

# Pender County Shellfish Lease Hearing

## Submitted Comments

Tuesday, April 15, 2025



Topsail Beach Town Hall  
820 S. Anderson Blvd., Topsail Beach, NC 28445  
In Person and virtually via Webex

### **Adams, Hilary**

North Carolina  
4/7/2025 22:02

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding Shellfish Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL, the proposed oyster field in Banks channel, close to Harvey's cut . As a frequent kayaker in this area, I anticipate that the presence of this oyster field will significantly impact the safety and accessibility of the waterway for recreational users like myself. The potential for navigational hazards, restricted passage, and sharp oyster shells posing injury risks, are major concerns that I urge the Division to consider before approving this project. I request a thorough review of the safety implications for non-motorized watercraft.

### **Adams IV, William H.**

North Carolina  
4/8/2025 20:32

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Greetings,

I am the President of The Marina at Queens Grant and our membership is vehemently opposed to the proposed Shellfish Lease 24-023BL. I plan to attend the April 15th Topsail Town Hall Meeting and I would request the opportunity to speak at the meeting. This lease, applied for by Thomas A. Cannon, is for a 1.33-acre shellfish bottom lease in Banks Channel at the intersection of Harvey's Cut. Queens Grant Marina Floating Dock #4 on Banks Channel is directly across from the sandbar where the proposed shellfish lease would be located. Queens Grant Floating Dock #4 is definitely one of the closest man made structures to where the Proposed Shellfish Lease would be located.

Our firm opposition stems from concerns regarding the safety and recreational impacts the shellfish lease would have on the area if it is approved and constructed:

Safety issues:

The proposed shellfish lease would narrow Banks Channel at the point of a three way intersection with Harvey's Cut. The natural instinct of a watercraft driver would be to navigate closer to Floating Dock #4 and further away from a shellfish lease structure if one was approved and constructed on the sandbar. The back end of boat slips would be perceived as deeper water than the shellfish lease structure which would have poles in the water marking the shellfish lease boundaries. These type poles are often used to indicate shallow water areas. On a busy day boat traffic already has a significant impact due to the wave motion from watercraft on Floating Dock #4 and a Shellfish Lease in that area would cause stability safety issues for people walking / boarding or unloading from a boat on the floating dock.

The navigability of Harvey's Cut is heavily dependent on tide levels. It is a route that many fishermen and recreational boaters use as a quick way to get to the Intercoastal Waterway. Lower draft boats don't normally have a problem, but boats with a deeper draft often run at a pretty fast pace in order for those boats to remain on plane. This is already not a good combination with a three way intersection, but the construction of a shellfish lease would constrain the area and unquestionably lead to more danger to any type of watercraft traveling through that area.

People who are using non powered watercraft (kayak, paddle boards, etc.) in that narrowed area on Banks Channel would not have a direct path of getting away from motorized watercraft in that constrained area if a shellfish lease were built there. Once you enter the outside area / closer to the deep water in banks channel side of the shellfish lease they could no longer use the shallow water above the sand bar to have a direct path to get away from heavy wave action. Once they got beside a shellfish lease of that size they would be pinned in next to the waves

until they could paddle to the other end of the structure to get back into a safe zone.

There is currently a dredge pipe and constant movement in this area working on the effort to dredge sand for the renourishment of Surf City Beach. This is the first time that Surf City has done a dredging beach nourishment project and it probably will not be the last time dredge pipes are run through this area for Topsail Beach and Surf City Beach Renourishment Projects.

Recreational impact:

People often use that area to wade, fish, kayak, paddle board, sunbathe, walk or anchor up with friends to hang out on the sand bar. A shellfish lease in Banks Channel would be terrible, but that one specific spot would eliminate use of the sandbar for any type of recreational use which would be a huge waste of a wonderful natural recreation location on Banks Channel.

Many Thanks,

William H. Adams IV

(919) 886-6264

**Allison, Josh and Carrie**

North Carolina

4/13/2025 15:45

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

We own a house in the Queens Grant community and our dock is directly across from the proposed shellfish lease 24-023BL

We are strongly opposed to this lease for safety reasons. This section of Banks Channel is very narrow and heavily traveled by many different types of boats. It is also used by kayaks and paddle boards. The sandbar where the lease is proposed provides an area of refuge for paddle boarders and kayaks at times when boat traffic is heavy. removing access to the sandbar would eliminate this safe area for kayaks and paddleboarders and would make the area drastically more

dangerous for all vessels. It would also pinch down fast boat traffic which already operates at very close vicinity to our dock.

Furthermore, the intersection of Harvey's cut at this location makes this a tricky area to safely navigate at times when boat traffic is heavy. Adding another structure would only increase the complexity of navigating that area.

The sandbar is also a natural recreational amenity that is used by boaters and residents. Taking this amenity away from tax payers to instead use as a shellfish lease is not right. There are many other areas that would be more appropriate and safer for additional shellfish leases.

For these reason we strongly oppose this shellfish lease and urge you to deny it.

Thank You,  
Josh and Carrie Allison  
965A Tower Court

**Arleth, James**  
North Carolina  
3/28/2025 17:22

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Along with my wife Jennifer, we own the house at 944 Observation. Several times per week starting in the late spring and through late fall, my four children, my wife, and I regularly kayak out to the sandbar during low tide. We have four single kayaks, and one double kayak. We land on the sandbar, walk around on the sand bar for about an hour, and then kayak back to our house about 200 yards away. Based on the white poles that I have seen, this shellfish bottom lease covers a large portion of the sandbar. This differs from the other leases that have been around for several years that are further across the channel. Those leases remain underwater at low tide and are very easy to avoid while still enjoying kayaking on the intracoastal. But this new lease, for some reason, is for the same area that my family, and several other families, use regularly during the summer. We are opposed to the lease at its

current location. If the lease was shifted south west 300-500 feet or so, and did not include any portion of the sandbar that is above water at low tide, it really would not impact our ability to kayak and enjoy that area.

**Arndt, Drew**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 19:11

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-015BL/24-016WC**  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

I am opposed to all 3 leases being proposed. The density of water column leases in Pender county waters is getting overwhelming that all new leases are impacting anyone enjoying our public natural resources. There needs to be a moratorium on all leases until impact and density studies can be done to set limits.

Lease 24-015BL/24-016WC blocks a natural shoreline, high potential for seagrass growth and is in an area of shifting sands so the channel may not stay on the opposite side of that lease and then it would be blocking navigation.

Lease 24-023BL is in a high traffic area that is extremely busy. That sandbar is dry at lower tide cycles and is commonly used by everyone to park and enjoy the water. That sandbar also is shifting and seagrass commonly grows in that area as shown by your maps and that I have seen on the water. At higher tides it will be a navigational hazard right where boaters cut across to get to the marsh channels. It would not be fair to take this portion of sand from the many that enjoy it daily just for the benefit of one.

24-024BL this lease is in a shifting channel that many smaller craft use and would take away a safer passage away from the busy curve in banks channel. It would be a navigational hazard. The lease is also right next to a primary nursery area that is full of seagrass and crowded with multiple shellfish operations that I would argue should have never been approved for that area.

**Bilheimer, Roger**

North Carolina  
3/23/2025 13:04

Lease(s) Referenced:

**Not Specified**

We live at 820B N. Anderson Blvd. adjacent to and across from the Pender County Shellfish leasing proposal which I am adamantly opposed to for so many VALID reasons.

This is a very narrow channel which already constricts boat traffic directly in front of our dock (and many others!). There is no wiggle room any more. It creates safety issues for hundreds (maybe thousands?) of recreational boat users who are not familiar with the water. We all depend on these renters to feel comfortable so that they may return in the future. I have (on more than one occasion!) helped to steer them through these tight waters!)

This is already an extremely high wake zone which is already dangerous to us (and our neighbors!) but I am advised that is also bad for shellfish growth. Where is the gain for this?

This part of the Sound is very special and should remain protected to the utmost. The value of this strip both financially to the Town and its residents should not be underestimated. Harvey's Cut, and the access it provides, not only to local residents, but also to other boaters is a critical part of what makes Topsail Beach so special.

**Bowden, David**

North Carolina  
3/28/2025 21:25

Lease(s) Referenced:

**Not Specified**

No! No shellfish lease here. This is a HIGH traffic area and this lease area is commonly used by residents and visitors in the area. Plus, there are A LOT of boats in the area making the water less clean and less favorable for clean, healthy oysters. No shellfish lease. This will be a terrible impact to the community and a minimal (if not zero) positive impact on the local community and residents. Who does this benefit!? The millionaire investor only! No local patrons benefit from this. You need to look out for the community at large, not a sole corporation. You all know the right thing to do. No shellfish lease!

