

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 274

(Senator Haines)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Department of Natural Resources - Tidal Fish License Apprenticeship Program

This bill modifies the practical experience requirements under the tidal fish license apprenticeship program by crediting past experience and by repealing specified time requirements.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's changes could be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Maryland operates under a limited entry program for commercial fishing licensees. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is authorized to accept an application for an apprenticeship permit from a person who is at least 14 years of age and who does not qualify for a tidal fish license or authorization. DNR may issue such a permit if the number of tidal fish authorizations issued for that fishing activity is less than the target number established by regulation. Applicants to the apprenticeship program are required to:

- complete an application and pay required fees;

- participate in the apprenticeship program;
- submit a monthly log of daily practical experience;
- work with a commercial tidal fish licensee;
- complete an eight-hour commercial fishing program; and
- provide copies of income tax returns if wages are received during the apprenticeship.

Before DNR may issue a tidal fish license or authorization, the apprentice must have completed specified experience requirements. For a specific fishing activity, the practical experience must consist of 50 days of experience in the fishing activity applied for per year for three consecutive fiscal years, or 150 days of experience in the fishing activity applied for over a minimum of two years. For multiple fishing activities, the practical experience must consist of 60 days of experience in at least two separate fishing activities per year for three consecutive years, or 180 days of experience in at least two activities over a minimum of two years. Applicants adding an authorization to a valid commercial tidal fish license (other than a fishing guide or unlimited tidal fish license) are required to (1) provide documentation that 20% of their gross income was from commercial fishing for the past two years; and (2) document commercial fishing activity under their current license for at least two years after the permit is issued.

Background: According to DNR, a number of individuals who have previous commercial fishing experience are, under current law, unable to count that experience towards the practical experience requirements under the apprenticeship program. In addition, applicants must serve a two-year learning period. By crediting past experience and by repealing specified time requirements, this bill would enable certain individuals to qualify for a tidal fish license sooner than under current law, within the limitations of the existing limited entry system.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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ncs/ljm

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