

WEEKLY UPDATE: Thanksgiving 2017
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
Phone: (252) 726-6232

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

COMMENTARY FROM JERRY

At last week's Marine Fisheries Commission meeting DEQ Deputy Secretary John Nicholson addressed the Commission to begin the meeting. It was good to see him at the meeting. Such a hands on approach by someone in that position is very refreshing. He gave the Commission an update on the search for a new Director of Marine Fisheries and a status report on the one vacancy on the Commission and two other seats that expired on June 30th. (Joe Shute was a Commissioner on the Recreational Industry seat but he stepped down earlier this year, and the seats currently filled by Sammy Corbett, Commercial Industry and Mike Wicker, Scientist, are up for reappointment.)

John also circulated a letter from DEQ Secretary Michael Regan that denied the Commission's request that he approve a supplement to the striped bass fishery management plan. NCFA is very pleased with the Secretary's decision.

The Commission conducted business till about 5:00pm then recessed until the public comment period at 6:00pm. The public can sign up to speak on any issue related to fisheries for up to 3 minutes.

I used my time to thank John Nicholson for attending the meeting along with optimism that with the 3 upcoming appointments and the 3 that will be coming up next June, Governor Cooper can help with the current imbalance on the MFC. NCFA has been engaged in offering our opinions on those seats and have met with the appropriate folks in the Governor's office about it. It was thought that a decision on the 3 seats was forthcoming prior to the November meeting, but some concerns necessitated revisiting the decision.

I also noted to the Commissioners that NCFA was represented at this meeting by myself and our biologist, David Bush. Our Chairman, Brent Fulcher and Executive Director, Glenn Skinner, and other NCFA members may have attended the meeting if they had confidence in the process. However, with this current Commission being so imbalanced, there is an attitude that attending such meetings is a waste of time. However, with the upcoming appointments, perhaps it can become fair and equitable as provided by statute.

The public comments session only lasted about 30 minutes, but prior to recessing for the evening, Commissioner Chuck Laughridge couldn't help himself and grabbed his microphone to challenge "the speaker that mentioned fair and equitable". He said the speaker was confusing the Magnuson Act with the Fisheries Reform Act because it's the federal Magnuson Act that calls for fair and equitable, but North Carolina's Fisheries Reform Act simply says, "Fair".

OK then. In the legal arena it's all about definitions. To define FAIR is to be Free from bias. To define EQUITABLE is being fair and just. Wow! What a difference. His point, I guess, is the MFC should just be fair but not equitable, yet the definition of equitable is to be fair. And that, ladies and gentlemen is the way MFC meetings have been going for quite some time. He should have been called out of order, but he seldom is. After all, he's Chuck!

We can live with FAIR, can't we? So, let's have a Commission that is free from bias. With the one vacancy on the MFC we have three commercial representatives, four recreational and one scientist. Before Joe Shute stepped down it was five recreational because Governor McCrory appointed two recreational guys in at-large seats, contrary to the charge in the Fisheries Reform Act for being "fair", or free from bias. Not that it's part of the FRA, but NCFA has always had the position that folks appointed to an at-large seat should not otherwise qualify for a recreational or commercial seat. Fill those seats with seafood consumers or a seafood chef or restaurant owner to avoid stacking the deck.

I have a list of every Marine Fisheries Commission since I've been involved in this process which spans 30 years. It's my opinion that the current Commission is the most imbalanced in those 30 years. The best Christmas gift that Governor Cooper can give ALL fishermen, indeed all of the citizens in North Carolina, is a fair process.

FISHERMAN DIES ON FISHING BOAT

We are saddened to report the death of crewman, Wesley VanHook of Pamlico County on Monday morning. He was working on the Little Jesse while shrimping off Beaufort Inlet. Wesley was 30 years old. As of now, Wednesday morning, we do not have an obituary or know of any arrangements, but will send them out when we get the information. A fund has been set up to help with funeral expenses as there was no insurance. You can donate by going to the link below on the Go Fund Me page.

NCFA Board, Members and Staff offer our most sincere condolences and prayers to the VanHook family.

[Click here to help with Wesley VanHook funeral expenses.](#)

NCFA BOARD MEETING on NOVEMBER 27th:

NCFA Board will meet on Monday, November 27th at Noon at the Civic Center in Washington, NC. This will be a November/December meeting.

CALENDAR

Nov 27; Noon; NCFA Board of Directors; Civic Center; Washington, NC
Dec 4 – 8; South Atlantic Council; Doubletree; Atlantic Beach, NC
Dec 11 – 14; Mid Atlantic Council; Westin Annapolis; Annapolis, MD