**Bowden , Brooke**

North Carolina  
4/7/2025 22:25

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I have many concerns regarding the Shellfish Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. Specifically, the proposed oyster field in Banks Channel near Harvey's Cut. This will negatively impact the safety and accessibility of the waterway for recreational users like myself. I am not in support of this.

**Breuer, Kyle**

North Carolina  
3/18/2025 15:05

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

The Town of Surf City would like to thank the Division of Marine Fisheries for holding public hearings on shellfish leases in and around the Town. Estuarine waters in and adjacent to the planning jurisdiction of Surf City provide important habitat for a diverse range of shellfish, birds, and other forms of marine wildlife. The Town supports actions that maintain or improve the quality of water and the abundance of the fisheries available to area residents and visitors, to include the propagation and availability of fin fish and shellfish.

The siting of oyster column leases should address the need to ensure continued maritime navigation throughout public trust waters. A balance needs to be presented between shellfish production and the other commercial and recreational features that make Surf City a wonderful place.

**Bridges, Thomas**

North Carolina  
4/13/2025 7:35

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I live in Hampstead and have a boat. I don't have a problem with bottom leases, but the leasing of the water column hinders boat access. The water is public property and access should not be restricted by any private entity.

**Burleson, F.**

North Carolina  
3/28/2025 15:54

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

The proposed shellfish lease in Banks Channel in the area of the sandbar would prevent recreational use of the sandbar by residents and tourist boaters, paddleboarders, personal watercraft users, and kayakers. Sandbars are a popular destination for individuals, families, and dog

owners. That sandbar is especially nice as it allows for little ones to play/swim in shallow water protected from waves and strong currents. We have personally taken our grandchildren and spent a wonderful morning or afternoon on the sandbar.

From a recreational boating point of view, the leases in this narrower part of the channel would also reduce the boating lanes which are already very busy during the weekends and in the summer months with sailboat and motorboat traffic along Banks Channel to Serenity Point and back up to the Intracoastal, and make it more difficult and potentially less safe for local kayakers, paddleboarders, and personal watercraft users.

**Caldwell, Ron**

North Carolina  
4/9/2025 10:16

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

My name is Ron Caldwell and we have a beach home at 909 Bumble Bee Lane in the Queens Grant community in Topsail Beach. We strongly oppose the approval of Shellfish Lease 24-023BL for a variety of important reasons. I believe that Pender County officials should have safety and recreational impacts as top considerations over and above a financial incentive of the leasee and lessor of this proposed shellfish lease. If that's in fact true, this should be a straightforward conclusion for the county. The area in question sits in a highly trafficked part of the Sound which also is not wide enough to allow for shellfish farming so close to our docks and community. Boats already travel through that very narrow channel and high speeds, and now those same boats would be forced even closer to our boat slips where our 5-year-old twins often play or walk to/from house and boat. Recreationally, our family and dozens of others use the sandbar every single day for sunbathing, picnics, water sports and other memory-building things that families have done out on the sandbar for years. This proposed shellfish lease completely eliminates this natural area that should be preserved for generations of families to enjoy.



I would ask that the County absolutely NOT approve this lease and determine a less impactful location if such a lease is desired or necessary. This chosen location is simply too dangerous if approved and most definitely would destroy a unique sandbar for the indefinite future.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

**Campbell, Chase**

North Carolina  
4/9/2025 5:59

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Though I am a big supporter of both recreational and commercial fishing and shellfish harvesting, the location near Queens Grant on South topsail Beach is a concerning location due to boat traffic and how this area will inhibit the use of the sandbar where many people, families and children enjoy The public waters and sandbar frequently. This will also narrow traffic in an already congested and increasingly becoming more congested area.

**Chamberlain, Diane**

North Carolina  
3/21/2025 16:21

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I'm writing to you because of this proposed shellfish farm across from our development (Queens Grant). I'm concerned about the potential impact the marina would have on a food source located so close to the mouth of our canal. I've seen a decent amount of trash and occasional fuel contamination from the marina in the water.

**Cilento, William**

North Carolina  
4/5/2025 10:13

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

My name is Bill Cilento and I am the President of Queens Grant Rec Association, a community in Topsail Beach, NC. The community of Queens Grant (109 homes strong) is up in arms about a proposed shellfish lease right off the back of the community. It's within 250' of our Marina space and honestly on one of the more popular sandbars for recreational use on the south end of Topsail Island. This sand bar happens to sit in the middle of the waterway and is inline with Harvey's cut (a common cut through for shallow water boats). Boats from Hampstead often pass through Harvey's cut to reach the waterway. To

my knowledge this would be the first shellfish lease in the center of the waterway in the area.

**Cilento, William**

North Carolina  
4/11/2025 13:26

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

My name is Bill Cilento and I am the President of Queens Grant Rec Association, a community in Topsail Beach, NC. The community of Queens Grant (109 homes strong) is up in arms about a proposed shellfish lease right off the back of the community. It's within 250' of our Marina space and honestly on one of the more popular sandbars for recreational use on the south end of Topsail Island. This sand bar happens to sit in the middle of the waterway and is inline with Harvey's cut (a common cut through for shallow water boats). Boats from Hampstead often pass through Harvey's cut to reach the waterway. To my knowledge this would be the first shellfish lease in the center of the waterway.

Please deny this request.

**Cilento, William**

North Carolina  
3/28/2025 11:45

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I own a home in Queens Grant and a boat slip less then 250 yards from this proposed bottom lease. This lease is particularly problematic as it sits in the middle of the waterway on one of the more popular sand bars for recreational use. This lease is in line with Harvey's Cut ( a cut through the Marsh) from the deeper Intracoastal Waterway to the more shallow version (On way to Inlet)..the boat traffic in this area is particularly high. The individual sandbar is commonly used for a kayaking stop point in stronger currents/winds, paddleboarding and will push boat traffic closer to the boat slips. The sandbar is locate din the middle of the waterway. I own a boat and commonly tube in this area along with many residents and visitors. This lease should not be allowed in its current location as it will intrude on recreational use and create a hazard.

**Creamer, Kim**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 18:53

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

NOTE: I provided these comments at the public hearing but wanted to also submit in writing. I will add, additionally, that Mr. Cannon's comment to forego bottom lease 24-023BL due to the great amount of public concern he heard at the hearing was appreciated. I hope the division will accept that offer to withdraw that lease.

Comments from public hearing:

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Kim Creamer. [My husband, Ben, and I reside at 828B N Anderson Blvd, Topsail]. I am here to voice strong opposition to proposed shellfish bottom lease 24-023BL in Topsail Sound.

This lease is situated in a highly trafficked, recreational zone between Harvey's Cut and the main channel's an area actively used by boaters, kayakers, sailors, paddleboarders, jet skiers, and families engaging in watersports and sandbar activities, such as tubing and water skiing. The introduction of a shellfish lease in this specific location would significantly restrict navigation and impair the safe enjoyment of these activities. On any given day, you will find families on the southern side of this proposed lease anchoring to have safe harbor from the channel in shallow water and enjoy the sandbar. You will find families crossing this area to and from Harvey's Cut. You will find families on the northern side participating in water activities, such as water skiing. Recreational activities literally occur ALL around and on top of this proposed lease area.

Equally important, this area would seem to meet the requirements for denial of the proposed lease under Article 16, statute 113-202B of NC General Statutes that states "The Secretary may not grant a new lease in an area heavily used for recreational purposes." This proposed lease area meets that definition through its current, continuous use for non-commercial recreation. To proceed with lease approval would violate both the spirit and the letter of these legal protections.

The proposed location of this shellfish lease is contrary to all other shellfish lease locations already in the sound, as Mr. Cannon proposes placing this one right in the middle of the channel in a high-recreational use area in which recreational activities occur on either side of the proposed lease area, on the sandbar of the proposed lease area, and across the waterway of the proposed lease area. This is not about opposing the shellfish industry as a whole. It is about preserving a unique and vital recreational space that serves both residents and tourists and is central to the identity and economy of our island community.

I respectfully urge the Division to deny lease 24-023BL and uphold the state's responsibility to protect public trust waters for the safe recreational use of all.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.

**Creamer, Kim and Ben**

North Carolina  
3/17/2025 21:31

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

We write regarding proposed shellfish bottom lease 24-023BL. We have serious concerns about the location of this proposed shellfish bottom lease in Topsail Sound.

