

Board of Commissioners

Mark Mansfield, Chair
Robin Comer, Vice-Chair
Bob Cavanaugh
Jimmy Farrington
Jonathan Robinson
Bill Smith
Ed Wheatly



County Manager
Tommy R. Burns

Clerk to the Board
Rachel B. Hammer

May 9, 2019

The Honorable Governor Roy Cooper
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Cooper:

The Honorable Carteret County Board of Commissioners, while sitting in session on Monday, May 6, 2019, adopted the enclosed Resolution in opposition of House Bill 486 that would change the definition of commercial fishing.

The Carteret County Board of Commissioners reaffirms its unwavering commitment to North Carolina's commercial fishing industry and oppose any action that would change the definition of commercial fishing or cause any additional harm to North Carolina's working watermen.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, we would greatly appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Rachel B. Hammer
Clerk to the Board

/rbh
Enclosure

copy: Senator Norman W. Sanderson
Representative Pat McElraft
Secretary Michael Regan, NCDEQ
Rob Bizzell, Chairman, Marine Fisheries Commission
Stephen Murphey, Director, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

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RESOLUTION
OPPOSING NORTH CAROLINA HOUSE BILL 486
THAT WOULD CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL FISHING

WHEREAS, the Carteret County Board of Commissioners has steadfastly supported North Carolina's Commercial Fishermen who are a vital part of our State's history, heritage, and culture and represent a crucial component of the economy for Carteret County and other coastal communities. According to the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, the sales impact of the harvesting and sale of commercial seafood is \$388,325,000 and the income impact of employed commercial fishermen is \$166,066,000; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 486 proposes to drastically raise the annual Commercial Fishing license fee and impose burdensome requirements on commercial license holders, who are still recovering from the devastation caused by Hurricane Florence; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of House Bill 486 is yet another attempt to redefine commercial fishing, which would be detrimental to North Carolina's Commercial Fishing Industry. In fact, last year the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission embarked on an effort to change the criteria of what constitutes a commercial fishing operation by imposing, among other things, that license holders document annual seafood landings of at least 1,000 pounds; and

WHEREAS, the Carteret County Board of Commissioners on February 7, 2018 and again on June 18, 2018, adopted unanimous Resolutions opposing any change in the definition of commercial fishing based on the following:

- No other professional license issued by the State dictates a level of participation in order for its holders to qualify. Furthermore, the definition of what constitutes commercial fishing in North Carolina has already been determined by the General Assembly and has long been established in Section 113-168 of North Carolina's General Statutes.
- Imposing an arbitrary level of participation based on landings would unfairly have a harsh and punitive effect on coastal communities hit by hurricanes and other natural disasters where many commercial fishing license holders, whose income generating season may have been entirely wiped out by a storm, are forced to temporarily divert their time and talents to other business enterprises.
- Those who engage in commercial fishing already suffer because of government overregulation that imposes severe quotas and unnecessary restrictions on fishing seasons, limits, and gear forcing many to take on additional jobs and engage in part-time businesses in order to support their families.

- In October of 2010, the Marine Fisheries Commission empaneled a Fishing License Review Taskforce, which examined in detail the requirements for holding a commercial fishing license and concluded that the definition contained in the General Statutes was adequate and therefore, there was no real need to modify the definition of what constitutes a commercial fisherman. In its Final Report the Taskforce clearly stated its recommendation that, "no changes are needed to the existing definition."

WHEREAS, House Bill 486 is an attempt to fix something that is not broken and would jeopardize coastal communities whose economy and wellbeing are dependent upon both full-time and part-time commercial fishermen who are small, independent businesses that work hard under adverse conditions to put fresh, healthy North Carolina seafood on American tables.


NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Carteret County Board of Commissioners reaffirms its unwavering commitment to North Carolina's commercial fishing industry by strongly opposing House Bill 486, or any other action, that would change the definition of Commercial Fishing or cause harm to North Carolina's Working Watermen.

ADOPTED, this the 6th day of May 2019.



Mark Mansfield, Chairman
Carteret County Board of Commissioners

Attest:



Rachel Hammer, Clerk to the Board

