

## *Viewpoint 2010 Follow-up Questions:*

All of the spoil islands located in the Sound have been posted “No Trespassing” by N.C. Wildlife. How can we remove this and use some of these islands for boating recreation?

**Rep. Spear:** I am waiting for a response from the WRC about this question. As soon as I have more information I will forward the response to you.

Last year, in an effort to keep all agencies operating, the Governor seized operating funds of many departments, including those that are not funded by appropriations. Do you expect that these funds will be returned in the future?

**Sen. Basnight:** The senate did not include funding for the statement government furlough payback in the budget because employees were given 10 hours of leave as compensation last year. In this time when businesses are cutting back it would not be wise for government to include any pay raises or paybacks.

**Rep. Spear:** The seizure by the Governor of operating funds to various agencies was necessary to help balance the state budget. We are currently facing an \$800 million dollar revenue shortfall this year. Until the economy improves I do not expect to see these funds replaced.

**Please comment on the current state of transportation funding – equity formula or not? Push to move secondary roads to counties.**

**Sen. Basnight:** I have been a longtime supporter of the equity formula. Without the formula, rural area, and especially eastern North Carolina, would never get their fair share. As the state grows more urban, it is even more important or all the state’s transportation money would go to large cities.

**Rep. Spear:** The current equity formula is working and has been of great benefit to the rural areas of our state. I do not see any changes in the formula forthcoming during the short session. I would oppose any changes that would remove the level of funding currently received by our smaller and rural counties.

**What are the pros and cons surrounding commercial netting? Will netting be restricted to Monday through Thursday? What is the status of the “Turtle Suit”?**

**Sen. Basnight:** I will continue to follow the gill net issue and other fisheries and wildlife issues closely.



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**Rep. Spear:** Commercial fishing is a part of our culture and heritage and a vital part of our economy. Currently there are several environmental and sports fishing groups that are working hard to eliminate the use of gill nets in our coastal waters. Some of these are the same groups that are opposed to vehicle access on our national park service property. The turtle lawsuit could devastate our commercial fishing industry if the court ordered a complete net ban. There are numerous discussions being held at this time between the Division of Marine Fisheries and the Beasley Turtle Rehabilitation Center. A tentative agreement has been reached that would allow fishing four days a week. It would also exempt the Albemarle and Currituck Sounds from any turtle restrictions as there have been no turtle interactions in that area. There are other issues being discussed and this agreement is not final and could fall apart in which case the lawsuit would go forward.

**Currently, Boards and Commissions issue rules and regulations without legislative oversight. Would you propose to change that policy? Why/why not?**

**Sen. Basnight:** I am open to reforming state government and finding ways to become more efficient and eliminate duplication.

**Rep. Spear:** I believe we should look at current rule making authority given to boards and commissions. There may be need to change some of the rule making process that currently exists. Some of the rules are subject to legislative review if the public objects to implementation during the public comment period.

**In order to reduce the tax burden on all citizens in North Carolina, would you pledge that you, personally, will not support or vote to raise taxes and fees during the 2010 short session of the legislature?**

**Sen. Basnight:** It has been my long-standing practice while serving in the North Carolina Senate to not sign pledges or fill out questionnaires committing myself to be either for or against a specific issue on a wholesale basis. I believe that these pledges and questionnaires impede officials' abilities to use their best judgment when dire situations arise, or to change their minds as new information becomes available – these impediments are not in the best interests of our state. When I consider any matter that may come before the Senate, I want to be free to hear the debate, to consider all information available, and – if my previous position is wrong – I want to be free to change my mind so I can make the right decisions for our people and our state. That is my job as a representative of the people.