First, this proposed location serves as a recreational area for residents and visitors to the island. It is proposed on a sandbar located between Harvey's Cut and the main waterway for boat traffic in the sound. The location serves, therefore, as a popular recreational location for boaters, kayakers, paddleboarders, and fishermen. In addition, the location serves as a popular area for waterskiing, tubing, and jet-skiing. Boating, watersports, and sandbar recreation would be impacted for two main reasons. The proposed location would take a large portion of the area used for these activities; and the markings for the proposed location have already and would likely continue to increase risk of boaters running aground, as they mistake the signage for navigation markings (which we have witnessed occur already numerous times). Running

aground in this manner increases risks of injury to boaters and watersport participants.

Second, the number of lease applications for Topsail Sound is rising to an alarming number. With moratoriums secured by other counties, Onslow and Pender appear to be bearing the brunt of these lease applications. For example, two shellfish industry locations already exist very close to this proposed site, with several more located on the sound nearby. It seems prudent not to oversaturate any area, for the sake of the environment and the tourism industry. This area of Topsail Sound has already provided a fair share of locations for the shellfish industry. It seems a reasonable request to allow the remainder of this location to stay preserved for recreational use.

Lastly, research is conflicted on the pros and cons of these shellfish industry leases. While some purport the environmental benefits of the industry, others express concern for the long-term effects on the marshlands, indigenous birds (due to practices of bird deterrence), and the tourism industry. In addition, other options, such as rewilding do exist. Wisdom could be found in slowing down the installation of these shellfish industry locations to properly study and determine the long-term effects on the Topsail Sound.

It is our understanding that the towns of Topsail Beach, Surf City, and North Topsail Beach also oppose the alarming rate of the approval of these leases. Consideration of the tourism industry, as well as the real estate industry, should be of paramount importance. Many homeowners on the island were once tourists who fell in love with the beauty of the island and its marshlands, as well as the recreational opportunities both the sound and oceanfront provide. Continuing impact on recreational use of the waterway, tourism, and real estate must be part of the equation. We should not hinder the sustainability of one critical industry for the growth of another.

We respectfully request this proposed lease application be denied.  
Thank you for your time and consideration of these concerns.

With great concern,  
Ben & Kim Creamer

**Dail, Jason**  
North Carolina  
3/21/2025 15:20

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Good afternoon,  
I am adamantly opposed to issuance of a water column lease at this location as it would create an obstruction to navigation. The State cannot continue to allow for proliferation of these water column leases in out open water bays and navigable waterways, regardless, if the leases are proposed outside of a channel. If approved, this lease will restrict traditional public navigation and will limit the public from being able to harvest natural resources from the area. I fish and oyster in this area, and have documented ""tracks"" on record to support that this area is used frequently by the public. Again, a lease in the proposed area will create a significant navigational hazard and will eliminate the publics use. Please understand the proliferation of these water column leases in Pender and Onslow Counties are reducing natural spat and recruitment of native oysters in the area. These two counties alone cannot withstand the volume of leases being proposed. The public trust area in these Counties is being overrun with commercial operations, thereby limiting the ability of citizens to enjoy and benefit from its intended use. Please consider my comment as an official objection to this proposed lease.

**Davis, Michael**  
North Carolina  
4/16/2025 16:14

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-015BL/24-016WC**  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

Re: Pender County Shellfish Leases 24-015BL, 24-16WC, 24-023BL, 24-024BL

These are areas my family kayaks and fishes in near the banks. Also the area near the sandbar across from Queens Grant we use to park our boats. It is getting harder and harder to find areas to use for families to enjoy the waterways. Thank you.

**Etheridge , Chip**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 19:15

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I appreciate Mr. Cannon's comment to forego bottom lease 24-023BL due to the great amount of public concern he heard at the hearing was appreciated. I hope the division will accept that offer to withdraw that lease.

Also, I'd like to add that I wanted to speak when called on, but the mic wasn't working.

Thank you for your time this evening.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chip Etheridge  
923 N. Anderson Blvd C#210  
Topsail Beach, NC

**Filer, Rebekah**

North Carolina  
3/24/2025 18:42

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Please consider a moratorium on shellfish leases. At least until more study and public input. It is having a significant impact on navigation and a dire impact on recreation. From fishing to watersports to good old fashioned relaxing on the sandbar, the bast number of leases is creating a huge problem. Don't get me wrong. We need some shellfish leases. They are important to our local oystermen, our restaurants, our tourists and our economy. And they're DELICIOUS. But we have to have a balance and we have to coexist.

**Graham , Julie**

North Carolina  
3/24/2025 12:35

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I understand that commercial fishermen need to make a living but how far do we let it go. The state has already regulated recreational fishermen to the extent that we can barely enjoy fishing anymore while commercial fishermen excel and now y'all want to punish us more. The proposed lease is for one of THE most popular sandbars in our area. The locals have visited this sandbars for years, we take care of it, make sure it's clean and there has even been a personalized flag put on it. Allowing this lease to go through takes away those memories and one of the few

places that bigger boats can enjoy themselves. In addition this lease would block the waterways on the sides of the sandbars and I don't know if you have traveled on the alternative route on any given weekend in the summer it already has a massive amount of boat traffic coming in from the ocean as well as recreational boats. If you take the access away on the sides of this sandbar you are putting people in danger by putting additional traffic in that already crowded canal with the boats of all sizes and jet skis. There is plenty of sandbars not directly in a main thoroughfare that could be leased that would be a better alternative. There is not any amount of shellfish that are worth it.

**Hall, Ruffin**

North Carolina  
4/12/2025 15:38

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

My wife and I are very opposed to the proposed shellfish lease 24-023BL. We believe there will be serious boating safety issues produced by narrowing the channel and making it more hazardous through that part of the channel. That will produce more waves impacting the docks and a greater likelihood of boating accidents. Additionally, there is a serious negative impact to recreational activities in the area. PLEASE deny this lease permit application.

**Harry , Harry**

North Carolina  
3/26/2025 13:41

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

We are strongly against allowing more Shellfish farming in the Topsail sound. This would be detrimental to the recreational use of the waterway and also create a negative view of the water area to all of the homeowners located on the sound.

These sites should be limited to unobtrusive areas in the marshes, not in plain view. The particular area off of Queens Grant in Topsail is widely used by recreational boaters and fishermen.

Please do not let this become a reality. It will negatively impact real estate prices in that area along with the inconvenience it brings



**Herring, Karen**

North Carolina  
4/9/2025 8:40

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

There are 2 navigable channels in Banks Channel; one on each side of the sandbar. The proposed lease completely blocks one of those channels as well as blocks access to one of the sandbars that is used daily for recreational activities. This poses a danger to boaters, paddle boarders, kayakers and those applying for the leases. Please take this into consideration as you make the decision on granting these leases.

Thanks,  
Karen Herring

**Herring, Will**

North Carolina  
4/9/2025 8:42

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

My family plays on the sandbar, and this lease would completely ruin that for boaters, kayaks, paddleboarders, and anyone wishing to enjoy the sandbar.

**Holcombe, William**

North Carolina  
4/1/2025 0:17

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

As a life long Topsail beach boater, the positioning of the shellfish lease would be a danger to boaters, swimmers, and all intracoastal recreation. This area is a boater/kayaker/swimmer/paddle boarding highway and having an oyster lease positioned this close to residential areas will surely cause injuries and turmoil. The issue is not about having a few extra oysters it's about destroying recreation safety in that area so that a select few can earn money off of the safety of others. Allowing this lease would be the equivalent of putting a razorblade farm in a play ground. Please do not allow this lease to commence.

**Hoover, William**

North Carolina  
3/21/2025 15:30

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

This is regarding shellfish bottom lease application 24-023BL. I support commercial Fisheries but NOT this one. This would create a very unsafe situation in the channel that it is proposed. The channel is narrow with lots of boat traffic. In addition, this will eliminate a popular sandbar and activity spot that is widely used by boaters, kayakers, and

other recreational activities. Please do not grant this lease for the safety of all boaters and families that enjoy this area at Topsail Beach. Thanks

**Johnston, Jeff**

North Carolina  
4/10/2025 9:15

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

Right now, and I am sure other times in the future, there are dredge pipes and constant movement in this area working on the effort to dredge sand for the renourishment of Surf City Beach. How can a shellfish farm exist in an area that every few years dredges will be pulling sand, dragging cables and pipes right over their farm. This location simply will not work. It interferes with dredging and it creates even more danger for motor craft and paddle boats. Please deny the application for Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL.

