



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
3 Fort Wetherill Road
Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835

Summary of Public Hearing Comments

Agency: Department of Environmental Management

Division: Marine Fisheries

Regulations:

- Part 2 – Commercial Marine Fishing Licenses, Landing Permits, and Party and Charter Licenses (250-RICR-90-00-2)
- Part 7 – Dealers (250-RICR-90-00-7)

Type of Filing: Amendments

Timetable for action on the proposed rule:

1. Part 2 - Commercial Marine Fishing Licenses, Landing Permits, and Party and Charter Licenses:
 - Date of public notice: August 22, 2023
 - Date of hearing: September 11, 2023
 - End of comment period: September 21, 2023
2. Part 7 – Dealers:
 - Date of public notice: August 23, 2023
 - Date of hearing: September 11, 2023
 - End of comment period: September 22, 2023

Testimony and Comments:

The public hearing was recorded and is publicly available on the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#). ***This document represents a synopsis of the comments provided specific to the proposed rules; it does not include supporting details, rationale, or discussion of matters not specific to the proposed rules.***

1. Part 7 – Dealers: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
2. Part 2 - Commercial Marine Fishing Licenses, Landing Permits, and Party and Charter Licenses:

- a. Fishery endorsement for species other than Finfish, Shellfish or Crustacean: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
- b. Standard Resident License with three (3) unlimited fishery endorsements: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
- c. Issuance of Mid-Water/Pair Trawl Endorsement: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
- d. Exit:entry ratio – Standard license w/Unlimited Finfish endorsement: *Two (2) comments in support of 2:1 as proposed.*
- e. Exit:entry ratio – Standard license w/Unlimited Shellfish endorsement: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
- f. Issuance (aka “transfers) of a new license for family members or crew: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
- g. Appeal of license renewal application denials due to Medical Hardship: *No testimony or comments were provided.*
- h. Prioritization for the issuance of new licenses/endorsements – Military Service and Apprenticeship Program: *One (1) comment in support of the proposed rule.*
- i. Multipurpose Vessel License:
 - *Four (4) comments in support of industry proposal # 2; no issuance indefinitely.*
 - *Four (4) comments in support of industry proposal # 3: 70 licenses available for issuance in 2024; indefinite term of program*
 - **IMPORTANT:** Please see the hearing video (link provided above) and written comments submitted for a full detail of the comments provided on this matter.

From: [zionlion31](#)
To: [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)
Subject: MVI
Date: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 11:39:01 AM

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Hello Peter,

I have attended every meeting on this proposal and publicly voiced my opinions about this, which should be on record. I am, as well as most small commercial fisherman in the state, strongly against the allowance of a multi purpose vessel license and I am in favor of proposal #2, no issuance at all!

Thank you,
Charles Julian

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [David Blackburn](#)
To: [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#); [Lake, John \(DEM\)](#); [McManus, Conor \(DEM\)](#)
Cc: [Kenneth Booth](#)
Subject: Proposed licensing regulation
Date: Saturday, September 16, 2023 1:39:27 PM

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Gentlemen,

It was with disappointment that I was unable to attend this past Monday's meeting to discuss the proposed change in regulations that, if it becomes law, will ultimately allow corporate entities and their assets to be licensed in addition to individuals.

This proposal will, if adopted, have as its ultimate impact on current regulations the unfair disenfranchisement of those individuals holding general purpose multi species licenses. The corporations that are obviously behind this effort to allow vessels (their own) rather than individuals to be licensed would now be in the effective position of being able to create what would be in effect a multi tiered pricing structure for the wholesale processing of fish - one for themselves and another for the non corporate license holder. On the surface this might not be apparent but I feel a competent accountant could provide some interesting perspective. Unless I am missing something it doesn't quite frankly seem to require a lot of imagination to understand the ultimate potential impact this would have on the individuals who are current non corporate license holders.

I would urge you to carefully consider the ramifications of the adoption of the current system that is being proposed in their entirety before further steps are taken to move forward with this proposal.

I would further ask the question why is a proposal to replace a system that isn't broken but will if adopted provide an unfair advantage to the entities pushing for this change even being seriously considered ?

