

First Name	Last Name	State/ Province	Comment
Don	Sheffield	North Carolina	Every week i seem to get notices of leases of the public bottom and water columns for use of commercial business. The total for this announcement is roughly 41 acres. How many acres of the public waters is the state allowed to lease? If we don't curtail the leasing of public land, soon the public will not be able to use the land that they own!
STEPHEN	TAYLOR	North Carolina	To Whom it May Concern: I am writing on behalf of Mandy Uticone in full support of y'all granting her approval for her proposed 5.30-acre Water Column lease. She has already been approved for an 8.5-acre bottom lease and this will just give her the additional water column area to grow her "CB Salts". This would not take up any additional new bottom. The argument that all the natural bottom is getting used up and the cages are ugly has been ongoing since I worked in the Southern District with Fisheries. The positives in this case certainly outweigh any possible negative effects. Mandy has put her money and time and effort into this lease and does it year-round. Wild oystermen go out and knock what they can during the season and make a decent living each season. With the amount of time and effort Mandy puts in (10 - 12 months a year) farm raising these oysters, she is entitled to having sales available to her year-round. If you've not tried her oysters, you need to, they're salty, clean and have a great taste only backing up the "Stump Sound" oyster's wonderful reputation known throughout the Southeastern US. I have been involved with oysters most of my career with Fisheries and have come to believe that farm-raised oysters, clams, and other shellfish is the way of the future. This process, done right is clean, and sustaining to the lease holder year after year. These oysters are also cleaning the waters in which they are grown and available to the public most months of the year. From what I understand, Mandy's lease is in a rural section of Onslow County and Spicer Bay (Everett's Bay) has traditionally been known as a great oyster growing area. Her lease is not in front of any high density neighborhoods that would complain about her cages, but near a rural farm. Mandy went to school and studied Aquaculture at Brunswick Community College then went on and got her degree from UNCW. She is out there doing her dream job and cares very deeply about how and what she is producing. I met Mandy after I retired from DMF and went to work for COS and Richard Cescelski. We both taught environmental sciences to school groups and about preserving and conserving our waters and how important estuaries are to our shellfish. Mandy is very aware of all these factors and she is doing a great job with this lease and raising these delicious oysters. I strongly recommend that Mandy's application be approved for this water column in this particular area where for now, commercial fishing is still appreciated and not looked upon as a eye-sore. Please grant her her lease. Thank you very much for your time. Stephen Taylor, Retired Fisheries Biologist Supervisor, Wilmington Office
Drew	Arndt	North Carolina	I was in favor and excited for the oyster farming as it first made headway. I think there is getting to be too much of a good thing. Our estuaries south of New River are not that big and no more of these leases should be approved. Our water is getting choked out to the point it is getting hard to maneuver while fishing or getting to fishing spots. Red drum are directly disturbed and several places they used to call home they will no longer come near it. It is structure they don't care for or the activity around it that is required. They are also an eyesore to our beautiful coast. Several leases already look like their cages are not even being used or thrown off to the side. At minimum the requirements need to be much farther from any land and make use of the middle of bigger bays which is what I thought the idea was from the beginning. Leave the area near marsh grass for natural oysters and marine life to not be disturbed.
Rennie	Clark jr	North Carolina	You guys gotta stop with these oyster cages in NC backwaters. I have lived here my whole life. You already have way to many of them in our marshes. Not only do they look horrible but they are blocking traditional fishing grounds. Fish have moved or been scared out of these NOW heavily trafficked areas. They have also been placed in bays that have natural sea grasses which also along with oysters filter the water. I am a full time guide and recreational angler in NC. The destruction to the natural bottom, blocking of waterways, and the horrific eyesore they are far outweighs any benefit from them. Topsail Island has proposed more of these leases and it should NOT be done....too many now. Stop destroying our natural resource for the little bit of money they generate. Our recreational fishing by tourists that come to our area to fish and enjoy NC backwaters far outweigh this little bit of money to NCDMF or our local economy. Capt Rennie Clark Jr.

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Dustin	Heath	North Carolina	I would like to oppose the proposed leases for future oyster farm development. I am not against the harvesting of oysters, but I am against growing non-native oysters in our already condensed back waters behind topsail and surf city, North Carolina. These farms are not only hazards to navigation, they strip the waters of many nutrients and leave behind sediment and create mud that smothers our native grasses and other native shell bottom in this area. As mentioned before, we are already very limited on the amount of backwater in this region. Putting more farms in place will result in more disturbance of the bottom with people constantly entering the forms for harvesting and checking the oysters. This is constantly disturbing the bottom with foot traffic and propeller traffic. Furthermore, Gamefish, such as drum, trout and flounder tend to stay away from these areas which is also usually prime locations for these fish. Putting these in place will disturb prime, breeding estuary for these fish, and could ultimately result in a decline of fish stocks as estuaries are swallowed up more and more by oyster farming. The gamefish in these waters are already struggling due to inshore netting, increased pressure, and dwindling waters due to filling in of our already small amount of backwater. There will also be trash left behind by the farmers, as well as a constant accumulation of trash from broken pins and oystering. By farming, a non-native, non-reproducing oyster, we are simply raping nutrients from the water. More oysters are not going to be replenished by these non breeding oysters. There is no benefit for the fish or wildlife of the estuary, it only benefits, the farmer and his pocketbook. Last, but not least, these farms are unsightly to look at and clutter up our shallow water shorelines. The only benefit that comes from oyster farming in this manner is the money that is made by the farmer. The ecosystem and those that live here and enjoy the water and what it has to offer are the ones that suffer at the expense of a few oyster operations exploiting the resource for nothing but monetary gain.
Sandra D	Cecelski	North Carolina	Oyster farming in North Carolina benefits our community in so many ways. It is an economic boost to our coastal economy by providing a delicious tasty seafood loved by all year round! Oysters help to clean the water too. They help to keep the water clear for other estuarine organisms that need clear water to survive. Oysters create habitat for other critters to live on and around such as trout and red drum. These are very important fish. I fully support the leases to be renewed and encourage more leases to be offered.
