



The Watch

Doug MacPherson, Chairman



The RISAA Legislative Committee’s mission is to provide, in partnership with the Affiliated Clubs, a forum for improving the knowledge and understanding of fishery-related and government issues that affect recreational anglers. An informed membership encourages involvement and advocacy. The Legislative Committee will strive to advocate responsible fishery decision.

The Committee is comprised of RISAA Members and delegates from the Affiliated Clubs. The Committee meets two or three times a year, depending on the number of fishery and/or legislative issues that develop.

RI Legislative, Fisheries Updates

State budget bill contains new tax proposals on the Rhode Island outdoor community, including recreational fishing clubs

It is often stated in Rhode Island that not even the state legislators read the budget document originated by the Governors Office. They must believe that up on Smith Hill because of all the gotcha’s they hide in it.

New proposals for additional taxes or anything that lives, breathes or crawls get hidden there in the hope that no one will see



it until that rushed process to get the budget done at the end of the year becomes law.

RISAA has learned recently that a proposal to tax, buried in the new budget has

*“Hunting, Trapping and Shooting Services applicable to; archery ranges, **recreational fishing clubs**, fishing guide services, shooting galleries, hunting guide services, recreational gun clubs, recreational hunting clubs, fishing, hunting, and game guide outfitters, recreational rifle clubs, recreational shooting clubs, shooting ranges, skeet shooting facilities, and recreational trapshooting facilities.”*

This document is House Bill H 7171. It has 621 pages! The above (and more like them) proposals are on page 180.

Please, if you think this is wrong, send a letter, an email what ever to either members of the budget committee or your own House Representative and tell them.

You can find all the information you need such as email addresses, mail addresses and phone numbers for any state rep at this web site: www.rilegislature.gov/representatives/default.as

Rhode Island Marine Fishery Council Roll Back Legislation

A proposed amendment has been submitted in the House of Representative to roll back the decision making authority from the Director of DEM to the Marine Fisheries Council (Council).

The current director, **Janet Coit**, in my opinion, has shown careful consideration of all sides in making final decisions on fisheries issues.



Janet Coit

I have been an observer and participant in Council hearings and workshops for close to two decades and previously served on several species advisory panels. It has been my observation that a lot of the politics have been removed and her decisions have been sound ones, not only the fishery but for the environment and the fish stocks.

I believe that re-arranging the current train of decision responsibility would be a step backwards.

Public Hearing on Fluke Scup Sea Bass Allocation Amendment

This hearing was held on February 26 at the URI Bay Campus to allow public input into the current species allocations for these three very popular recreational and important commercial fisheries. In July 2018, MRIP released revisions to their time series of catch and harvest estimates based on adjustments for a revised angler intercept methodology and a new effort estimation methodology (namely, a transition from a telephone-based effort survey to a mail-based effort survey). **These revisions resulted in much higher recreational catch estimates compared to previous estimates, affecting the entire time series of data going back to 1981.**



In other words, the data used to establish many of the current commercial/recreational catch limit was wrong. If we take one fish in particular, fluke, it looks like we actually harvested from 5% to 10% than the numbers used. Similar miscalculations could also affect other species as well.

The ASMFC has recognized that, but it can only be resolved by a new amendment. The scoping meetings are the first time that stakeholders in the fishery get to make our feelings known.

Corless Auditorium was near full and as soon as the meeting opened it was clear that those of there to speak out for the recreational fishery and support were in for a long night. There was a large number of both commercial fisherman and charter captains. There were, by my estimate, about six recreational speakers. As you can guess, one of the options listed for discussion was “Status Quo.” **(to page 33)**