14 for the port sampling, is that the Gedamke  
23 project? That's a great thing. We did a lot of outreach to the  
24 fishers so that they can be better prepared and work with  
25 whatever group they get for samplers.  
26  
27 **BONNIE PONWITH:** Allow me to say this has been a highly  
28 cooperative project and we've heard more than one of the council  
29 members and fishers say we're worried about giving, giving,  
30 giving. I will say that this is one project where the  
31 industry's input on this is absolutely invaluable. We can't  
32 succeed in this without the industry. The cooperation has been  
33 admirable thus far and if this project succeeds, it will be  
34 because the industry has been right alongside of it.  
35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I do know that it happened during boat  
37 registration and commercial fishing renewal in Howard's office  
38 this year and so all the fishers know him and they are pretty  
39 pleased with it. Bill.  
40  
41 **BILL ARNOLD:** Bonnie, just a couple of comments or questions. I  
42 think the Shervette study involves the folks out at the Puerto  
43 Rico Fish Lab and maybe building some capacity there and do you  
44 know if Ault's capacity building thing is building capacity in  
45 the islands or just at the University of Miami? I ask because  
46 one thing I would like to see is getting capacity built down  
47 here, so the folks here can actually do a lot of the work.  
48

1 If you look at the list of proposals, I mean they're great  
2 proposals and I think Saltonstall-Kennedy alone was like \$2.1  
3 million total, but very little of that is coming to the islands.  
4 Some, but not a lot. It would be nice to see the island folks  
5 submitting more successful proposals and getting some of that  
6 money in their hands.

7  
8 **BONNIE PONWITH:** I appreciate that question, because it's a good  
9 entre to me to really change the council. You know how many  
10 times you hear the words data, data, data, we need better data.  
11 The Saltonstall-Kennedy -- Brace yourselves for this, because  
12 the Saltonstall-Kennedy amount of awards that went out this  
13 year, they combined 2014 and 2015 into one large award and it  
14 was \$25 million.

15  
16 Think of the problems that we could solve in this council with  
17 \$25 million worth of science being awarded and so I would urge  
18 the council to do two things.

19  
20 One is to work with the SSC to do a very good job of lining up  
21 what your top science priorities are. Now, I do science  
22 priorities all the time. Scientists will do science priorities  
23 and if I get one more dollar, this is the science I want to do,  
24 but that's not the whole picture.

25  
26 A really important part of that picture is the managers'  
27 perspective on what the science priorities are. Tony, what do  
28 you need? What science do you need for you as someone involved  
29 in a management process to do a better job of what you're called  
30 to do as a council member and that's for each of you.

31  
32 The councils, on an annual basis, are encouraged to put together  
33 a list of this is this council's notion of the top science  
34 priorities. Let me tell you why that's important.

35  
36 That call for proposals for SK, every single council was asked  
37 to hand me your science priorities and we will use those  
38 priorities to write the call for proposals. You can't get more  
39 influential than that and so if you put together a list of those  
40 science priorities, this is a way to make sure that you get an  
41 opportunity to have some of those priorities in line for  
42 receiving funding.

43  
44 The second thing that I would urge you to do is talk with your  
45 colleagues. If you have a list of science priorities, talk with  
46 your colleagues who are in an academic setting or who are  
47 working for the Department of Natural Resources or who are  
48 fishers themselves and say, are there ideas you have for how to

1 put proposals forward to tackle some of those?  
2

3 If we don't put proposals in from here, guess what? The next  
4 shot of money goes to Alaska or the Western Pacific or New  
5 England and so you don't get the money unless you get a proposal  
6 in and that's a really, really important step and we can help  
7 with that, to make sure that the proposals that are going in are  
8 designed in a way that answer those highest priority needs.  
9

10 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Bonnie. Graciela.  
11

12 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** Both the MARFIN and the SK, the  
13 council had submitted specific language for these projects to go  
14 on and we are working on the SK for this upcoming call for  
15 proposals now and so if you have anything specific, really  
16 specific, in mind, let me know.  
17

18 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Great. Boy, we are going to bombard you with  
19 work. Okay. Thank you, Bonnie. Next on the agenda is Outreach  
20 and Education Report and Alida Ortiz.  
21

#### 22 **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION REPORT**

23  
24 **ALIDA ORTIZ:** This will be a short report. We were supposed to  
25 meet, the O&E AP, next week, but apparently we will have to make  
26 a little bit of a change, just because of the hurricane may be  
27 getting close and we had a guest from the Southeast and we want  
28 to take care of that, but this is what we have been doing until  
29 now.  
30

31 You can see the newsletter and the report, the council report,  
32 and it is up on the webpage and we produce that probably a month  
33 or so after the regular meeting and it sort of summarizes all  
34 the decisions that were made and announces any type of new  
35 information for the people who are interested.  
36

37 The brochure is finally in the printing shop. We had hoped to  
38 have it for this meeting, but it didn't arrive on time and so I  
39 hope the next week it will be in the office and that's the  
40 brochure that was done a long, long, long time ago and we  
41 finally got a revision and it went out to the printing shop and  
42 we are working on the calendar.  
43

44 The calendar for 2016 has a theme of fishing as a vocation. We  
45 want to emphasize the fact that fishing is not just a job that  
46 they do today to get some money and that most of the families  
47 involved, there is a lot of culture behind it and a lot of  
48 social communication in fishing.

1  
2 We need some photos from the Virgin Islands. We have some from  
3 St. Croix that Jannette provided with the heritage of *Fuete y*  
4 *Verguilla*, but we don't have much or anything at all from St.  
5 Thomas and so if you can find people, the grandfather working  
6 with the children and the family working in the fishing  
7 industry, that would be very important to have.

8  
9 Right now, we will be working with -- The council will be  
10 supporting the production of the lionfish kit that was used or  
11 developed by Sea Grant and was used a long time ago and so it's  
12 a project that was done before, but monies were low and now they  
13 are going to have some more funding on that. It's a gear to get  
14 the lionfish and so they will have more people going out in the  
15 water to fish that animal.

16  
17 A campaign that we will be working, and we have taken a lot of  
18 examples from the U.S. Virgin Islands from Lia Ortiz, is the  
19 Sustainable Seafood. We would like to see that sustainable  
20 seafood directed or emphasized towards the consumers, where we  
21 would like to have those fish that are an alternative to those  
22 that have great demand, but might be in closed seasons, and have  
23 people, the housewives and the chefs, use that fish instead of  
24 demanding the ones that are always the very high price.

25  
26 For that, we will be using the list that was produced by the  
27 DAPs of all those fish that could go onto the list and we will  
28 prepare outreach material, placemats and small posters and  
29 recipes and details of how the fish can be cooked.

30  
31 There had been a lot of presentations from the staff. Graciela  
32 has been some of them and we put them in the newsletter and  
33 Helena also was in some presentations and we have -- Everywhere  
34 that a group demands some information on the council or the  
35 activities of the council, usually they will get a response.

36  
37 MREP Caribbean, PEPCO, and USVI Outreach and Education, for  
38 MREP, the plans are to have an MREP session in the Virgin  
39 Islands in 2016 or whatever is closer to that. The idea is that  
40 some fishers may go first to the workshops in the states and  
41 then, with their experience, like it happened with our fishers  
42 here -- With their experience, they will come back and help  
43 organize the activity. A steering committee will be formed and  
44 they will establishing the printing and curriculum. Helena,  
45 would you like to say anything else about the MREP? Helena is  
46 not only the contact, but she is the person that all MREP in the  
47 Caribbean moves around.

