



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Pat McCrory
Governor

Donald R. van der Vaart
Secretary

August 20, 2015

Chairman Corbett, Commissioners, and Staff:

I bring to your attention a letter that was hand delivered to my office earlier today. As you can see, there is ample concern within both houses of North Carolina's General Assembly regarding the processes being utilized with various options under consideration for the Southern Flounder Supplement.

After reviewing the legislative letter received earlier today, and in response to careful monitoring of the supplement process, I must share my concerns as well. In the letter, the signatories referenced the existing Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and the effect some of these options would have in changing the fundamental nature of the Southern Flounder FMP. They further noted that such significant alterations, if believed to be in the best interest of fishery, should be adopted through the process proscribed in G.S. §113-182.1, or the amendment process. I agree with this interpretation of the law.

Further and in addition to aforementioned letter, we must afford the newly appointed Marine Fishery Commissioners ample time to become fully educated on this complicated and important issue. All agree that the Southern Flounder is one of the most economically important estuarine species to our State for both the commercial and recreational fisheries. Before a vote of this magnitude is cast, those charged with regulating the fishery need the necessary time to achieve an informed vote.

Please be aware of these concerns and know that we support any measure to protect the fisheries of North Carolina. We are equally devoted, however, to protecting all those who rely on and enjoy our fisheries. We hope that with your leadership, and any future action taken by you, the Marine Fishery Commission, the appropriate balance will be struck between the management of our resources and the rights of the public.

Best Regards,

Donald R. van der Vaart