

**N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
November 2022 Business Meeting
Online Public Comment**

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Rick Sasser	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in the large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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		<p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver- another reason to extend the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Extending the net closure to the Tie-Down Line will help meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing but is not overfished. Spotted Seatrout will be a primary commercial target if the gill net ban above the ferry lines is removed.</p> <p>It should be noted here that with all of these fisheries in decline, THERE ARE MULTIPLE COMPELLING REASONS TO EXTEND THE GILL NET RESTRICTIONS TO THE TIE-DOWN LINE.</p>
Larry Lord	North Carolina	<p>I will say the Commission and North Carolina Marine Fisheries has a batting average very close to a perfect 1.000 average when it comes to the mismanagement of "our" Fisheries. It appears "we" have very few species left inshore that are not overfished and one is the Speckled Trout where overfishing is occurring. Why would anyone think Commissioner's Cross's motion to open netting above the Ferry lines is a good idea? Wouldn't that lead to more overfishing of an overfished species and lead to overfished status? Striped Mullet are listed as Overfished, wouldn't opening the netting above the Ferry Lines lead to Over over Overfished Status?</p> <p>Failed policies for years by Marine Fisheries and the Commission has lead "us" to where "we" are. It is time for the State to lower their nearly perfect batting average on destroying "our" Fisheries. Wake up.</p>
Steve King	North Carolina	<p>Hi folks -- I live in Carteret County, and am a life-time fisherman in the area.</p> <p>I'm VERY against opening up the river areas above the Ferry Lines to gill netting until we have a stronger recovery of fish that are impacted by the gill nets.</p> <p>I'm not anti-commercial: it's just too soon to start allowing harvest in these sensitive areas.</p>

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		<p>Thx,</p> <p>Steve</p>
Lance B	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-</p>

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Trey Gurley	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p>

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Kenny Doyle	Tennessee	Gill nets should not be allowed back in areas closed previously for years!!

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Michael H	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if</p>

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<p>Brandon White Brandon White</p>	<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>Gill nets do not belong above the ferry lines! Do a better job at protecting our resource, we are the only state left with any kind of net left in the water, there is a reason all the other states done away with them!</p>
<p>James Strickland</p>	<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the</p>

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jay gunter	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August MFC meeting to reopen the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting</p> <p>PLEASE PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THIS.</p>
Cathy Doyle	Tennessee	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as</p>

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A W Jeffreys	North Carolina	<p>Almost all NC sport fish experiencing over fishing and you want to do what with our natural resources? Extend the legal areas for commercial nets? Seems that you are forgetting the natural resources of NC belong to the people, not just commercial interests. Please do your jobs and manage the shrinking resources while there is still time to make a meaningful difference.</p>
Chris Powell	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased</p>

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		<p>number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver- another reason to extend the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Extending the net closure to the Tie-Down Line will help meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing but is not overfished. Spotted Seatrout will be a primary commercial target if the gill net ban above the ferry lines is removed.</p>

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James Milks	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-</p>

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Josh Wilder	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p>

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Joseph Bair	North Carolina	<p>Lifelong NC resident here. I've witnessed the recreational fishery decline across the board, and am worried it will collapse completely even during my lifetime, let alone my childrens. NC fisheries are a fraction of what they were when I was younger. Therefore:</p>

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William Maultsby	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p>

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CA Pittman	North Carolina	<p>Lifelong NC resident here TIRED of having our fisheries destroyed by greedy commercial fishermen. and HORRIBLE management by NCDMF. It is TIME TO END BOTH.</p> <p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as</p>

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Jan Willis	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect. 2. BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver. 3. SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover. Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries. Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.

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Daniel Downing	North Carolina	Please remove all gill nets from the sounds and rivers.
Charles Tyndall	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p>

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Mike Eubanks	North Carolina	If the fishery is in danger, common sense would say stop over fishing. Take the politics, money, and propaganda out of the decision making process. Across the board, spread the "justice".

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Ben James	North Carolina	I strongly oppose allowing nets above the ferry line. With trout being over fished the nets shouldn't be allowed in any creeks.
Gerald Hinton	North Carolina	<p>I live in [REDACTED], and have seen first hand the increase in marine life since the advent of the hill net ban above the ferry lines. I would heartily agree that this ban had had a positive effect on the marine life as well as the economies of the towns surrounding the areas. New Bern boat ramps are more heavily trafficked today than they were before the net ban and are spending dollars in these local towns. Please retain this hill net ban and in fact I would advocate to extend the ban to the proposed "Tie Down Line"</p> <p>Thank You!</p>
Jenna Hinton	North Carolina	<p>I live in [REDACTED] and have fished eastern NC for many years. I have been thrilled when seeing first hand the increase in marine life since the advent of the GILL NET BAN above the ferry lines. This ban has had a positive effect on the marine life as well as the economies of the towns surrounding the local areas. New Bern boat ramps are more heavily trafficked today than they were before the net ban and there is a corresponding increase to the dollars spent in these supporting towns. Please retain this gill net ban and in fact I would advocate to extend the ban to the proposed "Tie Down Line"</p> <p>Thank You!</p>
Chris McCaffity	North Carolina	<p>November 2022 Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting Public Comment</p> <p>Please start incubating fertilized eggs from local seafood and release hatchlings to live wild and free until harvested by recreational and commercial fishermen. Wise use of regional hatcheries can help overcome habitat related spawning obstacles that are negatively impacting many seafood stocks. Proven management tools can help stocks thrive at historically high levels even as we harvest more. Our license fees should contribute to stocking efforts. A 1% restocking fee on all retail seafood sales should also be considered as a way for consumers to cover hatchery cost. Consumers are the largest user group of our fisheries and should be more involved in the management process.</p> <p>Please support a moratorium on any new public water lease that restricts our freedom to access public resources.</p> <p>Please support a moratorium on introducing genetically sterilized or otherwise modified species in public waters.</p> <p>Thank you, Chris McCaffity</p>
Randy Faircloth	North Carolina	Need to leave the gill net band in place. We now have a great Quality of salt water fish around duck creek.

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Jordan J	North Carolina	I do not support allowing gill nets above the ferry lines. I am against what is being proposed by commissioner Doug Cross. Keep the gill nets out.
Clinton Jones	North Carolina	I am strongly against Commissioner's motion at the August 2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At a minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.
Steven Long	North Carolina	Since the NCMF and WRC jointly approved the stoppage of gill netting above Minosott Beach, the River has started to recover from the extreme commercial overfishing and illegal commercial fishing which was occurring. To return to prior practices would be detrimental to all fish species in the river and the striped bass would once again be nearly bycatch rather than a healthy reproducing population. Vote NO on opening netting in the upper Neuse.
Russel Speller	North Carolina	I feel like the Speckle Trout are thriving and we do not need any restrictions at this time.
Greyson Gwaltney	North Carolina	It is my belief that gill nets should be completely banned from the inshore waters of the sounds and rivers. Please do not extend netting past the ferry lines on neuse and pamlico rivers. How in good faith could that even be a consideration? Striper and other fish in our estuary are strained it makes no sense to allow more fish to be killed in nets. Trawling inshore waters should also be banned. Every other state has adopted these practices why has NC not followed through?
Patrick Cotter	North Carolina	If Striped Bass have had a moratorium for the past few years on the Tar/Neuse then how does it make sense that nets in New Bern and little Washington won't affect the progress that the Moratorium is in place for? Thank you
Chance N	North Carolina	I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line. 1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect. 2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas

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Matthew Beaty	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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Peter Overgaard	North Carolina	PLEASE vote to keep gill nets OUT of our waters! They are indiscriminate killers of many species of fish as well as other marine animals.
Greg Kokoski	North Carolina	I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.
Howard Hink	North Carolina	It should be noted here that with all of these fisheries in this area are in decline, THERE ARE MULTIPLE COMPELLING REASONS TO EXTEND THE GILL NET RESTRICTIONS TO THE TIE-DOWN LINE. In fact there are very few fish out there. Do the right thing and have courage to do it.
Ricky Moore	North Carolina	All gill nets should be banned!
Andrew Cannan	North Carolina	In reference to the final vote on Amendment 2 to the Estuarine Striped Bass Plan, I wish to voice my support for keeping gill net restrictions in place above the ferry lines. As sport fisherman, my sons and I frequently fish the

