

**NEW JERSEY SHELLFISHERIES COUNCIL
— ATLANTIC COAST SECTION —
P.O. BOX 418
PORT REPUBLIC, NJ 08241**

**WALTER L. JOHNSON III, CHAIRMAN
GEORGE W. MATHIS JR., VICE CHAIRMAN
PAUL T. FELDER, COUNCILMAN
EDWARD W. GAINES, COUNCILMAN**

May 29, 2025

Senator Brian P. Stack
411 Palisade Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07307

Dear Senator Stack,

The New Jersey Shellfisheries Council (Council) is again following up on its request to fill the vital Monmouth County seat on the Atlantic Coast section of this Council. Mr. Kevin Kirk had been nominated by the Governor and put forward to the Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration in April 2024. His respective district Senators have endorsed him. The Monmouth County seat has been vacant since May 2019.

The Council represents the coastal counties of the State and the various sectors of the growing shellfish industry that need proper representation to ensure that this industry and its resources remain viable and sustainable. The hard-working baymen that support NJ's coastal economy deserve proper representation. Mr. Kirk is that manager of one of two of New Jersey's clam depuration plants, which employs many of our hard-working baymen. He has extensive knowledge of the wild hard clam fishery and the shellfish resources of the State. It would be a continued disservice to these hard-working baymen not to have someone advocate for them. The Council would like to reiterate that New Jersey's marine fish and shellfish industries are worth approximately \$2.8 billion to the State's economy and is one of the nation's leading states in terms of landings and value. The viability of New Jersey's shellfish industry can be directly attributed to the working relationship between the industry and state resource managers, in which proper representation through the Shellfish Council plays a key role.

The Council is authorized under Title 50 to serve as an advisory body to the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) as well as assisting in the formulating of comprehensive policies for the preservation and improvement of the shellfish industry and resources of the State. The Council also has exclusive authority to lease land under tidal waters for shellfish aquaculture. As such, the Council clearly plays a vital role as a conduit between the industry and the NJDEP.

The Council would also like to bring to your attention the fact that this is the third letter sent to your office from this Council as well as additional letters from the NJ Marine Fisheries Council. Our letters have received no response or apparent consideration to move

Mr. Kirk's nomination to the Judicatory Committee agenda for consideration. We respectfully request at least a status update on this appointment.

Please feel free to contact me at (609) 513-4380 to discuss this matter so that the Council and the NJ shellfish harvesters can be informed of the delay in considering Mr. Kirk's appointment and so the Council can further address this matter.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,



Walter L. Johnson III
Chairman

c. Senate President, Nicholas P. Scutari
Senator Troy Singleton
Senator Jon M. Bramnick,
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Senator Renee C. Burgess
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Sam Parker, Appointments Director
Shawn LaTourette, Commissioner, NJDEP
Edward D. Wengryn, Secretary, NJDA
David Golden, Assistant Commissioner, NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife
Joseph Cimino, Administrator, NJ Marine Resources Administration
Dr. Patrick Donnelly, Acting Chair, NJ Marine Fisheries Council
Members, Delaware Bay Section of the NJ Shellfisheries Council