Sean	Colligan	Missouri	Regarding: Water Column Lease Application, Lease ID 21-060WC. I am an attorney representing Gretchen Colligan and Connie Everett, who are neighbors and riparian owners of single family homes located on several acres of land adjacent to the referenced proposed water column lease. My clients are concerned that the lease appears to cover the entirety of Mrs. Colligan's waterfront and a significant portion of Mrs. Everett's waterfront. To the extent that the lease would interfere with either of their properties' access to Alligator Bay and, through it, to the Intracoastal Waterway, it infringes on their riparian rights and they object to the granting of the lease. See N.C.G.S. § 113-202.1(b)(4) (any leased area "must not significantly interfere with the exercise of riparian rights by adjacent property owners including access to navigation channels..."). My clients have also noted that from their observation, the area of the proposed lease is frequently fished by recreational fishers. As such, the proposed lease may be inappropriate under N.C.G.S. § 113-202.1(b)(5) (leased area "must not be within an area traditionally used and available for fishing ... activities incompatible with the activities proposed by the leaseholder..."). Finally, please note that Mrs. Colligan's property includes a long dock extending over 350 feet through the marsh, adjacent to an old mosquito control channel, with a boat lift on the end of the dock. As such, the proposed lease may well be within 250 feet of a water-dependent shore-based structure, and the proposed lease may violate 15A N.C.A.C. § 0300201(a)(1). The presence of the dock and boat lift reinforces the need to preserve my clients' riparian rights of access to open water. While Mrs. Colligan and Mrs. Everett do not oppose the proposed lease in its entirety, they do oppose it unless provision is made for preserving the rights and complying with the requirements outlined above. Using the entirety of the water column over the entirety of the proposed lease area would significantly impair their riparian rights, and to that extent, they object to its issuance. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Sincerely, Sean W. Colligan, N.C. Bar No. [REDACTED]
David	Cignotti	North Carolina	I encourage the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries to support the proposed shellfish leases in Onslow County. Oyster farming offers our state the opportunity to provide jobs as well as improve the water quality of the coastal environment. I realize there is opposition to oyster farming, mainly due to the self-serving interest of those who believe the view from their waterfront homes is theirs's alone, never mentioning that the growth of mansions and docks on the waterways are far more visually damaging and polluting (impervious surfaces) than any oyster farm. If we encourage the orderly growth of the industry, we can become the "Napa Valley" of oysters while keeping any visual disturbances to a minimum. Let's grow both state's mariculture industry and wild oyster populations. Bottom line is, the more oysters in the waterways, the cleaner our waters for ALL of us to enjoy.

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Karen	Dunn	North Carolina	<p>Coastal Eco Adventures, LLC owned and operated by Captain Karen Dunn in Wrightsville Beach, NC, submits the following public hearing comments in support of Carolina Beach Oyster Company, LLC – Mandy Uticone, Lease Number 22-005WC, Onslow County, Waterbody/location-Spicer Bay (Everett Bay), Proposed Lease Size (acres) 5.30, Lease Type: Water Column. The shellfish industry has garnered unanimous support from NC lawmakers with the passage of Session Law 2019-37. On June 21, 2019, Governor Roy Cooper signed a bill into law that makes several critical changes to support the state’s shellfish aquaculture leasing program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carolina Beach Oyster Company, LLC – Mandy Uticone Lease Number 22-005WC supports the goals and objectives of S.B. 648 that was unanimously passed by the NC Senate in early May 2019, with the NC House doing the same on June 12, 2019.</li> <li>• The proposed lease poses no hazards to federal navigation.</li> <li>• Proposed Lease Number 22-005WC presents no threats to Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV).</li> </ul> <p>Restoring oysters in NC’s public trust waters offers environmental, economic, social, and cultural benefits not only for coastal communities, but for the entire state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental benefits of oyster reefs include improved water quality, habitats for fish and other aquatic life, accumulation of marine biotoxins, help prevent algal blooms and provide shoreline protection from storms. A single adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons per day.</li> <li>• In 2019, North Carolina’s shellfish industry contributed \$27 million in economic impact and supported 532 jobs.</li> <li>• The 2019 North Carolina Strategic Plan for Shellfish Mariculture, mandated by the NC Legislature, has set goals of a \$100 million shellfish industry in North Carolina that supports 1,000 jobs by 2030.</li> <li>• Senate Bill 257 directed the North Carolina Policy Collaboratory to work in conjunction with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and other relevant stakeholder groups to provide conceptual plans and recommendations for the economic development and promotion of the State’s shellfish industry.</li> <li>• The NC Oyster Trail is a state-supported tourism and educational marketing effort highlighting oyster farms, restaurants and conservation programs throughout NC. The Oyster Trail supports additional ancillary job opportunities, including my educational tour business, Coastal Eco Adventures.</li> <li>• Carolina Beach Oyster Company, LLC – Mandy Uticone Lease Number 22-005WC supports the goals and objectives of the NC State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) that promotes and provides vital support for women and minority-owned businesses across NC’s rural communities.</li> <li>• In Onslow County, the NC Estuarine Research Reserve’s Permuda Island in Stump Sound presents archaeological evidence dating the earliest occupation to 300 B.C. by Native Americans. NC’s abundant shellfish species sustained generations of Native Americans for centuries and continue to contribute to our cultural heritage today.</li> </ul> <p>There is brewing controversy surrounding shellfish leases in some of NC’s sounds and estuaries claiming “unsightly water column oyster farm infrastructure” will threaten real estate, development, and the tourism industry, as some waterfront property owners infer. However, it is the continuing degradation of water quality from incompatible land uses, overharvesting, and intensive coastal development that is the real threat to our public trust waters. The growth of the shellfish mariculture industry can support the sustainable development of our coast, as oyster farming represents an addition of oysters to our sounds and estuaries that reduces harvest pressure on wild shellfish stocks, increases water filtration, mitigates nutrient loading, and supports enhanced biodiversity via the provision of structurally complex habitat (meaning both the oysters themselves, as well as, potentially, the bag/rack gear used to hold oysters). These are ecosystem services somewhat unique to shellfish farming among other plant and animal crops. (North Carolina Strategic Plan for Shellfish Mariculture: A Vision To 2030 - Final Report to The North Carolina General Assembly, December 30, 2018). Enhancing oyster development in the sounds and estuaries of NC will only have positive effects on tourism, real estate values, and the coastal economy. The 10-acre size limitation, the known environmental and economic benefits of shellfish leases provide a case that oyster farming in NC’s public trust waters is a reasonable use for the greater good. I urge NCDEQ-DMF to approve Carolina Beach Oyster Company, LLC – Mandy Uticone Lease Number 22-005WC. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this beneficial and compatible coastal industry.</p>

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Arun	Baskaradoss	North Carolina	Hello, This communication is in regards to Lease: 21-060WC and Lease: 20-006WC. The issue, aside from unsightly oyster farms which can be as close to shore as 200ft on habited parts of the watershed, is that there have been no environmental impact studies done. There is also no requirement for the farmers to be bonded so after storm management will likely fall on homeowners when they wash ashore. Normal operations will likely disrupt wildlife and impact fishing as well as posing a hazard to navigation. Again, my concern is the potential for negative environmental impact and hazard to navigation. What is the process to oppose these Leases? Thanks! Arun, [REDACTED]
Rick	Sprouse	North Carolina	Regarding Lease: 21-060wc and 21-006wc. I live at [REDACTED], North Topsail Beach, NC and I live in Aligator Bay. I strongly oppose due to boating and fishing restrictions that this would create. Big time safety problem as well.