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		<p>areas between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED]. While still fewer and farther between than I would expect, in the time that gill net restrictions have been in place, there is a noted increase in our frequency of catching striped bass and other sport species in this area. In a time when takes on such significant number of species are under restrictions or are outright prohibited, presumably due to continuing decline in populations, how does it make sense to restore access for indiscriminate catch practices like gill netting?</p>
David Knowles	North Carolina	<p>I support maintaining (even expanding) gill net regulations. Although not on the agenda, I support closure of expensive reached of our estuaries to commercial crabbing; the number of crab pots on these waters is ridiculous.</p> <p>I support a creel limit of 3 for speckled trout and a slot size limit. I support a creel limit of 2 for southern flounder, also with a slot size limit.</p> <p>I suggest the MFC, fisheries professionals and enforcement officers address the issue of caught fish release and mortality. It is a complicated enforcement issue but requiring the release of fish that obviously will not survive is a wasteful practice. Perhaps cell phone cameras could be used to document the injured catch. Again, complicated but an important issues worthy of discussion.</p>
David Holloman	North Carolina	<p>I strongly support keeping the net restrictions in place and I would like to see them extended to include the entire Neuse, Pamlico and Pungo rivers. I personally have seen a great increase in the catches on the upper [REDACTED], even though there are no current moratoriums on gill nets in the [REDACTED], and suspect it would only get better with increased restrictions. Removal of these restrictions will take us backwards very fast. Extended restrictions on all 3 rivers would help many other species as well.</p>
Peter West	North Carolina	<p>The current restrictions that do not allow nets to be used west of the Bayview Ferry and the Minnesott Beach Ferry need to remain in place. The hereto unforeseen abundance of bait and fish has not be seen in my lifetime and should be allowed to continue as net free. Most if not all of the species that would be targeted are already challenged from a Fishery perspective and it would be unconscionable to allow further exploitation in this protected area. Let these species recover and revisit if and when they are no longer species of concern.</p>
Will Sanderson	North Carolina	<p>Please do not open up the upper Neuse and upper Pamlico to gill netting. Please protect the resource and keep the gill netters outside the ferry lines.</p>
Hain Ficken	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-</p>

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		<p>Down Line.</p> <p>1. IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2. BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3. SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver- another reason to extend the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Extending the net closure to the Tie-Down Line will help meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing but is not overfished. Spotted Seatrout will be a primary commercial target if the gill net ban above the ferry lines is removed.</p> <p>It should be noted here that with all of these fisheries in decline, THERE ARE MULTIPLE COMPELLING REASONS TO EXTEND THE GILL NET RESTRICTIONS TO THE TIE-DOWN LINE.</p>

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James Oppenheim	North Carolina	You finally got something right...don't screw it up...keep the net ban upstream of the ferry line

Online Public Comments # 50 - 81

As of 8:00 a.m. 11/10/22

November 2022 MFC Business Meeting

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Stancil Lilley	North Carolina	<p>Good evening Ladies & Gentleman,</p> <p>My comments and questions is regarding opening gill nets in the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers.</p> <p>Question 1: Can anyone explain how opening these waters to gill nets is going to prevent killing of Striped Bass when caught in these gill nets?</p> <p>Question 2: If opening these areas to gill nets are you going to open the fisheries to all fisherman/fisher ladies for Striped Bass?</p> <p>Because the gill nets will kill more than recreational anglers will harvest.</p> <p>If you vote to open these areas to nets they should be Pound nets only. I do not support any gill nets in these rivers or creeks.</p> <p>Question 3: If trout are being overfished, why not ban gill nets in spawning areas?</p> <p>No, nets should not be allowed in spawning areas and creeks. If your desire is to truly increase the numbers in the trout fishers. Close net fishing in the creeks. Period!</p> <p>If you vote to open these areas to gill nets, then you should be open them to both commercial as well as recreational anglers to once again harvest Striped bass.</p> <p>You can not allow one group to set nets, kill the very fish you say you trying to protect, Strip Bass, while banning the other group from harvesting these fish.</p> <p>Respectfully Stancil Lilley</p>
Charles Cauley	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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Richard Keel	North Carolina	<p>i don't think that you will ever over fish with a rod and reel i have no problem with limits but not 1 fish and season is 30 days or less and shutting down fish is not good , just think about how many fish are caught in a net and then someone with a single fishing line catch . And then there are different rules for the regular fisherman that ain't right. Tell me why a sport fisherman can keep more fish than i can. I think that officals should not think that we as rod fisherman don't see what's going on. Maybe we can change things around with the right voting.</p>
Travis Harrison	North Carolina	<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>I am a avid outdoorsman. I live in [REDACTED], NC and have fished the [REDACTED] river for the last 25 years. I have watched the rise and decline of speckled trout, flounder, stripers and redfish over the years. Moving the gill nets above the Ferry lines again is absolute insanity. They were moved in the past to protect stripers, and there are more stripers in new Bern now than before the gill nets were moved; however, it is foolish to return the nets above the ferry lines which will only return the poor state of the striper fisheries on the Neuse. Fishing for stripers, trout and redfish my entire life, I can attest that even with the gill nets removed, the stripers on the Neuse are nowhere close to what they were 15 years ago. Not only these top sport target have suffered due to inshore gill nets and poorly managed trawling inshore, but baitfish such as mullet, menhaden and other fisheries such as croakers, and spots. 15 years ago it was no problem to catch quality spots and croakers all summer long from shore on the Neuse river. This is a fishery basically untouched by recreational, yet there are far less adult and juvenile spots and croakers in the Neuse. Keeper sizes of spots and croakers are Basically non existent from what I can see from a recreational fishery. I believe that inshore trawling has severely depleted these fish populations.</p> <p>It would be a reckless disregard for the populations of Speckled Trout, redfish, flounder and striped bass to move the gill nets upstream to appease a small percentage of North Carolina's income. It is evident that far more revenue is generated through recreational fishing, and distributed from boat manufacturers, tackle shops, gas stations, grocery stores, automotive industry and the list goes on. North Carolina is stuck in the past with how inshore gill netting is managed, and it shows for populations of sport fish in local waters. When the gill nets</p>

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		<p>are removed, populations rise; alternatively, when gill nets arrive, populations decline. It's that simple.</p> <p>I will welcome anyone on my boat to show you first hand overnight the damage a gill net can do to mature and wintering trout. These fish are what keeps the population strong, and they are punished year after year by gill nets. When one commercial gill net arrives in a creek, no matter the amount of recreational fisherman, I have rarely seen the number of fish vanish overnight, but when nets are set, they keep trout vanish overnight. It is as plain as day where they go.</p> <p>Hopefully these words from a concerned local outdoorsman will fall on receptive ears.</p> <p>God Bless, Travis Harrison</p>
Jacob Parente	North Carolina	<p>Please consider voting against this proposition. For the first time in several years, there is a truly viable multi species fishery above the ferry line. Gill nets in this region would also impact the struggling striper population. There is no good reason for reversing this protection. This region has far more to gain from a good fishery than it does from added commercial fishing and the inherent bycatch that comes with it.</p> <p>Conservation of a resource historically involves limiting the efficiency of methods of take. It would be an act of bad government to allow part of the population to harvest a public resource more effectively and lethally than another.</p>
Nick P	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p>

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Larry Deglandon	North Carolina	As a fisherman and resident of [REDACTED] I am opposed to allowing nets any where in the Neuse River, much less above the ferry line.
Mary-Lynn Perricone	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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Travis Harrison	North Carolina	<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>I understand that there is a small percentage of fisherman that make living commercial fishing. I do not have any numbers or statistics, but I do have 25 years of fishing in eastern NC. I also have the information provided by NCDMF that the Striped Mullet population is overfished downstream of the ferry lines. If the mullet are overfished, and the purpose of DMF is to protect the public resources of the state, what sense does it make to open up a smaller, more concentrated fishery to commercial gill netting? It is blatantly obvious that recreational fishing is not depleting striped mullet populations. Mullet and menhaden are a critical baitfish for Flounder, Trout, Redfish, and Striped bass on the Neuse River and all eastern NC waterways.</p> <p>It would be a total disregard of the health of NC fisheries to open the areas above the ferry line to gill nets knowing that the gills nets have depleted mullet populations downstream from the ferry which is a much larger area. Repeating what known to destroy a fish population in a smaller, more concentrated area will only have the same negative impact in a shorter period of time.</p>

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		<p>Outside of striped mullet, opening areas above the ferry line to gill nets will have a significant impact on Striped Bass, Speckled Trout and redfish that have moved upstream for winter. It is known that stripers and redfish congregate upstream of the ferries all winter long and there will be bycatch of stripers and redfish while these gill nets shift focus from striped mullet to speckled trout for the winter.</p> <p>As a recreational fisherman, with the information provided by NCDMF, I can see only negative impact from allowing commercial gill nets above the ferry lines. It is a reckless and blatant disregard for our fisheries.</p> <p>God Bless, Travis Harrison</p>
Peter Pappas	North Carolina	<p>Please keep gill nets out above the ferry lines. We have got to let our waters heal and rebound from years of overfishing. The citizens of NC deserve a fishery that is healthy. Why are we destroying our fishery for a very small group of users? Other states have commercial fishing that is not close to as destructive as NC. can we please adopt their methods and gear for commercial fishing. It is the only way to get a fishery back to a place remotely close to what it used to be. So many out of staters as well would visit our state to fish if we had better fishing. If I'm living in [REDACTED] and I have the option to fish in NC or SC, I'm choosing SC.</p>
darrel buickerood	North Carolina	<p>Please do not allow commercial fishing nets above the ferry lines in the Neuse river, I think this is a very bad idea for the recreational fishing community in the upper Neuse and for the health and population of the fishery on a whole. Please vote against !!!</p>
Everette T. Wall	North Carolina	<p>I feel that the DMF allowing gill nets to be placed upstream from the points where ferries currently cross the Pamlico and Neuse rivers would be a terrible mistake and a severe disservice to the citizens of our state. Extensive research by well-qualified professionals has shown that gill nets have a major impact on striped bass, shad and mullet. It has also been determined that those species are overfished and continue to decline in numbers. Allowing gill nets to be set upstream from their present boundaries would simply acerbate that situation. Doing so would indicate a total disregard for our state's marine resources.</p>
Billy Trivette	North Carolina	<p>Please do not remove the gill net restrictions on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers. The fisheries cannot stand the current fishing pressures. Additional pressures will negatively impact many species.</p> <p>Re-opening these areas will encourage the harvest and discards of several designated overfished species including Southern flounder, striped mullet, striped bass, and now, speckled trout. It does not make any sense for fishery managers to adopt measures that will increase mortality on the above species while plans and</p>

