

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ISFMP POLICY BOARD**

**The Westin Alexandria Hotel
Alexandria, Virginia
February 4, 2015
Approved May 2015**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Call to Order, Chairman Louis B. Daniel, III	1
Approval of Agenda	1
Approval of Proceedings, October 2014	1
Public Comment.....	1
Discussion of Voting Procedures Used by the Northern Shrimp Section	1
Update on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences.....	3
Review and Consideration of Comments for the HMS Shark Draft Amendment 6.....	12
Review and Consider Approval of the 2015 Weakfish Stock Assessment Terms of Reference	15
Adjournment.....	18

INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda by Consent** (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of October 2014 by Consent** (Page 1).
3. **Move to approve the Terms of Reference for the Stock Assessment for Weakfish as well as the Peer Review Panel for Weakfish** (Page 18). Motion by Rob O'Reilly; second by Roy Miller. Motion carried (Page 18).
4. **Motion to adjourn by Consent** (Page 18).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Terry Stockwell, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Leroy Young, PA, proxy for J. Arway (AA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Dave Saveikis, DE (AA)
Doug Grout, NH (AA)	John Clark, DE, Administrative proxy
Ritchie White, NH (GA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Tom O'Connell, MD (AA)
Paul Diodati, MA (AA)	Bill Goldsborough, MD (GA)
Bill Adler, MA (GA)	Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for J. Bull (AA)
Robert Ballou, RI (AA)	Louis Daniel, NC (AA)
Rick Bellavance, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Robert Boyles, Jr., SC (AA)
David Simpson, CT (AA)	Malcolm Rhodes, SC (GA)
Dr. Lance Stewart, CT (GA)	Patrick Geer, GA, proxy for Rep. Burns (LA)
Katherine Heinlein, NY, proxy for Sen. Boyle (LA)	Spud Woodward, AA (GA)
Jim Gilmore, NY (AA)	Jim Estes, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Mike Millard, USFWS
Brandon Muffley, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (AA)	Kelly Denit, NMFS
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)	Martin Gary, PRFC
Loren Lustig, PA (GA)	

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Staff

Bob Beal	Mike Waive
Toni Kerns	Katie Drew
Pat Campfield	Shanna Madsen

Guests

John Bullard, NMFS	Greg Kenney, NYS DEC
Karyl Brewster-Geisz, NMFS	David Pierce, MA DMF
Andrew Rubin, NMFS	Dan McKiernan, MA DMF
Delisa Ortiz, NMFS	Russ Allen, NJ DFW
Guy DuBeck, NMFS	Cheri Patterson, NH F&G
Alexis Jackson, NMFS	Chris Bonzek, VIMS
Wilson Laney, USFWS	Jack Travelstead, CCA
Steve Meyers, NOAA	Cynthia Jones, ODU
Tom Baum, NJ DFW	Raymond Kane, CHOIR
Charles Lynch, NOAA	Arnold Leo, Town of E. Hampton
Derek Orner, NOAA	

Proceedings of the ISFMP Policy Board Meeting February 2015

The ISFMP Policy Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Edison Ballroom of the Westin Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia, February 4, 2015, and was called to order at 9:10 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Louis B. Daniel, III.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN LOUIS B. DANIEL, III: All right, I'd like to call the ISFMP Policy Board Meeting to order. I'm going to try to get us back on schedule. We're late and it is my fault, so I apologize for that. You have an agenda for this morning's proceedings. We have our agenda and we also have our proceedings from October annual meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Are there any corrections or modifications to the minutes or any additional items for the agenda that anyone would like to bring forward at this time? Seeing none; without objection the agenda and the proceedings are approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: This is a time on our agenda where we ask for public comment. I do not have anyone signed up to speak. Is there anyone that would like to address the ISFMP Policy Board? Seeing none; we will move on to our first agenda item, which I'll turn it over to Toni Kerns to discuss voting procedures used by the Northern Shrimp Section.

DISCUSSION OF VOTING PROCEDURES USED BY THE NORTHERN SHRIMP SECTION

MS. TONI KERNS: I'm just going to quickly go through some information and then I will pass it off to Terry for the recommendations from the state of Maine. The Charter gives us guidance on how each of our boards follow procedures. It states that we follow the Roberts Rules of

Order and that each state on a board or section has one vote for boards and sections.

We also have votes for our federal partners. In sections we do not have federal partners sitting on those boards. The Northern Shrimp Section is made of only three states; and so there were concerns raised at the section by one of the states of whether or not voting was the appropriate method to carry out its business. There was a question of whether or not they work by consensus instead of voting. Terry, I will let you go from there.

MR. TERRY STOCKWELL: Thank you, Toni, for the lead-in. As Toni indicated, at our last Shrimp Section Meeting we initiated a PID for a limited entry program for northern shrimp. The public hearings are just about to be scheduled. I believe the first one will be at the Maine Fishermen's Forum the 1st of March.

At this point the primary issues in the document, one of which is limited entry and the other is a state-by-state allocation. Each of these two primary components could significantly impact one of the three states, particularly limited entry in the state of Maine which our state legislature has very much taken a position on.

If there is limited entry, they would like to do it on their own and not have it remanded from the commission. In the discussion I've had with Toni and Pat and others is because a majority vote might put two states against one state, whether or not we should look at a three-state section as a consensus vote. I don't have an answer; but I just would like to bring it to the attention of the board that when we do come down to a final vote here, we might have state against state.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: Mr. Chairman, we did have this discussion at the last meeting; but I would say that this issue isn't brought to you by a consensus of the three states involved in the Shrimp Section. Keep that clear. I'm speaking

as the vice-chair of the section who will be taking over in the fall; and I hate to think of myself having to do business by achieving consensus.

I have before me the definition of consensus, which is a group decision-making process that seeks the consent of all participants. I think if we do want to discuss consensus decision-making, instead of restricting this conversation to the Shrimp Section because of its size, we should expand it to the Herring Section, which has six; some of the South Atlantic Boards who probably have a limited number of folks.

I don't think the Policy Board should be determining whether the Shrimp Section should be operated differently than the other boards and sections. We eventually at all times reach a point where we have to vote; and I think that our vote is important. I don't think that one state's position should override any other state's position by wanting to achieve consensus.