Matthew	Littleton	North Carolina	The proposed lease near Bogue inlet by Hershall Kevin Brown would be a detriment to everyone using that area except him. The proposed site sits directly in the channel for travel between the two entry/exit points of the bay. This would limit commercial fisherman, recreational anglers, recreational boaters, and duck hunters from accessing the bay in the most traditional manner. No manner of travel into the bay is safer than right where this lease is proposed. The proposed site also would block large amounts of access to Huggins Island. The shoreline that the proposed lease will be sitting against is one of the easiest and most convenient places to access the island. I have no doubt that the proposed site was chosen because of the ease of access, water, and proximity to open shoreline, but public water and one of the most popular bays in the area used by so many from both Onslow and Carteret county should not be restricted and essentially privatized. The comments made by multiple state agencies and officials attached on the NC DEQ website all make note of the popularity of the bay and the area at every level of user group. This lease will interfere greatly with access to Dudley Island Bay, Huggins Island, and many other activities. Shellfish leases should be limited to low traffic areas and then should be limited to open water, not winding marsh channels.
Josh	Johnson	North Carolina	I am throughly against the proposed lease in Dudley island bay against Huggins island. That area borders a state park, and is used by man recreational and commercial boaters as it currently sits. The proposed lease would block access to the state park land areas on that side of the island and impede a the existing channel and a large portion of the waters in the bay. This area also serves as a scenic trail for kayakers coming from Swansboro and cedar point. The lease would defeat the purpose of the scenic trail which navigates the waters behind hammocks beach state park and Huggins island. Thank you, Josh
Matthew	Liscomb	North Carolina	I'm Asking you nicely to Please stop this shellfish lease from Happening. I am a crab fisherman and where they are talking about putting this is the only place I can navigate back There at low tide. I think there's plenty over places to Grant a lease instead of a channel for fisherman. Please reconsider.
Josh	Black	North Carolina	An individuals use should not take precedent over that of the residents of the state. Boats, fisherman both private and commercial use that area. Disagree vehemently with this.
Jeffrey	Cronk	North Carolina	I am a professional guide and long time commercial fisherman here in Onslow County. Although I have no issues with water column leases when placed in a location that will not affect major recreational traffic and fishing, I do have a big concern with the proposed water column lease 22-042WC which is proposed to be positioned in Dudley's Island Bay on the South Eastern side of Huggin's Island. The only channel deep enough for boats to safely enter and exit Dudley's Island Bay on a good low tide is from the channel along the island in the NE corner of the bay. I and dozens of fisherman and even more kayakers run utilize that channel to access the public waters for fishing, boating, clamming, etc and as can be seen from the satellite image of the proposed water column lease in that bay, the proposed lease 22-042wc extends all the way across the entry channel to the mud flat near the small upside down Y shaped marsh and oyster bed. This will block access to the waters of Dudley's Island at low tide for the public use and worse, any boater in there already will not be able to exit at low tide safely due to the lease blocking the channel. My personal cell is [REDACTED] if someone with the NCDMF would like to step onboard my boat and run the channel on low tide to show my concern.
Cesar	Collazo	North Carolina	I am against lease 22-042WC. The proposed location would severely affect recreational boating access the Dudleys Island bay.
Mike	Coleman	North Carolina	If this goes through you are taking the only channel us locals have at low tide to enter and exist the area safely..please reconsider

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William	Sally	North Carolina	The proper 22-042wc lease is in a location that is used for primary navigation for vessels in and around the Bogue Inlet and white oak river area. This lease would pose a navigation hazard due to its positioning and location along Huggins Island. This location is also over noted SAVs aka critical habitat for the marine ecosystem . It is my opinion that the shade and disturbance of the mariculture operation could negatively impact these SAV in and around the area of the proposed lease. I would like to proposed this area not be allowed for a mariculture lease for theses reasons. I am typically and advocate for oyster farms and sustainable mariculture activited in the Carolina and think it is an industry that could benefit the state greatly but this location does have the best interest of all those who utilize this public water area. I live within a of the proposed location and can view it from my window and know first hand the volume of commercial and rec boats and paddle craft that access this area. Thank you.