**Johnston, Jeff**

North Carolina  
4/11/2025 10:49

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

I am opposed to Please deny the applications for Bottom Lease Applications 24-023BL and 24-024BL.

Both of these leases will hurt local, recreational fishing. There are already too few edible sized fish in Topsail Sound. Placing 023 near Havey's cut creates dangerous navigation and 024 is right on top of a favorite recreational fishing hole. 024 will destroy that fishing location forever.

Please deny the applications for Bottom Lease Applications 24-023BL and 24-024BL.

**Johnston, Jeff**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 22:50

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

I would like to thank everyone who showed up for the meeting at The Topsail Island Town Hall. The presenters gave authentic and sincere comments about their concerns about lease application 024 23BL and 24BL. The main concerns related to major negative effects on recreational use of the sandbar and significant increases in danger to kayakers, windsurfers and even to skiers and people being pulled on

rafts. Navigation to and from Harveys Cut was also a major concern. Please deny these lease application. It is interesting that the applicant actually told me after the session that based on the dangers our presenters made he would consider withdrawing his application.

**Johnston, Jeff**

North Carolina  
3/19/2025 16:33

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I have been studying the benefits and drawbacks of Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL for a number of months. It is directly across from the marina canal at Queen's Grant community. The proposed bottom lease is within a pitching wedge of docks and cuts across an oft used sandbar where kayakers, windsurfers and boaters go to run their dogs, set up tents and enjoy their days. The bottom lease will narrow even further a very narrow part of a channel in Topsail Sound where hundreds of boats drive slowly and race past the sandbar and our canals on a daily basis. This will greatly increase danger to non-power boaters and decrease recreational access to a much loved spot. Please deny this lease application.

**Johnston, Jeffrey**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 22:53

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Thanks for Casey Silva for her professionalism and management of this process. She was pleasant, helpful and extremely well organized.

**Johnston, Jeffrey**

North Carolina  
4/16/2025 16:57

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

Excellent townhall meeting last night in Topsail. Lots of good speakers telling their authentic concerns about danger to boaters, negative impacts on recreational activities near Queen's Grant and 24-023BL. Another speaker brought up the density of shellfish farms in our smaller topsail sound and the need to consider a moratorium in Pender County based on surrounding areas having moratoriums, which has caused farmers to swarm to our area. We lost two mayors at Topsail due to

untimely deaths. These mayors were advocates of a moratorium. Please at least delay the decisions on these leases, including 24-024BL. It seemed, last night, that the applicant for these leases will consider withdrawing his application. He said he had not been aware of the sincere concerns of our local citizens. Please check with him about his pending decision. Thank you.

**Johnston, Jeffrey**

North Carolina  
3/28/2025 9:13

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

The sandbar across from Queen's Grant is a cherished landing spot for power boaters, kayakers and win surfers. It is already a narrow channel in that area. It can't be more than 80 yards from the dock/boat lifts that belong to Queen's Grant. A shellfish farm on 1/3rd of this sandbar will diminish use of the sandbar for recreational purposes, depriving the people in Queen's Grant and surrounding properties of something they have enjoyed for many, many years. Please deny this application for Bottom Lease 24-023BL. (Jeff Johnston)

**Johnston, Sandy**

North Carolina  
3/20/2025 8:33

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I worry about the shellfish in Bottom Lease 24-023BL being contaminated from oil and gas in the water flowing daily from our marina canals. Our canal is well maintained, but there are over 30 boat lifts and docks; and boats, both new and old lose fuel and oil into the water. I love shellfish, but I am already nervous about contamination. In my opinion, no shell fish lease should be allowed if there is a possible health hazard. I believe it would be unwise for a shellfish farmer to place his bottom lease cages near a narrow channel that is so close to a canal and marina. Please deny this lease application.

**Johnston, Sandy**

North Carolina  
3/22/2025 8:24

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

My adult kids own a home in Queen's Grant. We love how close we are to the sound, water and sandbars. We see white polls near the marshlands and know these represent shellfish farms and that is great. We love shellfish. But putting a bottom lease near one of our favorite sandbars and in the MIDDLE of the sound seems quite unwise. It

intensifies traffic through an already narrow channel. It increases danger to non-motorized recreational vehicles and creates more liability for drivers of motor craft and possibly to Queen's Grant homeowners. Please deny this bottom lease application.

**Johnston, Sandy**

North Carolina  
3/27/2025 8:01

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

My daughter and her husband own the home at 920 Observation Lane, Queen's Grant. I believe this would be the only shellfish lease in the middle of Topsail Sound. Why would anyone think this a good idea. Near or in the marshes is great. I fully endorse leases in the marshes, but narrowing a channel for a shellfish farm only increases danger to all boaters; motored or paddled. Please deny this application for Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL.

**Johnston, Sandy**

North Carolina  
4/6/2025 8:45

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

Increased danger for ALL motorcraft and particularly paddle craft is my concern. Danger to our kids and ourselves with a narrower channel for speed boats near Queen's Grant. The sound is already narrow and shallow in this area. Some people have suggested we will need to put a traffic light in our narrow channel to increase safety. Kids are frequently on their windsurf boards or kayaks, going across to the sandbar or to the marshlands near Harvey's Cut. Shellfish are great, but a shellfish farm within a baseball throw to second base docks is simply a bad idea. Would the shellfish farmer be liable for the danger they create. Please deny the application for Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL.

**Jurgensen, Scott**

North Carolina  
3/22/2025 15:10

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

3 22 2025: My name is Scott Jurgensen and I own a place at Queen's Grant (921 N Anderson, 112-D) I have looked at the Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. It is directly across from the marina canal at Queen's Grant community. The proposed bottom lease is across the narrow channel from the QG docks. The bottom lease will even further narrow part of a channel in Topsail Sound where hundreds of boats

drive slowly and race past this sandbar on a daily basis. I visit this mall sandbar connected to the bottom lease, with my kids, grandchildren and dogs every other day during the summer season. Many bottom leases are visible, when you go through Harvey's Cut to the Intercoastal Waterway, but these active bottom leases are out of the way of recreational traffic, back within the marsh areas. This Bottom Lease Application 24-023Bl is the exact opposite, located within a high traffic channel that will increase danger to non-power boaters and decrease recreational access to a much loved sandbar. There has been newly installed dredge piping for the Surf City beach re-nourishment. Please deny this lease application. (Scott Jurgensen)

**Lambert, Jennifer**  
North Carolina  
4/14/2025 7:44

Please do not do the oyster beds. That is where people cut through to go to the waterway. It's very shallow there and it's already hard enough.

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

**Leary, Brian**  
North Carolina  
3/24/2025 12:58

I oppose it

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

**Leary , Alexia**  
North Carolina  
3/24/2025 12:58

I oppose this

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

**McDonald, Maria**

North Carolina  
4/7/2025 17:55

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

There are 2 navigable channels in Banks Channel; one on each side of the sandbar. The proposed lease completely blocks one of those channels as well as blocks access to one of the sandbars that is used daily for recreational activities. This poses a danger to boaters, paddle boarders, kayakers and those applying for the leases. Please take this into consideration as you make the decision on granting these leases.

Thanks,  
Maria McDonald

**McDonald, Ray**

North Carolina  
4/9/2025 9:56

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

It is inconceivable that the proposed shellfish lease even made it past the local inspection and it causes me to question the judgement of the local Marine Fisheries inspector. If he/she would even consider a lease in the middle of a navigable channel means that the residents of Pender county need to be on high alert for any other leases proposed. Banks channel has 2 navigable channel and a sandbar in the middle. This proposed lease not only makes the sandbar inaccessible but it completely blocks the west side channel where many recreation boaters use for skiing and tubing. Having a lease in this channel would be very hazardous to boaters and the proposed oyster cages would constantly be damaged. This lease is terrible idea that should have never made it to the public hearing phase. Ray McDonald, 1025 Ocean Blv, Topsail Beach

**Meredith, Barbara**

North Carolina  
3/25/2025 6:56

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I believe the installation of this lease will greatly impact the safety of small watercraft along the reduced size of the sound. There are many canoes and kayaks, along with small sailing boats that travel along this already narrow waterway. The sandbar located adjacent to the proposed site has been a highly desired place for children and their families to enjoy without concern for disturbing developing shellfish. The bottom lease for shellfish will also be a concern for boaters entering

the channel that connects to the ICW. Please deny this application.

