

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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HOUSE BILL 1045

Short Title: Emergency Assistance for Commercial Fishermen. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Richardson.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 28, 2020

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE DEDICATED FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO
COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Appropriation. – The sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) is appropriated on a nonrecurring basis for the 2020-2021 fiscal year from the General Fund to the Department of Environmental Quality, to be allocated to the Division of Marine Fisheries to administer an emergency assistance program for commercial fishermen and for-hire fishing operation license holders who have suffered economic loss due to COVID-19.

SECTION 2. Program. – The following shall apply to the emergency assistance program and payments made under the program:

- (1) The Division, after deducting the administrative costs authorized by this section, shall award grants in an equal amount not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) to each qualifying person. A qualifying person who holds more than one qualifying license shall receive a grant for only one of the qualifying licenses.
- (2) The Division shall notify qualifying persons that funds received by a qualifying person are not subject to income taxation by the State.
- (3) Any grants that are undeliverable or unclaimed six months after all grants have been awarded by the Division shall revert to the General Fund at the end of that fiscal year.
- (4) The Department of Environmental Quality may use up to five percent (5%) of the funds appropriated by this act for administrative costs associated with administration of the emergency assistance program authorized by this act.

SECTION 3. Definitions. – For purposes of this act, the following definitions apply:

- (1) COVID-19. – The coronavirus disease 2019.
- (2) Division. – The Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environmental Quality.
- (3) Qualifying license. – A Standard Commercial Fishing License issued in accordance with G.S. 113-168.2, a Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License issued in accordance with G.S. 113-168.3, a shellfish license issued in accordance with G.S. 113-169.2, or a For-Hire License issued in accordance with G.S. 113-174.3.
- (4) Qualifying person. – With respect to a person holding a Standard Commercial Fishing License, Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License, or a shellfish



1 license, the person held one or more qualifying licenses on March 10, 2020,
2 and engaged in an activity permitted by the qualifying license between July 1,
3 2019, and March 10, 2020, as demonstrated by landings reported on a trip
4 ticket. With respect to any other qualifying license, the person held the license
5 on March 10, 2020.

6 **SECTION 4.** Conforming change. – G.S. 105-153.5(b) is amended by adding a new
7 subdivision to read:

8 "(14) For taxable year 2020, the amount paid to a taxpayer by the Division of Marine
9 Fisheries of the Department of Environmental Quality as emergency
10 assistance for economic losses due to the impacts of COVID-19."

11 **SECTION 5.** Reporting. – The Department shall report on its implementation of this
12 act no later than September 1, 2020, and quarterly thereafter to the Joint Legislative Oversight
13 Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources and the Fiscal Research
14 Division. The duty to report imposed by this section shall end with the submission of the quarterly
15 report for the quarter in which all funds appropriated by this act have been distributed.

16 **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.