Brian	Cutlip	North Carolina	The public waters will not be safely accessible from the main channel at the NE corner of the proposed water column lease in Dudley Island Bay! The lease touches the edge of the mud flat off the upside down Y-shaped marsh/oyster bed as can be seen in the image. On a good low tide this is the only safe entry/exit point in Dudley's Island Bay
Jason	Ginn	North Carolina	"The public waters will not be safely accessible from the main channel at the NE corner of the proposed water column lease in Dudley Island Bay! The lease touches the edge of the mud flat off the upside down Y-shaped marsh/oyster bed as can be seen in the image. On a good low tide this is the only safe entry/exit point in Dudley's Island Bay." Please take this information and all other comments in consideration before deciding. Thank you
Anthony	Jackson	North Carolina	I am asking that you do not approve lease proposal 22-042WC. This is NOT a good location for a water column lease as it will restrict access to recreational boaters into and out of Dudley's island bay from the skinny, shallow channel on the NE corner of the island (the only channel deep enough to run a boat thru on low tide!
Jimmy	Hall	North Carolina	My family uses this public passage as the only safe passage. This blocks safe public use and is not acceptable!
Dion	Lynn	North Carolina	As a life long boater and resident of Onslow County, this is one of the stupidest ideas I've ever heard. That is the only access to the area at low tide and you are proposing to block it off for a few dollars from an oyster farm. I strongly suggest you reconsider and move it somewhere else.
Brandon	Sewell	North Carolina	Lease #22-042WC: The proposed location for this lease will substantially impact access for recreational boaters in that area. We regularly take our family in that area fishing and to the sandbars, as well as many other local and tourist boaters. This lease in the proposed location would prohibit access.
David	Brown	North Carolina	I have only lived in Onslow County for 5 years, but have fished these waters for a very long time. What my is this. Why are we bombarding our waters with more and more of these artificial oyster beds? This not only creates more eye sores for anyone using our waters, it also leaves less and less water for the fish and the people that use them. Plus, whomever puts these in our waters have no ethics as far as cleaning up their mess after storms or if any of their beds break lose. I have hit, ran over and have gotten my prop tangled in them a lot. Please don't over use our waters for this. I hope this is not another way for the state to make more money. I would like to lease some water just to fish, is this possible? Thank you for your time
Bryan	Watts	North Carolina	Referencing lease 22-042wc: The public waters will not be safely accessible from the main channel at the NE corner of the proposed water column lease in Dudley Island Bay! The lease touches the edge of the mud flat off the upside down Y-shaped marsh/oyster bed as can be seen in the image. On a good low tide this is the only safe entry/exit point in Dudley's Island Bay
Michael	Mattice	North Carolina	These proposed areas, are areas that alot of people fish. Including me. This cannot happen. Our area is very small. This needs to be distributed to other areas. This is not fair to us rec anglers. Please do not allow this to happen. Thank you, mike mattice
George	Ansell	North Carolina	I am concerned with the location of the proposed water column lease in Dudley Island bay, lease #22-042WC. I believe the location of this lease will be a hazard to safe navigation as the area around this lease can be extremely shallow at certain tides. If this lease is approved it will almost completely block the channel and access to this bay. This would severely inhibit the access to the entirety of this bay to commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen and other boaters. I believe there are several suitable areas where this lease could be relocated in the area without posing such a hazard to navigation and restriction of access to the many boaters and fisherman who frequent this bay.
Dale	Collins	North Carolina	This comment is in reference to oyster lease number 22-042wc in or around Huggins Island Bay at Bogue Inlet! A 1.5 acre lease will cut off entrance to a very popular bay by all our boaters and fishermen alike! The bay isn't big enough to support a lease of that size and the recreational fishermen and tourist that use that bay and the islands around that bay! Please take this in consideration before you grant this lease! I'm not against the commercial fishermen by no means but sometimes things just isn't fair!

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Stephen	Loper	North Carolina	You will ruin good fishing waters. Please find another area. My favorite pastime is fishing and they area you are proposing is in some of the most fertile Redfish waters in the State. Please reconsider.
Johnathan	Garrett	North Carolina	22-042WC proposed lease will be blocking the only low tide access channel to Dudley Island Bay at low tide. This is not a good location for the oyster lease!
Shannon	Clark	North Carolina	Please stop this shellfish trash pile leases. This not fair for recreational fisherman to clog up our flats and bays with these eyesores that also block navigation amd hurt fishing. Our waterways are being littered with this garbage. You have to stop these shellfish leases.
Shane	Stewart	North Carolina	PLEASE stop with this non-sense! If you've seen what this looks like, it's absolutely an eye sore to see. There are already WAY to many of these in Onslow County, take a boat ride from just Sneads Ferry to Surf City and you'll understand what I mean. Check out Fulcher Landing, Traps Bay, Chadwick Bay, Alligator Bay, Turkey Creek, Everett Bay, Permuda Bay, etc. Let's try and maintain what little bit of natural beauty we have on our coast and not sellout to the few that benefit from this!
Ben	Atwater	North Carolina	This is a terrible spot to put the lease numbered 22-042WC. It will block the only safe access from Dudley's Island Bay on low tide.
Eric	Bregman	North Carolina	No new leases. You are cutting off navigable waterway and usable fishing and boating spots to the general public. 41 acres of already limited space is bad news for recreational anglers and boaters
Richard	Longamore	North Carolina	We don't need any obstructions anywhere anymore. It's hard enough getting around all the skinny water as it is. We all don't fish out of kayaks . I have seen enough oyster lease signs and broken PVC pipes to last a lifetime.
Bruce	Hollis	North Carolina	I am a resident of North Topsail Beach and am not in favor of proposed shellfish leases 21-060WC and 20-006WC in Alligator Bay. I am concerned with the environmental impacts of the proposed vertical water column oyster leases. Alligator Bay and the estuarine water in North Topsail are nursery areas for fish and shellfish, these structures would cover or shade their habitat. CAMA regulations are designed to minimize the impact individual property owners have on these waters, so I can't see how a commercial Oyster Farm would not have greater negative effect. Additionally the vertical Oyster structures could cause a hazard for navigation, especially after a storm event.