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		<p>strategies are in place to reduce their mortality.</p> <p>The following comments summarize my views:</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. The tarpon run from New Bern to Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, may never recover</p> <p>Sturgeon – endangered, ITP for all interactions, requires observation in large mesh gill net fisheries for shad and flounder</p> <p>Striped Bass – CSMA stock so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have also indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>closures are a potential management option. Keeping the nets out of these places may serve to meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing, but is not overfished. Though they have not said much publicly about it, trout will be one of, if not their primary target, with gill nets upriver.</p>
John Roy	North Carolina	<p>Good Day All,</p> <p>As a very concerned member of the [REDACTED], I need to express our concern with the Upcoming discussion of allowing Commercial Fishing with nets in our beautiful inland waterways. We as a club, work hard to educate ourselves on maintaining and preserving our access to three river. They provide opportunities for all to enjoy fishing, a large part of why we live here. Please don't limit our fish from coming and going in our rivers!</p> <p>Thank for your taking time to hear us out and for all your hard work!</p>
Charles Forrest	North Carolina	<p>Keep the nets out of NC estuaries! As a boy, I fished the [REDACTED], areas. As a young man I would take family trips back to fish these areas. I planned to retire in [REDACTED]. But due to years of mismanagement, fishing is not worthwhile to make the trip down. I'm not retiring there now. You can and should do better.</p> <p>Charles</p>
Morgan Moskal	North Carolina	<p>I do not support the practice of gill netting, nor do I support any business/individual/organization that contributes in anyway to the practice of gill netting. Please do not allow gill netting.</p>
Stephen Gay	North Carolina	<p>Gill nets are actively destroying the local economy and ecosystems. Stop prioritizing a few interests over the vast majority. Make smart choices for the water and for ALL those who work on it and use it—not just the few commercial fishermen. Gill nets make no economic or ecological sense.</p>
Tyler Coccoziello	North Carolina	<p>Commercial netting should not be allowed in these estuaries. Strongly disagree with said proposal.</p>
Mat Smith	North Carolina	<p>The scientific studies show, without a doubt, that gill nets are decreasing our fish populations. If this continues, we won't have any fish left for even fill nets to catch. Please place a ban on gill nets.</p>
Brandon Furlough	North Carolina	<p>We do not need more fill nets to impact our fisheries but less. The weekend warriors are paying the price with lesser limits they can enjoy, shorter seasons, and such. It almost isn't worth the price of license, a boat, gas and such now. All while SC and VA keep going strong. If you want to do something stock reds, and sea trout. Don't ruin our pastimes and our economy.</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Abram Koehn	North Carolina	It seems a number of you will vote in support of commercial fishermen no matter what the issue or evidence is. Take a look at any boat ramp on almost any Saturday and look at the dollars spent on boats, trucks and tackle/equipment yet you will continue to support fishery destroying and downright un-ethical means of harvest. I'm so sick of the way this states fisheries are being handled. Please realize that this isn't the 1960s anymore and get with the times! Most other states aren't allowing gill netting at all anymore! Let's make NC the fishing destination it could be.
Jacob Sparrow	North Carolina	It's incredible that this topic is even coming up for vote again. The vote should be whether we ban gill netting inshore totally. The fishing is PHENOMENAL past the ferry lines compared to what it used to be, and I know that because I've fished the [REDACTED] river my whole life. If gill netting is allowed inshore it will become a problem again and it will have to be changed back again, and the cycle will continue, uselessly. Or, we could improve our fishery even more by pushing them out further, or making it totally illegal. Then the populations wouldn't be hurting and we could keep more than one drum and no striper for crying out loud. Deep down we all worry what they'll do to trout next. These nets do ten times the damage we could ever do as recreational fishermen. We are the ONLY STATE ON THE EAST COAST TO ALLOW IT. Makes you wonder why. Use your head.
Kav Ellis	North Carolina	Very against bringing these practices back. They are ruining our fisheries!
Cory Kirkland	North Carolina	Please do not allow gill netting in areas it was previously banned and consider a state wide ban. Other fisheries are way more productive than ours and it is honestly embarrassing talking to other fisherman in states with gill netting banned.
Martien Vanhooft Martien Vanhooft	North Carolina	My names Marty Vanhooft. Coming from another country helps me see both sides of things, the biggest thing I see is the impact of the fishery with netting. I have experienced this first hand watching nets get set up in areas they shouldn't. I spend a lot of money to recreational fish from boats to fishing gear so wants the point on spending money on fishing tackle and boats if there's no fish to fish for ? Please re think this gill net situation Much appreciated. Marty Vanhooft.
Hunter Graves	North Carolina	I have been fishing the [REDACTED] river since I was a child with my father. I'm 26 now and back in the day we were happy to catch [REDACTED] and a [REDACTED] was a monster back then. The past few years since y'all outlawed netting in the river, fishing has been greatly improved with fish averaging between 18-24inches. This

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>has been the best fishing my dad and I have ever seen. I hear y'all want to allow netting in the Estuaries again and this will have major impact on recreational fishing. With the boom in trout fishing the past few years I would say I have seen 3 times the amount of people have picked up the sport and support small business for tackle shops, ma and pop restaurants and gas stations up and down ██████████ and roads that connect them. If netting is permitted again in the previously outlawed areas I fear this will have a detrimental impact on the fishery, industry in the area, and the conservation effort y'all have been successful with. Practically erasing all the accomplishments with the conservation effort.</p> <p>Sincerely, A concerned fisherman</p>
Charles Wood	North Carolina	<p>I am 100 percent against returning gill nets above the ferry lines. This area has served as a safe haven for not only striper, but drum, trout and flounder. Gill nets should be banned in NC, every other state has done this. There is a reason almost all the inshore saltwater fish stocks are depleted.</p>
Russell Hudson	North Carolina	<p>There is much pressure on our spotted trout due to gill netting in the lower Neuse River since the closure of gill netting above the ferry line. The Lower Broad Creek near Oriental, NC and the Bay River near Vandemere, NC are experiencing a tremendous amount of gill netting especially during the night time hours.</p> <p>Please consider suggesting a closure of all gill netting after dark. Furthermore we must stop gill netting in our small creeks and nursery areas. A good amendment to a rule would be to agree that there shall be no netting in areas where trawling and dredging are prohibited.</p>
Henry Jacobs	North Carolina	<p>I have lived here for 23 years & would love to see our fishery's grow to those of South Carolina & many other states that are far better than us. Sadly we kill the fishery constantly. Never hold commercial fisherman accountable. All nets should be out of NC</p>
Watson Caviness	North Carolina	<p>We are past gill nets. Too many bi catch species die needlessly from these nets. There are more eco friendly ways to harvest fish. Do better! Be better!</p>
Preston McQueen Preston McQueen	North Carolina	<p>Keep the nets out of the marshes and bays!!! I like seafood so don't want to stop the harvest, BUT... We have to be smart about where all the younger sea creatures are born and grow.</p> <p>Keep the nets out of the marshes and bays!!!</p>
Wilson McGraw	North Carolina	<p>I am writing to support a continuation of the gill-net ban above the ferry lines in order to continue the positive trends in the striped bass fishery that have been realized with the current gill-net ban. If we start managing for</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>long term conservation of our fisheries, instead of a short-sighted focus on near term maximum harvest, then North Carolina can once again become a premier fishery that supports sustainable commercial and recreational users. The commission should undertake an effort to allow our fisheries to rebound by removing harmful fishing methods that are unsustainable for the long run. Other states on the east and gulf coast have removed inshore gill-nets and other harmful methods of take and each one of them has had a positive response from rebounding stocks of fish. This model should be followed to avoid the alternative -- continued focus on maximum harvest until the day that the harvest is zero.</p>

