



Onslow County Shellfish Lease Hearing Submitted Comments

Thursday, February 12, 2026

Holly Ridge Community Center
404 Sound Rd, Holly Ridge, NC 28445
In Person and virtually via Webex

William Terry

North Carolina | 1/15/2026 5:59 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“It's Public Waters. You have no right to lease MY waters to anybody. But Constitutional rights don't mean much to the Marine Fisheries, now does it. SHAME ON YOU.”

Kyle Hatcher

North Carolina | 1/15/2026 6:37 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“The recreational fisherman, whom foots most of the bill for the economic spending in NC, will soon, have no where to fish and nothing to keep.
There is absolulty no need for more oyster farms, especially in river systems. There is already a guide around every corner living off the fish, not to mention all the other commerical fisherman, now an oyster farm in every bay. I have to throw trout back, to pay 8 dollars a pound for them? The water is a public resourse, and so few, should not be able to control so much.
I am currently buying a boat, to fish out of this state! NO more guides or nets or oyster farms!”

James Oakley

North Carolina | 1/15/2026 7:47 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“I'm not sure how we "lease" a public owned water area for aquaculture as opposed to giving reasonable permits to grow a commodity for consumption. Other than sucking the life out of citizens trying to making a living by growing food by charging money for something that arguably costs the county/state nothing to maintain, this looks like nothing more than a bunch of HOA Karen's ruining fishing and farming for everyone.”

Michael Taffler

North Carolina | 1/16/2026 8:12 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“I am Against all proposed leases. This is coastal tidal water, and no one owns it. If state is able to lease it then we the citizens should be able to buy and pay taxes on it. I understand that you cannot own the water, but what gives NC State the Right to hold the land back from its citizens. If you can lease it, we should be able to buy it and pay taxes on it then lease it to others ourselves. State does not pay Property taxes, our tax money Funds the state to Run and Tidal water should not be restricted to anyone; These Leases take away citizens' rights to use those tidal areas for Nothing but profits. Is money more important than your citizens' rights?”

Steven Fincannon

North Carolina | 1/16/2026 8:56 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-001BL, 25-028WC

“It seems to be in poor judgement to place a farm under a bridge. The water runoff will contain matter of vehicular origin as well as road debris and neither is something humans should ingest. This concern is also compounded by the proximity to Camp Legeune and its history of water quality issues.

I am referring to these (2) sites:

+ Old Baldy Aquaculture, LLC (Matthew T. Miller) – Shellfish Bottom – No. 25-001BL – 4.78 acres – New River below NC 172 bridge, Onslow County.

+ Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-028WC – 3.65 acres – New River below NC 172 bridge, Onslow County.

Thank you for the consideration.

Steven F.”

Preston Thisken

North Carolina | 1/16/2026 2:23 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“Dear NCDMF,

I am submitting public comment in opposition to the proposed shellfish bottom and water column leases in Onslow County scheduled for hearing on February 12, 2026. While I support responsible aquaculture, these applications would collectively restrict approximately 20 acres of navigable public waters that have long been used for fishing,

recreation, and transit, including areas in the New River, Stones Bay, Ellis Cove, Seaside Areas, and Alligator Bay. These waters are protected under the Public Trust Doctrine. As a taxpayer of Onslow county, who pays to live and recreate in this county, it is troubling that access to public fishing waters can be restricted through a single administrative vote. This not only affects individual recreational anglers, but also local charter operators who rely on these areas to make a living.

Allowing a single applicant, or a small group of applicants to limit public access sets a concerning precedent for the gradual privatization of shared waters. Once access is restricted, it is rarely restored.

Public fishing grounds and navigable waters should not be removed from public use without clear overriding public benefit and meaningful consideration of cumulative impacts. I respectfully urge the Division of Marine Fisheries to deny or substantially modify these proposed leases to preserve public access and navigable use of Onslow County waters.

Sincerely,
Preston Thielen”

Bundage Guy
North Carolina | 1/16/2026 2:45 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“Our coastal waters are a shared public resource, and expanding shellfish leases further limits access, navigation, and traditional fishing grounds.”

Jeff Dawson
North Carolina | 1/16/2026 6:45 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“There are already plenty of leases in the area taking away public waters. Please don't approve more leases.”

Louis Pigford
North Carolina | 1/22/2026 8:45 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“As a resident and tax payer in Onslow County I oppose the approval of any related aquaculture leases in public waters. As a resident and local fishermen these leases are impeding on public areas and restricting access and egress to fishing areas and they distract from the natural environment. The

approval of these leases has no positive impact to the local residents of the area and the only economic benefit is for the lease holder. I strongly disagree with the approval of these leases and renewal of current lease holder contracts.”

