



NCCFRG NEWS RELEASE

REFORM GROUP FILES 60-DAY NOTICE OF CLEAN WATER ACT LAWSUIT AGAINST THE LARGEST COMMERCIAL SHRIMP TRAWLING COMPANIES AND THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

After over a decade of unsuccessful attempts to engage in meaningful fisheries management reform dialog with Governors, the North Carolina General Assembly leadership, the Marine Fisheries Commission, and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), we have been forced to file a Notice of Claim under the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA).

A Notice of Claim is legal filing that is used to notify those whom you'll be suing that a claim will soon be filed. Normally there is a 60-day waiting period after the Notice has been filed for the named parties to either correct their behavior or demonstrate that they are not violating the CWA.

“We have tried every remedy possible to start reform talks with both the Executive and Legislative Branches of North Carolina, and we were outright dismissed or completely ignored. They had their chance to discuss the issues.” said Joe Albea. “We are going to take legal action against the State of North Carolina in Federal Court, and we intend to name leaders in the North Carolina commercial fishing industry as co-defendants, too. Look, the timing of this is crucial. We’re coming up on yet another shrimping season. Are we going to allow our coastal resource to be abused another year? We say no, because we are desperately trying to preserve the resource for recreational and commercial fishing alike!” Albea leads the NCCFRG and is a 47-year veteran of outdoor journalism in NC. He has produced and hosted an outdoor TV series for 26 years. Albea has witnessed first-hand the continued deterioration of our coastal marine resources.

According to NCCFRG’s legal counsel, Mr. James L. Conner, II, partner in Calhoun, Bhella & Sechrest, the disposal of millions of dead finfish (bycatch) into Pamlico Sound every shrimping season violates the Clean Water Act, and the behavior has been allowed and encouraged by the Marine Fisheries Commission and the Division of Marine Fisheries.

Robert P. Crone, Sr., media specialist and member of NCCFRG is disappointed that their group has had to resort to litigation. *“We tried to talk with the politicians, yet they ignored us. But if they ignore our Notice of Claim, we will take it to the courts and this egregious large-scale dumping of bycatch will be exposed for all to witness. And the citizens of North Carolina will not like what they see. That’s going to be hard to ignore.”*

To see the full text of the 60-Day Notice, and to learn who we’ve named as defendants, please go to www.nccfrg.org.

For more information, contact nccfrg@gmail.com.

###