48

1 **HELENA ANTOUN:** Thank you, Alida. Regarding MREP, definitely we  
2 will be having another MREP workshop in Puerto Rico and we are  
3 working to have one in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as Alida  
4 mentioned. Our MREP Puerto Rico Steering Committee got together  
5 this last Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup>, and we were just reviewing the  
6 outcomes of the first MREP workshop, which was back in January  
7 in La Parguera.

8  
9 Basically, to summarize the outcomes of that meeting, it was  
10 agreed that pretty much the agenda that we had set up was pretty  
11 good, but definitely we will be focusing a little bit more on  
12 state issues and so we're going to be making some adjustments  
13 and incorporate more state issues into that workshop.

14  
15 We don't have anything definite in terms of date, but we will be  
16 getting together and maybe for the next meeting we will have  
17 something a little bit more concrete.

18  
19 In terms of the USVI, I had a talk with Julian and Eddie  
20 Schuster and Tony Blanchard yesterday and we're going to  
21 definitely be sending some of the USVI fishermen to the MREP in  
22 the states, the Southeast MREP workshops, and we will slowly,  
23 slowly be introducing MREP to the USVI, but definitely MREP is  
24 not a regular, normal workshop.

25  
26 MREP is more than just a workshop and it's definitely not  
27 something that can be just pushed in. It has to be something  
28 that is gradual and so we'll be taking it slow and when we have  
29 more information about when and where and what, I will be  
30 getting back to everybody on that and so that's about it.

31  
32 **ALIDA ORTIZ:** Okay. Thank you, Helena. You have another one.  
33 PEPCO, as you remember, we have reported on PEPCO. PEPCO is the  
34 local orientation to the fishers and it's a project that Helena  
35 has been working with DNER and the council and, as you noticed  
36 this morning in the numbers of fishers that were here, I think  
37 that's a response to the -- It's a reaction to the presence of  
38 Helena around the fishing villages, because not many of the  
39 fishers go to the internet every day or every two hours to find  
40 out what's going on.

41  
42 We don't have radio announcements that give the information and  
43 we don't have any other kind of program and so the outreach for  
44 the fishers depends on word of mouth and depends on contact with  
45 the people and not only in the field, but also in the market and  
46 in the church and anywhere that they get to be together.

47  
48 Helena has been very, very efficient in doing that and this

1 morning's presence of so many fishers for the ABT I think was a  
2 very good show of the efficiency.

3  
4 PEPCO has had how many? 225 participants. This is a local  
5 initiative for the fishers. It's for the licenses and it's for  
6 the regulations, but then it all goes into the other areas where  
7 they work and so if you would like to say anything more on  
8 PEPCO.

9  
10 **HELENA ANTOUN:** We had 225 approved participants, meaning that  
11 of the people that registered in the workshops, the ones that  
12 completed the workshops and were given a certificate of  
13 completion, were 225, but we did have more participants and you  
14 can see in the columns there.

15  
16 We have continued -- That was PEPCO 2014 and so we have  
17 continued with PEPCO this year, in 2015, and we have done -- I  
18 think it's approximately already four workshops regionally and  
19 we pretty much will be concluding our PEPCO workshops by  
20 September or maybe late October and the same thing. It's just  
21 workshops on licenses and permits and regulations and just  
22 answering the questions and clarifying a lot of the information  
23 to the fishermen.

24  
25 **ALIDA ORTIZ:** The Outreach and Education USVI Style, Lia Ortiz  
26 sent us this report. I will just read it to you and probably  
27 Carlos and Blanchard can give us more information about what is  
28 going on.

29  
30 They are developing the partnership with the Virgin Islands  
31 Department of Tourism. They are responsible not only for the  
32 market of the fish, but it's also for the consumer. If our  
33 fishing effort is based on the demand for the product, then we  
34 have to educate the people who make that demand. They have to  
35 learn about what they are eating and where it is caught and how  
36 it is caught and how it is cooked and how can you substitute one  
37 from the other.

38  
39 They want to expand that to St. Thomas and St. John by the end  
40 of the year and they will engage also the local supermarkets.  
41 Right now, they are working mostly with the fish markets and  
42 also with the local restaurants and they have up to fifteen  
43 restaurants that have been trained with the reef responsible  
44 certification and so apparently it's very, very successful  
45 there.

46  
47 Then she also has the MOES VI workshops to improve the  
48 communication in the commercial fishing community and compliance

1 with the USVI regulations. It is very similar to what PEPCO is  
2 doing here and so they have had workshops across the three  
3 islands. It's NOAA staff and the local and regional management  
4 and also the local government.

5  
6 The fishers come out of this workshop with a packet of  
7 information where they can go back and check and they can also  
8 request more information on particular issues. They are three-  
9 day workshops and they are planning to continue with that.

10  
11 My experience with this workshop with the fishermen is that once  
12 you have three or four fishers that get really impressed with  
13 the way it is done and with the education that is given to them,  
14 they will continue that and at some time they will be just  
15 running by themselves.

16  
17 This is what we have been doing in outreach and education and  
18 with today's results, I think we have a lot more work to do to  
19 try to summarize everything that came out of the public hearing  
20 today and return the information to the fishers.

21  
22 To me, it was very important and the claim that they have that  
23 they give a lot of information and that they give a lot of data  
24 and that they are interviewed all the time, but they never know  
25 what happened with the information. Then probably two years  
26 later, they get back to give the same information and so we must  
27 have some way, some avenue, to get feedback to the fishers for  
28 the things that we request from them and so this is my report.  
29 Any questions?

30  
31 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Carlos Velasquez.

32  
33 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** Alida, this is the process that is very  
34 important to the fishermen, commercial fishermen, in Puerto  
35 Rico. For me, it's a very good presentation and for that PEPCO,  
36 too. PEPCO is important for the knowledge for the fishermen so  
37 to learn and the ability for the fishers in Puerto Rico and that  
38 was a very good presentation.

39  
40 **ALIDA ORTIZ:** It has been very, very successful and the feedback  
41 that Alexa Dayton gave us last Monday I think I felt very good,  
42 because it was a long, long, long time that in Puerto Rico we  
43 didn't have that communication with the fishers and now it's  
44 there.

45  
46 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Alida. Just to mention one real  
47 quick thing about outreach, this thing that we're discussing  
48 with Dr. Ponwith, I will leave you with that one. It's got some

1 statements that the fishermen made about the importance of port  
2 sampling. Miguel.

3  
4 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, we don't have any reports from  
5 enforcement and any of the four bodies here and they may take --  
6 They will bring any actions or reports for the December meeting  
7 and then Meetings Attended by Council Members and Staff, we  
8 don't have anything to report there and so we can go to the  
9 five-minute per person public comment period and then we will  
10 follow with Other Business and we have two presentations, one  
11 from Tom Matthews regarding the trap project and Dr. Lee Caruba  
12 regarding the invasion of seagrass.

13  
14 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Anyone in the public who wants to give  
15 a five-minute? Okay. We will move forward with Tom Matthews,  
16 Dr. Matthews.

