

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

It was a very, very busy week in the General Assembly, including fisheries, so here's a synopsis:

S-738, "Support Shellfish Industry" was filed on May 23rd.

Without getting into the weeds, the bill is now H-361 thanks to a Committee Substitute that was adopted this week in the Senate Committee on Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources. The bill passed that Committee as well as Senate Finance, Senate Rules and was passed on the Senate floor yesterday afternoon. The bill is now scheduled for action in the House on Monday evening. If it remains on the calendar, it will be either an up or down vote to concur with the Senate version. If they vote to concur, the bill will be sent to the Governor for his consideration. If they vote not to concur, the House and Senate will designate conferees to work toward agreement.

It's important to note that Rep. Pat McElraft took her name off as a sponsor of the bill.

Here is a link to the bill as it is currently written:

[H-361 "Support Shellfish Industry"](#)

H-1049, "Support Sustainable Fisheries Communities": There was no action on this bill. It was filed on May 30th and sponsored by Rep. Michael Speciale and co-sponsored by Reps Beverly Boswell, Carl Ford, George Cleveland, Larry Pittman, Michelle Presnell, Mike Clampitt & Bob Steinburg and Howard Hunter. [H-1049](#)

The bill would re-establish the Joint Legislative Commission on Seafood & Aquaculture, change the two at-large seats on the Marine Fisheries Commission to one recreational industry and one commercial industry and establish a moratorium on the authority of the MFC to propose and adopt rules. It **WOULD NOT IMPEDE THE STATE'S ABILITY TO MANAGE OUR COASTAL FISHERIES**, but will not allow the Commission to misuse the petition for rulemaking process or create meeting agendas that read like a Christmas wish list. It allows the Commission to meet the statutory requirements of the fishery management plan process, but allows stakeholders the time to discuss issues without fear of unfair or unnecessary rules being imposed on them.

NCFA strongly endorses this bill!

Further, it assures that Division of Marine Fisheries staff can concentrate on real scientific issues rather than wasting time and tax dollars to push agendas.

H-1049 has been assigned to the House Committee on Wildlife Resources: [House Wildlife Resources Committee](#)

[H-1049 "Support Sustainable Fisheries Communities"](#)

H-1063, "Commercial Fishing License Reforms": There was no action on this bill. It was filed on May 31st and sponsored by Reps Larry Yarborough, Jimmy Dixon, Ted Davis, & Billy Richardson and co-sponsored by Rep. Stephen Ross. [H-1063](#). It should be noted that Rep. Billy Richardson took his name off the bill as a sponsor.

You may recall that after overwhelming opposition by commercial fishermen to ANY changes of commercial fishing licenses at an MFC meeting in Wrightsville Beach, the Commission wrote a letter to the members of the General Assembly suggesting some changes. However, this bill goes way beyond what even the MFC has recommended, as the

bill would DOUBLE the fees for a Standard Commercial Fishing License from \$400 a year to \$800, DOUBLE the fees for a Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License from \$200 a year to \$400, establish a Commercial Fishing Crew License at \$100 a year for any person serving on the crew of a vessel engaged in commercial fishing, make eligibility pool reforms and ELIMINATE THE RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSE.

NCFA strongly OPPOSES this bill!

H-1063 has been assigned to the House Committee on Wildlife Resources: [House Wildlife Resources Committee](#)

[H-1063 "Commercial Fishing License Reforms"](#)

CALENDAR

June 11 – 15; South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Ft. Lauderdale, FL
June 13; 6:00pm; Blue Crab FMP Advisors; DEQ Regional Office; Washington, NC
June 18; Noon; NCFA Board of Directors; Civic Center; Washington, NC