

Onslow County Public Hearing (1/27/2022) Comments

Date Submitted	First Name	Last Name	State/Province	Please type your comments in the box below:
1/3/2022 15:06	Donna	Dail	North Carolina	I am a resident of the State of NC and I strongly object to issuance of any of the water column leases referenced in this public notice. The State has failed to evaluate the impacts of these water column leases on public water access, to include current and historical navigation. I am not opposed to bottom leases, but these water column leases are quickly taking over a lot of public bottom and open water area(s). I strongly recommend the State refrain from issuing any additional water column leases until a comprehensive study has been completed and it has been determined how these leases impact the States Coastal waters under the public trust doctrine.
1/10/2022 23:06	Allen	Jernigan	North Carolina	I oppose lease #385. This particular lease sits in water that is 2.5 feet deep on high tide and is the deepest part of the bay. This lease will restrict our historical navigational channel running south in Permuda Bay. You can't pass this lease to the east because of a sandbar. You can't pass this lease to the west/ICWW side because of a sandbar, oyster rock and a complete assortment of marine shellfish debris from previous shellfish practices. On the west side there are numerous broken poles under the surface, at least one 4x4 under the surface, tires and various clam/clutch bag material from previous shellfish activities that the State has not required anyone to clean up. if this lease is approved myself and the public will be completely cut off from accessing some fishing grounds except for tides high enough to pass the sandbar to the east of this lease. Not only are there navigation concerns, SAV is present in the warmer months here, myself along with others have clammed and oystered this bottom historically. we will no longer be able to if this lease is approved.
1/10/2022 23:22	Allen	Jernigan	North Carolina	I oppose lease numbers 21-006BL/21-007WC This particular lease with the current setback in place, will take away access to a shoreline that myself and others have fished our entire lives. This lease sits on a shoal behind Permuda Island that is a very productive area for trout, reds and flounder. This particular shoal is extremely vital to me commercial flounder fishing. if the setback was 100 yards or 150 yards from the shoreline I wouldn't have much of an issue. but with current rules, my business can't stand to lose even more access around Permuda Island. there is enough in this area. The public should not be losing more. Especially considering it is cutting off public access to a wildlife preserve even further. You are strangling my industry in this area of Permuda.
1/10/2022 23:38	Allen	Jernigan	North Carolina	I oppose water column lease #21-060WC Alligator Bay This has been a traditional bottom lease for as long as I can remember. Other than having to be careful dodging broken poles under the surface and about 40 tires in the lease, you can still access and fish it. 100s of people a year fish this bank. I frequent it myself sometimes 3 or 4 times a week. If this becomes a water column lease, with the current set back rules, our access will be taken away. We will lose access to nearly 1/3 or more of the west bank of the bay. this is just not right. I feel the public should have more say so and feel our public trust rights are being violated severely in this case. this will impact a lot of people.
1/10/2022 23:50	Rupert	Brown	North Carolina	Please reconsider not adding any new leases to Onslow County. We are being overrun by cages and crap. Thank you
1/11/2022 18:14	Steven	Brewster	North Carolina	It's great to know that more shellfish will be in our waters. They are a key part of the ecosystem and we need to restore their numbers to previous levels in the interest of conservation. With that said, any lease that renders any part of the waterway unnavigable should not be allowed as it will remove the lawful right of all to access those waters. Please take great care when defining specifications for leases and make sure that we can follow up to enforce those specifications. Thank you!

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1/12/2022 8:42	Tripp	Murray	North Carolina	Regarding proposed lease 21-0006BL : Permuda Bay is already overrun with oyster leases. Public access to fishing locations in this area have been substantially reduced as a result. This particular lease is directly on top of one of the few remaining consistently productive redfish locations in Permuda Bay. It also highlights one of the most glaring problems with shellfish leases in the Topsail Island area. Leases are routinely approved right up against the bank. The bank is where recreational anglers most often fish for redfish, so a lease such as this eliminates this area as a fishing location. Why not put the shellfish leases out in the middle of a large body of water where they will have less impact on public access to recreational fishing?