17  
18 **OTHER BUSINESS**  
19 **PRESENTATION ON TRAP PROJECT**

20  
21 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Thank you. I think most of you recognize the  
22 person in the photograph there. So Tony Iarocci started this  
23 work two years ago. He had the objective of incorporating -- I  
24 am going to call them Florida fishing methods that basically  
25 lobster are probably underutilized in the Caribbean.

26  
27 It's one of the few species, because of its unique life history  
28 of broad recruitment -- Basically lobsters everywhere get  
29 distributed through a six-month larval history and they settle  
30 wherever they are and so almost every year you get a whole new  
31 crop that is largely unrelated to the local fishing pressure  
32 that's going on.

33  
34 That basically means there is outside forces driving the whole  
35 population and basically you get to fish whatever is delivered  
36 that year and so Tony had the idea of incorporating the Florida  
37 lobster traps into that are, at one level, more efficient.  
38 We'll sort of talk about that. Certainly after working with the  
39 fishermen -- There is a couple of people in this room who  
40 probably know more about the project than I do.

41  
42 This was Tony's brainchild and I was brought in to help him with  
43 the analysis and, as it turns out, help him with his paperwork  
44 and travel orders. Thank you very much. We will move on from  
45 there.

46  
47 The project concept, many fish traps, more the typical arrowhead  
48 trap here, are designed to catch a broad range of species, but

1 when both lobsters and fish are caught, the total catch of both  
2 is reduced and so if you have a trap that's more specific, and  
3 basically we're talking about keeping fish out of the trap, you  
4 have the potential to catch more lobsters. The typical trap,  
5 because it's catching everything, doesn't catch anything nearly  
6 as well as it could.

7  
8 The idea was to use a more specialized trap and this is a  
9 typical Florida lobster trap, all wood. If Carlos is paying  
10 attention, he will start to recognize some of these images.  
11 This is the price board when I was able to work at his place in  
12 Naguabo and so you can see langostas are basically twice the  
13 value of the other fish and so the concept is to catch a high-  
14 value fish and that will economically relieve some of the  
15 stress, potentially, on overfished or regulatory fish that are  
16 unavailable because of whatever rules and things.

17  
18 Here is a very typical shot of one of those traps being used and  
19 you can see it actually does have three legal lobsters in it.  
20 I'm sorry. That's hard to see. There are three legal lobsters  
21 in the trap and essentially no fish were in this trap and so the  
22 trap is pretty danged specific for lobsters.

23  
24 Again, fishing out of his place with Mickey. Another more  
25 typical trap and it's difficult to recognize on this, but a big  
26 part about traps -- I say average fish trap, but there is no  
27 such thing.

28  
29 There is a lot of different designs by different fishermen and  
30 many modifications to these and a big modification to use in a  
31 trap like this is to change the throat. Instead of having a  
32 horsehead trap, which has an extra bend in it, which is much  
33 more specific, or a more clam-shaped opening that might actually  
34 restrict the entrance of lobsters, they have a slope and that  
35 actually makes the trap a little more lobster-specific than  
36 fish-specific.

37  
38 That's what Mickey and his wife Yolanda here were using in their  
39 very small boat and so this was a whole myriad of traps, but  
40 that's probably one of the better looking traps he was using.

41  
42 Project activities, I showed the delivery. These trap building  
43 supplies were shipped from Florida. Shipping them here was  
44 quite the ordeal. It slowed down the project quite a bit. They  
45 would sit in the holding for a little while until they were  
46 released for the taxes and things like that and so actually  
47 getting the raw material here turned out to be quite a success  
48 of the project, just physically getting supplies delivered.

1  
2 Again, you will recognize some of the people here, Tony and our  
3 Chairman, building the traps. Sorry. That was the only picture  
4 I had of you. I would have done anything else, but I definitely  
5 wanted a picture of us building traps in the different areas.  
6  
7 We worked with the fishermen to build the traps and provided  
8 prototype traps to the fishermen. Here are some in Naguabo and,  
9 again, building the traps.  
10  
11 We built the traps and trained the fishermen how to make these  
12 traps and tying the ropes and doing the buoys, all of these are  
13 actually things -- It sorts of seems simple, but tiny little  
14 differences in how you attach ropes and how you nail the wood to  
15 keep the corners tight, because if the corner overlaps and the  
16 rope catches it when you pull it, it pulls the wood off and so  
17 there is just a number of little things that a guy like Tony,  
18 who has been doing this for I think forty years, knows these  
19 things and how to make the traps quickly and efficiently and so  
20 his training of things like that -- I don't want to call it too  
21 much training, because every fisherman in the room knows how to  
22 build a trap, but there is just little subtleties of how to make  
23 the stuff a little bit better and a little more efficient.  
24  
25 Here was a shot from Rincon. We actually distributed small  
26 rulers to the quarter inch. The fishermen would measure the  
27 catch of these and so we trained fishermen to collect high-  
28 quality fishery data and I will show you the data sheets here in  
29 a moment.  
30  
31 The concept is that they collect this data and I analyze it and  
32 I give it right back to them and they can see where the data --  
33 We can truly see little subtle differences in the catch rates  
34 and things like that.  
35  
36 We haven't gotten nearly as much data as we had hoped for. Even  
37 though the project is over, we are still doing some ongoing  
38 effort to get some more data out of the fishermen and so we  
39 weren't able to give as much data back to the fishermen and I  
40 will show you some of the numbers on that coming up here.  
41  
42 Here is our participants. Again, this was Tony's project and I  
43 actually don't know most of these guys. I worked with a handful  
44 of people and so I might have a few things here. I actually  
45 just had to check in with Homer. I wasn't sure Nicky and Gerson  
46 were -- They are the same people and so there were just simply a  
47 couple of nicknames and things that I just knew them by Nicky  
48 instead of his given name.

1  
2 These were a number of people and all of these people got traps  
3 from this project and so we did deliver traps and training to a  
4 number of people and so that part of the project I would say was  
5 fairly successful and that we did engage a number of fishermen  
6 and at least had the process of introducing a new piece of gear.

7  
8 Here is a typical Florida lobster trap. This trap in particular  
9 was fished by Winston Ledee in St. Thomas. What this trap does  
10 nicely, it's mostly biodegradable materials. There is a plastic  
11 throat and there is built-in escape gaps. This gap is about an  
12 inch-and-a-half and that allows a lot of smaller fish that might  
13 embolize when the trap is pulled, that the fisherman doesn't  
14 want to deal with anyway, to actually be washed out of the trap  
15 when it gets pulled.

16  
17 It's a smaller trap and smaller traps physically hold less fish.  
18 If they have a few lobsters in them, they basically exclude fish  
19 catch almost completely and so this trap will never fill up with  
20 lobsters.

21  
22 Tony talks about these days when they are running when he gets  
23 nearly a hundred pounds. That won't happen with this trap, but  
24 that only happens a couple of times a year. This trap will  
25 essentially catch three lobsters every time you pull it and so  
26 there is long-term delivery throughout the year. That is, of  
27 course, what your markets and what your hotels want, a small  
28 amount of product being delivered continuously instead of a huge  
29 amount.

30  
31 A trap like this, a smaller trap, you don't have that great day  
32 that you tell your people about years later, but you are going  
33 to be delivering a product at a high value continuously and so  
34 it's that year-long fishing opportunity that a small trap like  
35 this actually delivers.

36  
37 We weren't really able to show that through the data to the  
38 fishermen. Hopefully we will still get a little bit of data and  
39 maybe we can continue working on that in the future.

