In the Matter Of:

Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

PROPOSED REVISIONS - COBIA July 22, 2021



Proposed Revisions - Cobia - July 22, 2021

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1	MS. NEWMAN: Good evening. I	
2	believe everyone is now connected and ready,	
3	so we will now begin the virtual public	
4	hearing.	
5	I want to thank you all for taking	
6	the time out of your busy schedules to	
7	connect with us today. The date is Thursday,	
8	July 22, 2021.	
9	We are here this evening to provide	
10	a virtual platform for the State of	
11	Delaware's Department of Natural Resources	
12	and Environmental Control to conduct its	
13	virtual public hearing on the proposed	
14	revisions to 7 DE Admin Code 3550, Cobia.	
15	And immediately following the	
16	adjournment of this hearing, we will then	
17	conduct the same hearing platform for the	
18	proposed revisions to 7 DE Admin Code 3542,	
19	Tilefish.	
20	My name is Theresa Newman, and	
21	Secretary Garvin has appointed me to serve as	
22	the hearing officer for tonight's formal	
23	proceeding.	
24	In adherence to the state of	

emergency that was in effect during the time the scheduling was completed for the hearing, the Department scheduled a virtual hearing for this matter before us tonight.

As this hearing is being conducted virtually, no one is together in the same room, everyone is participating independently at their own respective locations.

While we are not physically gathered together tonight, WebEx does generate a list of those that are virtually present for the proceedings so that the Department will still have a record of those who have electronically joined this event.

At the conclusion of the introductory remarks, I will be turning the hearing over to the Department staff to provide their presentation for the record being generated in this matter.

Whereas the Department would then open the verbal comment portion of the hearing following the Department's presentation, the Department did not receive registration for verbal comment for this

hearing.

It is important to note that the Department offered the opportunity for verbal comment as noticed in the legal ads and online. Those that would have wished to provide a verbal comment would have had to register by 12:00 p.m. today, to which there were no registrants by that time.

There is a court reporter virtually present who will prepare a verbatim transcript of this hearing, pursuant to the statutory requirement for DNREC to have the same prepared. And, as always, that transcript will be posted on the hearing webpage dedicated to this matter as soon as it is received.

In addition, I would encourage those who are attending tonight's hearing to also visit the hearing webpage dedicated to this matter for additional details concerning the proposed regulatory matter.

The hearing webpage can be found online under Administrative Law Section of DNREC's website that will be listed at the

conclusion of tonight's hearing.

Before we begin the presentation tonight, please be advised of the following protocols that remain in place for all DNREC public hearings:

All comment received must be solely limited to the subject matter of tonight's hearing. All comments pertinent to the subject matter of this virtual hearing will be incorporated into the record being generated in this matter.

In order to ensure that everyone who wishes to offer comment for the Secretary's consideration is accommodated, the record in this matter shall remain open for a minimum of 15 days following tonight's proceeding.

There is only one authentic record of this formal proceeding tonight, and it is the official court reporter's verbatim transcript.

The statutory purpose of tonight's hearing is to build a record with regard to the Department's proposed actions.

A record consisting of the transcript of the hearing tonight, all written comment, all exhibits, and eventually the Hearing Officer's Report will be reviewed by Secretary Garvin.

The Secretary will ultimately issue an order, following that review process, containing his decision on this matter and the reasons therefor.

Per DNREC's standard hearing protocols, there will be no Q and A or chat session permitted during the hearing.

Lastly, it is important to note no decision has already been made by the Department, nor will any decision be made tonight with regard to the proposed regulatory matter.

As previously stated, DNREC wishes to ensure that everyone is enabled to offer their comments for inclusion into the record being generated in this matter. In light of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Department is required to, at a minimum, provide a comment period of a minimum of 15

days after the hearing.

As noticed in legal ads and online, the Department stated that the public comment period will be open through February -- or I'm sorry -- through Friday, August 6, 2021.

Comments may be submitted through a comment form link on the hearing webpage, via email to DnrecHearingComments@delaware.gov, or via the U.S. Postal Service at the physical address for DNREC indicated on the hearing webpage and/or the public notices previously issued in this matter.

Written comment to DNREC may not be submitted using social media platforms such as Twitter, You Tube, or text messaging.

Please remember that all comment received, either through USPS or via the electronic mechanisms noted just now, as long as it is received by the Department on or before August 6, will bear the exact same weight and will be considered equally by the Department -- I'm sorry -- by the Secretary prior to making his final decision in this matter.

Lastly, the ultimate decision regarding this matter is made by DNREC's Secretary Garvin. This formal proceeding tonight acts as a mechanism to enable the Department to thoroughly vet the regulatory matter to the public and to let the public know the various ways to which comment may be submitted for Secretary Garvin's consideration, if so desired.

I will now hand it over to John
Clark with the Division of Fish and Wildlife
to provide the Department's presentation.

MR. CLARK: Thank you, Theresa.

I'm going to give a little background on why
we are amending, why we are proposing to
amend the Cobia regulation, and then I will
talk about the options for amending the
option.

The Atlantic States Marine

Fisheries Commission adopted Addendum 1 to

the Interstate Fishery Management Plans for

the Atlantic migratory group of Cobia in

October of 2020, which mandates changes

though recreational de minimis measures. And

de minimis, Delaware is a de minimis state for Cobia, which means we have very low catch of Cobia, so there are special regulations that are allowed for states in such situation.

