

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Roosevelt Hotel  
New York, New York  
October 23, 2018**

**Approved February 6, 2019**

Proceedings of the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board Meeting October 2018

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1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of proceedings of August 2018** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move that the Board recommend to the Policy Board to submit a letter to NOAA requesting a delay on further action on the Block Island Transit Zone until such time as the Board has an opportunity to review the Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment and formalize a recommendation** (Page 11). Motion by Dave Borden; second by Ritchie White. Motion carried (Page 12).
4. **Move to approve the nomination of Steven Smith (DE) to the Atlantic Striped Bass Advisory Panel** (Page 16). Motion by John Clark; second by Tom Fote. Motion carried (Page 16).
5. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 16).

Proceedings of the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board Meeting October 2018

**ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members**

Nick Popoff, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Andy Shiels, PA, proxy for J. Arway (AA)
G. Ritchie White, NH (GA)	John Clark, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)
Doug Grout, NH (AA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Ed O'Brien, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Rep. Sarah Peake, MA (LA)	Russell Dize, MD (GA)
Mike Armstrong, MA, proxy for D. Pierce (AA)	Robert Brown, Gov. Appt. proxy
Sara Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	David Blazer, MD (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Mike Luisi, MD, Administrative proxy
Bob Ballou, RI, proxy for J. McNamee (AA)	Bryan Plumlee, VA (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Sen. Monty Mason, VA (LA)
Matt Gates, CT, proxy for P. Aarrestad (AA)	Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for S. Bowman (AA)
Sen. Craig Miner, CT (LA)	Steve Murphey, NC (AA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, Administrative proxy
Maureen Davidson, NY, proxy for J. Gilmore (AA)	Michael Blanton, NC, proxy for Rep. Steinburg (LA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Martin Gary, PRFC
Michael Falk, NY, proxy for Sen. Boyle (LA)	Derek Orner, NMFS
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)	Mike Millard, USFWS
Heather Corbett, NJ, proxy for L. Herrighty (AA)	

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

**Ex-Officio Members**

**Staff**

Robert Beal	Max Appelman
Toni Kerns	Jessica Kuesel
Katie Drew	Mike Schmidtke

**Guests**

Robert Brown, MD Watermens Assn.	John McMurray, American Saltwater Guides Assn., NY
Peter Burns, NMFS	Nichola Meserve, MA DMF
Joe Cimino, NJ DEP	Allison Murphy, NOAA
Caitlin Craig, NYS DEC	Thomas Pirraglea, Bayside, NY
Phil Edwards, RI DEM	Jamie Pollack, Shark Angels, NY
George Jackman, Riverkeeper	Julia Socrates, NYS DEC
Jon Hare, NOAA	Jack Travelstead, CCA
Phil Langley, PRFC	Charles Witek, W. Babylon, NY
Arnold Leo, Town of E. Hampton, NY	Chris Wright, NMFS
Chip Lynch, NOAA	Douglas Zemeckis, Rutgers Univ.
Dan McKiernan, MA DMF	

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Terrace Ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel, New York, New York; Tuesday, October 23, 2018, and was called to order at 2:45 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Mike Armstrong.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIRMAN MIKE ARMSTRONG: Welcome everyone to the Striped Bass Board. I'm Mike Armstrong. We have an hour and 15 minutes to get our job done here.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I would like to call it to order, and our first order of business is approval of the agenda; you all have it, any changes? Seeing none; we'll consider it approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: You all have the minutes from the August, 2018 meeting; any changes, any objection to approving the minutes? They are approved.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We now have a ten minute period maximum of public comment. We have a number of people signed up. Keep in mind; this is for things that are not on the agenda. Please limit your comments not to the EEZ discussion in particular. If that was what you wanted to talk about, please disenroll yourself from the signup sheet, and you might get a chance later in the meeting to discuss it, first up Robert Brown. If all the speakers could limit to about two minutes, so we can move things along. Thank you.

MR. ROBERT T. BROWN: Robert T. Brown; President of the Maryland Watermen's Association. I've handed out some tags for our rockfish that we use in Maryland. I would like for you all to just look at them. I need them back at the end of the day; as I've got to

be accountable for all of them.

At the top of it, it gives you the year 2018. ITQ stands for individual transferrable quota. It has Maryland on it, striped bass, SB is for striped bass, and sale, and it's got my reference number on all these. I just wanted you all to look at them. The tagging of striped bass in Maryland started in the mid-1990s; and has improved it since.

Back in 2009, 3,326,096 tags were issued. By 2012 it dropped to 1,295,800 tags issued. In 2013, the amount of tags that were issued was 781,000 tags; some reasons were a drop in quota, and a reduction of the many tags that were being distributed and unused. In 2015, individual transferrable quotas, ITQs were implemented.

Also, a quota reduction of 25 percent for the coast and 20.5 percent for the Chesapeake Bay, and only 453,110 tags were used and has been approximately the same since 2015 to the present day. This contributes to our accountability and compliance. To go along with this, Maryland fishermen tag the striped bass before landing; and the fish are then weighed and counted by an approved check-in station before sale, recorded on their permit card, and then the check-in station reports the information to the Department of Natural Resources on a separate form. This is our method of checks and balances. The fisherman after the season is over returns his permit card with all the unused tags to the Department of Natural Resources for validation. This ensures that all tags are accounted for.

Some states are now shipping into Maryland's striped bass over its maximum size of 36 inches. My first thought was this was a violation of the Lacy Act. However, according to law enforcement, this does not apply if the fish where it is caught is legal. But Maryland has a possession law; but this comes under interstate commerce.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Officials says they cannot stop this. If so, why can't Maryland ship legally caught, tagged striped bass with a minimum size of 18 inches to states with a minimum size of 28 inches or to a state that does not permit the sale of wild caught tagged striped rock fish. I just don't understand. You know how can they send these fish oversized to us; and we can't send what's legally caught in our state to them?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mr. Brown, if you could finish up, please. I'm sorry.

