

CHAPTER 605

GENERAL DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

SUBCHAPTER 1

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

§6051. General department activities

The department, under the direction of the commissioner, may conduct or sponsor programs for research and development of commercial, marine recreational and anadromous fishery resources and other marine resources of the State which may include biological, chemical, technological, hydrological, processing, depuration, marketing, financial, economic and promotional research and development. The department may carry out these programs within the department, in cooperation with other state agencies, and federal, regional and local governmental entities, or with private institutions or persons. [PL 1987, c. 599, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 599, §1 (AMD).

§6052. Specific department activities

The department, under the direction of the commissioner, may also: [PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

1. Extension. Serve as the primary state agency to assist members of the fishing industries by providing technical and managerial assistance, including development of gear and techniques of fishing, within departmental capability; [PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

2. Education. Conduct educational programs on all educational levels, including the training of teachers, conducting workshops and instructional programs, and developing curriculum, courses and texts for elementary and secondary students; provide access to and information on department facilities for any student; and develop and distribute information concerning marine resources and departmental programs and facilities; [PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

3. Marketing. Serve as the primary state agency providing promotional and marketing assistance to the commercial fishing industries, including assisting in marketing seafood, stimulating of consumer interest in and consumption of seafood, increasing the sales of seafood domestically and abroad, supporting and expanding existing markets and developing new markets for traditional and underutilized species; [PL 2017, c. 159, §1 (AMD).]

4. Research. Serve as the primary state agency engaging in research for the conservation of marine resources; and engage in all aspects of marine research, including:

A. Providing information on stock levels and environments of commercially and recreationally valuable marine and anadromous fish organisms; [PL 1987, c. 599, §2 (AMD).]

B. Solving particular problems that relate to the State's commercial, marine recreational and anadromous fishing industry; [PL 1991, c. 285, §1 (AMD).]

C. Providing technical and scientific information and support for all department activities; and [PL 1991, c. 285, §2 (AMD).]

D. Establishing a marine research revolving fund for soliciting and receiving funds for conducting marine research. A marine research fund established under this paragraph may be used only for research purposes set forth under paragraphs A and B and may not be used for research specific to any one company; [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §3 (AMD).]
[PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §3 (AMD).]

5. Safety and security services. Provide safety and security services in the coastal waters of the State. The department shall coordinate with other local, state and federal agencies when the department provides such safety and security services; and
[PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §4 (AMD).]

6. Implement and manage coastal zone management program. Manage and coordinate implementation and ongoing development and improvement of a state coastal zone management program in accordance with and in furtherance of the requirements of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, 16 United States Code, Sections 1451 to 1466 (2012) and the State's coastal management policies established in Title 38, section 1801. The commissioner may:

A. Implement aspects of the state coastal zone management program and be the lead state agency for purposes of federal consistency review under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, 16 United States Code, Section 1456 (2012); [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §5 (NEW).]

B. Receive and administer funds from public or private sources for implementation of the state coastal zone management program; and [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §5 (NEW).]

C. Act as the coordinating agency among the several officers, authorities, boards, commissions, departments and political subdivisions of the State on matters relative to management of coastal resources and related human uses in the coastal area. [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §5 (NEW).]
[PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §5 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 599, §2 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 285, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 60, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 660, §A2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 159, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. QQ, §§3-5 (AMD).

§6053. General penalty

A violation of any provision of this chapter is a civil violation, unless another penalty has been expressly provided. [PL 2005, c. 92, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2005, c. 92, §1 (NEW).

SUBCHAPTER 2

LEASES AND SPECIAL LICENSES

§6071. Importing of certain marine organisms

1. Live importing for introduction into coastal waters. Except for Atlantic salmon imported by the commissioner, it is unlawful to import for introduction, possess for purposes of introduction or introduce into coastal waters a live marine organism without a permit issued by the commissioner pursuant to subsection 2.

[PL 2009, c. 561, §4 (AMD).]

2. Permits and regulations on importing for introduction. The commissioner may grant a permit to import for introduction, possess for purposes of introduction or introduce to the coastal waters a live marine organism if the introduction, importation or possession will not endanger the indigenous marine life or its environment. Prior to granting a permit to introduce a nonindigenous organism, that has not been previously introduced under a permit, the commissioner shall hold a hearing. The commissioner may adopt or amend rules governing the importing and introduction of organisms to the coastal waters and the issuing of permits, to the extent required to prevent the introduction of bacteria, fungus, virus or any other infectious or contagious disease or parasite, predator or other organism that may be dangerous to indigenous marine life or its environment.
[PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (AMD).]

2-A. Restricting importation of organism. The commissioner may adopt rules under which the commissioner may restrict the importation of a marine organism from a particular location when the commissioner determines that an organism from that location is or may be diseased or infected in any manner. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A.
[PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (NEW).]

3. Organism and products embargoed and condemned. The commissioner or the commissioner's agent may indefinitely embargo, condemn or order to be destroyed a marine organism or marine organism product either indigenous or imported if:

A. The organism or product is introduced to coastal waters in violation of this section and the commissioner determines that the organism or product is of unsound quality, contains any filthy, decomposed or putrid substance, may be poisonous or deleterious to health or is otherwise unsafe;
[PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (NEW).]

B. The organism or product is intended for introduction to coastal waters and the commissioner determines the organism or product is diseased or otherwise in a condition that if introduced to coastal waters could endanger indigenous marine life or its environment; or [PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (NEW).]

C. Handling of the organism or product could result in the introduction of that organism or product to the coastal waters and the commissioner determines the organism or product is diseased or otherwise in a condition that if introduced to coastal waters could endanger indigenous marine life or its environment. [PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (NEW).]

The commissioner shall cooperate with those state and federal agencies having similar responsibility in the protection of public health and in enforcing the order to embargo, condemn or destroy.

If any marine organisms or marine organism product is embargoed, condemned or ordered destroyed, the commissioner or the commissioner's agent shall, as soon as practical, notify the owner in writing of the amount and kind of marine organisms or marine organism product embargoed, condemned or destroyed.

[PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (AMD).]

4. Salmon imports prohibited. Except as provided in this subsection it is unlawful to import for introduction into any waters of the State any Atlantic salmon, live or as eggs, that originate in any Icelandic or European territorial waters or any other species of salmon, exclusive of rainbow trout, originating west of the North America continental divide. The commissioner may grant an exemption from the provisions of this subsection for a term not to exceed 2 years, renewable upon application, for legitimate aquacultural projects.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §3 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 205, §1 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 381, §2 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 390, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 562, §1 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 406, §§4,5 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 153, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 401, §BB3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 695, Pt. C, §2 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 561, §4 (AMD).

§6071-A. Definitions

As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [PL 2007, c. 212, §1 (NEW).]

1. Intertidal zone. "Intertidal zone" means the shores, flats or other land between the high and mean low water mark.

[PL 2007, c. 212, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 212, §1 (NEW).

§6072. Research and aquaculture leases

1. Authority. The commissioner may lease areas in, on and under the coastal waters, including the public lands beneath those waters and portions of the intertidal zone, for scientific research or for aquaculture of marine organisms. The commissioner may grant a lease to any person. Except as provided in this Part, the commissioner's power to lease lands under this section is exclusive. For the purposes of this section, the deputy commissioner may serve in the place of the commissioner. For the purposes of this section, the commissioner or the deputy commissioner serving in the place of the commissioner may authorize in writing qualified professional department staff to sign lease documents. [PL 2003, c. 247, §2 (AMD).]

1-A. Lease requirement; finfish and suspension culture. Except as provided in sections 6072-A, 6072-B and 6072-C, it is unlawful for a person who does not have a lease issued by the commissioner under this section to construct or operate in the coastal waters of the State a facility for the culture of finfish in nets, pens or other enclosures or for the suspended culture of any other marine organism. For the purposes of this subsection, "suspended culture" includes all forms of culture except for the placement of marine organisms on the ocean bottom without the use of gear of any type.

A. [PL 1997, c. 231, §2 (RP).]

B. [PL 2023, c. 564, §1 (RP).]

B-1. [PL 2023, c. 564, §1 (RP).]

C. [PL 2023, c. 564, §1 (RP).]

A person who violates this subsection is subject to a civil penalty, payable to the State, of no more than \$1,000 for each day of the violation.

[PL 2023, c. 564, §1 (AMD).]

2. Limitations of lease. The commissioner shall determine the provisions of each lease, provided:

A. A lease may not exceed a term of 20 years; [PL 2017, c. 159, §2 (AMD).]

B. [PL 1997, c. 138, §1 (RP).]

C. [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (RP).]

D. [PL 1981, c. 609, §2 (RP).]

E. Except as provided in subsection 13-A, the lease does not result in a person being a tenant of any kind in leases covering an aggregate of more than 500 acres; [PL 2023, c. 268, §1 (AMD).]

F. No single lease may exceed 100 acres in size; and [PL 2023, c. 268, §2 (AMD).]

G. A lease may not be issued for aquaculture of salmonid species if the proposed stocking density of pens in the lease area exceeds 30 kilograms per cubic meter. [PL 2023, c. 268, §3 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 268, §§1-3 (AMD).]

3. Municipal approval. In any municipality with a shellfish conservation program under section 6671, the commissioner may not lease areas in the intertidal zone within the municipality without the consent of the municipal officers.
[PL 1999, c. 267, §1 (AMD).]

4. Applications. The application shall:

A. Be written on forms supplied by the commissioner; [PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

B. Describe the location of the proposed lease area by coordinates or metes and bounds; [PL 1997, c. 138, §2 (AMD).]

C. Identify the species to be cultivated; [PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

D. [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (RP).]

D-1. Characterize the physical and ecological impact of the project on existing uses of the site and any adverse effects on the existing uses of the area, as defined by regulation promulgated by the Commissioner of Marine Resources; [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (NEW).]

D-2. [PL 1997, c. 138, §3 (RP).]

E. Describe the degree of exclusive use required by the project; [PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

F. Include written permission of every riparian owner whose land to the low water mark will be actually used; [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (AMD).]

G. Include a map of the lease area and its adjoining waters and shorelands, with the names and addresses of the known riparian owners as listed in the municipal tax records; [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (AMD).]

H. Include an environmental evaluation of the site upon which the decision to seek a lease was made. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, bottom characteristics, resident flora, fauna and hydrography of the site if appropriate for the proposed lease; [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (NEW).]

I. Describe the proposed source of organisms to be grown at the site; and [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (NEW).]

J. Include a nonrefundable application fee of at least \$100, but not more than \$2,000, the amount to be set by the commissioner depending on the proposed acreage, type of aquaculture proposed and complexity of the application. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §4 (AMD).]
[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §4 (AMD).]

4-A. Application information. A person who applies for a lease in an area for which that person has been issued a limited-purpose lease under section 6072-A or an emergency aquaculture lease under section 6072-B may submit any information utilized in applying for a limited-purpose lease or an emergency lease to meet the application requirements of this section. If the commissioner determines the information is not valid or relevant to a lease application under this section, the commissioner must require a person to submit additional information.
[PL 1997, c. 231, §3 (NEW).]

5. Application review. The commissioner shall review the application and set a hearing date if the commissioner is satisfied that the written application is complete, the application indicates that the lease could be granted and the applicant has preliminarily demonstrated that the applicant has the financial and technical capabilities to carry out the proposed activities. When the commissioner has

determined that the application is complete, the commissioner shall forward a copy of the completed application and notice of hearing to the known owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed lease and to the municipal officers of the municipality or municipalities in which or adjacent to which the lease is proposed. A municipality must be granted intervenor status upon written request.

[PL 2023, c. 564, §2 (AMD).]

5-A. Department site review. Prior to the lease hearing, the department shall conduct an assessment of the proposed site and surrounding area to determine the possible effects of the lease on commercially and ecologically significant flora and fauna and conflicts with traditional fisheries and all other uses. This information must be provided to the intervenors and made available to the public 30 days before the hearing. As part of the site review, the department shall request information from the municipal harbor master about designated or traditional storm anchorages in proximity to the proposed lease. The commissioner may by rule establish levels of assessment appropriate to the scale or potential environmental risk posed by a proposed lease activity. The rules must provide a method of establishing a baseline to monitor the environmental effects of a lease activity. Rules adopted under this subsection are major substantive rules as defined by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §5 (AMD).]

6. Hearing procedure. Prior to granting a lease, the commissioner shall hold a hearing. The hearing shall be an adjudicatory proceeding and shall be held in the manner provided under the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter IV and the specific procedures of this section.

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of Title 5, section 9052, subsection 1, paragraph A, personal notice of the hearing is required to be given only to the lessee and the known riparian owners, the municipal officers of the municipality or municipalities in which or adjacent to which the lease is located and any interested parties that have provided a written request for notification. [PL 2021, c. 52, §1 (AMD).]

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of Title 5, section 9052, subsection 3, paragraph A, notice of hearing must be published once in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of the State affected and by any other manner considered appropriate by the department at least 30 days before the hearing. The commissioner may require the applicant to reimburse the department for costs incurred by the department in providing public notice under this paragraph. [PL 2023, c. 564, §3 (AMD).]

C. The Department of Environmental Protection must be notified of all lease applications that involve activities that have a discharge into the waters of the State. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife must be notified of all lease applications. [PL 2021, c. 52, §3 (AMD).]

D. [PL 2003, c. 247, §3 (RP).]

[PL 2023, c. 564, §3 (AMD).]

7. Decision.

[PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (RP).]

7-A. Decision. In evaluating the proposed lease, the commissioner shall take into consideration the number and density of aquaculture leases in an area and may grant the lease if the proposed lease meets the following conditions as defined by rule.

A. The lease will not unreasonably interfere with the ingress and egress of riparian owners. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §6 (AMD).]

B. The lease will not unreasonably interfere with navigation. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §6 (AMD).]

C. The lease will not unreasonably interfere with fishing or other uses of the area. For the purposes of this paragraph, "fishing" includes public access to a redeemable shellfish resource, as defined by the department, for the purpose of harvesting, provided that the resource is commercially significant and subject to a pollution abatement plan that predates the lease application, that includes verifiable activities in the process of implementation and that is reasonably expected to result in the opening of the area to the taking of shellfish within 3 years. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §6 (AMD).]

D. The lease will not unreasonably interfere with significant wildlife habitat and marine habitat or with the ability of the lease site and surrounding marine and upland areas to support existing ecologically significant flora and fauna. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §6 (AMD).]

E. The applicant has demonstrated that there is an available source of organisms to be cultured for the lease site. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §6 (AMD).]

F. The lease does not unreasonably interfere with public use or enjoyment within 1,000 feet of a beach, park or docking facility owned by the Federal Government, the State Government or a municipal governmental agency or certain conserved lands. For purposes of this paragraph, "conserved lands" means land in which fee ownership has been acquired by the municipal government, State Government or Federal Government in order to protect the important ecological, recreational, scenic, cultural or historic attributes of that property. [PL 2023, c. 564, §4 (AMD).]

G. The lease will not result in unreasonable impact from noise or light at the boundaries of the lease site. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §6 (AMD).]