Thank You

**Meredith, Barbara**

North Carolina  
3/24/2025 16:46

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

As a homeowner in the Queens Grant community, I object to Shellfish Bottom Lease Application, 24-023BL for the reasons pertaining to the safety of boaters of all sizes and of the recreational impact it would have on hundreds.. or thousands of people traveling through this narrow area of the waterway. There are significant safety concerns in addition to the negative recreational impact this lease would have on the people living in the immediate areas adjacent to the proposed lease site. The proximity of the marina and the high degree of boat traffic may also become an environmental hazard to the shellfish. Please deny this application

**Miller, Eric**

North Carolina  
3/31/2025 10:04

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I have read that Pender County has passed a resolution requesting The State place a moratorium on all new leases in Pender County. We in Queen's Grant support this proposal for a moratorium. Please deny Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. This particular lease would create danger in a narrow, shallow part of The Sound. (Eric Miller)

**Miller, Stephanie**

North Carolina  
3/25/2025 8:18

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

My sister and her husband bought a house in Queen's Grant in 2018. My family loves it. Danger to our kids and ourselves with a narrower channel for speed boats near Queen's Grant. The sound is already narrow and shallow in this area. Kids are frequently on their windsurf boards or kayaks, going across to the sandbar or to the marshlands near Harvey's Cut. Shellfish are great, but a shellfish farm within a sand wedge from our canal and docks is a bad idea. Would the shellfish farmer be liable for the danger they create. Please deny the application for Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. (Stephanie Miller)



**Misiaveg, Suzanne**

North Carolina  
4/8/2025 14:41

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am responding with my concerns regarding Shellfish Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. I am a property owner in Queens Grant at Topsail Beach, NC. In addition, I have been coming to Topsail beach most of my life and have enjoyed the recreational use of the sound for many decades. The area seeking approval seems very problematic to me for several reasons. The channel in this area is full of boat traffic and is not very wide. The sandbar adjacent to this area is used by many families for sandbar recreation, kayaking, and boating. The area is very close to Harvey's cut which I have observed has alot of boat traffic. In addition, it is close to floating dock #4 and would make their entry and exit onto their dock much more difficult. Understanding that there is an economic incentive for shellfish and oyster farming in our state, I am not opposed to having these areas. I feel that there are better options that are closer to marshes and quieter areas in our sound. Please do not approve this application.

**Misiaveg, William**

North Carolina  
3/27/2025 10:53

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

We oppose the lease for oyster farming in the middle of the channel at Topsail Sound across from Queens Grant. It presents a major safety hazard for boaters and recreational use on the existing sand bar. It is not near the marshline habitat which is normally used for this type of oyster farming and it is not logical to create this habitat in a restricted channel with heavy boating traffic.

**O'Brien, Buckley**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 18:17

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

I approve of Thomas Cannon's proposed leases (24-023BL and 24-024BL)

**Ogle, Addison**

North Carolina  
3/30/2025 7:49

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am Addison Ogle (18). My parents own a home at Queen's Grant on Topsail. I have read that heavy wake from powerboats is not conducive to a productive shellfish farm. Wouldn't this high traffic also contaminate the oyster beds? I guarantee there will be constantly heavy wakes from the hundreds of boats that pass through this area each hour during the spring and summer months. Putting a shellfish farm in this precise location is a bad idea. It likely will not be a productive farm and it increases danger so everyone. Please deny Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL

**Ogle, Chace**

North Carolina  
3/26/2025 8:50

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am an adult. My parents own a beautiful home in Queen's Grant. Right now (March 26 2025) there are dredge pipes and dredge equipment immediately over where the Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL will place a farm. The dredge itself is pulling sand within 50 feet of the sandbar. Placing a bottom lease in the middle of the sound at this spot is simply a very bad idea. Next time dredgers come to this area, will the farmer remove all his equipment and start over? If this shellfish farm is allowed it will narrow an already narrow channel and increase the danger to kayakers, swimmers as well as speed boats attempting to navigate between docks on the shore and a sandbar. Please deny this application.

**Ogle, Jennifer**

North Carolina  
4/3/2025 7:49

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

Please deny Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. It is lunacy to put a shellfish farm right in the middle of a shallow and narrow section of Topsail Sound. I am a homeowner in the Queen's Grant Community. We have a boat lift in the marina canal. We boat to the nearby sandbar, a section of which is right on the sandbar. My family and friends kayak to the sandbar. It is already a dangerous area because the channel is so narrow. Hundreds of boats fly through that area daily. The bottom lease farm will only narrow the channel more and make it significantly more dangerous for motor boaters and particularly for paddlers of all kinds. Please help keep our waters safe for recreational use.

**Ogle, Jennifer**

North Carolina  
4/14/2025 8:55

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

My husband and I own a home at 920 Observation Lane in the Queen's Grant community. We have a small motorboat and kayaks. All of us love to leave our canal and boat or paddle to Harvey's Cut or to the sandbar, which is 1/3rd the way across the sound. I am shocked that a shellfish farm might be allowed to take up nearly a third of our beloved sandbar and I am even more concerned that having a farm in that location will create significantly more danger for paddlers in that area. The channel between Queen's Grant docks and the proposed lease is extremely narrow, and will be made even more narrow with a farm blocking other paths around the sandbar. Please deny lease application 24-023BL.

**Ogle, Jennifer Ann**

North Carolina  
3/24/2025 14:42

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

My husband and I purchased a home in Queen's Grant in 2018. We love it. Our three children bring friends to our home and they enjoy kayaking into the sounds and onto the sandbar near our canal. We already worry about the traffic in this narrow area of The Sound, but our kids are careful and they have so much fun being independent explorers. We all often kayak over to the marshlands and enjoy the incredible sights and sounds. The proposed bottom lease would be directly in the line that we travel when we kayak to Harvey's Cut from our canal. Whose liability will it be if someone gets hit by a motorized craft while trying to get across the sound quickly and needing to avoid a shellfish farm. Please deny this application. (Jennifer Ogle)

**Ogle, Jennnifer**

North Carolina  
4/11/2025 10:36

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

I own a home and drive a motorized boat out of our canal. The navigability of Harvey's Cut is heavily dependent on tide levels. In order to access Harvey's Cut we already have to be very careful to avoid extremely shallow waters. The route we take from Queen's Grant canals is the same as many fishermen and recreational boaters use as a place to fish and as a quick way to get to the Intercoastal Waterway. Lower draft boats don't normally have a problem, but boats with a deeper draft often run at a pretty fast pace in order for those boats to remain on plane. This is already not a good combination with a three way

intersection. The construction of a shellfish lease would constrain the area and unquestionably lead to more danger to any type of watercraft traveling through that area. Please deny the application for Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. I am also opposed to application 24-024BL. It is right in the middle of a key recreational fishing hot spot. A lease in that area would destroy fishing for many.

**Ogle, Scott**  
North Carolina  
3/21/2025 9:05  
  
Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I own a home at 920 Observation Lane, Queen's Grant. My wife, kids and I often kayak from the canal, close to the sandbar and over into Harvey's Cut. Harvey's is a direct line from the canal and from what I can tell the bottom lease (24-023BL) is directly in our path. The channel near the sandbar is already narrow and boat traffic can be heavy during the day. We already have to be quite careful navigating across the channel. With this proposed Bottom Lease traffic will be more intense and more dangerous. Please deny this shellfish lease application.

**Ogle, Scott**  
North Carolina  
4/10/2025 9:22  
  
Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I own a home and drive a motorized boat out of our canal. The navigability of Harvey's Cut is heavily dependent on tide levels. In order to access Harvey's Cut we already have to be very careful to avoid extremely shallow waters. The route we take from Queen's Grant canals is the same as many fishermen and recreational boaters use as a place to fish and as a quick way to get to the Intercoastal Waterway. Lower draft boats don't normally have a problem, but boats with a deeper draft often run at a pretty fast pace in order for those boats to remain on plane. This is already not a good combination with a three way intersection. The construction of a shellfish lease would constrain the area and unquestionably lead to more danger to any type of watercraft traveling through that area.

**Ormond, James**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 18:39

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-015BL/24-016WC**  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

All three shellfish lease applications up for consideration pose either a hazard to navigation or impede our ability to freely park our boat and/or fish these areas. As a resident of the area I would like to go on the record in opposition to the following applications:

James B. Pumphrey and Benjamin Slay (24-015BL/24-016WC)  
Thomas A. Cannon (24-023BL)  
Thomas A. Cannon (24-24BL)

Thank you.