MR. BROWN: Maryland Department of Natural Resources has done all it can to ensure that striped bass are legal that go to the market. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Jamie Pollock. Two minutes, please.

MR. JAMIE POLLACK: Got it. Hi, my name is Jamie Pollack and I am Executive Director of Shark Angels; a nonprofit based here in New York City. Our mission is to protect sharks through advocacy, action, and legislation. All of our members care about the status of sharks, the laws pertaining to them, and the fisheries surrounding them. Menhaden is one such fishery. Forage fish is the backbone of every large predator up and down the east coast.

New York's water-based ecotourism depends on the abundance of forage; whether that's fishing, whale watching, or my favorite scuba diving. We take divers to meet sharks in the wild off the coast of Montauk and Rhode Island. A healthy ocean provides income for lots of businesses. I would like to remind the Commission on your action regarding menhaden; and I am holding you all accountable to develop ecological reference points in two years. I will be watching.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Phil Langley.

MR. PHIL L. LANGLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I'll be brief. My name is Phil Langley; I sit on the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and Maryland Sportfish Advisory Commission. I want to thank you, Mr. Chair and the Board for allowing me to speak today. I would also like to thank the Board in supporting the conservation equivalency measures that Maryland took this year utilizing a circle hook.

I believe this was a step in the right direction for conservation. It will benefit our fishery in the future; especially with one of the largest year classes in the last ten years, the 2015 year class entering the fishery. I don't know what the future will bring; however, I think this type of management tool being utilized is important now and in the future for our fishery. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you. George Jackman.

MR. GEORGE JACKMAN: Hello everyone. My name is George Jackman; I'm the Habitat Restoration Manager for Riverkeeper. As you well know, the Hudson River forms the second largest estuary on the east coast of the United States, and is the second largest spawning ground for striped bass.

The Hudson River faces an existential threat right now. There are plans to build storm surge barriers in front of the New York Harbor. If those barriers were to be built, even with the gates open tidal flow would be restricted by 30 percent at a minimum. The Thames River, it was expected that they would be closed once or twice a year, were closed 50 times in 2014.

We believe that it is the existential threat of all migratory fish in the Hudson River. In addition, we do feel that we are also putting a lot of work into removing dams and working with state agencies; to protect river herring and shad in the Hudson River. We feel that the forage fish need to be managed at an

ecosystem level; because if the menhaden and the sea herring are not managed correctly, the predators would be driven to our river herring, which are down anywhere from 95 to 99 percent.

These fish are in precipitous decline and we have to try and conserve them before it's too late. There are many threats facing the Hudson River right now. The fishery is unstable; climate change, the temperature is up two degrees, so this will all affect striped bass and the striped bass need to be sustained by their forage fishes. That is about all I have to say right now.

The last thing, I was a New York City cop for 21 years. I left that job so I can help protect the fish. I grew up on the Great South Bay. Most of the fish are gone; the winter flounder are gone, the river herring are gone. As you pressure the forage base there will be nothing to sustain the charismatic species. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you. John McMurray.

MR. JOHN McMURRAY: I plan to use my two minutes wisely here. I would like to speak on behalf of the American Saltwater Guides Association today; but also from the perspective as a charterboat captain in the New York area. I want to touch on that forage fish component too; because I want the Board to understand how critical menhaden is to the striped bass fishery in New York.

I would go so far as to say the striped bass fishery, at least my fishery, lives and dies based on menhaden aggregations. There has been a lot of talk around this table about well, striped bass could eat other things. We have a pretty good aggregation of bay anchovies right now, and we have some menhaden, but not a terrible amount of menhaden. I could take any one of your guys out tomorrow and show you the amount of life on those bay

anchovies versus the amount of life on those menhaden; it's like night and day. Do you want a healthy and abundant striped bass fishery? You must have a healthy and abundant menhaden fishery. Not simply healthy from a yield or a maximum sustainable yield context, but from an ecosystem context, and also from a geographic context. Menhaden absolutely drive time and area bites for striped bass; and it's really important to our fishery in New York. The New York fishing community was not very happy about the big industrial boats being off our coast this year.

I don't know how much they took; but I think efforts to minimize the amount of harvest, I think they're inaccurate. I know that we don't have the menhaden aggregations that we had at this time during the prior three years. I think it's too early to tell whether or not we're going to get them; but I think it's something that this Board really does need to consider. That is really all I have. Thanks, I appreciate it.

**REVIEW OF THE ADVANCE NOTICE OF  
PROPOSED RULE REVIEW ANPR REGARDING  
LIFTING THE BAN ON ATLANTIC STRIPED  
BASS FISHING IN THE FEDERAL BLOCK  
ISLAND SOUND TRANSIT ZONE**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you, moving on to Agenda Item 4; which is the Review of the Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making for lifting the ban in a portion of the EEZ. Max, you have some breaking news?

MR. MAX APPELMAN: Yes, I just wanted to make the Board aware that we received comment late last night from Congressman Zeldin of New York that was e-mailed to all of you. If you did not receive it in your e-mail, I do have a couple limited copies of that comment.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think what we need to do here is consider sending a letter to NMFS; the charge in the advanced notice is

that they're moving this forward, or thinking about moving it forward with input from ASMFC. We are the input for ASMFC. We need to consider whether we're going to send a comment. The alternative is you can comment as individual states in addition to us commenting. We'll talk about that. But I want Derek to sort of walk us through where we are and the timelines and that sort of thing.

