

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 441
Senate Finance Committee Substitute Adopted 6/19/25
Third Edition Engrossed 6/24/25

Short Title: Shrimp Trawling Transition Program/Fees. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 20, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE SHRIMP TRAWL TRANSITION PROGRAM TO PROVIDE
TEMPORARY TRANSITION PAYMENTS TO HOLDERS OF COMMERCIAL FISHING
LICENSES WHO HAD REPORTED SALES OF SHRIMP CAUGHT WITH A TRAWL
NET BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2023, AND JUNE 30, 2025, AND TO INCREASE
COASTAL FISHING LICENSE FEES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SHRIMP TRAWL TRANSITION PAYMENT PROGRAM

SECTION 1.(a) Shrimp Trawl Transition Program. – The Shrimp Trawl Transition Program (Program) is established within the Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Marine Fisheries (Division). Funding for the Program shall come from the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund and the North Carolina Marine Resources Fund. The Division may use up to two million dollars (\$2,000,000) annually from the cash balance of the North Carolina Marine Resource Endowment Fund to address shortfalls in making Program payments. The Program shall be used to provide annual transition payments to eligible holders of commercial fishing licenses with verifiable inshore landings of shrimp between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2025. The Program shall expire October 1, 2028. To be eligible for a transition payment, a person must satisfy all of the following criteria:

- (1) The person held a Standard Commercial Fishing License or a Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License at any time between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2025.
- (2) The person reported on trip tickets submitted to the Division of Marine Fisheries the sale of brown shrimp, pink shrimp, or white shrimp caught in inshore waters with a trawl net between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2025.

SECTION 1.(b) Retained Eligibility. – A person who holds a Standard Commercial Fishing License or a Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License who harvests shrimp using legal commercial gear within the area described in G.S. 113-187(d)(3a) or using any gear, including trawl nets, outside of the area described in G.S. 113-187(d)(3a), may still be eligible for a transition payment from the Program, provided the person otherwise meets the criteria in subsection (a) of this section.

SECTION 1.(c) Documentation. – A person seeking a transition payment pursuant to the Program shall submit documentation verifying that the person meets the criteria in subsection (a) of this section, including copies of all trip tickets submitted for brown shrimp, pink



shrimp, or white shrimp caught in inshore waters with a trawl net between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2025, to the Division no later than December 1, 2025.

SECTION 1.(d) Program Payment Criteria. – The Division shall administer the Program in accordance with the following criteria:

(1) The annual transition payment amount awarded to a Program applicant shall be set at the sum of (i) the average monthly value of the eligible shrimp trip tickets submitted by the applicant under subsection (a) of this section multiplied by 12 and (ii) one hundred eighty dollars (\$180.00). For applicants that hold more than one Standard Commercial Fishing License or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License, the annual transition payment amount awarded shall be set at the sum of (i) the average monthly value of the eligible shrimp trip tickets submitted by the applicant under subsection (a) of this section associated with the license with the highest reported shrimp landings multiplied by 12 and (ii) one hundred eighty dollars (\$180.00). For the purposes of this subdivision, the "value of the eligible shrimp tickets" means the value of shrimp caught by trawl net in any inshore waterbody between January 1, 2023 and June 30, 2025, but shall not include any values reported on shrimp trip tickets where most of the catch occurred in the ocean as reported on trip tickets submitted to the Division.

(2) The Division shall gather all trip ticket information from Program applicants no later than December 1, 2025. If the total of Program payments calculated and verified by the Division for each Program applicant is greater than the funds available for the Program in the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund and the North Carolina Marine Resources Fund, then the Division shall provide to each eligible applicant a portion of the Program payments by allocating the funds available in proportion to the Program payments documented by each applicant.

SECTION 1.(e) Reporting. – The Department shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources and the Fiscal Research Division no later than October 1, 2025, and annually thereafter until all funds are expended or the Program expires containing, at a minimum, all of the following data:

- (1) The number of Program applicants.
- (2) The number and amount of transition payments awarded.
- (3) The total amount of funding available to the Program, the total amount encumbered, and the total amount disbursed to date.

SECTION 1.(f) Effective Date and Expiration. – If House Bill 442, 2025 Regular Session, becomes law, then this section is effective when it becomes law and expires October 1, 2028.

INCREASE COASTAL FISHING LICENSE FEES

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 113-168.2(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Fees. – The annual SCFL fee for a resident of this State shall be ~~four hundred dollars (\$400.00)~~ five hundred eighty dollars (\$580.00). The annual SCFL fee for a person who is not a resident of this State shall be the amount charged to a resident of this State in the nonresident's state. In no event, however, may the fee be less than ~~four hundred dollars (\$400.00)~~ two thousand dollars (\$2,000). For purposes of this subsection, a "resident of this State" is a person who is a resident within the meaning of:

- (1) Sub-subdivisions a. through d. of G.S. 113-130(4) and who filed a State income tax return as a resident of North Carolina for the previous calendar or tax year, or
- (2) G.S. 113-130(4)e."

SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 113-168.3(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) Eligibility; Fees. – Any individual who is 65 years of age or older and who is eligible for a SCFL under G.S. 113-168.2 may apply for either a SCFL or RSCFL. An applicant for a RSCFL shall provide proof of age at the time the application is made. The annual fee for a RSCFL for a resident of this State shall be ~~two hundred dollars (\$200.00)~~ two hundred ninety dollars (\$290.00). The annual fee for a RSCFL for a person who is not a resident of this State shall be ~~two hundred sixty dollars (\$260.00)~~ four hundred seventy-five dollars (\$475.00). For purposes of this subsection, a "resident of this State" is a person who is a resident within the meaning of:

(1) Sub-subdivisions a. through d. of G.S. 113-130(4) and who filed a State income tax return as a resident of North Carolina for the previous calendar or tax year, or

(2) G.S. 113-130(4)e."

SECTION 2.(c) G.S. 113-168.6(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) The annual fee for a commercial fishing vessel registration shall be determined by the length of the vessel and shall be in addition to the fee for other licenses issued under this Article. The length of a vessel shall be determined by measuring the distance between the ends of the vessel along the deck and through the cabin, excluding the sheer. The annual fee for a commercial fishing vessel registration is:

(1) ~~One dollar and twenty five cents (\$1.25)~~ One dollar and eighty cents (\$1.80) per foot for a vessel not over 18 feet in length.

(2) ~~One dollar and ninety cents (\$1.90)~~ Two dollars and seventy-five cents (\$2.75) per foot for a vessel over 18 feet but not over 38 feet in length.

(3) ~~Three dollars and seventy five cents (\$3.75)~~ Five dollars and fifty cents (\$5.50) per foot for a vessel over 38 feet but not over 50 feet in length.

(4) ~~Seven dollars and fifty cents (\$7.50)~~ Eleven dollars (\$11.00) per foot for a vessel over 50 feet in length."

SECTION 2.(d) G.S. 113-169.2(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) Fees. – Shellfish licenses issued under this section shall be issued annually upon payment of a fee of ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) upon proof that the license applicant is a North Carolina resident."

SECTION 2.(e) G.S. 113-169.3(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Application Fee for New Fish Dealers. – An applicant for a new fish dealer license shall pay a nonrefundable application fee of ~~one hundred dollars (\$100.00)~~ one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) in addition to the license category fees set forth in this section."

SECTION 2.(f) G.S. 113-169.5(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) The fee for a land or sell license for a vessel not having its primary situs in North Carolina is ~~four hundred dollars (\$400.00)~~ six hundred dollars (\$600.00), or an amount equal to the nonresident fee charged by the nonresident's state, whichever is greater. Persons aboard vessels having a primary situs in a jurisdiction that would allow North Carolina vessels without restriction to land or sell their catch, taken outside the jurisdiction, may land or sell their catch in the State without complying with this section if the persons are in possession of a valid license from their state of residence."

SECTION 2.(g) G.S. 113-173(f) reads as rewritten:

"(f) Duration; Fees. – The RCGL shall be valid from the date of issue for a period of 12 months as defined by G.S. 113-270.1B(b) and G.S. 113-270.1B(c). The fee for a RCGL for a North Carolina resident shall be ~~seventy dollars (\$70.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00). The fee for a RCGL for an individual who is not a North Carolina resident shall be ~~five hundred dollars (\$500.00)~~ nine hundred dollars (\$900.00)."

SECTION 2.(h) G.S. 113-174.2(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) Types of CRFLs; Fees; Duration. – The Wildlife Resources Commission shall issue the following CRFLs:

(1) Annual Resident CRFL. – ~~\$15.00-\$28.00.~~ This license is valid from the date of issue for a period of 12 months as defined by G.S. 113-270.1B(b) and G.S. 113-270.1B(c). This license shall be issued only to an individual who is a resident of the State.

(1a) Annual Nonresident CRFL. – ~~\$30.00-\$65.00.~~ This license is valid from the date of issue for a period of 12 months as defined by G.S. 113-270.1B(b) and G.S. 113-270.1B(c). This license shall be issued only to an individual who is not a resident of the State.

...

(4) Ten-Day Resident CRFL. – ~~\$5.00-\$12.00.~~ This license is valid for a period of 10 consecutive days, as indicated on the license. This license shall be issued only to an individual who is a resident of the State.

(4a) Ten-Day Nonresident CRFL. – ~~\$10.00-\$25.00.~~ This license is valid for a period of 10 consecutive days, as indicated on the license. This license shall be issued only to an individual who is not a resident of the State.

...."

