

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?

The regulation affects anyone who is waiting for a commercial fishing license to become available.

What is the specific regulatory action?

Amend Regulation .05 under COMAR 08.02.01 General.

Was this change 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
- The idea was scoped with the general public February 6-20, 2025.

Regulatory Process

- The Department followed our normal procedures as this concept moved forward.
- At the conclusion of the scoping process, the Department determined that the action is necessary and appropriate. The rules were promulgated following the Administrative Procedures Act described in Title 10, Subtitle 1 of the State Government Article Annotated Code of Maryland.
- The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee reviews the regulatory proposal for fiscal and legal analysis.

- The proposal was printed by the Division of State Documents in the Maryland Register on May 2, 2025.
- A 30 day public comment period began on the day of publication.
- After review of the comments, the Department adopted the changes.
- The final action was published in the Maryland Register on June 27, 2025.

Effective Date of Change

July 7, 2025