MR. DEREK ORNER: I just had a couple slides to kind of sense a little bit of background and what exactly is in the ANPR. Then we can have a little bit more of a discussion amongst the Board. The ANPR is Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making. A quick little background, the harvest and possession of striped bass is prohibited in the entire coastal EEZ; with the exemption of a defined area in the Block Island Transit Sound, or transit area.

This was established in 1990. Striped bass caught legally in adjoining state fisheries can be transported through the Block Island Transit Zone; with a caveat that the vessel has to remain in continuous transit, and they cannot be fishing in the zone. Here is a quick map of the zone itself. The area we're talking about is from Montauk Point, New York across to Block Island, and then from Block Island up to Point Judith up in Rhode Island.

The area in green is what's considered the Block Island Transit Zone. At both the May meeting, I brought up some of the language that was in our Omnibus Appropriations Act in regards to aquaculture in two different items that were identified, as far as us looking at the Block Island Transit Zone, as well as the entire coastwide EEZ.

In August I brought up the specifics here on the Block Island Transit Zone. The language that says that NOAA in consultation with the Commission to consider lifting the ban on striped bass fishing in the federal Block Island Transit Zone. That is what I brought up back in August; which led to the advanced notice

of proposed rulemaking that published October 4. I need to make clear that the ANPR is not a proposed rule; there are no regulations associated with the notice, it is basically providing background information to make the public aware of what a proposal could look like, and it's out for public comment.

Right now we're looking at removing the current prohibition on recreational striped bass fishing in the Transit Zone only. We're not proposing to allow commercial fishing. According to Executive Order 13449, prohibits the sale of striped bass caught in the EEZ. Therefore, it would run afoul if we allowed commercial fishing in the transit zone.

One of the questions that were brought up at the August meeting was the timeframe of when we're going to have the ANPR out. As I mentioned it came out October 4. It is opened for 45 days; that way it allows for an open public comment period to the annual meeting. Public comment period closes November 19.

Whatever the Board decision here today, as far as providing comment, letters, you know the deadline to submit that into NOAA Fisheries is the 19th of November. With that I'll turn it over to I guess Max, maybe if he wants to run through maybe what some of the options could be, or I'll address and take any questions from the Board.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Are there any questions for Derek? Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: What is the timeline after November 19?

MR. ORNER: Good question. It depends on a number of factors; the next step in the process, if we're taking it all the way through, would be to develop a proposal that would go out in the Federal Register Notice. That is where an analysis and environmental assessment, or an environmental impact statement would be conducted.



The timing could be a little strained; because I would want to work with Gary Shepherd in particular up in the northeast, who is involved in the assessment. But the process would be to get that proposal out for public comment. I would assume, or maybe hope that that rulemaking would be out at the same time we have a Commission meeting week. There is not guarantee on that; but you would be looking at either February or the May timeframe.

MR. REID: Just another timeline question. Striped bass stock assessment, when is that due?

DR. KATIE DREW: It's going to peer review at the end of November; and will be presented to the Board in February.

MR. REID: Okay that's this November.

DR. DREW: Yes, this November.

MR. REID: All right, so we would have that for our February meeting.

DR. DREW: That is correct.

MR. REID: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Are there any other questions for Derek? Max.

MR. APPELMAN: Just to reiterate what Chairman Armstrong pointed out at the start of this agenda item; that there are really three routes that the Board can go with this information. Clearly NMFS has put this ANPR out. They're looking for some comments. The Board can provide its comment collectively.

To do that basically I would more or less jot down the comments made around the table; and go back home and write that into a letter for you all to review, and then we would submit that by the deadline. Alternatively, if

discussion around the table shows that maybe it's more appropriate for each state to submit their own comment; that can happen, or both can happen.

Sometimes there is a Board specific opinion that is put forward, and also state specific opinions put forward. Just want to make that clear that we do need the Board to come to consensus on one of these three routes; other than that I will give it to you guys to open deliberation.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I think we need to respond. I'll ask. Is there consensus that we need to respond in some form from this body; as opposed to individual states? I mean we can certainly do it individually; but we're representing ASMFC to NMFS in this case. Again, we don't know what that letter is going to say. Ritchie.

MR. G. RITCHIE WHITE: Question. Could the response be to ask NMFS to delay their decision until after we have the stock assessment; because I'm hearing there might be some less than positive news with the stock assessment?

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: I absolutely thing that's a way we could go. Honestly, we don't have the time, I don't think to reach consensus on whether this is a good thing, a bad thing. I don't see a universal letter coming from us in that respect. If you feel otherwise, please speak up. That suggestion might be a route we want to go. David Borden.

MR. DAVID V. BORDEN: I share Ritchie's concern. Given the proximity of the stock assessment to this whole consideration, I think it's ill advised to do anything other than submit a letter to NOAA, and basically recommend that they delay action on this particular item until the Board has had a chance to fully digest the stock assessment.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom Fote, and

then I've got Eric and Ray and Dennis.

MR. THOMAS P. FOTE: I think I agree with Ritchie and David. Understand this has always been a strong issue in New Jersey. I happened to look over, and I pulled up my '95 newsletter from December of '95, and just said let me see what I wrote years ago when we discussed opening the EEZ. Then I saw my Congressional testimony and an article by Gary Caputi. If some of you get a chance take a look at it. It's posted up on the JCAA webpage. My concern here is that three years ago or four years ago, I'm trying to think when the last addendum for striped bass came out. There was a lot of concern from the northern states about what the stocks were doing. There was a big push by New York, Massachusetts, and I think Rhode Island, to basically go to one fish, maybe even New England.

From my understanding, I got the same word as Ritchie that this stock assessment is not showing any good, so why would we propose opening the EEZ at this time? I can't see it. I think the only letter you can wind up supporting here is that we really postpone the decision until we basically see what the stock assessment actually says.

