

Stephen J. Nielsen

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EDUCATION

Virginia Commonwealth University

Graduation May 2013

Bachelors of Science in Mass Communications with a concentration in Print Journalism

Northern Virginia Community College

2010-2011

Associates of Science with a specialization in Social Science

INTERNSHIPS

RVA News, Richmond, Virginia

2012

A local independent news source in Richmond, VA. It serves as both a news provider and a hub for a series of specialized local news websites devoted to separate Richmond districts.

- Wrote multiple articles dealing with local issues and upcoming events of the Richmond area
- Assisted in research for posts and articles.

Submarine Telecoms Forum, Sterling, Virginia

2010

(40,000+ readers) An independent commercial publication, serving as a freely accessible forum for professionals in industries connected with submarine optical fiber technologies and techniques.

(www.SubtelForum.com)

- Adeptly edited incoming articles, as well as rewriting pieces with significant flaws
- Worked in collaboration with the marketing segment to contact clients and participated in weekly company-wide project meetings

EMPLOYMENT

Staff Writer, Submarine Telecoms Forum, Sterling, Virginia

2012 - 2013

- Held a staff writer position producing a principle article for each issue's main topic, ranging from technology, environmental concerns and law

Writer, Capital News Services, Richmond, Virginia

2013

- Covered the 2013 Virginia General Assembly, published with multiple newspapers around the state as part of capital news program

Writer, The Commonwealth Times, Richmond, Virginia

2011

- Produced local news articles for the VCU school newspaper

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Hornaday Conservation Award 2003

Eagle Scout 2003

Boy Scout Venturing Silver Award 2006

Boy Scout Venturing Ranger Award 2006

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Volunteered for Venturing Crew 761, Boy Scouts of America

- Led scouts on a ten day backpacking trip at Goshen Scout Reservation, acting as co-instructor in the Kodiak Leadership Training

- Supervised regular meetings for the purpose of planning high-adventure activities

Citizens of the World

- Attended and participated in the bi-monthly meetings which focused on national and international humanitarian efforts
- Educated students and the local community through awareness campaigns and forums

PROFICIENCIES

Professional

- Research and analysis
- Variety of writing styles and editing

Technical

- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel
- New Media: Blogging, Facebook, Twitter
- Adobe: InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Premiere, Audition

REFERENCES

Kevin G. Summers

Editor, Submarine Telecoms Forum

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Mary Anne Owens

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Blue crab survey finds mixed news

FEB. 3, 2013

February 03, 2013 | By Stephen Nielsen, Capital News Service

RICHMOND — There's mixed news for the Chesapeake Bay blue crab.

The general crab and young blue crab populations are very healthy, the head of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission says. VMRC Commissioner Jack Travelstead said the crab population in the bay has reached 764 million — the highest in nearly 20 years.

"The good news is, blue crabs are not overfished," Travelstead said.

However, the population of adult female blue crabs — which the crabbing industry relies upon for the next generation of stock — is low.

"The number of spawning-age crabs, the adults in the population, declined last year — fairly significantly," Travelstead said.

In 2011, the population of spawning-age females was estimated at 194 million, approaching the target of 215 million. But in 2012, a survey found only about 97 million spawning-age females. This comes close to 70 million, a number that would officially label blue crabs as "overfished."

Those figures come from the 2011-12 Winter Dredge Survey. Travelstead discussed the survey with the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus, a group of General Assembly members.

Literal overfishing isn't the issue, Travelstead said. The state has about 15 regulations to help protect the blue crab population, including a shortened crab potting season, and restrictions on the number of crab pots allowed.

So why were the survey numbers low?

One theory is that, because of the fairly warm winter, crabs were too active, Travelstead said. When it's warm, crabs don't bury in the mud and would outrun the equipment that would catch them for the survey.

Travelstead points out, however, that if this were the case, then the recent harvest would have been very good. "But it wasn't," he said. "This summer we had a relatively – by comparison with recent years – poor harvest."

