

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 28.2-201.1, relating to grants for creating oyster gardens.

[H 2493]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 28.2-201.1 as follows:

§ 28.2-201.1. Commission to administer grants to individuals transferring oysters to a state-managed sanctuary.

For purposes of this section:

"Fund" means the Oyster Growing Activities Fund.

"Individual" means the same as that term is defined in § 58.1-302.

A. Beginning January 1, 2002, and ending 12:00 p.m. on December 31, 2011, any individual who (i) grows oysters during the calendar year pursuant to a valid Virginia Marine Resources Commission General Permit for Noncommercial Riparian Shellfish Growing Activities issued pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Commission according to the procedures established in Article 2 (§ 28.2-209 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of this title and (ii) is issued a written receipt from the Commission evidencing the transfer during such calendar year of at least five hundred oysters to a state-managed sanctuary reef, or to a designated organization or person authorized to take possession of such oysters for the purpose of depositing them on a state-managed sanctuary reef, shall be eligible for a grant from the Commonwealth.

B. The grant paid for such oysters transferred during the calendar year shall be equal to the lesser of \$300 or the amount paid by the individual in such calendar year to grow such oysters, including but not limited to the amount paid for equipment, materials and training.

C. The Commission shall establish a process to issue a written receipt to any individual who grows and transfers oysters in accordance with the conditions of subsection A. Such receipt shall include the date and the number of such oysters transferred.

D. An individual eligible for a grant under this section shall file an application for such grant with the Commissioner in person or by mail no later than March 31 of the calendar year following the calendar year in which the oysters were transferred to a state-managed sanctuary reef or to a designated organization or person authorized to take possession of such oysters for the purpose of depositing them on a state-managed sanctuary reef (or such later date determined by the Commissioner in his sole discretion). Such application shall include sales receipts and such other evidence required by the Commissioner for purposes of determining the amount paid by the individual to grow such oysters in the previous calendar year. Failure to meet the filing deadline shall render the individual ineligible to receive a grant for such calendar year. For filings by mail, the postmark cancellation shall govern the date of the filing determination. The Commissioner shall award grants only to those individuals who have been issued the written receipt described in subsection C.

E. Within ninety days after the filing deadline in subsection D, the Commissioner shall certify to (i) the Comptroller and (ii) each applicant the amount of the grant to which such applicant is entitled under the provisions of this section. Payment of such grant shall be made by check issued by the State Treasurer on warrant of the Comptroller within sixty days of such certification.

F. Grants shall be awarded in the order in which grant applications are filed with the Commissioner. The Commissioner may not award any grant unless there are sufficient funds in the Fund from which such grant shall be paid. Any individual growing and transferring oysters as required under this section, but not receiving a grant for such transfer because of insufficient funds in the Fund, shall have no priority or right to any future moneys that may be appropriated or deposited into the Fund based on such prior transfer of oysters.

G. There is hereby established the Oyster Growing Activities Fund to be administered by the Commission from which grants shall be paid to individuals for growing and transferring oysters to a state-managed sanctuary reef, or to a designated organization or person authorized to take possession of such oysters for the purpose of depositing them on a state-managed sanctuary reef, as provided in this section. The Fund shall consist of such funds as may be appropriated by the General Assembly from time to time. The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller, and any funds, including interest, remaining in the Fund at the end of a fiscal year or a biennium shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Interest earned on the Fund shall be credited to the Fund.

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