



Bill Draft 2019-MHa-175: Emergency Assistance for Commercial Fishermen.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:	House Select Committee on COVID-19	Date:	April 13, 2020
Introduced by:	Rep. Richardson	Prepared by:	Jeff Cherry
Analysis of:	2019-MHa-175		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *Bill draft 2019-MHa-175 would allow up to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund to be used for emergency assistance to holders of certain commercial fishing licenses that support the Fund. The emergency assistance program would be administered by the Division of Marine Fisheries.*

CURRENT LAW: The North Carolina Commercial Fishing License Fund (Fund) was established in 2014 to pay for observer coverage to fulfill the State's obligations under incidental take permits for the commercial fishing industry under the federal Endangered Species Act. Additional money from the fund in excess of the observer coverage was used for other projects to develop and support sustainable commercial fishing in the State. The Fund receives a portion of license revenue from the following licenses:

- Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses and Retired Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses.
- Shellfish licenses.
- Fish dealer licenses.
- Land and sell licenses.
- Recreational Commercial Gear Licenses.

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill draft rewrites the Fund's authorizing statute to allow up to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) from the Fund to be used for emergency assistance for holders of the various licenses that contribute license revenue to the Fund. The emergency assistance program would be administered by the Division of Marine Fisheries and would be available upon declaration of a state of emergency for any area that includes coastal fishing waters of the State. The emergency assistance program would become the second priority for the Fund, after the observer coverage program and before any other projects to develop and support sustainable commercial fishing. The bill draft also clarifies that the Fund may receive appropriations from the General Fund in addition to license revenue but does not actually appropriate any funds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill draft would become effective July 1, 2020.

Kory Goldsmith
Director



Legislative Drafting
919-733-6660