I think it would be difficult at times to achieve consensus; but in the Shrimp Section, which I've served on for 18 years, it has been the common practice of that section, when they meet, to always huddle up in the back of the room and make the hard decisions through a consensus forum although it is not formalized.

I think the intent of the three states has been to reach consensus. I think we've done that fairly well. We also do that in herring when we set the landing days. I just don't think that the Policy Board should be dictating to the Shrimp Section a change in our policy. I do not favor this idea at all. Thank you.

MR. PAUL DIODATI: I agree with just about everything that my colleague from New Hampshire has just stated. I think it is very true if you open the door here for northern shrimp, you would almost have to consider the same type of rule or policy condition for everything else that we do. I almost think that the majority

vote that we have allows groups that have a voting privilege that might have less of a stake in a fishery could be objective about what really needs to be done.

It is almost like removing objectivity from the decision process by going to a consensus. I'm against that in this case. I'd also like to point out for those of you who don't know that the Northern Shrimp Section is probably – not probably; it is the longest-running management program in this commission and it is successfully running. It has gone uninterrupted in this interstate process longer than any other similar type of management process in the nation, I believe. It has got something it is doing right, and I would like to see it continue unchanged.

MR. G. RITCHIE WHITE: I agree with everything the previous two speakers have said. I would just add that going to consensus would then give the power to the minority in that process. You'd be forced into status quo or not making any changes if one state would not go along. That is how this commission works. The idea of pitting states against states; unfortunately, that is part of this process and states have to look out for their own interest.

I think we do that pretty well here keeping the resource as number one. I think the history of our actions on the shrimp section show that when we don't always quite come to consensus, we come very close. I know New Hampshire in past years has definitely moved substantially from what they wanted to see to try to accommodate the state of Maine when there was a push for additional harvest. I think that even though it might not formally be a consensus, I think we already work pretty close to that. Thank you.

MR. THOMAS FOTE: I served 18 years on the Policy Committee of the Barnegat Bay Estuarine Program and have been on the Advisory Committee for 22 years. At the beginning of that program, I had to sit through five days of how you do everything by consensus because

the EPA runs these programs as consensus building.

The reason they do that is because there is a lot of different goals by the people sitting around the table. You have the builders, you have the politicians, you have the public, you have the environmental groups, you have the fisheries groups, so you want to get consensus before you move forward because any policy we put out would have to get the support of those groups from the Estuarine Program.

This is a different situation. When we come to a Herring Section or a Northern Shrimp Section, there is no divergency. You're there to build the sustainable stocks. You're there to make healthy stocks go and allow fishermen to basically harvest it if they can. It is not really a consensus situation. It is different with caucus, because it is the state getting together in a caucus. It is different in a section, so I agree with staying with the same model that we have used for the last 20-something years or 30 years.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Based on the discussion around the table, is there any interest in taking any action on this issue? Not taking action maintains the current strategy on dealing with northern shrimp. Seeing no interest, we will move on. Next is Shanna is going to lead us on a discussion of updating the roles and responsibilities of the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences.

**UPDATE ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

MS. SHANNA MADSEN: As the CESS Coordinator I wanted to speak with the board today about a few ideas that the committee had to update some of our roles and responsibilities and hopefully improve the socioeconomic information that we can provide you. After I'm done reviewing the suggestions that we have, I'm going to pass the baton over

to Bob and he is going to discuss what our options are moving forward.

To start, I wanted to briefly go through the commission's guiding documents in regards to socioeconomics. In both ACFCMA and the Striped Bass Act, there are no requirements outlined in regards to fishery socioeconomics. However, in the ISFMP Charter we do recognize the importance of socioeconomics and state that these impacts and benefits must be taken into account with our management program.

Last year the board discussed having CESS carry out a socioeconomic case study. After discussing potential topics of interest with the CESS, we decided the best way to pursue this was to actually create an RFP and contract independent researchers. One of the reasons being is the point that Madeleine has made during her last presentation to the board, which is that CESS membership is really unlike any other ASMFC committee.

CESS is comprised entirely of volunteers, which makes it hard for them to have time and resources available to perform in-depth analyses for the commission. This led me to a new idea where I thought that maybe CESS could take on a role as a steering committee. We would then be able to form guidance for the Policy Board toward specific socioeconomic issues.

CESS can then help the board pinpoint any significant socioeconomic data gaps with ASMFC species and we can select the appropriate consultants or researchers to collect or analyze data. In the next few slides I'm going to focus on the specific proposed changes to the language of the CESS' guiding documents.

I've listed the current language in the handouts that you should all have in front of you as well as highlighted the proposed changes as well that I will go through on these slides. To start off, one of our first suggested changes is to

make sure that the scientists who are CESS members that serve as ASMFC species representatives are actually CESS members.

Previously some of the scientists that were appointed to serve on the technical committees or plan development teams were not necessarily CESS members even though they were social scientists. We did find that this caused a large disconnect between the CESS and the species committees. Moving forward we think that it is very important to make sure that those members are actually CESS members and they serve on technical committees and plan development teams.

Another new idea that we had was to have species CESS representatives be able to form task forces or subcommittees if there appears that there is going to be a significant management action for a specific species. Then we can have multiple members assisting with the socioeconomic sections of new amendments and provide different regional perspectives.

Previously CESS members were required to appoint one social scientist and one economist to each species. That was about a total of 42 CESS representative slots to fill while our committee maxes out at 23 members. When I was going through the list, I noticed that some members were responsible for up to four species, which really did not allow them time to frequent many technical committee or plan development team calls.

CESS proposes that we change language to only nominate one member for each species technical committee or plan development team so that each member of our committee can only cover one to two species. This way it will give them time to devote more attention. Some of our higher profile species have obviously generated more interest; so one more than member can serve on those committees if they so choose.

CESS members will then be added to technical committee mailing lists as the socioeconomic representative and will read through agendas or meeting topics as well as communicate with the FMP coordinators to determine if they should be present to identify pertinent socioeconomic issues.

We know that plan development teams will probably require more participation than the technical committees. However, technical committee calls can also provide the biological rationale for management. We also proposed that on a yearly basis CESS members will meet to report out on their individual species assignments, which should help to keep the committee informed of any significant upcoming actions or plan development team formation.