Chris	Briley	North Carolina	Blood clams and hard clams grow there also. That garden is in the middle of a main unmarked channel that many boats use and have used for years. It is not a good place to have a garden or column lease for any purpose
Chris	Sewell	North Carolina	FEB 28 2023. Regarding lease 22-042wc Dudley island bay. I am AGAINST it being used for a shellfish lease closing the entrance and exits to local people used to get around faster and avoid major waterway traffic it is a longtime spot for local people in that area fishing clamming oystering viewing Huggins island eco tours
Jacob	Kight	North Carolina	In regards to lease number 22-042wc : This area is a very high traffic area for local, knowledgeable fisherman. The lease location impedes the main channel into Dudley island bay. With this lease you make it very difficult for waterman to fish the waters safely
Scott	Hatsell	North Carolina	I am mayor of cedar Point ,nc . I am 69 years old an have been in swansboro and cedar point my entire life. The bays where the leases are being asked for should not even be considered . The estuaries in this area are Extremely important and should be preserved as they are and have been for many years . This area is also full of history for onslow county carteret county and the state of North Carolina , if anything we should make efforts to preserve this area as is forever so our kids and grand kids forever can enjoy this area . In cedar point we bought 56 acres on the water along boathouse creek in cedar point to make an effort to protect the waters from pollution from building homes or commercial business on the water , we look directly at Jones island and swansboro and swansboro bridges from this park . Please keep this as is and deny lease. Thanks, Mayor Hatsell [REDACTED]
Maurice	Mann	North Carolina	There's nothing wrong with it long as it don't block any boat traffic
Kevin	Finger	North Carolina	I live on Alligator Bay. I respect and support proper use of our water resources. My comments are about proposed water column lease in Alligator Bay. I saw the hurricane preparedness guidelines on DEQ website but believe they are voluntary compliance. Is that interpretation accurate? My second concern is regarding clarity on how many leases could be approved for this body of water based on residential, docks, setbacks, depth of water, spoil islands, Coast Guard navigational markers, tidal height, etc. if there was a clearer picture of potential total number of leases that could be allowed it would be appreciated. I am a boat owner and licensed recreational fishermen. I understand sharing the water. I lived in Va. as well as a boater and my opinion is leases got too big. I want to support Aquaculture and especially a local business that has been a part of the community. Thank you.
Phil	McCarson	North Carolina	If this online statement below is true why would you want to block the access involved?? Sounds like to me someone isn't using some common sense. Sounds like a 'no' vote for me...This is NOT a good location for a water column lease as it will restrict access to recreational boaters into and out of Dudley's island bay from the skinny, shallow channel on the NE corner of the island (the only channel deep enough to run a boat thru on low tide! When leaving a comment be sure to include the lease number 22-042wc

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John	New	North Carolina	I see no benefit to anyone who navigates this area if this lease is enacted. Leasing land is one thing but leasing an area under water available to the public makes no sense.
Steven	Brewster	North Carolina	While I am happy to support our commercial fishermen in their efforts to farm our waterways sustainably I am concerned that some leases may result in some of our shallow bays becoming inaccessible to the public and would like to point out that this would not only be inconvenient for many but also likely illegal as the waters are a public resource and as such must remain reasonably accessible to all. Please take care when reviewing leases that may restrict public access.
Clinton	Peele	North Carolina	I just submitted my comment. The public waters will not be safely accessible from the main channel at the NE corner of the proposed water column lease in Dudley Island Bay! The lease touches the edge of the mud flat off the upside down Y-shaped marsh/oyster bed as can be seen in the image. On a good low tide this is the only safe entry/exit point in Dudley's Island Bay
Walter	Giese	North Carolina	I am NOT in favor of the Water Column Leases that are up for review, for several reasons: 1. These are Public Trust Waters and the water column leases restrict usage. 2. If these Corporations were to go out of business or stopped maintaining the leased areas who would be responsible for clean up of the infrastructure? 3. I believe that the majority of these corporations are not associated with NC but are simply using the State's resources. 4. These waters are associated with Tourism and should be protected and accessible by all, water column leases restrict usage. Bottom leases are less restrictive. However, both Bottom Leases and Water Column Leases restrict usage by the average Commercial Fisherman in favor of a Larger Corporation. Thanks for your consideration of my comments. Walter D. Giese
Jeff	Dawson	North Carolina	I am opposed to the proposed lease 22-042wc. This lease will prevent access to a substantial amount public water. Furthermore, the idea that the government can lease public waters for exclusive use by another private party is not in the best interest of the public and should be forbidden.
Jeff	Tyson	North Carolina	No lease should be allowed. Recreational boaters use that area all the time. No private leases should be there.
Courtney	Nankervis	North Carolina	Don't do this! Quit ruining our coast lines and local areas.
Nancy & Julio	Casanas	North Carolina	Absolutely NO!!!! Oysters are very beneficial and an very important component of ocean health. Oysters filter and clean the surrounding water and provide habitat, food, AND JOBS!!! Water column farming will have many negative impacts on this ecosystem. The water column farming will actually remove nutrients from the water and will compete with other organisms for survival. It will cause environmental damage. The benefits of There have been no environmental impact studies completed. There is also no requirement for the farmers to be bonded so "after storm management" will likely fall on homeowners when they wash ashore. Onslow county recently increased the tax burden on county residents with doubling property values. This has created a huge financial burden on your citizens. Now with the addition of "after storm management" to clean up the washed up column farms, this will create yet another financial burden for us as homeowners. Not to mention the unsightly appearance which will likely lower property values. Is it all about property value, no. It is also the fact that column farming operations will likely disrupt wildlife, impact fishing, and pose a hazard to water way navigation. This is not an idea of imposing yet another threat to our community, this is about protecting the community we live in.