H. Upon the implementation of rules, the lease must be in compliance with visual impact criteria adopted by the commissioner relating to color, height, shape and mass. [PL 2003, c. 247, §4 (NEW).]

The commissioner shall adopt rules to establish noise, light and visual impact criteria under paragraphs G and H, which are major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2023, c. 564, §4 (AMD).]

7-B. Conditions. The commissioner may establish conditions that govern the use of the leased area and limitations on the aquaculture activities. These conditions must encourage the greatest multiple, compatible uses of the leased area, but must also address the ability of the lease site and surrounding area to support ecologically significant flora and fauna and preserve the exclusive rights of the lessee to the extent necessary to carry out the lease purpose. [PL 2003, c. 247, §5 (AMD).]

8. Preference. If more than one person applies to lease an area, preference must be given as follows:

A. First, to the person who holds a lease for the area or a portion of the area under section 6072-A and who submitted an application for a lease under this section for the area or a portion of the area before the lease under section 6072-A expired; [PL 2011, c. 93, §1 (AMD).]

A-1. Second, to the person who holds a license for the area or a portion of the area under section 6072-C and who submitted an application for a lease under this section for the area or a portion of the area before the license under section 6072-C expired; [PL 2017, c. 159, §3 (NEW).]

B. Third, to the department; [PL 2017, c. 159, §3 (AMD).]

C. Fourth, to the riparian owner of the intertidal zone in which the leased area is located; [PL 2017, c. 159, §3 (AMD).]

D. Fifth, to a person who fishes commercially and who has traditionally fished in or near the proposed lease area; and [PL 2017, c. 159, §3 (AMD).]

E. Sixth, to the riparian owner within 100 feet of leased coastal waters. [PL 2017, c. 159, §3 (AMD).]
[PL 2017, c. 159, §3 (AMD).]

8-A. Preference for limited-purpose lease areas.

[PL 2011, c. 93, §2 (RP).]

9. Rents. After consulting with the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands, the commissioner shall determine the rent that must be paid under each lease. The rent must represent a fair value based upon the use of and any structures in the leased area, but in no instance may the rental fee be set at less than \$50 an acre or more than \$100 an acre. The commissioner has the discretion to increase the rental fees for categories of leases. These changes may take effect over the term of a lease. The commissioner also may discount a portion of the rental fee during the first 2 years of operation of a new lease. This discounted rate may not be less than \$50 an acre.
[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §7 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

10. Notification of granted leases. After the granting of a lease:

A. [PL 2015, c. 68, §1 (RP).]

B. The department shall notify all riparian owners, intervenors and the municipality in which the lease is located that a lease has been granted. The notice must include a description of the area and how a copy of the lease may be obtained; [PL 2003, c. 247, §6 (RPR).]

C. The lessee shall mark the leased area in a manner prescribed by the commissioner; and [PL 2003, c. 247, §6 (RPR).]

D. The lessee shall annually submit to the department a seeding and harvesting report for the past year and a seeding and harvesting plan for the coming year. Upon written request, the department shall provide a copy of the report to the municipality or municipalities in which or adjacent to which the lease is located. The seeding and harvesting reports submitted by a lessee under this paragraph are considered confidential statistics for the purposes of section 6173. A copy of a report provided to a municipality pursuant to this paragraph is confidential. [PL 2021, c. 581, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2021, c. 581, §1 (AMD).]

11. Monitoring and revocation of leases. The department shall monitor a lease under this section on an annual basis. If aquaculture has been conducted in a manner substantially injurious to marine organisms or public health, if no substantial aquaculture or research has been conducted over the course of the lease or if any condition of the lease or any minimum lease maintenance standard adopted pursuant to subsection 13, paragraph A has been violated, the commissioner may initiate revocation proceedings and revoke the lease. A lease revocation is an adjudicatory proceeding under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 4. The department shall hold a hearing with public notice prior to revoking any lease.

[PL 2021, c. 52, §4 (AMD).]

11-A. Lease assignment. The commissioner shall assign leases in accordance with this subsection.

A. When a lease under this section has been terminated by the lessee or has been revoked by the commissioner and all appeals have been exhausted, the commissioner may lease the same site on the same terms and conditions to a new lessee for the amount of time remaining in the term of the previous lease, subject to the requirements of this section. A lease that has been terminated or revoked may be assigned pursuant to this subsection at any time before its term expires. A lease assignment pursuant to this subsection is not an adjudicatory proceeding. [PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

B. Before assigning a lease pursuant to this subsection, the commissioner shall give notice to the public of the opportunity to submit proposals to assume and operate the lease. The commissioner shall determine that a proposal is eligible for consideration if:

- (1) The application is complete, using forms provided by the commissioner;
- (2) The change in lessee would not violate any of the standards in subsection 7-A;
- (3) The assignment is not intended to circumvent the intent of subsection 8;
- (4) The assignment is not for speculative purposes; and
- (5) Except as provided in subsection 13-A, the assignment will not cause the assignee to be a tenant of any kind in leases covering an aggregate of more than 500 acres. [PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

C. The commissioner shall consider the eligible proposals under paragraph B and shall either:

- (1) Select for assignment the proposal that is best suited to the lease site and in the best interests of the State;
- (2) Declare all proposals unsuitable and solicit new proposals; or
- (3) Suspend the assignment process for the lease site in question. [PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

D. After a proposal is selected pursuant to paragraph C, but before the lease is assigned, the commissioner shall give notice of the pending assignment to the public, the owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the lease site and the municipal officers of the municipality within which the lease is located. The notice must provide an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed lease assignment within 14 days. The commissioner may decline to assign the lease and may select another proposal for assignment or proceed as described in paragraph C, subparagraph (2) or (3). [PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

E. A decision by the commissioner to assign a lease or to decline to assign a lease to an applicant whose proposal was selected pursuant to paragraph C must be rendered in writing and must include findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision by the commissioner to assign or not to assign a lease is a final decision. [PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

F. The commissioner shall establish by rule the fee for assigning a lease under this subsection, which may not exceed \$5,000, based on the type of aquaculture conducted and the size of the lease. The assignee must pay the fee prior to the execution of the lease. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 229, §1 (NEW).]

12. Renewal. The commissioner shall renew a lease if:

A. The commissioner receives, at least 30 days prior to the expiration of a lease, an application for renewal that includes information on the type and amount of aquaculture to be conducted during the new lease term; [PL 2021, c. 52, §5 (AMD).]

B. The lessee has complied with the lease agreement during the term of the lease; [PL 2003, c. 247, §8 (NEW).]

C. The commissioner determines that renewal of the lease is in the best interest of the State; [PL 2003, c. 247, §8 (NEW).]

D. Except as provided in subsection 13-A, the renewal will not cause the lessee to become a tenant of any kind in leases covering an aggregate of more than 500 acres; and [PL 2005, c. 535, §2 (AMD).]

E. The lease is not being held for speculative purposes. [PL 2003, c. 247, §8 (NEW).]

If a person who holds a lease pursuant to this section applies to renew the lease, the lease remains in effect until the commissioner makes a decision on the renewal application. If the renewal is denied, the lease expires 30 days after the date of the commissioner's decision.

When aquaculture has not been routinely or substantially conducted on a lease that is proposed for renewal, the commissioner may renew the lease, as long as the proposed renewal will continue to meet the criteria for approval in subsection 7-A.

A lease renewal is an adjudicatory proceeding under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 4. Public notice must be given to the entities required to receive notice under subsection 6. A person may provide to the commissioner comments on the proposed lease renewal by the 30-day deadline specified in the applicable notice to the entities required to receive notice under subsection 6 or within 30 days of publication of the proposed renewal. A hearing must be held if it is requested in writing by 10 persons within the 30 days. The commissioner may review multiple leases concurrently during the lease renewal process.

A lease renewal application must include a nonrefundable application fee of no more than \$1,500, the amount to be set by the commissioner depending on the type of aquaculture permitted by the lease. [PL 2023, c. 564, §5 (AMD).]

12-A. Transferability. A lease under this section may be transferred to another person for the remaining portion of its term subject to the conditions in this subsection. A lease transfer is not an adjudicatory proceeding.

A. An application to transfer a lease pursuant to this subsection must be made on forms provided by the commissioner. When the commissioner determines that the application is complete, the commissioner shall give notice of the proposed transfer to the public, the owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the lease site and the municipal officers of the municipality within which the lease is located. The notice must provide an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposed lease transfer within 30 days. [PL 2023, c. 564, §6 (AMD).]

B. The commissioner may grant lease transfers pursuant to this subsection if the commissioner determines that:

- (1) The change in lessee does not violate any of the standards in subsection 7-A;
- (2) The transfer is not intended to circumvent the intent of subsection 8;
- (3) The transfer is not for speculative purposes; and
- (4) Except as provided in subsection 13-A, the transfer will not cause the transferee to be a tenant of any kind in leases covering an aggregate of more than 500 acres.

A decision by the commissioner on an application to transfer a lease must be rendered in writing and must include findings of fact and conclusions of law. The decision by the commissioner on the transfer application is a final decision. [PL 2021, c. 676, Pt. A, §28 (AMD).]

C. The commissioner shall establish by rule the fee for transferring a lease under this subsection, which may not exceed \$5,000, based on the type of aquaculture conducted and the size of the lease. The transferee must pay the fee at the time application for the transfer is made. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2021, c. 52, §6 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 564, §6 (AMD).]

12-B. Extension of lease.
[PL 2011, c. 93, §4 (RP).]

12-C. Expansion of lease. A person who has held a lease under this section for at least 2 years from the date the lease was originally executed may apply to the commissioner to expand the contiguous area of the lease by up to 25%, but may not expand by more than 4 acres, once during the duration of the term of the lease pursuant to this subsection.

A. The lease holder shall submit an application written on forms supplied by the commissioner:

- (1) Describing the location of the proposed lease expansion area by coordinates or metes and bounds;
- (2) Characterizing the physical and ecological impact of the lease expansion on existing uses of the site and any adverse effects on existing uses of the area, as defined by rules adopted by the commissioner;
- (3) Including the written permission of every riparian owner whose land to the low-water mark will be used;
- (4) Including a map of the lease area and its proposed expansion, and its adjoining waters and shorelands, with the names and addresses of the known riparian owners as listed in the municipal tax records;
- (5) Including an environmental evaluation of the site upon which the decision to seek an expansion of the lease was made. The evaluation must include, but is not limited to, bottom characteristics, resident flora and fauna and hydrography of the site if appropriate for the proposed lease; and
- (6) Including a nonrefundable application fee of at least \$100, but not more than \$2,000, the amount to be set by the commissioner depending on the proposed acreage, type of aquaculture proposed and complexity of the expansion application. [PL 2021, c. 52, §7 (AMD).]

B. The commissioner shall review the application. When the commissioner has determined that the application for the lease expansion is complete, the commissioner shall provide notice to the known riparian owners and to the municipal officers of the municipality or municipalities in which or adjacent to which the lease expansion is proposed. The applicant shall publish in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality or municipalities in which the lease expansion is proposed a summary of the application and notice of the opportunity to submit comments regarding the proposed lease expansion to the commissioner during a period of at least 30 days following the date of publication of the lease expansion summary. [PL 2021, c. 52, §7 (AMD).]

C. The commissioner may conduct an assessment of the proposed lease expansion area to determine possible effects of the lease on commercially and ecologically significant flora and fauna. [PL 2017, c. 159, §4 (NEW).]

D. The commissioner shall consider comments received during the period for comments set pursuant to paragraph B. [PL 2017, c. 159, §4 (NEW).]

E. If the commissioner determines that, based upon the application and comments received, the lease expansion meets the requirements of subsection 7-A, the commissioner may approve the request for the lease expansion. [PL 2017, c. 159, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 52, §7 (AMD).]

12-D. Conversion of a limited-purpose lease. A person who holds a limited-purpose lease for commercial purposes pursuant to section 6072-A may apply to convert that lease to a lease under this subsection as long as the application is for the same lease area and same operations authorized by the limited-purpose lease.

A. An application to convert a limited-purpose lease pursuant to this subsection must be made on forms provided by the commissioner and must be received in accordance with time frames specified in section 6072-A, subsection 20-A. A person may submit information used in applying for the

limited-purpose lease to meet the application requirements of this subsection. If the commissioner determines the information is not valid or relevant to the lease application under this subsection, the commissioner shall require the person to submit additional information. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

B. In any municipality with a shellfish conservation program under section 6671, the commissioner may not issue a lease under this subsection for the intertidal zone within the municipality without the consent of the municipal officers. The applicant must also submit written permission from every owner of riparian land whose land to the low-water mark will be used. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

C. Upon determining that an application is complete, the commissioner shall provide notice of the conversion application to owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed location of the lease and to the municipal officers of the municipality in which the lease activity would take place. The applicant shall provide the names and addresses of known owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed location of the lease. The names and addresses must be taken from the current property tax roster on file at the local municipal office or, for an unorganized territory, with the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Revenue Services. The commissioner shall publish a summary of the application in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of the State in which the lease conversion is proposed. The commissioner may require the applicant to reimburse the department for costs incurred by the department in providing public notice under this paragraph. A person may provide comments to the commissioner on the application by the 30-day deadline specified in the applicable notice to owners of riparian land or municipal officers or within 30 days of publication of the newspaper notice. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

D. The department may consider the original site review when the lease was evaluated pursuant to section 6072-A or conduct another assessment of the proposed lease and surrounding area to evaluate the possible effects of the lease conversion on any new uses of the area, including ecologically significant flora and fauna as they relate to the conditions specified in subsection 7-A. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

E. The commissioner may hold a public hearing on the proposed conversion. The commissioner shall hold a public hearing if 10 or more persons request a public hearing during the 30-day comment periods provided in paragraph C. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

F. The commissioner shall provide notice of a public hearing to owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed location of the lease and to the municipal officers of the municipality in which the operations would take place. The commissioner shall publish notice of a hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of the State in which the lease conversion is proposed at least 30 days before the hearing. The commissioner may require the applicant to reimburse the department for costs incurred by the department in providing public notice under this paragraph. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

G. In evaluating the proposed lease conversion, the commissioner shall take into consideration the conditions specified in subsection 7-A. [PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 564, §7 (NEW).]

13. Rules. The commissioner may adopt or amend rules:

A. Establishing minimum standards for maintaining leases; [PL 1981, c. 609, §4 (NEW).]

B. For procedures to issue, transfer, review, assign, expand, convert or revoke leases; [PL 2023, c. 564, §8 (AMD).]

C. For notices and hearings to the extent that those procedures are not established by this section or the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375; [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (AMD).]

D. For regulating the harvest of wild organisms to be cultured on aquaculture leases; [PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (NEW).]

E. For establishing and revaluing fees and rents related to aquaculture; [PL 1993, c. 525, §1 (AMD).]

F. For defining application requirements, an application review process and decision criteria; [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §11 (AMD).]