**Peros, Andrea**

North Carolina  
4/5/2025 10:41

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

Please deny Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL. Placing a shellfish farm in the middle of a shallow, narrow section of Topsail Sound is not only misguided—it is dangerous.

As a homeowner in the Queen's Grant Community, I am deeply concerned about the serious safety risks this proposal poses. My family uses the local marina and regularly boats and kayaks to the nearby sandbar, a portion of which would be directly impacted by this lease. The area already sees heavy traffic, with hundreds of motorboats going through the channel daily. Adding a shellfish farm in this spot would only further constrict an already narrow waterway.

The danger is particularly acute for non-motorized users like kayakers, windsurfers, and paddleboarders, who must navigate the same waters as fast-moving motorboats. The lease area sits between wider channels to the north and south, meaning boaters approach it at speed, only to be funneled into a chokepoint where collisions are far more likely. This setup creates a lethal hazard and undermines safe, recreational use of the Sound.

This is a bad idea, plain and simple. For the safety of all who use these waters—residents, visitors, and families alike—please deny Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL.

**Pollock, Julia**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 19:16

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I live right across from lease 24-023BL. There were many opposed to that lease, and I'm glad that the owner of the lease was there. My neighbor, Jim Stewart brought a picture of it. It proved to be helpful for many of the people giving comments. I was glad that the owner was there to see why we were upset and even more glad when he offered to move or lessen the footprint of it. Frankly, it is just in a very busy 3 way intersection, waiting for an accident to happen, be it a boat, a child swimming across to the sandbar (my grandson does) and kayakers who sit low in the water. This is a major thoroughfare in the summer. We just don't need a lease there. Can it be moved to the marshes? No heavy boating traffic there, and hopefully the oysters will grow happily there? thanks for having this meeting.

Julia pollock

828A N Anderson Blvd, Topsail Beach, NC

**R, Ashley**

North Carolina  
3/24/2025 10:07

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

"This is in regards to shellfish bottom lease application 24-023BL. This lease is directly across from the marina canal at Queen's Grant community. The proposed bottom lease is within 100m of docks and cuts across a frequented sandbar where kayakers, windsurfers and boaters go to run their dogs, set up tents, allow many small children to play and enjoy their days. The bottom lease will narrow even further a very very narrow part of a channel in Topsail Sound where hundreds of boats drive slowly and race past the sandbar and our canals on a daily basis. This will greatly increase danger to non-power boaters and decrease recreational access to a much loved spot. Please deny this lease application.

Additionally, I worry about the shellfish in Bottom Lease 24-023BL being contaminated from oil and gas in the water flowing daily from our marina canals. Our canal is well maintained, but there are over 30 boat lifts and docks; and boats, both new and old lose fuel and oil into the water. We love to consume shellfish, but I am already nervous about contamination. In my opinion, no shell fish lease should be allowed if there is a possible health hazard. I believe it would be unwise for a shellfish farmer to place his bottom lease cages near a narrow channel that is so close to a canal and marina and so heavily trafficked with humans and water crafts. Please deny this lease application.

My husband, kids and I often kayak from the canal, close to the sandbar and over into Harvey's Cut. Harvey's is a direct line from the canal and from what I can tell the bottom lease (24-023BL) is directly in our path. The channel near the sandbar is already narrow and boat traffic can be heavy during the day. We already have to be quite careful navigating across the channel. We have 4 kids under 11 and this is dangerous and sad they can't enjoy the beauty and fun that comes with living on the waterway. With this proposed Bottom Lease traffic will be more intense and more dangerous than it already is. Please deny this shellfish lease application. We love how close we are to the sound, water and sandbars. We see white polls near the marshlands and know these represent shellfish farms and that is great. We love shellfish. But putting a bottom lease near one of our favorite sandbars and in the MIDDLE of the sound seems quite unwise. It intensifies traffic through a narrow channel. It increases danger to non-motorized recreational vehicles and creates more liability for drivers of motor craft and possibly to Queen's Grant homeowners. Please deny this bottom lease application. Whose liability will it be if someone gets hit by a motorized craft while trying to get across the sound quickly and needing to avoid a shellfish farm?

Lastly, one of our sons was cut by an oyster when he slipped a few years ago while enjoying the canal. This required emergent, extensive surgery. We had to rush 2 hours to the ER where he could be operated on

immediately due to risk of infection from shellfish. This was an expensive and terrifying example of the dangers of shellfish in recreational areas enjoyed by families and children. He needed 9 liters of fluid to wash out the injury and more than 30 stitches. Please do not allow this sandbar lease and deny the application for the safety of all who enjoy these special areas of our coast.

**Rankin, Sam**

North Carolina  
4/8/2025 7:27

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

please do not allow more leases in the baks channel and surf city area. they are a terrible eyesore and are navigational hazards.  
thank you for keeping the lights unlocked waters open and natural.

**Rhodes, Tony**

North Carolina  
3/24/2025 9:27

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

These oyster pots are taking up a lot of the fishing grounds we use as recreational fisherman. I have hit one or two with my boat that were unmarked and damaged my motor. I have seen birds sitting on them at low tide and the bird poot is running down on the oysters. There is no way this is healthy.

**Rodenberg, Denny**

North Carolina  
3/26/2025 6:54

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Although we support commercial fishing, this planned location is unfortunately poorly thought out. Location could not be worse for shellfishing, as this is a high wake area, in a narrow channel, creating safety issues, not only for proximity to a marina, but for contamination to the shell fish as well.

There are dredging lines in the proposed area as well. This location makes no sense at all. High traffic thru this heavily utilized boat recreation area will add additional hazards.

Safety is a great concern for this well used recreational area for all of Topsail Island, and a moratorium on this form of abuse to the area should be considered. Thank you, please deny this lease application.



**Sakowski, Yvonne**

North Carolina  
3/25/2025 10:43

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

Regarding shellfish bottom lease application 24-023BL, I feel that this lease would be an unfair burden to the local community. This lease would affect an area on the water that many local residents frequent for recreation. This includes small watercraft like paddle boards, kayaks, canoes and small family sized boats. This lease would put all these forms of recreation in harms way because there would be less room for all boating in the area, placing them closer to large power boats. It's inevitable that injuries would increase or even worse deaths to an unsuspecting public, who value this beloved recreational environment. The citizens in the area deserve a clean and safe environment that is for everyone to use, and we pay our property taxes to the county and city in order to enjoy these privileges. It's unfair to place a commercial entity that threatens our safety and enjoyment of this beautiful local environment. I hope the local authorities respect citizens rights over increasing revenue. Thank you.

**Schneider, Brian**

North Carolina  
3/25/2025 9:49

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

This comment is regarding the Shellfish bottom lease application 24-023BL.

I am in opposition to this lease. It will severely restrict the current recreational activities in the area, including but not limited to a VERY popular sand bar that thousands of recreational boaters will no longer be able to frequent each weekend. This will have a severely negative impact on the area and the environment that we currently enjoy.

If this is allowed to go forward, it will significantly narrow the navigable section of the sound. This area is heavily trafficked, especially in the boating season, with person using personal water craft such as kayaks and paddle boards. Narrowing the navigable section is a major safety concern which will cause power boats of all sizes coming into closer proximity to persons using PWC. At some point, the narrowing of the area would likely result in injury and or death.

I ask that this application be denied and that the applicant find a safer place to conduct this activity.

**Sherron, Frank**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 10:31

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

These comments are in opposition of Shellfish lease 24-023BL proposed north of the intersection of Banks Channel and Harvey's Cut and also behind the sandbar south of that area that I see poles on the west side of the sandbar. I assume that to be additional oyster leases as well. While I am encouraged by the increased aquatic farming being done in our area, there needs to be a balance of the recreational uses of our sound and any shellfish farming. The significant increased population in our area is putting more and more pressure on Banks Channel for recreational boating, kayaking and the like. With that increased traffic, any decrease of recreational areas that are being used presently is not only a safety hazard but also a hazard to navigation. The leases already in place on the ICWW side of Banks Channel are restrictive enough but also visually screened to a great extent. Further increases in leases will also be an eyesore to your community. I urge you to seek a balance between our growing recreational demands put upon the sound by increased population of Pender Co and our shellfish industry finding low impact areas for further development out of the direct or indirect navigational areas.

**Shields, Kathleen**

North Carolina  
3/27/2025 21:47

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

My husband and I have been owners of a unit at Queens Grant Topsail since 2004. Over the years we have enjoyed kayaking and anchoring at this bayside island area to walk and observe the wildlife, as well as fishing and crabbing. Our children, and now our grandchildren, enjoy these experiences immensely. The removal of this area from public use would take away a treasured feature that has made Queens Grant special to us. We respectfully ask that you deny this request.

