



St. Croix Commercial

Fishermen's Association

P.O. Box 1129

Thursday, May 07, 2009

Opening Statement for May 7, 2009 ACL Scoping Meeting
By Ed Schuster, Sr.

Good Evening Mr. Miguel Rolon, distinguished guests, fishermen, Legislative Representatives and all others here tonight.

My name is Ed Schuster and I am the President of the St. Croix Commercial Fishermen's Association.

Where do I begin? It seems as though we have been fighting and fighting for our fisheries and our words have been falling on deaf ears. Hopefully with the support of the Governor, the Legislature and the Congresswoman our voices, hard work and efforts to address this problem will now be heard. We cannot do this alone.

I am of the opinion, as are many others; there is no overfishing here in the Virgin Islands. Everything caught here is consumed here, we do not export. If there is anything to be done in our Virgin Islands Fishery, our Virgin Islands data must be used. You cannot regulate our St. Croix Fishery based on studies done on any island other than St. Croix. The one option I would like to stress is a limited entry fishery, which will reduce the amount of catch as opposed to large area closures. We also need to get away from using ACL's, if we can use the management plans we have come up with there will be no need for ACL's.



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For many generations families, restaurants and even political figures have been dependant on our fisheries as a means of feeding their families, supplying the community with a fresh local product and even with the many cultural events and “Fish Fry’s” we have. With all the proposed closures, our culture, heritage and traditions are slowly being taken away. Collectively we have come up with management plans for our fisheries and we as an association are quite capable of managing our own fishery.

We do not and will not support any action taken against this fishery without our input. Now is the time to put our foot down and say enough is enough. To the council and the Administration, I say, you have our support and cooperation. Help us save what we have left for our future generations

Best Regards,

Ed Schuster