1/12/2022 8:51	Tripp	Murray	North Carolina	Regarding proposed lease 385: The location of this lease will block the very narrow channel to an often-used redfish fishing location and will effectively eliminate redfishing in that area. Another example of shellfish leases too close to the bank
1/12/2022 9:34	Tripp	Murray	North Carolina	Regarding active leases 1892199, 9613, 62-75 and 8501A: There are several comments I want to make- these leases are the most egregious example of completely ruining a prime fishing location I have seen to date. The "BC Bay" as we call it (because it is the bay at the intersection of Banks' Channel and the ICW) was my absolute favorite place to fish for redfish. Now ALL of the once productive banks are obliterated by these oyster leases that are once again right up against the bank. This situation also highlights another issue- one of public comment. The convoluted way the public is "notified" of a proposed shellfish lease (via a miniscule sign out in the water and even more miniscule newspaper "notifications" buried in the legal section) and overly complex method the DMF has implemented for public comment on their website with no option for in-person hearings, is at best a woeful dereliction of duty to the public that owns the resource, or perhaps criminal mismanagement of a public trust resource. Sadly, this seems to be a recurring theme with the NCDMF. If this situation was properly managed, the public would be better informed about proposed leases, and better able to comment. I know I certainly would have when these particular leases were proposed.
1/18/2022 12:30	Chris	Mccaffity	North Carolina	<p>Onslow County Shellfish Leasing Public Comment</p> <p>The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) gives citizens effected by environmental policies a way to voice concerns and offer mitigation options. The law gives me standing in this case as a licensed commercial and recreational fisherman with a State Registered boat. Please keep an open heart and mind while considering the concerns and mitigation options listed below.</p> <p>Leasing public waters for private production restricts the public's freedom to access our waters and natural resources. This is especially true with water column leases that effectively eliminate access to public waters for navigation or anything else. New leases should be limited to the bottom so we can still use most of our public waters for recreational and commercial purposes. Public Shellfish Gardens should be created equal to the areas of leased bottom to offset our loss of access to public resources. Public Shellfish Gardens should be stocked with native shellfish that can naturally reproduce. Shellfish grown on leased bottom should also be native and able to naturally reproduce. We should not be introducing genetically sterilized or otherwise modified species in public waters for obvious reasons.</p> <p>Please do not approve any new public water column leases and require all introduced shellfish to be native and natural. Public water mariculture really should be limited to stocking local seafood that can naturally reproduce for the benefit of everyone and our environment.</p> <p>Sincerely, Chris McCaffity</p>

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1/25/2022 10:41	David	Sneed	North Carolina	<p>The Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina supports the development of oyster mariculture as a preferred method of meeting the growing consumer demand for fresh, local seafood while defending the right of the public to maintain access to public trust waters. CCA NC encourages the Division to look for more involvement with the public to address potential user conflicts when reviewing new lease applications before the permits are granted. The Stump Sound area has become a hotbed for production of oysters raised on water column leases to the point that they are squeezing out access to traditional fishing waters available to the public. The proliferation of oyster leases in this area should be considered before any additional leases are granted. If the current siting criteria is not sufficient for addressing user conflicts, then the Division should consider a moratorium on new leases in these waters until new rules can be put into place. New leases should be placed in areas without large numbers of existing leases where the potential for user conflicts is less prevalent.</p> <p>The State should resist the temptation to sell off public trust waters with such low lease rates in a rush to meet consumer demand for farm raised oysters. The Division should initiate a fiscal review of current lease rates to determine if the public is receiving adequate compensation in return for the loss of access to public trust waters. In addition, criteria for protecting the public from derelict gear washed out into navigable waters following storms needs to be developed and enforced. Strict requirements should be in place to require clean up and removal of gear following storms.