40  
41 Here is basically the trap we were pushing. It's sort of the  
42 same thing. It's mostly biodegradable. There is some wire on  
43 the sides. This wire actually helps the trap not move. A solid  
44 wood trap in a high current, high surge area from the waves  
45 moves quite a bit more. You put a little bit of wire on it like  
46 this and it actually moves a lot less.

47  
48 It's still got -- Here is the rope on this side and so it has on

1 the end of it those slats and so as the trap is pulled, the  
2 smaller fish have the opportunity to wash out the back. It's  
3 not like these fish are trapped in there, but when the trap is  
4 pulled, if it's a wire trap, they are stuck in there. These  
5 slats here allow those fish to wash out the back and so you  
6 don't get the embolism death, again.

7  
8 We call it a partial wood trap. It is actually illegal in the  
9 State of Florida, because there have to be slats on all sides,  
10 but this is a very effective trap for doing what we need to do,  
11 especially in high current, high surge areas like in the  
12 Caribbean.

13  
14 We set up with the fishermen and, as many of you know, fishermen  
15 sort of want to do it their way anyway and so we didn't make one  
16 trap design. Fishermen, you can see -- Here is one with wire on  
17 all sides and here is one that's quite a bit larger and here's  
18 an all wood trap and here is the standard trap we were trying to  
19 make and so even in this fisherman's yard, he made it with four  
20 or five different designs.

21  
22 It works great for him to experiment, but it's very hard to  
23 analyze and to understand the differences between these types of  
24 gear, but the concept is they are all a top-entrance trap and I  
25 am sorry, but I did mean to bring up a top-entrance trap.

26  
27 Many fishermen throughout the Caribbean see a top-entrance trap  
28 and say how in the world does a lobster get in? This trap  
29 really -- You will have to take this with a grain of salt for a  
30 second, but this trap isn't designed to catch lobsters, but it  
31 is designed to keep lobsters.

32  
33 A normal trap with a side entrance probably gets more entrants,  
34 but it also gets more exits the fish out of them. This trap  
35 probably has a few less entrants, but it holds a lobster very  
36 well and so in Florida we have far too much gear. We are  
37 probably only catching ten lobsters per trap and so when a  
38 lobster gets in this trap, the fisherman doesn't have to return  
39 to it for weeks and that lobster will likely still be in the  
40 trap and so that's the value of a top entrance. It's not that  
41 it catches better, but lobsters get out of it more slowly and  
42 that's the value in the Florida fishery.

43  
44 Data sheets, we've got two kinds of data sheets. We call this  
45 the trap data and so Traps 1 through 25. We're not asking the  
46 fishermen to record everything that happens. Just record what  
47 happens in twenty-five traps. That way, just for a moment of  
48 their day, they are busy doing a little bit of data and then

1 they can get back to their fishing.  
2  
3 The important thing about this is you don't pick the twenty-five  
4 best or the twenty-five worst. You start and then just do the  
5 next twenty-five, whatever happen to be in them.  
6  
7 You would mark it if it was a test for "T" or a local trap and  
8 how many market lobsters. So the number of lobsters that were  
9 kept and the number of short lobsters and, in this case,  
10 something we really didn't think about was this fisherman did  
11 not keep molted lobsters or soft lobsters and so that was an  
12 extra note we put in.  
13  
14 How much bycatch was kept, and we had little descriptions, and  
15 how much was discarded. In this case, two of the traps seemed  
16 to be missing. The fishermen originally thought they were  
17 stolen and then a little bit later they changed their minds and  
18 said they were probably just underwater because of the current,  
19 because the current had picked up. We actually do record a  
20 little bit about why the trap was or wasn't pulled and things  
21 like that. This is pretty good data and I will show you how we  
22 can use some of this data in a couple of slides from now.  
23  
24 The second data sheet is actual lobsters. Again, we have got  
25 two columns of twenty-five and record what type of trap it was,  
26 male or female, the length of it, and all we're doing is  
27 recording the length to the nearest quarter-inch. That's about  
28 six-millimeters.  
29  
30 Lobsters grow about six-millimeters every time they molt and so  
31 that level of accuracy, even though I am on the boat sometimes  
32 measuring stuff to the tenth of a millimeter, it's totally  
33 ridiculous when you're working with lobsters. That quarter of  
34 an inch really gets you within about three months of their  
35 growth.  
36  
37 They are molting about every three months and they grow very  
38 quickly and that's a level of data collection that fishermen can  
39 report relatively quickly and, of course, if they had eggs or  
40 not for the females. You can see for this trip out of Naguabo  
41 that three-and-a-half inches is legal size and so by far most of  
42 the lobsters they were interacting with here were fairly small,  
43 which is actually pretty unusual for many fishing areas in St.  
44 Croix and certainly in Rincon.  
45  
46 Again, we only necessarily needed them to do the first twenty-  
47 five lobsters. We have room for fifty if they wanted to do a  
48 little bit more, but, again, we don't need someone to measure

1 300 lobsters in a day. What we're really interested in is  
2 measurements of between twenty-five and fifty many different  
3 trips, because, of course, the specific location and the  
4 specific time of the year has much more variability than if we  
5 measured all the lobsters.

6  
7 It turns out if you measure about thirty lobsters where you're  
8 fishing that day that that's a great estimate of the size  
9 distribution for the population. It's all about more samples in  
10 many different places instead of lots of measurements from one  
11 location at one time.

12  
13 What can you potentially do with this? For the trap data sheet,  
14 we can, of course, compare the catch between more typical wire  
15 fish traps and our experimental Florida traps and we can  
16 actually start talking about the value of the catch and that  
17 was, we think, what was really the selling point of these traps  
18 to the fishermen and not just per trip, but also annually.  
19 Consistent catches over time we thought was one of the real  
20 values of this.

21  
22 We also get some measurements of bycatch and discards, either  
23 because the fish or lobsters are dead and didn't make it to the  
24 market or simply they were undersized or not desired by the  
25 market at that time.

26  
27 The actual lobster data, we'll get lobster size structure  
28 information. Going back to my roots in Florida again, pretty  
29 much every lobster you catch is one molt bigger than minimum  
30 legal size. We catch lobsters literally within months of them  
31 reaching legal size.

32  
33 A little bit of the data, particularly collected in St. Thomas -  
34 - I was looking at where there is probably a four or five-year  
35 size structure or years in the fishery and so there is a broad  
36 number of lobsters out there from multiple year classes and that  
37 pretty quickly tells me that you could do a lot more harvesting  
38 of that population.

39  
40 The downside of that is bigger lobsters are more valuable and  
41 weigh more and so if you do harvest, you might reduce that size  
42 structure a little bit, but you might be having some natural  
43 mortality also and so it's hard to figure out where that balance  
44 is, but from the size structure, it certainly looks like there  
45 is an opportunity to harvest more lobsters in many places.

46  
47 The trap selectivity, of course, the fish trap versus the wood  
48 trap, some fishermen were very concerned that the trap throat is

1 fairly small. Only about a three-pound lobster can go through  
2 the throat in the Florida lobster trap and so you might want to  
3 use two of them and make the throat a little bit bigger and so  
4 those trap selectivity issues are potentially an issue in a  
5 fishery like St. Thomas or parts of Puerto Rico, where you do  
6 have fairly large lobsters, over five pounds, regularly caught  
7 in the trap.