Online Public Comments # 82-110

As of 8:00 a.m. 11/14/22

November 2022 MFC Business Meeting

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Jared Kennish	North Carolina	As a resident of North Carolina and an avid recreational fisherman I strongly support the continued ban of net fishing in our estuaries.
Elias Vaisberg	North Carolina	Gill nets will continue to decimate any chance of rebuilding striped bass populations. Convert all commercial interest to harvest via rod and reel in this area.
John DeBellis	North Carolina	Gill net pressure in our rivers and creeks is decimating multiple fisheries in NC. Please vote to keep the Neuse and Pamlico closed to gill nets. In fact all estuaries in NC should have similar restrictions. Thank you.
Mark Cable	North Carolina	Please start managing "our fish stocks" for the benefit of "All North Carolinians" and not putting the greater regulatory burden on "recreational fisherman". I have always lived in the "central piedmont" region of the state and have traditionally made "trips the coast" a few times a year with the expectation that I would be able to bring back some fish for the freezer. I support the "coastal economy" with my investment in "hotel rooms, restaurants, groceries, tackle, bait, gas, license fees, etc." I have not made a trip in the past few years, because I can't justify the expense for "one flounder, one red fish, one gray trout, one striped bass, etc.". I am hoping that in time the "economic impact" of anglers "across the state" will get more notice from those that regulate and are charged with managing "our fish stocks" for the benefit of "All North Carolina Citizens".
john allen	North Carolina	I am a recreational fisherman and I support keeping the gill net restrictions in the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers. The restrictions have had an obvious and positive effect on numerous fish populations that are under extreme pressure, including striped bass, flounder and speckled trout. It is not logical to adopt measures that will increase mortality on these species while plans and strategies are in place to reduce their mortality. Please protect our state's recreational fishery.
Dan Martin	North Carolina	The gill net restrictions currently in place for the Neuse and Pamlico rivers continues to be a significant benefit to the overall health of several fisheries. It should remain in effect and there should be a comprehensive plan to monitor the health of these stocks
Jack Staley	North Carolina	Please do not reopen the closed gill net areas. In fact, all creeks where speckled trout congregate in fall and winter months should be off limits to commercial fishing and the recreational limits should be reduced during this time of year.
Steve Toler	North Carolina	Please continue the closure of gill nets at the ferry lines in the Pamlico and Neuse rivers. This has had a substantial positive impact on the fishing in these areas. Both the quantity and quality of the fish such as the

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		speckled trout has drastically improved. Please do not allow these destructive and indiscriminate killing devices to be used in these critical nursery areas. The fish must be allowed to reproduce. This gill net closure should be made permanent.
Flint Harding III	North Carolina	<p>I voice strong support for restricting gill nets in the Neuse and keeping the nursery areas closed as a measure to rebuild fisheries and increase valuable tourism.</p> <p>When will the council finally stand up as support the long term health of NC fisheries?</p> <p>Flint Harding - [REDACTED]</p>
Robert Powell	North Carolina	<p>Gill net restrictions on the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers should be continued. To renew this netting would lead to harvest and discard of southern flounder, striped mullet, and speckled trout. Striped bass are already overfished. Continuing to not allow gill netting in those areas have already and will continue to give us increased bait and more and larger striped bass. Rob Powell, [REDACTED], NC</p>
Stuart Creighton	North Carolina	<p>Good evening all,</p> <p>At your meeting next week, one item on the agenda is clearly the most important; that being the final vote on Striped Bass Amendment 2. Every time this amendment has come up for a vote, the commercial industry has pushed to have the nets returned to the restricted areas above the ferry lines on the Neuse and Tar/Pamlico Rivers. Correctly, the votes did not go their way during the process, including through Departmental and Legislative review. Their efforts continued with them appointment of a new MFC, and nearly succeeded during the August meeting. Because of an eventual tie vote, final approval was delayed until November.</p> <p>If you vote to significantly change the plan by returning gill nets to these areas, you will have to start over. The revised plan will have to go out for public comment and administrative review for a second time.</p> <p>There are numerous reasons why this Commission should not give in to the commercial interests and should keep the net ban in place.</p> <p>The most important of those is because IT IS WORKING!!! Anglers in both systems are reporting catches of more and larger stripers. Though anecdotal, there are more than enough observations to indicate that the restrictions are having the desired effect.</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>One of the stated goals of this amendment is to return sufficient mature female fish to these systems so that natural, self sustaining spawning can occur. It should be noted here that stripers are long lived, and are not fully mature until they are approximately nine years old. The population in the CSMA is severely truncated with most fish being 3 or 4 years old. Very few fish exist that are 6 years old, and even fewer have survived to the critical 9 year age. You can't make nine year old fish in three years. These restrictions must continue long enough so that the stripers in the system can reach the desired level of maturity.</p> <p>Returning gill nets to these areas will have harmful effects on numerous fisheries that are already in depleted conditions. River herring, sturgeon, southern flounder, striped bass, striped mullet, American shad, and speckled trout are either collapsed, depleted, or experiencing some degree of overfishing. It would be astonishingly irresponsible to return gill nets to these areas thus putting each of these fisheries under greatly increased pressure. Representatives of the industry have stated publicly that their intended targets in these areas will include shad, mullet, and speckled trout. Why would any commissioner vote to allow the intentional targeting of multiple fish species that are already in trouble?</p> <p>Though not an original goal of these restrictions, the benefit to numerous other species in these areas cannot be understated. Menhaden, red drum, and even tarpon have each been on the rebound since the restrictions have been enacted. While there are numerous other variables at play, the importance of these upriver areas cannot be underestimated.</p> <p>Finally, despite their claims to the contrary, commercial fishermen are not having the difficulties that they claim. River specific data from DMF clearly shows that they are catching more trout and mullet than ever, and that the harvest value to each fisherman is also increasing. So, they are getting what they need without having to work upriver.</p> <p>For all the reasons above, I urge you to vote to continue the upriver gill net restrictions.</p>
Dennis O'Driscoll	North Carolina	Please do not allow gill nets in the rivers under consideration. They will deplete targeted stocks and anything else that happens to swim past, this is a common sense response to severely depleted stocks.
John McQuaid	North Carolina	I support keeping The gillnet ban in effect down to the ferry lines. I also support banning gillnets further down stream. The gillnet ban is working. it's helping striped bass, and it's helping other threatened fisheries. It's critical to keep gillnets and trawling out of our nursery areas.

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Nathan McElmurry	North Carolina	<p>Please do NOT remove the gill net restrictions on the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers. The restriction created an excellent sample set of what our fisheries could be if properly protected. The DEQ's finest hour will be when these nets are banned everywhere and forever. Until then the quality of our fisheries will remain embarrassingly far behind all other coastal US states. You have the chance now to start turning that around.</p>
PAUL SCHUBERT	North Carolina	<p>I urge you not to allow gillnetting in the Neuse and Pamlico estuaries! In fact I urge you to ban gillnetting altogether in NC waters!</p> <p>Recreational fishing catches in NC waters has continued to decline in the forty years I have been living here. I have a house on Topsail Beach and I rarely fish anymore because many of the fish are just gone. Consider me times the thousands that feel this way and no longer spend money supporting the businesses that support recreational fishing. I now spend my fishing dollars in the Keys and Bahamas when I would rather be here. It is so sad that our great state has allowed such a thing to happen.</p> <p>If you do not consider the above consider the inadvertent bycatch damage. I have seen lengths of gillnets that have broken free when other animals get entrapped. I witnessed 30 cormorants that were drowned after being caught in a gillnet when it washed up on a Neuse River beach. I have rescued cormorants that were tangled in gillnets. Consider the damage done to other species including endangered sea turtles, birds and non-targeted fish species. Consider what has not been reported to you.</p> <p>Is all of this damage worth it? If you consider the real facts you have to say no.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Paul Schubert</p>
Ralph Haddock	North Carolina	<p>I write this to communicate my informed conclusions on Amendment 2 of the Estuarine Striped Bass FMP as it pertains to the gill net ban upstream from the "ferry crossing lines."</p> <p>My experience in the past three years is that the removal of the nets has had a positive affect on the striped bass population in this area. There is also a marked increased the population of speckled trout, flounder, menhaden and jumping mullet. This is based on my catch history and sightings and reports from others who fish these waters.</p> <p>Based on the above, I know that the net ban should continue in the identified water.</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		Data will show that eliminating that gear further downstream will show positive results for striped bass and other species as well.
Dylan Cox	North Carolina	I'm a 19year old commercial fisherman that enjoys the water,I don't understand how the DMF would consider taking the rivers away from us to be inland waters the DMF should be looking ways to attract young fisherman instead of taking away everything from the fishing industry.Thank you to the commission that looks to improve commercial fishing not to the ones to only take. This is our livelihood that the commission is constantly taking commercial fishing is my dream don't keep taking away my dream!!
Dave Farmer	North Carolina	<p>Dear Commission members,</p> <p>Thank you for your service!</p> <p>While the proclamation was originally implemented to protect a couple of good striped bass year classes through a ferry line gill net closure in both systems, it has had a very positive effect on the abundance of other species. Please do not ignore this fact when How this can be ignored when deciding how to manage these system.</p> <p>Re-opening these areas will encourage the harvest and discards of several designated overfished species including Southern flounder, striped mullet, striped bass, and now, speckled trout. It does not make any sense for fishery managers to adopt measures that will increase mortality on the above species while plans and strategies are in place to reduce their mortality.</p> <p>By keeping these closures it will be a win win for commercial fisherman, recreational fisherman and the Commission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increases the amount of money spent by recreational fisherman in NC because of larger and more striped bass in the protected areas. - The protected areas function as nurseries for many species i.e. menhaden, redfish, flounder and stripers. This benefits commercial and recreation fisherman, - Increased bait in the protected areas has shown more Tarpon present. This will increase the amount of money spent by recreational fisherman that will hire guides to fish for these awesome fish.

