

Dear Members of the House Natural Resources committee,

I am a homeowner in North Bethany Beach, Villas at Beach Cove community. Over the past few years, truck traffic has greatly increased on the beach we use. The fishermen often set up early in the morning and spread out their lines along the shore, effectively blocking ocean access for swimmers for hundreds of yards even if there are only one or two fishermen. This has created hazards for beach goers like myself as there are limited areas we can enter the ocean, and coming back to shore is hazardous because you cannot see the fishing lines and I myself have been caught in them when coming in from a swim or paddle. While I respect and appreciate the fisherman's right to fish, I am hoping we can designate specific areas for that that are not in front of residential areas. Rehoboth has done this and beach goers and fishermen coexist peacefully and safely. Without some kind of separation of fishermen and leisure beach users, the beach goers lose. This greatly diminishes our home value if the beach is fully occupied by trucks and fishing lines in the summer. If we could designate the southernmost portion of the state park beach for families, (in front of residential areas like Indian Harbor Villas and Villas at Beach Cove), it would ensure safe and happy cohabitation of our beautiful beach. Please consider this issue in your upcoming meeting. (Senate bill SB66)

Sincerely,

Debbie Francis

29088 Beach Cove Square

Bethany Beach, DE 19930

Good afternoon members of the House Natural Resources committee:

I am writing to you to encourage the Senate to pass SB 66. As a board member on the HOA for the Villas at Beach Cove we would like to see that officers who patrol the beach have real enforcement powers and that there are enough to cover the areas under their jurisdiction. It is our opinion that too many of the trucks on the beach are not real surf fishermen. They are using the cover of having fishing equipment so that they can drive on the beach primarily for the use of the beach and not fishing. If this is effectively enforced it should cut down on the number of trucks on the beach and enhance the fishing experience for the real surf fishermen and enhance the experience for those people using the beach for swimming and relaxation.

The beach enjoyment for the developments that include Indian Harbor, The Villas at Beach Cove and The Cove as well as other people using the public access through Indian Harbor are there primarily to swim and play on the beach. Many of these units are rentals during the summer and a positive beach environment is very important to keep these people happy so that they continue to return to our beach. They buy food, souvenirs and go to restaurants. These are all very important to the health of the Delaware tourist industry and employ many people.

I would also like to bring to your attention the most egregious practice I have seen on at least two occasions. That is fisherman going out in kayaks and chumming the water to bring sharks in closer so they can fish for them. All we need is for someone to be attacked by a shark and there goes your rental business and property values. I would hope the officers would be in a position to prevent that practice.

This seems to be a fairly small request that will greatly ensure the health, safety and most importantly the enjoyment of our beach.

Kindest regards,

Scott Robinson

Rebecca Robinson

#17 Villas at Beach Cove

Bethany Beach, DE 19930

301-332-2537

Hello,

My husband Raymond and I are previous residents of Sussex County, Delaware, and for the past 15 years, we have been homeowners in the community of Villas at Beach Cove, Bethany Beach, Delaware. In the late 1970's, my husband was a Park Ranger for DNREC at Cape Henlopen. In fact, we have been homeowners in the Delaware beach area since the late 1980's -- having previously owned homes in South Bethany and Fenwick Island. We believe Delaware offers some of the most beautiful, unspoiled beaches and have very much enjoyed spending relaxing days on the beach with our children and other family members over the years.

When we are unable to spend time at our home, we do offer it for rent so others can also enjoy. Over the years, we have received many favorable comments about the beauty and the "family feel" of the Delaware beaches. However, more recently, we are receiving more complaints than compliments.

The number of people that drive vehicles onto the beach as well as the location the vehicles park to engage in fishing activities has become a major source of complaints. The beach areas at or near the pedestrian access pathways have become a dangerous place to be, and visitors cannot enjoy the beautiful scenery, take a stroll along the beach, or even relax on the beach and go for a swim without fear of stepping on or getting "caught" by a fisherman's fishhook. The vehicles have encroached far too close to innocent visitors, making their vacation time far less enjoyable.