Respectfully Submitted,

David Blackburn
Treasurer RICRRA

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kenneth Booth](#)
To: [McManus, Conor \(DEM\)](#)
Cc: [Lake, John \(DEM\)](#); [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)
Subject: Public Comment - September 11, 2023 Proposed Regulation Amendments
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 4:33:06 PM

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I am writing to express my organization's concern with proposed changes to Commercial Marine Fishing regulations, specifically those pertaining to the licensing of fishers, as detailed below:

Part 2, Item 4 Exit: Entry ratio

In past years it has been the practice to issue a new license to replace each that was unrenewed or retired. This year there is an industry proposal presented which recommends issuance of one new license for every two which were unrenewed or retired in 2023. In the upcoming year State licensed fishermen face a number of potential quota cutbacks and regulatory changes which will directly impact their ability to harvest fish. While the proposed 2:1 ratio is more conservative, determination of the final number issued should be made after any quota cutbacks and aggregate program expansions have been finalized. Increasing competition for an already small and shrinking quota is unfair to current licensees as well as those making financial commitments to enter the business.

Part 2, Item 6 Multipurpose Vessel Licensing

Rhode Island has historically licensed the fisherman, not the vessel. This proposed change will benefit only a small portion of the fishing industry, at the expense of many other small businesses. The need for this licensing change has not been demonstrated or justified, but once put in place it will change the face of the RI fishing industry. Without a comprehensive study of the potential effects on RI fishing industry we see this licensing change having numerous unintended consequences. By virtue of our current licensing practices, Rhode Island has successfully avoided losing control of its fishing industry to the large corporate control which plague other States. We have had our issues trying to balance the equation, but the small boat fishermen (as small business owners) have always had a voice.

We recommend Proposal 2: Amend rule to prohibit issuance of these licenses indefinitely.

It is obvious that the political initiative behind this proposal is strong, and it is likely to move forward. Understanding that, we recommend the following requirements be attached to any pilot program.

- A participant would have had to hold the MPL in his/her name for a period of 5 years prior to transfer to a vessel. That license would have to have met activity requirements for each of those 5 years.

This may limit an operation with resources from buying up latent and minimal effort licenses and creating an imbalance in participation.

-A participant in the program must agree to providing all information required for through review of program performance, including but not limited to catch and harvest information, and financial information such as price paid/received for sold products.

This information is vital to project potential economic effects on the established fishing industry,

- The need for this program was based on a lack of RI licensed captains to operate a few vessels. The proposed rule limits the transfer of a licensed in the two-year period. There is no need to reference vessel transfer in a pilot program. It should be clear to all participants that participation in the program grants no "grandfather rights" if a full program moves forward after two years.

There is minimal outlay by a participant, but potentially large benefits so there should be no claim of stranded investment or advantage over other fishermen in the future if the program either fails or succeeds.

Kenneth Booth, President
Rhode Island Commercial Rod and Reel Association

Name: [Tom Smith](#)
To: [Paddy](#)
Subject: Paddy
Date: Wednesday, September 25, 2013 10:46:16 AM

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Please, please see Paddy McGrade comment on behalf of his 2 vessels.

Thanks,

Mike Roderick
St. Director Fresh Purchasing, Sales & Vessel Operations
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From: Paddy.venin@ca.com
Sent: Monday, September 23, 2013 10:45 AM
To: Mike Roderick <roderick@towndock.com>
Subject:

WARNING: This email originated outside of The Town Dock. USE CAUTION when clicking on links or attachments.

I am writing to support the industry proposed MVPL license, option #3

I am the owner of two fishing vessels F/V Cody and F/V Enterprise, both here in Point Judith, RI. I am fully in support of DEM giving the industry the flexibility we need to make our own business decisions on who is best to run our vessel. Having a MVPL will do just that.

Surrounding states have this type of permit system and there is no reason why we shouldn't be afforded the same flexibility.

Being able to chose the most qualified and trusted captain to run my vessels is extremely important to me. These boats are my livelihood, and the safety of my crew comes first. I should be able to make the choice of who is responsible for both.

Thank you,

Paddy McGlade
F/V Enterprise
F/V Cody

Paddy Mc Glade 9/18/23

I am in favor of Proposal #3, support for a MPVL.

