

Article 16.

Cultivation of Shellfish.

§ 113-201. Legislative findings and declaration of policy; authority of Marine Fisheries Commission.

(a) The General Assembly finds that shellfish cultivation provides increased seafood production and long-term economic and employment opportunities. The General Assembly also finds that shellfish cultivation provides increased ecological benefits to the estuarine environment by promoting natural water filtration and increased fishery habitats. The General Assembly declares that it is the policy of the State to encourage the development of private, commercial shellfish cultivation in ways that are compatible with other public uses of marine and estuarine resources such as navigation, fishing, and recreation.

(b) The Marine Fisheries Commission is empowered to make rules and take all steps necessary to develop and improve the cultivation, harvesting, and marketing of shellfish in North Carolina both from public grounds and private beds. In order to assure the public that some waters will remain open and free from shellfish cultivation activities, the Marine Fisheries Commission may limit the number of acres in any area that may be granted as shellfish cultivation leases.

(c) The Marine Fisheries Commission shall adopt rules to establish training requirements for persons applying for new shellfish cultivation leases and for persons acquiring shellfish cultivation leases by lawful transfer. These training requirements shall be designed to encourage the productive use of shellfish cultivation leases. Training requirements established pursuant to this subsection shall not apply to either:

- (1) An applicant who applies for a new shellfish cultivation lease if, at the time of the application, the applicant holds one or more shellfish cultivation leases and all of the leases meet the shellfish production requirements established by the Marine Fisheries Commission.
- (2) A person who receives a shellfish cultivation lease by lawful transfer if, at the time of the transfer, the person holds one or more shellfish cultivation leases and all of the leases meet the shellfish production requirements established by the Marine Fisheries Commission. (1921, c. 132, s. 1; C.S., s. 1959(a); 1965, c. 957, s. 2; 1973, c. 1262, s. 28; 1983, c. 621, s. 2; 1987, c. 827, s. 98; 2004-150, s. 1; 2009-433, s. 3.)