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MURPHY ADMINISTRATION PROVIDES $11 MILLION CARES ACT GRANTS TO COVID-IMPACTED COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING INDUSTRIES

(21/P003) TRENTON – As part of the state's efforts to aid in economic recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has begun disbursing $11 million in grants funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to commercial and recreational fishing businesses, Governor Phil Murphy and Acting DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette announced today.

The grants are funded through a $300 million allocation for fishing industries in coastal states provided by the CARES Act. The program was made possible through the collaboration of the Murphy Administration, New Jersey's congressional delegation, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"Our fishing communities and seafood industries are important parts of our New Jersey identity, and crucial components of our state's economy," said **Governor Murphy**. "The grants our Administration is making to our partners in fishing industries will help the business and communities impacted by this public health emergency. I continue to encourage our New Jersey family to support our fishing industry by buying from local seafood suppliers and enjoying fishing through our local charter boat operations and bait and tackle shops."

"As stewards of all of New Jersey's natural resources, it is critical that DEP support our thriving fisheries, said **Acting Commissioner LaTourette**. "From our Delaware Bay oysters to our tilefish in Belford, fishing is engrained our culture and a staple of our economy. To our recreational and commercial fishing industries and the vibrant communities they support: help is on the way."

"Our fishing communities have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, which is why I fought so hard to include robust funding in the CARES Act and have worked to ensure that funding is distributed to those who need it most. I'm pleased to see that New Jersey's commercial and recreational fishing industry is finally receiving the help they need," said **Congressman Frank Pallone**. "The economic impacts of the pandemic have been felt deeply across our state and have been especially severe for the hardworking men and women who make our fishing industry so strong. I'll continue to work to ensure that the fishing community in New Jersey receives the assistance it needs to weather this ongoing economic storm."

Assistance is being provided to successful applicants in the following fishery-related eligible sectors: commercial and aquaculture businesses, dealers and processors, and for-hire recreational and bait-and-tackle businesses. Successful applicants demonstrated a greater than 35 percent loss in fishery related revenues between March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, as compared to their 5-year average revenue for the same period.

Based on past revenue information provided by NOAA, $6.1 million in grants were allocated for New Jersey's commercial and aquaculture sector. The recreational fishing industry sector was allocated $1.1 million, and the dealer and processor sector – which is critical to getting seafood to consumers – was allocated $3.8 million.

All applicants will be notified the week of February 1.

Estimates place the economic value of commercial and recreational fishing in New Jersey at some $2.5 billion annually. As part of its efforts to assist the commercial industry, the DEP and New Jersey Department of Agriculture have launched a Support NJ Seafood website. It provides the public and consumers with information and an interactive map of businesses that sell seafood products that have been landed, grown or harvested in New Jersey.

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