



ROY COOPER  
*Governor*

DIONNE DELLI-GATTI  
*Secretary*

KATHY B. RAWLS  
*Director*

May 20, 2021

*RE: Proposed shellfish lease near Michael J Smith Field Airport*

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been contacted by a member of the public who wishes to apply for a shellfish aquaculture lease in public trust water that is near the shoreline at the Michael J Smith Field Airport in Beaufort, NC (Enclosure 1). There has not been a formal application for a lease submitted just yet, and in the interest of proactively addressing potential user conflicts and safety concerns, we would like preliminary comments from the Airport regarding this location's suitability for a shellfish lease.

The citizen intends to use floating cages arranged in rows to cultivate shellfish. This cultivation system is used widely by many growers throughout North Carolina. Enclosure 2 displays how these floating cages will be arranged on the lease site.

As required by the Division of Marine Fisheries, all shellfish lease applications must be accompanied by a written management plan that includes deterrent measures for birds on the lease. The citizen has indicated that they will use cage spikes and cable ties to deter birds from landing on top of the floating gear, in addition to kites and streamers on lease markers to deter birds from the lease site. These measures are all widely employed by other growers in the state.

Since no formal application has been submitted, any comments received by the airport will be relayed to the citizen, who may choose to submit an application as this location generally meets the minimum standards set forth by NC Legislative Statutes and Marine Fisheries Commission Rules. Once a formal application has been received, Shellfish Lease program staff will process the application normally (Enclosure 3). We will seek formal comment from the Airport during the internal review stage once a site investigation has been conducted, and will have a full application package for your review at that time.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at [Owen.Mulvey-McFerron@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Owen.Mulvey-McFerron@ncdenr.gov) or 252-269-3082 .

Sincerely,

*Owen Mulvey-McFerron*  
Owen Mulvey-McFerron  
Shellfish Lease Coordinator  
N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries

Enclosures:

- (1) Location map of lease with distances from shore
- (2) Overhead schematic of gear layout
- (3) Shellfish lease process overview