



WE NEED YOUR HELP TO RESCUE NJ'S ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM!

Dear Anglers and Divers:

New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program was originally developed with our State's Department of Environmental Protection and the recreational community. The 15 reefs, 2 in our waters and the other 13 directly outside our borders in federal waters, provide recreational anglers and divers increased opportunities to catch bottom dwelling fish who are attracted to these types of structures as safe breeding grounds and because of the shelter they provide from predators. These reefs have been a success story for recreational anglers, divers and our State's DEP.

However, in recent years the artificial reefs have been taken over by commercial fishermen who have overrun our reef areas with a proliferation of fish traps and pots on reef sites that were specifically built for hook and line fishing and diving. This gear has restricted access to hook and line anglers, interfered with the goals and objectives of the Artificial Reef Program and has also hindered additional reef construction efforts. Once an isolated problem on the northern most reefs, the lack of restrictions on the number of pots a commercial fisherman can fish has allowed the problem to rapidly expand to every reef along the entire Jersey coast. Essentially, the reefs have become dominated by a relatively small group of commercial fishermen which was not the original intention of the Artificial Reef Program.

This issue is now at a critical stage and we need your help! The New Jersey State Assembly and Senate are considering bills that would limit fishing gear on reefs to "hook and line, and spear only" which would in effect remove pots and traps. Assembly Bill 3986 passed out of the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee 4-1 on May 21 and now must be posted by Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts for final Assembly vote. The corresponding Senate bill, S 2635, will be referred to the Senate Environment Committee in the coming weeks and once released, will need to be posted by Senate President Richard Codey for final vote before the Senate.

Without a doubt commercial fishermen will be there at every step with strong opposition and if they are successful in defeating the bills, we may forever lose access to the reefs. Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA), Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA), New Jersey Council of Diving Clubs (NJCDC) and Reef Rescue will be there fighting to get the pots and traps off the reefs, but it is critically important that Assembly Speaker Roberts and Senate President Codey hear from the recreational fishing and diving communities.

Your support of these bills is essential! The commercial industry has paid lobbyists to promote its agenda. The only force that can overcome their money is the voice of the voters, lots of them. Please sign the enclosed letters to key legislators and mail them in the enclosed envelopes. Thank you for your much needed help! Additional information on the Artificial Reef Program can be obtained by going to www.njreefrescue.com.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jim Donofrio.

Jim Donofrio
RFA

Handwritten signature of John Toth.

John Toth
JCAA

Handwritten signature of Glenn A. Arthur.

Glenn A. Arthur
NJCDC

Handwritten signature of Pete Grimbilas.

Pete Grimbilas
Reef Rescue



June 2007

The Honorable Richard J. Codey
449 Mount Pleasant Ave.
West Orange, NJ 07052

RE: Senate Bill 2635

Dear Senate President Codey:

As a strong supporter of New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program, I firmly support Senate Bill 2635, to remove certain fishing gear from New Jersey's artificial reefs. The artificial reef program is critically important to the recreational fishing community which consists of 1 million anglers and generates over 1.3 billion annually. The State should be commended for creating one of the best ocean reef programs in the country which provides tremendous benefits to fishermen, divers and our shore economy.

However, I am greatly concerned about the proliferation of fish pots and traps on our artificial reefs. New Jersey's Artificial Reef Plan, the policy approved by former DEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell and included in the New Jersey Coast 2005 Initiative during your term as acting Governor, establishes goals to increase marine habitat, improve biodiversity and provide recreational opportunities for hook and line fishermen and divers. The presence of fish pots and traps on the reefs goes against the spirit and intent of the Artificial Reef Plans' goals. Miles of commercial gear has been set on every single reef which has denied access to recreational hook and line fishermen and divers and allowed a small group of commercial fishermen to completely dominate a public resource.

I respectfully request that when S. 2635 is released from the Senate Environment Committee in the coming weeks you post this bill before the full Senate for final vote. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature

Print Name

Print Address

Print Address

I FISH ♦ I VOTE



June 2007

The Honorable Joseph J. Roberts
Brooklawn Shopping Plaza
Route 130 & Browning Rd.
Brooklawn, NJ 08030

RE: Assembly Bill 3986

Dear Speaker Roberts:

As a strong supporter of New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program, I firmly support Assembly Bill 3986, to remove certain fishing gear from New Jersey's artificial reefs. The Artificial Reef Program is critically important to the recreational fishing community which consists of 1 million anglers and generates over 1.3 billion annually. The State should be commended for creating one of the best ocean reef programs in the country which provides tremendous benefits to fishermen, divers and our shore economy.

However, I am greatly concerned about the proliferation of fish pots and traps on our artificial reefs. New Jersey's Artificial Reef Plan, the policy approved by former DEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell and included in the New Jersey Coast 2005 Initiative, establishes goals to increase marine habitat, improve biodiversity and provide recreational opportunities for hook and line fishermen and divers. The presence of fish pots and traps on the reefs goes against the spirit and intent of the Artificial Reef Plans' goals. Miles of commercial gear has been set on every single reef which has denied access to recreational hook and line fishermen and divers and allowed a small group of commercial fishermen to completely dominate a public resource.

On May 21, 2007, A. 3986 passed out of the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. I respectfully request that you post A. 3986 for vote before the full Assembly. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature

Print Name

Print Address

Print Address

I FISH ♦ I VOTE