The yield didn't pick up until the fall – a boost Travelstead says the industry will need again this year. The Chesapeake Bay crab industry is an important part of the Virginia's economy.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, there was roughly \$70 million in commercial dockside landings in 2008 and 2009 at the blue crab fishery. An overfished categorization would hurt the economy and the watermen who make a living off the Chesapeake.

"The important thing to remember," Travelstead said, "is we get new numbers in April." Despite the sharp decline in adult females, the blue crab population is not at a dangerously small level. Depending on the new survey, the previous year may not mean much, and adult blue crab populations could be far higher than in 2012.

Travelstead also addressed the question of opening the winter crab dredge fishery. Crab dredging allows the harvesting of crabs while they are dormant in the winter. For five years in a row, the VMRC has made the decision to close the winter dredge fishery.

"One of the things we lack in our understanding of the winter dredge fishery is, in addition to what it harvests, what impact it is having on the resource," Travelstead said. The equipment used in the dredging, in addition to harvesting crabs, can damage or kill other crabs. Even some of the crabs that are caught have been damaged and can't be sold.

Travelstead announced a study into the actual mortality rate of crabs while using this method. The study involves four commercial dredgers with scientists aboard counting the number of damaged crabs. So far, the numbers have ranged from 3 to 15 percent depending on the area.

"At some point, if the stock stays healthy, we're going to have to reopen that fishery," Travelstead said. "We're not going to be able to make the argument that the fishery shouldn't be opened."



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Government

Divided Virginia Senate Approves Transportation Overhaul

Vienna-area Sen. Janet Howell calls compromise — expected to raise \$880 million a year for roads and mass transit — "truly the best we're going to get."

February 24, 2013

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By [Stephen Nielsen](#), *Capital News Service*

A divided Virginia Senate on Saturday passed [Gov. Bob McDonnell](#)'s signature issue of the 2013 legislative session – a bill to overhaul the state's system for funding transportation.

Just hours before the session's end, the Senate voted 25-15 for [House Bill 2313](#), which will raise about \$880 million a year more for roads and mass transit by increasing sales taxes while lowering the fuels tax.

The debate over how to increase revenue continued right up to the vote.

"To me, the final bill represents bad economics and bad transportation policy," said Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-Alexandria), who believes the state should raise its gasoline tax to address the problems.

"This isn't any bill. This is the only bill," said Senate Majority Leader Thomas Norment, R-Williamsburg. He said it's the only way to provide the revenue Virginia's transportation system needs – and to ease traffic congestion in Northern Virginia and Tidewater.

HB 2313, which was negotiated by a conference committee and [approved 60-40 by the House on Friday](#), would:

- Eliminate the 17.5-cents-per-gallon gasoline tax that consumers pay at the pump. Instead, the state would impose a 3.5 percent tax on gasoline at the wholesale level. The wholesale tax on diesel fuel would be 6 percent.
- Increase Virginia's sales tax from 5 percent to 5.3 percent.
- Raise the motor vehicle sales tax from 3 percent to 4.3 percent.
- Charge a \$100 annual license tax for electric and alternative fuel vehicles.
- Allow a 0.7 percent sales tax increase in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia to fund transportation projects there.

HB 2313 also would boost the proportion of the state's general fund revenue dedicated to transportation from 0.5 percent to 0.675 percent. And it would prohibit tolls on Interstate 95 south of Fredericksburg without approval from the General Assembly.

"Do I feel like we have anyone in this body that can make a perfect plan? No," Sen. Charles Carrico (R-Galax) said. But he said the transportation plan was close enough and a product of a great deal of compromise between parties.

A dozen Republican senators and three Democrats voted against the bill.

"I don't agree with having different tax rates in different parts of the commonwealth," Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax) said.

"Having a regional tax in Northern Virginia – that means my constituents are going to have a surcharge on all their consumer goods, just for living in that one part of the state. I don't see the fairness in that, so I voted no," Petersen said.