As homeowners, we pay property taxes to be able to enjoy the lovely Delaware beaches. Rental visitors pay to visit the area, and they bring revenue to the region. In past years, we had renters that would come back year after year. However, this has changed -- and comments from the renters indicate that the presence of vehicles and fishing rods near the sunbathing areas are the major reason to look elsewhere for future vacation spots. This has had a documented negative impact on our rental income, and we fear that the reputation of the Delaware beach area as a prime destination will suffer.

This is bad for the homeowners and the revenue potential for the Delaware beach areas. The presence of the vehicles and fishermen close to the sunbathing areas has drastically reduced the desirability of the region. Visits to the Delaware beaches should promote tourism -- not deter it!!

Homeowners, as well as visitors, need to be ensured that there will be a "safe zone" for children to play on the sand and in the water without the fear of fishhooks or being hit by a vehicle driving by. Last summer, I witnessed a fisherman catching a small shark, and when he pulled it up onto the sand, a small boy near me was terrified that he was going to be attacked by a shark. This should not be a memory a child takes home from his vacation.

We believe the beaches can and should be shared -- with designated areas for the vehicles and fishing activities that are a reasonable distance from the sunbathers who come to the beach to enjoy the sand, water and beautiful scenery.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Respectfully,

Patricia Bouchard

patriciabouchard@gmail.com>

House Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Lynn Kuttruff and my husband and I own a home at Villas of Beach Cove Bethany Beach and we and our guests frequently use the State Bark Beach from the entrance through Indian Harbor Villas.

We have noticed over the years an increased number of "trucks" on the beach at that end of the state park. When we bought our property in 2004 we thought we had a beautiful beach for our children and grandchildren to enjoy for decades to come for swimming and sunbathing. Our granddaughter was a baby when we first owned the property and we felt completely safe with letting her roam all over that end of the beach even during the height of the summer. Now at almost 16, it makes me more nervous than it did then, because of the number of trucks that could easily not see a sunbather and the number of fishing lines just dangling in the water.

It's my understanding that the number of fishing licenses has increased exponentially during the last decade and that this may be the cause of the problem. As we often walk our dog on the beach in the morning (on leash of course) we converse with the local fisherman who are there in the early hours of the day during the best fishing times. Even those locals believe that the number of licenses issued has become excessive and that many of the folks who are buying the licenses aren't really there to fish. They are putting poles in the sand and occasionally watching a line, just for the privilege of parking on the beach. True fisherman are going to be there during the early hours or evening hours when the fishing is best and they will be monitoring their poles at all times.

I have been told that there's a referendum being voted on soon to better monitor and control the beaches, which would have the potential of reducing the amount of truck traffic and therefore once again bring back the peace and safety of the beach that we once knew and thought we were going to enjoy for decades.

We of course do not oppose legitimate fisherman having their place to fish -- either specific locations or times of day. At minimum there should be constant monitoring to "fish out" those individuals who are not really fishing and just taking up space on our once pristine beach with their trucks. Our goal would be to have the far end of the beach limited to a small portion of trucks during the morning/evening (if any) and leave the remainder of that area for beach blankets, chairs, and kids being able to throw balls and skim board to their hearts content, in SAFETY. Our families should not have to worry about their children having to "look both ways" before crossing the beach! The biggest worry should be about sunburn and undertow.

Lastly, As we bought in 2004 before the housing crash, we of course saw depreciated values. That said, we know that our values continue to stay low in part because we do not have the reputation for a pristine beach that we once had. We use our house primarily for family, with minimal renters, but we have had some renters comment on the beach and we've heard that from our neighbors who rent more than we do. As we hope to hold our property for many years to come, the depreciation is the least of our concerns, but is certainly one of them. Our primary concern is safety and relaxation at the beach. We believe there IS something that can be done about it that will be fair to everyone. Reduce the number of licenses; reduce the number of "faux fisherman" over the entire beach; allow a "no parking" area of the beach, specifically the last 100 yards or so across from Indian Harbor Villas; limit the hours of fishing. Any number of these solutions seem like they would be relatively easy to implement, while understanding that there is financial impact to the state by reducing licenses or increasing

patrols. But there's also financial impact to the state if tourism decreases in these areas and/or property values remain flat or worse.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and helping us keep our beaches safe, secure and beautiful.

Sincerely,

Lynn Smith Kuttruff

Resident Villas at Beach Cove

Bethany Beach DE 19930