



2023-2024 General Assembly

HOUSE BILL 600: Regulatory Reform Act of 2023, Sec. 6: Phased in Mandatory Commercial and Recreational Reporting of Certain Fish Harvests

Committee:
Introduced by:
Analysis of: Sec. 6 of S.L. 2023-137

Date: December 11, 2023
Prepared by: Kyle Evans
Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: Section 6 of S.L. 2023-137 creates a phased in reporting requirement for certain commercial and recreational fish harvests, to be managed by the Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environmental Quality and the Wildlife Resources Commission.

This bill was vetoed by the Governor on October 2, 2023, and that veto was overridden by the General Assembly on October 10, 2023. This section has a staggered effective date, with the first date being December 1, 2024. See the full summary for the detailed effective dates.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 6 requires that any person holding a recreational fishing license that harvests red drum, flounder, spotted seatrout, striped bass, or weakfish from coastal fishing waters, joint fishing waters, or inland fishing waters adjacent to coastal fishing waters must report that harvest to the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). Additionally, any person holding a commercial fishing license engaged in a commercial fishing operation who harvests any fish, regardless of sale, would be required to report that harvest to DMF. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) are required to adopt rules to implement this section. Both DEQ and WRC are required to report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources no later than May 1 of each year on the implementation and response to the fishery reporting requirements imposed by this section, as well as on potential incentives to encourage reporting.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This bill was vetoed by the Governor on October 2, 2023, and that veto was overridden by the General Assembly on October 10, 2023. This section becomes effective December 1, 2024. Violations of this section will be punishable only by a verbal warning beginning December 1, 2024. Beginning December 1, 2025, violations will be punishable by issuance of a warning ticket. Beginning December 1, 2026, violations will be punishable as an infraction with a fine of no more than \$35 and provide that DMF or WRC, as appropriate, can suspend, revoke, or refuse to reissue fishing licenses for repeat violations or refusal to pay the fine.

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Legislative Analysis
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