



April 29, 2019

Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger  
House Speaker Tim Moore  
NC General Assembly  
16 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Sirs,

The undersigned conservation organizations and recreational fishing industries write to urge the North Carolina General Assembly to support pro-resource legislation currently under consideration by both chambers of the NCGA.

Healthy and growing fish stocks are vitally important to the fishing economy of North Carolina, but North Carolina's coastal resources have been declining for decades. The 2017 commercial harvest of important species such as Atlantic croaker, Blue Crab, Southern flounder, Spot, Grey Trout and Striped bass are all less than 40% of their commercial harvest in 1997 - the year the Fisheries Reform Act was passed into law in North Carolina. North Carolina recently closed the commercial and recreational harvest of striped bass and are considering severe seasonal closures for Southern flounder before the fall of this year. We are well-overdue for some changes in how we manage our fisheries.

First, North Carolina has outdated fishery management laws that must be updated. Secondly, we should prioritize the growth and sustainability of our fisheries and their economic impacts. Finally, the decision-making process for marine fisheries must be streamlined and more efficient. Specifically, we support:

- **House Bill 483, Let Them Spawn**, which would set size limits for all fish species to protect juveniles until they reach a size at which 75 percent of the stock has reached maturity and have the opportunity to spawn at least once.
- **House Bill 486**, which seeks to bring the Commercial Fishing License requirements into compliance with the definition of a commercial fisherman as someone engaged in the taking of fish if the purpose is to obtain fish for sale.



- **House Bill 810**, Marine Fisheries Reform, which proposes multiple improvements to existing law that are essential to the future sustainability of our coastal fisheries resources.

The signatories below represent millions of sportsmen across the country and include hundreds of thousands who either live in North Carolina or visit the state each year to hunt and fish. We are asking that you support your Representatives and Senators in their efforts to stop the decline in our fisheries and rebuild our public trust resources for the use and benefit of current and future generations.

Sincerely,

American Fishing Tackle Company  
American Sportfishing Association  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
Big Rock Sports  
Center for Sportfishing Policy  
Coastal Conservation Association  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Grady-White Boats  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
North Carolina Wildlife Federation  
Regulator Marine  
Shimano  
Yamaha Marine