Cindy McCaffity

North Carolina | 1/28/2026 9:20 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“Recreational and commercial fishermen are sounding the alarm about how Public Water leases restrict our freedom to access our Public Waters and our Public Resources they support. It is time for a moratorium on any new Public Water leases. It is also time to reconsider the wisdom of introducing genetically sterilized invasive species to our Public Waters. Sudden Unusual Mortality Syndrome (SUMS) is another reason for a moratorium to hopefully help slow the spread of SUMS from caged genetic mutants to natural oysters that are native to our waters. Public Water aquaculture should be limited to stocking native seafood that can naturally reproduce for everyone to enjoy.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 9:27 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC

“I would like to oppose lease No. 25-028WC – 3.65 acres associated with Lease 8803, 7.2 acres and 2.4 acres for a combined approx 13 acres that appears to be larger than all of Poverty Point.

1. Granting this lease will increase even more bird activity in our immediate area that would impact our docks and recreational watercraft. On occasion the cages that are currently active and joins this proposed increase in column oyster cage farming have been filled to capacity with birds perched and defecating on top of the oysters. It is proven that this unfortunate activity has caused E coli especially when oysters are served uncooked. When boating and passing other Column cages there are always birds perched, at times not to the capacity previously described, but sometimes you couldn't get another bird to rest atop.
2. Currently we have to go around this area to pass towards New River Inlet, this would increase our navigation around.

3. Prior to 2019 when the 2 joining leases were granted without notification to those that live within the required distance, this shoal at 1 point served as a great area for myself and other commercial fishermen to utilize gill nets and harvest reef fish such as flounder, spots, croakers and mullets. In its current location it has obstructed this task.
4. If the wind is not in our favor the stench from the cages as well as the birds is not very pleasant especially in the hot summer months.
5. In the past there would be frequent Porpoise sightings very inshore, now you very rarely see any activity.
6. This is a shallow area that has served for a safe place to enjoy tubing and wake boarding and other water activities for younger children without worrying about the depths further out in the river where there is heavier boat traffic.
7. Maybe its been taken into consideration but if not it should, as a former Naval Aviator the number of granted column leases up and down the New River has increased bird activity throughout the day and night. The New River serves as a known approved flight path in and out of local airspace from New River Air Station to the New River Inlet. My aircraft has been struck by birds to the point where our aircraft has received damage. There are many proposed sites that may get approved that will obviously increase bird activity.
8. Person requesting additional increase in area already has 2 active bottom leases, 1 active column lease, and is requesting an additional bottom lease and an additional column lease. The location of the other proposed leases are away from residential areas as well as not in areas that are frequented by boating traffic, and should be considered for approval.
9. I know that the view I have to look at everyday is not an apparent consideration for the Marine Fisheries to approve or disapprove, however I would like to go on record, and I don't think anyone will disagree, it takes away from a beautiful natural scene that was one of the reasons for our homes purchase. We continue to see areas being taken up by these farmers. It is such a small area that if approval after

approval continues it will be filled with cages and birds.
Thank you for your considerations.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 9:37 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-002BL

“Proposed Lease No. 25-002BL

The shellfish population has been severely crippled after the 2018 Hurricane Florence. We are starting to see an increase in clam population. During the survey and as small of an area being requested there were a great number of clams harvested that shows this area is deemed productive, and granting to Old Baldy Aquaculture, LLC (Matthew T. Miller) – Shellfish Bottom – No. 25-002BL – 1.19 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County, would take away opportunity for those wishing to harvest clams commercially. I would like to oppose this location.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 11:00 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“I have heard comments about these farmers are helping to replenish the oysters in our river. Know that these are non reproducing shellfish and have no replenishment factors. However with that being said if they were reproductive, its a good possibility that the rivers floor would be sharp to stand and walk. If there is no effort to slow down the approval process, one day you will wonder where did all of this eye sore come from? Much like driving around and a new development just popped up.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 11:06 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“I have heard comments about these farmers are helping to replenish the oysters in our river. Know that these are non reproducing shellfish and have no replenishment factors. However with that being said if they were reproductive, its a good possibility that the rivers floor would be sharp to stand and walk. If there is no effort to slow down the approval process, one day you will wonder where did all of this eye sore come from? Much like driving around and a new development just popped up.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 11:16 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-015BL/25-016WC

“I oppose granting this lease Stump Sound Oyster Company, LLC (Shawn P. Burns) – Shellfish Bottom and Water Column – Nos. 25-015BL / 25-016WC – 4.77 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County. This location has served as an area for gill net fishing by many commercial fishermen. This is a productive point/shoal for many fin fish. Again if this is granted it continues to open the door for the shore to be riddled with permanent gear that has to be navigated for the next 10 years.”

