

NCFA UPDATE: 05/01/2020
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
PO Box 86; Morehead City, NC 28557
Phone: (252) 726-NCFA (6232) Fax: (252) 726-6200
www.ncfish.org

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

The General Assembly went into their "short session" on Tuesday. There were very few members actually on the floor as most participated virtually at home or in their offices in the legislative buildings. During the Wednesday and Thursday sessions, more members were on the floor but still maintaining distancing. Special rules were adopted regarding voting procedures.

Only legislators and staff are allowed in the legislative building. However, the public can listen to audio of the Senate and audio or video of the House.

The main issue is HB-1043, PANDEMIC RESPONSE ACT, which is a 98 page, \$1.7 billion package that "funds recovery priorities and provides assistance for small businesses, streamlines access to unemployment benefits, modifies education requirements, ensures continuity of government operations and supports healthcare facilities on the front lines of the public health crisis." (From Speaker Tim Moore's press release.)

The bill passed the House 117-1. Members of both chambers of the North Carolina General Assembly have begun meetings to reach a compromise agreement on Covid-19 relief packages approved by the state House and Senate.

FISHERIES BILL INTRODUCED:

There was a fisheries bill introduced by Rep. Billy Richardson. The bill is HB-1045, EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN and can be found here:

<https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/House/PDF/H1045v1.pdf>

The bill provides for \$10 million from the General Fund for an emergency assistance program for commercial fishermen and for-hire fishing operation license holders who have suffered economic loss due to COVID-19. 10 SECTION 2. Program.

This bill is the result of collaboration with Rep. Richardson, Glenn Skinner of NCFA, the NC For-Hire Captains Association, DEQ and the Division of Marine Fisheries.

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Here is an explanation of the bill's drafting history:

A few weeks ago, Representative Billy Richardson had a bill drafted for consideration of the Economic Support Working Group, part of the NC House Select Committee on Covid-19. Although meant to be helpful to our state's commercial fishermen, there were provisions in it that NCFA felt were problematic. As a result, Billy agreed to pull the bill from consideration and told Glenn Skinner he would work with him to come up with a bill to help fishermen that we could agree to.

With much needed input from DEQ, NCFA worked closely with the NC For-Hire Captains Association and Representative Billy Richardson to draft the bill. Billy & Glenn traded many messages, phone calls and drafts of the proposed legislation, which ended up being HB-1045, "Emergency Assistance for Commercial Fishermen".

The bill was filed on April 28th.

This is really a good bill! Here are the current sponsors:

[Billy Richardson](#), primary sponsor.

Co-sponsors: [Scott Brewer](#); [George Cleveland](#); [Terry Garrison](#); [Ed Goodwin](#); [Holly Grange](#); [Bobby Hanig](#); [Pricey Harrison](#); [Verla Insko](#); [Keith Kidwell](#); [Phil Shepard](#); [Carson C. Smith](#); [Michael Speciale](#); [Donna White](#)

As you will note, the bill has bi-partisan sponsorship with sponsors from the coast and inland.

If your representative is not on the list of sponsors above, you may want to give him/her a call as soon as possible.

The bill has been referred to the House Rules Committee.

God Bless,

Jerry

Industry Funded Economic Survey:

It is very important that all fishermen fill out this survey and return it. This information is so NC can get an accurate value for our fishing industry. Deadline will be extended until April 30, 2020 due to the delays from COVID-19 coronavirus.

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If you have not received an economic survey, or need a replacement survey, please contact Chris Dumas 910-962-4026 or via email dumasc@uncw.edu (To be eligible for the survey, a fisherman needs to have had (1) a commercial fishing license in 2019, and (2) trip ticket sales in 2019.