Kimberly	Blanchard	North Carolina	In regards to lease # 22-042wc. The public waters will not be safely accessible from the main channel at the NE corner of the proposed water column lease in Dudley Island Bay! The lease touches the edge of the mud flat off the upside down Y-shaped marsh/oyster bed as can be seen in the image. On a good low tide this is the only safe entry/exit point in Dudley's Island Bay. Please reject this proposal.
Josh	Kennedy	North Carolina	Good afternoon. I do not support the new proposed oyster farm 22-042wc. This is major deep water channel to get into into this bay. Also that area is great place to fish and carry kids where they can play safely away from boat traffic. We are a shallow area already and you are trying to restrict travel any more. Please consider this in your decision
Thomas	Robert	North Carolina	Do not approve proposed lease 22-042WC or 22-041BL as this would completely cut off low tide access to prime fishing areas.
Richard	Phelps	North Carolina	I am commenting on a proposed shellfish water column lease in Swansboro. The lease number is 22-042wc. If you approve this lease you will block off the only low tide navigable waterway into Dudley's Island. Please do not approve this lease.
Ray	Fish	North Carolina	This would block off a highly used May by both commercial and recreational fishermen. Would cut off access into the bay. Bad idea.
Andrew	Allen	North Carolina	I am opposed to the proposed lease #22-042wc, on the basis that it encroaches on a channel that restricts boating access to that area behind Dudley Island. I and many others are in support of the oyster leasing and environmental improvements it can bring, any set aside area in that bay should be done in a way to address needs of boaters, recreational fishing, and oyster farming. Sincerely, Andrew Allen. Emerald Isle resident.

First Name	Last Name	State/ Province	Comment
Thomas	Haynes	North Carolina	My family use this section of marsh extensively for recreation as well as Charter fishing income as I am a licensed OUPV captain. Allowing this lease to be placed in this location will greatly limit many of the local charter and comercial fisherman as well as recreational anglers and kayakers alike. I expressly do not agree with this lease area.
Jake	Haynes	North Carolina	22-042wc would greatly hinder my ability to access this prime fishing location. As a charter captain I earn an income on the water and this is one of my prime locations. It is an essential habitat for redfish and I greatly disapprove of this location.
Jay	Morris	North Carolina	The area proposed for shellfish lease in Dudley island bay is not suitable for such a lease. The area is an active productive fishing and shell fishing ground for charter captains, recreational fisherman and commercial. There is already limited space in the bay and numerous issues will arise if this lease is allowed. This lease is not in the best interest of North Carolinas resource holders and will diminish the currently prosperous fishing grounds.
Jesse	Satterwhite	North Carolina	22-042wc: I have no issues with oyster leases in general as long as they are located in areas that do not take away public boating access and fishing. This lease would block the only low tide channel in this area. The water should be able to be enjoyed by all. This lease should not be approved at this location.
Paul	Williams	North Carolina	I am not in favor of proposed lease number 22-042wc, water column lease for an oyster garden. The proposed lease location is in the only channel deep enough to enter or exit Dudley Island Bay at low tide, therefore, will block recreational boat traffic into and out the bay. I navigate this channel regularly. Approving this lease would be unfair since the proposer, I presume 1 or very few people, would benefit at the expense of dozens if not hundreds of recreational boaters who use this channel. I support the idea of increasing the oyster population in our waters, but surely, this oysterman can find some other area that does not impact so many others who use and have rights to access Dudley Island Bay. Thank you for considering my input.
Joe	Paliotti	North Carolina	I Joseph Paliotti, resident of Pender County oppose of any more water column leases for Pender / Onslow.
Blake	Bedson	North Carolina	I oppose lease 22-024wc. This is an unacceptable restriction of waterway access
Chris	Medlin	North Carolina	I'm writing because I'm worried about the numbers of farms looking to crowd in our area shutting off many fishing grounds open to the public. It's my understanding that there are moratoriums in other areas so that will be pushing an unusually large amount into a small place.
Douglas	Oglesby	North Carolina	I'm seriously concerned about the vertical oyster harvesting proposed for Alligator Bay and areas near. Next hurricane, where, exactly, do you plot these to wind up? Yeah, Act of God, Force Majeure, and all that, attempting to raise oysters in vertical columns hanging from rafts isn't an Act of God. And, the Force Majeure, that's just part of the annual cycle of nature for this area. The rafts, whatever color they begin as, will soon enough turn the same color pallet as the water and other natural features of our (fleetingly) beautiful waterways. Aside from aesthetics, as I've learned that they'll be positioned as close as 200 feet from your property, the danger they'll pose as navigation hazards to our friends, familys - our children and grandchildren, for God's sake! -
Douglas	Oglesby	North Carolina	I'm seriously upset about the plan to place vertical oyster harvesting in Alligator Bay and areas near. Aside from the aesthetics, as I've learned that that is unimportant to the individuals involved in making this decision, the navigational hazard they'll pose to our friends, family's - our kids & grandkids, for God's sake! - is paramount. Whatever color they'll begin as, they'll soon enough take on the same color pallet as the coastal waters and surrounding growth. Placed as close as 200 feet to shore, from our 60 feet long pier, our kids and grandkids will be as close as 140 feet from them when they leave out and return on jetskis, and ski boats towing giant floats and such. That's too close. And, where, exactly, do you plot that they'll end up after the next (and , subsequent!) hurricanes? Yeah, an Act of God, Force Majeure, and all that. It won't be an Act of God or nature that chooses to place vertical oyster harvesting in this area. When they wind up in our yards and tangled with our piers, we'll suffer the brunt of the cost of cleanup. In closing, I implore all of you to seriously consider the negative impact to our property values, and vote against this action. Thank you.
Brian	Bedson	North Carolina	I strongly oppose a lease of this size that would potentially inhibit recreational anglers along with guides making a living to fish an area that large. Taking away peoples lively hood so a out of town company can prosper is just plain wrong.



