

COMMERCIAL LICENSE TARGETS – Updates

What was proposed?

The Department proposed updates to the commercial license targets. Modifications to the authorization targets reflect the number of tidal fish license conversions since April 15, 2019.

Natural Resources Article, §4-701, Annotated Code of Maryland allows the conversion (downgrade) of an unlimited tidal fish license (UTFL) into its individual component authorizations and allows the Department to adjust all authorizations accordingly. Applicants may choose which license components of the UTFL they want to retain. Downgrading a UTFL decreases the UTFL target and increases the target of each license type that is included in a UTFL (resident fishing guide (FGR); unlimited finfish harvester (FIN); crab harvester 300 pot (CB3); clam harvester (CLM); oyster harvester (OYH); oyster dredge boat (ODB); and conch, cancer crab, turtle, lobster (CTL)). The number and type of authorizations involved in a downgrade of a UTFL provide the basis for changes to the license authorization target levels.

In summary, the UTFL number is decreased by 16 and the number for FGR, FIN, CB3, CLM, OYH, ODB, and CTL are increased by 16 each. The total number of UTFL downgrades includes: 11 from the 2019/2020 license year; 0 from the 2020/2021 license year; 2 from the 2021/2022 license year; 2 from the 2022/2023 license year; and 1 from the 2023/2024 license year. The downgrades have not been captured in previous regulation proposals.

Why is this change necessary?

Modifying the license targets is necessary to accurately reflect the number of authorizations available.

Who will this affect?

Anyone who is waiting for a commercial fishing license to become available.

When would this be effective?

The Department projects that this change could be effective in the summer of 2025. However, the exact date cannot be determined. The Department will follow our normal [procedures](#) if this concept moves forward.

Has this change been discussed with advisory bodies or other interested individuals?

The idea was scoped with the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission and the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission at their meetings in January 2025 and with the public in February 2025.

What is the specific regulatory action?

Amend Regulation .05 under COMAR 08.02.01 General.