



# Maryland Charter Boat Association, Inc.

**December 2017**

Captains,

As many of you know Phil Langley stepped down as President this week, and we had our elections. I took over for Phil and Brian Hardman moved into the northern Vice President spot. We also gained a vital asset in Bob Munro, who took over as the Secretary of the MCBA.

I think that everyone owes Phil a huge thank you for his efforts in the past few years. He was put into a very difficult position navigating the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and a very reluctant Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The position of President is a no win situation but Phil was able to gain vital contacts and the respect of many within the Department. We also owe a thank you to Mrs. Ireland, Tom's better half, who stepped up and volunteered to handle the Secretary position until we found someone to hold the position. Again, a big thank you to both is needed.

With that being said we are moving forward to the next phrase of this reduction that has been placed on us. As stated in the meeting I will be handling the fisheries issues from now on. However, that does not mean that other board members will not be attending meetings or voting on certain agenda items. Basically, it is a way of saying if anyone has any issues and or ideas regarding fishery issues they need to be directed to me. The Department has set up so many useless boards and committees in the last few years that if we do not streamline our ideas and issues into one voice, I feel we will continue to take a back seat to other user groups.

We did have a vote at the last meeting about getting back to a 19 inch fish. The Department and other user groups, us included, formulated a plan that basically says if we use circle hooks while using bait we can have a 19 inch fish creel limit. This would allow (2) 19 inch fish, with the loss of ZERO days, next year (2018). As mentioned we did vote on this at the meeting. The vote was not unanimous but it did carry easily. Phil did forward this to the Department which in turn forwarded it to the technical committee for review. This is not a guarantee but this was the latest idea on the table. There are a few draw backs to the use of circle hooks; one, if it passes it would be a law not a regulation so going back to a standard hook would be difficult. Additionally, the use would be for the recreational fishery only -- commercial would have no such restriction. I also feel that the law would be very difficult to enforce and could be very time consuming if you were boarded to check compliance since there are several definitions

of a circle hook. We also took a vote on planer board lengths. We had a unanimous vote to cap our board lengths at 3 times your boat length or a maximum of 150 feet. This will not be forwarded to DNR until we are asked for an opinion. As many of you know we have had several problems with boats with extremely long planer board lines. These complaints have not only been on charter boats but also with private boats. A few organizations are again trying to do away with planer boards altogether, so this motion was to find out what we could live with as an industry.

I am not real confident that we are going to get a smaller fish without giving up days until after 2020. We will continue to try and forward any ideas that members have that are viable. I have started to reach out to the Presidents of smaller Charter organizations within the State for ideas. I will be more than happy to attend any of their meetings to get those ideas and to also explain the importance of expanding or recovering some of our membership.

Now, for the bad news. I will not be able to maintain this position as your President for the long term due to other commitments. I will be reaching out to some younger captains to see if they will start going to some of these meetings to see how the process works within the department as well as the lack of flexibility we usually have. The younger guys will be the ones taking us forwarded, so let the training begin. We have to start regaining our membership to a sustainable amount and everyone needs to get involved in this endeavor. I will be sending out MONTHLY newsletters to keep everyone informed. Included in those newsletters will be the meetings that anyone on the board attends and a brief explanation. This should help with the lack of communication within the board to membership. Please feel free to give the newsletters out to Captains who are not members so they see that we are working for them.

I am sure it will take us a month or so to get the computer, contact lists and changes finalized so please be patient. There are more items that will be included, but I will wait until after we have our Board of Directors meeting that has not yet been scheduled. Please help in recruiting members. We need to be proactive in this as membership is at a level that does not even pay for the annual cost of doing business at this time.

Call me when needed but please include your area Vice President because sometimes they may have the answer you seek.

Thanks, Ken Jeffries (410-507-1117)

President, MCBA

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