First Name	Last Name	State/ Province	Comment
David	Johnston	North Carolina	<p>I would challenge the issuance of the leases given the lack of environmental impact studies on what is arguably a fragile shallow-water environment. Land and homeowners along this area of coastline are subject to the scrutiny of CAMA and other regulatory agencies- why should shellfish growers not be? In the DEQ review of the application, it states: applicant indicates a storage facility, grader/sorter, and tumbler will be used as part of the operation. Depending on the location and any accessory structures associated with these methodologies, a CAMA permit may be required. Has the necessity of a CAMA permit been determined conclusively?</p> <p><a href="https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1314">https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1314</a>. Further, under NC General Statute Chapter 113 Article 16 – Cultivation of Shellfish / § 113-202.1. Water column leases for aquaculture, (b), subparagraphs (1) – (5), granting the proposed leases would arguably violate in part or whole, the following: (3) The leased area must not be within an area traditionally used and available for fishing or hunting activities incompatible with the activities proposed by the leaseholder, such as trawling or seining; The locations of the proposed leases are frequently used for the enjoyment of anglers, crab pots, and flounder gigging. The statement from the patrol study below shows the indifference the proposed leaseholder has for the impact: “Just talk from local’s (sic) and tourist they are tired of seeing leases overtake the water, But at this time no known (public trust) issues for this lease.”</p> <p>(<a href="https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1312">https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1312</a>) This impairment would be year-round, given that the intent is to conduct closed season oyster harvest as well.</p> <p><a href="https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1313">https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1313</a>. (4) Aquaculture use of the leased area must not significantly interfere with the exercise of riparian rights by adjacent property owners including access to navigation channels from piers or other means of access; and I see no allowance for making growers responsible for mitigation of potential damage done to adjacent properties should a storm event impact the area. Refer to the study done by NOAA, the NC Coastal Federation and Sea Grant here (<a href="https://www.nccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NC-Mariculture-Marine-Debris-BMP-FINAL.pdf">https://www.nccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NC-Mariculture-Marine-Debris-BMP-FINAL.pdf</a>). In the DWR review (<a href="https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1315">https://services2.arcgis.com/kCu40SDxsCGcuUWO/arcgis/rest/services/Lease_DB_View/FeatureServer/2/1049/attachments/1315</a>). It’s stated: this office has concerns regarding other commercial and recreational usage limitations associated with the proposal due to the proximity of the lease to adjacent leases and acreage of open water impact. Has this concern been mitigated to the satisfaction of the Division of Water Resources?</p>
Mike	Botinovch	North Carolina	Gentlemen please reconsider the location of lease 22-042WC this is a area I use often during low tides , it seems to me there are other areas that could be considered with less impact to recreational boaters Thank you for considering my concern over this proposed lease
Kelly	Hollis	North Carolina	It has been brought to my attention that North Topsail Beach bay areas are being considered for vertical water column oyster leasing without doing any Environmental Impact Studies. Alligator Bay is a nursery for fish which will undoubtedly be effected by the oyster columns. A much smaller concern is navigation in and out of the bay area. It's disheartening that this is being considered. EVERY homeowner on or near the bay has bent over backwards to maintain the integrity of our wildlife eco- system. To propose this WITHOUT doing environmental studies is egregious at best. A disgusting display of entitlement and privilege.
Hershall Kevin	Brown	North Carolina	This comment is in support of all of the proposed leases in Onslow County discussed at the February 28th meeting. I would also like to specifically submit my support for proposed bottom and water column leases 22-041-BL and 22-042-WC. The proposed 1.42-acre lease, which I applied for, would be the only one in the approximately 150-acre bay. The proposed lease is fully situated in and surrounded by relatively deep water (3-5 ft depending on tide), rendering the site navigable on all sides including at low tide. Access to the bay is not blocked at any time for other waterway users. I have personally observed a local 27-foot passenger ferry navigate on all sides of the proposed lease at low tide with no issues. The shoreline varies from 125 to 225 away in distance from the edge of the proposed lease, with navigable water available at all times between the site and shoreline. This ensures full access to that shoreline for boaters and/or kayakers. NC Division of Marine Fisheries site sampling indicated no SAV nor native shellfish within the proposed lease site, indicating the area is not impacting native shellfish habitat nor shellfishing activities. Likewise, the recreational fishing I have observed in the area has been focused mostly along the shorelines and within the entrance to the bay from Bogue Inlet and not localized in the area of the proposed lease. As a North Carolina native who grew up fishing the state’s waters, I realize the importance of keeping our waters accessible. This is one of the reasons I chose this location within the large bay for my proposed lease. Thanks, Kevin Brown

First Name	Last Name	State/ Province	Comment
Amy	Stamp	North Carolina	RE: Leases: 21-060WC and Leases: 20-006WC. I strongly oppose the proposal of the vertical water column oyster leases. Besides being very unsightly they can also be on parts of the habited parts of the watershed and no environmental impact studies have been done to show how this will affect the bay which could include fishing and other wildlife in the area. This could cause damage to the environment that could potentially take years to correct. Beside the environmental concerns, this could also cause a safety issue for the numerous boaters, etc. that use this area due to the navigation issue these could cause.
Sean	Riback	North Carolina	Good Afternoon. I am a resident of Sneads Ferry and live alongside Mill Creek in Alligator Bay. The proposed shellfish lease in Alligator Bay could severely hinder boaters (both commercial fisherman and recreational boaters) from safely navigating through the bay back and forth from the ICW to Mill Creek. At the end of Mill Creek is a seafood market (Grant's Oyster house) where commercial fisherman bring their oysters and clams to on a daily basis. They transit Alligator Bay to get there. There's also about 300 homes that use a launch in Mill Creek and the proposed lease could hinder both these recreational boaters and the commercial fisherman from safely transiting Alligator Bay's already shallow water. I urge you to reconsider this lease or at the very least consider the boaters that use that area on a daily basis and create a safe channel with a fair depth to transit well and clear of the proposed shellfish lease. Thank you for your consideration and understanding.