8  
9 Reproduction, of course from a fishery-dependent monitoring at  
10 the fish house, you will never see egg-bearing lobsters,  
11 hopefully, but in the field you can start understanding the size  
12 of productivity and how many are in the population and things  
13 like that and, of course, lobster mortality.

14  
15 Lobsters die in traps, just like when predators get to them.  
16 They have a little less chance to escape a predator in a trap  
17 and so something like a triggerfish has much more access to kill  
18 lobsters in a trap as they're going about their normal day.

19  
20 Data, we didn't get nearly as much data as we were hoping for.  
21 We have only got those data sheets from four fishermen and  
22 twenty-one trips and 578 traps and 722 lobsters. That's spread  
23 across St. Thomas, St. Croix, and the two locations in Puerto  
24 Rico.

25  
26 Yes, I could show you a graph of some size distribution, but,  
27 boy, is it very time and site-specific and I almost wouldn't  
28 want you to use it for management. It's much too spotty of a  
29 view, but these are the views we've got.

30  
31 This is Winston Ledee's boat and Tito's boat and another -- This  
32 is actually plastic and so there is a lot of traps out there we  
33 didn't anticipate and this is them proving what size lobster can  
34 go through a throat. They're a little bit bigger than many  
35 people were giving them credit for, but it is a small throat for  
36 a broad size distribution and so I don't think a five-pound  
37 lobster could enter this trap very well and, of course, some of  
38 those do exist in the fisheries here.

39  
40 Tony did a couple of other things while he was down here. He  
41 experimented with escape gaps. This is a typical trap that's  
42 used in the New England lobster fishery for the American lobster  
43 and so he experimented with a handful of putting these in here.  
44 The concept here is, again, small lobsters and small fish could  
45 get out a little more easily.

46  
47 This is the typical biodegradable. This is supposed to be tied  
48 with string, so when the string rots that it would pop open a

1 little bit. Some other work he did was utilizing some gillnets  
2 and some ballyhoo nets. This was not work I was involved in and  
3 so I can't tell you much about it, but we did buy gillnets.

4  
5 The concept here was we were going to replace trammel nets with  
6 gillnets and so we were reducing about one-third of the net  
7 material in the water and so there would hopefully be a net  
8 reduction of entanglement material in the water.

9  
10 The ballyhoo nets, I apologize that we don't have a single  
11 picture of that project, and we just did it literally on June  
12 29<sup>th</sup>. We finished making the nets and took them out fishing for  
13 the first time.

14  
15 There is a fair large local demand for bait. The ballyhoo  
16 fishery is something that's almost renewable every six months  
17 and so you can go out and fish for these and package them and  
18 deliver them to the local recreational fleet, which is right now  
19 -- My understanding is most of that bait is actually delivered  
20 from Florida and so that would just be an easy local opportunity  
21 to enhance as an alternative fishery for some other fishermen.

22  
23 **BILL ARNOLD:** Tom, where were they harvesting ballyhoo?

24  
25 **TOM MATTHEWS:** They were doing that right off the coast here.

26  
27 **BILL ARNOLD:** How far out?

28  
29 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Again, sorry. I was not involved.

30  
31 **MARCOS HANKE:** Turtle grass flats and shallow water, close to  
32 the shore, primarily.

33  
34 (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

35  
36 **TOM MATTHEWS:** It just seemed to be -- Is anybody actually  
37 harvesting those right now?

38  
39 (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

40  
41 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Okay and so you would sort of agree that it might  
42 be an opportunity out there for an alternative? There is huge  
43 times when the fishery in Florida -- I mean they're selling them  
44 for a dollar each and, again, it's not just about the net. It's  
45 salting this product so that it firms up, because there is  
46 actually some processing involved in this and so there's a  
47 number of steps and it's not just buying a net and going out  
48 there and doing it.

1  
2 **MARCOS HANKE:** Just to qualify my description, I am aware of  
3 what you're saying. Traditionally, the ones in Puerto Rico they  
4 look for are the ones on the flats.  
5  
6 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Because the other ones are more expensive  
7 and the commercial or whatever, we try to get them, the smaller  
8 ones, the offshore ones, are smaller and are better for fishing.  
9  
10 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** The catch is offshore or in the inshore?  
11  
12 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** There is two types. The one that has the  
13 yellowtail, which you say you catch inshore, and what you call  
14 the blue ones, you catch them offshore. There are two types.  
15  
16 **MARCOS HANKE:** There is another species of ballyhoo that has the  
17 orange beak and this one is primarily a smaller species that is  
18 closer to the shore that is developing very quick a very big use  
19 on the recreational fishing and commercial fishing to troll for  
20 mahi and so on.  
21  
22 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Another thing is I sell them for the  
23 restaurants. They fry them and fried and dried, they are very  
24 good for eating.  
25  
26 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** But that's still within state waters.  
27  
28 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Right.  
29  
30 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** All right.  
31  
32 **TOM MATTHEWS:** That wrapped it up, if there is any questions.  
33  
34 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** I have Blanchard and then Carlos.  
35  
36 **TONY BLANCHARD:** In that one trap that you showed, the wire trap  
37 with the escape panel, what size lobsters will come into that?  
38  
39 **TOM MATTHEWS:** What it would catch?  
40  
41 **TONY BLANCHARD:** No, the size of the escape panel, what size  
42 lobster would come through that hole?  
43  
44 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Smaller than half a pound. When I say -- The  
45 cape would be smaller than two-and-a-half inches and your legal  
46 size is three-and-a-half.  
47  
48 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Carlos.

1  
2 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** For the nets, the gear, the trammel net, this  
3 project was on the island?  
4  
5 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Yes.  
6  
7 **CARLOS VELASQUEZ:** The resource is very good or not?  
8  
9 **TOM MATTHEWS:** You're asking my opinion of the use of this net?  
10  
11 **MARCOS HANKE:** No, he is asking for the results.  
12  
13 **TOM MATTHEWS:** Unfortunately, we have no data from this. The  
14 gear was built and the fishermen are using it, but we did not  
15 collect any data from the fishermen and certainly not any  
16 comparative information.  
17  
18 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** That's one of the reasons why I mentioned it  
19 at another council meeting, but since it's a state problem, I do  
20 believe strongly that the state needs to work on a management  
21 plan for baitfish and forage fish, but since these occur mostly,  
22 other than flying fishes, out in the deep -- That will come  
23 eventually.  
24  
25 **TOM MATTHEWS:** This was also used, of course, for lobsters, for  
26 the entanglement.  
27  
28 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Yes, I have my opinions about that. Any  
29 other questions for Tom? Hearing none, thanks, Tom. You know  
30 only Tony Iarocci can take three days out of my time fishing to  
31 build traps, but I am very proficient in building lobster traps  
32 now. Now we have Lisamarie Carrubba on invasive seagrass.  
33  
34 **PRESENTATION ON INVASIVE SEAGRASS**  
35  
36 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** Thank you for allowing me to present this.  
37 Before I start the presentation though, I am going to start with  
38 a question. Other than those of you who I harassed about this,  
39 how many people are actually aware of the *Halophila stipulacea*  
40 presence? Not very many people. Of those who just raised your  
41 hand, or everyone else in the room, how many think it's actually  
42 a problem? Okay. That's interesting. Here we go. The history  
43 of this.  
44  
45 **TONY BLANCHARD:** A question. I need a translation of what you  
46 just told us.  
47  
48 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** That's actually the name of the grass,

1 *Halophila stipulacea*. There is no translation. There really  
2 isn't an English common name for it.