If it isn't any better news than the last time, we shouldn't be putting more pressure on striped bass. I mean it's an important fish up and down the coast. Maryland last time had to take the brunt of some of this; and there have been a lot of problems going on in Maryland because of this. Now the restrictions you put, so we're going to put further restrictions.

Why are we opening the EEZ? In that Congressional testimony that I put in, '95 was like looking at old home week. I hate to say this, Larry Sims, Jerry Schill, and myself. I think it's the only time we were all in agreement on the same subject of keeping the EEZ closed. I know if Larry was still around now he would be still supporting me

on that; and I know Jerry still is.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Eric Reid.

MR. REID: The reason I asked about the timeline was because of the discussion that was just had in the Law Enforcement Committee. Max, do you want to say what it was or do you want me to give you my opinion of what was said? Basically what I took away from that discussion, which only happened an hour or so ago was that although it may ease enforcement, capabilities for enforcement in the Block Island Sound. What was said very clearly was that the Law Enforcement Committee was concerned that the stock itself could afford the extra fishing pressure in that zone. Is that pretty much what they said?

MR. APPELMAN: My take and you can correct me if I'm wrong. I agree that they felt that from an enforcement standpoint, whether they kept it open or closed it doesn't matter. They're enforcing it now. If they open it up it might ease up any burden on them to continue to enforce the area. But they were concerned first and foremost of the biology of the species.

They were concerned that this might open up added fishing pressure on them. Those were their comments in my mind. Whether they knew what kind of pressure they could sustain. I don't think that was really brought up at all; just that first and foremost biology, science should be at the front of it.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Eric.

MR. REID: Okay, so with that being said. I think it would be a mistake to make any determination on this EEZ opening before the benchmark is completed. I would suggest that not only do we send a letter saying that; that the states do the same.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ray Kane.

MR. RAYMOND W. KANE: Yes, I'm going to

agree with my other Commission members on this. I have one question; it's to Kate. This benchmark that we'll be looking at in February, you know we delay this until we at least see the benchmark. The new form of MRIP numbers is incorporated into this upcoming benchmark assessment?

DR. DREW: Yes that is correct.

MR. KANE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Dennis Abbott.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: I guess a question for Derek would be; did you not consider the fact that there was an assessment going on that might affect our decision making? The second question I would have separate from that is; are there other areas along the coast that could feel similarly affected by proximity of islands to the coast, and therefore be seeking similar relief as the relief that is requested along Block Island Sound?

MR. ORNER: To answer your first question. Yes, we did consider it. Not to say it was more of a political push; but there was a bit of a push to look at it now. The second bullet in the items appropriation language I didn't get into was looking at considering opening the entire coastwide EEZ upon completion and review of the benchmark assessment. That is something that we'll be looking at after the benchmark is completed.

This being kind of a smaller area and more of a regional concern, it was well we can look at that now before the assessment comes out. I don't necessarily have a response to your second one. I'm not familiar with any other smaller, regional areas. The Block Island Transit Zone is the one we're concerned with.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: David.

MR. BORDEN: I just want clarification on the February meeting. Are we going to have a full blown discussion of a benchmark then; and

are we guaranteed to get it? I know Katie; I'm asking you to put on your Carnac the Magnificent hat at this point.

DR. DREW: Well I guess we can jump ahead to the Assessment Update. We will absolutely have that document in to the SAW/SARC process in time. It will be reviewed; barring some kind of earthquake in Woods Hole. That assessment process will be complete. The timeline is set up right now that we will have the Review Panel report and the Stock Assessment Report given to you at the February Board meeting. Obviously an act of God could change this; but that is the intention, and that's the timeline we're on right now for that.

MR. BORDEN: Is the expectation that we would have the document so we could review it thoroughly; and basically develop an informed position at that point? We're not going to need any additional analyses?

DR. DREW: I mean I've never met a Board that didn't want additional analyses. But the intent is that the complete document will be available for you ahead of time as part of Board materials; so that you can take a look at that. There will be additional work and discussion for you guys; and some decisions to make on the results. But all of that material will be provided to you ahead of time.

MR. BORDEN: Mr. Chairman, while I extract that arrow out of my side. I just note that I have a draft motion for you to consider when you're ready.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, I don't think we actually need a motion; but make one anyway. Do we?

MR. APPELMAN: If your motion is about writing a letter and getting consensus on that; I don't think we need a motion. But I'm not sure what your motion is about.

MR. BORDEN: Well, all I was going to suggest

is; and I defer to staff. If this Board wants to make a recommendation to NOAA, I think they have to formalize the recommendation and submit it to the Policy Board. Is that correct, Bob? Okay so if you want to do that I think we should make a motion; and I'm happy to make that motion.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Robert.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: If there is a motion made and passed, it is a little easier to carry that forward to the Policy Board for their consideration to send a letter. We've done that a couple times already this week. If there is general consensus we can carry it forward too. It's kind of up to the will of the Board.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let's move forward.

MR. BORDEN: I'm a strong believer if we can move forward without a motion, do that in the interest of time. My suggestion is we submit that as a request to the Policy Board; basically ask them to submit a letter to NOAA requesting a suspension of any rulemaking on this issue until the Board has a chance to consider the results of the benchmark stock assessment in February.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Was that a motion or was that just a mental motion? Whatever we want?

MR. BORDEN: Whatever you want Mr. Chairman.

MR. APPELMAN: Again, if there's any opposition to doing that around this table.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: The Chair has made that just a mental motion. We have heard from north of the Mason Dixon Line, I don't want to move forward without consensus. Steve Train, did you have?

MR. STEPHEN TRAIN: I think I'm in agreement

with most of the people that spoke; but I have two questions. One, currently we prohibit the harvest of striped bass in the EEZ by both recreational and commercial. Why is only the recreational going to be exempted here? We have effort controls on both. You know a dead fish is a dead fish.