G. For adding or deleting authorization for the holder of an aquaculture lease to grow specific species or to use specific gear on the lease site and for a modification to operations as a result of a change in species or gear authorization. A change in authorization or a resultant modification to operations is not an adjudicatory proceeding. The commissioner shall establish by rule the fee for modifying a lease under this paragraph, which may not exceed \$200. The rules must provide for notice of proposed changes in gear authorization to the public, riparian landowners and the municipality in which the lease is located and an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposal. Authorization to add species or gear must be consistent with the findings made under subsection 7-A when the lease was approved; [PL 2021, c. 52, §8 (AMD).]

H. For establishing fallowing requirements and procedures; [PL 2021, c. 52, §8 (AMD).]

I. For establishing fees for services provided by the department to a lease holder if the lease holder requests testing or location-specific studies to ensure the lease holder's products are safe for human consumption. Fees collected pursuant to this paragraph must be deposited into the Shellfish Fund under section 6651; and [PL 2021, c. 52, §8 (NEW).]

J. For defining seed size or seed management and harvest seasons. [PL 2021, c. 52, §8 (NEW).]

Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2023, c. 564, §8 (AMD).]

13-A. Lease acreage increase; fallowing. The commissioner may require a person to submit an annual fallowing plan and a reassessment schedule for that plan to the commissioner that identifies lease sites that have been actively operated during the lease period and that will be fallowed. The commissioner shall review the plan and reassessment schedule and may approve them, reject them or request changes. Revisions to the plan must be submitted in accordance with the reassessment schedule unless the commissioner authorizes an exception due to extraordinary circumstances.

A. Except as provided in paragraph B, a person may not be a tenant of any kind in leases covering an aggregate of more than 500 acres including fallowed leases at any time. [PL 2005, c. 535, §4 (NEW).]

B. The commissioner may by rule authorize leases in excess of the 500-acre limit if the commissioner determines that the increase is beneficial for the management of aquaculture and is environmentally and economically appropriate. The commissioner may not authorize a person to be a tenant of any kind in leases covering an aggregate of more than 1,500 acres. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2005, c. 535, §4 (NEW).]

For purposes of this subsection, "fallow" means a lease site without cultured organisms. A lease site fallowed pursuant to an enforcement action may not be considered fallowed for the purpose of this subsection.

[PL 2005, c. 535, §4 (RPR).]

14. Conflicts. Whenever a project described in a pending aquaculture lease conflicts or could conflict with a project described in a pending submerged lands act lease, the commissioner and the

Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall determine which project is in the best interests of the State.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §6 (REV).]

15. Rules.

[PL 2021, c. 52, §9 (RP).]

16. Lease-by-rule; small-scale finfish and suspended shellfish operations.

[PL 1997, c. 138, §7 (RP).]

17. Restitution. A person who cuts any lines or marker buoys or intentionally damages approved aquaculture gear commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 for each violation may be adjudged. In addition, the court shall:

A. Order that person to pay to the owner of the approved aquaculture gear that was cut or damaged an amount equal to twice the replacement value of the gear that was damaged or lost as a result of the cutting or damaging action; and [PL 2005, c. 92, §3 (NEW).]

B. Direct that person to provide the commissioner, upon making full payments as ordered by the court, proof of that payment. [PL 2005, c. 92, §3 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 92, §3 (NEW).]

18. Violation. A person who violates a condition of a lease under this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 for each violation may be adjudged.

[PL 2013, c. 509, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1981, c. 609, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 1983, c. 301, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 1987, c. 453, §1 (AMD). PL 1987, c. 891 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 381, §§3,4 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 409, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 525, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 383, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 502, §E30 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 138, §§1-7 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 231, §§2-5 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 609, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 267, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 567, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 591, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 247, §§2-8 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 660, §§A3-14 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 92, §§2,3 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 535, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 229, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 240, §8 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 93, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. II, §4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. II, §11 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §§5-7 (REV). RR 2013, c. 1, §22 (COR). PL 2013, c. 301, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV). PL 2013, c. 509, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 512, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 68, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 159, §§2-5 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 52, §§1-9 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 557, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 581, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 676, Pt. A, §28 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 268, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 564, §§1-8 (AMD).

§6072-A. Limited-purpose lease for commercial or scientific research

1. Authority. The commissioner may issue a limited-purpose lease for areas in, on and under the coastal waters, including the public lands beneath those waters and portions of the intertidal zone, for commercial aquaculture research and development or for scientific research. The commissioner or the deputy commissioner acting on the commissioner's behalf may authorize in writing qualified professional department staff to issue a final decision and sign a lease document on an application for a limited-purpose lease. A decision issued by department staff pursuant to this subsection is a final agency action with respect to that lease application.

A. [PL 2013, c. 509, §3 (RP).]

B. [PL 2013, c. 509, §3 (RP).]

[PL 2013, c. 509, §3 (AMD).]

2. Suspended culture. A person issued a limited-purpose lease under this section may construct or operate in the coastal waters of the State a facility for the culture of finfish in nets, pens or other enclosures or for the suspended culture of any other marine organism.
[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

3. Limit on duration. A limited-purpose lease may not be issued for a period greater than 3 years.
[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

4. Size limitation. A limited-purpose lease may not be issued for an area in excess of 4 acres.
[PL 2009, c. 229, §4 (AMD).]

5. Notice of application. Upon determining that an application is complete, the commissioner shall provide notice of a limited-purpose lease application to owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed location of the lease and to the municipal officers of the municipality in which the limited-purpose lease activity would take place. The applicant shall provide the names and addresses of known owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed location of the lease. The names and addresses must be taken from the current property tax roster on file at the local municipal office or, for an unorganized territory, with the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of Revenue Services. The commissioner shall publish a summary of the application in a newspaper of general circulation in the area proposed for a limited-purpose lease. The commissioner may require the applicant to reimburse the department for costs incurred by the department in providing public notice under this subsection. A person may provide comments to the commissioner on the proposed limited-purpose lease by the 30-day deadline specified in the applicable notice to owners of riparian land or municipal officers or within 30 days of publication of the limited-purpose lease summary.
[PL 2023, c. 564, §9 (AMD).]

6. Public hearing. The commissioner may hold a public hearing on the proposed limited-purpose lease. The commissioner shall hold a public hearing if 10 or more persons request a public hearing within the 30-day comment periods provided in subsection 5.
[PL 2023, c. 564, §10 (AMD).]

7. Notice of public hearing. The commissioner shall provide notice of a public hearing to owners of riparian land within 1,000 feet of the proposed location of the lease and to the municipal officers of the municipality in which the limited-purpose lease activity would take place. The commissioner shall publish notice of a public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the area proposed for a limited-purpose lease at least 30 days before the hearing. The commissioner may require the applicant to reimburse the department for costs incurred by the department in providing public notice under this subsection.
[PL 2021, c. 52, §11 (AMD).]

8. Rules; general and lease application. The commissioner may adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section. Within 180 days of the effective date of this section, the commissioner shall adopt rules regarding a limited-purpose lease application. The rules must require an applicant to, at a minimum, meet the requirements of section 6072, subsection 2, paragraph E and section 6072, subsection 4, paragraphs A, B, C, E, F, G and J. The rules must also require an applicant to provide to the department proof of access to the lease area. If access will be across riparian land, the applicant shall provide to the department the written permission of every riparian owner whose land will be used to access the lease area. The commissioner may adopt rules to add or delete authorization for the holder of an aquaculture lease that is held only for scientific research purposes to grow specific species and to use specific gear on the lease site. A change in authorization is not an adjudicatory proceeding. The rules must provide for notice of proposed changes in gear authorization to the public, riparian landowners and the municipality in which the lease is located and an opportunity to submit written comments on the proposal. Authorization to add species or gear must be consistent with the findings made under subsection 13 when the lease was approved.

[PL 2021, c. 168, §1 (AMD).]

9. Application information. A person who applies for a lease in an area for which that person has been issued an emergency aquaculture lease under section 6072-B may submit any information utilized in applying for an emergency aquaculture lease to meet the application requirements of this section. If the commissioner determines the information is not valid or relevant to a lease application under this section, the commissioner must require a person to submit additional information.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

10. Assessment of proposed activities. Within 180 days of the effective date of this section, the commissioner shall by rule establish a method for conducting an assessment of the proposed limited-purpose lease site and surrounding area to determine the possible effects of the proposed limited-purpose lease activity on commercially and ecologically significant flora and fauna and conflicts with traditional fisheries. The rules must establish levels of assessment appropriate to the scale or potential environmental risk posed by a proposed limited-purpose lease activity. The rules must provide a method for establishing a baseline to monitor the environmental effects of a limited-purpose lease activity.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

11. Municipal approval. In any municipality with a shellfish conservation program under section 6671, the commissioner may not issue a limited-purpose lease under this section for the intertidal zone within the municipality without the consent of the municipal officers.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

12. Preference. If more than one person applies to lease an area, preference must be given as follows:

A. First, to the department; [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

B. Second, to the riparian owner of the intertidal zone in which the leased area is located; [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

C. Third, to a person who fishes commercially and who has traditionally fished in or near the proposed lease area; and [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

D. Fourth, to the riparian owner within 100 feet of leased coastal waters. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

13. Decision. The commissioner may grant a lease if a proposed project:

A. Will not unreasonably interfere with the ingress and egress of riparian owners; [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

B. Will not unreasonably interfere with navigation; [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

C. Will not unreasonably interfere with fishing or other uses of the area taking into consideration the number and density of aquaculture leases in an area; [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

D. Will not unreasonably interfere with the ability of the lease site and surrounding areas to support existing ecologically significant flora and fauna; [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

E. The applicant has demonstrated that there is an available source of organisms to be cultured for the lease site; and [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

F. The lease does not unreasonably interfere with public use or enjoyment within 1,000 feet of municipally owned, state-owned or federally owned beaches and parks or municipally owned, state-owned or federally owned docking facilities. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

The commissioner may by rule develop criteria for an applicant to meet the terms of this subsection.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

14. Fee. The commissioner shall by rule determine the rental fee for a limited-purpose lease.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

15. Conditions. The commissioner may establish conditions that govern the use of the leased area and limitations on the aquaculture activities. These conditions must encourage the greatest multiple, compatible uses of the leased area, but must also address the ability of the lease site and surrounding area to support ecologically significant flora and fauna and preserve the exclusive rights of the lessee to the extent necessary to carry out the lease purpose. The commissioner may grant the lease on a conditional basis until the lessee has acquired all the necessary federal, state and local permits.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §15 (AMD).]

16. Statement of rights conveyed. The commissioner shall include the following statement in a lease issued under this section: "A limited-purpose lease for scientific research or commercial aquaculture research and development conveys only those rights specified in the lease."

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

17. Actions required of lease holder.

[PL 2003, c. 247, §12 (RP).]

17-A. Notification of granted leases. After the granting of a limited-purpose lease:

A. The department shall notify all riparian owners, intervenors and the municipality in which the lease is located that a lease has been granted. The notice must include a description of the area and how a copy of the lease may be obtained; [PL 2003, c. 247, §13 (NEW).]

B. The lessee shall mark the leased area in a manner prescribed by the commissioner; [PL 2009, c. 240, §9 (AMD).]

C. Until October 1, 2023, the lessee shall annually submit to the commissioner a report for the past year on results of the commercial research and development undertaken at the lease site and a plan for the coming year. Results of commercial research and development submitted to the commissioner before October 1, 2023 are confidential records for the purposes of Title 1, section 402, subsection 3, paragraph A; [PL 2023, c. 207, §6 (AMD).]

C-1. The holder of a limited-purpose lease for scientific research shall annually submit to the commissioner a report for the past year on results of the scientific research undertaken at the lease site and a plan for the coming year. Upon written request, the commissioner shall provide a copy of the report to the municipality or municipalities in which or adjacent to which the lease is located; and [PL 2023, c. 207, §6 (NEW).]

D. Until October 1, 2023, the lessee shall annually submit to the department a seeding and harvesting report for the past year and a seeding and harvesting plan for the coming year. Upon written request, the commissioner shall provide a copy of the report to the municipality or municipalities in which or adjacent to which the lease is located. The seeding and harvesting reports submitted by a lessee under this paragraph before October 1, 2023 are considered confidential statistics for the purposes of section 6173. [PL 2023, c. 207, §6 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 207, §6 (AMD).]

18. Scientific lease renewal. A limited-purpose lease for scientific research may be renewed. A scientific research lease renewal is an adjudicatory proceeding under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 4, but a public hearing is not mandatory unless it is requested in writing by 10 or more persons. The commissioner may review multiple leases concurrently during the lease renewal process. The commissioner shall renew a limited-purpose lease for scientific research unless the commissioner finds that:

A. The leaseholder has not complied with the terms of the limited-purpose lease; [PL 2023, c. 564, §11 (AMD).]

B. Research has not been conducted during the term of the lease; or [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

C. It is not in the best interest of the State to renew the limited-purpose lease. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 564, §11 (AMD).]

19. Commercial lease not renewable. A limited-purpose lease for commercial aquaculture research and development may not be renewed.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

20. Extension of commercial lease. If a person who holds a limited-purpose lease for commercial aquaculture research and development submits an application under section 6072 for that lease area or a portion of that area before the expiration of that limited-purpose lease, and if the commissioner's decision under section 6072 occurs after the expiration of that limited-purpose lease, the lease remains in effect until the commissioner makes a decision. If the commissioner grants that person a lease under section 6072, that person's limited-purpose lease remains in effect until the effective date of the lease issued under section 6072. If the commissioner denies that person a lease under section 6072, that person's limited-purpose lease remains in effect until 30 days after the commissioner's decision.

[PL 2011, c. 93, §6 (AMD).]

20-A. Extension for conversion of a commercial lease. If a person who holds a limited-purpose lease for commercial aquaculture research and development submits an application under section 6072, subsection 12-D for that same lease area and the same operations before the expiration of that limited-purpose lease, and if the commissioner does not make a decision under section 6072, subsection 12-D before the expiration of that limited-purpose lease, the limited-purpose lease remains in effect until the commissioner makes a decision under section 6072, subsection 12-D. If the commissioner grants the person a lease under section 6072, subsection 12-D, that person's limited-purpose lease remains in effect until the effective date of the lease issued under section 6072, subsection 12-D. If the commissioner denies that person a lease under section 6072, subsection 12-D, that person's limited-purpose lease remains in effect until 30 days after the commissioner's decision.

[PL 2023, c. 564, §12 (NEW).]

21. Monitoring lease.

[PL 2003, c. 247, §14 (RP).]

22. Monitoring and revocation of leases. The department shall monitor a lease under this section on an annual basis. If aquaculture has been conducted in a manner substantially injurious to marine organisms, if no substantial aquaculture or research has been conducted over the course of the lease or if any condition of the lease has been violated, the commissioner may initiate revocation proceedings and revoke the lease. The department shall hold a hearing with public notice prior to revoking any lease. A lease revocation is an adjudicatory proceeding under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 4.

[PL 2003, c. 247, §15 (NEW).]

23. Restitution. A person who cuts any lines or marker buoys or intentionally damages approved aquaculture gear commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 for each violation may be adjudged. In addition, the court shall:

A. Order that person to pay to the owner of the approved aquaculture gear that was cut or damaged an amount equal to twice the replacement value of the gear that was damaged or lost as a result of the cutting or damaging action; and [PL 2005, c. 92, §4 (NEW).]