William Robinson

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 12:30 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC

“North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, I submit this letter as a formal objection to the proposed shellfish lease identified as Lease ID 25-028WC, associated with Lease ID 8803, owned by Joshua A. Thompson, located in Onslow County on the New River below the Highway 172 Bridge.

My residence and dock are located immediately adjacent to the existing lease area. The cages closest to my shoreline are associated with the lessee’s bottom lease and are frequently exposed or partially out of the water. Submerged gear in this area has interfered with my lawful fishing activities, and its placement raises concerns about whether this area meets the intent and siting criteria for a bottom lease under Division standards. I also own an RV located directly adjacent to the lease area, and the presence of exposed and unsightly gear negatively affects the use and enjoyment of that property.

I respectfully oppose approval of the proposed expansion based on the following considerations, which I believe are directly relevant to the Division’s review of lease suitability and compatibility with other lawful uses of public trust waters:

Compatibility With Adjacent Uses and Public Trust Waters

The existing lease already generates significant and persistent bird activity immediately adjacent to residential docks and shoreline structures. Expanding the lease would further intensify this activity, resulting in an excessive

accumulation of bird waste on docks and vessels. The placement of oysters directly beneath roosting birds raises reasonable concerns related to sanitation and public health, particularly given the common consumption of raw oysters.

Navigation and Public Access Impacts

The current lease configuration requires vessels transiting the New River to alter course to safely navigate around the lease area. Expansion would further restrict navigable waters and reduce safe access for both recreational and commercial vessels, contrary to the multiple-use nature of public trust waters.

Interference With Established Commercial Fishing Activities

Prior to the initial lease approval in 2019, this shoal supported productive commercial fishing, including gill netting for flounder, spot, croaker, and mullet. The existing lease has already restricted access to this traditional fishing area. Expansion would permanently eliminate the ability to lawfully fish this shoal and represents a loss of historically utilized fishing grounds.

Odor and Nuisance Impacts on Adjacent Properties

During periods of unfavorable wind, particularly in the summer months, odors associated with shellfish cages and accumulated bird waste are noticeable and unpleasant. Expansion of the lease would exacerbate these nuisance impacts on nearby residences and docks.

Effects on Marine Wildlife Use of the Area

Historically, porpoises were frequently observed inshore within this section of the river. Since the installation of the lease, sightings have become rare, suggesting that the lease may be altering habitat use or movement patterns for marine mammals.

Loss of a Historically Safe Recreational Area

This shallow portion of the river has long been a safe spot for tubing, wakeboarding, and other family-friendly water activities, especially for children. Expansion of the lease would eliminate one of the few shallow, low-traffic areas suitable for these uses.

Cumulative Bird Activity and Aviation Safety Concerns

The New River is a recognized flight corridor between Marine Corps Air Station New River and New River Inlet. Increased bird activity associated with water column leases presents a cumulative concern. I have personally experienced bird strikes that caused aircraft damage, and increased bird concentrations raise legitimate aviation safety concerns. Concentration of Lease Acreage Under a Single Operator
The applicant currently holds two active shellfish leases and has an additional proposed lease under review. Approval of further expansion would result in an increased concentration of lease acreage under a single operator within a limited section of the river, intensifying cumulative impacts on navigation, fishing access, and adjacent uses.

Visual Impacts and Character of the Area

While I recognize that visual impacts may not be a primary approval criterion, I respectfully request that the Division note for the record that the existing lease materially detracts from the natural character of the shoreline. This natural setting was a significant factor in our decision to purchase our home, and further expansion would compound this impact.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the Division deny approval of the proposed lease expansion because it is incompatible with existing uses, navigation, and traditional fishing activities, and would have cumulative impacts on this section of the New River.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

”

Alan Robinson

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 12:34 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC

“To the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries,
I submit this letter as a formal objection to the proposed shellfish lease identified as Lease ID 25-028WC, associated with Lease ID 8803, owned by Joshua A. Thompson, located in Onslow County on the New River below the Highway 172 Bridge.

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associated with the lessee's bottom lease and are frequently exposed or partially out of the water. Submerged gear in this area has interfered with my lawful fishing activities, and its placement raises concerns about whether this area meets the intent and siting criteria for a bottom lease under Division standards. I also own an RV located directly adjacent to the lease area, and the presence of exposed and unsightly gear negatively affects the use and enjoyment of that property.

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The current lease configuration requires vessels transiting the New River to alter course to safely navigate around the lease area. Expansion would further restrict navigable waters and reduce safe access for both recreational and commercial vessels, contrary to the multiple-use nature of public trust waters.

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Prior to the initial lease approval in 2019, this shoal supported productive commercial fishing, including gill netting for flounder, spot, croaker, and mullet. The existing lease has already restricted access to this traditional fishing area. Expansion would permanently eliminate the ability to lawfully fish this shoal and represents a loss of historically utilized fishing grounds.

