The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
(617) 626-1520 | mass.gov/MarineFisheries

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MarineFisheries Advisory

Information from DMF on US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Harvest Fuel Relief Program Eligibility and Participation for Massachusetts Fishermen

On October 19, the USDA announced it will make $8 billion available for one-time payments to American farmers and commercial fishermen to provide relief from increased fuel costs. USDA has provided recommendations to Massachusetts fishermen on navigating eligibility and participation in the Harvest Fuel Relief Program. The USDA is in the process of developing a program for distribution of these funds. Fishermen can help the process by providing information, documents, and any questions related to their fuel expenses and fuel consumption via email to **HarvestFuel@usda.gov** to help USDA determine payment eligibility. Please note, this does not constitute a formal application for the relief program.

A formal document is not being provided by USDA to collect this information at this time. We suggest documenting in a spreadsheet (preferred) or word document:

- Business name
- Your contact information: Name, Phone, Email
- Fishing vessel name(s), their homeport(s) including city and state
- Vessel length(s) (feet)
- Engine horsepower
- Fuel type (diesel or gasoline)
- Seafood caught. If more than one species is harvested on the same trip, please note this
- Gear used on the vessel
- Fishing season length
- Fuel consumption (For the below, please provide the information if you can, and please note if they are estimates):
    - Average gallons used per hour, average gallons per nautical mile
    - Total fuel used for a typical fishing trip (gallons), engine run time (hours), distance traveled (nautical miles, if known), average catch (lbs)
    - Fuel-use rate this year and last. If you can provide fuel-use for the past three years that would also be helpful.
    - Supporting documentation may be required in a future formal application.
    - Any comments on how the increased fuel costs have impacted you

We realize this is a lot of information to provide, but as this is new to USDA and unlike major agricultural commodities that they are used to dealing with, these details help inform how the fuel costs impact fishing operations and how they'll develop their payment formula.

We also want to re-emphasize that the **HarvestFuel@usda.gov** is being monitored to collect this data for informational purposes only. Data submitted through that email will not be formally used as part of the relief applications.

You will need to resubmit information through the official application process when announced. We suggest setting up an account at Login.gov in advance of the application period announcement. Providing these records to the USDA in advance will help you be prepared to provide the relevant information again when applying.

DMF will continue to work with the Massachusetts federal delegation to provide you with the most up to date information on this program.

If you or others have questions, please reach out to **HarvestFuel@usda.gov**.