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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO FISH AND WILDLIFE -- LICENSING

Introduced By: Representatives Spears, McEntee, Donovan, Boylan, Tanzi, Fogarty,
Cotter, Speakman, Felix, and McGaw

Date Introduced: February 11, 2026

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

(Dept. of Environmental Management)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 20-2-31 of the General Laws in Chapter 20-2 entitled "Licensing" is
2 hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **20-2-31. Hunting and fishing licenses — Exceptions.**

4 (a) Every valid license to hunt or fish in this state that is held by any resident of this state
5 upon joining the armed forces or the merchant marine of the United States is hereby extended and
6 is in force and valid until six (6) months following the termination of his or her service.

7 (b) Every member of the armed forces or of the merchant marine of the United States may
8 hunt or fish in this state if that person procures a hunting or fishing license issued by the state of
9 Rhode Island, the fee for which is that charged for a resident civilian.

10 (c) Every man or woman who was a part of the armed forces of the United States
11 government and is now a one hundred percent (100%) disabled veteran, and any man or woman
12 who is one hundred percent (100%) permanently disabled, is entitled, subject to the provisions of
13 this title, to receive a license to hunt or fish or both in this state; and upon the presentation of his or
14 her necessary military discharge identification or disability papers or both, as prescribed by the
15 department of environmental management, shall, at the discretion of the licensing authority,
16 receive, without the payment of any license fee, a continuing special form of license authorizing
17 the man or woman to hunt or fish or both in this state in accordance with the provisions of this title
18 and regulations issued pursuant to this title for so long as he or she so desires; provided, however,
19 that the man or woman, having once made application for this license, shall not again be required

1 to appear before the licensing authority to present his or her papers.

2 (d) A freshwater fishing license is not required of any blind person. For the purposes of
3 this section, a person is blind only if his or her central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the
4 better eye with correcting lenses or if his or her visual acuity is greater than 20/200 but is
5 accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field
6 subtends an angle no greater than twenty degrees (20°).

7 (e) Every resident man or woman over the age of sixty-five (65) years is entitled, subject
8 to the provisions of this title and the regulations issued pursuant to this title, to receive a special
9 permanent license to hunt or fish or both in this state for which there is no fee.

10 (f) Any man or woman who is one hundred percent (100%) permanently disabled may
11 apply to receive a license to fish in this state, and upon presentation of a proof of his or her disability
12 as prescribed by the department of environmental management, receive, without the payment of
13 any license fee, a continuing special form of license authorizing the man or woman to fish in this
14 state for so long as he or she so desires; provided, however, that the man or woman, having once
15 made application for this license, shall not again be required to appear before the licensing authority
16 to present his or her papers.

17 (g) The director may, by regulation, designate no more than two (2) days in each year,
18 which may or may not be consecutive, during which residents and nonresidents may, without
19 having a license and without payment of any fee, exercise the privileges of a holder of a freshwater
20 fishing license. These persons are subject to all other limitations, restrictions, conditions, laws,
21 rules, and regulations applicable to the holder of a freshwater fishing license.

22 (h) For the purpose of this section, “man or woman who is one hundred percent (100%)
23 permanently disabled” means an individual who has a physical or mental impairment and is
24 receiving:

25 (1) Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits (SSDI);

26 (2) Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI).

27 All licenses that are issued to persons who qualify pursuant to this subsection shall be
28 issued without the requirement of the payment of a fee and shall expire annually on February 28 of
29 each year. Persons seeking the issuance or reissuance of licenses shall be required to present
30 documentation establishing that the applicant is qualified, or remains qualified, pursuant to this
31 subsection.

32 (i) Every member of a federally recognized Indian tribe that is located in Rhode Island is
33 entitled, subject to the provisions of this title and regulations issued pursuant to this title, to receive
34 a freshwater fishing license for which there is no fee.

1 SECTION 2. Section 20-2.1-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 20-2.1 entitled "Commercial
2 Fishing Licenses" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **20-2.1-8. Dealers' licenses and fees.**

4 (a) No person, partnership, firm, association, or corporation shall barter or trade in marine
5 species taken by persons licensed under this chapter unless a license so to do has been obtained
6 from the director of environmental management.