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Effects on Marine Wildlife Use of the Area

Historically, porpoises were frequently observed inshore within this section of the river. Since the installation of the lease, sightings have become rare, suggesting that the lease may be altering habitat use or movement patterns for marine mammals.

Loss of a Historically Safe Recreational Area

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The New River is a recognized flight corridor between Marine Corps Air Station New River and New River Inlet. Increased bird activity associated with water column leases presents a cumulative concern. I have personally experienced bird strikes that caused aircraft damage, and increased bird concentrations raise legitimate aviation safety concerns.

Concentration of Lease Acreage Under a Single Operator

The applicant currently holds two active shellfish leases and has an additional proposed lease under review. Approval of further expansion would result in an increased concentration of lease acreage under a single operator within a limited section of the river, intensifying cumulative impacts on navigation, fishing access, and adjacent uses.

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our home, and further expansion would compound this impact.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the Division deny approval of the proposed lease expansion because it is incompatible with existing uses, navigation, and traditional fishing activities, and would have cumulative impacts on this section of the New River.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alan Robinson

To the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries,
This checklist is submitted in opposition to Proposed Shellfish Lease 25-028WC (associated with Lease 8803) and is aligned directly with applicable provisions of the North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC) governing shellfish lease siting, review, and approval.

Compatibility With Public Trust Uses

15A NCAC 03O .0201(b); 03O .0202(1)

Shellfish leases must be compatible with other lawful uses of public trust waters.

- The proposed expansion is incompatible with existing residential dock use, recreational boating, swimming, and traditional fishing activities immediately adjacent to the lease.

Navigation and Safe Passage

15A NCAC 03O .0202(1) & (2)

Leases may be denied if they interfere with navigation or public access.

- The existing lease already requires vessels to alter course when transiting this portion of the New River.

- Expansion would further restrict navigable waters and compromise safe passage for recreational and commercial vessels.

Interference With Established Commercial Fishing

15A NCAC 03O .0201(b); 03O .0202(1)

Leases must not unreasonably interfere with traditional fishing activities.

- Prior to 2019, this shoal was routinely used for gill netting and harvest of flounder, spot, croaker, and mullet.
- The existing lease restricts access; expansion would permanently eliminate lawful commercial fishing in this area.

Suitability of Lease Location / Gear Placement

15A NCAC 03O .0202(3)

Leases may be denied if the location is unsuitable for the proposed use.

- Gear associated with the bottom lease is frequently exposed or partially out of the water.
- Submerged gear interferes with lawful fishing activities, raising concerns regarding compliance with siting standards for bottom leases.

Cumulative Impacts

15A NCAC 03O .0202(1) & (3)

DMF may consider cumulative impacts when evaluating lease applications.

- The applicant already holds two active leases and has another proposed lease under review.
- Additional acreage would intensify cumulative impacts related to navigation, fishing access, bird activity, and adjacent land uses.

Creation of Nuisance Conditions

15A NCAC 03O .0202(1)

Leases must not create unreasonable nuisance conditions affecting adjacent uses.

- Significant bird concentrations associated with existing cages result in excessive waste accumulation on nearby docks and vessels.
- Odors from cages and bird waste are noticeable during warmer months and negatively affect adjacent residences.

Impacts on Marine Resources and Habitat Use

15A NCAC 03O .0201(b); 03O .0202(3)

Leases should not adversely affect marine resources or habitat use.

- Marine mammal activity (including historically frequent inshore porpoise sightings) has declined since lease installation, suggesting altered habitat use.

Loss of Safe Recreational Use Area

15A NCAC 03O .0202(1)

Leases must be compatible with recreational use of public trust waters.

- This shallow area has historically provided a safe location for tubing, wakeboarding, and family recreation.
- Expansion would eliminate one of the few low-traffic, shallow recreational areas in this section of the river.

Aviation Safety (Cumulative Consideration)

15A NCAC 03O .0202(3)

DMF may consider site-specific conditions affecting suitability.

- Water column leases increase bird activity.
- The New River is a recognized flight corridor between MCAS New River and New River Inlet, and increased bird concentrations present a legitimate cumulative aviation safety concern.

Consistency With Public Interest

15A NCAC 03O .0201(b)

Leases must serve the public interest and preserve balanced use of public trust waters.

- The proposed expansion disproportionately benefits a single operator while adversely impacting navigation, fishing access, recreation, and adjacent landowners.

Conclusion:

Based on the above NCAC-based considerations, the proposed lease expansion fails to meet Division standards for compatibility, navigation, suitability, traditional use protection, and cumulative impact assessment. Denial of Lease 25-028WC is respectfully requested.