3

4 **TONY BLANCHARD:** The sargassum?

5

6 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** No. Sargassum is an algae and this is a  
7 seagrass. You will see some pictures. Let's talk about it  
8 first. This grass is actually native to the Western Indian  
9 Ocean and it already has invaded in the Mediterranean region.

10

11 In the 1800s, it already started to invade the Mediterranean  
12 through the Suez Canal and by 1997, and so this has been a  
13 longer spread invasion, has already ended up in Sicily and so we  
14 now had it reported first in the Caribbean in 2002 and it's  
15 though that since we don't have as much commercial vessel  
16 traffic as there is obviously through the Suez Canal and whatnot  
17 that it might be being brought by recreational pleasure craft.

18

19 The history here in the Caribbean, so, as I mentioned already,  
20 it was first reported in Grenada in 2002 in one particular bay  
21 and it happens to be a bay where a lot of recreational yachts  
22 from the Mediterranean like to anchor.

23

24 Then in 2009 it was documented in several places around Dominica  
25 and St. Lucia and it was also observed to compete and out  
26 compete *Syringodium filiforme*, which is the manatee grass, the  
27 one that's round that manatees really like to chomp on.

28

29 Then in 2014, in a paper, it was reported in Aruba, Curaçao,  
30 Grenadines, St. Eustatius, St. John, St. Martin, and St. Vincent  
31 and the Grenadines. In our experience, we were working on a  
32 project in St. John for the Westin Hotel. This site was  
33 surveyed in 2005 and 2012 and 2013 and no seagrass was in the  
34 footprint of the dock and lots of turtle grass in other parts of  
35 the bay and then all of a sudden, before they started the work  
36 in 2015, there was almost half an acre of this grass.

37

38 We have also now had a whole bunch reported in different places  
39 in the Charlotte Amalie area, particularly in the area of Crown  
40 Bay and Long Bay. We now also recently observed it in two  
41 places in Water Island, again in the Flamingo Bay area, a  
42 monospecific stand. It's the only seagrass present in that  
43 area.

44

45 The University of the Virgin Islands is tracking it in Brewers  
46 Bay and as recent as 2010 it was not there and it is now  
47 spreading throughout Brewers Bay, which, by the way,  
48 historically has had manatee and turtle grass as well.

1  
2 It was recently observed in July, because we asked contractors  
3 to look for it, in three areas around Culebra.  
4  
5 Some characteristics of it, it tolerates a wide range of  
6 salinities. This thing is really, really impressive. It can  
7 grow from shoreline and full sun exposure and even partial  
8 drying all the way down to fifty-meter depths.  
9  
10 It likes almost any kind of substrate. It can grow in mud and  
11 it can grow in sand and now it's being observed growing up to  
12 reefs and so it's thought that it can just find any little spot  
13 where it can put down its ribosomes.  
14  
15 It also have been speculated that it can survive sort of a long  
16 period of time as floating fragments or in the anchor wells of  
17 vessels and so when you pull up your anchor, you might be  
18 bringing it with you.  
19  
20 It exhibits very rapid vegetative expansion and I already  
21 mentioned adaption to high irradiance. In the Caribbean, we  
22 have observed -- Well, it's male and female and that is a  
23 characteristic of it, but it has been observed flowering and it  
24 means it's actually also reproducing.  
25  
26 Capacity for spread, so in 2014 there were some preliminary  
27 experiments sponsored by the National Park Service around St.  
28 John that showed lateral growth of more than six meters per day.  
29 People, that's like none of our other native seagrass and up to  
30 50 percent increase in biomass in just seven days and so this  
31 thing grows really, really fast, unlike anything else that we  
32 have native here.  
33  
34 Also, we don't know if the preferential grazing is more because  
35 things don't know that they can eat it yet or it's just that it  
36 might have some phenols or something that native species just  
37 don't like to eat. Its density can be more than 10,000 shoots  
38 per meter squared. Again, this is just --  
39  
40 I stole this graphic actually from a colleague in Parks Service,  
41 but it's from one of Willette's recent papers with Steiner.  
42 They found, and because you might not know what all these things  
43 mean, each of those little abbreviations are abbreviations for  
44 the scientific names of native seagrass species and so don't  
45 worry so much about that.  
46  
47 The important part is it goes from that lighter green, which is  
48 the manatee grass, and then the graph to the right is what

1 happened over time, from 2008 to 2013, where that lighter green  
2 is now that small slice of the pie and the dark green is all  
3 *Halophila stipulacea* now. The percentages of all the native  
4 grasses declined to the point in fact where *Halophila decipiens*  
5 is completely gone from the area and *stipulacea* is dominant by  
6 86 percent.

7  
8 An opportunity that we have right now, the USVI actually  
9 identified this as a jurisdictional priority for the Coral Reef  
10 Conservation Program FY16 funding and so we have actually -- Our  
11 regional office accepted a preproposal idea to submit a full  
12 proposal to the coral program that we're actually working on.

13  
14 We've got partners with Dr. Willette, who is actually the person  
15 who has led most of the research in the Caribbean so far. He is  
16 now at UCLA. National Parks Service, as I mentioned, they are  
17 really interested in this problem, obviously, from their  
18 management perspective and the University of the Virgin Islands  
19 has been doing a lot of work on it already as well.

20  
21 The University of the Virgin Islands already does have a webpage  
22 for reporting sightings and they've been working on some citizen  
23 science programs and then there is also a person who is with the  
24 university in the west, but is now also part time at UVI, Dr.  
25 Wyllie-Echeverria, who actually worked on a similar problem in  
26 the Northeast.

27  
28 Some of our questions for the proposal that we want to work on  
29 is the degree to which it actually provides habitat to our local  
30 organisms and that could include herbivory, habitat use,  
31 nutritional content, whether it coexists or is out competing, as  
32 it seems to, native species, and dispersal predictions.

33  
34 Why am I even talking to you about this, other than the fact  
35 that it's not a really nice thing and could have a big  
36 implication on fisheries? Right now, the council has essential  
37 fish habitat that just says seagrass and so, as I mentioned, we  
38 have started to see more and more projects where this grass is  
39 coming up as an issue, because how do we treat it? Right now,  
40 we treat it as a seagrass and so are we supposed to mitigate for  
41 it or are we supposed to see it as a bad thing?

42  
43 One of the things that we are proposing with our colleagues at  
44 UVI and NPS and all that in looking at this issue is to be able  
45 to make some recommendations related to how you might want to  
46 change EFH language, or maybe not, to potentially be species  
47 specific.

48

1 We also have a similar issue under the Endangered Species Act,  
2 because right now when we talk about habitat for green sea  
3 turtle, we just say seagrass also.

4  
5 We do have images of green sea turtles chomping on *Halophila*  
6 *stipulacea*, but not -- We don't know yet whether or not that's  
7 actually a preferential thing or not and so, again, like I say,  
8 this is an issue and it's an issue that affects a lot of our  
9 decisions related to water resources project review and it is an  
10 issue with the designation that the council has and then also  
11 some of the language we have for ESA and so we need to think  
12 about guidance.

