

NEWS RELEASE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

June 11, 2020

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WDFW invites feedback on development of \$50 million spending plan for commercial fishing and shellfish industry federal relief funding

Commercial fishers invited to attend June 18, 19, and 22 industry discussions, June 30 public meeting

OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is looking for feedback from commercial fishers, shellfish growers, charter boat owners, seafood processors, and members of the public as it develops a spending plan for \$50 million in federal relief funding for commercial fishing and shellfish industry members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding is part of \$300 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding approved by U.S. Congress. Washington State and Alaska received the largest allotment of \$50 million respectively.

“With global trade disrupted and restaurants just starting to open in parts of Washington State, we realize how much the commercial fishing community is hurting right now as our nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Ron Warren, WDFW director of fish policy. “We want to hear from a broad cross-section of the commercial fishing and shellfish industry in Washington as we develop a fair and balanced plan for distributing this funding. Thanks to our federal leaders, including Senator Maria Cantwell, for securing these critical economic relief funds.”

In coordination with the Governor’s Office, WDFW will be working with the state departments of Agriculture and Commerce to develop criteria for receiving funding assistance based on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) guidance.

Once developed, Washington will submit its plans to NOAA fisheries for approval and then to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to distribute funds.

To learn more and provide feedback, commercial fishing industry members are encouraged to tune in to one of the following virtual WDFW discussions:

- Charter operators: **6 to 7 p.m., Thursday, June 18:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86174067206>
- Commercial harvesters and processors: **3 to 5 p.m. Friday, June 19:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84057585777>

- Shellfish industry members: **9 to 10 a.m., Monday, June 22:**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89160627925>

WDFW will also host an online public meeting from **1 to 3 p.m. Tuesday, June 30**, with general information about the CARES Act funding and its approach to a spending plan:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DRLUCaU-RvO8gOjR2JPCAA

To support COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines, the meetings will be available to commercial fishing industry members and the public through webinar or conference call. For more information on how to participate and to find call-in details, visit <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/commercial/federal-disaster-assistance>. The meetings will be recorded and posted online so people can also watch the meetings afterwards at their convenience.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is the state agency tasked with preserving, protecting, and perpetuating fish, wildlife, and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fishing, hunting, and other recreation opportunities.

Persons with disabilities who need to receive this information in an alternative format or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact Dolores Noyes by phone (360-902-2349), TTY (360-902-2207), or email (dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov). For more information, see https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable_request.html.