”

Shani Palmer

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 1:04 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC

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lease has already restricted access to this traditional fishing area. Expansion would permanently eliminate the ability to lawfully fish this shoal and represents a loss of historically utilized fishing grounds.

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For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the Division deny approval of the proposed lease expansion because it is incompatible with existing uses, navigation, and traditional fishing activities, and would have cumulative impacts on this section of the New River.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Shani M. Palmer”

Louis DeNoia

North Carolina | 1/29/2026 5:10 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“I along with many other commercial fishermen oppose the continued leased bottoms in the new river and other areas that impede the navigation of these waters to include taking of public bottom that would effect the commercial fisherman’s livelihoods. This currently difficult and unsafe to navigate the waters along the shorelines due to poles and cages along these waters.

We are unable to fish many of these areas and a continued growth and leases of these bottoms will negatively impact our ability to work the waters for shellfish and net fishing. There are already many rules and factors that have already impacted the livelihoods of many current fishermen. Hope that the decisions made will not allow any additional bottom leases this way we can continue to harvest our products without any interference. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion on this matter.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 1/30/2026 10:00 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-001BL

“Old Baldy Aquaculture, LLC (Matthew T. Miller) – Shellfish Bottom – No. 25-001BL – 4.78 acres – New River below NC 172 bridge, Onslow County.

The location of this proposed bottom as well as the surrounding immediate areas that are now active leases and have been taken from the commercial fisherman have always provided a productive area for harvesting clams in an overboard operation. At times when North of the 172 bridge is closed for harvesting shellfish we depend on areas like these to commercially harvest shellfish. During the DMF survey 148 clams were harvested proving this is a productive area and anticipate more natural clam reproduction to occur. Therefore I oppose

Old Baldy Aquaculture, LLC (Matthew T. Miller) – Shellfish Bottom – No. 25-001BL – 4.78 acres – New River below NC 172 bridge, Onslow County, should not be granted.”

Tony Rhodes

North Carolina | 2/11/2026 7:18 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“I am 100% against these leases. They are ruining our waters with junked up pots coated with seagull crap. There is no way this is sanitary for people to eat. Oysters covered in seagull poop. They are taking up prime fishing grounds and should be banned from our waters like they have been in other counties. They are blocking navigable waters and should not be allowed here at all. I have no problem with the old way of a bottom lease for a oyster garden the way it should be. The natural way. I hope this gets voted down.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 2/11/2026 9:13 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-002BL

“On the tool that is used for the public to view the whole report seems to be inaccurate. This is supposed to be 1.19 acres, and on the photos of the corner markers it says 5.19 acres. Either way there were too many clams identified in this area that has shown to be productive over the past several years. I oppose the granting of this lease. Old Baldy Aquaculture, LLC (Matthew T. Miller) – Shellfish Bottom – No. 25-002BL – 1.19 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County.”

Harold Eddington

North Carolina | 2/11/2026 9:25 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“This is a general concern for all of the leases to be considered for upcoming meeting. There are currently approximately 60 leases in the county that are said to be active, and nearly all are in the vicinity of the New River. If Marine Fisheries continues to grant farmers these areas at the growth from 2010 to present we will have to navigate around all these cages that are attracting birds and stench. At the end of the day My tongs, rakes, trawls, gill nets, skimmer frames, conveyors, and other equipment are on the boat at the dock. When these lease are granted they are there for at least 10 years. Get it under control or the beauty that these rivers and bays have provided for our inner calm will be gone.”

Michael Taffler

North Carolina | 2/11/2026 3:47 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-026BL/25-027WC

“Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Bottom and Water Column – Nos. 25-026BL / 25-027WC – 3.73 acres – Ellis Cove, Onslow County. I Michael A Taffler oppose due to impeding Navigational water blocks my home and others from using the bay.”

Marlene Taffler

North Carolina | 2/12/2026 12:24 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC, 25-029WC

“I oppose to Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-028WC – 3.65 acres – New River below NC 172 bridge, Onslow County.

Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County. due to Impediment of Navigational water. This blocks us from using waterways. Thank you”

Tyler Eggers

North Carolina | 2/12/2026 1:45 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC, 25-029WC

“I oppose all lease but in particular Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-028WC – 3.65 acres – New River below NC 172 bridge, Onslow County.

Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County.

I oppose for impeding use of navigable water. Boat is kept in Stone Bay, and this would stop me from being able to use it or get out.”

Maria Walend
North Carolina | 2/12/2026 6:34 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“Hi I am here to vote no on the oyster field in Stone bay where Joshua Thompson is wanting to put oyster pots in our area.”

