In the Matter Of:

Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

PROPOSED REVISIONS - TILEFISH July 22, 2021



Proposed Revisions - Tilefish - July 22, 2021

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MS. NEWMAN: All right. We are back. So thank you all who have remained logged in.

We will now begin the second part of tonight's proceeding where you will hear me repeat much of the remarks I previously stated, so please bear with me.

Again, the date is Thursday

July 22, 2021. We are here this evening to

provide a virtual platform for the State of

Delaware's Department of Natural Resources

and Environmental Control to conduct its

virtual hearing on the proposed revisions to

7 DE Admin Code 3542, Tilefish.

My name is Theresa Newman, and
Secretary Garvin has appointed me to serve as
a hearing officer for tonight's formal
proceeding.

In adherence to the state of emergency that was in effect at the time, the scheduling timing of this hearing, the Department scheduled a virtual hearing for the matter before us tonight.

As this hearing is being conducted

4 1 virtually, no one is together in the same 2 Everyone is participating room. 3 independently at their own respective 4 locations. 5 While we are not physically gathered together tonight, WebEx does 6 7 generate a list of those that are virtually 8 present for this proceeding so the Department will have a same record of those who have 9 10 electronically joined this event. 11 At the conclusion of the 12 introductory remarks, I will be handing the 13 hearing over to the Department staff to 14 provide their presentation for the record being generated in this matter. 15 16 Whereas the Department would then 17 open the verbal comment portion of the 18 hearing following the Department's 19 presentation, the Department did not receive registration for verbal comment for this 20 21 hearing. 22 It is important to note that the 23 Department did offer the opportunity for 24 verbal comment as noticed in the legal ads

and online. Those that would have wished to provide a verbal comment would have to register by 12:00 p.m. today, which there were no registrants by that time.

There is a court reporter virtually present who will prepare a verbatim transcript of the 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 the 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 comments received must be solely limited to the subject matter of tonight's hearing.

All comments pertinent to the subject matter of the 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 proceedings.

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

The statutory purpose of tonight's proceeding is to build a record with regards to the Department's proposed actions. A record consisting of the transcript of the hearing tonight, all comments, all exhibits, and eventually the Hearing Officer's Report

		7
1	will be reviewed by the Secretary will be	
2	reviewed by Secretary Garvin.	
3	The Secretary will ultimately issue	
4	an order, following that review process,	
5	containing his decision on this matter and	
6	the reasons therefor.	
7	Per DNREC's standard hearing	
8	protocols, there will be no Q and A or chat	
9	session permitted during the hearing.	
LO	Lastly, it is important to note	
11	that no decision has already been made by the	
12	Department, nor will a decision be made	
13	tonight with regard to the proposed	
L4	regulatory matter.	
15	As previously stated, DNREC wishes	
L6	to ensure that everyone is enabled to offer	
L7	their comment for inclusion into the record	
L8	being generated in this matter.	
L9	In light of the Administrative	
20	Procedures Act, the Department is required	
21	to, at a minimum, provide a comment period of	
22	a minimum of 15 days after the hearing.	
23	As noticed in the legal ads and	
24	online, the Department stated that the public	

comment period would be open 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 Services at the physical address for DNREC indicated at the hearing webpage and/or the public notices previously issued in this matter.

Written comments to DNREC may not be submitted using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, or text messaging.

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

Lastly, the ultimate decision regarding this matter is made by DNREC's Secretary Garvin.

This formal proceeding tonight acts at 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 submit comments for the Secretary'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.

MS. NEWMAN: You are welcome.

MR. CLARK: Okay. I'm going to give a little background as to why DNREC wants, is proposing to change the Tilefish regulation, and then give a summary of the change proposed.

The Mid-Atlantic Marine Fisheries

Council approved management actions for

Federal waters that resulted in a significant increase to the recreational possession

limits for both Golden and Blueline Tilefish.

It imposed a closed season for Blueline

Tilefish and increased the daily landings

limit for the commercial Tilefish fishery.