My other question is do we know what is there? Is it just a transit area for the fish like it is for the boats; traveling through to somewhere else, or is this a home to the large fish that are hanging out that might be the brood stock for the area that maybe we shouldn't be touching anyway? Do we have any data from in there?

MR. ORNER: Steve, to answer the question on why we're looking at only allowing recreational harvest is the Executive Order that was put in place a number of years ago under President Bush; prohibiting the sale of striped bass and red drum caught in the EEZ. For that reason we didn't want to get into the legalities behind it, so we are not allowing changes to the commercial.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: To your second question, I believe Eric Reid could help out on that.

MR. REID: If you could put up that chart that would be great. There is an area. The main focus of this action is an area we call the Southwest Ledge; there is a red line that southerly red line that runs from Montauk Point to the Southeast Light on Block Island, runs basically right through the Southwest Ledge. There is a navigational buoy inside of Rhode Island state waters that pretty much shows you where it is.

There are a lot of big fish that come out of there; big, it's been referred to as brood stock if you like, a lot of big fish that are caught there, so that is a concern. While I have the floor Mr. Chairman, I won't do it again I promise. There is a discussion about whether or not that line is actually the right line; if in

fact the EEZ were to open. The idea is to have access to Southwest Ledge.

Right now that line runs pretty much right through the middle of it. It would be my opinion that we would also have to redraw that line slightly; perhaps from Montauk Point to that offshore red can that's in federal waters, to the Southeast Light on Block Island, in order to actually accomplish what is proposed to be accomplished. But to answer your question, there is a lot of big fish that come out of that area, a lot of big fish.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: It's a complex question; but what we're proposing is to kick the can just a little bit further.

MR. ABBOTT: A question for Eric. How do the fish come out of that area if it's closed?

MR. REID: That's part of the problem, Mr. Abbott that's part of the problem. There is enforcement action that shows that there is effort there; documented enforcement action. There is also a portion of that ledge that is inside of state waters; so some of those fish are caught legally. But FEK, which is Fishermen's Ecological Knowledge, which has been used before, certainly indicates that the best fishing is in the Fed.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, Andy.

MR. ANDREW SHIELS: I have a question for Derek. I feel like I'm not clear on how we got here to start. The bullet item said it was part of the Federal Appropriation Omnibus Bill. Could you take us through how this actually got to the point of a Notice of Proposed Rule Making; because I feel like I don't understand how it began, and therefore when I condition my comments, when I provide a letter directly to the Secretary. I guess I want to know how we got here, who was in favor of it, and what was their purpose when it was proposed.

MR. ORNER: The Appropriations Act in 2018 had two directives for NOAA. One was in

consultation with the Commission at the completion of the benchmark assessment to review opening the coastwide EEZ. The other directive was also to work in consultation with the Commission was to look at opening up the Block Island Transit Area for fishing.

That one did not specify a timeframe or a specific need of waiting until after the assessment was completed; so we started on that one earlier, since looking at the entire coastwide EEZ will come after the benchmark. We picked up working with the Block Island Transit Sound and moving that forward now. At this point we have the ANPR, which is just putting some background information and getting it out to the public for comment. It hasn't been developed into a proposed rule at this point.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. SHIELS: Just a quick follow up. Who actually put it in to that appropriation? Who physically put that into the budget; do you know?

MR. ORNER: My understanding was Representative Zeldin. But I'm not sure, I'm not 100 percent.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Nick.

MR. POPOFF: Mr. Abbott asked the question I was going to ask; but I follow up and say if there is documented illegal behavior, it just further legitimizes waiting until assessment's done, because if you legitimize an illegal behavior it would look really bad.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Mike.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: I was trying to get through a striped bass meeting without raising my hand. Just a quick question, Derek, I thought I heard you say that after this issue is taken up that there is an intention to consider the opening of the entire EEZ. That's another rulemaking process that the Service is

considering; but you're going to wait until after the benchmark for that?

MR. ORNER: Yes that was one of the other directives from the Appropriations Act was to look at the completion of the assessment in consultation with the Commission is to review the entire coastwide EEZ.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: What I'm hearing is opening the whole EEZ, the Service wanted to wait until after the benchmark, but considered this smaller EEZ not really a resource issue, so it could move forward without the assessment. Not to put words in your mouth. You don't even have to answer. What I'm hearing is I think the Board feels that it is maybe a resource issue needs to be considered; unless you want to add to that. No. Mike.

MR. LUISI: Just a follow up to that Mr. Chairman, and you asked for some perspective from the southern states. You know I'm certainly supportive of a delay here. My only concern is that I find it hard to believe that the area we're looking at on the screen, if it were to be opened, would have that much more of an impact on a harvest. But I don't know because I don't fish there. We've heard from Eric, who I thought incriminated himself originally, but I guess he hasn't.

It's just hard for me to believe that an area the size of what we're looking at on the screen is going to have an impact down the road; when we're considering looking at assessments years in the making and making management changes based on fishing mortality and spawning stock biomass. But for the time being I think the timing is terrible of when this discussion is to be had. I'm fully supportive of waiting until we have the benchmark; so that we have a new baseline of science to base decisions on for the future.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom.

MR. FOTE: Aw I wrote 23 years ago; this is the opening of the Pandora's Box, because once you open up the EEZ for any place, it's going to open up along the whole coast. You already opened that door and why should you basically penalize other states if you're allowing it to happen in other states.

My concern again; we've used the EEZ and that was my position years ago, as a sanctuary for the big fish. You do have a lot of big fish off Rhode Island. I fished both areas years ago, and you do have big fish up there. That was the concern that we passed this addendum to go to one fish or 25 percent reduction three years ago, four years ago.