B. Direct that person to provide the commissioner, upon making full payments as ordered by the court, proof of that payment. [PL 2005, c. 92, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 92, §4 (NEW).]

24. Violation. A person who violates a condition of a lease under this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 for each violation may be adjudged.

[PL 2013, c. 509, §5 (NEW).]

Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW). PL 2001, c. 122, §1 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 247, §§9-15 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 660, §A15 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 92, §4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 229, §4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 240, §§9-11 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 93, §§5, 6 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 301, §§2, 3 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 509, §§3-5 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 512, §2 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 52, §§10-12 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 168, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 207, §6 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 564, §§9-12 (AMD).

§6072-B. Emergency aquaculture lease for shellfish

1. Authority. The commissioner may issue an emergency aquaculture lease for areas in, on and under the coastal waters including the public lands beneath those waters and portions of the intertidal zone for the emergency aquaculture relocation of shellfish from an area for which a lease has been issued pursuant to section 6072 or section 6072-A when the health and safety of those shellfish are threatened.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

2. Limitation. The commissioner may not issue a lease under this section unless:

A. The applicant holds a lease pursuant to section 6072 or 6072-A, except that this paragraph does not apply if the department is the applicant; [PL 2021, c. 557, §2 (AMD).]

B. The applicant demonstrates to the commissioner that the health and safety of shellfish at the leased area are threatened; and [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

C. The commissioner determines the relocation of those shellfish to an emergency aquaculture lease area would not threaten the water quality of the receiving waters or the health of marine organisms in those waters. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 557, §2 (AMD).]

3. Permission of intertidal land owners. The commissioner may not grant an emergency aquaculture lease unless the applicant obtains the written permission of every owner of intertidal land in, on or over which the emergency aquaculture activity occurs.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

4. No fee. The commissioner may not charge a fee for an emergency aquaculture lease.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

5. Suspended culture. A person issued an emergency aquaculture lease under this section may construct or operate in the coastal waters of the State a facility for the suspended culture of shellfish.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

6. Limit on duration. An emergency aquaculture lease may not be issued for a period greater than 6 months.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

7. Extension of emergency aquaculture lease. If a person who holds an emergency aquaculture lease submits an application under section 6072 or 6072-A for all or a portion of that lease area before the emergency aquaculture lease expires, and if the commissioner's decision under section 6072 or 6072-A occurs after the expiration of that emergency aquaculture lease, the emergency aquaculture lease remains in effect until the commissioner makes a decision. If the commissioner grants that person a lease under section 6072 or 6072-A, that person's emergency aquaculture lease remains in effect until

the effective date of the lease issued under section 6072 or 6072-A. If the commissioner denies that person a lease under section 6072 or 6072-A, that person's emergency aquaculture lease remains in effect until 30 days after the commissioner's decision.

[PL 2011, c. 93, §7 (AMD).]

8. Public notice. Upon granting an emergency aquaculture lease, the commissioner shall provide notice to the municipality in which the emergency aquaculture lease area is located. Within at least 30 days from granting an emergency aquaculture lease, the commissioner shall publish notice of the emergency aquaculture lease in a newspaper of general circulation in the lease area. The notice must describe the area leased and list any restriction in the leased area.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

9. Actions required of lease holder. After being granted an emergency aquaculture lease, a lessee shall:

A. Record the lease in the registry of deeds of each county in which the leased area is located; and
[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

B. Mark the leased area in a manner prescribed by the commissioner. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

10. Conditions. The commissioner may establish conditions that govern the use of the emergency aquaculture lease area and limitations on the aquaculture activities. These conditions must encourage the greatest multiple, compatible uses of the leased area, but must also address the ability of the lease site and surrounding area to support ecologically significant flora and fauna and preserve the exclusive rights of the lessee to the extent necessary to carry out the lease purpose. The commissioner may grant the lease on a conditional basis until the lessee has acquired all the necessary federal, state and local permits. A lease may not be approved unless the commissioner has received certification from the Department of Environmental Protection that the project will not violate the standards ascribed to the receiving waters classification in Title 38, section 465-B.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

11. Rules. The commissioner may adopt rules to establish application requirements, a process for application review and a process for deciding upon lease applications and otherwise implement the provisions of this section.

[PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A. [PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 231, §6 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 93, §7 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 557, §2 (AMD).

§6072-C. Limited-purpose aquaculture license

1. License required. A person may not engage in the activities authorized under this section without a current limited-purpose aquaculture license or a lease issued under this Part authorizing the activities.

[PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §10 (AMD); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]

2. Licensed activities. The holder of a limited-purpose aquaculture license may place marine organisms on the ocean bottom without gear or utilize approved aquaculture gear in a site in the coastal waters of the State to engage in certain aquaculture activities that meet the criteria established in subsection 2-A and in rules adopted by the commissioner. Except as provided in subsection 2-C, the license also authorizes unlicensed individuals to assist the license holder in the licensed activities only with the direct supervision of the license holder.

- A. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
 - B. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
 - C. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
 - D. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
 - E. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
 - F. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
 - G. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (RP).]
- [PL 2021, c. 52, §13 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 207, §20 (AFF).]

2-A. Criteria. The commissioner, or qualified professional department staff designated in writing by the commissioner, may issue a limited-purpose aquaculture license for certain aquaculture activities if:

- A. The proposed activity generates no discharge into coastal waters; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - B. The applicant proposes to use aquaculture gear and markings approved by the commissioner in rules adopted pursuant to subsection 8; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - C. The gear, excluding mooring equipment, does not cover more than 400 square feet of area and the gear does not present an unreasonable impediment to safe navigation; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - D. The proposed activity does not unreasonably interfere with the ingress and egress of riparian owners; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - E. The proposed activity does not unreasonably interfere with fishing or other uses of the area, taking into consideration the number and density of aquaculture leases and licensed aquaculture activities in that area; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - F. The proposed location, species and activity do not present a risk to public health; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - G. The applicant holds no more than 3 other limited-purpose aquaculture licenses issued under this section; and [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
 - H. The consent of the riparian owner is obtained if the proposed activity is located above the mean low-water mark. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]
- [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

2-B. Exceptions. Upon request, the commissioner may grant the holder of a limited-purpose aquaculture license an exception to the requirement in subsection 2 that the license holder provide direct supervision of unlicensed individuals assisting the license holder in the licensed activities at the license holder's limited-purpose aquaculture license site. The commissioner may grant exceptions to:

- A. A license holder who is also the holder of or has an ownership interest in an entity, including as a shareholder in a corporation, that holds a lease issued pursuant to section 6072, 6072-A or 6072-B; [PL 2021, c. 52, §14 (NEW); PL 2023, c. 207, §20 (AFF).]
- B. A license holder using specific gear types as specified in rule; or [PL 2021, c. 52, §14 (NEW); PL 2023, c. 207, §20 (AFF).]
- C. A license holder who has applied for a lease under section 6072 or 6072-A for an area that includes the area authorized by the license holder's existing limited-purpose aquaculture license. [PL 2021, c. 52, §14 (NEW); PL 2023, c. 207, §20 (AFF).]

The commissioner may adopt rules to implement this subsection, including, but not limited to, establishing requirements for an application for an exception and the reasons for which an exception may be granted.

[PL 2021, c. 52, §14 (NEW); PL 2023, c. 207, §20 (AFF).]

2-C. Primary assistant. The holder of a limited-purpose aquaculture license may designate one unlicensed individual as a primary assistant. Notwithstanding subsection 2, a primary assistant may conduct the licensed activities without the direct supervision of the license holder. If an individual is designated by the license holder as a primary assistant, the limited-purpose aquaculture license on which the individual is designated a primary assistant counts against the total number of licenses the primary assistant may hold under subsection 2-A, paragraph G. An individual may be the primary assistant on no more than 4 limited-purpose aquaculture licenses.

[PL 2021, c. 52, §15 (NEW).]

3. Eligibility. A limited-purpose aquaculture license may be issued only to an individual who is 12 years of age or older or to a municipal shellfish management committee established pursuant to section 6671 that has met any requirements established under subsection 3-A.

[PL 2019, c. 232, §1 (AMD).]

3-A. Educational courses. Prior to the issuance or renewal of a limited-purpose aquaculture license, the commissioner may require the applicant to complete any educational courses the commissioner determines appropriate, except that an applicant that is exempt from payment of an application fee as provided in subsection 6-A may not be required to complete an educational course. Educational courses may be provided by the department or by any public or private sector association or organization authorized by the commissioner. For any course provided by the department, the commissioner shall set an enrollment fee sufficient to recover all costs incurred by the department in providing the course.

[PL 2023, c. 98, §1 (AMD).]

4. License limitations. The issuance of a limited-purpose aquaculture license does not constitute the issuance of a lease of an area in, on or under the coastal waters.

[PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

4-A. Preference. If a person applies to lease an area that is the subject of a limited-purpose aquaculture license, the department shall notify the holder of the limited-purpose aquaculture license. If the holder of the limited-purpose aquaculture license documents to the department that that holder wants to lease the area, preference must be given as follows:

A. First, to the person who holds the limited-purpose aquaculture license in the area and who submitted an application for a lease under section 6072 for the area; and [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

B. Second, to the person who applied to lease the area, but does not hold a limited-purpose aquaculture license in the area. [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

5. Application. The application for a limited-purpose aquaculture license must:

A. Be written on forms supplied by the commissioner; [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

B. Identify the species to be cultivated; [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

B-1. Identify whether the applicant is growing the organisms for commercial or personal use; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

C. Describe the proposed source of organisms to be grown in the approved aquaculture gear; [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

D. Describe the location of the approved aquaculture gear deployment by coordinates or metes and bounds; [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

D-1. Identify the shellfish growing area that is subject to the proposed license and its classification; [PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

E. Include a clear set of plans that includes at a minimum:

(1) A location plan with an overhead plan view showing the aquaculture gear deployed at the proposed location. The area occupied by the gear must be drawn to scale on the plan. The location plan must include a north arrow, ebb and flood directions, any federal or local channels and anchorages, any nearby structures and property lines for all riparian owners within 300 feet; and

(2) Two gear drawings, one with an overhead plan view and one with a cross-sectional elevation view of the approved aquaculture gear proposed to be used. The gear drawings must be clearly dimensioned and include, at a minimum, mean high-water and mean low-water marks and the dimensions, profiles and materials used in the construction, deployment and securing of the approved aquaculture gear; [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

F. Include documentation that riparian landowners within 300 feet of the proposed activity have been notified of the license application and proposed activity; and [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

G. Include documentation that the municipal harbor master or appropriate municipal officers have been notified of the license application and proposed activity. [PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]
[PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (AMD).]

6. Fee. Except as provided in subsection 6-A, the application fee for a resident limited-purpose aquaculture license is \$100 and for a nonresident limited-purpose aquaculture license is \$400. The application fee is nonrefundable. All fees collected under this subsection must be deposited in the Aquaculture Research Fund established in section 6081.
[PL 2023, c. 98, §2 (AMD).]

6-A. Fee exemptions. The commissioner may not assess an application fee for a limited-purpose aquaculture license that is issued to:

A. A municipal shellfish management committee established pursuant to section 6671, as long as the organisms cultured on the license site are not used for commercial purposes; or [PL 2023, c. 98, §3 (NEW).]

B. A municipal officer for a municipal project, as long as the organisms cultured on the license site are not used for commercial purposes. [PL 2023, c. 98, §3 (NEW).]
[PL 2023, c. 98, §3 (NEW).]

7. Prohibition; molesting gear. A person other than a marine patrol officer, the licensed owner of the gear or the licensed owner's assistant, with written permission from the licensed owner, may not utilize, raise, lift, transfer, possess or in any manner molest any approved aquaculture gear that is deployed under a current limited-purpose aquaculture license.

A. [PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §11 (RP); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]

B. [PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §11 (RP); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]
[PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §11 (AMD); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]

7-A. Prohibition; taking product. A person other than a marine patrol officer or the license holder, or the license holder's assistant with written permission from the license holder, may not take any marine organism grown by the license holder under the license in the area designated on the license and marked in accordance with applicable rules.
[PL 2013, c. 509, §7 (NEW).]

7-B. Prohibition; transporting organisms. A person may not transport organisms grown under a limited-purpose aquaculture license that is designated for personal use to an area that is the subject of a limited-purpose aquaculture license that is designated for commercial use.
[PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (NEW).]

8. Rules. The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this section, including, but not limited to, rules establishing the type of gear that is approved aquaculture gear for the purposes of a limited-purpose aquaculture license, minimum standards for maintaining gear, methods of gear identification and license application and review procedures. The commissioner may adopt rules to limit the period of the year during which license applications may be submitted. Rules adopted under this section are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.
[PL 2021, c. 52, §17 (AMD).]

9. Violation; restitution. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 for each violation may be adjudged. If a person violates subsection 7 by cutting any lines or marker buoys or intentionally damaging approved aquaculture gear, the court shall also:

A. Order that person to pay to the owner of the approved aquaculture gear that was cut or damaged an amount equal to twice the replacement value of the gear that was damaged or lost as a result of the cutting or damaging action; and [PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §12 (NEW); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]

B. Direct that person to provide the commissioner, upon making full payment as ordered by the court, proof of that payment. [PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §12 (NEW); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]

[PL 2005, c. 92, §5 (AMD).]

10. Reporting requirement; confidentiality. A holder of a limited-purpose aquaculture license shall annually submit to the department a seeding and harvesting report for the past year and a seeding and harvesting plan for the coming year. Information provided in seeding and harvesting reports submitted by a license holder under this subsection is considered confidential information reported to the commissioner pursuant to section 6173.

[PL 2013, c. 509, §8 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1999, c. 567, §2 (NEW). PL 2001, c. 421, §§B10-12 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 421, §C1 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 247, §16 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 92, §5 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 212, §2 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 229, §§5-7 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 509, §§6-8 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 159, §6 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 232, §1 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 52, §§13-17 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 52, §21 (AFF). PL 2023, c. 98, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 207, §20 (AFF).

§6072-D. Aquaculture Management Fund

1. Fund established. The Aquaculture Management Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a dedicated, nonlapsing fund within the department. All income received by the commissioner under this section must be deposited with the Treasurer of State. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year does not lapse and must be carried forward to the next fiscal year. Any interest earned on assets of the fund is credited to the fund.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §16 (NEW).]

2. Fees. In accordance with the authority of the commissioner to levy lease rents pursuant to section 6072, subsections 9 and 13 and section 6072-A, subsection 14 and application fees pursuant to section 6072, subsections 4, 12 and 12-A, the commissioner shall adopt routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to implement a fee structure for lease rents and application fees that are in addition to the minimum lease rents and application fees that are in effect

on the effective date of this subsection. Any rent or fee assessed pursuant to this subsection that is in addition to the fees that are in effect on the effective date of this subsection must be credited to the fund. A person who does not pay the rent or fee commits a civil violation for which a fine of not more than \$1,000 may be adjudged.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §16 (NEW).]

