



**Paul J. Diodati**  
*Director*

# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

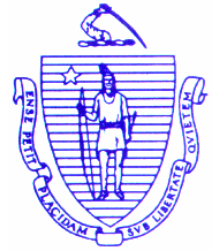
## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617)626-1520

fax (617)626-1509



**Deval Patrick**  
*Governor*  
**Ian A. Bowles**  
*Secretary*  
**Mary B. Griffin**

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### *Marine Fisheries* Advisory

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD Red Tide Disaster Relief Grant Allocation Formula

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The Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) has announced a four week comment period for feedback on an allocation formula to disperse Red Tide Disaster Relief funds.

As detailed in the 2008 ‘Massachusetts Red Tide Technical Assistance and Disaster Relief’ Proposal, submitted by *Marine Fisheries* to the US Department of Commerce, *Marine Fisheries* will develop a formula to determine the amount of economic relief individuals will receive through the Lost Income Subsidy program. The amount that has been set aside for distribution to shellfish harvesters will compensate up to 100% of losses due to 2008 Red Tide Closures. This information will be posted for a four-week period, during which time the public may submit comment on the proposed allocation formula.

*Marine Fisheries* developed a similar formula for the 2006 Red Tide Disaster Relief Program. Of the four options presented during the 2006 process, the ‘weighted distribution’ option was selected by industry members as the most equitable allocation formula. The Final Report for the 2006 ‘Massachusetts Red Tide Technical Assistance and Disaster Relief’ program was approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in April of 2008. Included in the Final Report of the 2006 program is a recommendation to use, “*SAFIS (Standard Atlantic Fishery Information System) data for future subsidy programs requiring an examination of harvest data to examine specific economic impacts*”. This recommendation to use SAFIS data was included in the 2008 proposal which was approved by NMFS in May of 2009.

*Marine Fisheries* suggests using dealer records (SAFIS) in determining allocation amounts, since all Massachusetts shellfish dealers are required to report the date, species, value, area of harvest, as well as harvester information for every transaction. Individual disbursement amounts would be equal to the dealer-reported value of all shellfish harvested in 2007 for the areas, species and dates that were closed in 2008 due to Red Tide. The intent of this formula is to provide an applicant with a subsidy payment equal to the full value of shellfish that *might* have been harvested, had there been no Red Tide closures in 2008. The proposed allocation formula is based on 2007 dealer records for several reasons: 1) there were minimal Red Tide closures in 2007; 2) 2007 represents the most recent account of shellfishing activity prior to the 2008 closures; and 3) dealer-reported data provide comprehensive transaction-level information.

In accordance with the 2009 Massachusetts Red Tide Technical Assistance and Disaster Relief Proposal, *Marine Fisheries* has established this public comment period of May 15 – June 12, 2009 for the proposed allocation formula. Comments made during this period may be used to modify the allocation formula if necessary. Based on 2007 SAFIS records:

**ALLOCATION FORMULA =  $\sum$  2007 SHELLFISH LANDINGS VALUE (for species, areas and dates closed in 2008)**

Using the same formula proposed for individual allocations, *Marine Fisheries* has established a total subsidy amount not to exceed \$1.2 million. This amount has subsequently been approved by the Department of Commerce and is not subject to change.

Written comments may be received by e-mail, ([jared.silva@state.ma.us](mailto:jared.silva@state.ma.us)), fax (617.626.1509), or mail (Attn: Jared Silva DMF; 251 Causeway St., Suite 400; Boston, MA 02114) and will be accepted until 5PM on June 12, 2009. For further information please visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)