

**§6171-B. Sustainable development of emerging fisheries**

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

A. "Emerging fishery" means the commercial fishing for any marine organism, except herring and groundfish species, that requires a commercial fishing license issued under section 6501 or a commercial pelagic and anadromous fishing license issued under section 6502-A. [PL 2025, c. 244, §1 (AMD).]

B. "Endorsement" means an authorization, identified on a commercial fishing license issued under section 6501 or a commercial pelagic and anadromous fishing license issued under section 6502-A, to harvest, possess, transport and sell a specific marine organism for which there is an emerging fishery. [PL 2025, c. 244, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2025, c. 244, §1 (AMD).]

**2. Determination of sustainability.** The commissioner may investigate conditions affecting marine resources and, with the advice and consent of the Marine Resources Advisory Council, may require a person to hold an endorsement to participate in an emerging fishery if the commissioner determines that a marine organism or its habitat is under increasing pressure that could impact its sustainability or if the commissioner determines that a marine organism is becoming established in the waters of this State and that access to that marine organism must be limited to ensure its sustainable management. The commissioner shall ensure that emerging fisheries do not develop at a rate that is not sustainable on a long-term basis.

Harvesters involved in an emerging fishery may petition the commissioner to investigate the sustainability of that emerging fishery.

[PL 2025, c. 244, §2 (AMD).]

**3. Eligibility for endorsements.** The commissioner may limit the number of endorsements issued to control the number of individuals engaged in commercial harvesting in an emerging fishery, based on criteria established by rule. The commissioner may require the collection and timely reporting of any biological or environmental data as a condition of the endorsement. The commissioner's authority to limit the number of endorsements issued for a specific marine organism is limited to a period of 3 years from the date of the issue of the first endorsement, renewable for one 3-year extension.

[PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]

**4. Endorsement required.** Notwithstanding sections 6501 and 6502-A, a person may not fish for, take, possess, ship, transport or sell a marine organism for which an endorsement is required pursuant to subsection 2 unless that person holds a current commercial fishing license or a commercial pelagic and anadromous fishing license with an endorsement for that organism, except that a license with an endorsement is not required for that person to fish for, take, possess or transport the organism only for personal use.

A fee may not be charged for an endorsement required pursuant to this section.

[PL 2025, c. 244, §3 (AMD).]

**5. Incidental harvest.** Notwithstanding subsection 4, the taking or possession at sea of a marine organism for which an endorsement is required is not prohibited if the taking is incidental to the harvesting of another organism.

[PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]

**6. Rule-making authority.** The commissioner may adopt rules to establish eligibility for endorsements, the number of endorsements issued and reporting requirements. Rules authorized by this section must be adopted and amended in accordance with the procedures outlined in subchapter II and are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

[PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]

**7. Report.** The commissioner, within 24 months of the issuance of the first endorsement for a marine organism, shall report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over marine resources matters regarding the status of the emerging fishery, management goals and objectives and control of access to the emerging fishery. In the report, the commissioner shall consider:

- A. The long-term sustainability of the resource; [PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]
- B. The impact of harvesting on other fisheries; and [PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]
- C. The department's ability to enforce and administer the management program. [PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1999, c. 297, §1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 248, §2 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 244, §§1-3 (AMD).

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