</p> <p>The granting of new leases should also include a tie-in to the phasing out of destructive harvest practices like mechanical dredging for oysters, clams and crabs. The public should receive "payback" for the granting of water column and bottom leases in the form of more protection of critical fish habitat areas specifically the nursery areas identified in the Division's P195 trawl surveys.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
1/26/2022 14:54	Michael	Maynard	North Carolina	<p>The company I work with recently acquired an approximately 500-acre tract in Onslow County, which is bound by the Intracoastal Waterway and Batts Mill Creek. The parcel ID is 424600132559. We intend to develop this property as a subdivision and have plans to extend a piers for our residents. This area is very shallow and it will be important to extend piers as closely to the channel as possible in order to get the required 2' minimum depth. A shellfish lease in this proposed area would result in a significant loss in our property value and a taking our property rights. As we recently purchased the property, we have not yet applied for piers in this area, but intend to within the next year. We would greatly appreciate if the adjacent leases could be shifted north or south of our property line.</p>
1/27/2022 11:40	Ethan	Bilderback	North Carolina	<p>Lease ID: 96 Associated with Lease ID: 21-060WC Owner or Business Name: Clarence W. Grant Jr</p> <p>I would like to go against this lease. I fish this area all summer long with guests. I run 223 trips a year and half of them in are right where these leases are going up. I also guide in the little stem creeks that go through the whole marsh along the inland side. Putting these leases that close to the bank and effect where these fish stage in certain times of the year. Im the first to say Im all for clean water efforts but not when it is going to effect my livelihood. We could compromise and put these leases in the middle of the bays. I urge you not to put these leases 20 feet off the bank.</p> <p>Thank you, Capt. Ethan Bilderback</p>

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1/27/2022 16:12	Stan	Griffith	North Carolina	I oppose lease # 385 because it will block my ability to access areas that I have fished for redfish for 18 consecutive years. I also am dismayed about there not being requirements for leaders to clean up their equipment after storms or abandonment of equipment. We can see daily the equipment of previous years and decades being left to rot or rust . Much of this is plastic or styrofoam that we know poisons our marine waters. Thank you, Stan Griffith. Surf City , phone [REDACTED].
1/27/2022 18:41	Helen	Herbert	North Carolina	Mark Maynard is the shoreline property owner near proposed Shellfish Bottom Lease (21-002BL), proposed by Mr. Burr McLawhorn. The land borders Topsail Sound and Batts Mill Creek. He recently acquired this property with plans to get a dock permit and is currently going through this process. There are requirements about the length of the dock when the water depths are less than 2'. This water in this area is very shallow and its likely the dock will extend 100 feet. The concern is that if proposed lease 21-002BL is issued where designated, the shellfish lease will create user conflicts as well as navigational and public safety hazards. This proposed shellfish operation interferes with Mr. Maynard's exercise of riparian rights as an adjacent, shoreline property owners and will interfere with public means of water access. See G.S. 113-202.1(b)(4). Our request is that Shellfish Bottom Lease 21-002BL be moved 800 feet north along the shore. The lease location may be close to where Mr. Josh Dunn has a proposed shellfish lease operation (21-004BL) so we are requesting that the Division of Marine Fisheries consider their locations together so both can be accommodated.
1/27/2022 19:24	Keith	Wells	North Carolina	I would like to see the commercial oyster farms kept out in the middle of the bays. This way we could still fish the banks behind them. Thanks, Keith Wells
1/27/2022 20:38	Dan	Vote	North Carolina	Lease 21-016WC/21-015BL-I feel this lease will restrict the ability for, myself, and other recreational anglers to fish this area and greatly reduce access to run this area into other pockets around this area. I am not against any lease. I am just wanting them in areas that will not affect other activities , which cannot be overlooked.
