

**Data Collection Committee**  
**October 17, 2016**  
**Greg Stunz – Chair**

*NFWF For-Hire Pilot Program*

Mr. Gill gave a presentation (**Tab F, No. 4**) summarizing the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) For-Hire Pilot Program. The objective of this program is to use electronic logbooks to report catch and effort information of for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico. The program uses CLS America reporting software developed for this project. To date, 234 vessels have voluntarily participated in the program. The program has been effective and several methods to improve software including ease of use and data quality have resulted from this pilot program. Mr. Gill stated that the intent is for this program to serve as building block to implement electronic reporting for the federally permitted for-hire fleet.

*Generic For-Hire Reporting Amendment*

Staff provided a summary of the Technical Committee meeting (**Tab F, No. 5a**) recommendations about data elements that should be considered in the proposed for-hire electronic reporting program. Staff explained that the list of recommended elements were identified as ‘essential’ elements and the timing of anticipated reporting (i.e., during hail-out or hail-in) was included for each variable. The Committee was in agreement with this list; however, requested that the number of passengers be added to the list of essential elements.

Staff reviewed the Generic Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements document (**Tab F, No. 5b**) including the Actions and Preferred Alternatives. Staff reviewed comments and recommendations from the ad-hoc Red Snapper Charter For-Hire (**Tab B, No. 10b**) and Reef Fish APs (**Tab B, No. 13**). The ad-hoc Charter For-Hire supported the current, Preferred Alternatives for Actions 1 and 3, but recommended Alternative 2 for Action 4 that would require vessel operators to submit fishing records via NMFS approved hardware/software with minimum archived GPS capabilities that provides vessel position. The Reef Fish AP supported the current, preferred alternatives in all four Actions. They requested that a backup option be available in the event of VMS/hardware failure and that options for VMS funding be explored.

Staff reviewed public comments received during the September 28, 2016 webinar as well as written comments submitted through our website. Staff also reviewed the comments from the Law Enforcement Committee. The Committee recognized the benefits of hail-in requirements for the purpose of data collection, but did not recommend the hail-in requirement for law enforcement purposes. The Committee supports the Council’s Preferred Alternative 4 in Action 4 that requires VMS that is permanently affixed to the vessel.

The Committee recommended that staff expand the discussion in the document to clarify the need for a backup system in the event of VMS/hardware failure and clarify the role of the Council in reviewing the final plan before implementation.

*Cost Analysis and Reporting Requirements of Commercial Electronic Reporting Program*

Dr. Ponwith gave a presentation summarizing a commercial e-logbook pilot program. Dr. Ponwith stated that this is a voluntarily program that aims to transition the fleet from paper-based to electronic logbooks. She stated that preliminary feedback has been positive and that the Council may want to consider developing an amendment to implement mandatory electronic reporting for commercial vessels.

Madam Chair, this concludes my report.