This way all of CESS is able to have a more active knowledge of ASMFC species and the socioeconomic issues that they're facing. These yearly meetings should also help to inform the socioeconomic research needs' list that we would like to present to the commission. At least every three years we propose that CESS prepare a report that should outline what they view as the greatest critical gaps in socioeconomic knowledge for the ASMFC.

This report can help to guide the ASMFC socioeconomic RFPs and future data collection. As the board chooses appropriate socioeconomic data collection or analysis initiatives, the CESS can then create the RFPs for distribution. The CESS will then decide what the appropriate parties are to distribute the RFPs, review the proposals and then decide where to distribute funding.

It also seemed that after our workshop during annual meetings, the board was very interested in having similar educational activities. We'd like to add language to our guiding document outlining what we can provide in the way of educational workshops to help maintain

member awareness on relevant socioeconomic topics.

We can then create these activities by request to ensure that they are of interest to the ASMFC. Finally, this is a list of our current membership; and our last suggestion is to change the language of our membership slightly. Currently the guidelines read is required to have only one representative from each of the fifteen states as well as eight federal members.

Since CESS is unique in that membership is comprised of volunteers, we've actually have interest in people joining our committee outside of those limitations. We'd like to expand the membership to include up to five additional members who are willing to serve on the committee as our species liaisons.

We hope that this should add minimal cost to our travel budget while still not turning away willing volunteers. With that, I'm going to go over our discussion points and outline what our steps are moving forward.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: Moving forward, Shanna mentioned there is limited guidance in the Charter recognizing the importance of socioeconomics. The Atlantic Coastal Act and Striped Bass Act don't have any direct language that forces the commission's hand in this issue.

In the past the commission has obviously relied heavily on the knowledge of the folks sitting around this table. As we were going into the Menhaden FMP or Amendment 2 discussions and considering a 20 percent reduction, there was ample discussion on the socioeconomic impacts at the board level.

Jack Travelstead, who is in the audience now, provided the impacts to the Omega Protein folks, and the public comment opportunities and public hearings that we had highlighted the

socioeconomic impacts as well as a few hundred individuals in the back of the room with the yellow signs highlighted the impacts of the socioeconomic impact.

The question is how does the commission want to handle socioeconomic information in the future? Some of our FMPs have had limited sections on socioeconomics and sort of basic economic impacts and value of fisheries. Very seldom have we done extensive analyses and studies on socioeconomic impacts; and that is a resource issue and a timing issue. It takes a lot of time to do that.

The question before the commission is essentially as you went through the striped bass decision that was just made; would that have been a better decision if we had put a lot of resources and significant time into developing socioeconomic analysis to include in the draft document that went out for public comment.

That is up to the group to decide; but it would have slowed the decision down. You would not have affected the 2015 fishery. You probably would have at best affected the 2016 fishery; and that is a big difference. The socioeconomics that have been characterized by at least one commissioner is a tie-break kind of a situation where you have two options that are essentially equal or a push on biology. Maybe economics then weigh into deciding which is a better option.

That is one way to look at it. There is always a struggle of the priority between economics and biology, and that is just the nature of the business that you guys are in. I think those are the questions up on the slide. It is a two-part question. What do you guys want in the FMPs; what should those sections look like.

These decisions may require adjustments to the Charter, which is fine, we just need to clarify that. What do the sections in the FMPs look like; are they just simple value of fisheries; how much ex-vessel value is generated by

menhaden or lobster or striped bass or whatever it may be; and what is the estimated overall recreational impact for some species?

Those types of things are relatively easy; but comprehensive socioeconomic studies like the ones that were presented at the annual meeting are amazingly informative, but they take some time. They explore tradeoffs between different management options and those sorts of things. The next level of that question is do you want to continue to rely on commissioner expertise or do you want to use some of the CESS expertise or outside contractors to work on that?

As Shanna mentioned earlier, what is the CESS role in this sort of new approach to handing socioeconomic information? Do they actually do the work at the Committee for Economics and Social Sciences or are they more of a steering committee that finds contractors to do the work? There are budget impacts there, but I think they're all viable options.

It is just really the priorities and tradeoffs of the commissions and how you want to handle it. Since the annual meeting when we had the discussion with Madeleine Hall-Arber and Jorge – when they came in and presented the options, there were two things that came up. One is an appeal from the state of Delaware on the striped bass decision. One of their main concerns in that appeal was socioeconomics.

They felt that it wasn't fully explored in the draft addendum that went out for public hearing. The other thing that came up was a letter from the governor for the Commonwealth of Virginia; and that letter brought up similar questions and concerns about socioeconomics. There is clearly an increasing focus on socioeconomics; but given the resources available to you, how do you want to move forward and what do you want to include in your FMPs are essentially the two questions. Then the third is how does CESS fit

into this? I think that is the background, Louis, and it is up to however you want to handle it.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Don't everybody raise their hand at once. All right, Mr. Adler.

MR. WILLIAM A. ADLER: My question goes to the work "rely". Apparently what this would do is put in a section in an FMP that would say this is the socioeconomic situation based on this particular proposed plan; but I don't believe it actually forces the board to go with it. I think this is right; this is just another picture to look at while we consider. Is that basically where this would go if they did have this particular thing in an FMP?

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, I think, yes, it would provide more information for the commission on the impacts of the decision that they're making. Again, it is like having worked with the councils and the councils have – at least from my experience, they have an economist, they have an anthropologist, they have folks that are going out and doing these community surveys.

They're doing community outreach. They're looking at the social and economic consequences of the fishery, the dependency of the communities on the fishery and the like. One of the big questions comes down to when the rubber meets the road; how is that information used to end overfishing and rebuild stocks? Traditionally it is not used.

I think there is an awareness there of the impacts, but we're not going to fail to take the necessary biological information into account because it may have an impact. We know reductions are going to have an impact. That is kind of some of the discussion that we had about the appeal from Delaware; and I will go to John next to let him respond to that.

Like Bob said and the way I have always understood it at the federal level, if you've got two equal alternatives for reducing overfishing and one is more economically advantageous to

our constituents than the other, that is what you pick; but other than that you don't say, well, we're not going to end overfishing because it is going to have an economic consequence.