That had a strong impact on all of our states up and down the coast, to basically allow anymore harvest of fish is a concern before the benchmark, and probably going to be at the looks of this benchmark a bigger concern after the benchmark. I think we just should either make a motion to basically postpone until after we have the benchmark assessment at this time. I thought Dave was going to make the motion; because I was going to make it the first time.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: We have a mental motion on the table.

MR. FOTE: Just do the mental motion and let's move on; we're not going to come to consensus. I think that we can come to consensus on.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Let me ask the Board. Do we have consensus to write a letter saying the moving forward of however we say it, should be delayed until after the stock assessment? We can add language to concerns of stock status and the awkwardness of the timing and such. Bob Ballou.

MR. ROBERT BALLOU: I just want to make sure I understand your wording there; it's delay until the completion of the stock

assessment, and subsequent consideration of this issue by the Board. I think those two go hand in hand, and that hasn't really been stated yet.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Correct, I think that would be the intent. Are there any other comments? Let me go, before Arnold breaks his arm.

MR. ARNOLD LEO: I'm Arnold Leo; I represent the Fishing Industry of the Town of East Hampton, Long Island. This issue affects radically some of the fishermen that I represent; the charterboat industry out of Montauk. I want to be sure I understand. I think this is a question for clarification to Derek.

I believe in the first slide it said that you could transit the striped bass through the Block Island Transit Zone; but that you could not catch them there, and that you had to keep moving. Then somehow later on in the slides it said that you could catch them in that Block Island Transit Zone. Would you clarify that for me? Perhaps it would help if you showed that first slide. It might have been the second slide. It was either the first or second.

MR. APPELMAN: I'm just going to take that real quickly. This first slide shows what the current prohibition is; which is you cannot possess, catch, harvest striped bass within Block Island Sound Transit Zone, or anywhere in the EEZ.

The next set of slides was referring to information in the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking; saying what is being considered or what would be considered down the road to allow the catch and harvest of recreationally caught striped bass in the Transit Zone. The first one is again, reiterating what the current prohibition is. The second one is letting you know what is being considered down the road as a proposed change.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Anymore comments? Dennis.

MR. ABBOTT: I don't know how many years ago it was where we took up the issue of opening the EEZ. It must have been at least 10 or 12 years ago. I think we had a very close vote. I'm going to say it was if I think back, I missed the final vote because I was having my heart overhauled. But in Rhode Island I think they took a vote; and I think the vote came out 7 to 6 to keep the EEZ closed.

I think that issue was brought forward by the Commonwealth principally. I remember Paul Diodati. I think if my memory serves me correctly, anecdotally it seemed as though there was, I don't know if there was a Raytheon big deal in Massachusetts that really was pressuring to have the EEZ opened.

The debates that we had regarding the opening of the EEZ were hot and heavy; to say the least. The ASMFC position at that time was to keep it closed. I don't think we should take any action to open the EEZ at this time; based on our previous action. It just seems like it's opening Pandora's Box. While we're talking, I opened up Google Maps, and I'm looking at the ocean and I'm thinking, why can't we open up between Cape Cod and Cape Cod Bay from there to Boston? It's a transit zone between Provincetown and Boston and Plymouth, and so on and so forth. I just think that we should send a letter saying that first of all it's not proper time for us to take any action, and give this some further thought.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Clearly we have not reached consensus on whether this is a good thing or not; and that is not what this letter will say. Do we have consensus of a letter stating what we've talked about? It's not the right time to move this. Max, we'll get a letter to the Board to review. Is that how this will work? Actually, you have to go to the Policy Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: If this is approved by this Board and the Policy Board approves it; we'll draft a letter for review by the Policy Board before submitting it to NOAA Fisheries by the 19th.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Emerson.

MR. EMERSON C. HASBROUCK: After the discussion we've had on this; there are several suggestions about how to modify Dave's original mental motion. I would feel much more comfortable if we had a motion on the board so that we all knew what we were talking about.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: David, do you want to craft one?

MR. BORDEN: I've been holding my breath for 15 minutes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Well we've got seven minutes left.

**MR. BORDEN: I move that the Board, I'll say this slowly so staff can type it. I move that the Board recommend to the Policy Board to submit a letter to NOAA requesting a delay on this issue until such time as the Board has an opportunity to review the Benchmark Stock Assessment and formalize a recommendation.**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Ritchie White second; discussion. Toni.

MS. TONI KERNS: David, would it be all right if we say what this action is by saying to delay further action on the Block Island Sound Transit Zone?

MR. BORDEN: That perfection is entirely acceptable.

MS. KERNS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Discussion. Mike

Luisi.

MR. LUISI: Just another thing to add, Mr. Chairman. It may help perfect it; you may just want to put striped bass in there before benchmark.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Are there any other comments? Let me read that into the record. **Move that the Board recommend to the Policy Board to submit a letter to NOAA requesting a delay on further action on the Block Island Transit Zone until such time as the Board has an opportunity to review the Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment and formalize a recommendation.** Is there any objection to this motion; just a second, Eric Reid?

MR. REID: Sorry, I was still digesting my self-incrimination a little while ago. There are two issues in play on the Block Island Transit Zone. There is another action about the Rhode Island Transit Zone as well. This is actually opening up Block Island Sound, the EEZ and Block Island Sound to striped bass fishing.

I don't know if we have to make it clear that it is one issue or the other. It doesn't really matter to me, but as long as we know that there are two in play right now. I think this is probably fine; but just so we're not, I mean I can get confused in a big hurry. Are you good with it, Max? Never mind, I'm going back to figure out where my circle hooks are.

**CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Sounds like we're good. Any objections, we have one abstention, any objections? By consensus with one abstention; the motion passes, and we finished two minutes early for that item.**

#### **UPDATE ON NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE WINTER TAGGING PROGRAM**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Max, an Update on North Carolina Cooperative Winter Tagging Program.