States can either adopt the default de minimis measures that are in Addendum 1 or match the management measures of the nearest non-de minimis state, which for Delaware is Virginia.

We have two options under consideration for this proposed regulation, so DNREC is seeking comments on which of the two options to amend the regulation that you prefer.

As you can see from this table, there are bolded items. Those represent changes to our current measure. Our current measure is a minimum length of 40 inches, a possession limit of one per angler or three per vessel, and an open season of June 1st through September 15th.

The default de minimis option from the Addendum 1 is a minimum length of 37 inches, which is obviously shorter than the current minimum length; a possession limit of one; and a vessel limit of one, down from the current three. And the season will be open all year, which is longer than the current situation.

Our second option, option two, the Virginia regulations are 40-inch minimum, which maintains what we have now, but for a vessel which can have two Cobia, only one Cobia can be greater than 50 inches. So that has changed in the lengths.

Possession limit for an individual angler is still one. The vessel limit is reduced from three Cobia to two. And the season has been shortened to June 15th through September 15th.

So those are our two options, and that is a summary of the changes we are proposing to the Cobia regulation.

With that, I will turn it back over to you, Theresa.

12 1 MS. NEWMAN: (Speaking but muted) 2 MR. CLARK: I think you are muted, 3 Theresa. 4 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you. Prior to the hearing, you submitted proposed exhibits 5 from the Department. Would you like to go 6 over those exhibits? 7 8 MR. CLARK: Oh, would you like each exhibit to be -- you want me to read a list 9 10 of the exhibits? 11 MS. NEWMAN: If you can give a 12 brief summary of each exhibit, that would be 13 great. 14 MR. CLARK: Okay. Shoot. Let me just get to where I can actually see them. 15 Okay. Let me get to the exhibits here. 16 17 Pretty much the same thing for both. 18 Okay. We have meeting minutes of a Tidal Finfish Advisory Council where the 19 change to the Cobia regulation was discussed. 20 21 That is Exhibit 1. 22 Exhibit 2 is a copy of the Start 23 Action Notice. 24 Exhibit 3 is a copy of the

13 1 Regulatory Flexibility Analysis Regulatory 2 Impact Statement corresponding to the proposed action, as published in the July 1, 3 Delaware Register of Regulations. 4 Exhibit 4 is a copy of the register 5 notice and the proposed amendment to the 6 Cobia regulation, once again published in the 7 8 July 1, 2021 Delaware Register of 9 Regulations. 10 Exhibit 5 is evidence of the 11 publication of the legal notice regarding the 12 amendments that were published in the 13 Delaware State News and the Wilmington News 14 Journal on Sunday, June 27, 2021. Exhibit 6 is notice of this public 15 16 hearing as it appeared in the Delaware 17 statewide calendar and posted on July 8, 18 2021. Exhibit 7 is a copy of the legal 19 notice for tonight's public hearing as posted 20 21 on DNREC's public notices website, starting 22 on June 27, 2021. 23 Exhibit 8 is additional noticing

sent to the fisheries e-mail Listserv,

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14 1 certain Blackboard Connect subscribers, and 2 posted to the Division's Facebook page 3 regarding tonight's hearing on the proposed 4 amendment. And Exhibit 9 is a copy of the 5 legal notice for tonight's public hearing 6 7 posted on the bulletin board in the DNREC 8 building. 9 Exhibit 10 is a copy of the 10 presentation on proposed amendments to the 11 Cobia regulation which I just presented 12 tonight. 13 And finally, Exhibit 11 for the Cobia is the one comment we have received to 14 date for the Cobia proposed changes. 15 And that covers all our exhibits, 16 17 Theresa. 18 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Clark. 19 I do hereby mark these exhibits as 20 Department's Exhibits 1 through 10. Does 21 this conclude the Department's presentation? 22 MR. CLARK: Yes, it does. 23 MS. NEWMAN: Thank you. As the 24 Department received no registration for

1 public comment by 12:00 p.m. today, there 2 will not be a public comment portion for tonight's hearing. 3 Again, if you wish to submit public 4 comment, please follow the instructions that 5 were given during my entry remarks, and they 6 are available on the screen for those who are 7 8 virtually present. 9 Again, this hearing matter will be open through Friday, August 6, 2021. 10 11 Before concluding the Cobia hearing 12 matter, I would like to thank you all for 13 attending the first part of the virtual 14 hearing. We will now take a three-minute 15 break before beginning the virtual hearing 16 17 for Tilefish. Please remain logged in if you 18 would like to attend the meeting of the hearing for Tilefish. 19 20 This now concludes the hearing matter of 7 DE Admin Code 3550, Cobia. 21 22 time is now 6:12 p.m. Thank you. 23 (Concluded at 6:12 p.m.) 24

CERTIFICATE

I, Lorena J. Hartnett, a Notary Public and Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate and complete transcription of the proceeding held at the time and place stated herein, and that the said proceeding was recorded by me and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said witnesses.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney of any of the parties or a relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office on this 23rd day of July 2021.

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Lorena J. Hartnett Registered Professional Reporter

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