13  
14 Here you go. Those who were asking, I don't have a common name,  
15 but that's what it looks like. The one on the left is from this  
16 July in Culebra, in an area that used to be dominated by turtle  
17 grass, but is an area we had studied in the past that had a lot  
18 of mechanical impacts from vessel anchorage and now it is almost  
19 all *Halophila stipulacea* and Flamingo Bay, Water Island is a  
20 carpet and so are there questions?

21  
22 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.

23  
24 **MARCOS HANKE:** A little description of the visual difference  
25 between both.

26  
27 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** Yes, sure. If you look at the picture, the  
28 one with the long leaves, that is turtle grass. That's the one  
29 that typically in a lot of shallow -- This guy is turtle grass,  
30 the long, flat leaf. It can grow very, very long leaves and all  
31 of this and all of this and all of this is *stipulacea* and all of  
32 this and all of this is *stipulacea*. There is nothing else in  
33 that one, in that particular seagrass bed.

34  
35 **MARCOS HANKE:** There is no other feature to put them apart,  
36 because my concern is for us to identify. If we are going to  
37 report, we need to make sure.

38  
39 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** That's actually a great question and  
40 unfortunately I'm not on my computer, because if I were on my  
41 computer, I could show you every single seagrass species  
42 picture, but so yes, it's very easy to distinguish. There is no  
43 way you could ever confuse turtle grass or manatee grass with  
44 this guy. This guy is typically a lot shorter and grows in  
45 pairs and has a white what's called a pedicle at the base of the  
46 leaves.

47  
48 You see the ribosomes very easily and that's like the root

1 system connected in the shallow surface of the water, whereas  
2 turtle grass, as you know, is just very, very dense and very  
3 tall, flat leaves. You typically don't see the roots or if  
4 there is some reason, like a blowout, that you see the roots,  
5 you see that the roots go all the way down to about eighteen  
6 inches of depth and so it's a lot hardier.

7  
8 The trouble with this one though, to get to your question, is  
9 that we do have native *Halophila*. We have *decipiens* and we have  
10 some others as well, but *decipiens* is the most common of the  
11 *Halophila* here in the Caribbean. You can confuse the two if  
12 you're not familiar with them and so that's one of the things  
13 that mentioned.

14  
15 UVI has the webpage to report sightings and so one of the things  
16 that we're trying to work on with them is doing a YouTube video  
17 so that you would be in the field actually looking at different  
18 kinds and figuring out -- Have people explain how to identify  
19 between those two, because otherwise -- I actually have a  
20 picture from Culebra that it was a misreporting and they said  
21 this was *stipulacea* and it's not. It's *decipiens* and so those  
22 are the two that you can most easily confuse.

23  
24 **MARCOS HANKE:** My question comes exactly on this protocol of  
25 engaging people to help on the identification and also on areas,  
26 because you just reported that it can leave on the areas on low  
27 tide that it is totally exposed and any other grass that grows  
28 there would be trimmed by the tide and that sun exposure and  
29 they will not be so long.

30  
31 The length of the leaf will not be so obvious in that case and I  
32 am just encouraging if you guys want to engage the fishing  
33 community to identify to create those protocols or the video and  
34 education to identify them.

35  
36 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** Yes, that's a great idea and, like I said,  
37 Parks Service is actually also working on a brochure of like a  
38 have you seen this, similar to what's been done for the  
39 lionfish. Then, as I mentioned, UVI already has a webpage, but  
40 that was a criticism that we gave them too, because all they do  
41 is link to Wikipedia and, quite frankly, when I look at the  
42 photos in Wikipedia, I am not sure which *Halophila* I am looking  
43 at either.

44  
45 It's just not so great and so that's why we had the idea of the  
46 YouTube video, where you could actually see it in the field and  
47 have somebody explaining to you how you identify between each of  
48 the species of grass, because it's easy for me to tell you there

1 is no way you would ever confuse them and there really isn't if  
2 you know and if you were to see it live and get a true  
3 description, but you're right.

4  
5 In some shallow areas, Thalassia can be much shorter leaves, but  
6 it will always be a flat, straight leaf, versus this thing  
7 that's always going to have that rounded top and very obvious  
8 veins on the leaves and so more like a tree. You think more  
9 like a tree, whereas Thalassia looks more like a blade of grass  
10 and so there are some very obvious characteristics that you can  
11 easily tell people.

12  
13 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you. Any other questions? Miguel.

14  
15 **MIGUEL ROLON:** So aside from watching it grow, we can do nothing  
16 about it?

17  
18 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** That's a good question and actually, our  
19 NPS colleagues have designed a little box thing that they're  
20 trying to work with UVI to experiment on that's actually like a  
21 suction dredge kind of idea of trying to just suck it all the  
22 way up, because if you leave it floating and fragments get away,  
23 trust me those fragments are going to end up somewhere else  
24 growing.

25  
26 Then also they have another experimental design where they are  
27 actually trying to shade it and see what happens, but so far  
28 there is actually a UVI student who has been trying to  
29 experiment killing it and the darned thing is not so easy to  
30 kill.

31  
32 That's why I mentioned like the depth range and all that. It's  
33 really interesting, because it actually -- In shallow depths, it  
34 actually gets darker and darker and darker and then in -- It  
35 adjusts to a lot of conditions and so to go back to your  
36 question and actually answer your question, in addition to the  
37 fact that they're trying to do some experiments to see how it  
38 might be managed, the bottom line might be that some bays are  
39 just going to be that grass and that's all there is to it, but  
40 other bays, where we only have small patches of it, because of  
41 boat impacts, because that seems to be the way that it's really  
42 coming in, to try to remove those patches and try to keep the  
43 boat impacts better managed. I think that's going to be -- But  
44 it will be a big effort, because this is spreading really fast  
45 and, as you saw, it grows really fast.

46  
47 **MIGUEL ROLON:** My comment is just, very quickly, there are a  
48 couple of summaries of papers about the invasion from the Indian

1 Ocean all the way here and it seems to be that it attacks --  
2 more than any other seagrasses and there are fish associated  
3 with those species, especially in the nursery stage area, and it  
4 has an impact and so it will be important to keep documenting  
5 the growth of this algae throughout the Caribbean and it seems  
6 that it's here to stay. It's a pity that the sea lion doesn't  
7 eat it.

8  
9 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** To interrupt you for one second, the  
10 experiments to date have been with -- There have been some  
11 observations with *Thalassia* and it seems like potentially, just  
12 because of *Thalassia*'s characteristics, the turtle grass,  
13 because it's so deep rooted and all that, it's not so hard to  
14 displace, I mean so easy to displace, but there is also  
15 evidence, like I mentioned with the Willette from 2014, that it  
16 also does get rid of native *Halophila decipiens* and so the ones  
17 that are kind of more fragile, it seems to be pretty good at out  
18 competing, but that's one of the things that we wanted to look  
19 at, was actually competition between different species,  
20 including turtle grass, just to see if that's true or not.

21  
22 To what we need from you, I mean nothing right now, but  
23 potentially your awareness and commitment to thinking about it  
24 and having that in your head of what you might want to do,  
25 because even if we don't get funding, this is a significant  
26 issue that could end up impacting fisheries and fishery stocks,  
27 because these are nursery areas and, like I said, it could also  
28 end up all the way in deep areas and we don't know why yet,  
29 potentially just because of a lack of herbivory -- You know in a  
30 natural system a lot of times you'll have a patch reef and  
31 there's a halo around it. Not with this guy. This guy is all  
32 the way up to the reef and even starting to grow up the reef.  
33 Again, we're not sure if that's just because nothing eats it  
34 yet, because they don't know it's palatable, or maybe it's not  
35 palatable. This could potentially change all of our habitats.  
36 It's a big deal.

