



FINAL
VIRGINIA MARINE PRODUCTS BOARD (VMPB)
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday August 14, 2025/ 1:00 P.M.
VIMS, Davis Hall
Gloucester Point, VA

CALL TO ORDER: VMPB Executive Director Mike Hutt called the meeting to order at 1:08 P.M. Four board members were present. Mike Hutt informed the board that because a quorum had not been met this would just be an informational meeting and board members would not be able to vote on proposals.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Monica Schenemann
Michael Congrove
Chris Sopko
Trey Sowers

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jonathan van Senten
Taylor Deihl
Daniel Knott
William Sexauer
Beverly Ludford
Nathan Bussels
Terri Graham Wallace

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Hutt, VMPB
Owen Hynson, VMPB

GUESTS PRESENT:

Kim Huskey, Cherrystone Aqua Farms
Jordan Krevonick, Executive Director of Shellfish Growers of Virginia
Karen Hudson, VIMS
Shelby White, VIMS

INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME:

Introduction of attendance at meeting.

MINUTES:

The minutes from the June 11, 2025, board meeting were unable to be voted on, signed, and approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Seafood Source News February 2025 Ads Activity Report: The VMPB received three months of comp placement in SeafoodSource.com during May, June, and July. The VMPB also received one month of comp placement in Weekly Global Newsletter during July. The value from the comp advertising during May-July was \$14,150.00. The number of impressions as of the end of May 2025 in Seafood Source advertising was 50,007, the total number of clicks was 39, and the CTR was .08%. The number of impressions as of the end of June 2025 in Seafood Source advertising was 75,017, the total number of clicks was 75, and the CTR was .10%. The number of impressions as of the end of July 2025 was 75,022, the total number of clicks was 33, and the CTR was .04%. The VMPB Weekly Global Newsletter July 2025 numbers were 58,007 impressions, 18 clicks, and the CTR was .03%.

Undercurrent News March, April, May 2025 Ads Activity Report: The total number of impressions as of the end of July 2025 were 696,878 newsletters sent, 277 total clicks and the click through rate was .21%. The VMPB also received complimentary placement in the months of June and July during this period. The total number of impressions as of the end of July 2025 were 70,121 newsletters sent, 797 total clicks, and a click through rate of 3.40%.

Adams 6/30/25-7/20/25 Advertising Activity Report: The VMPB had a three-week ad run with Adams on their billboard off of I-64 in Hampton. From 6/30/25-7/20/25 the VMPB was guaranteed 25,200 plays. The VMPB received 27,658 plays and 894,882 total impressions.

Lamar 7/7/25-7/31/25 Advertising Activity Report: Starting on 7/9/25 the panel on Broad Street in Richmond had 44,289 anticipated deliveries. Lamar over delivered on this projection with 88,020 deliveries through 7/31/25. Starting on 7/21/25 the panel at the Mechanicsville Turnpike had 10,989 anticipated deliveries. Lamar over delivered on this projection with 27,991 deliveries through 7/31/25.

April 2025 Oyster FIP: As of the April 2025 update the current Oyster FIP has maintained it's A rating and is in compliance with Environmental reporting requirements and social reporting requirements.

VDACS Blue Catfish Work Group: Mike Hutt informed the board that the VDACS Blue Catfish work group recently met a few weeks ago. This board is composed of watermen, processors, and members of the state government with the task of marketing, promoting, and supporting Blue Catfish Marketing. Mike Hutt also informed the board that another \$250,000.00 dollar grant for Blue Catfish processing has been approved in the states FY 25-26 budget.

2025 Northeast Nonmetropolitan Area Oyster Shucking Prevailing Wage Survey: Mike Hutt informed the board that the VMPB conducted an oyster shucking prevailing wage survey for the Northeast Virginia Nonmetropolitan area for wages from the dates February 15, 2024, to February 14, 2025. This survey was sent to all 39 certified oyster shucking locations in this area, and they had 4 responses. The prevailing wage that was collected was \$14.40 per hour. The results of this survey were sent back out to the respondents on March 24, 2025.

2025 Virginia Beach MSA Blue Crab Picking Wage Survey: Mike Hutt informed the board that the VMPB is currently in the process of conducting a wage survey on Blue Crabs for the Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Newport News, VA-NC MSA. The dates from this survey are to run from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. This survey was sent out to all six certified crab picking locations within the MSA with three companies sending responses. Mike Hutt informed the board that the survey has been completed and is being reviewed by Phoenix Labor before the VMPB sends the results back to the responders.

VDACS Blue Catfish Harvesting Video: Mike Hutt is still working with VDACS and the VMRC on this project. He is currently looking to find a commercial waterman that would like to take part in this video showing Blue Catfish harvesting.