MR. APPELMAN: I just wanted to since we have this Board meeting schedule, give a quick update on the North Carolina Cooperative Winter Tagging Program. I'm referring to the hook and line portion of what is commonly referred to as the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise. In short, North Carolina has been funding that program for the last few years; and is not providing funding for the immediate future, including the 2019 tagging efforts.

There was a request from the principal partners to the Executive Committee to provide some of the Plus-up Funding to support the 2019 tagging efforts. I think you'll see that at the Executive Committee meeting tomorrow morning. I'm happy to take any questions. We also have Commissioners from North Carolina and U.S. Fish and Wildlife at the table; so if there are any questions about that we'll take them, but again it is something that is going to be brought up at the Executive Committee tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Marty.

MR. MARTIN GARY: Question for either Katie or Max. If we were to lose the opportunity to perpetuate that survey this winter; could you characterize the value of the survey data, or maybe conversely say what we stand to lose if we don't conduct the survey?

DR. DREW: Good question. I think it depends a little bit on which version of the stock assessment model passes peer review. The new model that we're developing includes migration; and sort of some stock structure information, and it needs the information that we're getting from the tagging program.

Not only the North Carolina Tagging Program, but the North Carolina Tagging Program, Massachusetts and New York are very important to this; because they're tagging on the coastal population, and so understanding how those fish then mix or return to the natal

grounds is important for the movement model that we're developing and hoping to provide recommendations for.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Marty.

MR. GARY: If I could offer a comment. I know we have a lot of Commissioners at this table that are very familiar with this survey. But we also have a lot of Commissioners that are not so familiar with the survey. Not that I'm any expert; but to provide some context. If my recollection is correct this survey was initiated in 1988. This past January's survey would have been the 30th consecutive year.

In many ways from what I understand, and my own personal experience with it, this survey shadows the timeline of the story of striped bass post moratorium. Initiated in the depths of the moratorium in 1988, it has continued for 30 consecutive years following the ascension of striped bass, the restoration, and where the next benchmark stock assessment will tell us where we're going.

Along the way it has showed us a few things that I've observed; not quantitatively, but back in the early years the fish were off the North Carolina coast, and I know why North Carolina is struggling to fund it now, because the animals have now geographically shifted to the north. I see Chris nodding his head.

I understand their rationale. I didn't realize that North Carolina was actually funding, or encumbering most of the funding budgetary requirements for this. But along the way it was a trawl survey, as was indicated, and then it shifted to hook and line. My one experience with it was in 1994, and that was the seventh year they had the survey.

At that time we had representatives from many of the states, Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, most of the states were contributing staff and manpower to go down to it. That one cruise, up until that point they were tagging 6/700 fish per year. I went out

in 1994 expecting if we had a really good year we might tag 1,000 fish. We wound up tagging over 5,000 in January of 1994. I tagged over 2,100 myself, this all happened in three days.

At the time I thought I was a pretty capable field biologist; until they put me out to administrative pasture a couple years later. I guess the point I'm trying to draw is we've kind of learned along the way; and as we flash forward to the present time, now those fish are no longer along the coast. They've moved north, they've moved off the coast.

I think this survey has given us a lot of information to kind of tell the story of what we've seen over the years. It's one of the few data points we see for the fish on their wintering grounds; and now out in the EEZ. Then paradoxically, we're looking at a situation where we might open the EEZ, but potentially not fund the only survey that's telling us some information about the fish that are wintering in the EEZ.

If you haven't already figured it out, I'm just a strong advocate for this survey. I hope there is some way we can summon the resources, the collective resources of the Board and the Commission to keep this survey going and not miss a beat. Thanks for listening to that. I don't usually grab the microphone for that amount of time; but I feel pretty passionate about this survey, and I would like to see it continue if we can.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: Could someone clarify for me and others. My recollection of this was a trawl survey. Apparently it transitioned at some time into a hook and line survey. Can someone enlighten me as to when that was and what relative numbers of tagged striped bass are we talking about now associated with hook and line tagging?

MR. APPELMAN: Good question. It started as

a trawl back in the late eighties and I think in around 2010-11, Fish and Wildlife Service caught wind of a funding dilemma down the road; and decided to pursue an alternative platform for the program, and they tested out this hook and line operation. It seemed to track; they caught a lot of striped bass with it. It was quick, easy; they tagged a lot of striped bass.

It seemed to work. As expected a few years later, the trawl portion ended and they continued on with the hook and line. I'm not exactly sure funding how it transitioned from a cooperative U.S. Fish and Wildlife, North Carolina, Maryland funded survey, and is now solely in the hands of North Carolina. I don't have those answers. But that is more the quick history of the survey.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Go ahead, Roy.

MR. MILLER: Quick follow up. What relative numbers of tagged striped bass are we talking about in recent years via this hook and line tagging effort?

MR. APPELMAN: Well I have a figure in front of me and I'm going to try to decipher it on the spot. But we're looking at roughly in the last few years the hook and line has been anywhere from just shy of, am I reading this right, 15,000 tags? I'm sorry, somewhere around the order of 100.

DR. DREW: It depends on both the availability of fish and the ability to actually. Right now the way it's done is through hiring a charterboat vessel to go out and take people fishing; use hook and line to catch them. It's a little bit limited by the weather conditions and if you have to cut the trip short, as well as the ability to find the fish.

But basically the cooperative program is representing between about 15 and 30 percent of the tags put out in recent years of the tags on that mixed ocean stock. It corresponds to somewhere between a couple

of hundred and a couple of thousand tags per year.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Chris.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Just to touch on, add to the rationale as to why we're not able to pursue this any further; and cost is certainly an issue. The other one and Marty kind of touched on it from talking about just the history of the participation in the tagging program. It's just the staff time, the personnel time that we use to coordinate and go out and do the tagging. We're just with other priorities, the Division and the staff involved has; it just got to be a little too much to keep up at this level. I expect there will be more discussion at the Executive Committee meeting tomorrow. But I just wanted to add that it's not only the cost but also just our resources available to continue at the level we've been doing.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Tom, did you have your hand up?