I think the question for the commission – Bob, correct me if I'm wrong and don't hesitate – the question to the commission is the Magnuson Act requires socioeconomic analysis of their management actions and they are held to a very high standard there. We are not; and so recognizing how that information has been used at the council, how much effort, how much money, how time do we want to dedicate or allocate to determining these social and economic consequences with our limited staff both at home and at the commission level.

I think that may fairly broach the question. Bill, your questions are excellent; so I think that is a very difficult decision from a political standpoint. We don't want to say we don't care about the economic consequences of our actions. I don't anybody is saying that; but at what level to they enter into the decision-making process and how much information do we need to have on the table to make our decision? John.

MR. JOHN CLARK: I might be misremembering, but I thought the Striped Bass Conservation Act did require an economic analysis to be submitted to Congress by 1998, but that is not my main point. As you mentioned, we in Delaware were asked to appeal the decision and much of that appeal was based on the lack of an economic analysis in the addendum.

I think we need to get into a full-detailed market analysis of everything. I think what a lot of our commercial fishermen in particular were concerned about was the fact that we knew there would be impacts to them. We did not even acknowledge that in this addendum. Obviously, the recreational fishery is going to take a strong impact also, but the commercial impact would have been very easy to calculate.

For example, in Delaware I can calculate based on the average price of striped bass that each of our fishermen is going to lose about \$1,600 a year. Assuming this plan is in place for at least three years, that is about \$5,000, which to a lot of these guys that is a substantial part of their income that they make from fishing.

I think they would have really just appreciated that we acknowledged that we had looked at that when we made this decision; that we were aware of this. I think the states could get some of this data very simply because we know how much our fishermen are getting. We know even the recreational businesses in the states.

I think, as I said, if we can at least acknowledge that in the addendums, it would go a long way to at least making these impacts – the people that are affected by this feel that we're taking that into consideration when we do these addendums. As far as the commercial quotas go, I think they're all pretty realistic in realizing that under Amendment 6 we had a population that was completely recovered. It was probably at a historical high.

They're not going to see the commercial quotas go higher than where they were; so the loss they're taking under this addendum will never be made up in those terms. We can tell them that if we didn't do this, well, you wouldn't have anything to catch in a few years; but as I said, it is more of a question I think of acknowledging that we understand the impacts that the various sectors are going to have to withstand under these addendums. Thank you.

MR. FOTE: When we looked over the years – for many years have been looking at the socioeconomic impacts covered in the Mid-Atlantic plans and a lot of other plans, on the recreational side, it always says this will not have a substantial effect on the recreational fishery. We always ask where is the socioeconomic data to prove that and never got an answer.

Unless we're going to really do something, that truthfully does something to look at it, there is no sense in putting a paragraph in the plan unless you're going to do the research necessary. What I think is more important is to look at certain factors. I mean, when I started digging into a lot of the trip limits and everything that went on last year; and I looked at it and saw that the Mid-Atlantic Region has went down 8 million trips in the last – since 2007.

That is a place we should be looking at; that is a trend. That is a lot of money being lost in that region and we should find out what is affecting that. We also should have some kind of guideline on certain species, which is more economically important; size, bag limit or seasons, because that could help in the decision, which means do we make the season longer and raise the size; which has the biggest economic impact on the recreational side?

Those are some of the answers. I'm not looking for a long – I would love to have that, but I know we don't have the resources. I mean, one time New Jersey actually had an economist, Dr. Brown, on staff. As soon as he retired, we decided it was a non-job anymore. As everybody retires in New Jersey and they don't replace them, the same thing happened with Dr. Brown.

With the limited resources that we have, we should be looking at things that really affect us; why has New Jersey dropped two millions trips; why has the rest of the states dropped eight million trips in the last eight years? We have ideas, was it gas prices, was it the economy, was it regulations or people just get frustrated when they can't catch legal fish? We should understand that because this has a huge economic on the states. I mean, I don't know what it has cost us.

What is the most amazing part, even with all those drops in eight million trips, we're still catching them with less number of boats. Like

in New Jersey, I think it is down 80,000 boats, we're still catching the same amount of fish with less trips and less boats. That is another fallacy that I can't figure out.

MR. DAVID SIMPSON: My preference is to stay with the simple approach that we've been using. I feel that in all our decisions I've had a good sense of what the economic implications are of any of our decisions. I felt pretty informed on striped bass what the implications were short term and long and on menhaden as well.

I felt I had a really good understanding of what our FMP meant to the Commonwealth of Virginia and Omega Protein in particular, to the bait fisheries. I don't see a 500-page document for each one of these really helping form my opinion or refining my opinion any further. We're also at least 20 years into management for most of these species now; so we're not struggling with that initial is it going to be worth the short-term economic losses for the long-term stability and long-term economic gains.

We're well into this on most of our species. I appreciate the sensitivity from certain segments of the industry to, hey, us remember us out there; and maybe there wasn't as much of that discussion at the table as there could have been, perhaps; but I think we all as a political body, we are taking that into account. I hope your fishermen do appreciate that we do consider that.

We know a 25 percent cut in a state who fully utilizes their quota means something. We can all multiply at least by four dollars a pound and say we understand that. I don't think there is a lot to be gained by spending a lot of effort. In fact, as Bob alluded to, it is only going cause us to delay a decision that gets on with conservation and long-term economic benefits.

MR. STEPHEN R. TRAIN: David Simpson said a lot of what I was thinking. If we're going to do an economic impact statement with our

actions, we've got to go all in to get it. I mean economic impact always has a negative connotation. Every one of us around here knows every decision we make has an economic impact; but the economic impact in the long term should be positive if we're doing our job and not negative.

We can't just put a small statement with our actions say the immediate economic impact is X when five or six or eight years down the road it should be a benefit to everybody. An impact should be positive; so in my opinion to do this, we've got to go full-bore and show the long-range benefits to the coastal communities of everything we do and not the immediate negative to an action we're taking to keep F at M, whatever. As the stocks rebuild, harvest levels should increase and the economic benefit should be positive. I don't know if we have the manpower or the finances to go all in.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Or the forecasting ability; good point. Doug Grout.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: I think some of the issues here are whether we want to have a more quantitative economic assessment as opposed to the qualitative that we rely on. The other issue that we need to deal with is what kind of socioeconomic impacts we put into our management documents. Clearly, in an addendum we don't spend a lot of time on socioeconomic impacts.