SUSTA Wild Blue Catfish Promotion: Mike Hutt informed the board that SUSTA will be running a program featuring Wild Blue Catfish the day after Seafood Expo Asia ends on September 13, 2025, from 2:00 am-5:00 am for seafood markets in Singapore looking for new products to feature. This event is taking place after Seafood Expo Asia and because Mike Hutt will be departing from Singapore this day Stone Slade from Maryland will be the SUSTA activity manager for this event.

SUSTA Hong Kong & China Inbound Buyers Mission: Mike Hutt informed the board that VDACS will be working with Mike Hutt, Owen Hynson, and Maryland's SUSTA members on a SUSTA sponsored inbound mission of buyers from Hong Kong and China from October 12-14 of 2025. This mission would be a joint effort by Virginia and Maryland's SUSTA teams and will involve tours of both Virginia and Maryland's seafood industries. Mike Hutt will be in charge of showing the tour group parts of the Virginia seafood industry on October 13th and 14th and then will drop off the tour group on Route 13 at the Virginia-Maryland border on the Eastern Shore for Stone Slade of the Maryland SUSTA team to finish the tour of the Maryland seafood industry.

VDACS Catfish Website: Mike Hutt informed the board that VDACS is working on a website about Virginia Wild Caught Blue Catfish. VDACS will be handling the cost of creating and maintaining the website and has asked the VMPB for help when needed on content for the website. Mike Hutt informed the board that the VMPB has provided VDACS with pictures, recipes, and videos for the website but has not received a timeline line yet for when it will be completed. Mike Hutt will reach out to VDACS and see if there are any updates from them.

SEA 2025: Seafood Expo Asia will take place in Singapore from September 10-12, 2025. Mike Hutt informed the board that he would be traveling on behalf of the VMPB as one of the co-activity managers for the SUSTA pavilion. SUSTA will pay for the cost of Mike's travel. Mike Hutt reaffirmed his support of participating in SUSTA events like this show because of the ability to showcase a wide variety of Virginia Seafood with a low cost to the VMPB. Mike Hutt informed the board that there will be Blue Catfish, Scallops, Virginia Oysters, and Hard Clams in the display box as well as being sampled during the show by potential buyers.

VMPB 2026 Legislative Seafood Luncheon: Mike Hutt informed the board that the VMPB Legislative Seafood Luncheon will take place on January 26, 2026. Mike Hutt asked the board to think about some options on what to serve at this event so that the board could vote on the menu and the catering contract during the VMPB November 13, 2025 board meeting.

Proposed VMPB budget for FY 25-26: Mike Hutt presented the VMPB with a budget proposal for the 25-26 FY. Because a quorum was not met at this meeting the budget was not able to be voted on. The board members went into discussion about the budget proposal and to look into ways to significantly cut down on the advertising line item by spending a smaller amount on a more focused social media marketing campaign.

NEW BUSINESS

VIMS/Shelby White Catfish Cloth Wipes & Catfish Promotional Cards: Shelby White informed the board that the 5,000 catfish promotional cards have been completed and delivered, and she will be giving these to Mike Hutt and Owen Hynson to use for their marketing efforts. Shelby also informed the board that the cloth wipes are still being produced and that they should be ready in a few weeks. She is also looking into creating Blue Catfish stickers to go along with the other marketing material.

Economic Impact Study Phase 2 Update: Mike Hutt informed the board that he had talked to Mike Schwartz and learned that phase 2 of the Economic Impact Study had been completed and is being sent off to be published currently. Once this is complete the VMPB will be able to use this in their marketing efforts. Mike Hutt also informed the board that they will not be invoiced a little over \$40,000.00 from the original approved amount because the departure of Fernando Goncalves from the Virginia Tech Seafood AREC cut down on the salary costs for the project.

Virginia Beach Restaurant Association Meeting with Martha Davenport: Mike Hutt informed the board that he met with Martha Davenport of the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association on July 23rd so that she could discuss with him efforts that they have taken promoting Wild Caught Blue Catfish in the Virginia Beach Area and possible cooperating with the VMPB on different Blue Catfish events in the future. The Virginia Beach Restaurant Association is hosting an event on November 18, 2025, Mike Hutt will have the specifics on this event at a later date.

VDACS International Marketing Consultants from Canada Industry Meetings: Mike Hutt informed the board that the VDACS hosted an event for Virginia companies interested in finding interested buyers and shipping products from Virginia to Canada. This event was held on August 7th at the Virginia Tech Seafood AREC in Hampton. Mike Hutt informed the board that he received a lot of positive feedback from attendees and that it was helpful in identifying markets for products and the processes that companies unfamiliar with shipping into Canada would have to go to. Kim Husky reported to the board that she was unable to attend but she received positive feedback from attendees at Cherrystone that it was very beneficial and informative.