1/27/2022 20:39	Luke moser	Moser	North Carolina	In regards to the following leases. Lease #385 Lease 21-006BL/21-007WC Lease 21-060WC Alligator bay. I oppose these lease numbers. This would dramatically limit recreational access to these areas. With being a seasonal resident to this area and being close to my house this would cause my access to fish and access these areas virtually non existent. The countless boaters and kayaks that uses these areas through out the year would be detrimentally effected by these leases.
1/27/2022 20:43	Dan	Vote	North Carolina	Lease 21-060WC- I oppose this becoming a water column lease. If this lease is approved a third of the west bank will be lost to fisherman being able to access it. Many people frequent this area to fish and this will be a violation of our public trust rights.
1/27/2022 20:47	Daniel	Vote	North Carolina	210006BL/21-007WC- The setbacks of this lease need to be moved further off the bank. If it is moved 100yds or more off the bank this would not restrict access for fisherman to continue to fish this area. This area needs to be especially monitored because of being a "Wildlife Area". This specific area is an important fishing area for hundreds of people.
1/27/2022 20:55	Daniel	Vote	North Carolina	I oppose lease #385. This lease, if approved, will be a navigational hazard for this spot. If the lease is approved the only access boats will have to fishing areas beyond will be over a sandbar at high tide. This restriction of an area only for the benefit of one company goes against the public trust of use of the water.

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1/27/2022 21:00	Daniel	Vote	North Carolina	Lease 21-001BL- I oppose this lease. This is a frequently fished area for ,myself, and many others. This lease will impede navigational access and fishing of the area. Once gear is in place there will no longer be 18 inches of clearance for the area. Grass is presence and always has been here. This area if frequented not just by boats, but kayaks and wade fisherman as well.
1/27/2022 21:05	DAniel	Vote	North Carolina	21-016WC/21-015BL - I oppose this lease on the grounds of losing public access to the area by myself and the rest of the public. This lease will greatly restrict navigational access through shallow water areas through this bay to good fishing areas.
1/28/2022 9:55	Julia	Mckenzie	North Carolina	I strongly appose these lease numbers #385 #21-006BL/21-007WC #21-060WC Alligator Bay Since 2005 we have paid to keep our Boats at Old Ferry Marina. We have taken our kids and now grands fishing, boating and kayaking in these areas for 17 years. We purchased a home and land in that location to allow us easy access. We would no longer be able to fish our routine recreational areas!
1/28/2022 17:51	Lloyd	Butler	North Carolina	I oppose water column aquaculture in onslow and pender for many reasons. I feel like we are moving way too fast on this. Large amounts of debris (pilings, wire covered oyster baskets, etc) are being placed in our waters. This debris is destroying the breathtaking picturesque scene of coastal North Carolina. The future burden to remove this debris when lease holders have moved on and are unreachable will be immense. After a large hurricane this debris is going to be strowed everywhere. I cringe at the thought of what would happen to me or my family if I hit a new oyster farm slightly submerged by a high tide. I know they are supposed to be marked, but what if it is not or what if there is low visibility. I was born in NC and have been fishing these waters my whole life (42 years). Here recently, I am very nervous about crossing bays that I have crossed 100s of time, due to the new danger of striking something that used to not be there. Striking something that was allowed to be placed there by the state and county. I know it looks good on paper to have a "new" industry, but at what expense. I know they clean water, but so do the natural oysters in these areas, when managed properly. I oppose Lease #385. It will make it very difficult to access Permuda bay at certain tides. I oppose Lease #21-006BL/21-007WC. It will make those areas difficult to fish for everyone I oppose Lease #21-060WC Alligator Bay It is going to limit everyone's access to fishing there. Lease #1979970, #20-016WC, #1923788, #1966811 and #1980028 have destroyed the fishing in one of my favorite bays by my house. I used to sit on Lea island and enjoy the view of the marsh, but Lease #1849579 and 1547728 destroyed that. Please consider what your are allowing to happen. This is not the answer.