HB 2313 now goes to McDonnell for his signature.

In a press release, the governor said "the annals of history will recognize this session as the year that vital transportation funding reforms, substantively ignored since 1986, were enacted to address the decades-old issues that have left Virginia unable to maintain our existing road, rail and transit infrastructure and unable to pay for needed new transportation services."

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How They Voted

Here is how the Senate voted Saturday on HB 2313 ("Revenues and appropriations of State; changes to revenues collected and distribution, report").

Floor: 02/23/13 Senate: Conference report agreed to by Senate (25-Y 15-N)

YEAS – Alexander, Barker, Blevins, Carrico, Colgan, Deeds, Edwards, Favola, Herring, Howell, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McEachin, McWaters, Miller, Norment, Northam, Puckett, Puller, Ruff, Saslaw, Stosch, Wagner, Watkins – 25.

NAYS – Black, Ebbin, Garrett, Hanger, Marsh, Martin, McDougle, Newman, Obenshain, Petersen, Reeves, Smith, Stanley, Stuart, Vogel – 15.

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FairfaxTimes.com

Fairfax, Virginia

Published: Friday, February 8, 2013

General Assembly Notes

House budget would boost teacher pay, Medicaid waivers

The Virginia House of Delegates Appropriations Committee released its proposed amendments to the 2013-14 state budget Sunday, seeking to pump more money into the commonwealth's "rainy day" fund, education and Medicaid.

The proposals include a \$95 million deposit in the state's rainy day fund. The plan also would provide \$45 million for pay raises for teachers and school support staff, funding for school security and funding for an additional 250 Medicaid waiver slots for people with disabilities.

"On the heels of the news that our national economy shrunk in the last quarter of 2012, it's important that we continue to exercise fiscal discipline," said House Majority Leader Kirkland Cox (R-Dist. 66), of Colonial Heights, vice-chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

Cox said the \$95 million rainy day fund includes \$45 million more than Gov. Bob McDonnell (R) called for. This would prepare Virginia for economic challenges that might lie ahead, Cox said.

The 250 Medicaid slots would create 200 waivers for people with intellectual disabilities waivers and 50 waivers for people with developmental disabilities. The budget specifically includes \$7.7 million for ID and DD Medicaid waivers.

The proposed budget also includes \$2.5 million in targeted economic development incentives to create the Cyber Accelerator program, which state officials hope will attract cyber security companies to Virginia. The program will be managed by the state's Center for Innovative Technology, based in Herndon.

The allocation also would increase the cap by \$500,000 for angel investor tax credit, a credit system to help individual investors in early-stage businesses.

"In the past three years, we have invested over \$100 million in concentrated economic development and watched our unemployment rate drop to 5.5 percent," said Augusta Del. Steve Landes (R-Dist. 25), who chairs the House Appropriations Committee's economic development subcommittee. "But we know there is more work to do."

For education, the House budget expands on McDonnell's proposed 2 percent pay raise for teachers and includes support staff. The proposed funding totals \$62 million. The budget also includes \$12 million for higher education enrollment growth and \$3.7 million to increase Virginia Tuition Assistance grants from \$2,800 to \$3,100 per student.

"As they grow older, we want to make sure all of our students have the opportunity to attend a Virginia college or university," said Virginia Beach Del. Bob Tata (R-Dist. 85), who chairs the House Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on K-12 education. "Expanded funding to encourage enrollment growth and TAG grants are two important parts of achieving that goal."

School safety also would get a funding boost in the House budget. The budget includes \$1.7 million for school resource officers and \$30 million for school security improvements.

The full House of Delegates has not yet acted on the budget proposal.

— Stephen J. Nielsen, Capital News Service

Bills support Teach for America

Legislation that would grant a provisional teaching license to Teach for America participants is moving toward passage in the General Assembly.

Both the House and Senate have unanimously approved separate bills to create such a license to help the program, which recruits college students to teach in low-income areas.