MR. FOTE: I was going to ask Mike, I'm trying to think what year we are in the young-of-the-year survey in Maryland, how many years we've been doing that '70, '75, '60, late '60s. We basically look at how important striped bass is; how we rebuilt the stocks, and we have a few time series of information that we can basically look at that has been consistent. I did the young of the year once or twice back in the early days down in Maryland to find out how that was done.

I decided not to do the one in North Carolina; because the weather is usually pretty rocky when it gets down there to do it. I think it's important that we continue that. It's the best source of information, and again when we're trying to decide, and I think that's part of the next move is to decide what contributions the Delaware River, what contributions the Hudson River, and what contributions the Chesapeake actually make to the coastal migratory.

We assume now it's maybe sometimes certain years the Delaware and the Hudson contribute up to 30 or 40 percent of the stock. We need to have better data to assess that and see what's happening. I know we've had some great young of the years in the Chesapeake Bay in 2011 and 2015, but I'm looking at what survives, and there are other factors involved, and just not producing good young of the year.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Bob Beal.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: Just to give a little more perspective on tomorrow morning's Executive Committee discussion. The folks that were at the herring meeting, well this will be kind of a repeat for them. The Commission was fortunate enough to get about \$400,000.00 of Plus-up money through the Council and Commission line in the federal budget.

Tomorrow morning the Executive Committee is going to basically decide how they want to spend that money. What are the priority projects they want to spend the money on? There are five projects that are being recommended by the staff to be funded with that money. The striped bass tagging hook and line survey is one of those five projects. Fortunately it's a very inexpensive and very efficient tagging or survey projects. It's about between \$16,000.00 and \$24,000.00 to conduct it; depending on the number of trips that are taken. I think obviously the message is being delivered from this Board that it's an important survey, and the Executive Committee should strongly consider funding that.

I think the good news is it's inexpensive, it's already on the list of the top five priorities, and hopefully it will get funded in the morning. But just to give some more perspective on where this stands, so folks don't worry too much that it's not going to get funded.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Bob, I think that is the message from this Board; Dennis, the final word on tagging.

MR. ABBOTT: Along those lines. I don't know what we're looking for, but I'll be sitting at the Executive Committee tomorrow as well as the State Directors and Roy. Do we want an endorsement from the Striped Bass Board as a formality? We know it's a done deal, really.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Bob, would that be helpful?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: I guess maybe we turn that on its head and say; is there anyone around the table that would not want me to carry forward the message with the other Commissioners to carry forward the message that funding this survey is a high priority, and the Executive Committee should strongly consider it. Yes and the Striped Bass Board support that funding. If anyone disagrees with that let us know. Hearing no disagreement; I will carry that message forward. I'm sure the other Commissioners that are here will carry that message to the Executive Committee.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Okay, Mike.

MR. LUISI: Mr. Chairman, thank you so that I can go back to my office on Friday without getting beat up by my Striped Bass Program staff. The survey that Tom was mentioning was started in 1954, not the late sixties, thank you.

**PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE  
2018 BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENT**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Next item, Katie could you enlighten us on progress on the benchmark assessment?

DR. DREW: Well, we've covered this a little bit already. The Technical Committee did approve the benchmark stock assessment to

go forward to the Peer Review Panel, so it's in the final process of edits for formatting and things like that; and it will go to the SARC no later than November 8, which will give them enough time to prepare it, disseminate it to the Peer Review Panel ahead of the review.

It will be reviewed November 27 through the 29th at Woods Hole, and then once that is complete the SARC Panel will have a certain amount of time to complete their report and we will have the information, the Review Report, the Stock Assessment Report available for you in time for the February meeting.

As I mentioned before, we are putting forward a model that incorporates migration and stock structure information as well as doing some updates and improvements to the model that is currently used for management as both sort of a continuity or a bridge building, as well as a fallback plan, if the Review Panel has serious concerns about the migration model. But we are going forward with the migration model as the base or the preferred model.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Questions for Katie. John.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Katie, I've seen just a summary of it and the migration model puts the Delaware and the Hudson together in a single stock; is that correct, and what is the reason for that?

DR. DREW: That is correct. Right now the model has a Chesapeake Bay stock and a sort of mixed Delaware/Hudson River stock; and the reason was essentially we could not go far back enough and split the Delaware Bay catch out separate from the Hudson River and from the rest of the Delaware/New Jersey ocean catches, versus Delaware Bay catches for the beginning of the time series. As a result, we combined them into a single stock for this particular model.

**REVIEW AND POPULATE  
THE ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIP**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Are there any more questions? Seeing none; our last agenda item is Review and Populate the Advisory Panel Membership. Tina.

MS. TINA BERGER: Hi Mr. Chair, I offer for your consideration and approval one new member to the Striped Bass Advisory Panel; Steven Smith, a recreational angler from Delaware.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Do we have a motion? John.

**MR. CLARK: I move that the Board approve Steven Smith, his nomination to the Advisory Panel for striped bass as a recreational representative for Delaware.**

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: Second, Tom Fote; Dennis, discussion.

MR. ABBOTT: Steven Smith, is he on ESPN?

MR. CLARK: Yes, he also has a bait shop in Leipsic, Delaware.

CHAIRMAN ARMSTRONG: **Any discussion, any objection to appointing Steven Smith? Seeing none; motion is approved unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

We are out of agenda items. Does anyone have any other business? Seeing none; we are adjourned.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 3:55 o'clock a.m. on October 23, 2018)