On an amendment we do have sections in there on socioeconomic impacts and to date it has been most qualitative. In my experience with councils, even with a very bright and quite frankly extensive staff compared to what we have on socioeconomics both at the science center and within the council, they produce for some things some very detailed quantitative economic impacts.

On groundfish they provide a tremendously high-level quantitative impact on the commercial fishery impacts to our regulations;

but when we have been putting in changes to our recreational, they are still very qualitative; not quantitative. They don't have the information. That is a very large, bright, well-paid staff in opinion.

I'm not sure we're going to – given our resources that we're going to be able to get much beyond a qualitative assessment in our socioeconomic impacts. I think as far as the addendum versus the amendment, I think that is our job is if we are foreseeing that a management action would have a substantial economic impact on one or more of our constituents, then we maybe we need to think about whether we need to take the time and do a full-blown amendment as opposed to an addendum and at least give some kind of qualitative impact – put a qualitative impact assessment within the amendment.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That is the kind of input I think we need for this discussion. We can discuss the merits of economic data for a couple of days. We've got 35 minutes to get through three agenda items. What I'm hearing primarily around the table is that we recognize that we're not going to be able to do these quantitative analyses on socioeconomics; that we want to have some recognition of the economic impacts of our decisions, but recognize that is going to be qualitative.

I'm not sure how much more discussion we need to have on that. I've several other folks to speak but please try to keep that in mind. If you have recommendations or discussions, I'm not exactly sure what we want to come out of this with; and, Bob, maybe you could kind of clarify again what result you would like.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: I think your summary was great, Louis. It sounds like folks are settling on the notion of some basic information in documents that we can pull together at the plan development team level interacting with the CESS representatives on things like ex-vessel value, number of permits,

those sorts of things. I think we can pull those together pretty quickly.

That doesn't describe the impacts. It just lets folks know kind of what is at stake and how many people are involved; but that does provide some valuable information to the folks around the table. Maybe we can pull together a short outline on what that might look like to bring back to the Policy Board in the May meeting.

I think the bigger role for CESS is kind of on a special case basis. In other words, are there species where there are big allocation questions coming up or something along those lines where the board does want to take some time, do a larger economic analysis and ask the CESS if they have the expertise; and if they don't, turn that over to a contractor of some sort. It doesn't seem anywhere around the table that folks want to do an extensive economic analysis for every action the commission takes.

I think there is some inherent understanding of what the impacts are and the inherent understanding of the resources that are available, and we just can't do that. If we put very basic information in draft documents with the notion that the big issues that pop up, menhaden, lobster, eels, whatever they might be that do a have a lot of economic impacts and may warrant some longer studies; then the commission ask the CESS to get involved and tackle those sorts of one-off projects rather than doing it for every FMP. That is kind of where I'm going, anyway, based on this conversation and sort of reading between the lines.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Perhaps one of the comments that struck the cord with me more than any was Steve's regarding the expected benefits down the road, kind of like you can pay me now or pay me later type of situation. If we've got a stock that is in bad shape, we would hope that once that stock recovers; those economic losses during the rebuilding period

would be offset by the economic gains of a recovered fishery.

I mean that's why we're all here, right? I've got four folks that are signed up to speak; Bob Ballou, Roy Miller, Ritchie White and John Clark. If you could speak to those issues and you have objection to the direction that we're going in, I think we need to hear that, but we really need to move on to two additional topics. Bob.

MR. ROBERT BALLOU: I will be brief. Actually what Bob Beal just articulated is very much what I was planning to offer. It is in my view in terms of how to best engage the CESS; an issue of focusing them on the high-priority management issues in advance of those issues being addressed by the board.

Perhaps coinciding with the benchmark assessments, as menhaden now rolls forward, as tautog perhaps is about to roll forward, it would be awesome to have that kind of comprehensive analysis before the board in parallel with the science, with the benchmark assessment, so that we're fully informed as we move forward.

Bob offered some excellent examples; eels, for example. I think that is where we want to really focus and target the work of the CESS. I think we do not want to try to spread them too thin; so it is on those high-priority issues, perhaps coupled with the benchmark assessments and upcoming major management actions that I think we want to have them engaged. Thank you.

MR. ROY MILLER: Having listened to Bob Beal's summary, I think we're headed in the right direction. I would just like to point out that let's face it, folks, we had the time to do a little bit of economic analysis with striped bass. We did not take that action at the annual meeting on short notice.

We had the opportunity to gather some potential economic impacts even as simple as

what John articulated and what would be the net economic loss to states' commercial fishermen on a per-pound-landed basis, that type of thing, very basic information. Not a full economic analysis but an immediate – recognition by the commission that there is an immediate economic impact. For other species that we're going to discuss this week like summer flounder, we've heard from our colleagues in New Jersey that there have been economic impacts from having a differential size limit in Delaware Bay.

That is easy to say, but some substantiation of what that economic impact would be or was would be much more useful, I think, to everyone in this room rather than stating that there in fact has been an economic impact. I think we need to do something. I think Bob is heading us down the right road. We need to give at least some consideration for these major species where we're making major changes in catch allocations and allowable landings.

MR. WHITE: I agree with the direction we're going although I have grave concern over reallocation of financial resources to any degree in this direction. We struggle with getting stock assessments and peer-reviewed stock assessments in a timely manner that we want them. We don't have the financial resources to do them at the rate we'd like to do them. I think this is all good if we can do it, but I don't want to see us take money away from a lot of those situations to fund this.

MR. CLARK: Just to be brief, I agree with what Bob said the direction he wants to go in. I just would want to point out to Doug's point about the amendment; Amendment 6 does have one paragraph about social and economic benefits of the striped bass amendment. It is very sacrifice now for the future. There are no specifics in there.

I think also that we need to look at this almost on a case-by-case basis. Some species, like with this addendum we were taking cutbacks on a

stock that was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring. I think we owe it to the public to tell them why we are doing this, why we are going to be taking action in those cases.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, Shanna, is there anything we didn't discuss that you would like to –

MS. MADSEN: I don't think so. I think that the end of the conversation is essentially what we're proposing. When we come forward with a list of socioeconomic data needs and present that to you on hopefully a three-year basis, if we see that one of our major species is probably going to go through a major management action; that is at the point where the board can come to the CESS and say we'd like to develop an RFP, here is the amount of funds that we have available, and the CESS can work together to get that distributed and start to look at the contractors and review proposals. I think that you've answered pretty much all of my questions; and I think we're good to move forward.