7 (b) Any licensee operating under the provisions of this section shall purchase marine
8 species from licensed persons only and shall purchase or possess only those ~~lobsters~~ marine species
9 legally taken or possessed.

10 (c) The director shall issue and enforce rules and regulations and orders governing bartering
11 and trading in marine species by licensed persons of marine species and licensed dealers, and other
12 persons, partnerships, firms, associations, or corporations.

13 (d) **License types and fees.**

14 (1) **Multipurpose dealer's license** This license shall allow the dealer to purchase or sell
15 all marine products in the state of Rhode Island. The license shall be valid for the calendar year in
16 which it is issued. The fee shall be four hundred and fifty dollars (\$450).

17 (2) **Finfish dealer's license.** This license shall allow the dealer to purchase or sell all finfish
18 products in the state of Rhode Island. The license shall be valid for the calendar year in which it is
19 issued. The fee shall be three hundred dollars (\$300).

20 (3) **Shellfish dealer's license.** This license shall allow the dealer to purchase or sell all
21 shellfish products in the state of Rhode Island. The license shall be valid for the calendar year in
22 which it is issued. The fee shall be three hundred dollars (\$300).

23 (4) **Crustacean dealer license.** This license shall allow the dealer to purchase all
24 crustacean products in the state of Rhode Island. The license shall be valid for the calendar year in
25 which it is issued. The fee shall be three hundred dollars (\$300).

26 (e) **Seafood dealers license — Suspension or revocation.** The director may suspend,
27 revoke, or deny the license of a seafood dealer or fisher of marine species for the violation of any
28 provision of this title or the rules, regulations, or orders adopted or issued pursuant to this title.

29 (f) Any person aggrieved by the decisions of the director may appeal the decision pursuant
30 to the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, chapter 35 of title 42.

31 (g) The director is authorized to enter and inspect the business premises, appurtenant
32 structures, vehicles, or vessels of any seafood dealer and to inspect the records maintained by a
33 seafood dealer for the purpose of determining compliance with the provisions of this section and
34 any rules, regulations, or orders issued under this section, and no person shall interfere with,

1 obstruct the entrance, or inspection of the director or the director's agents of those business
2 premises, appurtenant structures, vehicles, or vessels.

3 (h) Any violation of the provisions of this section or any rule, regulation, or order adopted
4 under this section shall be subject to the penalties prescribed in § 20-1-16.

5 SECTION 3. Section 20-2.2-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 20-2.2 entitled
6 "Recreational Saltwater Fishing License" is hereby amended to read as follows:

7 **20-2.2-6. Fees — Terms and conditions — Information required.**

8 (a)(1) Resident, seven dollars (\$7.00);

9 (2) No fee shall be charged for residents who are over the age of sixty-five (65), or are
10 members of a federally recognized Indian tribe located in Rhode Island or in active military service;

11 (3) Nonresident, ten dollars (\$10.00);

12 (4) Licenses issued pursuant to this subsection shall expire on December 31st of each year.

13 (b)(1) Resident or nonresident seven-day (7), five dollars (\$5.00);

14 (2) This license shall entitle the holder to fish recreationally for seven (7) consecutive days,
15 including the day of issuance.

16 (c) All license applications shall be required to provide their name, address, phone number,
17 and date of birth.

18 (d) Any lost or destroyed license shall be replaceable, during the calendar year in which it
19 was issued, or in the case of a seven-day (7) license, during the seven-day (7) period when it is
20 valid, at no cost to the license holder.

21 (e) The director is authorized to determine a portion of the license fee, not to exceed any
22 of the amounts set forth above in this section, that may be retained by the state-approved vendor
23 and authorized licensing agents, as set forth in § 20-2.2-7, as commission for services rendered.

24 SECTION 4. Sections 1 and 3 of this act shall take effect on March 1, 2027. Section 2 of
25 this act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO FISH AND WILDLIFE -- LICENSING

1 This act would allow any member of a federally recognized Indian tribe located in Rhode
2 Island to receive recreational freshwater and saltwater fishing licenses free of charge. It would also
3 make a technical correction to a separate section of law dealing with commercial fishing dealers'
4 licenses.

5 Sections 1 and 3 of this act would take effect on March 1, 2027. Section 2 of this act would
6 take effect upon passage.

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