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## **FCC Calls for "Day of Action" to Help Fishermen Secure Financial Relief**

*Community fishermen must act today to secure access to critical Cares Act Funds*

April 24, 2020 (WASHINGTON) - The Fishing Communities Coalition (FCC) — representing more than 1,000 small-boat, independent fishermen and business owners from Maine to Alaska — is coordinating efforts to ensure fishermen throughout the country have the resources they need to access federal relief funding in the wake of the COVID-19 global health pandemic.

“Fishermen were left behind in the first round of funding,” said Ben Martens, executive director of the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association. “Most couldn’t even apply for the first week, so we want to do everything we can to lower the barriers for community-based fishermen to participate in the opportunities that the CARES Act is providing. We are incredibly thankful for our volunteers who are able to lend a helping hand through this time of crisis.”

As the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, and other unemployment and disaster assistance programs get replenished by Congress and the Federal Government in the coming days, the FCC worries that small-boat community fishermen will not be able to access these critical funds before they run out.

Following on the heels of a fishermen-focused [webinar](#) organized and led by FCC Member Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association, the FCC is marking Friday, April 24, as a “Day of Action” for fishermen and seafood suppliers. FCC member groups will have resources available and experts standing by to help commercial fishermen apply for financial relief from the devastating effects

COVID-19 has had on their businesses.

“Fishermen have been hit hard by the COVID-19 closure of restaurants and fish markets, but because many are fishing—albeit for substantially lower prices—they have not yet applied for CARES Act assistance,” said Linda Behnken, Executive Director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association. “The time to apply is now! FCC member groups and volunteers are standing by to assist.”

“We are wading through technical documents and webinars to find answers that are specific to the nuances of small fishing businesses,” said John Pappalardo, CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance. “Not only did self-employed individuals have to wait a week to apply for PPP, but there was little guidance on how to apply if you didn’t have payroll.”

While the FCC is heartened by Congress passing legislation to replenish the PPP, it is certain these funds won’t last long and many fear the funds will run out long before most commercial fishermen will be able to access them. In an effort to help these fishermen navigate this process, the following FCC member groups are offering the following resources:

#### Resources

- Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association: [COVID-19 Fishermen Resources and Assistance](#)
- Alaska Marine Conservation Council: [COVID-19 Resources for Fishermen](#)
- Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance: [COVID-19 Fishermen Resources and Information](#)
- Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance: [Information Regarding COVID-19 Response and Assistance](#)
- Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association: [COVID-19 Pandemic Resources](#)

“Much like farmers and ranchers, commercial fishermen help feed America,” said Eric Brazer, Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance. “Now, perhaps more than ever, commercial fishermen need a lifeline to help get them through this global crisis and back to work. CARES Act funds are a critical piece and the FCC is doing everything it can to make sure that commercial fishermen aren’t forgotten.”

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The Fishing Communities Coalition is the united voice for small-boat, community-focused, commercial fishermen from around the country who strive to bring their stewardship vision to bear on national issues. We believe that together, fishermen from around the United States who believe in community-focused ideals, science-based management and forward-looking policies

can build a national movement that protects fish, fishermen and fishing communities for this and future generations.

<https://mailchi.mp/b8ec3e9463a6/fcc-calls-for-day-of-action-to-help-fishermen-secure-financial-relief>