37  
38 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Roy.

39  
40 **ROY CRABTREE:** Thanks for being here. I guess you said right  
41 now the way we've defined essential fish habitat, seagrass as  
42 essential fish habitat, is sort of generic and so technically  
43 this would fall into it.

44  
45 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** Yes and that's the issue that we've had so  
46 far with the consultations for the projects in the Virgin  
47 Islands. I will give you an example. Crown Bay Marina  
48 dredging, the entire marina basin is all *Halophila stipulacea*

1 and so it was about an acre of seagrass impacts, but we didn't  
2 want them to mitigate by transplanting it somewhere else and so  
3 what they did was actually roll it up and then roll it back out  
4 and just put it back where it was, because -- That's not  
5 necessarily the best --

6  
7 **ROY CRABTREE:** I get what the problem is. Do you know when our  
8 five-year review of our EFH stuff is coming up and when we're  
9 going to revisit all of that?

10  
11 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Graciela, is it going to be in 2016 or 2017?

12  
13 **GRACIELA GARCIA-MOLINER:** The last one was in 2011.

14  
15 **MIGUEL ROLON:** So it's 2016.

16  
17 **ROY CRABTREE:** That's next year and so yes, I think when we do  
18 that we ought to bear in mind to do something to make sure we  
19 exclude this. I think we could still say seagrasses, but we  
20 could just say except not this, not invasive seagrasses.

21  
22 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** That's the question that you need to think  
23 about as well. While we don't know yet what the nutritional  
24 quality or habitat use or anything else is and so -- But that  
25 would be an option that you should consider.

26  
27 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Marcos.

28  
29 **MARCOS HANKE:** Is there any information comparing fishes that  
30 are leaving the area and invertebrates that are leaving there  
31 compared to the original habitat?

32  
33 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** So yes. There are actually two different  
34 studies that get to that. There is one and there have been some  
35 preliminary analyses of the nutritional content and actually  
36 nutritionally, in terms of starch, carbon, nitrogen,  
37 phosphorous, it's very similar to Syringodium, to manatee grass.  
38 They are almost the same nutritionally, but what hasn't been  
39 analyzed is all the other stuff, like does it have more phenyls  
40 or does it have some other compounds that plants might have.

41  
42 That's one and so there have been studies, like those by  
43 Willette, in the Caribbean that have shown that fish species use  
44 it. However, the composition overall, there aren't a lot of  
45 smaller fish and it's mainly fish that are in like a -- Kind of  
46 that size class before they move out to the reef kind of thing  
47 and it doesn't seem like they are eating the grass. It seems  
48 like they're just using it for refuge to look for other things

1 that might be in the grass, like little crabs or shrimp.

2

3 **MARCOS HANKE:** That size distribution is different?

4

5 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** Yes, from a native seagrass bed, yes. Too  
6 bad lionfish aren't herbivorous. Maybe they would take care of  
7 the problem.

8

9 **MIGUEL ROLON:** We will keep you in mind for the review of the  
10 EFH and we certainly would like to invite you to help in any way  
11 and I know that you will, because Dr. Willette also found that  
12 in the eastern Caribbean that the activity of trap fishing  
13 promotes the propagation of these species across other areas and  
14 it's here to stay.

15

16 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** It seems to be anything that you throw on  
17 the bottom and then pick back up and don't thoroughly clean or  
18 as you thoroughly clean it you just let the fragments fall back  
19 in the water. It's trap fishing and it's boat anchors.

20

21 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Thank you a lot.

22

23 **LISAMARIE CARRUBBA:** Thank you.

24

25 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you. Okay. I think that covers all  
26 of our agenda items and we're going to figure out here our next  
27 council meeting date.

28

29

#### 30 **NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

31

32 **MIGUEL ROLON:** Mr. Chairman, the next council meeting will be on  
33 December 15 and 16 at the Frenchmen's Reef in St. Thomas, U.S.  
34 Virgin Islands.

35

36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Any other discussions? Hearing none -  
37 - I am sorry, Gary.

38

39 **GARY ROGERS:** I just have a few concerns about our new AP.  
40 Yesterday I was speaking with Edward and Julian and they told me  
41 that they have a 50 percent commercial fisherman participation  
42 in their AP.

43

44 Now, in our new one here, we have a pretty diverse group. We  
45 have recreational fishermen, blue water hunters, local  
46 businessmen, environmental groups, restaurant owners, and myself  
47 in the aquarium trade, but we only have five commercial  
48 fishermen, since you guys stole Carlos from us. Only three of  
49 those showed up for the last AP meeting.

1  
2 I would like to ask this council if they could send someone to  
3 our next AP meeting with vast AP experience, such as maybe  
4 Marcos, Tony Blanchard, Edward, or Julian, that they could sit  
5 in and kind of give us advice and help and guide us along so our  
6 meeting can have a successful conclusion, because I would really  
7 hate to see our AP fall apart with people leaving over  
8 frustration and I want them to understand why it's really  
9 important for them to be there.

10  
11 Helena, by all means, when you are in your travels and you see  
12 commercial fishermen, guide them our way, because like the  
13 Virgin Island guys, we should really have at least 50 percent  
14 commercial fishermen participation on this, because this is an  
15 advisory panel for Caribbean fisheries. That's all.

16  
17 **MIGUEL ROLON:** No, they do not have 50 percent and the advisory  
18 panel is not for commercial fishermen. It's a cross-section of  
19 commercial fishermen and recreational and restaurateurs and  
20 NGOs and anybody that has anything to do with it.

21  
22 **GARY ROGERS:** Yes, but I would just like to see a little higher  
23 --

24  
25 **MIGUEL ROLON:** The mechanism that we have for telling them what  
26 to do is different from what you are saying. The other thing is  
27 that we have a policy and if these people don't show up, they  
28 will be kicked out of the committee and I hear you. I agree  
29 with you that the importance of having these meetings is to be  
30 as effective as possible and so the next meeting of these three  
31 panels will deal with the Step 2 of the species list and we will  
32 take your word on this one and make sure that those people will  
33 show up any way we can. For that, we are grateful for your  
34 comments.

35  
36 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Thank you, Gary. Bill.

37  
38 **BILL ARNOLD:** I don't recall if we covered this or not, but did  
39 I ask that you guys schedule an SSC meeting between now and the  
40 December council meeting, so we can get started on the complex  
41 development and reference point development for the new FMPs?

42  
43 **MIGUEL ROLON:** We have budget for another meeting of the SSC and  
44 Graciela is in charge of coordinating such a meeting with  
45 Richard Appeldoorn and, of course, the Chairman of the council  
46 and so yes, we will have another meeting and I believe that  
47 Graciela scheduled that meeting and it's a matter of beefing up  
48 the agenda that they have set and so Graciela will knock on your

1 door asking for suggestions for that agenda and it should be  
2 before the council meeting.

3  
4 **CARLOS FARCHETTE:** Okay. Any other comments or questions?  
5 Hearing none, this meeting of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Caribbean Council Meeting  
6 is adjourned and it's 4:57.

7  
8 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 20, 2015.)

9  
10 - - -  
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