NOAA/Upper Mattaponi Tribe, Blue Catfish meeting: Mike Hutt informed the board that the Upper Mattaponi Tribe had reached out to him to see if he could schedule a meeting with them and a representative at NOAA to discuss what the tribe would need to do to get into Blue Catfish processing. The meeting was scheduled over zoom on August 8th, Mike Hutt and the NOAA representative had both joined the meeting but a representative from the Upper Mattaponi Tribe did not. Mike informed the board that he had reached out leading up to the meeting and after with reminders but had not received any responses, so he is going to leave it up to them to follow up with this if they are still interested.

VSU-College of Agriculture, VT, VMPB Blue Catfish promotion & sampling at the Virginia State Fair: Mike Hutt informed the board that between September 29-October 3 the VMPB will be at the Virginia State Fair during the day handing out marketing materials and samples of Blue Catfish nuggets. The booth space and samples will be at no cost to the VMPB they will be partnering with the VSU College of Agriculture and the VT Seafood AREC on this event.

State Fair Sunsets & Scholarships Event: Mike Hutt informed the board that he is still deciding on if the VMPB will participate in this event because of conflict from the Virginia State Fair Blue Catfish event. This is scheduled to take place on October 2nd at the Mansion on the fairgrounds. If Mike can find an oyster company that can bring the oysters and handle the setup before the event, then Mike and Owen will participate in this event.

Virginia Aquaculture Conference: Mike Hutt informed that the 2025 Virginia Aquaculture Conference will take place in Newport News from November 14-15, 2025. Mike Hutt also informed the board that Mike and Owen have paid the VMPB's booth cost in will be in attendance handing out promotional material and signing interested aquaculture growers up for their Virginia Oyster Aquaculture Directory.

Agribusiness Legislative Reception: Mike informed the board that he does not have confirmation if this event will be taking place, but he will continue to look into this. This event normally takes place in January and Mike would like the VMPB to participate if it is being held.

Virginia Food & Beverage Expo: Mike informed the board that as of now this event I still scheduled to take place on March 2, 2026, at the Richmond Expo Center. Mike Hutt informed the board that the VMPB has booth space that VDACS has provided for them for this event and that Mike and Owen will be there with marketing material, samples, a seafood display, and will be gathering trade leads for the industry.

SENA 2026: Mike Hutt informed the board that SENA 2026 will take place in Boston between March 15-17, 2026. Mike Hutt informed the board that he is considering highlighting Blue Catfish again in the samples and the seafood display.

SEG 2026: Mike Hutt informed the board that SEG 2026 will take place in Barcelona between April 21-23, 2026. Mike Hutt informed the board as one of the SUSTA co-activity managers for this show he will start recruitment for this in a few months.

SEA 2026: Mike Hutt informed the board that the show dates for SEA 2026 have just been released and that SEA 2026 will be held in Singapore between September 2-4, 2026. Mike Hutt will be one of the SUSTA co-activity managers for this show.

INTERESTED PARTY REPORTS

VIMS – Karen Hudson informed the board that the current Shellfish Growers report that they have been working on will be releasing in a few weeks and that a new Shellfish Growers survey will be going out as well. Shelby White informed the board that VIMS is also working on an infographics card with a link to the survey on it. Shelby also let the board know that VIMS will be hosting a Young Fisherman’s Workshop in January 2026.

Virginia Tech – No report.

VMRC – No report.

Virginia Seafood Council – No report.

Virginia Waterman’s Association – Monica Schenemann informed the other board members that the VWA’s Annual Crab Feast will be held at the Fairfield Fire Department in Reedville on September 20th. Monica also informed the board that the VMRC declined a proposal to require turtle excluders in crab pots.

Shellfish Growers of Virginia – Jordan Krevonick informed the board that the SGV will have a booth at the 2025 Virginia Aquaculture Conference.

Omega Protein – No report.

Cooperative Programs

VDACS – No report.

Financial Report

Mike Hutt reported a carryover for FY 2025-2026 of \$449,230.26 and a balance of \$449,230.26 as of June 30th, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENT – No comment.

TRAVEL – The Board may request travel reimbursement.

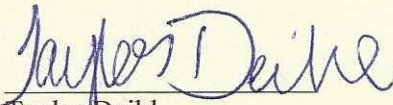
ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mike Hutt
Executive Director



Taylor Deihl
Chair