



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Mark Belton, Secretary
Joanne Throwe, Deputy Secretary

April 2016

Dear Commissioners;

Since 2013, the Department has been piloting an electronic reporting program using software called FACTS™. FACTS™ provides harvest accountability unlike any other reporting system used by Fisheries Service.. The program currently has 545 participants; crabs, striped bass, and other finfish have been reported using the system.

Participants registered to use the FACTS™ system are permitted to take advantage of incentives based on the species they are reporting: crabs, striped bass, or yellow perch. For example, a blue crab harvester can choose a flexible day off each week; striped bass permit holders can check their fish in the day after harvest; yellow perch harvesters don't have to tag individual perch but can use a box tag. Additional incentives we've been asked to consider include harvest traceability tools and use of anchor gill nets, among others.

These incentives, which are flexibilities in existing regulations, are possible because of the accountability of the system. They are part of the pilot program and some incentives have been modified or changed since originally tested. The Department would like to offer more flexibility to participants, but we need to hear from our advisors regarding which incentives should be explored.

The Department is inviting you to nominate representatives from your Commission to serve on a new E-Reporting with FACTS™ Incentives Workgroup. The charge of the workgroup is to suggest and review E-Reporting with FACTS™ incentives to ensure the sustainability, accountability, and enforceability of our fisheries. We welcome input from all sectors: commercial and recreational; crabbers, finfish harvesters and seafood dealers; paper-reporters and FACTS™-users. Workgroup members should be willing to participate in three to four meetings a year, be prepared to discuss varied viewpoints and concerns, and suggest solutions or compromises.

To apply, please send a brief paragraph expressing your interest in exploring possible FACTS™ incentives to:

Carrie Kennedy
580 Taylor Ave, B-2
Annapolis, MD 21401
Carrie.kennedy@maryland.gov

The Department looks forward to working with you and our partners to provide an accountable reporting system while allowing for additional benefits to the industry.

For more information about FACTS™ and current incentives, please visit our webpage:
<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/e-reporting/index.aspx>

If you have any questions, please call me at 410-260-8295.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carrie Kennedy
Data and Quota Monitoring Program Manager
Fisheries Service