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>- The protected areas should be permanent. This will reduce the time and effort the Commission has to spend on enacting new regulations because the protected areas will produce stable fish populations.</p> <p>- The reduced interactions with endangered species is a win for the Commission and should be noted as an accomplishment.</p> <p>Please do not undo the protections, make them permanent. NC has the opportunity to be a world class recreational fishery that can compete with FL, TX and LA. That is big money for NC.</p> <p>Thank you, Dave Farmer</p>
Randy Bayne	North Carolina	<p>I am a [REDACTED]. We depend on commercial fisherman to supply us with Striped Mullet for bait. The Outer Banks is one of the biggest surf fishing destinations in the world. One of the main baits used is striped mullet. Tourism, and commercial fishing are our main source of income.</p> <p>If the fishermen decide to stop coming to our island, it will effect not only the tackle shops but also the real estate industry, as well as the service industries (IE) realty companies, hotels and restaurants and more. Any changes made to the regulations in reference to the commercial fishing of striped mullet will have a direct negative effect on our island.</p>
Lisa McCracken	North Carolina	<p>Please do not lift the gill net ban, extend the gill net ban to the Tie-Down line. I live on [REDACTED] in Craven county and have seen a tremendous increase in gill net activity this fall. There are as many as 6 to 8 boats all hours of the day. Living on the creek gives me the opportunity to witness the exploitation of our valuable resources and this is not sustainable. Clubfoot creek is not a vast body of water with infinite resources but a tributary of the Neuse River. Action has to be taken before it's too late. All of the fish in our creek are vitally important and their absence due to overfishing would cause the collapse of our coastal ecosystem. The primary target in Clubfoot Creek are female striped mullet for the value of their roe. For this reason, striped mullet are being removed too fast and the population of spawning stock biomass is well below the level for a sustainable fishery. Stock assessment predicts future declines in the population. Please act now and keep the gill net ban in place above the ferry line and extend the ban to the Tie-down line. Ignoring the data will surely result in negative consequences that will be irreversible for our coastal habitat.</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
John Baker	North Carolina	<p>Marine game fishes have shown significant improvement with the prior gill net restrictions above the ferry lines. From menhaden to redfish, species are showing increased number and size. The tarpon run from New Bern to Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present at the rivers mouths. Numerous overfished species that frequent the nursery habitats are either closed or under significant restrictions for a reason, and it would be irresponsible to bring nets back in these marine systems. Fact is, you are responsible for protection these resources.</p> <p>River Herring – fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – endangered, ITP for all interactions, requires observation in large mesh gill net fisheries for shad and flounder.</p> <p>Striped Bass – CSMA stock so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have also indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Keeping the nets out of these places may serve to meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing, but is not overfished. Though they have not said much publicly about it, trout will be one of, if not their primary target, with gill nets upriver.</p> <p>Keep gill nets out of the rivers and estuaries. Enough is enough.</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		Thank you, John Baker
Allen Jernigan	North Carolina	The Neuse River above the ferry line needs to stay closed to gill nets. The fishery in that river has absolutely exploded since the net ban. If anything we need to be expanding net bans to other areas. These net bans above the ferry lines have increased net pressure in other areas such as the New River and Bay River. Why don't we just move to a commercial hook and line fishery for speckled trout, black drum, red drum, spots etc???? Florida and Louisiana both manage their commercial speckled trout fishery as a hook and line fishery with a 75 fish limit, the same as here in NC. With dwindling stocks and all of the asinine decisions being made by the MFC and NCDMF, it is past time to make the hard decisions once and for all. Get rid of all estuarine gill nets, let flounder, rockfish, speckled trout, hard heads and the rest recover. ONE GEAR is the common denominator in all of these fisheries with problems and it is not the recreational angler.
Bradley Smith	North Carolina	<p>We have seen how the rock fish population has increased slightly when the nets and other gear staying below the ferry lines. This helps shows how this helps the fish population. Also shows how nets should be pulled completely out of the water as well. Was sad to see so many ██████ killed in ██████ back in September and left from dead when folks were targeting flounder with the nets.</p> <p>Just to add more. I'd love to see a size limit added to trout to enhance the population as well. Keeping a 4 fish limit but only being able to keep one fish over 24".</p> <p>Redfish I'd also love to see NC limits changed to keep 2 fish. Only difference is make them 18"-24"</p>
Dennis Symons	North Carolina	Our fisheries in the sounds and adjoining waterways have been deteriorated by trawling and gill nets. Every other state recognizes the danger nets and trawlers do to inland waters fisheries. Our Great State of North Carolina would benefit both environmentally and financially by removing these obstacles that are not allowed anywhere else in the southeast. We would have the Greatest fishery in the US, Just think how many people would come to NC to fish. Bringing in more tax dollars and better paying jobs. Thanks For listening.
Toni Jernigan	North Carolina	Again I see videos of fish totaling much more than the 75 a day limit that were caught in nets. One particular video had 15 boxes of trout in one single day of "fishing". The red drum by catch in that video was more than allowed as well. Why do the recreational anglers keep getting cuts to allow this type of fishery to continually decimate the fish population? Most of those net fishermen hold a full time job and supplement that pay with whatever pennies they can get for the sale of our resource. Do away with the nets inshore and those guys can

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		either catch them hook and line or not at all. That is the most simplest of solutions that would see our fishery grow by leaps and bounds!
David Skipper		You guys plain and simply know that the gill nets are the main problem with all the spicies of fish common sense should tell you guys to take the gill nets a couple miles off shore would help the commercial and recreational fisherman sometimes you have to think of the people rather than your bank accounts
JAMES FLETCHER	North Carolina	<p>A request the Commission consider allowing private hatcheries to supplement spawning stocks for the coastal sounds.</p> <p>NOAA has granted \$ 750.000 in funds to Cultural & Natural Resources https://www.wnct.com/local-news/crystal-coast/nc-aquariums-receiving-part-of-750000-grant-from-noaa/ These funds are intended to begin Aquaculture and hatcheries, This is a different agency from marine fisheries {same church different pew }</p> <p>Marine Fisheries should allow private hatchery to compete and produce larva & fertilized eggs to supplement natural spawn.</p> <p>A private hatchery AT PRESENT IS NOT POSSIBLE DUE TO REGULATORY RESTRAINTS.</p> <p>The request is for the Marine Fisheries Commission to create / offer a clear path for a private hatchery to be built / utilized in NORTH CAROLINA.</p> <p>PRIVATE HATCHERY IS NEEDED BECAUSE NORTH CAROLINA AGENCIES REFUSE TOO ADDRESS WATER QUALITY!</p> <p>Fisheries are affected by water quality.</p> <p>NO agency addresses chlorine being used in SO CALLED waste water treatment.</p> <p>NO agency addresses man made plastics PFAB'S passing through waste water plants.</p> <p>NO agency addresses man made pharmaceuticals affecting fish reproduction & growth, EXAMPLE: CAMP LEJEUNE MARINE BASE.</p> <p>This case WITH COMMISSION SUPPORT offers a funding method to support a private hatchery.</p> <p>Marine Fisheries Commission could at least offer a clear method for a private hatchery to supplement natural spawn.</p> <p>NORTH CAROLINA IS BLESSED TO HAVE ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST AQUACULTURE INDUSTRIES ALREADY DOING BUSINESS IN THE STATE.</p> <p>PLEASE allow a clear path for a private hatchery to compete and help restock the waters of NORTH CAROLINA.</p> <p>James Fletcher [REDACTED]</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Steven Craven	North Carolina	I want to make clear my thoughts on the possibility of gill nets being allowed again on the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers not only no on that thought but gill nets be banned completely. Represent the majority of people which is the sports fishery industry.
Jeff Martin	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-</p>

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Final 11/14/22
November 2022 MFC Business Meeting

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Brandon Martin	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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Chris West	North Carolina	<p>I truly believe in sustaining fish populations for the best interest of the fish themselves and not either use group. That said, the fishing east of the current moratorium lines has been sub par at best this year while the fishing inland of those ferry lines has been outstanding. It may have to do with the lack of rain but most feel it has to do with the lack of commercial pressure so I think it's best to keep folks from netting west of the ferries.</p>
Kenny Martin	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased</p>

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Brady Martin	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-</p>

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Noah Stroud	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p>

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Shannon Tripp	North Carolina	I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-

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Christian Ruiz	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p>

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Corbett Cummings	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas</p>

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Austin Rouse	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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Tyler Smith	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the</p>

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Dylan Rouse	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p>

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Tommy Williams	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p>

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Brandon White	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p>

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Wade Howell	North Carolina	<p>am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p>

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Franky Smith	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p>

