



HOUSE BILL 518: Temporarily Waive Commercial Fishing Fees.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:	House Marine Resources and Aqua Culture. If favorable, re-refer to Finance. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 20, 2021
Introduced by:	Reps. Goodwin, Hanig, Wray, Richardson	Prepared by:	Kyle Evans
Analysis of:	First Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 518 would waive certain commercial fishing license and vessel registration fees due to the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) between April 1, 2021 and June 29, 2022, and provide for refunds to permittees or registration holders who have prepaid a fee waived under this bill.*

CURRENT LAW: Pursuant to Article 14A of Chapter 113 of the General Statutes, it is unlawful to engage in a commercial fishing operation without holding the relevant licenses, endorsements, and registrations. Licenses, endorsements, and registrations expire on the last day of the license year, which is defined as the period beginning July 1 of a year and ending on June 30 of the following year. The following are a selection of licenses and registrations required by Article 14A:

- Standard Commercial Fishing License (SCFL), which is required to engage in a commercial fishing operation in coastal fishing waters. Annual fee of \$400.
- Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License (RSCFL), which is an option available to a person otherwise eligible for a SCFL and 65 years of age or older. Annual fee of \$200.
- Shellfish License, which is required to take shellfish from the public or private grounds of the State as part of a commercial fishing operation by hand methods. Annual fee of \$50.
- Commercial fishing vessel registration, which is required for North Carolina vessels used in a commercial fishing operation in the coastal waters of the State or used to land or sell fish in the State. Annual fee varies based on vessel length, from \$1.25/ft up to 18 feet, \$1.90/ft between 18 and 38 feet, \$3.75/ft between 38 and 50 feet, and \$7.50/ft over 50 feet.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would direct DMF and the Department of Environmental Quality, from April 1, 2021 through June 29, 2022, to renew the following licenses and registrations that are active as of June 30, 2021 without charging a fee:

- SCFL.
- RSCFL.
- Shellfish License.
- Commercial fishing vessel registration.

Section 2 would allow a person who holds a license or registration exempted in Section 1 of this bill that has already prepaid a renewal fee to request a refund of that fee from DMF. No later than 30 days after

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receiving a request authorized under this section, DMF must refund the entire amount of the prepaid fee to the licensee or registration holder.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This bill would become effective when law.