Florida to Receive $23 Million in Aquaculture & Fisheries Assistance via CARES Act Stimulus

May 8, 2020

Tallahassee, Fla. – The U.S. Department of Commerce has announced the allocation of $300 million (https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/commerce-secretary-announces-allocation-300-million-cares-act-funding) in federal assistance for fisheries provided by the *CARES Act* stimulus package. These funds will be available for coastal and marine fishery participants negatively affected by COVID–19. Florida will receive **$23.6 million** of this funding to aid the state's commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.

The **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** (FDACS) is the state's lead aquaculture agency, and coordinates and assists in the development of aquaculture and regulates aquafarms to protect and conserve Florida's natural resources.

"As Florida's fishermen navigate uncertain markets, ensuring the recovery of our seafood industry is paramount to securing the nation's food supply," said **Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried**. "Thank you to Secretary Ross and

said **Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried.** "Thank you to Secretary Ross and the Congressional leaders who have provided Florida fisheries with this essential relief. We must continue to support our critical aquaculture, fishing industry, and our dedicated seafood professionals during these difficult times."

Ranked among the top U.S. states for fresh seafood production with over 400 commercial aquaculture operations, Florida's commercial fishing operations supply 84 percent of the nation's grouper, pompano, mullet, stone crab, pink shrimp, spiny lobster, and Spanish Mackerel. Both the commercial fishing and seafood products industries in Florida provide more than 13,000 jobs and have added-value contributions of over $730 million.

"Florida aquaculture producers have been heavily impacted by COVID-19. The aquaculture industry is incredibly thankful to federal leaders for including the industry in the CARES stimulus package and allocating much-needed relief alongside Florida's commercial fishing industry," said **Portia Sapp, Director of Aquaculture for FDACS. "**This funding is critical to help the industry continue to provide fresh, domestic seafood products to consumers during this difficult time and into the future."

NOAA Fisheries will use this allocation to disburse funds that address direct or indirect fishery-related losses as well as subsistence, cultural, or ceremonial impacts related to COVID-19.

Funding Details: The nation's interstate marine fishery commissions will work with each state, Tribe, and territory to develop spending plans consistent with the *CARES Act* and NOAA's guidance. In Florida, these funds will be administered by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. All spending plans must describe the main categories for funding, including direct payments, fishery-related infrastructure, and fishery-related education that addresses direct and indirect COVID-19 impacts to commercial fishers, along with charter businesses, qualified aquaculture operations, subsistence/cultural/ceremonial users, processors, and other fishery-related companies. Once NOAA has approved a spending plan, the agency anticipates that the commissions will review applications and process payments to eligible fishery participants on behalf of

the states and territories. The states will have the option to process payments themselves.

Applying: Fishery participants eligible for funding include Tribes, commercial fishing businesses, charter/for-hire fishing businesses, qualified aquaculture operations, processors, and other fishery-related businesses. These businesses should work with their state marine-fishery management agencies, territories, or Tribe to understand the process for applying for these funds.

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Press Releases

2022 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2022-Press-Releases)

2022 Press Releases (Spanish) (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2022-Press-Releases-Spanish)

2021 Press Releases (https://www.fdacs.gov/News-Events/Press-Releases/2021-Press-Releases)

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Media Inquiries

Contact the Office of Communications:

Erin Moffet
Strategic Communications Director

Strategic Communications Director
Erin.Moffet@FDACS.gov

Caroline Stonecipher
Deputy Communications Director
Caroline.Stonecipher@FDACS.gov

Sabina Covo
Hispanic Media Director
Sabina.Covo@FDACS.gov

(https://www.facebook.com/FDACS) (https://twitter.com/FDACS)

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Florida Capitol — Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0800
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