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Wilbur Vitols	North Carolina	<p>Born in North Carolina, I have fished its inland and coastal waters for over 60 years and have been witness to countless changes in both quantities and quality of the many species harvested for recreational and commercial purposes from Wilmington to the Northern Outer Banks.</p> <p>Moving to New Bern in 1993, I began fishing the [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] and it's many tributaries. Starting in 2005 I had witnessed a true decline in the numbers of certain species. In particular trout, stripers, slot redfish, and several others. Certainly we had some harsh winters, many hurricanes, hot weather fish kills and other natural factors during the last 25+ years.</p> <p>Now, we have had milder winters the past 2 years and that has helped many species to recover, and it has resulted in some of the best fishing in nearly 30 years but it would be foolish to overlook the establishment of the net ban and the positive effect it has had particularly for the Neuse River. This year there were more bait fish above the Minnesott Ferry and more game fish species caught than one can recollect.</p> <p>Although I am not certain that the current policy for striped bass and flounder are truly founded on undeniable "science" and hard facts, I must come to the conclusion by simple observation that the net ban above the Minnesott Ferry and in the Pamlico and Tar Rivers has helped the fish populations thrive and benefit by allowing them to follow the food source up the tributaries. This has apparently resulted in the best fishing for the increased number of trout, and the breeding stock of red drum and even tarpon in many years.</p> <p>While, in my opinion, the jury is still out on the effectiveness of the striper policy and, in particular the flounder policy, where we seem to carrying the load for our neighboring states, I do believe we should keep the net ban in place. I urge the commission to keep it in place in the current locations so that stocks can continue to</p>

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		<p>increase and be responsibly used by both recreational and commercial fishermen.</p> <p>Thank you</p> <p>Wilbur Vitols New Bern, NC</p>
Stacy Jackson	North Carolina	Please consider changing the size limit of speckled trout but not the limit. We already have a limit amount on drum and flounder of one. Thanks for your consideration.
Jon Doe	North Carolina	<p>I am an Inshore charter captain on hatteras island, and also gill net fish. I am on the water everyday. And quite frankly know more about what's going on with the fishery than anybody. This coming from a commercial background , the gill nets have to get out of the pamlico sound. I'm as guilty as anyone but when we are harvesting 4-8lb breeder trout all winter, and by the way nobody on the commercial side stops at 75 fish, the fishery will go downhill every year. Until it's finally gone. Action to remove the nets must start soon. I have charter fishing as my main source of income, but it is sad to see what's going on here in my backyard. Look at Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. We could have what they have but we continue to want to kill every last living thing in a net. I'm scared our societies youth in NC may never get to catch a redfish or trout if this overfishing continues. And this is coming from someone who 100% supports gill nets. Gotta get em out of our estuaries.</p>
James Holloway	North Carolina	<p>I am in opposition to The NC Marine Fisheries Commission allowing commercial netters to operate above the ferry line into the the upper stretches of the Neuse River. The years of not allowing nets has improved the overall condition of the fisheries, and recklessly allowing the nets to come back and indiscriminately kill and waste the resource is unthinkable. The resource belongs to the people of NC, and not to just the few commercial operators as they would like to have it. It is also unsettling that after you publish a decision (like the last vote iteration where it was decided to keep the striper moratorium in place and the nets out above the ferry lines) that the decision is able to be challenged for revisiting so often. For the sake of the river and the fishery you are charged with managing, do not let the netters back in to destroy what we have.</p>
Jonathan Bottoms	North Carolina	<p>Thanks for your service on this committee. I know this would be a tough job. I have been fishing for over 50 years and I truly believe that recreational fishermen will bring a lot more revenue into our state than commercial fishermen. If the state would not allow nets in our rivers and sounds that would create so many jobs in the hotels and restaurants, more guides. Taxes on all that will be brought, gas food baits and tackle. Take nets out of the river, creeks, and sounds and out them in the ocean Their would be so many fish in the state waters that there would be so many more fishermen coming to our state to fish.</p> <p>Thanks for your time.</p>

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		<p>Just think about it for a minute.</p>
David Sneed	North Carolina	<p>The Draft Estuarine Striped Bass FMP Amendment 2 clearly states, in regard to the Neuse and Pamlico river stock:</p> <p>Stock status is not available for the other North Carolina stocks due to continuous stocking efforts. However, modeling indicates that these stocks are depressed to an extent sustainability is unlikely under any fishing mortality.</p> <p>DMF Biologist Charlton Godwin stated in his comments at the August MFC meeting that significant mixing of the Albemarle-Roanoke striped bass stock is occurring with the Pamlico and Neuse river stock. This should be an obvious red flag that the allowance of additional gill net effort on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers will not just impact the rebuilding of the Pamlico and Neuse river striped bass stock, but it would adversely affect the A-R stock as well, which is both overfished with overfishing occurring. Godwin stated the transient A-R fish visiting the Neuse and Pamlico rivers are returning to the A-R system for spawning.</p> <p>At its February 2022 business meeting, the MFC passed by a supermajority a motion to remove options 2.B. and 2.C. from draft Appendix. Thus, allowing gill netting above the ferry lines was not an option in the final Draft Estuarine Striped Bass Amendment 2 that was presented to the public and legislature.</p> <p>The Striped Mullet Stock Assessment and Scoping Document also present clear reasoning against removing the current gill net restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2022 stock assessment indicates overfishing is occurring in the striped mullet fisheries and the North Carolina striped mullet stock is overfished. • The North Carolina Fishery Reform Act of 1997 requires management end overfishing and achieve a sustainable harvest. • To reach these goals within the 10-year time period, conservative management measures require a 20—33% reduction in total removals from 2019 landings.

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		<p>DMF staff also knows that any additional gill net effort on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers would have a negative impact on the rebuilding plan for Southern flounder, which is both overfished with overfishing occurring, through directed harvest, legal and/or illegal, and additional regulatory discard mortality. Gill netters are very adept at modifying gear and methods to circumvent rule as we have seen on multiple occasions over the years. Re-opening the rivers to large mesh, or only small mesh, above the ferry lines will result in additional flounder mortality, juvenile and adult fish, which will further impede the rebuilding plan for Southern flounder and would require reopening the FMP to address the additional removals.</p> <p>Please consider these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why has a commissioner pushed for regulation that will encourage the additional harvest of an overfished species whose stock needs a reduction in total removals - striped mullet? • Why would other commissioners support a motion that would encourage the additional harvest of multiple overfished species- striped mullet, striped bass and Southern flounder? • Why is the Commission considering rule change without a reliable way of monitoring bycatch in gill net fisheries due to complete compliance failure in the ITP observer program? <p>Faced with these questions, any commissioner who votes to approve the removal of the river gill net ferry line closure in November would be guilty of abdicating their duty to the citizens of North Carolina to manage our coastal resources sustainably and without overfishing.</p> <p>Doing so will implicate not only the Commission, and individual commissioners, but also the Division in this mismanagement. As an overfished stock, or a stock undergoing overfishing, both in the case of striped mullet, the Division is responsible for making management recommendations for which a supermajority vote of the Commission is required to overrule the Division's recommendations. The Division can and should give the management recommendation that the rivers stay closed to gill netting at the ferry lines. It is the responsible action to take.</p> <p>In fact, the Division should recommend extending the river closures to the Tie-Down Line to further protect and enhance recovery of both striped mullet, striped bass and Southern flounder through additional area closures.</p>

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		<p>The Division has listed Area Closures as a possible management recommendation presented in the Striped Mullet Scoping Document. It would be totally appropriate, and responsible, for the Division to support maintaining the current gill net restrictions, and extending them to include all of the Neuse, Pamlico and Bay rivers, in the face of the critical need to rebuild these important fisheries. We do not believe, as some commissioners, that this "science experiment" has in anyway run its course or that biologists have even begun to answer the questions we had hoped they would when the restrictions were put into place in 2019. The original reason for the ferry line closure was to determine if fish from an extraordinarily successful striped bass spawn in 2015 could be saved until they were old enough to possibly help jump start the spawning stock in the CSMA. The Division even agreed with the concept at the time. We do not know yet what the impact was on the number of striped bass that tried to spawn in each of our systems.</p> <p>But here's the rub, anglers, through anecdotal reports, and commercial fishermen through Trip Ticket landings data, have reported improvements in other popular species, including speckled trout and red drum, since the ferry line restriction was implemented. Commercial landings data show a steady upward trend in nearly all these species. How does one explain this?</p> <p>Here's one explanation: all of these species spend a portion of their lives in the rivers before becoming mature. Could it be that the net discards from gill nets that were eliminated when the nets were removed up-river, were allowed to develop to maturity and a legal size, adding more fish to the legal portion of its population? Another explanation is that the net closure has been good for the stocks being evaluated. That would be something. You have to ask yourself, who would be opposed to answering these questions?</p> <p>Our DMF biologists have not even had time to consider all of the questions, like, could it be that the upper estuarine parts of our rivers are where many species develop and "grow up"? Could it be that the net closure is allowing more fish to develop and get older, thus weighing more and increasing in abundance?</p> <p>Our coastal rivers function as nursery areas for so many species and as these fish develop, they will eventually move east where nets are allowed. More fish for recreational anglers and commercial fishermen. The closure has created a sanctuary of sorts for estuarine species that utilize these areas as part of their life history. Think about it. Menhaden, mullets, flounder, striped bass, spot, croaker, shrimp, hard crabs, and many more depend on these areas in their development. Our coastal rivers should receive special attention based on that fact.</p>