Delaware's Tilefish regulation has lower recreational possession limits than the new Federal limits, no closed recreational season for Blueline Tilefish, and a lower daily commercial landings limit.

Delaware's different recreational possession limits have proven confusing to the angling public. Because Tilefish are only caught in Federal waters, this is a fish that's only found in deep waters of the ocean. So for Delaware to have different regulations for the State waters just adds confusion rather than helping anything.

The proposed amendments will harmonize Delaware's Tilefish regulation with the Federal water rules.

So a summary of the regulations right now in place for Delaware waters has been in place since 2016: Seven Tilefish, any combination of Golden and Blueline, and no closed season.

As you can see, our combined
Tilefish limit is less than just the new
Golden Tilefish limit.

The Golden Tilefish have no closed season in Federal waters.

For Blueline Tilefish, the Federal water regulation is three per angler on a private vessel, five for an angler on an uninspected for-hire vessel, and seven on an inspected for-hire vessel. And, plus, there is a closed season of November 1st through April 30th.

So, as you can see, there is quite a big difference here. And we want to change it so that we match the Federal regulations and remove that confusion.

In addition, the commercial possession limit for Federal waters is increased from 300 pounds to 500 pounds. So, once again, we want to match the Federal regulations so any commercial fisherman targeting Tilefish can take advantage of that increased limit.

So that's a summary of the changes we are proposing to the Tilefish regulation.

And I can now go through the exhibits and just shrink this down so I can

12 1 see the exhibits. And here we go. Okay. 2 So the Tilefish exhibits: Exhibit 1 are the meeting minutes 3 from the meeting of the Advisory Council on 4 Tidal Finfisheries, which include the 5 Council's motion to recommend Delaware adopt 6 the Federal water regulations for Tilefish. 7 8 Exhibit 2 is a copy of the approved Start Action Notice pertaining to this 9 10 regulatory proposal. 11 Exhibit 3 is a copy of the 12 Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, Regulatory 13 Impact Statement corresponding to the 14 proposed action published in the July 1, 2021 Delaware Register of Regulations. 15 Exhibit 4 is a copy of the register 16 17 notice and the proposed amendment to the 18 Tilefish regulation as published in the same 19 Register of Regulations. Exhibit 5 is evidence for the 20 21 publication of the legal notice regarding the 22 proposed amendments to the Tilefish 23 regulation that were published in the 24 Delaware State News and the Wilmington News

Journal on Sunday, June 27, 2021.

Exhibit 6 is a notice of this public hearing as it appeared in Delaware's Statewide Calendar and posted on July 8, 2021.

Exhibit 7 is a copy of the legal notice for tonight's public hearing, posted on DNREC's public notices website starting on June 27, 2021.

Exhibit 8, additional noticing sent to the Fisheries e-mail Listserv, certain

Blackboard Connect subscribers the Fisheries has, and posted on the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Facebook page regarding tonight's hearing on the Tilefish regulation proposed changes.

Exhibit 9 is a copy of the legal notice for tonight's public hearing as posted on the bulletin board in the DNREC lobby as of July 8.

And, finally, Exhibit 10 is a copy of the presentation I just gave about the proposed amendments to the Tilefish regulation.

14 So that concludes the exhibits, 1 2 Theresa, and I will turn it back over to you. MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Clark. 3 I have received the Department's Exhibits 1 4 through 10, and I do hereby mark these 5 exhibits as Department's Exhibits 1 through 6 7 10. 8 As the Department received no registration for public comment by 12:00 p.m. 9 10 today, there will be no verbal public comment given -- verbal comment portion of the 11 12 hearing given tonight. 13 Again, if you wish to submit public 14 comment, please follow the instructions that were given during the introductory remarks, 15 and it is also available on the screen. 16 17 The hearing record will remain open through Friday, August 6, 2021, to which you 18 can submit your comments. 19 20 I want to thank you all for 21 attending the virtual hearing tonight. 22 hearing is now concluded at 6:27 p.m. 23 you. 24 (Concluded at 6:27 p.m.)

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.

4

Lorena J. Hartnett Registered Professional Reporter

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