



Email to: Alice Derian, Manager

From: Steve Smith, Chair, Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission

After a lengthy discussion at the Topsail Shoreline Protection Commission on Thursday, August 22, 2024, it was agreed that each Town and County should see if their Boards would consider requesting as a group a moratorium on new shellfish leases in Pender and Onslow water.

The reasons for this request:

1. The density has continued to increase, which has an impact on recreational fishing, the tourism impact on use of small vessels, and is impacting the beauty of a marsh area that did not have the plastic poles and other equipment marking shellfish areas.
2. With moratoriums to the south and north of our counties; we are seeing an increase movement of aquatic business activities moving into Pender and Onslow Counties
3. At this time there is no way to identify shellfish equipment after a major storm, etc. Who cleans up this dislodge equipment?
4. At what level of density impacts available food for oysters and other aquatic life. Is this being considered with both bottom and column leases increasing.
5. No consideration has been given to municipalities for their town limits and ordinances that govern business and development activities. This has an impact on Land Use Plans, enforcement, navigation in marsh areas, property values, noise impact on other species, and restricted public use of lease areas
6. The impact on property when you consider column leases and the equipment out of water for part of the day. This has an impact on tourism and reduces space being used by tourism for water activities.
7. Many of the lease requests are coming from businesses outside Pender & Onslow Counties due to moratoriums in their respective counties.
8. The State is in favor of shellfish leases and we are also in favor of shellfish farming; however, there should be limits on types, density, disease control considerations, and impact considerations on other businesses use of same water area.

Please let me know if your Board would consider a moratorium on shellfish leases. Mayor Batts did agree that Surf City would draft possible language for a moratorium.

Leases that are in place today would remain.

Thanks Steve Smith