

COUNTY OF HYDE

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Resolution Opposing A Bill To Be Entitled An Act To Designate Red Drum, Spotted Sea Trout, and Striped Bass As Coastal Game Fish; To Prohibit The Taking of Coastal Game Fish Other Than By Hook-And-Line; To Prohibit The Sale of Coastal Game Fish; And To Compensate Commercial Fishermen For Certain Losses Due To The Designation And Prohibition

WHEREAS, Hyde County along with the Working Watermen's Association and N. C. Watermen's United strongly endorse support of resolution against upcoming ~~HB353~~ HB983 – game fish bill.

WHEREAS, the Preamble of the North Carolina Fisheries Reform Act states that the NC Legislature empowered the NC Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) and the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to manage fish stocks for all North Carolina user groups.

WHEREAS, commercial harvest of Red Drum and Speckled Sea Trout have been curtailed significantly over the last three years. In the case of Red Drum, total stock biomass and spawning biomass are at NCDMF target levels and there has been very strong recruitment over the last three years. Speckled Sea Trout FMP has given the NCDMF Director Proclamation authority to manage the stock for cold stuns and commercial harvests have been significantly reduced. It is estimated that the recreational by-catch mortality now exceeds the commercial catches of Red Drum and Speckled Sea Trout.

WHEREAS, NC Legislature has spent considerable time and money to establish branding campaigns and advertise "NC Fresh" products to foster more consumption of NC seafood by residents and tourists. Red Drum, Speckled Sea Trout and Striped Bass are perennial favorites and great strides have been made to find ways to get seafood further west so more state residents can enjoy North Carolina seafood.

WHEREAS, CCA valuations for the Red Drum, Speckled Sea Trout and Striped Bass fisheries are economic multiplier associated with commercial fishing. Some examples include: boat and motor purchases, jobs associated with harvesting, packing out, shipping and retail, purchases of gear, sales tax from tourism and maintaining the coastal fishing families and their income is a key to many businesses staying open during the winter months. Family members are also a large part of the local labor pool that businesses depend upon during the summer months.

WHEREAS, commercial and recreational fishing play a role in county and statewide economy. North Carolina needs every job to keep unemployment down. CCA projections of increased tourism are unrealistic and the loss of jobs will be destructive to our coastal communities.

WHEREAS, while not harvested in significant numbers, Red Drum, Speckled Sea Trout and Striped Bass provide fishing families income during late fall, winter and spring when fishermen need it most.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that game fish status is not needed to maintain healthy fish stocks. ~~HB353~~ HB983 will have a devastating impact on commercial fishing families income; eliminate availability of the state fish, a public resource, to North Carolina residents, tourists, restaurants and seafood retail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Honorable Pat McCrory, NC Governor, and the Hyde County Legislative Delegation to the North Carolina General Assembly.

Adopted this the ____ day of _____, 2013, in Hyde County, North Carolina.

ATTEST: _____
Lois Stotesberry, Clerk to the Board

Barry Swindell, Chairman