CHAIREMAN DANIEL: Just a gut-check and make sure we weren't just going around the table and not providing you with any direction that you needed. I do have just a couple of summaries. I think it is incumbent upon the states to recognize the specific economic consequences of a specific action the commission takes.

Being familiar with the council process, they're looking at the federal waters; and they're not really distinguishing – they do distinguish between states, but they're really looking at it from a more holistic standpoint; whereas, we're looking at stocks throughout their range; but as individual state caucuses, we have a specific interest in our individual state, obviously. Some of these management actions are going to be more or less proportionate to the individual states.

I think it is important for us as individual states to bring those issues to the table, recognizing that maybe the CESS may not be able to give the level of complexity, the level of detail that you believe may be necessary for the decision-making process; so that we don't run into the problems that we're run into in the past where you didn't really understand these economic impacts that are going to occur.

Well, I think to some degree that is our responsibility to try to make sure that we bring those to the table if we're not seeing it done to our satisfaction. Just a suggestion. Nothing further on that issue; we've provided our guidance to the CESS folks; and obviously we will hear more in future meetings on moving forward with that.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF COMMENTS FOR THE HMS SHARK DRAFT AMENDMENT 6

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The next item on the agenda is a review and consideration of comments for the HMS Shark Draft Amendment 6. Karyl Brewster-Geisz us here from the HMS Section to provide us with an overview of that amendment. This is an opportunity for us to provide comments.

MS. KARYL K. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everybody. As Louis said, my name is Karyl Brewster-Geisz. I'm here from the National Marine Fisheries Service; and we really appreciate the opportunity to present our Amendment 6 to our FMP to you. I really you are all under a very tight time constraint, so I am going to try to go through this very fast. If I'm going too fast, let me know. In the meantime, hold on to your hats, and let's get going.

As many of you are aware, over the past few years our shark fishermen have faced a lot of issues. Some of these issues are listed here. These challenges that they have faced have caused a number of shark fishermen to leave the fishery. What we are trying to do in

Amendment 6 is address some of these issues and allow for the shark fishermen to be able to make some profits, hopefully at least.

We are also trying to, however, continue rebuilding overfished shark species along with preventing overfishing. In addition, Amendment 6 considers two of the most recent stock assessments. These stock assessments were on bonnethead and sharpnose sharks. The assessments found that both of these two species have two stocks, one in the Gulf of Mexico and one in the Atlantic.

For bonnethead sharks, for various reasons the assessment results were rejected, so we have an unknown status for that species; whereas, for sharpnose sharks, the status is not overfished and no overfishing is occurring within the Atlantic. Moving on to the alternatives; the first group of alternatives we considered was permit stacking.

This is an idea that was raised by shark fishermen early in this process for Amendment 6. Under permit stacking, if you had multiple permits, you would put them on one vessel and then could land multiple trip limits. We looked at this and decided not to move forward with any of the permit stacking alternatives.

We felt while this would be advantageous for fishermen who have multiple permits, it would have severe disadvantages for those who only have one permit. Instead we decided to move forward with commercial shark retention limit changes. A lot of fishermen and others agreed with this approach. The current trip limit is 36 large coastal sharks per trip. This is the same limit that this body has for state waters; so we would really appreciate your comments on this range of alternatives.

If you remember when we set up this retention limit back in 2008, it was set up as a balancing act with the Shark Research Fishery, trying to balance the number of sandbar dead discards within the fishery. As we increase the retention

limit, we are expecting more dead discards of sandbar sharks, we would be reducing the Shark Research Fishery Quota.

We are preferring a trip limit of 55 large coastal sharks per trip. As I said, we would really appreciate your comments on this. The next group of alternatives is something that has come up numerous times on the Shark Board. This is change between regional and subregional quotas. This is a very big hot topic.

A lot of fishermen particularly along the Atlantic want to fish at different times of the year, depending upon when the sharks happen to be in their area, regarding their migratory patterns. At the last Shark Board meeting we had a large discussion on this. I mentioned that this was coming through in here.

For the Atlantic Region and quota, we looked at a number of alternatives. For the split for subregions we looked at 33 degrees north latitude, which is the northern part of South Carolina; and we also looked at 34 degrees north latitude, which is the southern part of North Carolina. I hope I said that right.

For landings' history for large coastals, we looked from 2008 to 2013. 2008 was when all the big changes happened in the shark fishery. The trip limit went into place; fins naturally attached; regional quotas, a whole bunch of things. We tried to avoid anything that happened before those big changes.

For small coastal sharks, we only looked at two years, 2011 and 2012. There was a big amendment in 2010 that changed some small coastal issues; and then in 2011 and 2012 we had the full year of data; whereas, in 2013 we did have a closure in that fishery. In addition for the Atlantic, we are proposing to modify some of the quota linkages for small coastal sharks.

This is the overall slide of what we are proposing. That proposed line for the

subregions would be at 34 degrees north latitude; all the northern states would get approximately 20 percent of the aggregated large coastal, approximately 34 percent of the hammerhead. For the small coastal sharks, the blacknose quota turned out to be really small when we split it.

It was less than a metric ton what we are proposed is no blacknose quota for the northern states; and then for the non-blacknose small coastals about 30 percent of the quota. In the south you would have just the opposite. There was a lot of blacknose quota; so that linkage would still exist for the southern states between blacknose and non-blacknose quotas.

This group of alternatives, as I said, is a hot topic. It is something that has come up again and again at the Shark Board meeting; and we'd really appreciate comments from all of the states on this. We have already been working closely with some of Louis' staff, who have been asking about how we came up with these numbers.

We are double-checking all the calculations and would be happy to work with other states on the numbers. In addition to all of the regional splits and the quotas and how we've split that, we're also looking at adjusting the total allowable catch and the overall quota for small coastal sharks based on those state assessments. We are proposing to maintain the current base quota. We considered similar things for the Gulf. I am not going to go over those with you; so I'm assuming most of you aren't interested.

The last group of alternatives have to do with vessel upgrading restrictions. We put these in place back in 1999 when we did limited access. Since then with the trip limits, we are think we'd no longer the upgrading restrictions, so we are proposing to remove them. The comment period for this proposed rule ends on April 3rd.