Mike	McHugh	North Carolina	I would like to submit my support for proposed Onslow County bottom and water column leases 22-041-BL and 22-042-WC. As the executive director of the Swansboro Area Chamber of Commerce, I obviously support local businesses. And I look forward to welcoming a new one in the form of this proposed oyster farm. The economic impact of these types of operations has been well-documented, with shellfish aquaculture accounting for \$27 million in economic impact in the state in 2021, according to NC Sea Grant. This farm would allow us to also promote the continued popularity of agritourism in our region. I see great potential in farm partnerships with local kayak operators and fishing charters for site tours and tastings. I have looked at the map of where the site would be located and, as a Swansboro native and frequent visitor to Hammocks Beach and its associated islands, do not see any indications where the proposed 1.42 acres dedicated to oyster gear within an otherwise significantly larger bay would hamper other recreational or commercial activities on the water. I reiterate my support for the proposed lease and am ready to add some Bogue Sound oysters to area menus as well as other restaurants on the N.C. Oyster Trail.
Jon	Salvant	North Carolina	More public notice needs to be provided ahead of these meetings. Email notification from DMF are not being received. All fishing and hunting license holders should be on the email list with the option to opt out. At no point should a shellfish lease restrict access to other users for fishing or hunting. If a bay or waterway access is blocked there should be specific process for reporting it and the lease holder should have "X" amount of time to reposition the gear or face fines. Revise lease requirements from 20yds off the bank to 50yds off. There needs to be a maximum number of acres a shellfish lease(s) can occupy withing a square mile. As it stands there is no limit
Robert	Carr	North Carolina	All leases regardless should not infringe upon the rights of the recreational, commercial or for hire Anglers. Additionally all oyster leases should only be allowed at minimum distance of 100 yards to any and all shorelines.

First Name	Last Name	State/ Province	Comment
Cynthia	Brown	North Carolina	<p>Good afternoon! My comment is in support of all of the proposed shellfish water column and bottom leases in Onslow County discussed at the February 28th meeting. I would also like to specifically submit my support for proposed bottom and water column leases 22-041-BL and 22-042-WC, applications submitted by my spouse. When we set out to “ground truth” potential sites, one of the criteria we focused on was ensuring that we would not negatively impact other use of the waterways. We spend a lot of time fishing recreationally and know how important it is to many in the area. Likewise, I have friends and coworkers with commercial fishing backgrounds and did not want to set up an operation detrimental to them. That’s why I appreciate the opportunity to address concerns that the proposed site would impact either. The proposed 1.42-acre lease would take up less than 1 percent of a large bay that currently has no other similar operation. With the site’s approval, more than 148 acres would remain available to the public for their preferred activities. I can personally attest to the depth of the water that surrounds the site. When we installed the pole markers, we started at low tide. The northeast and southeast corners came up over my waist, a depth of more than three feet. When we started on the western corners, the tides were coming in. We ended up having to delay the final two poles as the water depth was chest high on the northwest corner and chin high at the northeast corner with high tide still an hour-plus off. While we waited for the outgoing tide, as well as on other days we spent fishing in the bay, we actively watched boating traffic in the area. Anecdotaly, the vast majority of the vessels we saw traveled outside the marked area without any interruption to their navigation. This included the Lady Swan, a 27-foot passenger ferry that we watched on separate trips traveling safely and easily on both the island side of the marked lease as well as the far side. This overall experience is relayed to underscore the lack of impact on navigation around the site, which is more than 100 feet from the shore of Huggins Island at its closest point and 200 feet at its furthest. A second part of our ground truth site visits was to ensure we would not detrimentally affect natural habitat. Our early investigation was confirmed by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries site inspection that discovered no SAV nor native shellfish within the proposed site. I would understand opposition to a potential lease site based on facts. A site blocking a navigational channel or access to a recreational or commercial area is easily discoverable in the state’s investigative stage, as is the presence of SAV or native shellfish. Proposed bottom and water column leases 22-041-BL and 22-042-WC does not negatively impact either. Sincerely, Cyndi Brown</p>
JANE	JOHNSON	North Carolina	<p>I disagree with the issuance of the leases given the lack of environmental impact studies on what is arguably a fragile shallow-water environment. Land and homeowners along this area of coastline are subject to the scrutiny of CAMA and other regulatory agencies- why should shellfish growers not be? In addition, I see no allowance for making growers responsible for mitigation of potential damage done to adjacent properties should a storm event impact the area. Reference the study done by NOAA, the NC Coastal Federation and Sea Grant here (<a href="https://www.nccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NC-Mariculture-Marine-Debris-BMP-FINAL.pdf">https://www.nccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NC-Mariculture-Marine-Debris-BMP-FINAL.pdf</a>)</p>
Richard	Cecelski	North Carolina	<p>As a former commercial fisherman and the owner for the past 30 years of a boat tour company which takes hundreds of people fishing every year, I wholeheartedly recommend the support of well managed oyster leases for Onslow County. Whenever we take parties fishing we are always trying to put them on structure. Oyster reefs provide some of the best structure and most productive catches for many of the species we target. My company also teaches groups about the estuarine environment and our lessons always share the ecological benefits that oysters reefs provide, including in how they create habitat and their remarkable water filtering capabilities. As Onslow County becomes more developed, oysters can help mitigate potential negative effects to our estuaries from storm water run-off. This helps all parties and stakeholders, from commercial fishers to charter boat owners, to those of us that are involved in our coastal tourism industry. It also increases the general quality of life for coastal residents resulting in increased property values. I would like to specifically endorse the work and management of Mandy Uticone. Ms. Uticone worked for my company for 15 years and is extremely professional and responsible. I am confident that the management of her lease is always carried out within the guidelines and rules of the state. I can also say with confidence that Mandy strives to help and support other professionals and residents. She likes to be a good neighbor and colleague and believes doing so lifts everyone up. Personally, I have fished on and in the proximity of Mandy’s lease and have had good success in this area, and especially have had nice results with black drum catches over her lease. Her lease in no way has ever hampered our navigation through this area. I find her lease a tremendous benefit to myself, to tourism development and to the residents of Onslow County.</p>