3. Additional revenues. The commissioner may expend annual revenues that are in excess of the operating expenses of a program under subsection 4 to address matters that the commissioner determines are of an emergency nature to the State's aquaculture industry, to address matters that the commissioner determines are of long-term interest to the State's aquaculture industry and to rebate revenues to all those persons who paid fees under subsection 2. The fund may receive money from any source for the purposes of this subsection.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §16 (NEW).]

4. Uses of fund. The commissioner may make expenditures from the fund to develop and manage effective and cost-efficient water quality licensing and monitoring criteria, analyze and evaluate monitoring data, process lease applications and make information about aquaculture available to the public.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §16 (NEW).]

5. Reports. The commissioner shall report annually to the Aquaculture Advisory Council under section 6080 on all expenditures made from the fund in the previous fiscal year and a summary of work accomplished and planned.

[PL 2011, c. 598, §7 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 660, §A16 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 598, §7 (AMD).

§6073. Exclusivity; prohibition or interference

1. Exclusivity. Each lease for aquaculture shall be exclusive for the species and to the extent provided by the commissioner in the lease.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

2. Prohibition on interference. It shall be unlawful to interfere with the rights provided in a lease.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

2-A. Cultchless American oysters; possession. Prior to the point of retail sale, a person may not possess a cultchless American oyster grown in the State unless that person:

A. Is a grower licensed under section 6863, an employee of a licensed grower or an agent of a licensed grower; or [PL 1991, c. 876, §1 (NEW).]

B. Is in the possession of a bill of sale or a bill of lading that includes the license number of the grower. [PL 1991, c. 876, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 1991, c. 876, §1 (NEW).]

2-B. Marking. In the coastal waters of the State, a person may not mark or designate an area as a sea farm, aquaculture lease or other similar designation unless that area is currently leased for aquaculture or is under consideration by the department for a lease through the aquaculture lease application process.

[PL 2007, c. 212, §3 (NEW).]

3. Penalty. Any person who violates subsection 2-A or who knowingly and willfully violates subsection 2 is guilty of a Class D crime, except that, notwithstanding Title 17-A, sections 4-A, 1704 and 1705, the court shall impose a fine of not less than \$1,000 and restitution may be ordered made to the owner of the lease in an amount set by the court pursuant to Title 17-A, chapter 69.

[PL 2019, c. 113, Pt. C, §10 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 284 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 876, §1 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 157, §1 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 212, §3 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 113, Pt. C, §10 (AMD).

§6073-A. Season and minimum size exemption; aquaculture

The holder of a lease issued under section 6072, 6072-A or 6072-B or a license issued under section 6072-C is exempt from any requirement regarding the time of taking or possessing, minimum or maximum length or other minimum or maximum size requirement for any marine organism cultivated on the leased area. The exemption applies only to those organisms actually cultivated on the leased area, except that upon harvest of finfish from the leased area pursuant to an aquaculture lease, any finfish of a species that was not cultivated on the leased area but occurred in the enclosure must also be harvested and retained for appropriate disposal by the holder of a lease. Such finfish may not be sold and may not be released or disposed of into the waters of the State and must be reported to the department at the same time as reports of the harvest are filed. The commissioner shall require a system of identification of organisms exempted under this section. [PL 2007, c. 522, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 381, §5 (NEW). PL 1999, c. 156, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 575, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 92, §6 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 522, §1 (AMD).

§6073-B. Harvester license exemption; aquaculture

The holder of a lease issued under section 6072, 6072-A or 6072-B or a license issued under section 6072-C is exempt from any requirement under sections 6421, 6501, 6601, 6745, 6746, 6748, 6748-A, 6748-D, 6751, 6801-A and 6803 to hold a separate license for the removal, possession or transport of the cultured organisms from the leased area or the licensed gear, except that, beginning May 1, 2018, a person may not sell organisms cultured on the lease site or under the limited-purpose aquaculture license without a license issued under section 6810-B. [PL 2017, c. 296, §1 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 296, §10 (AFF).]

REVISOR'S NOTE: §6073-B. Harvester license exemption; scallop aquaculture (As enacted by PL 2007, c. 607, Pt. A, §1 is REALLOCATED TO TITLE 12, SECTION 6073-C)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 522, §2 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 607, Pt. A, §1 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 296, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 296, §10 (AFF).

§6073-C. Harvester license exemption; scallop aquaculture**(REALLOCATED FROM TITLE 12, SECTION 6073-B)**

The holder of a lease issued under section 6072, 6072-A or 6072-B or a license issued under section 6072-C is exempt from any requirement under sections 6701, 6702 and 6703 to hold a separate license for the removal, possession or transport of scallops from the leased area or the licensed gear, except that, beginning May 1, 2018, a person may not sell organisms cultured on the lease site or under the limited-purpose aquaculture license without a license issued under section 6810-B. [PL 2021, c. 168, §2 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

RR 2007, c. 2, §4 (RAL). PL 2017, c. 296, §2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 296, §10 (AFF). PL 2021, c. 168, §2 (AMD).

§6073-D. Season and size exemption

A person who is in possession of a marine organism raised by means of aquaculture and lawfully obtained under the laws of the State is exempt from any requirement regarding the time of taking or

possessing, minimum or maximum length or other minimum or maximum size requirement, except that this section does not apply to the requirements for lobsters, sturgeon and striped bass. This exemption applies to aquaculture products that do not meet the legal size or season requirements for wild-caught marine organisms of the same species. [PL 2009, c. 229, §8 (NEW).]

The person possessing the marine organism must maintain sufficient documentation to prove the aquacultural origin of the marine organism, including, but not limited to, documents indicating the point of origin, quantity and dates of production or purchase of all cultured marine organisms exempted by this section, and the holder must present the documentation for inspection to department personnel upon request. A consumer in possession of such a marine organism may present a valid sales receipt to satisfy this requirement. It is prima facie evidence of possession of a marine organism in violation of the law if the person possessing the marine organism cannot present sufficient evidence to prove its aquacultural origin. [PL 2009, c. 229, §8 (NEW).]

This section does not exempt the possessor of the marine organism from any requirement to hold a lease or license pursuant to section 6072, 6072-A, 6072-B, 6072-C or 6085 to engage in the culture of marine organisms. [PL 2019, c. 310, §4 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 229, §8 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 94, §4 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 310, §4 (AMD).

§6074. Special license

The commissioner may issue a special license for research, aquaculture or education that exempts the holder from one or more marine resources' laws as to the time, place, length, condition, amount and manner of taking or possessing a marine organism. Except as provided in subsection 8, the commissioner may not issue a special license unless the application for that license is approved by the advisory council. [PL 1995, c. 567, §1 (AMD).]

1. Exception. A special license does not permit the holder to sell or, beyond the state limits, to ship or transport any marine organism that is less than the minimum size established by statute. This subsection does not apply to:

A. [PL 1999, c. 156, §2 (RP).]

B. Any species grown in a hatchery for stock enhancement or resale for purposes of cultivation or stock enhancement; or [PL 2013, c. 301, §4 (AMD).]

C. Scallop spat collected under the authority of a special license and sold for the purpose of placement on a lease site authorized pursuant to section 6072 or 6072-A or under the authority of a license issued pursuant to section 6072-C. For purposes of this paragraph, until September 1, 2015, "scallop spat" means scallops less than 40 millimeters in the longest diameter and, beginning September 1, 2015, "scallop spat" means scallops less than 25 millimeters in the longest diameter. [PL 2013, c. 301, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2013, c. 301, §4 (AMD).]

2. Application. The application shall include a description of the proposed project including the objectives, the location and the estimated time of completion of the project. The application shall also include a list of the sections of law or regulation for which exemptions are required, and the specific reasons for each requested exemption.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

3. Filing fee. Each application must include a nonrefundable filing fee of \$100. The fee may be waived for research activity by institutions or organizations financed in whole or part by state funding. A filing fee may not be required from a municipality applying for a special license for using a hydraulic dredge under section 6623.

[PL 2003, c. 513, Pt. N, §1 (AMD).]

4. Limitation. The special license shall authorize only the individual named in the license to undertake the licensed activities. Any individual engaged in handling or harvesting marine organisms in the licensed project shall be listed on the license or supplemental license. The commissioner may, at any time, place conditions or limitations on the licensed activities which shall become part of the license.

[PL 1977, c. 713, §2 (AMD).]

5. Fees. At the time of the initial issuance of a special license, and each year upon renewal, an annual fee must be paid. The annual fee for a special license for no more than 2 individuals is \$50. An annual fee for a special license for more than 2 individuals but no more than 10 individuals is \$100. Additional individuals may be included in a special license in groups up to 10 for an additional \$100 per group. The fee may be waived for research activity by institutions or organizations financed in whole or in part by state funding. A license fee may not be required from a municipality for a special license for using a hydraulic dredge under section 6623. A license fee may not be required for employees of the department when they are acting in their capacity as employees under the direction of the commissioner or the commissioner's designated representative.

[PL 2003, c. 513, Pt. N, §2 (AMD).]

6. Renewal.

A. The initial issuance of each special license must specify the number of times the license may be renewed after the initial issuance. Each license may be renewed at least 4 times. The commissioner, with the advice and consent of the advisory council, may authorize renewals if the necessary investment in the research or aquaculture requires additional renewals. [PL 2003, c. 513, Pt. N, §3 (AMD).]

B. The commissioner shall annually renew the license on request for the authorized number of renewals, unless the license holder has not complied with the conditions of the license or the commissioner finds that renewal is not in the best interest of the State. Renewals do not require a new application or filing fee and do not require the advice and consent of the advisory council. [PL 2003, c. 513, Pt. N, §3 (AMD).]

[PL 2003, c. 513, Pt. N, §3 (AMD).]

7. Transportation permit. A transportation permit is required for a special license holder to ship, transport or sell any marine organism raised or harvested under a special license. The commissioner may place conditions or limitations on the activities authorized by this permit to the extent necessary to provide proper controls and to comply with federal or state health or sanitation standards. The commissioner shall annually renew the permit on request unless the permit holder has not complied with the conditions of the permit or unless the permit holder no longer holds a special license.

[PL 2019, c. 501, §6 (AMD).]

8. Council approval not required. Approval by the advisory council is not required for a special license issued by the commissioner to the following:

A. An employee of the department when the employee is acting under the direction of the commissioner or the commissioner's designated representative; [PL 1995, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

B. A person who operates an aquarium; [PL 1995, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

C. A person who operates a festival; [PL 1995, c. 567, §2 (NEW).]

D. A person who undertakes a public service activity; [PL 2003, c. 104, §1 (AMD).]

E. A municipality that operates a hydraulic or mechanical soft-shell clam dredge for municipal transplanting projects under section 6623; or [PL 2003, c. 104, §1 (AMD).]

F. A teacher who is providing a primary, secondary or postsecondary school program for educational purposes only. [PL 2013, c. 301, §5 (AMD).]

[PL 2013, c. 301, §5 (AMD).]

9. Penalty. An individual who fails to comply with the conditions or limitations on the licensed activity under this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.

[PL 2003, c. 513, Pt. N, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1977, c. 713, §2 (AMD). PL 1979, c. 412 (AMD). PL 1979, c. 622, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 189 (AMD). PL 1983, c. 662, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 204, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 567, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 156, §§2,3 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 104, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 513, §§N1-4 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 301, §§4, 5 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 501, §6 (AMD).

§6074-A. Spat collection license

1. Definition. As used in this section, "spat" means sea scallops, *Placopectin magellanicus*, or blue mussels, *Mytilus edulis*, in the post-larval stage that have gone through metamorphosis and settled on a substrate. The commissioner may, by rule, add additional species to this definition.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

2. License required. A person may not engage in the activities authorized under this section without a current spat collection license issued by the commissioner. A person who holds a lease issued under section 6072 or 6072-A or a license issued under section 6072-C is exempt from the requirement to obtain a spat collection license to collect spat on the lease site or in connection with the license issued under section 6072-C if the species is commercially cultured and listed on that person's lease or license.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

3. Licensed activity. The holder of a spat collection license may take, possess or sell the spat of marine organisms identified on the spat collection license.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

4. Type and amount of gear. The commissioner shall specify on a spat collection license the method of taking and the type and amount of gear authorized by the license.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

5. Eligibility. A spat collection license may be issued only to an individual who is a resident of the State.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

6. Rules. The commissioner shall adopt rules that define the maximum size of spat for each species that a holder of a spat collection license is authorized to take. The commissioner may adopt rules to limit the amount of spat collected and the type and amount of gear that may be used for spat collection for each species. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

7. License holder exempted. The holder of a spat collection license is exempt from the requirement to hold a license under this Part for harvesting the species identified on the spat collection license up to the maximum size of spat that is specified for that species in rule. The holder of a spat collection license is exempt from the time restrictions on taking and possessing and minimum size requirements for that species up to the maximum size of spat that is specified for that species in rule.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

8. Fees. The fee for a spat collection license is \$75. All fees collected under this subsection accrue to the Aquaculture Management Fund established in section 6072-D.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

9. Reporting. The commissioner may require the holder of a spat collection license to report annually on the quantity of spat collected and whether the spat was used for aquaculture or stock enhancement activities.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

10. Violation. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 and not more than \$500 may be adjudged.

[PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW); PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2015, c. 199, §1 (NEW). PL 2015, c. 199, §2 (AFF).

§6075. Pathology program

1. Purposes. The purposes of this section are to increase the availability of pathological assessment of shellfish stock to be introduced into the State for culturing purposes, of culturing facilities and areas and of shellstock to be exported to other states and countries. This shall be provided as a service to protect the state's waters and other resources, and to support the shellfish industries of the State.

[PL 1983, c. 559, §1 (NEW).]

2. Responsibilities. The department shall be the state agency responsible for carrying out necessary shellfish pathology services related to the importation and exportation of shellfish.

[PL 1983, c. 559, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 559, §1 (NEW).

§6076. Marine Shellfish Toxins Monitoring Program

1. Purpose. A comprehensive Marine Shellfish Toxins Monitoring Program is established to protect the public health while providing for the harvest of susceptible species of marine mollusks in areas not shown to be affected by contamination.

[PL 1989, c. 205, §2 (AMD).]

2. Responsibilities. The department is the state agency responsible for implementing the program.

[PL 2011, c. 527, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 784, §1 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 205, §2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 527, §1 (AMD).

§6077. Aquaculture monitoring program

The department may establish and maintain an information base pertaining to the siting, development and operation of finfish aquaculture facilities within the State. [PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §17 (AMD).]

1. Coordination. The commissioner shall coordinate the data collection efforts of the department with those of other state agencies that regulate or assist the finfish aquaculture industry. All agencies of the State shall cooperate with the department in the establishment of the information system and shall provide all available information requested by the commissioner.

[PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]

2. Data requirements. The commissioner may collect information in site-specific categories, including, but not limited to, those listed in this subsection, to allow effective enforcement of all laws pertaining to finfish aquaculture at individual facilities:

A. Geophysical site characteristics, including currents and bathymetry; [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]

- B. Benthic habitat characteristics and effects, including changes in community structure and function; [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]
- C. Water column effects, including water chemistry and plankton; [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]
- D. Feeding and production data sufficient to estimate effluent loading; [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]
- E. Smolt and broodstock introduction and transfer data; [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]
- F. Disease incidence and use of chemical therapeutics; and [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]
- G. Other ancillary information as the commissioner may find necessary. [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §18 (AMD).]

