



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

ISSUE 1

Commercial License and Permit Fees

BACKGROUND

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) will be asked to update regulations to incorporate legislatively adopted fees for various types of required licenses and permits sold by the Department to commercial fishermen, processing plants, and fish buyers.

Licenses, such as for boat and commercial fishing gear, activities, and crew are required to engage in commercial fishing. Other licenses, for example, for fish buyers, govern those that buy commercially caught fish and shellfish. Additionally, permits are required to participate in most commercial fisheries, including restricted participation systems (e.g., Dungeness crab, pink shrimp, ocean troll salmon, etc.).

Oregon's commercial fisheries brought in \$177,000,000 in landings into coastal communities in 2024, resulting in \$4,100,000 of revenue from ad valorem and commercial license/permit fees to the ODFW Commercial Fish Fund (CFF). This fund supports fishery management and monitoring, research, and administrative services within ODFW's Marine Resources Program, the Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program, and Fish Division. Oregon State Police also receive CFF funds to aid in enforcing commercial fishery regulations.

The 2025 Oregon Legislature adopted increases to commercial license and permit fees and *ad valorem* (i.e., "landing tax") in House Bill 2342 (Regular Session; <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2342/Enrolled>). These increases are needed to limit reductions to services, as cost increases from inflation and new demands on Department resources have outpaced annual funds garnered from the current fees.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

ODFW solicited input (see attachment 2) from fish buyers, commodity commissions, commercial fishers, and fish processors via:

- Stakeholder meetings during March-May 2024
- Multiple meetings with Oregon's trawl, Dungeness crab, and albacore commodity commissions
- Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting, June 2024
- Legislative committee hearings.

ANALYSIS

Most commercial fishing fees in Oregon were last updated in 2016, with the intention that those rates would remain in place through 2021. However, due to cost savings from COVID-related restrictions and internal agency efficiencies, no new fee increases have been implemented for a full decade (2016–2025).

As we look ahead, rising costs for supplies and services—along with growing demands on the Marine Resources Program—mean that current fee levels will no longer be sufficient to maintain existing programs and services beyond 2026.

To address this, the Oregon Legislature approved a phased increase in commercial license and permit fees beginning in 2026. These increases will help the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) continue its work managing, monitoring, and conducting research to support the state’s commercial fisheries.

Fee Increase Schedule:

- **2026:** 12% increase
- **2028:** 4% increase
- **2030:** 4% increase

Details on specific license and permit costs can be found in Attachment 2. Note: Oregon Crew Member Licenses are not included in this increase and may be adjusted at a later date.

Without this fee adjustment, ODFW would have faced significant staff and service reductions starting in the 2025–2027 biennium. These cuts would have severely impacted data collection and research efforts—particularly fishery sampling programs like those for groundfish and nearshore rockfish. For example, the nearshore rockfish survey was essential in setting federal harvest limits for black rockfish in 2025–2026.

With fewer resources, ODFW would have had to adopt a more conservative management approach, potentially limiting fishing opportunities across several commercial sectors.

Even with the approved fee increases, some reductions to the Marine Resources Program were still necessary. As of July 1, 2025, positions related to coastal pelagic species (e.g., sardine, anchovy, market squid), nearshore policy, and commercial fishery sampling have been reduced or eliminated.

Changes to Albacore Tuna Licensing

Starting in 2026, Oregon will no longer offer a separate license solely for landing albacore tuna. Instead, vessels making more than one landing per year—including those targeting only albacore—must obtain standard commercial fishing licenses. These include:

- A **Commercial Boat/Vessel License**
- An **Individual Commercial Fishing License** or a **transferable Crew Member License** for each person on board

Vessels making only one delivery per year may still purchase a **single-delivery landing license** instead of full commercial licenses.

Previously, Oregon offered three different license options for albacore landings, depending on whether the permit holder had licenses from other states or Canada. This change simplifies and aligns Oregon's licensing with other West Coast states, improves safety oversight, enhances data collection, and helps enforce rules against the illegal sale of recreationally caught albacore.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the proposed Oregon Administrative Rules as set forth in Attachment 3.
2. Adopt the proposed Oregon Administrative Rules as set forth in Attachment 3 with adjustments to proposed rule language.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to adopt the staff proposal in Attachment 3 and amend OARs in Chapter 635, Divisions 004, 005, and 006 as proposed by staff.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2026.