P. McNally
North Carolina | 2/12/2026 7:42 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“I am writing today to inform you that the Joshua A Thompson Lease Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County. ,will not only hurt my community by blocking our water access for boats, but it will also put quite an eyesore in the water in front of our properties. These houses were purchased, knowing that we had full water access as well as an incredible view. Going forward with this lease will ultimately result in cutting off our water access from our boat ramp and docks, destroying our panoramic views , and most important you will severely devalue our properties . Leasing this area is a mistake. Please think about the people that pay taxes to live here. The people that buy fishing licenses. If you muck up the water with all these unsightly oyster beds, the tourist will not be as likely to come see us and help support our community They don’t want to vacation in unsightly areas. They come to our area for the views, the beaches and most importantly the boating. We like our small community feel. We don’t want to sacrifice that for greed. Stop being greedy and vote No This is what your people want are asking you to do. Don't allow the lease.”

Caroline Orsillo
North Carolina | 2/12/2026 8:03 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“The following proposed lease has a direct negative impact and effect on the homes of New River Plantation neighborhood. It would be a significant loss to the

community and property owners regarding home values . I would recommend this lease be refused.

Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County.”

Carolyn Boyd
North Carolina | 2/12/2026 8:13 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“As a New River Plantation waterfront homeowner I feel this issue will affect our view and our boating access. Increased boat traffic to the beds will be detrimental to our docks, shoreline and clubhouse water activity area.”

Teresa Diane Barwick
North Carolina | 2/12/2026 8:23 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“I am writing to formally oppose the proposed private oyster bed to be located directly in front of my home at [your address or parcel description].

While I understand the importance of aquaculture and supporting local seafood production, the placement of this oyster bed in this specific location raises significant concerns.

First, the proposed site will directly impact my use and enjoyment of my waterfront property. The installation of cages, racks, buoys, or other equipment will obstruct views, restrict access to the water, and interfere with recreational activities such as swimming, kayaking, and boating. This represents a substantial change to the character and usability of the shoreline in front of my home.

Second, there are concerns regarding navigation and safety. Markers and equipment in this area may create hazards, particularly during low tide or poor visibility conditions.

Third, the project may negatively affect property values and the residential nature of this stretch of shoreline. The introduction of a commercial or semi-commercial operation in close proximity to homes is not consistent with the established character of the area.

I respectfully request that the agency deny this application or require relocation of the oyster bed to a more appropriate site that does not directly impact adjacent homeowners.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns. I would appreciate confirmation that this letter will be entered into the public record for this application.”

Teresa Barwick
North Carolina | 2/12/2026 8:33 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed private oyster bed to be located directly in front of my home at [your address or parcel description].

While I understand the importance of aquaculture and supporting local seafood production, the placement of this oyster bed in this specific location raises significant concerns.

First, the proposed site will directly impact my use and enjoyment of my waterfront property. The installation of cages, racks, buoys, or other equipment will obstruct views, restrict access to the water, and interfere with recreational activities such as swimming, kayaking, and boating. This represents a substantial change to the character and usability of the shoreline in front of my home.

Second, there are concerns regarding navigation and safety. Markers and equipment in this area may create hazards, particularly during low tide or poor visibility conditions.

Third, the project may negatively affect property values and the residential nature of this stretch of shoreline. The introduction of a commercial or semi-commercial operation in close proximity to homes is not consistent with the established character of the area.

I respectfully request that the agency deny this application or require relocation of the oyster bed to a more appropriate site that does not directly impact adjacent homeowners.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns. I would appreciate confirmation that this letter will be entered into the public record for this application.”

Phil Work

North Carolina | 2/12/2026 9:01 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“Regarding Lease No. 25-029WC:

I attended the live hearing, and live in New River Plantation in Sneads Ferry, immediately adjacent to this lease While Mr. Thompson seems to be a very responsible waterman, this lease is in a prime recreational fishing spot and granting a water column lease can only be a detriment to recreational fishing. Also, this would be the first water column lease in Stones Bay. Will this facilitate future and further water column leases in the bay? Right now, our view from the south shore are unobstructed and we see none of the problems associated with other water column leases, such as increased bird activity/pollution and unsightly gear. Will it stay that way.? Please deny this water column lease. Mr. Thompson, by his own admission, seems to be doing quite well with his bottom lease alone.”

Brynna Clevenger

North Carolina | 2/12/2026 9:12 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“I object I live in new river plantation and let me just say this I didn’t come to this neighborhood to loose my water access and I can stand for everyone in the community when I say that. if you pass this you are ruining so many lives who have worked so hard to live on the water or close to an access !”

Christopher Prosonic

North Carolina | 2/12/2026 9:32 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“I oppose the lease that affects us Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County.”