We are hoping to have it effective this coming summer, so that is when the trip limits, the subregions, the new quotas would all go into place. We have a number of public hearings; so if you continue to have questions beyond what you might have here, feel free to go to the public hearings. I am here if any of you have questions or discussion points. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Questions for Karyl? No questions or concerns? I'm not going to let you off the hook that easy. Yes, sir.

MR. JIM ESTES: The subregional quotas, I think I saw the large coastal sharks that used data from 2008 to 2013; is that correct?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: That is correct.

MR. ESTES: And those years, if I remember right, we had different opening dates; is that correct?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: That is also correct; so some of those years we opened early in the year in January and others we opened in June and July.

MR. ESTES: Is there any way to adjust those numbers to make them more equal?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: We felt we had a good range since some of the time we opened earlier in the season, which meant those fishermen who would prefer to fish early had the opportunity, and those fishermen who fished later in the season had the opportunity when it did open late, so we feel like we have a good mix. If you can think of another way that we could look at it, we would be more than happy to consider that.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, I guess a couple of comments. Concerns to some degree is that those fishermen that chose to fish earlier had areas to fish; and North Carolina, we did not have the choice to fish because the area was closed; so that is an issue. I do appreciate the

work that the agency has done with our staff looking at the different ways in which the sharks are landed and the weights.

I suspect that if modifications need to be made, they will be made; and that may adjust the northern area quota, which certainly impacts the North Carolina and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery. Recognizing that the blacknose sharks do tend to be caught more in Florida and having that quota allocated exclusively to Florida and not having that linkage with small coastals in the North Carolina/Mid-Atlantic Region is I think a good move. That does protect our small coastal fishery, which I think it does in the northern region; so that is very positive, I think.

One issue that has come up is the definition – and I believe this is in our ASMFC Plan – is the short line that is allowed to be 500 yards and 50 hooks and whether or not there is opportunity either at the state level or the ASMFC level to modify that short-line definition. Since the new trip limits may be 55 sharks, it is going to be hard to catch 55 sharks on 50 hooks.

We need to look at that; and whether that is an issue that needs to be handled at the ASMFC Plan Level or at the federal level or if that is just something that the states can make a modification to, there needs to be some clarification on that. That may have impacts at least in North Carolina and Virginia and I would certainly think in the southern areas as well if you're using short lines. If you could clarify that, that would be great.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Our FMP does not define how many hooks are on the longline. The 50-hook I believe is in the ASMFC Plan.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Yes; it is us; so that is something that we probably need to look into to make some modifications in our shark plan to provide more leniency going from a limit of 36 large coastals to 55 large coastals. The gear doesn't match up anymore, if that makes sense.

I'm wracking my brain trying to remember the other issues.

This is always such a complicated issue when you're dealing with sharks. It is positive to have seen the bonnethead and the sharpnose assessments come back good. That does provide for a lot of opportunities in our nearshore coastal waters; and it does provide for some bycatch.

I think one of the questions – certainly, we just want to make certain that the allocation is fairly distributed between the northern and southern region and the difficulties in gutted weight versus whole weight, those types of issues are dealt with and we get to the bottom of those issues before we go to the final rule. I'm not sure what the commission and board might want to do in terms of submitting any comments on this. It sounds like to me that some of the issues really are more issues we need to deal with in our ASMFC Plan. Rob.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: I guess I just had a question first. Was it an indication that even though the bonnethead assessment said not overfished and overfishing not occurring, it was rejected; is that what you indicated?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: That is correct; the result of the bonnethead assessment was not accepted. That is because the way the bonnethead assessment was done is it looked at the overall species and not the two individual stocks.

MR. O'REILLY: So what is the remedy for that?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: We hope to do a benchmark for bonnethead at some point in the future. We have a lot of shark species that we need to assess and at this point that assessment is not yet scheduled.

MR. O'REILLY: So the 20 percent north of the demarcation line; how does that stand relative to what the landings have been over the last

ten years? You may have described that, but I'm not sure.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: That 20 percent was based off the average landings from 2008 to 2013. That has been how much the northern portion has been landing of the quota.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Anything else on the ever-popular shark fishery? Seeing none; is there interest in submitting comments on Amendment 6 from the Policy Board? Seeing none; we will move on. I would encourage those individual states that have an interest in the fishery to review this with your staff and submit comments as necessary. I want to thank Karyl for being here and providing the information that we reviewed today.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE
2015 WEAKFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: With that, we will move on to review and consider approval of the 2015 Weakfish Stock Assessment Terms of Reference; and Katie will lead us through that discussion.

DR. KATIE DREW: These are based, really, on the standard generic ASMFC Terms of Reference, so I will go through them fairly quickly. Just a reminder; the purpose of the TORs is to guide the technical committee and the stock assessment subcommittee in developing the assessment and guide the review panel in reviewing it to make sure that we hit the important biological questions that we have to answer without constraining us too tightly to a particular method or approach.

We have one set for the technical committee and stock assessment subcommittee and one set for the peer review panel. For the assessment, we are going to start out with characterizing the precision and the accuracy of the fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data used in the assessment; making sure we

describe the data sources; making sure we justify the inclusion or elimination of any of those data sources.

We are going to review evidence for constant or recent systematic changes in natural mortality; predator/prey dynamics; productivity; and/or discard mortality. This one is special for weakfish because this has always been a big concern for this species; so we wanted make sure that we got the issue of natural mortality on the TORs here.

We're going to develop models to estimate population parameters such as fishing mortality, biomass and abundance as well as biological reference points; and we're going to make sure we analyze the model performance with appropriate diagnostics. We are going to characterize the uncertainty of the model estimates and of the biological or empirical reference points.

We're going to perform retrospective analyses to assess the magnitude and direction of the retrospective patterns and any implications on the assessment results. We will recommend stock status as it relates to those reference points if those reference points are available. For example, is the stock below the biomass threshold or is F above the F threshold?

We are going to develop detailed short- and long-term research recommendations as well as highlighting the improvements that need to be made by the next benchmark stock assessment; and we will recommend timing of the next benchmark assessment relative to the biology and current management of the species. That is for the assessment.

