

NEWS RELEASE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Application Inquiries: PSMFC: WACARES@psmfc.org or (866) 990-2738

Public Affairs contact: Eryn Couch, 360-890-6604

Applications deadline extended for federal relief funding to commercial fishing, shellfish aquaculture, charter and seafood sector industry members

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission now accepting applications through April 9

OLYMPIA – Eligible commercial fishing, shellfish, charter and seafood sector industry members who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic now have through April 9 to apply with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) for assistance.

The 15-day extension includes additional time for industry members who fish or land their fish in Alaska but live in Washington to apply. Washington-based commercial fishers who fish in Alaska should apply to the Washington spend plan for assistance.

“This extension helps us to ensure that everyone who believes they’re eligible for this funding has the chance to apply,” said Ron Warren, “We recognize that the commercial fishing, shellfish aquaculture, and charter fishing industries are hurting right now and this marks an important step in getting this funding out to those who need it most.”

Industry members who experienced a gross revenue loss from January through July 2020 greater than 35 percent of their 2015-2019 average are eligible apply for federal relief funding.

Under Section 12005 of the CARES Act, Congress provided \$300 million to states to distribute to fisheries participants. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries allocated the funding among states, territories, and tribes with Washington and Alaska receiving the highest allocation of \$50 million each.

There is \$39 million allocated to non-tribal commercial fishing, shellfish and charter industry members, with the remainder available to tribal members of 24 treaty tribes for losses associated with commercial activities and any negative impacts to commercial, subsistence, cultural and ceremonial fisheries resulting directly or indirectly from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governor’s Office developed a plan for distributing this funding with assistance from the Washington departments of Fish and Wildlife, Agricultural, Commerce, and the Washington Office of Financial Management. State officials met virtually with commercial fishers, shellfish growers and seafood processors to better understand the consequences of COVID-19 on the industries, coordinating with fisheries managers in

neighboring West Coast states as well. The Governor's Office also convened discussions with the 24 treaty tribes to learn about their COVID-19 impacts to ceremonial and subsistence fisheries.

More information and eligibility details and application materials and instructions are available on the PSFMC's website at: psmfc.org/cares-act-the-coronavirus-aid-relief-and-economic-security-act. Previously open through March 25, applications remain open through April 9.

A second round of assistance is expected to cover losses incurred between August and December 31, 2020, made possible by another \$255 million that Congress approved in December. NOAA Fisheries has not yet announced how this second round will be divided between the state, territories, and tribal spend plans.

WDFW is the primary state agency tasked with preserving, protecting, and perpetuating fish, wildlife, and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fishing and hunting opportunities.

Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format, language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact the Title VI/ADA Compliance Coordinator by phone at 360-902-2349, TTY (711), or email (Title6@dfw.wa.gov).