Brigit Clevenger

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 5:15 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“The leases being requested by Joshua Thompson 25-029WC- as this channel comes out from a community boat ramp used daily , the maritime boats for MARSOC training area, the Coast Guard boats also uses this area to come in and out. The military uses this area for training, along with the path for the helicopters to the simulators. The pole lease and crab pots , equipment, and everything used for this project effects the use of the channel- there is

limited space already and not an area that has been dredged. The birds that have homes out here already naturally can cause issues, the oyster farm and materials would bring in more birds as well. The oyster farm projects have many other areas to use that do not directly affect the use by homeowners or the military, this area is limited already by natural occurrences and can not support adding in man made elements that affect everyone.”

Christopher Clevenger

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 5:30 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“The channel requested to have the lease 25-029WC is not functional for anyone using the narrow channel. This location is used for fisherman, military personal, and owners to access the bay to the ICWW. There is not enough space to place an oyster farm in an area that has not had dredging and it does not offer a wide enough sections as is for more than one vessel to use. The risk of loss of use by everyone and objects being placed here can cause unnecessary damage to boats, military training issues , and overall the rise to the the public are too high for this lease. Even more-so when those who rely on the channel have low water levels, equipment below and above the water, times when trees already naturally fall there, along with the birds that are bright in by the oyster farm hinders the use.”

Brigit Clevenger

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 5:45 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-026BL/25-027WC, 25-028WC

“There are two additional leases requested that block in use for property owners based on the water levels/location for 25-028WC and 25-026BL/25-027WC that are on the path for helicopters using the landing pad by the back gate. Neither of these should be allowed , the military base should be notified of the leases and the use of these 25-026BL/25-027WC discussed with base. Birds and objects that can be in the site lines for pilots is not a risk that should be allowed.”

April Girard

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 6:22 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC

“Objection to Proposed Shellfish Lease – Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-028WC (3.65 acres), New River below NC 172 Bridge, Onslow County
To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally express my disagreement with the proposed shellfish water column lease (No. 25-028WC) located in the New River below the NC 172 bridge in Onslow County.

Stone Bay and the surrounding New River area are already heavily utilized waterways. This section of the river supports significant recreational and commercial activity, including boating, paddle boarding, kayaking, fishing, and other forms of water-based recreation. Additionally, this area is adjacent to and influenced by military operations associated with Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. The waterway is frequently traveled and serves as an important access corridor.

The introduction of a 3.65-acre shellfish water column lease in this location would create several concerns:

Navigation and Safety Risks: The addition of lease structures, markers, and gear would reduce maneuverable space in an already busy waterway, increasing the risk of collisions for recreational boaters, paddle boarders, and other users.

Reduced visibility and obstacles could also pose concerns for low-flying military aircraft operating in the area.

Wildlife Concentration and Nuisance Issues: Shellfish leases often attract birds in large numbers. Increased bird activity can create excessive natural waste accumulation, impact nearby water quality, create odor concerns, and potentially affect surrounding properties and recreational users.

User Conflicts: This portion of the New River is a shared-use environment that balances recreation, nature observation, and military presence. Adding aquaculture infrastructure may intensify conflicts between user groups and diminish the open-water character of this stretch.

Environmental and Aesthetic Impacts: Gear, floats, and markers may detract from the natural scenic value of Stone Bay and the surrounding shoreline.

Overall, this is a relatively narrow and active waterway that already accommodates a variety of uses. Introducing additional infrastructure in this specific location may create safety, environmental, and user-conflict concerns that outweigh potential benefits.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the proposed lease be reconsidered or relocated to a less trafficked and less sensitive area.

Thank you for your consideration”

Anne Heath

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 6:42 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“With respect, I object to the lease request of Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC – 4.24 acres – Stones Bay, Onslow County because of the potential impact on the views, water access, and bird activity/waste for members of my community of New River Plantation.”

Thomas Martin

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 7:14 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“Objection to Proposed Shellfish Lease – Joshua A. Thompson – Shellfish Water Column – No. 25-029WC (4.24 acres), Stones Bay, Onslow County

I am writing to formally express my disagreement with the proposed shellfish water column lease (No. 25-029WC) Stone Bay and the surrounding New River area are already heavily utilized waterways. This section of the river supports significant recreational and commercial activity, including boating, paddle boarding, kayaking, fishing, and other forms of water-based recreation. Additionally, this area is adjacent to and influenced by military operations associated with Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. The waterway is frequently traveled and serves as an important access corridor.

The introduction of a 3.65-acre shellfish water column lease in this location would create several concerns:

Navigation and Safety Risks: The addition of lease structures, markers, and gear would reduce maneuverable space in an already busy waterway, increasing the risk of collisions for

recreational boaters, paddle boarders, and other users. Reduced visibility and obstacles could also pose concerns for low-flying military aircraft operating in the area.