The peer review panel is basically going to just go through and evaluate all the work that we have done. They will evaluate the data collection that we presented as well the treatment of the fishery-independent and dependent data. They will evaluate the evidence for those changes in natural mortality;

evaluate the methods and models used to estimate model parameters; as well as evaluating the diagnostic analyses and the methods used to characterize uncertainty in the stock assessment; as well as ensuring that the implications of uncertainty are clearly stated.

If a minority report has been filed, they will review that minority report and the associated analyses and make recommendations on whether or not that should be used in management. They will recommend the best estimates of stock biomass, abundance and exploitation or specify alternative management measures if they do not approve the measures that we used.

They evaluate the choice of reference points and the methods used to estimate them as well as recommend stock status based on those methods or alternative methods. They will review the research recommendations that we present as well as provide their own recommendations to improve the reliability of future assessments.

They will recommend timing of the next benchmark assessment as well; and they will prepare a peer review panel report on these terms of reference. That covers everything that we and they will be doing for this assessment.

MR. MILLER: Katie, I did not hear any plans for considering spatial considerations. We have listened to Louis telling us how many weakfish there are in North Carolina and how few there are up north we're very familiar with. We've always treated this as a single stock and maybe it is time to relook at that particular aspect of the biology of the fish. I didn't hear anything in that regard in terms of the terms of reference. Thank you.

DR. DREW: You are right; it is not specifically a term of reference. However, we have certainly received that input from our chair as well and it is something the technical committee is already in the process of working on. It the board

wishes to make it explicit in the terms of reference, I think we can work something out for that. I think it is sort of covered under evaluate the available fishery-independent and dependent data and looking at some of the spatial concerns there. It is something the technical committee is considering and working on.

MR. O'REILLY: I think the terms of reference for the stock assessment subcommittee and for the peer review panel are fine; and I'm glad to see that after a bit of a delay this is finally going forward. I think it is really important. As I mentioned a couple of years ago, just because there is a beleaguered stock, it doesn't mean the commission doesn't want to have the best information possible while even a slight rebuilding that may be starting blossoms a little bit more.

I think it is really important. On the stock discrimination issue, I did read that there may be some studies in the future to look at that. I know there are past studies that Shepherd and Grimes did a study where they determined there were three stocks with a split at the bay and then a split at Ocean City, I think it was.

There was also a VIMS PhD candidate that did a study, and, of course, there was the John Graves approach with mitochondrial DNA. I think if anything happens in the future, it has to be something that is a little bit more. Dr. Jones from ODU has done work along with Simon Thorrold, who is now with Woods Hole. There have been a number of studies.

I think we can look at those again as we get through this assessment and maybe see what else is needed and maybe pull back that information so the subcommittee at least has it to look at if it is not available now. There have been a number of studies. The other thing I wanted to mention is the board was unable, I understand that, with all conditions that were going on. I did have two questions and maybe they're not something the Policy Board does,

but I'm not sure which group appoints the PRT, I guess is one question?

MS. TONI KERNS: The board normally nominates and approves the PRT members. We can do that through an e-mail vote. We will have to do the FMP Review through an e-mail vote as well because we had that on the agenda prior to the slashing and burning of boards and agenda items. We can do that there or at the next board meeting, Rob.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you; that will be fine. I did want to mention that the reason I'm bringing that up is because we're heading towards a situation where it is going to be very important to have an engaged PRT as one thing; and we also still have that Addendum II, which still is referenced and maybe that needs some change as well. That is why I brought it up.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Just from my perspective – and I have brought this up numerous times – I'm aware of the data that are available and the studies that have been done. I'm not sure that they're fully answering the question just because of what we are seeing in the South Atlantic. Certainly, I think there should be information from SEAMAP and information from the other southern states as to what they're seeing. What I'm hearing anecdotally is very positive in the South Atlantic.

What I'm seeing firsthand in North Carolina is really nothing short of remarkable the number of fish and the size distribution of fish that are occurring in our area. I'm not making these statements and claims in order to try to harvest more fish. My big concern at this point are the discards that we're seeing and how reliable any future assessment is going to be when I know that the one fish and the one hundred pound bycatch allowance is resulting in tremendous quantities of discards, particularly in our recreational fishery.

We are working on a for-hire logbook right now; but one of the main focuses that folks have

been responding back to us on from the for-hire sector is, well, if we're able to show you in our logbooks that we're catching and releasing over a hundred gray trout in any single trip while fishing for speckled trout, is that going to help us, is that going to give you the information you need to go to ASMFC and try to relax some of these restrictions so that we can go and make a trip on them and leave them alone?

It has been a problem in North Carolina for several years now. Something is going on north and south of Hatteras. There is no doubt in my mind that something is happening; so whether or not we can parse it out in the stock assessment in a formal term of reference or a formal review by the technical committee is going to provide us with any specific information.

There needs to be some level of ability to take these issues into account and try to avoid some of this waste that is occurring. I hope you guys start seeing them up north and some of those fish move up there, but they seem to be staying south of Hatteras and not moving into the area north. That just tends to suggest to me that you've got separate populations.

I've always thought there were. It makes sense with the closure south of Hatteras to fly nets, with all the bycatch reduction devices that have been implemented by the South Atlantic states; you'd to have seen some differences. Why you're not seeing good recruitment in producer areas north of North Carolina, I don't even have a clue as to why that may be. It is a big issue for us and I appreciate the board's indulgence in letting me go off on a little bit of a tangent there.

I'm encouraged by the move forward, the terms of reference and the technical committee's review of this and hope we will have something that we can maybe start to answer some of these questions in the near term. If there is no further comment or questions regarding the terms of reference, we will need a motion to

approve the terms of reference to move forward. Is there such a motion?

MR. O'REILLY: **Yes; I will move to approve the terms of reference for the stock assessment subcommittee for weakfish as well as for the peer review panel for weakfish.**

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Motion from Rob O'Reilly and a second by Roy Miller to approve the terms of reference. Any discussion on the motion as it is put up on the board? Is it all right if we just strike the word "subcommittee", Rob, for clarification?

MR. O'REILLY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any discussion on the motion? Any objection to the motion? **Seeing none; the motion carries.**

ADJOURNMENT

Is there any other business to come before the Policy Board? Seeing none; we stand adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 o'clock a.m., February 4, 2015.)