

From: Bill Gorham [<mailto:getbowedup40@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, March 4, 2016 9:41 AM
To: Duval, Michelle <michelle.duval@ncdenr.gov>
Subject: Cobia Closure

Hello, I am Bill Gorham a recreational fishermen, business owner, and VA real estate agent currently living in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Since graduating from Virginia Tech with a BA in Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice and a Masters in Health Promotions, I have been an REO real estate agent in the state of Virginia, mostly in the Hampton Roads area (area around the lower Chesapeake Bay). During the past five years I've assisted banks or their choice of assets companies in the liquidation of hundreds of their default loans. I have been subject to the rigors of changing policies, laws, or operating procedures while working with Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Veteran Affairs and others. I, as many other agents who wanted to continue selling real estate post 2007, quickly learned we were on the front lines of this economic pit fall. This was due to us often being the first people to knock on the door once the property had been sold at auction.

I am proud to say that in every case that if there was property still occupied when I knocked on the door, I attempted everything within my power to help the people who answered. I have seen the pain, loss of pride, struggle, and fear from those who lost their homes due to economic changes or other outlier reasons beyond their own control

I have fished for cobia in NC waters from Hatteras inlet to the VA-NC line for the past 10 years. The past 5 years my seasonal cobia fishing would move to the Chesapeake Bay Mid July til mid Sept or as weather and water temperatures dictated. I recently started a Lure company and our signature lures are Cobia bucktails. I have three children under the age of five years old, many factors were weighted into this decision and only days after receiving our 2016 supplies of hooks, bucktails, paint, eyes, packaging, stickers, this possible closure was announced.

Since hearing of the possible shorten season or closure for 2016 I have attempted to research documents referenced by Kari MacLauchlin, SAFMC staff as to how or why a closure is possible. I have also reviewed summary data collection from state agencies or college programs. These include, the final SEDAR 28, CMP Amendments related to cobia, the VIMS tagging program, NOAA data collection power points, searches of catch poundage within the NOAA data base, phone interviews with over a dozen local charter captains, and the MSA.

The reason for the countless hours of research is due to the fact that one, my personal experience cobia fishing (over 45 days a year), social network with other cobia fishermen, and fear of not being about to provide for my three children. A closure of June 15th would result in the total loss of the

Hampton Roads (VA) market, as they are the largest market, with the longest cobia season (tackle sales) I will not be able to offset material costs with sales.

Jig sales in the North Carolina and Virginia states tend to be at their highest after school lets out in mid-June until school starts back again in early September. My daughter often comes up to me in the shop and asks, "Daddy are you tying hooks so I can buy toys?" I always reply, "yes baby." Little does she know those "toys" are really food, insurance, cloths, formula, and I admit every now and then a real toy. So maybe this research has really been about being able to find the honest truth, factual data evidence, of why I will not be able to buy those "toys".

In the sake a time I remove a detailed summary and I appears the default is the "law" requires. There have at least 20 Amendments to the FMP, one can be brought forth to correct this mess, god knows it should be done in this situation, and I pray you would agree.

request an Amendment to the FMP as follows; email to state reps

1. Amend Accountability Measures to better factor economic hardships, in consideration of a new zone ACL that was without 10-15 years of catch data throughout the zone and in an effort to insure AM's and overall FMP takes into consideration the presence of incomplete data in the factoring of exceeded ACL, by using three years of total catch poundage average NOT just the year an ACL is exceeded.

Request proposals for;

1. New stock assessment for GA-NY zone.

2. Allow ACL increases if/when when zone splits occur if 1st year zone split and allocated ACL is exceeded.