
SEAFOOD INDUSTRY | MARINE RESOURCES

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Purpose

The purpose of this committee is to identify issues and make recommendations for reviving a devastated seafood industry. Prior to Katrina the seafood industry was struggling to get by, facing high fuel prices, low prices on the sale of shrimp and seafood processors were selling their property to developers, thus creating a shortage of dock space, less places to unload their catch and fewer fuel and ice docks. Biloxi's heritage is rooted in the seafood industry; the city was built on shrimp hulls and oyster shells. That heritage — and the industry itself — must be saved and there is a lot that can be done to create an atmosphere that will allow the industry to survive. Primarily, the industry would benefit from the creation of a “seafood industry cluster” — a seafood industrial park — on Back Bay, with sufficient dock space, fuel and ice capacity, unloading space, seafood processors and a shipyard for repair work. And since charter fishing is a major part of our tourism industry, replacing lost dock space is a critical step.

Recommendations

97. *Increase dock space for shrimp boats at the Lighthouse Fishing Dock.*

The City of Biloxi has a commercial fishing dock on Back Bay at the intersection of Bayview and Lee Street called the Lighthouse Fishing Dock. This is one of the main docks for large steel shrimp boats (60-110 feet), the backbone of the industry. The volume from these large boats is required to keep even one processor open. Additional berthing will enhance the Lighthouse Fishing Dock, but will require dredging and a steel bulkhead with spring piles. The surrounding property owned by the City of Biloxi could be leased for development of an unloading facility and room for fueling (important because these large boats require 20,000 – 30,000 gallons each time they fill up) and an ice plant. The estimated cost for this enhancement of Lighthouse Fishing

Dock is \$2 million, most of which could be paid by FEMA and through Tidelands grants.

98. *Develop land use for fuel, ice and an unloading facility.* Federal funds may be available to purchase additional property near the Lighthouse Fishing Dock to cluster the seafood industry by providing sufficient fuel and ice services and an unloading facility.
99. *Create a Seafood Industry Cluster.* Following the principles and benefits of any industrial park, bringing together in one area near the Lighthouse dock the processors for shrimp, oysters and crabs would create an industry cluster with all the services, dock space and workforce. The cluster would be in close proximity to Interstate access and to water for unloading. And the cluster would be located near the neighborhoods where the bulk of the seafood workers live, making it easier to get the workers when needed. Providing space for shipyard use would complete the cluster. FEMA and Tidelands funds should help create this cluster.
100. *Develop land space for shipyard use.* At present, there is only one shipyard left that will accommodate shrimp boats and only the smaller ones, so additional shipyard facilities for larger boats is critical. Providing space for a shipyard in the “seafood industry cluster” (see above) would be the ideal location.
101. *Expand the dock space at Point Cadet Marina.* This would benefit both the recreational and charter fishing industry. Hurricane Katrina destroyed all Coast marinas and displaced boats that survived the storm. The charter boats have suffered a major financial loss because the lack of marinas, hotel/motel rooms and high fuel costs kept charters from operating from August 2005 through March 2006 and as of May 2006 only half the charter fleet is working full time. Expanding dock space at Point

Cadet Marina — near hotel/motel rooms coming back online, is critical to rejuvenating the charter and recreational fishing industry.

102. *Reinstall power at Point Cadet Marina.* Point Cadet Marina has been host to such prestigious events as the International Billfish Tournament, the Southern Kingfish Tournament and the cobia tournament. There are requests to hold yacht shows and other events at the Marina. Expanding its dock space and reinstalling power will turn the Point Cadet Marina back into a revenue-producing center for the seafood/fishing/tourism industry.
103. *Maximize use of Point Cadet Marina to encourage retail seafood, a Farmer's Market and restaurants.* The final step in building Point Cadet Marina into a major commercial center and tourism attraction is providing the space, docks and other facilities listed above to attract retail seafood business, a Farmer's Market and seafood restaurants to back to the Point.

