

DRAFT  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**15 Rudd Lane,**  
**Hampton, VA 23669**



**CALL TO ORDER:** Mike Oesterling called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. eight board members were present which represents a quorum.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Ann Gallivan  
J.C. Hudgins  
Daniel Knott  
Beverly Ludford  
Mike Congrove  
Monica Schenemann  
Mike Oesterling  
Jonathan van Senten

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Trey Sowers  
Nathan Bussels  
Taylor Deihl

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mike Hutt, VMPB  
Owen Hynson, VMPB

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa Ball, VDACS  
Bill Walton, VIMS  
Fernando Goncalves, VT

**INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:**

**Introduction of attendance at meeting.**

**MINUTES:**

Mike Congrove made a motion to approve the minutes from February 23, 2023, J.C. Hudgins seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**At 1:05 PM the board adjourned to take a tour of the Seafood AREC.**

**At 1:40 PM the board reconvened and continued the meeting.**

DRAFT  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**15 Rudd Lane,**  
**Hampton, VA 23669**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Delegate Hodges catfish processing:** Delegate Hodges cosponsored a bill with State Senator Richard Stuart that has passed, approving two million dollars for catfish processing. Each applicant will be able to apply for up to \$250,00.00 and the application process will start this summer. The money will be administered by VDACS and a meeting on this bill will be hosted by Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr.

**Seafood Expo North America 2023:** SENA 2023 was well attended and the VMPB booth saw a big increase from last year due to the Blue Catfish sampling. A lot of interested was generated by the Blue Catfish with 61 trade leads alone coming from inquiries on them. The number one issue with potential business on Blue Catfish is on the processing side. The contract will be going out soon on the floor space for SENA 2024 with VDACS paying for half of the booth space.

**NBC 12 Live Cooking Show:** On March 28, 2023, Mike Hutt was on NBC 12 noon news with Chef Goodier of Gloucester doing a live segment on Blue Catfish. This segment was part cooking, sampling, and part educating the public on the history of Blue Catfish, the taste difference compared to other catfish, and how to find suppliers in their areas.

**Seafood Source News January, February, March 2023 Ads Activity Report:** In January 2023 There were 32,790 impressions, 37 clicks, and a .11% click through rate. In February 2023 there were 34, 924 impressions, 34 clicks, and a .10% click through rate. In March of 2023 there were 48,356 impressions, 60 clicks, and a .12% click through rate in the Weekly Global Newsletter. The SeafoodSource News total so far is 574,816 impressions, 842 clicks, and a .15% click through rate. These click through rates are well above averages and we will have to wait for the April 2023 report to see if SENA 2023 turn out drove the March 2023 numbers up.

**Undercurrent News March/April 2023 Ads Activity Report:** The total clicks as of the end of March 2023 were 229 clicks and the click through rate was .31% the total clicks as of the end of April 2023 were 240 clicks and the click through rate had dropped to .30%.

**Oyster FIP Progress Report:** The Oyster FIP is continuing to receive A ratings and is in compliance with Environmental and Social reporting requirements.

**Seafood Expo Global 2023:** Seafood Expo Global was a tremendous success. Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson shipped Blue Catfish and Scallops for the chef to prepare as samples, to plate up for potential buyers, and to serve to a group of chefs observing different cooking techniques and hopefully incorporating SUSTA region products in their restaurants. These two items generated a lot of trade leads and were received well by potential buyers. Mike and Owen generated 70 trade leads for the industry.

DRAFT  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**15 Rudd Lane,**  
**Hampton, VA 23669**

**2022 Billboard Ads:**

- **Adams:** The Adams campaign has just started. During the next VMPB meeting there will be updated results from this.
- **Lamar:** The Lamar campaign has not begun. This contract will need to be reworked by VDACS finance office and run at a later date. The original campaign was drawn up by an outgoing member at Lamar and was never entered and executed.

**Seafood Expo Asia:** Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson have started to recruit companies for this show. It is still unclear to Mike and Owen at this time if their counterparts in Florida will be allowed to travel.

**Legislative Seafood Luncheon 2024:** Mike Hutt will get a confirmation on the exact date as we get closer. The board discussed focusing more on Shellfish at the luncheon, possibly doing clams, fried oysters, and seafood gumbo with fish in it.

**Economic Impact Study Stage 2:** Fernando Goncalves presented the board with a proposal for Stage 2 of the Economic Impact Study. This stage is to focus on retail stores and restaurants as they were not included in Stage 1. Fernando is going to employ various methods to determine retail and restaurant sales and expenses. The methods include canvassing these businesses online, purchasing reliable and up to date sales figures online, and conducting face to face interviews with people from these businesses. Stage 2 will also incorporate the figures from Stage 1 with necessary adjustments due to inflation so we can have a more accurate picture and so that these two figures can be combined giving us a total economic impact of the Commercial Seafood Industry in Virginia. This will be a two-year project from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. The total cost of Stage 2 will be \$198,334.00. JC Hudgins made a motion to table voting on this project until the next VMPB meeting, Mike Congrove seconded the motion, and discussion was held. After discussion JC Hudgins modified his motion to accept the proposal as is, Mike Congrove seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held.

