



*Martin O'Malley, Governor*  
*Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor*  
*Frank W. Dawson III, Acting Secretary*

## Commercial Industry Striped Bass Workgroup Meeting

*Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

*Tawes State Office Building – C1 Conference Room*

*5:00 pm – 8:00 pm*

January 15, 2015

Dear Striped Bass Workgroup Member:

The next meeting of the Commercial Industry Striped Bass Workgroup (SBWG) will be held on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 8:00 pm in the C1 conference room of the Tawes State Office Building. The purpose of the meeting will be to present the “2014 Year in Review” under the new ITQ/Common Pool system and to begin discussions regarding possible regulation changes to address topics such as permanent permit/quota transfers, multiple permit holders, the waiting list, quota caps, etc. I have given a lot of thought to the best approach to modifying the current management system based on Industry input and have concluded that we should take on regulation changes in two phases.

Phase 1 will focus on administrative elements of the fishery. This will include things like transferability of permits and quota, permit renewal for single and/or multiple permit holders, the waiting list, modifications to individual quota caps, and the permit card and tag return process. In order to have regulations in place to address these issues before license renewal/2016 SB Declaration in August, DNR will have to submit proposed regulations by April 10<sup>th</sup>. This gives us approximately 2 months from the date of this meeting to get SBWG recommendations, make decisions and get the work done. This is absolutely doable, however, it is going to require that you communicate with the watermen you represent so that you can come to the meetings informed and ready to make recommendations to the Department.

Phase 2 will focus on possible changes to fishing rules. We would work on Phase 2 during the late summer / fall of 2015 for implementation at the start of the 2016 fishing season. Topics for discussion in Phase 2 could include allowing anchor gill nets, modification to gear specific fishing seasons, harvest tolerance and overages, etc. I would recommend that let me know soon if you have something you would like me to put on the list for Phase 2.

### **Preparation for the February 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

I have had many conversations over the last year with permit holders who have asked me when the Department is going to allow for permanent transfers of a permit and/or shares/quota. As you know, permanent transfers can be done now, however, the regulations require that the commercial fishing license is transferred along with the permit. We need advice on this issue from the SBWG. We have discussed it before without resolve, therefore, I am recommending that the SBWG take a position on this matter and make a formal recommendation to DNR at this time.

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Information that I present as part of the “2014 Year in Review” could potentially influence the decision regarding permanent transfers. Due to this, I will be asking that the committee reach a consensus on February 17<sup>th</sup> as to whether or not a vote will be taken that evening. If a consensus cannot be reached after the discussion, the vote on this matter will be postponed until the next meeting of the SBWG – probably 2 weeks later.

While the permanent transfer issue is at the top of the list, there are a number of other issues we need to get feedback on. To help you think past the permanent transfer issue I have put together some questions that I will be asking the SBWG over the next few meetings. You can also use these questions as a platform for your conversations with those who you represent.

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### **Permanent Transfers**

Does the Industry want the Department to allow the permanent transfer of a striped bass permit and/or shares/quota separate from the commercial fishing license held by the permittee?

If the Answer is Yes:

- Is there a maximum share/quota amount (cap) that an individual could own?
- If an ‘ownership cap’ is set, would you want to eliminate/modify the temporary cap (currently set at 1%) to allow an individual to accumulate more quota temporarily throughout the year?

If the Answer is No:

- Is the Industry happy with maintaining status quo from 2014? Or are there modifications that you would like us to consider on the temporary transfer provisions?

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### **Permit Renewal / Single and Multiple Permit Holders**

It has been suggested to me that all permits (single and multiple permit holders) must be renewed each year in order to keep a permit active. This would eliminate the current 3 year provision to renew a permit in order to keep it in the fishery. Administratively this makes it much easier for DNR to manage the active permits, however, there is added cost to the multiple permit holder.

- Does the Industry have thoughts on this?
- What should we offer to people who own multiple permits?
- Should we allow them to keep multiple permits as long as they are renewed?
- Should we consolidate all of the permits held by a multiple permit holder into one permit? *This reduces the number of eligible permits.*
- Should we take back all of the multiple permits and distribute them to waitlist candidates? *The permit would have no share/quota associated with it.*

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### **Expired Permits / Waitlist**

If a permit is not renewed and expires should it go to the next person on the waitlist?

If so, what share amount should be assigned to the new individual receiving the expired permit?

If the expired permit’s share is larger than what it is decided that the waitlist candidate receive – how do we allocate the difference?



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Should DNR continue to manage a Commercial Striped Bass Waitlist?  
Should we continue to add people to the list?

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### **Permit Card and Tag Return**

It has been suggested that we eliminate the permit card and tag return and go to an affidavit system. This means that at the end of the year the permit holder would sign a form indicating the number of tags left over at the end of the season and would commit to destroying the tags. The permit card would be mailed to DNR. Regulations would make it illegal to be in possession of prior year's tags after January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Thoughts?

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I know that this is a lot of information but I wanted you to know what we are thinking and what type of advice we need over the next couple months. Additional topics may come up as you debate these issues – that is fine – we will deal with it. This is a great opportunity for us to work together to make this fishery what you and the people you represent want.

I am sending this letter to you a month prior to the meeting to give you time to digest it and discuss it with your fellow permit holders so that you can come to the meeting prepared to make progress. Do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions at all or have other thoughts or ideas about how we should proceed with considering these issues. As always, I am open for suggestions.

Lastly, I will be putting a formal agenda together for the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> and will send that out to you in early February. One thing that will definitely be on the agenda is the Permanent Transfer issue.

Hope you are all doing well and I look forward to talking with you soon. Thanks!

Sincerely,

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