

WALTER B. JONES
3D DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

ROOM 2333
RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-3415

COMMITTEES:
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1105-C CORPORATE DRIVE
GREENVILLE, NC 27858
(252) 931-1003
(800) 351-1697

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

July 27, 2012

Mr. Paul J. Diodati
Chairman
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland St., Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chairman Diodati and Fellow Commissioners:

One of our republic's basic principles is that government decision making should be open and transparent. Doing so encourages the accountability the public expects from those who regulate them. It has come to my attention that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) conducts its business in a way that falls short of this principle in two important ways. First, while public bodies across the country routinely broadcast their meetings over the Internet, the ASMFC does not. Second, while it is standard practice for public institutions ranging from local school boards to the U.S. Congress to release roll call votes, the Commission does not publicly release how each individual member of the Commission votes on agenda items.

On behalf of the North Carolina fishermen I am privileged to represent, I encourage the ASMFC to rectify these problems by taking action on the following two proposals, both of which could be implemented at minimal cost.

First, the Commission should broadcast all meetings live over the Internet. In addition, video recordings should be freely available to the public through the ASMFC website for a reasonable period of time after the meeting. This change is needed to give fishermen – many of whom do not have the time or the resources to leave their jobs and travel to distant locations for meetings – the opportunity to keep tabs on a regulatory body that impacts their livelihood.

Second, the Commission should post on its website how each Commissioner from each state votes on agenda items. Fishermen and the public have a fundamental right to know how individual Commissioners are voting.

I trust the Commission will see the benefit of these common sense proposals, and I encourage you to implement them as soon as possible. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Cc: Robert E. Beal, Acting Executive Director
Members of the Commission