

WEEKLY UPDATE: 6/16/2017
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
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SEAFOOD LOBBY DAY:

Seafood Lobby Day this past Wednesday was a tremendous success! Thanks to all who made the sacrifice to travel to Raleigh and show support for commercial fishing, their families and for our citizens to have access to fresh North Carolina seafood!

The primary reason for the trip was to let our legislators know that we oppose H-867 and our reasons for it. That goal was certainly accomplished, and it was done with numbers, unity and respect. It was a great day for commercial fishermen and seafood consumers!

We will post more about Seafood Lobby Day next week along with a few more pictures, but below is one of the group shot. Not all of the folks that attended are in the picture as some were in meetings and others were eating lunch.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

The biggest legislative item this week was Seafood Lobby Day and H-867. We were told that 867 is dead by some and that 867 "isn't going anywhere" by others. Well, the bill is still listed on the House Wildlife Resources Committee list, so it is NOT dead. I can tell you that it PROBABLY won't go anywhere, but being vigilant is crucial.

House leadership does not favor moving 867, but they DO want talks to continue to see if we can do something that we can agree to that would make the process better and remove some of the angst over discussions about fisheries issues. If legislators are of the belief that the friction comes from both sides, they would be incorrect. As I've been asking for some time, provide an example when the commercial side has

gone to Raleigh to advocate for further restrictions on recreational fishing. They simply cannot because we have not! The reason we spend so darn much time in Raleigh is to defend the commercial fishermen's ability to make a living and the consumer's right to fresh North Carolina seafood!

Be assured that we will continue to be involved in discussions that might lead to an agreement to make the fisheries management process better. That means making it fairer and more open to stakeholder input, and yes, stakeholder includes seafood consumers.

To give you an idea of how tough this issue can be to a legislator, there is one very vocal individual who believes that consumers do NOT have a right to North Carolina seafood! Fisheries management is tough enough but when you take the absolute extreme of these fish battles and have an individual that has the ear of a legislator and believes that you as a North Carolina citizen who does not fish commercially or for recreation, has NO RIGHT to the seafood that you own as a public trust resource, how in the world can you solve problems with such radicals involved in the debate?

Even though this individual has posted his belief on a website that is available to the public, I will not mention his name as he is just a little sensitive about being accountable for his writings. But that's ok because it's not him that's important, but his message so you understand the kinds of stuff that a legislator gets hit with when we leave the room.

Here is what was posted in his own words:

Those consumers don't have a right to speckle trout, red drum, southern flounder, striped bass, spot, croaker, sheepshead, black drum any more than they do to song birds, whitetail deer, wild quail, wild ducks, etc.

I certainly don't advocate for a ban on all commercial fishing nor gamefish for all the species above, but the argument that the consumer is a stakeholder doesn't hold water with me when you consider the precedence set with our game laws.

So, my seafood loving consumer friends, according to this individual you have NO RIGHT to fresh North Carolina seafood, but, (lucky for you), you have every right to consume whatever we import from wherever, including that good stuff tainted with all kinds of heaven knows what raised in a pond in China. That way, he and his buds can get to play with that same fresh North Carolina seafood and have it set aside for their recreation, commercial fishing families and consumers be damned.

Although the individual referenced above is mature, he reminds me of the sensitive little cupcakes in today's political culture that find it ok to offend others but get teary eyed when held accountable for their actions.

Finally, the new issue of Tradewinds was mailed on Wednesday. I should mention that my column, "BE MORE POSITIVE; JUST QUIT SMILING", was a repeat of an article I wrote for Tradewinds 15 years ago in 2002. I felt it was an appropriate message to repeat. Although the photograph of our great-grandson is current, the one of me was also about 15 years ago.

God bless,

Jerry

CARTERET COUNTY FISHERMAN'S ASSOCIATION NEWS:

CCFA will be holding a fundraiser at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum on June 24, 11:30am till 6:00pm, selling shrimp burgers and hotdogs!

TRADEWINDS

The current issue of Tradewinds was mailed on Wednesday, so look for your copy.

CALENDAR

June 24; CCFA fundraiser; 11:30am till 6:00pm; Core Sound Waterfowl Museum

July 11; NCFA joint meeting; time and location to be announced