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		<p>It will be hard to convince some fishers, even with the data and graphs, that the closure is improving commercial landings. But the data is, what the data is. Landings of most commercially targeted species have improved. All of our management strategies should perform this well.</p> <p>We cannot ignore the FACT that the major fisheries, certainly now, seem to be more productive in the rivers since the ferry line closures were established, based on catch data alone. Not to mention the new phenomenal growth in the recreational effort since Covid.</p> <p>Strong leadership is going to be required if the people of North Carolina are going to see the end of overfishing of important stocks like striped bass, striped mullet and Southern flounder. That strong leadership should start with a Division that is willing to stand against continued overexploitation and provide the strong guidance the Commission will need to make the right decisions to end overfishing and create truly sustainable stocks for these fisheries.</p> <p>We will be watching closely for that leadership from the Division and Commission this week.</p>
Jonathan Edwards	North Carolina	<p>Please do not allow gill nets back above the ferry lines. Striped bass populations are recovering slowly and allowing the gill nets to return above the ferry lines will only slow their recovery or reverse it. I have seen first hand dead striped bass with net marks that were dumped because they could not be sold. This will only get worse if the nets are returned above the ferry lines. I encourage you to push gill nets even further out to the tie down lines.</p> <p>Re-opening these areas will encourage the harvest and discards of several designated overfished species including Southern flounder, striped mullet, striped bass, and now, speckled trout. It does not make any sense for fishery managers to adopt measures that will increase mortality on the above species while plans and strategies are in place to reduce their mortality.</p>
Dannie Jones	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in</p>

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Noah Jones	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets</p>

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		<p>in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver- another reason to extend the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Extending the net closure to the Tie-Down Line will help meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing but is not overfished. Spotted Seatrout will be a primary commercial target if the gill net ban above the ferry lines is removed.</p> <p>It should be noted here that with all of these fisheries in decline, THERE ARE MULTIPLE COMPELLING REASONS TO EXTEND THE GILL NET RESTRICTIONS TO THE TIE-DOWN LINE.</p>
Mathew Jones	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p>

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		<p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p> <p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver- another reason to extend the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Extending the net closure to the Tie-Down Line will help meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing but is not overfished. Spotted Seatrout will be a primary commercial target if the gill net ban above the ferry lines is removed.</p>

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		It should be noted here that with all of these fisheries in decline, THERE ARE MULTIPLE COMPELLING REASONS TO EXTEND THE GILL NET RESTRICTIONS TO THE TIE-DOWN LINE.
Luke Jones	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly against Commissioner Cross's motion at the August-2022 MFC Meeting to re-open the rivers above the ferry lines to gill netting. At minimum, the gill net ban above the ferry lines needs to stay in place as part of Amendment 2 to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. I support extending the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>1) IT IS WORKING – This cannot be understated...there are numerous reports of larger and more striped bass in these areas. Though anecdotal, there are enough observations to demonstrate it is having the intended effect.</p> <p>2) BENEFITING OTHER FISHERIES – The lack of gill net pressure upriver of the ferry lines is allowing these areas to function as the nursery areas that they are. From menhaden to redfish, other species are showing increased number and size. This year's tarpon run to New Bern and Washington was one of the best ever, and certainly related to the increased bait that has been present upriver.</p> <p>3) SPECIES IN DECLINE – Numerous important species that frequent the habitats upriver are either closed or under significant restrictions. It would be irresponsible to bring nets back in to further interact with the following:</p> <p>River Herring – The fishery has collapsed, closed since 2005, and may never recover.</p> <p>Sturgeon – An endangered species that has an ITP for all interactions requiring observation in large and small mesh gill net fisheries.</p> <p>Striped Bass – The CSMA stock is so depleted that no level of harvest can be maintained. The ASMA/RRMA stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Data shows there is immigration of ASMA/RRMA fish to the CSMA Pamlico and Neuse Rivers with those fish returning to the ASMA/RRMA for spawning. Allowing gill nets in the CSMA is further depleting the ASMA/RRMA stock, which supports extending the gill net ban to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Southern Flounder – under a 72% reduction. Recreational anglers had a 30-day season in 2022, netters had a 5-day season. Putting nets back above the ferry lines will further deplete Southern flounder.</p>

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		<p>American Shad – depleted coastwide. Commercial fishermen have described it as one of their primary targets if nets are allowed back upriver- another reason to extend the closure to the Tie-Down Line.</p> <p>Striped Mullet – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is overfished with overfishing occurring. Commercial fishermen have indicated that this will be a primary target if their nets are allowed to return. Initial reports indicate that a 30% reduction in harvest will be needed. From the recent scoping period, area closures are a potential management option. Extending the net closure to the Tie-Down Line will help meet the needed harvest reductions.</p> <p>Speckled Trout – 2022 stock assessment shows that the fishery is experiencing overfishing but is not overfished. Spotted Seatrout will be a primary commercial target if the gill net ban above the ferry lines is removed.</p> <p>It should be noted here that with all of these fisheries in decline, THERE ARE MULTIPLE COMPELLING REASONS TO EXTEND THE GILL NET RESTRICTIONS TO THE TIE-DOWN LINE.</p>
Ted Vaden	North Carolina	<p>I strongly encourage the Commission to continue the restrictions on gill net fishing on the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers. The restrictions in place have worked in terms of increasing the viability of the striped bass population in our rivers, as evidenced in the numbers and size of the species since the restrictions went into effect. They have also had the ancillary effect of protecting other species in the rivers. The benefit is not just to recreational fishermen - although that is important - but also to the health of estuaries, the economic well-being of nearby communities and the legacy of the marine environment we leave to our children. Thank you.</p>
Christopher Elkins	North Carolina	<p>Mr. Chairman,</p> <p>I am Chris Elkins. Over the last two decades I have probably made ten public comments on striped bass; each comment urged the Commission to stave off the declines that were evident then and that continue today. The single pro conservation action short of a moratorium, removing gill nets above the ferry lines, has been the only action that has reversed the striped bass decline. Bringing the nets back makes no sense, given the declines of shad, striped mullet, flounder, speckled trout and other species they would kill. Moreover, given the success that lack of nets has had, the removal of nets at least out to the tie down line is a no brainer. The Divisions own observer data documents the bycatch of striped bass inside the tie down lines (this site does not allow the pasting of maps, etc.). If you want to expand the striped bass stock to its previous geographic range, you must extend the gill net moratorium to that range.</p>

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>On another note, a critical item has been lacking at these meetings from the Commission and the Division. They must articulate to fishermen of both sectors that when stocks recover, we cannot go back to the overgenerous fishing rules of the past that caused widespread declines. The Commission and the Division have been enablers to fishermen of both sectors for decades. For example, expanding the flounder fishery by granting additional pound nets is throwing gas on the fire. Just this week someone applied for a mile and a half of pound nets-are y'all really going to rubber stamp another pound net application? This would be especially egregious given the user conflicts of those locations.</p> <p>Chris Elkins PhD Gloucester, NC</p>
Lois Dail	North Carolina	<p>I am not in favor of the Delineation of Inland and Coastal Fishing Boundaries. My husband and I have enjoyed fishing in the [REDACTED] River and the [REDACTED] Sound this past year. I work for [REDACTED]. I have seen a decline in the fishing in the past 20 years that I have worked here. Please do not limit the boundaries for the fisherman. This could be detrimental to the commercial fishing industry.</p>
Russell Barclift	North Carolina	<p>the delineation of Inland and Coastal Fishing water boundaries does not need to be moved from it present place. This move would greatly diminish the commercial waterman from being able to make a living and deprive NC citizens of being able to purchase and consume NC fresh seafood.</p> <p>Russell Barclift [REDACTED]</p>

Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers

Context

On March 15, 2019, the North Carolina Marine Fisheries (MFC) issued a proclamation that required all fishing nets to be removed from:

- The Neuse River, upstream of the Minnesott Beach/Cherry Branch Ferry
- The Pamlico River, north of the Aurora Ferry

This proclamation is identified by the reference number M-6-2019. The rationale for that declaration was that deployment of any nets in that region would do irreparable damage to the Estuarine Striped Bass population in the Neuse River.

On November 10, 2020, Coastal Conservation Association, North Carolina Chapter, and 86 individuals filed a lawsuit in North Carolina Superior Court. This suit alleges that North Carolina has failed to regulate the state's fisheries for the benefit of all North Carolina residents. The Case Number is 20-CVS-1295.

An item has been added to the agenda of the MFC meeting of November 16 and November 17 2022 that would have the effect of reversing MFC Proclamation M-6-2019.

If the MFC reverses Proclamation M-6-2019, recreational fishing opportunities in the Neuse and Pamlico rivers will be severely, negatively and probably permanently impacted. This petition will be delivered to the MFC before the vote on the proposal.

Petition Statement

The people signing this petition hereby request that MFC Proclamation M-6-2019 **NOT** be reversed because:

1. The basis for proclamation M-6-2019 was the unsustainably poor status of the Estuarine Striped Bass population in the Neuse and Pamlico rivers.
2. No scientifically generated, peer reviewed and published data has been acquired since that proclamation was issued that would justify such a reversal.
3. Since M-6-2019 was issued, the MFC published evidence that striped mullet is overfished. The presence of nets in the areas affected by M-6-2019 would further aggravate the problems in the Striped Mullet fishery.
4. Without such scientific evidence, the only remaining, potential justification for the reversal of M-6-2019 is pressure from stakeholders. Such a reversal would add evidence supporting the claims alleged in the lawsuit brought by CCA, and others, against the State of North Carolina in Wake County Superior Court as Case Number 20-CVS-12925.

Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers			
Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	TEZZY KNICKERBOCKER		<i>[Signature]</i>
2	Steve Haas		<i>[Signature]</i>
3	NORMA J. MORRA		Norma J. Morra
4	STEVEN TORRES		<i>[Signature]</i>
5	Philip EVANCHO		<i>[Signature]</i>
6	Julie Madsen		<i>[Signature]</i>
7	JUDY GATES		<i>[Signature]</i>
8	Joan Meutsch		<i>[Signature]</i>
9	Mary Hittner		<i>[Signature]</i>
10	Dawn Stewart		<i>[Signature]</i>
11	Urena W Roberts		<i>[Signature]</i>
12	William L. Cote		<i>[Signature]</i>
13	Marty ROSEN		<i>[Signature]</i>
14	Alexandra Kemendy		<i>[Signature]</i>
15	Judy Skelton		<i>[Signature]</i>
16	Pamela Saupé		<i>[Signature]</i>
17	Patricia A. Mondt		<i>[Signature]</i>
18	Pamela J. Gastick		<i>[Signature]</i>
19	James R. Coney		<i>[Signature]</i>
20	LINDA S. Boryk		<i>[Signature]</i>
21	GORDIE PHENAS		<i>[Signature]</i>
22	David Archer		<i>[Signature]</i>
23	Janet Archer		<i>[Signature]</i>
24	George Leslie		<i>[Signature]</i>
25	JIM BRADSON		<i>[Signature]</i>
26	Martha Dzioba		<i>[Signature]</i>
27	RITA A. SHAKE		RITA A. SHAKE
28	Joe Fogleman		<i>[Signature]</i>
29	Gregory Wood		<i>[Signature]</i>
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Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers			
Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	Doug Ebeling		Doug Ebeling
2	J. A. Mahan		J. A. Mahan
3	DAVID WATTS		David Watts
4	Jamey Maso		Jamey Maso
5	Bryan Aldrich		Bryan Aldrich
6	Terri Watts		Terri Watts
7	Paul Smedley		Paul Smedley
8	Heather		Heather
9	Steve Patti		Steve Patti
10	ARTHUR ANTONIO		Arthur Antonio
11	MARSHA MCCORMICK		Marsha McCormick
12	JAMES MCCORMICK		James N. McCormick
13	Kellie Horner		Kellie Horner
14	Garry Lippin		Garry Lippin
15	Jane Lippin		Jane Lippin
16	TOM GAUTHIER		Tom Gauthier
17	TOPP WAGNER		Topp Wagner
18	Grant Canton		Grant Canton
19	Chris Sayers		Chris Sayers
20	Henry Funderburk		Henry Funderburk
21	Jeremy Fizzell		Jeremy Fizzell
22	Jauch Sauls		Jauch Sauls
23	W. Buggi		W. Buggi
24	Matt Williams		Matt Williams
25	Maggie Isola		Maggie Isola
26	MARY Florence		Mary Florence
27	Guy Isola		Guy Isola
28	James Florence		James Florence
29	Nancy Hastings		Nancy Hastings
30	HORACE HASTINGS		Horace Hastings

Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers			
Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	MARYSHANNON TAYLOR	[REDACTED]	Mary Shannon Taylor
2	Rock [unclear]	[REDACTED]	Rock [unclear]
3	Robert Lynch	[REDACTED]	Robert Lynch
4	Scott Cleveland	[REDACTED]	Scott Cleveland
5	Ed Bugbosky	[REDACTED]	Ed Bugbosky
6	Karen Bugbosky	[REDACTED]	Karen Bugbosky
7	Stephen Dentico	[REDACTED]	Stephen Dentico
8	Alan Hart	[REDACTED]	Alan Hart
9	Doug MORGAN	[REDACTED]	Doug Morgan
10	Colleen Morgan	[REDACTED]	Colleen Morgan
11	Dan SHUTTS	[REDACTED]	Dan Shuttles
12	Kathy Clay	[REDACTED]	Kathy Clay
13	Peter Clay	[REDACTED]	Peter Clay
14	PETER MARCHEL	[REDACTED]	Peter Marchel
15	Michael JABLON	[REDACTED]	Michael Jablon
16	NVA HINER	[REDACTED]	NVA Hiner
17	LAURA HINER	[REDACTED]	Laura Hiner
18	Wayne Moore	[REDACTED]	Wayne Moore
19	Michelle Moore	[REDACTED]	Michelle Moore
20	Stephan Griffin	[REDACTED]	Stephan Griffin
21	Manda Griffin	[REDACTED]	Manda Griffin
22	[unclear]	[REDACTED]	[unclear]
23	[unclear]	[REDACTED]	[unclear]
24	Brenda Huerra	[REDACTED]	Brenda Huerra
25	Carolee [unclear]	[REDACTED]	Carolee [unclear]
26	A. [unclear]	[REDACTED]	A. [unclear]
27	JAMES [unclear]	[REDACTED]	James [unclear]
28	DAVID [unclear]	[REDACTED]	David [unclear]
29	JEFF WALLER	[REDACTED]	Jeff Waller
30	Melinda [unclear]	[REDACTED]	Melinda [unclear]

Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers

Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers

Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	JAMES CARSON		[Signature]
2	Timothy Weld		[Signature]
3	Donald Simpson		[Signature]
4	Steve Burton		[Signature]
5	JASON MOORE		[Signature]
6	Tracy Dreesen		[Signature]
7	RON GREGSON		[Signature]
8	ALAN HARRUP		[Signature]
9	MARY HARRUP		[Signature]
10	Carol YUSKA		[Signature]
11	Jonathan Karsse		[Signature]
12	Patricia Hedt		[Signature]
13	MARIE GAGGINI		[Signature]
14	Frank Schmitt		[Signature]
15	Willy Roberts		[Signature]
16	Kelley Spartan		[Signature]
17	GUY PASCARE		[Signature]
18	[Signature]		[Signature]
19	Allen K. Lumb		[Signature]
20	Cheryl Schult		[Signature]
21	Harold Sturtevant		[Signature]
22	DEBRA GUSTAFSON		[Signature]
23	Cheryl Hard		[Signature]
24	JAMES J. HARRUP		[Signature]
25	James		[Signature]
26	Rhonda Miller		[Signature]
27	Don Dudley		[Signature]
28	Alan Harrup		[Signature]
29	Ethel Harrup		[Signature]
30	JEFF TAYLOR		[Signature]

Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers			
Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	Art Thinguldatud		Art Thinguldatud
2			
3	Mary Beth Craft		Mary Beth Craft
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5	Doug Benz		Doug Benz
6			
7	LARRY DEGLANDOO		Larry Deglandoo
8			
9	Lyn Hurst		Lyn Hurst
10	JAMES SPATHAROS		James Spatharos
11	WAYNE MASSETTI		Wayne Massetti
12	John McClain		John B. McClain
13	MICHAEL D. McKEEL		Michael D. McKeel
14	Michael Gunkle		Michael Gunkle
15	FRANK SPININGR		Frank Spingr
16	Geoffrey A. Castle		Geoffrey A. Castle
17	Gerald Manfredi		Gerald Manfredi
18	Kevin McKeel		Kevin McKeel
19	Michael Black		Michael Black
20	Eric Thinguldatud		Eric Thinguldatud
21	JOHN ROY		John Roy
22	Kevin Heydel		Kevin Heydel
23	Linda Heydel		Linda Heydel
24	DAN BEAUCAIN		Dan Beaucairn
25	BILL PENDLETON		Bill Pendleton
26	Dan Dudley		Dan Dudley
27	Lester W. Cable Jr		Lester W. Cable Jr
28	Steve Mint		Steve Mint
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Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers			
Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	STEVE ZDANOWICZ		[Signature]
2	GEORGE M. MARVELL		[Signature]
3	Rudy Heller		[Signature]
4	Tom Cuttrill		[Signature]
5	Bob Bruckner		[Signature]
6	Luke Kirkulac		[Signature]
7	Steve Burton		[Signature]
8	BILL CRAVEN		[Signature]
9	David Bluth		[Signature]
10	Tim Hergenroeder		[Signature]
11	Henry Frazer		[Signature]
12	JAY HINSON		[Signature]
13	Emmett To Wall		[Signature]
14	My [unclear]		[Signature]
15	[unclear]		[Signature]
16	[unclear]		[Signature]
17	[unclear]		[Signature]
18	[unclear]		[Signature]
19	[unclear]		[Signature]
20	Jim Samps		[Signature]
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Petition to Keep Gill Nets Out of Certain Areas of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers

Number	Name	Address	Signature
1	Bill Zimmerman	[REDACTED]	[Signature]
2	R Stan Choate		[Signature]
3	HARVEY PEE		[Signature]
4	Jim Carbaugh		[Signature]
5	Rocky CARTER		[Signature]
6	Matthew Wallin		[Signature]
7	STEVE BONDAREV		[Signature]
8	Van Parrish		[Signature]
9	Roger B. Brown		[Signature]
10	Scott Kimball		[Signature]
11	Bill Bunsarner		[Signature]
12	Bobby Aster		New Bern
13	DAVID ROUSE		New Bern
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