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Richard Grant  
Tom Leonard  
Connie Pletl  
Laura Olszewski



Alice Derian, ICMA-CM  
Town Manager

Nancy Avery  
Interim Town Clerk

October xx, 2024

[Legislator's Name]

[Legislator's Title]

[Legislator's Office Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear Senator Michael A. Lazzara and Representative Carson Smith

I hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of the Town of North Topsail Beach, I am writing to express our concerns regarding the increasing number of shellfish leases being granted in the waters surrounding North Topsail Beach. While we understand the economic benefits that shellfish farming brings to North Carolina, we must also consider the growing conflicts between these operations and our local recreational and commercial activities, as well as the potential for overproduction.

Our town is blessed with natural resources that draw residents and tourists alike, including pristine waters ideal for both recreation and commercial fishing. However, the expansion of shellfish leases has begun to encroach upon these valuable areas, creating conflicts that impact our community's way of life and local economy.

Recreational users, such as boaters and anglers, are finding it increasingly difficult to access waters that have been traditionally open to the public. Commercial fishermen, who have long relied on these waters, are also facing challenges as more areas become restricted due to shellfish farming operations. Additionally, we cannot at this stage rule out that the rapid growth of shellfish farming could lead to overproduction, which might have unintended ecological and economic consequences. Consequently, the Town has submitted objections to all applications for shellfish leases in the Town's jurisdiction.

Given these challenges, we respectfully request that you consider establishing a moratorium on new shellfish leases in our region. A temporary pause would allow us to evaluate the current situation, develop comprehensive management strategies, and ensure that future growth in the shellfish industry is balanced with the needs of our community and the environment.

We are eager to work with you and other stakeholders to find a solution that supports both the economic development of the shellfish industry and the preservation of our town's natural resources and recreational opportunities. We believe that a moratorium is a prudent step towards achieving this balance.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We appreciate your ongoing support and look forward to your leadership in addressing these concerns.

Sincerely,

Alice Derian  
Town Manager  
Town of North Topsail Beach  
2008 Loggerhead Court  
North Topsail Beach, NC 28460