



Walter Jones introduces bill to require Regional Fishery Councils and Science & Statistical Committees to webcast meetings

The following was released by the office of Congressman Walter Jones:

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- August 2, 2011 - Yesterday U.S. Congressman Walter B. Jones (R-NC) introduced legislation to bring sunlight to the proceedings of federal fisheries managers. H.R. 2753 - The Fishery Management Transparency and Accountability Act - would require the federal Regional Fishery Management Councils and the Science and Statistical Committees (SSC) to broadcast their meetings live over the Internet. It would also require the Councils to make transcripts and video/audio recordings of these meetings freely available to the public through their websites for three years after the meetings. Congressman Jones was alerted to the need for this legislation after hearing from fishermen who wanted to follow the Council's proceedings but could not do so due to the time and expense involved with attending in person.

"This bill is a common sense measure to add sunlight to the fisheries management process," said Congressman Jones. "Under federal law, the Regional Councils and SSCs are extraordinarily powerful. They often determine the economic livelihoods of fishermen and their communities.

Given the importance of Council and SSC decisions, fishermen ought to be able to monitor their proceedings in real time. But times are tough and fishermen don't have the money or the time to travel to council meetings for days at a time several times a year. This bill would fix that problem."

Fishermen in North Carolina participate in fisheries under the jurisdiction of three different fisheries management councils - the South Atlantic, the Mid-Atlantic and the New England Council.

Every year each council has multiple multi-day meetings in different locations throughout region it covers. For example, this year the South Atlantic Council is scheduled to have five separate meetings; one in St. Simons Island, Georgia, one in Key West, Florida, one in Raleigh, North Carolina and two in Charleston, South Carolina.