**Slovenski, Sean**

North Carolina  
3/21/2025 16:14

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I have been studying the benefits and drawbacks of Bottom Lease Application 24-023BL for a number of months. We are permanent residence in queens grant. 918 Bumble Bee LN. This Bottom Lease will be directly across from our home in an already heavily traveled commercial and recreational boat traffic area that is very narrow to begin with. Additionally we consistently and frequently observe wild life (deer) swim across the channel to the sand bar to play and then come back to shore. I can only imagine having the bottom lease in place and narrowing the available lane for boat traffic would increase the chance of wild life being injured or worse. Please deny this lease application.

**Spence, Tolly**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 15:59

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**22-053BL (Past, Active)**

I previously opposed Shellfish Bottom Lease 22-053BL and now it appears more leases are aggressively encroaching and being sought in recreational areas.

The location of the previous lease is where my family and neighbors kayak and paddle board adjacent to the beach/grass area. Furthermore, there is a boat beach 75-100 yards south of the lease where current rips hard in the area further causing concern for congested area.

It is more difficult to navigate recreational use of the area with the proposed lease area. I appreciate the benefit of shellfish development and the inherent benefit of cleaner water. I would ask the commission to consider eyes on the location to accommodate a better and less obtrusive location, but also further study the impact of congested boating and recreational kayaking, fishing and paddle boarding areas.

I would ask that a moratorium to new shellfish leases be imposed until a study is done to assess the impact on all stakeholders.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

Tolly Spence

919-466-0001

**Spence, Tolly**

North Carolina  
4/16/2025 16:53

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

Opposed to: Proposed Shellfish Lease 24-023BL and Proposed Shellfish Lease 24-024BL

The proposed Shellfish Lease would be located in a heavy boat traffic area used for access to Harvey's

Cut. Harvey's Cut connects the Intracoastal Waterway with Banks Channel behind Topsail Island.

Furthermore, this is a 10 year proposed lease whereby these sandbars in the middle of Banks Channel shift over time and are used at low tide for recreational activities by kayakers, paddleboarders and day trips to sandbar at low tide. I spoke on Tuesday evening referencing the those of us that boat frequently in Banks Channel don't have any paint on the bottom of our outboard motor because of the shallow draft nature of Banks Channel. Harvey's Cut is a narrow channel and during heavy summer boat traffic it is not unusual for safety reasons to drift a bit to wait your turn to enter Harvey's Cut. These proposed shell fish Leases would be right where you come off the Marked Banks Channel.

Also, Those of us familiar with the waters in Banks Channel will use the areas behind the sandbar to pull children tubing, etc so as not to put them in harms way in the marked sections of Banks Channel where boat congestion is off the chain during summer and warm weather weekends.

Finally, the boat traffic and recreational use of the waters of Banks Channel and ICW are becoming congested already from the Pender and New Hanover population growth. Additional Shellfish leases would add to the congested areas and creating more safety issues.

As a full time resident of Topsail Beach, we have lost 2 mayors (died/passed away) within the last year. We need time to realign our town's governing council and insure that we can serve all stakeholders (Citizens and Marine Fisheries).

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to call me with any questions - 919-466-0001

**Stephens, Katelyn**

North Carolina  
3/29/2025 13:21

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I strongly oppose the shellfish lease.

**Stephens , Jeff**

North Carolina  
3/29/2025 13:17

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

Hello,

I strongly object the newly proposed bottom Shellfish Lease located directly behind the new boat slips in Queens Grant on Topsail Beach, NC. The location of the proposed lease is illogical given the high traffic, the narrow boat way/channel and all the recreational use the sandbar gets. I have lived in Queens Grant for several years and this is a very high traffic area and not conducive to a shellfish growth. There is surely more suitable areas in the sound and intracoastal for this. Respectfully, objection. Thank you

**Stewart, Charles (Jeff)**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 22:26

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I attended the public hearing at the Town of Topsail Beach tonight and spoke in opposition to Application No. 24-0023BL. During his time at the podium, the applicant, Mr. Thomas Cannon, indicated he would consider withdrawing the application after hearing of citizen concerns over safety and incompatibility of his proposal with current navigational and recreational activities in the area. I encourage the Commissioner of Marine Fisheries to accept Mr. Cannon's apparent willingness to withdraw by declining the application. Thank you.

**Stewart, Jeff**

North Carolina  
4/7/2025 8:16

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am resubmitting the following letter regarding Bottom Lease Application No. 24-023BL. My wife, Linda, and I originally mailed this letter to the NC Dept. of Marine Fisheries on September 9, 2024.

Jeff Stewart

September 9, 2024

NC Marine Fisheries  
Attn: Shellfish Leases  
PO Box 769  
Morehead City, NC 28557

Emailed to: marla.chuffo@deq.nc.gov

Re: Bottom Lease Application No. 24-023BL

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Thomas A. Cannon has applied to the NC Division of Marine Fisheries for a 1.33 acre shellfish bottom lease on a sandbar in the middle of Topsail Sound, Topsail Beach, NC. This sandbar is located directly behind our home and between Queens Grant development and Harvey's Cut in the Town of Topsail Beach. We, along with many of our Topsail Beach neighbors, have serious concerns regarding the negative impact of operating a shellfish farming operation on this site. We ask that you consider the facts and opinions presented below and conclude that a reasonable assessment would result in rejecting this application.

The following facts relate specifically to the sandbar in question:

- It is in the middle of a busy recreational waterway with deep water channels on each side that are frequently used by boaters, kayakers, fishermen and for family gatherings. A few years ago, a couple chose this site for their wedding!
- The sandbar was "pushed up" in 2021 during a dredging operation that transferred sand from sound to ocean front in a government sponsored beach renourishment operation.

- The area in question is within the Town of Topsail Beach jurisdiction. The Town has adopted an ordinance opposing additional bottom leases for shellfish farming in this area.
- Working together, the Town of Topsail Beach, Surf City, and North Topsail Beach are in process of requesting a moratorium on approval of additional shellfish bottom leases in their respective jurisdictions. Moratoriums are already in place for coastal counties located north and south of these municipalities.
- The tourism and real estate industries are vitally important to the economies of coastal communities. The Town of Topsail Beach is fortunate to have some of the most attractive residential home sites anywhere in North Carolina with a wide and beautiful natural marsh habitat stretching from Topsail Sound to the Intercoastal Waterway.

Following are opinions we think reasonable and encourage you to act with them in mind:

- We acknowledge that the shell fishing is an important industry for North Carolina and that the NC State Legislature has charged your agency with the responsibility for awarding shellfish bottom leases. We believe you should, and encourage you to, consider the following in your assessment of specific applications:
  - o Respect ordinances adopted by local government for areas within its legal jurisdiction.
  - o Resist what may be an industry "gold rush" to acquire leases as rapidly as possible before Pender and Onslow counties secure moratoriums that other coastal counties have already acquired.
  - o Resist approving sites that would block access to popular recreational areas and favor more remote sites.

- Preserve sandy bottoms of Topsail Sound for future beach renourishment projects should the sand be needed for this greater good.
- Carefully consider the potential negative impacts on values of nearby property and communities at large.

We respectfully encourage you to deny this application.

Sincerely,  
Jeff and Linda Stewart  
23 Bentgrass Lane  
Durham, NC 27705  
919-614-5097  
826B N. Anderson Blvd.  
Topsail Beach, NC 28445

Cc: Steve Smith, Mayor, Topsail Beach -  
SteveSmith@topsailbeachnc.gov

Doug Shipley, Town Manager, Topsail Beach –  
dshipley@topsailbeachnc.gov

Town of Topsail Beach Board of Commissioners - via website

Brad George, Chair, Pender County Board of Commissioners -  
via website

Michael Silverman, Manager, Pender County - via website

Senator Brent Jackson, NC General Assembly -  
Brent.Jackson@ncleg.gov

Representative Carson Smith, NC General Assembly -  
Carson.Smith@ncleg.gov



**Sutton, William and Karen**

North Carolina  
3/29/2025 12:26

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

We have a home located at 913 Bumblebee Lane,,Topsail Beach in the Queens Grant community. We along with our family, enjoy boating in the summer season. A shellfish lease would restrict our boating activities, including the sandbar area and the channel going to the Intracoastal waterway which we use frequently, along with many other citizens. We urge you to please deny the lease as proposed.