- Ann Gallivan-Aye
- J.C. Hudgins-Aye
- Dan Knott-Aye
- Beverly Ludford-Aye
- Mike Congrove-Aye
- Monica Schenemann-Aye
- Mike Oesterling-Aye

Jonathan recused himself from voting. Seven Ayes and the motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**15 Rudd Lane,**  
**Hampton, VA 23669**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Meeting with Secretary of Natural Resources Travis Voyles, Secretary of Agriculture Matt Lohr, and VMRC Commissioner Green on catfish processing:** Mike Hutt met with Secretary of Natural Resources Travis Voyles, Secretary of Agriculture Matt Lohr, and VMRC Commissioner Green on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to discuss the issues with processing the commercial industry is having and ways that we could combat this.

**Industry Tour Catfish Packers/Processors/Coastline Technology Inc/Export to China:** Mike Hutt had an industry tour set up with a buyer he had met at SEG 2023 from China. Mike Hutt cancelled the tour because he and Owen Hynson both contracted Covid during the trip to SEG 2023. Mike Hutt has been in contact with the potential buyer and is waiting to hear back on an acceptable make up date for them.

**Japanese Embassy DC-Virginia Seafood Event:** Mike Hutt delivered Blue Catfish, Scallops, and Flounder to VDACS Deputy Commissioner Green who delivered it to the Japanese embassy in DC for an event they are holding on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The seafood will be paid for by the Virginia Wine Board.

**VA TECH Video Cooking Catfish:** On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Mike Hutt will be at the Hampton Seafood AREC with Chef Greg Burroughs cooking Blue Catfish and informing the audience about its taste, meat quality, and how adaptable it is to different cooking methods and seasonings. This will be done on video for remote viewing.

**Virginia Agriculture Week June 12-16, 2023/Industry Tour with Secretary of Agriculture Matt Lohr June 15-16, 2023:** Mike Hutt will be taking Secretary of Agriculture Matt Lohr on an industry tour during Agriculture Week this year. On June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 16<sup>th</sup> Mike Hutt will be taking Matt Lohr to view Blue Catfish processing in the Middle Peninsula and Oysters on the Eastern Shore.

**VA TECH Eat More Fish Program:** Virginia Tech is completely in charge of this program now. The Eat More Fish Program will have discussion dates on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 this year. Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson will be working on a Oyster PowerPoint for Mike Hutt to present.

**VA State Fair:** The Black Boots & Tie Event will be held September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, at the mansion on the state fairgrounds. Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson served about 500 oysters at last years event. Jonathan made a motion approving the VMPB to participate at this event with 600 oysters and two oyster shuckers which the cost should not exceed \$1,000.00. The motion passed unanimously.

**Monterey Bay Guidance on Eastern Oyster:** JC Hudgins informed the board that the Monterey Bay Aquarium changed its guidance on Virginia wild Oysters from alternative to avoid. Mike Hutt has contacted the Virginia Aquarium and they are working on getting into touch with Monterey Bay to see what the reason was for the change. Bill Walton informed the board that VIMS was working on an official letter challenging the change.

DRAFT  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**15 Rudd Lane,**  
**Hampton, VA 23669**

**INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS**

**VIMS** – Bill Walton informed the board that the Seafood Server Training, program for getting restaurant servers more knowledgeable on the seafood products they serve, is still on going.

**Virginia Tech** – Jonathan informed the other members of the board that if they need to use any of the space at the Hampton facility to let him know and he can schedule them. Jonathan also informed the board that the Seafood AREC will soon have virtual tours of the facility available on its website.

**VMRC** – No report.

**Virginia Seafood Council** – No report.

**Virginia Waterman’s Association** – JC Hudgins informed the board that it was a record year in the Public Season Oystery around 350,000 bushels and the total Oyster numbers are around 700,000 to 800,000 bushels. There are lots of crabs this year but not a lot of pickers. Most of the crabs have state up in Maryland not moving out of the Northern part of the Bay due to the water temperature.

**Shellfish Growers of Virginia** – Mike Oesterling informed the Board that Ben Stagg will be named director on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2023 and that Mike will be officially retiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Mike Oesterling informed the board that the organization is stable and that they have seen their largest membership numbers this year.

**Omega Protein** – No report.

**Cooperative Programs**

**VDACS** – No report.

**Financial Report**

Mike Hutt reported a carry over for FY 2022-2023 of \$631,282.27 and a balance of \$462,357.26 as of April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

DRAFT  
**VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)**  
**Board Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18, 2023/ 1:00 P.M.**  
**Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center**  
**15 Rudd Lane,**  
**Hampton, VA 23669**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**TRAVEL** – The Board may request travel reimbursement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 4:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Mike Hutt  
Executive Director

---

Mike Oesterling  
Chair