



**FIFTY TWO REASONS NOAA MUST CONDUCT FISHERIES STOCK
ASSESSMENTS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES © JANUARY 2, 2013**

"Science will set us free," has been a rallying cry for commercial and recreational fishermen from Texas through North Carolina for several decades. It will continue to be a passionate, continuous rallying cry in 2013. It will be spread far and wide to everyone with political power interested in reversing NOAA's goal to reduce recreational and commercial fishermen. Science is non-partisan. Fish are non-partisan.

The private sector group of men and women who fight for equal protection under the law and more transparency on how our tax dollars are spent by NOAA are non-partisan.

(#1 of 52 reasons) If NOAA science centers won't elevate stock assessment research as the most important aspect of managing the nation's sustainable fisheries, are NOAA science centers necessary?

Within the ranks of NOAA are highly competent and professional men and women who want to conduct honest, scientific research. They adhere to the scientific principle and need the time and money necessary to reach scientific conclusions based on empirical data including research done on the water instead of on the computer.

Within the ranks of NMFS in previous years were cunning men with a bias against the commercial fishing industry, who used their political position to set unfair policies and create protocols not in the best interest of the nation. I will not rehash the dark years in this document when scientists in charge of NMFS worked for the demise of the fishermen and fishing communities. Those are facts that can be discerned from many sources, both personal and historical.

The recreational and commercial fishing industry will be changed for the better with the departure of Dr. Jane Lubchenco, whose policies did more harm to the domestic fishing industry in the southeastern states than any other NOAA policymaker in history. With that background, I segue into my question about the need of NOAA labs if they don't consider stock assessments their number one priority.

The science labs in Beaufort, North Carolina and Miami, Florida should present a report listing every employee working at the labs, at what pay grade, and when each employee will be eligible for retirement. The labs should list the projects each employee works on especially the exact scientific projects each scientist and grantee have worked on for the last five years.

These lab reports should be submitted to the appropriate Congressional Committees so public Hearings can be held. Congress needs to review the labs research programs to determine if work being done is relative to the current era. The cost of each research project should be calculated in the report.

If, after a Congressional review, NOAA labs elevate stock assessments to number one goal then the labs should receive funding to conduct annual stock assessments. If the labs do not agree to elevate stock assessments, the labs should be closed, by not hiring new employees to replace retirees. This would not harm current employees, but would free up millions of dollars to fund state and academic entities qualified and willing to conduct fishery stock assessments in the federal waters off their respective southeastern states.

CONCLUSION: If NOAA labs won't elevate stock assessments as a top goal, then phase them out.

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