I am the owner of KSJ seafood and two vessels, the F/V Alexis Martina, and F/V Olivia Katherine. It's very important for me to be able to hire the best crew to run those vessels. Tying the permit to the vessels instead of the person allows me to access a wider pool of captains to consider for the job. New fishermen are not rushing into this profession, and we face a dwindling community. We need to make the changes needed for our industry to last and I think this is a great first step. Other states are doing this, and I think we should follow suit.

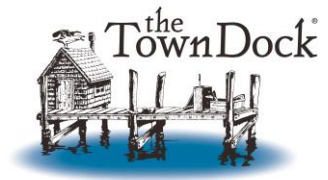
Thank you,


Peter Raposa

KSJ Seafood

F/V Alexis Martina

F/V Olivia Katherine



45 STATE STREET | PO BOX 608
NARRAGANSETT, RI 02882

Director Terry Gray
RI DEM
235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908

Dear Director Gray,

The Town Dock is in support of RIDEM creating a Muti-Purpose Vessel License (MPVL). Having this license being tied to the vessel and not a person will afford me the flexibility I need to run my fleet successfully. With a limited number of candidates here the port and not many filling the ranks of those leaving, having the ability to seek outside Rhode Island for additional skill and experience is imperative to keeping my vessels running. Several other states have this style of permit. Being on even playing ground when it comes to having flexibility over the hiring process is a step in the right direction.

My vessels are a major investment and the crew's safety is most important. I need to be comfortable that the person I hire is the best fit to keep my crew and vessel safe.

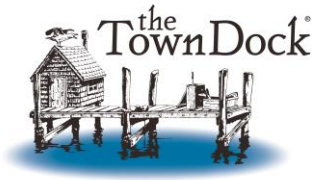
Thank you for taking the time to hear my views on this issue.

Sincerely,
Ryan Clark
CEO

F/V Lightning Bay Inc.
F/V Excalibur Fisheries LLC
F/V Susan Rose Fisheries LLC
F/V Kassidy Lyn Fisheries LLC



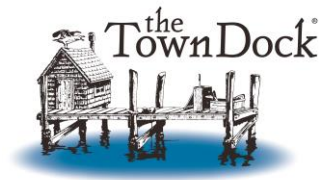
TOWNDOCK.COM
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45 STATE STREET | PO BOX 608
NARRAGANSETT, RI 02882

September 19, 2023

Director Terry Gray
RI DEM
235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908

Dear Director Gray,

The Town Dock is in support of Proposal #3, Industry Proposal, for a Multipurpose Vessel License (MPVL). A MPVL would allow companies like us to access a larger pool of candidates to captain our vessels. This would enable us to hire the most experienced person available and not tie us to choices based on where a person holds residency. The safety and lives of the boat's crew relies on the captain and you want the most experienced person at the helm.

The "greying of the fleet" is a well-known problem in this industry. As a generation retires there are not enough fishermen to fill the gap they will leave. This license would help by providing the much-needed flexibility the industry needs to ease that problem.

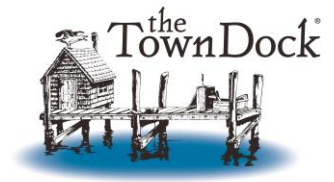
A MPVL would not only be beneficial to us, but also to independently owned vessels. It would allow a fisherman near retirement the choice of keeping their vessel and permits by allowing another captain to run their vessel, providing entry into the industry for those that normally wouldn't be able to afford it on their own and providing them the opportunity to gain experience and a pathway to hopefully own their own vessel one day.

DEM has had many workshops on this topic, with many public comment periods, and it has been extensively researched by them. We've done our best to reach across the table to educate those who have concerns about this license. However, even after those efforts in trying to calm their fears in telling them what this permit ISN'T going to do and what it WILL do and clearing up any misconceptions, there is still resistance, and we are not sure why.

We are one of the last states, if not the only, on the eastern seaboard that ties the permit to a person and not a vessel. This is not a "corporate takeover", but a modernization of a permit that is for the greater good of the Rhode Island fishing community and we hope to see it enacted.



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NARRAGANSETT, RI 02882

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Almeida
Sr. Representative, Government Relations & Sustainability
The Town Dock



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