

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21-20-CWS
May 19, 2021

Contact: Charmaine Schmermund
Phone: 228-523-4156

ENHANCE * PROTECT * CONSERVE

MDMR accepting public comments for second CARES Act assistance to fisheries participants spending plan

BILOXI, Miss. – With the appropriation of an additional \$2,960,079 from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act – Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 to the state of Mississippi for fisheries participants meeting the threshold of economic revenue losses, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) is working on a spending plan to distribute these funds. The agency is accepting public comments for one week, through Friday, May 28, 2021, which can be submitted at CARESActComments@dmr.ms.gov.

In March 2021, the Secretary of Commerce announced the additional appropriation of \$255 million in fisheries assistance funding under Sec. 12005 of the CARES Act provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, to states, tribes and territories with coastal and marine fisheries participants who have been negatively affected by COVID-19. The CARES Act enacts disbursement of funds to address direct or indirect fishery-related losses, as well as subsistence, cultural or ceremonial impacts related to COVID-19.

Mississippi is scheduled to receive nearly \$3 million to provide for fisheries participants meeting the threshold of economic revenue losses greater than 35% (as required by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) compared to the prior five-year average.

The Mississippi Spend Plan features the following proposed components:

- Commercial Fisheries Assistance – 51.9%* of direct payments
- Seafood Industry Assistance – 31.9%* of direct payments
- Charter Boat Industry – 16.2%* of direct payments

*Percent allocation based on NOAA recommendation

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ENHANCE ★ PROTECT ★ CONSERVE

Applicants must be Mississippi residents who are 18 years or older and have possessed a valid Mississippi resident or other eligible Gulf state commercial fishing, dealer-processor or charter boat license during the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 license year. Applicants may only apply in one participant category type.

The application process will be open for 30 days with a deadline to be determined upon receiving federal approval of this spend plan. No late applications will be considered and there will be no appeals if the deadline is missed.

The process will require applicants to provide qualifying licenses and affidavits for self-certification of economic revenue losses greater than 35%. The affidavit will require additional acknowledgements and self-certification with penalties outlined for false information. A W-9 form will also be required and retained by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Fishery participant loss estimation and assessment will be for the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2019, by 12-month period (state fiscal year July 1 – June 30), compared to July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, or for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2020, by 12-month period (state fiscal year July 1 – June 30), compared to July 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, or as deemed appropriate based on specific fishery information gathered. The revenue loss does not have to be for the entire year, but should cover January through June 2020 or July through December 2020. Individuals or organizations that have not been in the qualifying fisheries or seafood business for five years prior can provide an affidavit for revenue losses for the actual time frame they have been in the business, as long as that period of time is at least one year.

Mississippi residents who missed MDMR's first CARES Act program in 2020 due to the fast-paced schedule for disaster recovery fund distribution may apply for losses in the 2021 program for January through June 2020. No participant will receive compensation exceeding their reported loss. Those participants will need to reapply through a separate application for any losses documented for July through December 2020.

Mississippi residents who qualified in MDMR's first CARES Act program in 2020, but did not receive complete compensation for their reported losses January through June 2020, will automatically be included again in the 2021 program revisiting that period (January

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ENHANCE ★ PROTECT ★ CONSERVE

through June 2020). No participant will receive compensation exceeding their reported loss. Those participants will need to reapply through a separate application for any losses documented for July through December 2020.

Mississippi residents providing proof of appropriate qualifying licenses in another Gulf of Mexico state are eligible if only applying in Mississippi.

Within each category described above, an equal amount will be distributed to all eligible applicants who qualify, due to limited funding and to quickly provide CARES Act fisheries relief. However, no applicant will receive compensation exceeding their reported documented losses.

Please note, the demonstrated need may far exceed the funds available for disbursement.

Retail and related businesses, such as tackle, vessel and gear suppliers, are not eligible.

Public comments will be accepted by email at CARESActComments@dmr.ms.gov until May 28, 2021.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at dmr.ms.gov.

—END—