3. Data collection; authority. The commissioner may require persons holding licenses related to finfish aquaculture under this Title to report information in the categories listed in subsection 2. Personnel retained by leaseholders to perform tasks required for data collection as specified in subsection 2 and this subsection must be reviewed and approved by the commissioner for acceptable professional qualifications and experience prior to performing any data collection services. Routine notations of site operation do not require approved personnel.

[PL 2003, c. 660, Pt. A, §18 (AMD).]

4. Confidentiality. Notwithstanding section 6173 and except as provided in paragraphs A and B, information obtained by the department under this section is a public record as provided by Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter I.

In addition to remedies provided under Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter I, the Superior Court may assess against the department reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred by an aggrieved person who prevails in the appeal of the department's denial for a request for information.

A. Information submitted to the department under this section may be designated by the submitter as proprietary information and being only for the confidential use of the department, its agents and employees, other agencies of State Government, as authorized by the Governor, employees of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Services, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Attorney General and employees of the municipality in which the aquaculture facility is located. The designation must be clearly indicated on each page or other portion of information. The commissioner shall establish procedures to ensure that information so designated is segregated from public records of the department. The department's public records must include the indication that information so designated has been submitted to the department, giving the name of the submitter and the general nature of the information. Upon a request for information, the scope of which includes information so designated, the commissioner shall notify the submitter. Within 15 days after receipt of the notice, the submitter shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the department that the designated information should not be disclosed. Unless such a demonstration is made, the information must be disclosed and becomes a public record. The department may grant or deny disclosure for the whole or any part of the designated information requested and within 15 days shall give written notice of the decision to the submitter and the person requesting the designated information. A person aggrieved by a decision of the department may appeal to the Superior Court. Information that has been designated by the submitter as proprietary information may not be disclosed in a manner or form that permits identification of any person or vessel, except when required by court order or when specifically permitted under this section. All information provided by the department to the municipality under this paragraph is confidential and not a public record under Title 1, chapter 13. If a request for the information is

submitted to the municipality, the municipality shall submit that request to the commissioner to be processed by the department as provided in this paragraph. [PL 2009, c. 240, §12 (AMD).]

B. The commissioner may not release the designated information prior to the expiration of the time allowed for the filing of an appeal or to the rendering of the decision on any appeal. [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]

C. Any information that is collected by any other state or federal agency or information required by the department for the purpose of obtaining a permit, license, certification or other approval may not be designated or treated as designated information under paragraph A. [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]

D. The commissioner may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this section. The rules must be consistent with the provisions of Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter I. [PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW).]

E. It is unlawful to disclose designated information to any person not authorized by this section.

(1) Any person who solicits, accepts or agrees to accept, or who promises, offers or gives any pecuniary benefit in return for the disclosure of designated information is guilty of a Class D crime.

(2) A person who knowingly discloses designated information, knowing that the disclosure is not authorized, commits a civil violation for which a penalty of not more than \$5,000 may be assessed.

(3) In any action under this paragraph, the court shall first declare that the information is proprietary information. [PL 2009, c. 240, §13 (AMD).]

F. For the purposes of this subsection, "proprietary information" means information that is a trade secret or production, commercial or financial information, the disclosure of which would impair the competitive position of the submitter and would make available information not otherwise publicly available. [PL 2009, c. 240, §14 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 240, §§12-14 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 381, §6 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 247, §17 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 660, §§A17,18 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 240, §§12-14 (AMD).

§6078. Salmon Aquaculture Monitoring, Research and Development Fund

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 381, §7 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 562, §2 (AMD). RR 1995, c. 2, §§21,22 (COR). PL 1995, c. 176, §1 (RP). PL 1995, c. 176, §3 (AFF). PL 1995, c. 609, §2 (RPR). PL 1997, c. 189, §1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 156, §4 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 247, §18 (RP).

§6078-A. Aquaculture Monitoring, Research and Development Fund

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 247, §19 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 660, §§A19,20 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 92, §§7,8 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 240, §15 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 344, §18 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 598, §8 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 301, §6 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 563, §1 (RP).

§6079. Aquacultural use of antibiotics; notice

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 381, §7 (NEW). PL 1997, c. 231, §7 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 229, §9 (RP).

§6080. Aquaculture Advisory Council

1. Appointment; composition. The Aquaculture Advisory Council, referred to in this section as "the council" and established by Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 57-C, consists of 7 members who are appointed by the commissioner as follows.

A. The commissioner shall appoint at least 5 and up to 6 members from the aquaculture industry. In making appointments under this paragraph, the commissioner shall ensure geographic representation as well as representation of multiple sectors of the aquaculture industry and representation of businesses operating at different scales within the aquaculture industry. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (NEW).]

B. The commissioner shall appoint one member who is a member of the public with expertise in matters related to the work of the council. If the number of members appointed pursuant to paragraph A is fewer than 6, then the commissioner shall appoint one additional member who is a member of the public with expertise in matters related to the work of the council. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (NEW).]

In making appointments, the commissioner may consider nominations from the council and from associations representing the interests of persons involved in the aquaculture industry. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (AMD).]

2. Term. Council members serve for 3 years and continue serving until a successor is duly appointed and qualified. A member may not serve more than 2 consecutive terms. In the case of a vacancy, the commissioner shall promptly fill the vacancy. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (AMD).]

3. Purpose. The council shall make recommendations to the commissioner and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over marine resources matters concerning:

A. Matters of interest to the aquaculture industry, including, but not limited to, the leasing and licensing process, seed source, animal health, gear, compliance and research; and [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (NEW).]

B. Expenditures from the Aquaculture Management Fund for the purposes described in section 6072-D, subsection 4. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (NEW).]

The council shall bring forward to the commissioner matters of concern to the aquaculture industry and assist the commissioner with the dissemination of information to members of the aquaculture industry. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (AMD).]

4. Officers. The officers of the council are the chair and vice-chair. The term of the officers is one year. The council shall elect a member of the council for each officer position at the first regular meeting of each year. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (AMD).]

5. Meetings. The council shall meet at least twice each year, and the meetings may not be held within the same quarter. It may also meet at other times at the call of the chair or the commissioner. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (AMD).]

6. Repeal.
[PL 1999, c. 156, §5 (RP).]

7. Compensation. Council members are entitled to expenses according to Title 5, chapter 379, which are paid from the Aquaculture Management Fund established in section 6072-D. [PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

RR 1995, c. 2, §23 (COR). PL 1995, c. 609, §3 (NEW). PL 1997, c. 189, §2 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 156, §5 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 247, §20 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 92, §9 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 344, §19 (RP). PL 2011, c. 598, §9 (REEN). PL 2023, c. 556, §2 (AMD).

§6081. Aquaculture Research Fund

The Aquaculture Research Fund, referred to in this section as the "fund," is established as a dedicated, nonlapsing fund within the department. In addition to the fees derived from the limited-purpose aquaculture license, the commissioner may receive on behalf of the fund funds from any source. The commissioner shall use all money received into the fund for research and management related to the aquaculture industry. Unexpended balances in the fund at the end of the fiscal year do not lapse but must be carried forward to the next fiscal year to be used for the purposes of the fund. [PL 1999, c. 567, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1999, c. 567, §3 (NEW).

§6082. Confidentiality provisions for aquaculture information from other jurisdictions

Information obtained from other state, federal or foreign government agencies about aquaculture operations in other states, foreign countries or the exclusive economic zone that is designated as confidential by the jurisdiction from which it is obtained and that must remain confidential as a condition of receipt must be kept confidential by the department. Such information is not a public record as defined in Title 1, section 402, subsection 3. This section does not apply to aquaculture operations conducted in Maine. [PL 2007, c. 212, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 212, §4 (NEW).

§6083. Lease option

1. Lease option. A person may apply for a lease option that conveys the right to file an application for an aquaculture lease under section 6072, 6072-A or 6072-B for a particular area of the submerged lands of the State and for a defined period of time. The department may not accept an application for an aquaculture lease pursuant to section 6072, 6072-A or 6072-B or an application for a limited-purpose aquaculture license pursuant to section 6072-C in an area that is under a lease option, except as described in subsection 2.

[PL 2009, c. 229, §10 (NEW).]

2. Other claims of preference. A lease option under this section does not supersede the provisions for application preference in section 6072, subsection 8 and section 6072-A, subsection 12. Competing aquaculture lease applications from persons claiming preference under section 6072, subsection 8 or section 6072-A, subsection 12 must be evaluated by the department to determine if the claim of preference is valid and, if it is found to be valid, the holder of the lease option may cancel the lease option and receive a fee refund prorated for the remainder of the term of the lease option.

[PL 2009, c. 229, §10 (NEW).]

3. Issuance criteria. The applicant for a lease option under this section must demonstrate that the site is being assessed in good faith for its suitability for aquaculture and that there is a reasonable likelihood that an application for an aquaculture lease will be filed during the term of the lease option. The area proposed for lease option may not contain an existing aquaculture lease or license or include an area that is part of an aquaculture lease or license application under consideration by the department.

[PL 2009, c. 229, §10 (NEW).]

4. Fee. The fee for issuance of a lease option under this section may be up to \$500 for the first acre plus up to \$50 for each additional acre, the amount to be established in rules adopted by the commissioner. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2009, c. 229, §10 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 229, §10 (NEW).

§6084. Nonpayment of aquaculture lease fees

If a holder of an aquaculture lease or license under this subchapter fails to pay any related fees or charges, the commissioner may refuse to renew or issue any marine resources license or permit to the holder of the aquaculture lease or license. [PL 2009, c. 229, §11 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 229, §11 (NEW).

§6085. Marine organism aquaculture license

1. License required. The commissioner may require a license for aquaculture of marine organisms in facilities that are not located in the coastal waters of the State but are located in the State.

[PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

2. Licensed activities. The holder of a license under this section may possess marine organisms the holder has raised by means of aquaculture. The holder of such a license is exempt from any requirement regarding the time of taking or possessing, minimum or maximum length or other minimum or maximum size requirement for any marine organism the holder has raised by means of aquaculture.

[PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

3. Permit denial. The commissioner may refuse to issue a license under this section if the commissioner finds that the aquaculture activity presents an unreasonable risk to indigenous marine life or its environment. In determining whether or not to refuse to issue a license, the commissioner shall consider factors, including, but not limited to:

A. Risk of accidental or intentional introduction of marine organisms or marine organism products into the coastal waters of the State; [PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

B. Risk of the introduction or spread of disease within the State; and [PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

C. Interference with the enforcement of possession, size or season limits for wild marine organisms. [PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

[PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

4. Monitoring and revocation. The commissioner shall monitor licensed facilities under this section on an annual basis. If the commissioner determines following an annual review or at any other time that the licensed aquaculture activity presents an unreasonable risk to indigenous marine life or its environment, the commissioner may revoke the license after the licensee has been given an opportunity for a hearing before the department.

[PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

5. Reporting. The commissioner may require the holder of a license under this section to file periodic reports regarding the aquaculture practices and production of the facility. Information obtained pursuant to this provision is considered fisheries statistics for the purposes of section 6173, except that information about marine organism health reported pursuant to section 6071 may not be considered fisheries statistics.

[PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

6. Fee. The commissioner may charge a fee for a license under this section not to exceed \$1,000, the amount to be established in rules adopted by the commissioner depending on the type and amount of aquaculture. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN).]

7. Rules. The commissioner may adopt rules establishing procedures to implement the issuance, renewal and amendment of licenses under this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2021, c. 52, §18 (NEW).]

8. License expiration. Notwithstanding section 6301, subsection 2, the commissioner may issue a license under this section for more than one calendar year.

[PL 2021, c. 557, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 229, §12 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 94, §5 (RP). PL 2019, c. 310, §5 (REEN). PL 2021, c. 52, §18 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 557, §3 (AMD).

§6085-A. Land-based aquaculture; reporting

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2017, c. 94, §6 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 310, §6 (RP).

§6086. Abandoned aquaculture equipment and stock

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Abandoned aquaculture equipment" or "equipment" means any equipment associated with the operation of an aquaculture lease or license pursuant to section 6072, 6072-A, 6072-B or 6072-C that has been left by the aquaculture lease or license holder in coastal waters without intention of removal. "Abandoned aquaculture equipment" includes, but is not limited to, rafts, pens, barges, skiffs, nets, lines, mooring systems, cages, trays, racks, upwellers and other equipment used in the operation of an aquaculture site. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

B. "Abandoned aquaculture stock" or "stock" means cultured marine organisms, including, but not limited to, fish, shellfish, sea urchins and algae, that have been left by the owner in coastal waters without intention of removal. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

2. Eligibility. Abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock is subject to removal under this section only if:

A. The aquaculture lease or license holder has indicated in writing to the department that the holder wishes to terminate the aquaculture lease or license with which the abandoned equipment or stock is associated; the department has revoked the lease pursuant to section 6072, subsection 11 or section 6072-A, subsection 22; or the term of the lease or license has expired; [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

B. The equipment or stock remains in the area of the lease or license site and the equipment or stock is not legally permitted to remain by another authority, such as a municipal mooring permit; and [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

C. The aquaculture lease or license holder has not entered into an agreement with the department to accomplish timely removal of the equipment or stock. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

3. Responsibility of the department. The department's duties with respect to abandoned aquaculture equipment and abandoned aquaculture stock are as set out in this subsection.

A. The department shall investigate reports of abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock and review terminated, expired or revoked aquaculture leases and licenses to determine if there is abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock and give notice to the aquaculture lease or license holder. The department shall also give notice to any person who has declared to the department, in writing, a property interest in the equipment or stock and to any person the lease or license holder has, in writing, identified as having a property interest in the equipment or stock. The notice must require the lease or license holder and anyone with a property interest to respond within 15 days and to remove the equipment or stock from the coastal waters within 60 days of notification by the department or, if the equipment or stock is icebound, within 60 days of ice-out in the body of water where the equipment or stock is located. If the persons to whom the department has given notice cannot be contacted or do not respond to the notice and remove the equipment or stock within the time period specified, the department may initiate removal of the equipment or stock. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

B. The department may authorize a 3rd party to remove abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock if the department is satisfied that the work will be completed. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

C. Notwithstanding the time periods for removal by a lease or license holder or person with a property interest specified in paragraph A, if the department determines at any time that abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock is a human health or safety hazard or is an immediate threat to the marine environment, the department may immediately remove the equipment or stock from the coastal waters. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

D. If the department removes abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock from coastal waters under this subsection, the department may sell the equipment or stock. Any proceeds from the sale must first be applied to the costs to the State directly related to the expense of removal of the equipment or stock. Any money that remains may be applied to any liens against the equipment or stock. Money that finally remains must accrue to the Aquaculture Management Fund established under section 6072-D. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

E. Abandoned aquaculture equipment or abandoned aquaculture stock located on intertidal land may not be removed by the department without the permission of the landowner unless the department determines that the equipment or stock is a human health or safety hazard or is an immediate threat to the marine environment. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

F. The department may adopt rules governing abandoned aquaculture equipment and abandoned aquaculture stock, including, but not limited to, rules requiring the disclosure of property interests in abandoned aquaculture equipment and abandoned aquaculture stock. Rules adopted under this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

4. Civil action. If the State is not compensated for removal costs under the provisions of subsection 3, the State shall first attempt to recover the removal costs by claiming these expenses against any bond the aquaculture lease or license holder held during the term of the aquaculture lease or license. If the department is unsuccessful in recovering the removal costs in that manner, the State may bring a civil action against the owner of the equipment or stock to cover any cost of removal of the equipment or stock from coastal waters. The court in its discretion may award an additional 50% of the cost of

removal. The penalty is payable to the Aquaculture Management Fund established under section 6072-D.

[PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 229, §13 (NEW).

§6087. Seaweed Fisheries Advisory Council

1. Appointment; composition. The Seaweed Fisheries Advisory Council, established by Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 57-H and referred to in this section as "the council," consists of 7 members appointed by the commissioner as follows:

- A. Two members who process seaweed or hold either a seaweed permit or seaweed buyer's license; [PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]
- B. Two members who are seaweed aquaculture lease holders or their designees; [PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]
- C. One member of the scientific community; [PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]
- D. One member who harvests seaweed; and [PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]
- E. One member of the public. [PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]

The commissioner shall make appointments so that the composition of the council reflects the diversity of the State's seaweed operations.

[PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]

2. Purpose. The council shall:

- A. Make recommendations to the commissioner on all matters concerning the health of the seaweed resource, its ecosystem and the industry it supports; and [RR 2017, c. 1, §4 (COR).]
- B. Make recommendations to the commissioner regarding expenditures from the Seaweed Management Fund as described in section 6806. [PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]

[RR 2017, c. 1, §4 (COR).]

3. Term. The term of a member appointed to the council is 3 years, except that a vacancy during an unexpired term must be filled in the same manner as for the original member for the unexpired portion of the member's term. A member may not serve more than 2 consecutive terms.

[PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]

4. Officers. The officers of the council are the chair, vice-chair and secretary. The term of the officers is one year. The council shall elect a member of the council for each officer position at the first regular meeting of each year.

[PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]

5. Meeting. The council shall meet at least once a year. It may also meet at other times at the call of the commissioner.

[PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

RR 2017, c. 1, §4 (COR). PL 2017, c. 52, §2 (NEW).

§6088. Municipal fees

If a person submits an application to the commissioner for a lease or license under this subchapter and the municipality provides the commissioner with information necessary for the completion of that lease or license application, the municipality may not charge that person a fee of more than \$50 for the

administrative costs associated with providing that information to the commissioner on that person's behalf. [PL 2019, c. 112, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2019, c. 112, §1 (NEW).

SUBCHAPTER 3

INSPECTION AND QUALITY CONTROL

§6101. Voluntary fish products inspection program

1. Purpose. The purpose of this section shall be to increase the availability of fishery product inspection services to Maine processors and packers in order to improve the marketing of fishery products.

[PL 1989, c. 57, §2 (AMD).]

2. Program. The department is the state agency that is responsible for cooperating with the Federal Government in developing and administering a voluntary fishery product inspection program. Notwithstanding section 6103, the commissioner may enter into agreements with the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and seafood producers for the issuance of certificates of compliance necessary to meet international regulations and obtain reimbursement from the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the costs incurred by the department for the inspection and certification program.

[PL 2011, c. 567, §1 (AMD).]

3. Regulations. The commissioner may adopt or amend regulations not inconsistent with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program and National Marine Fisheries Services regulations for the voluntary inspection of fishery products.

[PL 1989, c. 57, §2 (AMD).]

4. Sardines. The program shall exclude sardines and other fish inspected by the Maine Sardine Council.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

5. Labeling. All products inspected under this section shall be accurately labeled to provide the public with information about the contents and quality of the fishery product. The commissioner may adopt regulations to insure proper and complete labeling.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

6. Misleading labeling prohibited. It shall be unlawful to sell any article inspected under this section under any name or other marking or labeling which is false or misleading, or in any container of a misleading form or size. Established trade names approved by the commissioner are permitted. It shall be unlawful to sell any article not inspected under this section under any name or other marking or labeling which is false and misleading when the mark or label is intended to represent the contents as having been inspected and graded.

[PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW).]

7. Preventing misleading labeling. If the commissioner has reason to believe that a violation of subsection 6 is occurring, the commissioner may order the withholding of an inspection or grading label or mark.

[RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §30 (COR).]

8. Procedure. The commissioner shall give notice of a withholding order and may give an opportunity for a hearing on the order. The order is effective on service or receipt of the notice. The

notice must contain a statement of the violation, the order and any opportunity for a hearing and must be personally served on or mailed to the violator. Any hearing must be requested in writing within 10 days, unless a longer period is mutually agreed to in writing. Notice of the hearing must be given immediately to the violator.

If a hearing is held, it must be conducted in the Augusta area. At the hearing, the violator is entitled to present any evidence concerning the violation and surrounding circumstances. All decisions of the commissioner must be in writing. All decisions of the commissioner under this section may be reviewed in the manner provided under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 7.

[RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §31 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 57, §2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 567, §1 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §§30, 31 (COR).

§6102. Mandatory quality control program

The commissioner may, in accordance with the most modern public health and food protection practices, establish and maintain effective surveillance and inspection of all segments of the State's fishing industries. The commissioner may establish a program to carry out this responsibility. The program may include provisions similar to those of section 6856 and section 6101, including any additional inspection, licensing and certification requirements that are necessary to insure proper sanitation and quality control. The commissioner may adopt or amend rules prescribing the minimum standards for establishments and for sanitation and quality control of the processing of any marine organism or its products. Each set of rules must be based on the particular operational requirements of the species or phase of industry being regulated and must conform to the latest state or federal sanitation standards. [RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §32 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1979, c. 672, §A50 (AMD). PL 1981, c. 705, §C1 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §32 (COR).

§6103. Implementation of fishery product or shellfish inspection programs

The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and the Commissioner of Marine Resources shall cooperate in developing and implementing any fishery product or shellfish inspection programs. Those programs must meet the standards established by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry under the Maine Food Law. [PL 2005, c. 434, §2 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §6 (REV).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1981, c. 705, §C2 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 57, §3 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 784, §4 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 434, §2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §6 (REV).

SUBCHAPTER 3-A

SURIMI OR SURIMI PRODUCTS

§6111. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [PL 1985, c. 254 (NEW).]

1. Surimi. "Surimi" means an intermediate manufactured seafood product derived from minced fish meat, washed to remove water-soluble protein, blood or other undesirable components and mixed

with additives, containing sugars or sodium, or both, to enhance its frozen storage and functional characteristics.

[PL 1985, c. 622, §1 (RPR).]

2. Surimi-based analogue.

[PL 1985, c. 622, §2 (RP).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 254 (NEW). PL 1985, c. 622, §§1,2 (AMD).

§6112. Labeling of food products containing surimi

A food product may not be sold in this State consisting of or containing surimi unless the packaging containing the food product is clearly and conspicuously labeled or, if there is no packaging, unless a sign is conspicuously displayed, indicating that the product is "imitation lobster," "imitation crab," "imitation" followed by the name of the seafood imitated, "processed seafood," "surimi," "lobster-processed seafood salad," "crab-processed seafood salad" or other terms as approved by the Department of Marine Resources through rules adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II. Any term approved by that department is sufficient to notify the public that the product contains surimi. [PL 1991, c. 378 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 254 (NEW). PL 1985, c. 622, §3 (RPR). PL 1991, c. 378 (AMD).

§6113. Serving food containing surimi

No food containing surimi or a surimi product may be served in any eating establishment in the State whether for consumption on or off the premises, unless on the menu and all notices advertising the food it is clearly and conspicuously labeled as "imitation lobster," "imitation crab," "imitation" followed by the name of the seafood imitated, "processed seafood," "surimi," "lobster-processed seafood salad," "crab-processed seafood salad" or other terms as approved by the Department of Marine Resources through rules adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II. Any term approved by that department shall be sufficient to notify the public that the product contains surimi. [PL 1985, c. 622, §4 (RPR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 254 (NEW). PL 1985, c. 622, §4 (RPR).

§6114. Violation; enforcement

1. Forfeiture. A violation of this subchapter is a civil violation for which a forfeiture not to exceed \$100 may be adjudged.

[PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. B, §13 (AMD); PL 2001, c. 421, Pt. C, §1 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 254 (NEW). PL 2001, c. 421, §B13 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 421, §C1 (AFF).

SUBCHAPTER 4

FISHWAYS

§6121. Fishways in existing dams or artificial obstructions

1. Commissioner's authority. In order to conserve, develop or restore anadromous fish resources, the commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife may require a fishway to be

erected, maintained, repaired or altered by the owners, lessors or other persons in control of any dam or other artificial obstruction within coastal waters frequented by river herring, shad, salmon, sturgeon or other anadromous fish species.

[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

2. Examination of dams. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall annually examine all dams and other artificial obstructions to fish passage within the coastal waters in order to determine whether fishways are necessary, sufficient or suitable for the passage of anadromous fish.

[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

3. Initiation of fishway proceedings. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall initiate proceedings to consider construction, repair or alteration of fishways in existing dams or other artificial obstructions whenever the commissioners determine that either of the following conditions may exist:

A. Fish passage at the dam or obstruction in issue, whether alone or in conjunction with fish passage at other upriver barriers, will improve access to sufficient and suitable habitat anywhere in the watershed to support a substantial commercial or recreational fishery for one or more species of anadromous fish; or [PL 1983, c. 388, §1 (RPR).]

B. Fish passage at the dam or obstruction in issue is necessary to protect or enhance rare, threatened or endangered fish species. [PL 1983, c. 388, §1 (RPR).]
[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

4. Adjudicatory proceedings.

A. A fishway proceeding is an adjudicatory proceeding under Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 4, but a hearing may not be required unless requested in accordance with paragraph B. Notice of the proceeding must be given in accordance with Title 5, section 9052 and the following requirements:

(1) Personal notice must be given to the dam owner, lessee or other person in control of the dam or artificial obstruction, informing that person that a proceeding has been undertaken and of that person's right to request a hearing; and

(2) Notice to the public, in newspapers of general circulation in the areas affected, notifying the public of the initiation of the proceedings and of the public's opportunity to request a hearing. [PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

B. If any interested person requests a public hearing, the commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall, within 30 days, either notify the petitioners in writing of the commissioners' denial stating the reasons or schedule a public hearing. The commissioners shall hold a public hearing whenever:

(1) The commissioners are petitioned by 50 or more Maine residents; or

(2) The owner, lessee or other person in control of the dam or artificial obstruction requests a public hearing. [PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

C. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall accept testimony from the dam owner, lessee or other person in control of the dam or artificial obstruction on alternate fishway designs to those proposed by the commissioners for that dam or artificial obstruction. [PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

5. Decision. In the event the commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife decide that a fishway should be constructed, repaired, altered or maintained, their final orders must be issued with specific plans and descriptions of the fishway construction, alteration, repair or maintenance requirements, the conditions of the use of the fishway and the time and manner required for fishway

operation. The commissioners may issue a decision requiring the owners, lessees or other persons in control of the dam or obstruction to construct, repair, alter or maintain a fishway. Such a decision must be supported by a finding based on evidence submitted to the commissioners that either of the following conditions exist:

A. One or more species of anadromous or migratory fish can be restored in substantial numbers to the watershed by construction, alteration, repair or maintenance of a fishway, and habitat anywhere in the watershed above the dam or obstruction is sufficient and suitable to support a substantial commercial or recreational fishery for one or more species of anadromous or migratory fish; or [PL 1983, c. 388, §1 (RPR).]

B. The construction, alteration, repair or maintenance of a fishway is necessary to protect or enhance rare, threatened or endangered fish species. [PL 1983, c. 388, §1 (RPR).]

In the event that the commissioners decide that no fishway should be constructed, the commissioners shall specify in that decision a period immediately subsequent to that decision during which no fishway may be required to be constructed. That period may not exceed 5 years.

[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

6. Compliance.

A. The owner, lessee or other person in control of the dam or other artificial obstruction is jointly and severally liable for the costs of fishway design, construction, repair, alteration or maintenance and for full compliance with a decision issued pursuant to subsection 5. If the owner, lessee or other person in control of the dam or other artificial obstruction refuses to comply or does not fully comply with the commissioners' decision, the commissioners shall initiate a civil action to enjoin the owner, lessee or person in control of the dam to comply fully with the commissioners' order or to restrain the violation of an order. In the proceeding, the court shall not review the legality of the commissioners' order, except when the owner, lessee or person in control of the dam or artificial obstruction has brought a timely petition for judicial review pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 7. [PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

B. The court may render judgment against and order the sale of the dam or other artificial obstruction, the land on which it stands and a right-of-way to the dam or artificial obstruction in order to secure the costs of fishway construction, repair, alteration or maintenance and costs of the court-ordered sale and the costs incurred by the department for fishway design. The purchaser of the dam or other obstruction is subject to the commissioners' decision. [PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

7. Privileged entry. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the commissioners' agents or subcontractors are privileged to enter upon any private land in order to examine, at least annually, fishways in dams or other artificial obstructions and the examination of dams provided in subsection 2. The commissioners shall notify the landowner, lessee or other person in control of the dam when the examination will take place and the time required to complete the examination. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall make every effort to preserve private land and shall restore surrounding lands to the grade and condition existing prior to entry, if economically feasible.

[PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1979, c. 127, §84 (AMD). PL 1983, c. 388, §1 (RPR). PL 2001, c. 190, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 598, §10 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 358, §1 (AMD).

§6122. Construction of new dams or other artificial obstructions

1. Notice required. Prior to construction or prior to authorizing construction of a new dam or other obstruction in the coastal waters, the owner, lessee or other person in control of the dam or other artificial obstruction shall provide written notice to the commissioner, supplying information on construction plans, proposed location and date of construction of the dam or other artificial obstruction. [PL 1983, c. 388, §2 (RPR).]

2. Initiation of fishway proceedings. Within 30 days of receipt of the construction notice, the commissioner shall review the plans in order to determine whether fishway construction or alteration of proposed fishway construction plans may be required pursuant to the criteria set forth in section 6121, subsection 3. If the commissioner determines that such construction or alteration may be necessary, the commissioner shall initiate fishway proceedings and follow the procedures prescribed in section 6121.

[RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §33 (COR).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1983, c. 388, §2 (RPR). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §33 (COR).

§6123. Obstructing fishways

A person who tampers with, damages, destroys or closes to fish migration or introduces foreign objects into any fishway without the authority of the commissioner commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture of not less than \$100 and not more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 1999, c. 771, Pt. B, §1 (AMD); PL 1999, c. 771, Pt. D, §§1,2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1999, c. 771, §B1 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 771, §§D1,2 (AFF).

§6124. Violations; penalty

A person who improperly operates a fishway required pursuant to this subchapter commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture equivalent to the value of the fish killed but not more than \$10,000 for each day of that violation may be adjudged. [PL 1999, c. 771, Pt. B, §2 (AMD); PL 1999, c. 771, Pt. D, §§1,2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 275, §1 (NEW). PL 1999, c. 771, §B2 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 771, §§D1,2 (AFF).

