

On Feb 9, 2018, at 11:03 PM, CLINTON MEYER <clinton.meyer@att.net> wrote:

Nancy D Fish
Marine Fishery Commission Liaison
Division of Marine Fisheries
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

Dear Ms Fish:

My wife and I live at 7429 Masonboro Sound Road Wilmington, NC. We are out of town and were unable to attend the public hearing February 8, 2018 before the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) in Wilmington on whether the DMF should issue 4 new 10 year renewable shellfish water column leases covering 6 acres of water column and surface area in Masonboro sound. I therefore am writing this letter to express our concerns and for this letter to be included in the material available to the DMF board when it meets February 14, 2018.

We have lived at 7429 Masonboro Sound Road for 26 years and built our house there because of our enjoyment of water activities and access to the waters of Masonboro Sound. Our property runs from the road to Masonboro Sound. We have enjoyed kayaking, canoeing, swimming and flyfishing in the pristine waters of Masonboro Sound since we have lived there. We also access the Masonboro Island Preserve from our property by canoe and kayak. Masonboro Sound is about a mile long and 1000 to 1700 feet wide. The Masonboro Sound borders the busy intracoastal waterway.

We are alarmed that a large number and density of oyster leases will prevent recreational use of the water of Masonboro Sound and access to the Masonboro Island Preserve from our property. The applied leases would block my access to the Inland waterway by canoe, kayak, swimming and boat. Any attempt to swim, canoe, kayak, or boat in the Masonboro Sound area would also be extremely hazardous due to the narrow width of the sound, the winds, water currents, the extent and the nature of commercial shellfish equipment.

Commercial shellfish equipment presents a hazard to swimmers, boaters, sailors and fishermen in the tiny Masonboro Sound area. I flyfish from a flats boat in the area and to a certain extent am pushed by the wind and current as I navigate the sound by polling the boat. The wind can easily blow me into the commercial shellfish equipment that are placed in the masonboro sound area resulting in collision and possible damage. In short areas of additional shellfish leases would deprive me of the ability to fish in the waters of masonboro sound where I currently fish. Sailors in the sound are also effected by the wind and current and would be deprived of the ability to sail and tack within the narrow Masonboro sound waters. The Masonboro Sound waters will become too small to navigate safely should additional areas of shellfish leases be granted for this area.

This issue of commercial oyster farming with multiple acres under lease is of utmost importance to the entire community. I would suggest that the number of acres used for

commercial shellfish leases in the small Masonboro Sound area be limited out of public interests. Shellfish leases negatively impact recreational usage of the Masonboro Sound area at this time. The entire community will be better off if recreational use of Masonboro Sound is preserved. I am not opposed to shellfish leases but further leases in the small Masonboro Sound area are ill advised. Expansion of the existing shellfish leases and acceptance of any further applications should be put on hold until the issues can be further studied.

Regards,

Clinton L Meyer MD