**Teachey, Ray**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 20:52

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-015BL/24-016WC**  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

I am opposed to the three lease applications below. They would greatly affect our ability to fish in kings creek and to navigate Harvey's cut. My children have played on the sandbar at Harvey's cut for years. I'm concerned that a shellfish lease would ruin this for many families.

James B. Pumphrey and Benjamin Slay (24-015BL/24-016WC)  
Thomas A. Cannon (24-023BL)  
Thomas A. Cannon (24-24BL)

**Teachey, Wilson**

North Carolina  
4/16/2025 8:30

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-015BL/24-016WC**  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**  
**24-024BL**

All three shellfish lease applications up for consideration pose either a hazard to navigation or impede our ability to freely park our boat and/or fish these areas. As a resident of the area I would like to go on the record in opposition to the following applications:

James B. Pumphrey and Benjamin Slay (24-015BL/24-016WC)  
Thomas A. Cannon (24-023BL)  
Thomas A. Cannon (24-24BL)

**Vosnock, Edward**

North Carolina  
4/11/2025 14:57

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

We need more oyster leases in N.C. The process need not be difficult nor political. After all, it is about feeding people and a livelihood for those who farm the oyster.

**Walls, Brittany**

North Carolina  
3/21/2025 16:17

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I'm an owner in QueensGrant and I'm urging you to deny approval for a shellfish lease to be located in this area of the waterway. My family frequently stand up paddles and kayaks across the water to the small islands across from QueensGrant. Narrowing the area of boat traffic increases the chances of an accident.

**Walters, Brannon**

North Carolina  
4/12/2025 12:51

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

We have a flip across from proposed shellfish lease!

Our firm opposition stems from concerns regarding the safety and recreational impacts the shellfish lease would have on the area if it is approved and constructed:

Safety issues:

The proposed shellfish lease would narrow Banks Channel at the point of a three way intersection with Harvey's Cut. The natural instinct of a watercraft driver would be to navigate closer to Floating Dock #4 and further away from a shellfish lease structure if one was approved and constructed on the sandbar. The back end of boat slips would be perceived as deeper water than the shellfish lease structure which would have poles in the water marking the shellfish lease boundaries. These type poles are often used to indicate shallow water areas. On a busy day boat traffic already has a significant impact due to the wave motion from watercraft on Floating Dock #4 and a shellfish Lease in that area would cause stability safety issues for people walking / boarding or unloading from a boat on the floating dock.

The navigability of Harvey's Cut is heavily dependent on tide levels. It is a route that many fishermen and recreational boaters use as a quick way to get to the Intercoastal Waterway. Lower draft boats don't normally have a problem, but boats with a deeper draft often run at a pretty fast pace in order for those boats to remain on plane. This is already not a good combination with a three way intersection, but the construction of

a shellfish lease would constrain the area and unquestionably lead to more danger to any type of watercraft traveling through that area. People who are using non powered watercraft (kayak, paddle boards, etc.) in that narrowed area on Banks Channel would not have a direct path of getting away from motorized watercraft in that constrained area if a shellfish lease were built there. Once you enter the outside area / closer to the deep water in banks channel side of the shellfish lease they could no longer use the shallow water above the sand bar to have a direct path to get away from heavy wave action. Once they got beside a shellfish lease of that size they would be pinned in next to the waves until they could paddle to the other end of the structure to get back into a safe zone.

There is currently a dredge pipe and constant movement in this area working on the effort to dredge sand for the renourishment of Surf City Beach. This is the first time that Surf City has done a dredging beach nourishment project and it probably will not be the last time dredge pipes are run through this area for Topsail Beach and Surf City Beach Renourishment Projects.

Recreational impact:

People often use that area to wade, fish, kayak, paddle board, sunbathe, walk or anchor up with friends to hang out on the sand bar. A shellfish lease in Banks Channel would be terrible, but that one specific spot would eliminate use of the sandbar for any type of recreational use which would be a huge waste of a wonderful natural recreation location on Banks Channel.

**Walters, Wendy**  
North Carolina  
4/12/2025 12:22

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I am a homeowner in Queens Grant in South Topsail and I write about my concerns about Shellfish Lease 24-023BL. This lease, applied for by Thomas A. Cannon, is for a 1.33-acre shellfish bottom lease in Banks Channel at the intersection of Harvey's Cut. Queens Grant Marina Floating Dock #4 on Banks Channel is directly across from the sandbar

where the proposed shellfish lease would be located. Queens Grant Floating Dock #4 is definitely one of the closest man made structures to where the Proposed Shellfish Lease would be located.

My opposition stems from concerns regarding the safety and recreational impacts the shellfish lease would have on the area if it is approved and constructed:

Safety issues:

The proposed shellfish lease would narrow Banks Channel at the point of a three way intersection with Harvey's Cut. The natural instinct of a watercraft driver would be to navigate closer to Floating Dock #4 and further away from a shellfish lease structure if one was approved and constructed on the sandbar. The back end of boat slips would be perceived as deeper water than the shellfish lease structure which would have poles in the water marking the shellfish lease boundaries. These type poles are often used to indicate shallow water areas. On a busy day boat traffic already has a significant impact due to the wave motion from watercraft on Floating Dock #4 and a shellfish Lease in that area would cause stability safety issues for people walking / boarding or unloading from a boat on the floating dock.

The navigability of Harvey's Cut is heavily dependent on tide levels. It is a route that many fishermen and recreational boaters use as a quick way to get to the Intercoastal Waterway. Lower draft boats don't normally have a problem, but boats with a deeper draft often run at a pretty fast pace in order for those boats to remain on plane. This is already not a good combination with a three way intersection, but the construction of a shellfish lease would constrain the area and unquestionably lead to more danger to any type of watercraft traveling through that area. People who are using non powered watercraft (kayak, paddle boards, etc.) in that narrowed area on Banks Channel would not have a direct path of getting away from motorized watercraft in that constrained area if a shellfish lease were built there. Once you enter the outside area /

closer to the deep water in banks channel side of the shellfish lease they could no longer use the shallow water above the sand bar to have a direct path to get away from heavy wave action. Once they got beside a shellfish lease of that size they would be pinned in next to the waves until they could paddle to the other end of the structure to get back into a safe zone.

There is currently a dredge pipe and constant movement in this area working on the effort to dredge sand for the renourishment of Surf City Beach. This is the first time that Surf City has done a dredging beach nourishment project and it probably will not be the last time dredge pipes are run through this area for Topsail Beach and Surf City Beach Renourishment Projects.

Recreational impact:

People often use that area to wade, fish, kayak, paddle board, sunbathe, walk or anchor up with friends to hang out on the sand bar. A shellfish lease in Banks Channel would be terrible, but that one specific spot would eliminate use of the sandbar for any type of recreational use which would be a huge waste of a wonderful natural recreation location on Banks Channel.

**Walton, William**

North Carolina  
4/16/2025 15:47

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**Not Specified**

I am writing in support of shellfish aquaculture. Often, at public hearings, a number of concerns and potential negative effects are raised by those who oppose shellfish aquaculture. As a scientist working in the field, I am convinced that the science overwhelmingly supports that shellfish aquaculture provides net public benefits. Beyond the indirect economic effects, shellfish aquaculture is considered a practice that provides numerous environmental benefits (provision of habitat for recreationally and commercially important species, improved water quality, etc.) while also providing cultural value of continuing a tradition of people in the community working hard to make a living on the water. I urge consideration of the existing scientific literature to address

concerns that were raised, as these have been raised elsewhere and answered.

**Watts, Bryan**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 14:46

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am opposed to shellfish bottom lease application 24-023BL. If approved, this lease will affect Boating safety in the channel, prevent the recreational use of the sandbar by NC residents, and make entrance into Harveys Cut difficult and more dangerous. Further, it will be an eyesore right in the middle of one of the most beautiful pieces of water around Topsail island.

**Watts, Elisabeth**

North Carolina  
4/15/2025 14:58

Lease(s) Referenced:  
**24-023BL (Terminated)**

I am opposed to shellfish bottom lease application 24-023BL. If approved, this lease will affect Boating safety in the channel, prevent the recreational use of the sandbar by NC residents, and make entrance into Harveys Cut difficult and more dangerous. Further, it will be an eyesore right in the middle of one of the most beautiful pieces of water around Topsail Island. My children have grown up on kayaks exploring this very sandbar. It is public land and should be kept as such for future generations to enjoy.