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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Distributes $28 Million in Federal Relief Funding for Fishing and Seafood Industries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

8/06/2020

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Fish and Game

Division of Marine Fisheries

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BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced the distribution of $27.8 million in federal disaster relief funding to mitigate the financial impacts to the fishing and seafood industries from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) worked with fishing industry stakeholders to develop a

plan to distribute the federal fisheries assistance, which has now been approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

“The fishing and seafood industries are integral parts of the economy, history and culture of Massachusetts,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “Our Administration remains dedicated to supporting these industries, and we look forward to getting these needed relief funds to impacted fishermen and businesses as quickly as possible.”

“These funds will be a needed lifeline for the Commonwealth’s fishing and seafood businesses, as well as the families and coastal communities who rely on these industries,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.** “The distribution of these CARES Act funds is another important step in our efforts to help those who have been impacted by the pandemic.”

In March, the CARES Act was signed into law providing $300 million of aid for the seafood industry with $27.8 million coming to Massachusetts, the third highest of all coastal states. The funds were allocated among the states based on the relative contributions to the economy of four distinct sectors: commercial fishing, marine aquaculture, seafood processing, and for-hire (party and charter boats) fishing businesses.

Eligible recipients include tribes, commercial fishing businesses, charter/for-hire fishing businesses, aquaculture businesses, and seafood wholesalers and processors whose residence is in Massachusetts who have suffered at least a 35% loss of revenue due to the ongoing pandemic.

“The Commonwealth’s fishermen, charter boat operators, and seafood businesses have been hard hit by the restaurant closures and supply chain disruptions during the pandemic,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides.** “The Baker-Polito Administration is grateful to all the industry stakeholders who worked closely with us on a plan for swift, fair and equitable distribution of this important relief funding.”

“I am extremely proud of the dedication shown by the Division of Marine Fisheries staff in coordinating this relief effort,” **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon**. “These funds will provide critical support for Massachusetts’ hardworking commercial fishing, seafood processing, aquaculture, and charter fishing businesses.”

Each state was required to submit a spending plan for the disbursement of its allocated funds following certain federal guidelines. DMF worked with an industry-based advisory panel on the development and administration of the spending plan, with members from the various affected industry fishing sectors.

The resulting spending plan has allocated funds to each of the four industry sectors, proportional to the scale of each sector:

- Seafood Processors -$13.8 million
- Commercial Fishermen - $11.8 million
- Aquaculturists - $1.2 million
- For-Hire Boats - $1 million

Applications will be mailed over the next month to all potentially eligible fishery participants to the address on their DMF-issued permit. Applications will include instructions to fill out the required information, due dates, and documentation needed for appeals, if necessary. More information on the CARES Act funding and how to apply can be found on **DMF's website** (/service-details/mass-cares-act-fisheries-relief).

The Baker-Polito Administration is committed to supporting the Commonwealth's fishing and seafood industries, and **recently awarded** (/news/baker-polito-administration-awards-marketing-grants-to-support-massachusetts-seafood-industry) $50,616 in grant funding to three projects to help the Commonwealth's local seafood industry sell fresh, locally caught products to Massachusetts consumers through promotion and awareness campaigns. The Administration is also developing an online platform, the MassGrown Exchange, to help facilitate business-to-business connections within the fishing and agricultural industries for products and services.

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
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Department of Fish and Game (/orgs/department-of-fish-and-game)

The Department of Fish and Game works to preserve the state's natural resources. We exercise responsibility over the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife species, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them.

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Division of Marine Fisheries (/orgs/division-of-marine-fisheries)

The Division of Marine Fisheries manages the state’s commercial and recreational saltwater fisheries and oversees other services that support the marine environment and fishing communities.

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