

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 28 (Delegate Owings)

Environmental Matters

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**Natural Resources - Tidal Fish License - Transfer**

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This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to permanently transfer a tidal fish license or authorization to the licensee's niece or nephew only: (1) if the licensee requests the transfer and the transferee has paid the fee for the license or authorization; or (2) upon the licensee's death, if the licensee had indicated the name of the niece or nephew on the license application on file with DNR.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** DNR could transfer licenses pursuant to this bill with existing resources. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful. To the extent that the bill reduces the number of vacant license slots available for the apprenticeship program, the primary entry system for the commercial fishing community, the bill could limit the number of new entrants to the commercial fishing industry, most of which are small businesses.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** DNR may permanently transfer a tidal fish license or authorization to the licensee's spouse, daughter, son, stepchild, grandchild, step grandchild, parent, sister, brother, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, or brother-in-law.

**Background:** As of March 1999, DNR had issued 8,662 tidal fish licenses. The number of transfers to family members is unknown. According to DNR, the intent of the original

provision for a permanent transfer of a tidal fish license to a family member was to keep commercial fishing within a family unit in the event of illness or death of the license holder. Through subsequent legislation, additional family relations have been added.

Chapters 418 and 419 of 1998 (SB 679 and HB 1260) established an apprenticeship program to provide a mechanism for individuals to enter the commercial fishery after acquiring practical experience relating to commercial fishing activities. To date, DNR has issued 184 permits to participate in the apprenticeship program. DNR advises that 525 people are on the waiting list for the apprenticeship program.

**Small Business Effect:** Most commercial fishing businesses are small businesses. DNR operates an apprenticeship program that serves as the primary entry system into the commercial fishing community. DNR advises that the supply of vacant license slots accrues from the retirement of commercial fishing licenses. To the extent that expanding the range of persons eligible for a family transfer reduces the number of vacant license slots available for the apprenticeship program, the bill could limit the number of new entrants to the commercial fishing industry.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 20, 2000

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