

H.B. 442 Background/Current Status

House Bill 442 was introduced in March of 2025 by Representative Frank Iler from Brunswick County. The purpose of the bill was to address the concerns of many of Representative Iler's constituents regarding the extremely limited access to the Southern Flounder and Red Snapper fisheries.

The first edition of the bill ([H.B. 442 Original Draft](#)) had some significant issues such as referring to Summer Flounder, rather than Southern Flounder, and requiring the state to amend the Red Snapper Fishery Management Plan, which the state does not have, etc.

NCFA reached out to Representative Iler, pointing out the problems with the bill and questioned why H.B. 442 only sought to increase recreational access to flounder, rather than providing both sectors some relief.

Over time, Representative Iler, and other sponsors cleaned up the bill language, eventually adding an increased commercial quota and requiring NCDMF to conduct a new stock assessment for Southern Flounder, as requested by the NCFA.

We also pointed out that the DMF/MFC can not open a Red Snapper season, except for in state waters within their jurisdiction (0-3 miles) as the other South Atlantic States (South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida) already have. While the landings of Red Snapper from these "state waters seasons" has been exceptionally low, the perception of increased access was important to Representative Iler's constituents.

After several changes were made, Edition 3 of H.B. 442 ([H.B. 442 Edition 3](#)) passed the House of Representatives, with broad support from commercial and recreational fishermen, and was sent to the Senate.

I want to make it very clear that the edition of H.B. 442 approved by the House did not include a ban on shrimp trawling.

On May 8th, H.B. 442 was sent to the NC Senate and referred to the Senate Rules Committee, chaired by Senator Bill Rabon, also from Brunswick County.

H.B. 442 sat in the Rules Committee for almost five weeks, until June 12, when it was reassigned to the Senate Agriculture Committee by Senator Rabon.

Four days later, on the morning of June 16th, NCFA was made aware of the proposed amendment to H.B. 442 which would add a trawl ban to that bill. There was no public copy of the amendment, and no one was meant to see it prior to the Agriculture Committee meeting scheduled for the following day.

NCFA UPDATE:06/30/2025
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Thanks to Senator Bobby Hanig, the trawl ban amendment was posted on social media and became public knowledge midday on the 16th.

The following day, June 17th, both the Senate Agriculture and Rules Committees approved H.B. 442, as amended with the trawl ban language, and it was scheduled to be heard on the Senate floor.

The Senate approved H.B. 442 (second reading June 18th, third reading June 19th) and then, due to the addition of the trawling ban, it had to be sent back to the House of Representatives.

On June 25th, just nine days after the shrimping ban was added, the House Republican Caucus met and decided not to take any further action on H.B. 442 at this time.

H.B. 442 was assigned to the House Rules Committee with the intent being to let it sit there through the end of the 2025-2026 session and die from a lack of action by the House.

That said, H.B. 442 is still a live bill, and while we have no indication this will happen, the House could choose to act on the bill at any time.

Again, we currently have no indication that the House would reverse their decision to let H.B. 442 die, but we must make it known that this is possible no matter how slim the chances seem.

NCFA will continue to monitor H.B. 442 and educate our elected officials, throughout the remainder of the legislative session.

While we are extremely pleased the NC House did not act on the trawl ban, we're also disappointed that, once again, the CCA and NC Wildlife Federation were allowed to cut recreational and commercial access to the Southern Flounder fishery.

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