SECTION 2.(i) G.S. 113-174.3(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) License. – It is unlawful for a person to engage in a for-hire operation without having obtained one of the following licenses issued by the Division:

(1) Blanket For-Hire Captain's CRFL. – This license allows individuals properly licensed by the United States Coast Guard to carry passengers on any vessel with a commercial vessel registration with a for-hire endorsement. A Blanket For-Hire Captain's CRFL authorizes all individuals on the for-hire vessel who do not hold a license issued under this Article or Article 25A of this Chapter to engage in recreational fishing in coastal fishing waters that are not joint fishing waters. The resident fees for a Blanket For-Hire Captain's CRFL are ~~two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00)~~ three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00) for a vessel carrying six or fewer passengers and ~~three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for a vessel carrying more than six passengers. The nonresident fees for a Blanket For-Hire Captain's CRFL are ~~three hundred twelve dollars and fifty cents (\$312.50)~~ five hundred seventy-five dollars (\$575.00) for a vessel carrying six or fewer passengers and ~~four hundred thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$437.50)~~ eight hundred dollars (\$800.00) for a vessel carrying more than six passengers. Any vessel whose operator is licensed under this subdivision and that is engaged in for-hire fishing must obtain a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration with a for-hire endorsement.

(2) Blanket For-Hire Vessel CRFL. – This license allows any United States Coast Guard licensed operator to carry passengers aboard the licensed vessel. A Blanket For-Hire Vessel CRFL authorizes all individuals on the for-hire vessel who do not hold a license issued under this Article or Article 25A of this Chapter to engage in recreational fishing in coastal fishing waters that are not joint fishing waters. The resident fees for a Blanket For-Hire Vessel CRFL are ~~two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00)~~ three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00) for a vessel carrying six or fewer passengers and ~~three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for a vessel carrying more than six passengers. The nonresident fees for a Blanket For-Hire Vessel CRFL are ~~three hundred twelve dollars and fifty cents (\$312.50)~~ five hundred seventy-five dollars (\$575.00) for a vessel carrying six or fewer passengers and ~~four hundred thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$437.50)~~ eight hundred dollars (\$800.00) for a vessel carrying more than six passengers. Any vessel

whose operator is licensed under this subdivision and that is engaged in for-hire fishing is not required to obtain a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration with a for-hire endorsement.

- (3) Non-Blanket For-Hire Vessel License. – This license allows any United States Coast Guard licensed operator to carry passengers aboard the licensed vessel. This license does not authorize individuals aboard the vessel to engage in recreational fishing unless they hold an individual CRFL issued under this Article or Article 25A of this Chapter. The fee for the Non-Blanket For-Hire Vessel License is ~~twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)~~ thirty-six dollars (\$36.00) for a vessel operated by a resident operator and ~~thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$37.50)~~ seventy dollars (\$70.00) for a vessel operated by a nonresident operator. Any vessel whose operator is licensed under this subdivision and that is engaged in for-hire fishing is not required to obtain a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration with a for-hire endorsement."

SECTION 2.(j) G.S. 113-174.5(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) The fee for a block of 10 Ten-Day CRFLs is ~~one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00)~~ two hundred fifteen dollars (\$215.00). An individual Ten-Day CRFL issued as part of a block of 10 Ten-Day CRFLs is valid for a period of 10 consecutive days beginning on the date that the license information is recorded as provided by subsection (c) of this section."

SECTION 2.(k) G.S. 113-351(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) Types of Unified Hunting and Fishing Licenses; Fees; Duration. – The Wildlife Resources Commission shall issue the following Unified Hunting and Fishing Licenses:

- (1) Annual Resident Unified Sportsman/Coastal Recreational Fishing License. – ~~\$65.00~~ \$91.00. This license is valid from the date of issue for a period of 12 months as defined by G.S. 113-270.1B(b) and G.S. 113-270.1B(c). This license shall be issued only to an individual who is a resident of the State. This license authorizes the licensee to take all wild animals and wild birds, including waterfowl, by all lawful methods in all open seasons, including the use of game lands; to fish with hook and line for all fish in all inland fishing waters and joint fishing waters, including public mountain trout waters; and to engage in recreational fishing in coastal fishing waters.
- (2) Annual Resident Unified Inland/Coastal Recreational Fishing License. – ~~\$40.00~~ \$58.00. This license is valid from the date of issue for a period of 12 months as defined by G.S. 113-270.1B(b) and G.S. 113-270.1B(c). This license shall be issued only to an individual who is a resident of the State. This license authorizes the licensee to fish with hook and line for all fish in all inland fishing waters and joint fishing waters, including public mountain trout waters, and to engage in recreational fishing in coastal fishing waters.

...."

SECTION 2.(l) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund, established in G.S. 113-173.1, and the North Carolina Marine Resources Fund, established in G.S. 113-175.1, may be used to provide Shrimp Trawl Transition Program payments to eligible applicants as set forth in Section 1 of this act.

SECTION 2.(m) If House Bill 442, 2025 Regular Session, becomes law, then this section becomes effective July 1, 2025, applies to licenses issued on or after that date, and expires June 30, 2028.

SEVERABILITY & EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 3.(a) If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications

- 1 of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application and, to this end,
2 the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.
3 **SECTION 3.(b)** Effective Date. – Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective
4 when it becomes law.