§6125. Rules

The Department of Marine Resources and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall jointly make rules defining "fish kill." [PL 1989, c. 275, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 275, §1 (NEW).

SUBCHAPTER 5

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

§6131. River herring fishing rights

The commissioner is authorized to develop, manage or lease river herring fishing rights as follows. [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

1. River herring rights. The commissioner shall grant the right, exclusive or otherwise, to take river herring to any municipality entitled to those rights on January 1, 1974 and may grant the right to take river herring to any other municipality provided:

A. Any municipality that has had the right to take river herring, exclusive or otherwise, or is granted that right by the commissioner, shall take action through its legislative body and file a copy of this action with the commissioner prior to April 20th or lose that right for the remaining part of that year; [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

B. Municipal rights that are not exercised for 3 consecutive years lapse; [PL 2009, c. 17, §1 (AMD).]

C. At its annual meeting the municipality may determine by vote:

(1) Whether river herring fishing will be operated by the municipality through the municipal officers or a committee; and

(2) Whether the municipal rights to take river herring will be sold by the municipal officers or committee; and [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

D. Harvesting plans must be developed as follows.

(1) Any municipality engaged in harvesting river herring shall submit a written harvesting plan to the commissioner prior to April 20th of each calendar year. All harvesting plans must set forth in detail the exact conditions under which river herring may be taken, all in accordance with good conservation practices.

(2) The commissioner, after consultation with the appropriate municipal officers, shall approve or modify the harvesting plan as the commissioner determines necessary for the conservation of river herring and other anadromous fish, and shall file a copy of the approved plan with the clerk of the municipality. [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

[PL 2009, c. 17, §1 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

2. Limitations. The following limitations apply to any grant.

A. It is unlawful to take river herring from 6 a.m. each Thursday morning until 6 a.m. Sunday morning. Municipalities that make other provisions for escape of spawning river herring that are approved by the commissioner are exempt from this limit. [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

B. It is unlawful for any municipality or purchaser or lessee of the municipal right to take river herring in any manner except as provided in the approved river herring harvesting plan. [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

3. Closed period in rivers and streams not under lease agreement. In any river or stream not managed under a lease agreement, there is a 72-hour closed period on the taking of river herring and obstruction of the watercourse to allow the free passage of fish from 6 a.m. on Thursday to 6 a.m. the following Sunday.

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

4. Violation of harvesting plan. If the commissioner determines after investigation that the municipality is not following its river herring harvesting plan, the commissioner shall notify the municipality. Any municipality that fails to take corrective action within 48 hours of notification loses its river herring fishing privilege for that calendar year. Upon further notification by the commissioner of loss of river herring fishing privileges, the municipality or its agents shall cease all fishing activity and immediately remove all traps, weirs, seines or other river herring fishing gear from their river herring waters.

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

5. Leasing of rights. The commissioner:

A. When the commissioner decides to manage or lease any river herring fishing rights when a municipality has had those rights and has failed to act as provided in subsection 1, shall so notify the clerk of the municipality in writing. After the notice, the commissioner may lease any of those rights to any person, as the commissioner determines is in the best interest of the State. All leases must be in writing and signed by the commissioner and the lessee and must set forth in detail the exact conditions under which the river herring may be taken, all in accordance with good conservation practices; and [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

B. May manage or lease river herring fishing rights in any river or stream where a municipality does not have those rights. The commissioner may lease any of those rights to any person, as the commissioner determines is in the best interest of the State. All leases must be in writing and approved and signed by the commissioner and the lessee and must set forth in detail the exact conditions under which the river herring may be taken, all in accordance with good conservation practices. [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

6. Violation of terms. It is unlawful for any person holding such a lease to violate any of its terms or to cause the same to be done.

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

7. Molesting equipment. It is unlawful to molest the fishing equipment of any lease holder or to interfere with the fishing rights granted by the lease.

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

8. Migratory Fish Fund. All fees received by the commissioner from river herring leasing rights are allocated to the Migratory Fish Fund, as established. Expenditures from the Migratory Fish Fund must be made:

A. To build fishways for river herring and other migratory fish; [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

B. For construction of other facilities for improving the environment of river herring and other migratory fish; [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

C. For general propagation and conservation of river herring and other migratory fish; [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

D. For research to enhance the fishing industry based on river herring and other migratory fish; and [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

E. For management measures required to maintain or enhance river herring populations or populations of other migratory fish. [PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

The Migratory Fish Fund does not lapse.

[PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1977, c. 661, §5 (NEW). PL 1981, c. 433, §3 (AMD). PL 1987, c. 513, §2 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 731, §1 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 17, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 598, §11 (AMD).

§6132. Natural Fish Die-off Clean-up Program

Upon the request of any affected municipality, the Department of Marine Resources shall assess the extent and severity of public nuisance and potential threats to public health posed by natural fish die-offs. The department shall provide technical advice and, subject to the limits of available funding, financial assistance to the affected municipalities in the conduct of any cleanup or other mitigating measures. [PL 1987, c. 459 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 786 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 459 (AMD).

§6133. Inspection of documents and watercraft

1. Inspection powers. Marine patrol officers may stop and board any watercraft at any time to inspect its documents, licenses and permits of the occupants of the watercraft and to conduct a safety inspection.

[PL 1987, c. 713, §1 (NEW).]

2. Rules. The commissioner shall adopt rules pursuant to the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375, which:

A. Specify safety requirements for watercraft subject to inspection. Requirements may be incorporated by reference to other state or federal watercraft safety laws, rules or regulations; and [PL 1987, c. 713, §1 (NEW).]

B. Define the procedure for a safety inspection. [PL 1987, c. 713, §1 (NEW).]
[PL 1987, c. 713, §1 (NEW).]

3. Failure to submit to inspection. Failure of an owner, operator or occupant of watercraft to submit to the inspection authorized by this section is a Class E crime and shall be grounds for the suspension, pursuant to chapter 617, of licenses issued under this Part to the person failing to submit.

[PL 1987, c. 713, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 713, §1 (NEW).

§6134. River herring passage; fishways on the St. Croix River

By May 1, 2013, the commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall ensure that the fishways on the Woodland Dam and the Grand Falls Dam located on the St. Croix River are configured or operated in a manner that allows the unconstrained passage of river herring. [PL 2013, c. 47, §1 (NEW).]

1. Woodland Dam.

[PL 2013, c. 47, §1 (RP).]

2. Grand Falls Dam.

[PL 2013, c. 47, §1 (RP).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1995, c. 48, §1 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 587, §1 (RPR). PL 2011, c. 598, §12 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 47, §1 (RPR).

§6135. Maine Groundfish Fund

The Maine Groundfish Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a dedicated, nonlapsing fund within the department. Unexpended balances in the fund at the end of the fiscal year may not lapse and must be carried forward to the next fiscal year and used for the purposes of this section. [PL 2003, c. 673, Pt. GGG, §1 (NEW).]

The fund may receive money from any source for the purposes of this section. Revenues may be used for support of the groundfish industry including research, development and economic assistance to maintain access, capacity and infrastructure along the entire coast. The commissioner shall select activities and projects that will be most beneficial to the commercial groundfish industry of the State. [PL 2003, c. 673, Pt. GGG, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 673, §GGG1 (NEW).

§6136. Maine Coast Environmental Trust Fund

1. Creation of trust fund. There is established the Maine Coast Environmental Trust Fund, referred to in this section as "the trust," as an Other Special Revenue Funds account within the Department of Marine Resources.

[PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

2. Purpose of trust. The purpose of the trust is to protect and improve the quality of the State's marine environment by providing grants to qualifying organizations for activities to advance scientific research concerning the nature, magnitude and effect of pollution of the State's estuarine, near-shore and off-shore marine environments and the means to abate pollution or preserve and enhance estuarine, near-shore and off-shore marine habitats.

[PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

3. Sources for trust. Money obtained from the following sources must be paid to the Treasurer of State for the benefit of the trust:

A. Gifts, bequests and donations to the trust from private individuals or corporations desiring to protect and improve the marine environment through applied research; [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

B. Grants to the trust from private or public foundations desiring to protect and improve the marine environment through applied and basic research; [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

C. Funds stipulated for deposit in the trust as part of the terms of settlement of legal actions against corporations, partnerships or individuals for violations of environmental laws, rules or regulations; [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

D. Funds for research received under any federal oil spill trust fund; [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

E. Revenues that may be from time to time realized through public bond issues; [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

F. Federal grants and loans; and [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

G. Appropriations and transfers authorized by the Legislature. [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]
[PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

4. Use and administration of trust. Trust funds must be used to provide grants to meet the purposes of this section. The department shall administer the trust as follows.

A. Unless otherwise specified by the source of a contribution to the trust, 50% of a contribution to the trust must be deposited in a principal account and maintained as a permanent endowment. The income earned on funds held in this account, combined with the remaining 50% of funds contributed to the trust, must be deposited in an operating account and made available for disbursement as grants to accomplish the purposes of this section and as expenditures for purposes of administering the trust. [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

B. An executive agency is not eligible to receive funding from the trust unless the agency jointly undertakes a research proposal with another entity that is not an executive agency. [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

C. The department shall give preference to institutions, organizations and entities located and operated in the State. [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

D. Principal, or interest earned from principal, with special instructions from contributors must be awarded in accordance with the contributors' instructions. [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

E. All money in the trust not immediately required for payment, pursuant to the provisions of this section, must be invested by the Treasurer of State as authorized by Title 5, section 138, except that the securities in which the trust money is invested must remain part of the trust until exchanged for other securities and the income from all investments must remain a part of the trust unless prohibited by federal law. [PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW).]

5. Amendment and termination of trust. The department shall make recommendations as follows.

A. [PL 2011, c. 598, §13 (RP).]

B. In the event the department determines that the provisions of the trust should be amended, the department shall make appropriate recommendations to the Legislature. [PL 2011, c. 598, §13 (AMD).]

C. The department may recommend that the trust be terminated if termination is determined to be appropriate. In the event that the Legislature terminates the trust, the principal and operating funds must be disbursed in a manner consistent with the purpose of the trust. [PL 2011, c. 598, §13 (AMD).]

[PL 2011, c. 598, §13 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2005, c. 641, §1 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 598, §13 (AMD).

§6137. Atlantic Salmon Commission

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §4 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 561, §5 (RP).

§6138. Members; appointment; composition; term; compensation; meetings

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §5 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 561, §6 (RP).

§6139. Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat Advisory Council

(REPEALED)

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §6 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 225, §4 (RP).

§6140. Atlantic salmon license

1. License required. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person may not fish for Atlantic salmon from any state waters without a current Atlantic salmon license.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

2. Licensed activity. The holder of an Atlantic salmon license may fish for Atlantic salmon in inland and coastal waters of the State.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

3. License fees. The following provisions govern license fees.

A. The fee for an Atlantic salmon license is \$15 for a resident. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

B. The fee for an Atlantic salmon license for any nonresident is as follows:

- (1) For a season license for a nonresident 16 years of age or older, \$30;
- (2) For a 3-day license for a nonresident 16 years of age or older, \$15. This license may not be exchanged for a season license; and
- (3) For a license for a nonresident under 16 years of age, \$5. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

C. Members of Indian tribes in this State and residents of this State under 16 years of age are exempt from any fee. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]
[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

4. Atlantic salmon; possession, buying or selling. A person may not possess, buy or sell Atlantic salmon unless each fish is clearly identified by one of the following methods:

- A. Tagged with a New Brunswick, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland-Labrador Atlantic salmon tag if imported from those Canadian provinces; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]
- B. Identified by a sales receipt less than 24 hours old; [PL 2007, c. 615, §7 (AMD).]
- C. For wholesale and retail seafood dealers, identified by a bill of sale indicating numbers of fish purchased, dates of purchase and point of origin of all fish purchased ; or [PL 2007, c. 615, §7 (AMD).]
- D. Tagged with a tag that conforms to rules adopted by the commissioner and identifies the fish as having been legally obtained from a private fee pond licensed pursuant to section 12508. Fish obtained in this manner may not be resold. [PL 2007, c. 615, §7 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 615, §7 (AMD).]

5. Exceptions. This section does not apply to a person holding a lease that allows that person to engage in the aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in this State while conducting authorized activities on that person's lease site.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

6. Agent's fee. Any clerk or agent appointed by the department to issue an Atlantic salmon license shall retain \$2 for each license issued.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

7. Use of license fees. All license fees must be used by the commissioner for purposes of conservation and management of the Atlantic salmon in this State.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

8. Duplicates. The department or its agents shall issue a duplicate license to any person whose license was accidentally lost or destroyed. The fee for a replacement license is \$1.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

9. Fishing in inland waters. When fishing in inland waters, the holder of a license authorized under this section is subject to all the provisions of Part 13.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §7 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 615, §7 (AMD).

§6140-A. Atlantic salmon; method of fishing; season

Unless more restrictive rules are adopted by the department, the following restrictions apply to methods of fishing and the season for Atlantic salmon. [PL 2019, c. 225, §5 (AMD).]

1. Catch and release only. All fishing for Atlantic salmon is catch and release, except for Atlantic salmon lawfully raised by means of aquaculture.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §8 (NEW).]

2. Method of fishing. A person may not fish for Atlantic salmon in waters of the State by any means other than hook and line with an unweighted artificial fly.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §8 (NEW).]

3. Closed season. A person may not fish for Atlantic salmon from waters of the State by any means from October 16th to April 30th.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §8 (NEW).]

4. Open season. The department may establish by rule an open season during which a person may fish for Atlantic salmon. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2019, c. 225, §6 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §8 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 225, §§5, 6 (AMD).

§6140-B. Unlawful fishing, possession or sale of Atlantic salmon

1. Prohibition. A person may not fish for Atlantic salmon in violation of the provisions of this Part.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

2. Possession of parts prohibited. A person may not possess any part of an Atlantic salmon taken from the inland or coastal waters of this State.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

3. Sale of Atlantic salmon prohibited. A person may not sell or offer for sale any Atlantic salmon taken from waters of the State, except Atlantic salmon lawfully raised by means of aquaculture.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

4. Exemptions. The following are exempt from the possession prohibitions of this section:

A. Atlantic salmon imported from outside the State; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

B. Atlantic salmon imported by taxidermists solely for taxidermy purposes; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

C. Atlantic salmon raised by means of aquaculture, except that Atlantic salmon raised in a hatchery for the purpose of restoration are not exempt. [PL 2013, c. 301, §7 (AMD).]

[PL 2013, c. 301, §7 (AMD).]

5. Incidental catch. An individual engaged in recreational or commercial fishing for species other than Atlantic salmon does not commit a violation of this section as long as any incidental catch of an Atlantic salmon results in an immediate liberation alive into the adjacent waters of the State.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

6. Penalty. A person who violates this section commits a Class E crime, and the court shall impose an additional fine of \$500, none of which may be suspended, for each Atlantic salmon unlawfully possessed.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. QQ, §9 (NEW). PL 2013, c. 301, §7 (AMD).

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