Wildlife Concentration and Nuisance Issues: Shellfish leases often attract birds in large numbers. Increased bird activity can create excessive natural waste accumulation, impact nearby water quality, create odor concerns, and potentially affect surrounding properties and recreational users.

User Conflicts: This portion of the New River is a shared-use environment that balances recreation, nature observation, and military presence. Adding aquaculture infrastructure may intensify conflicts between user groups and diminish the open-water character of this stretch.

Environmental and Aesthetic Impacts: Gear, floats, and markers may detract from the natural scenic value of Stone Bay and the surrounding shoreline.

Overall, this is a relatively and active waterway that already accommodates a variety of uses. Introducing additional infrastructure in this specific location may create safety, environmental, and user-conflict concerns that outweigh potential benefits.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the proposed lease be reconsidered or relocated to a less trafficked and less sensitive area.”

Daniel Vote

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 7:18 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-003BL/25-004WC, 25-015BL/25-016WC, 25-017BL, 25-020BL/25-021WC, 25-026BL/25-027WC, 25-028WC, 25-029WC

“Nos. 25-003BL / 25-004WC
Nos. 25-015BL / 25-016WC
No. 25-017BL
Nos. 25-020BL / 25-021WC
Nos. 25-026BL / 25-027WC
No. 25-028WC
No. 25-029WC

I am opposed to all leases listed above. These are mainly water column leases that impact fish habitat and navigation when recreational anglers are fishing. The bottom lease listed is there because alligator bay is already full of leases and there is no need to place anymore in this location. I

encourage the companies to seek out and try and develop other areas along the coast to set up leases. This area is becoming congested with them and there needs to be more work done with developing leases outside of this area.
Thank you
Daniel Vote”

Wendy Brock
North Carolina | 2/13/2026 7:43 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-028WC

“Subject: Objection to Proposed Shellfish Lease – No. 25-028WC

I am writing to formally object to the proposed shellfish water column lease (No. 25-028WC, 3.65 acres) in the New River below the NC 172 bridge in Onslow County.

This section of the New River and Stone Bay is already a heavily used waterway supporting boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, fishing, and other recreation, and is also impacted by Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune operations. It functions as a high-traffic access corridor.

Placing a lease at this location raises several concerns:

- Navigation and safety: Lease gear and markers would reduce maneuverable space and add obstacles in a busy channel, increasing collision risk for recreational users and potentially affecting low-flying military aircraft operations.

- Wildlife and nuisance impacts: Shellfish structures can attract large numbers of birds, leading to waste buildup, odor, and localized water quality concerns.

- User conflicts: Adding aquaculture infrastructure in a shared-use area may increase conflicts and reduce open-water access.

- Environmental and aesthetic effects: Floats and gear would detract from the natural and scenic character of the area.

Given the existing traffic and sensitivity of this waterway, I respectfully request that this lease be reconsidered or relocated to a less congested area.”

Magen Strimple

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 8:17 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“no to lease: 25-029WC

It’s going to be under water and floating traps/poles floating which cause issues for the military boats , owners boats, and this stuff will float to our decks. Plus it brings more and more bird’s which are an issue for boats and helicopters”

Brent Youngblood

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 8:51 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“I do not support the leases that would create a visual impediment to my view in new river plantation. There is massive amounts of water acreage near the marine base shoreline. In addition, there would be an increase of bird feces in the water, shores , and peoples yards”

Marisol Mondragon

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 9:47 AM
Leases Referenced: None

“The installation of the proposed oyster lease, including poles, netting, cages, equipment, and any materials brought onto the site — creates significant navigational and safety hazards. These structures pose risks to recreational boaters, commercial vessels, military traffic, and emergency responders operating in the area. Additionally, the presence of birds attracted to the structures may increase aviation and environmental safety concerns. The accumulation of materials and obstructions in the waterway could also create hazards to swimmers and others using the area for recreation. The families living on the coast, living closets to this should be taken into consideration.”

Diana Grzeszczak

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 10:03 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“No to lease: 25-029WC”

Stephen Grzeszczak

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 10:04 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“No to lease: 25-029WC”

Zane Grzeszczak

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 10:04 AM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“No to lease: 25-029WC”

Fred Skipper

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 12:24 PM
Leases Referenced: None

“I am against all of the proposed shellfish lease applications in Onslow County.”

Tom and Karen Mercer

North Carolina | 2/13/2026 4:37 PM
Leases Referenced: 25-029WC

“Vote no to lease 25-029 WC
Tom Mercer attended meeting in Holly Ridge and Karen Mercer reviewed slide presentation online.
We vote no. We live in New River Plantation on the water, in Sneads Ferry, NC 28460. Thank you. 2/13/26 4:37pm”