



## Update on CARES Act Gulf State Spend Plans

September 12, 2020

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The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance (Shareholders' Alliance) continues to closely monitor the progress of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act spend plans for the Gulf States.

We continue to advocate for a timely, public and transparent process for how these funds are distributed. Some states have actively sought fishermen's input while others appear to be doing this behind closed doors.

Below is a breakdown of the status for each state.



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## Update on Gulf States Spend Plans

**Louisiana:** Louisiana is the first state in the Gulf to have their Spend Plan approved by NOAA. Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) sent out a [press release](#) this week with details of their application process.

The deadline to submit an application is 11:59 pm on October 26, 2020. All applicants who submit before the deadline will be considered.

Payments for accepted applicants will be done in two phases: the first minimum payment that was calculated based on if all eligible participants apply, and then a second payment with funds remaining after all applications have been processed. Administrative funds not used by LDWF at that time will also be included in that second payment.

If you plan to apply for Louisiana CARES Act relief funds, review the Program Guidelines and Assistance pages (see below). You can also view an instructional video on how to complete your application. There is a video for:

[Commercial fishermen](#)

[Wholesale dealers](#)

[Charter captains](#)

If you fall into multiple sectors you may qualify for each as long as the 35% loss is met in each category.

[Louisiana CARES Act Assistance Page](#)

[Louisiana CARES Act Program Guidelines](#)

[Full CARES Act Spend Plan](#)

[\*View our comments on Louisiana's Spend Plan\*](#)

**Florida:** Florida was the only state to have a formal public comment period for their spend plan, which closed on July 26. Since then, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) submitted the draft plan to NOAA and has received comments back. We do not know the details of NOAA's feedback, other than there were no substantial changes proposed. FWC will be submitting their updated spend plan this week, but currently have no timeline for when the plan will be finalized and applications accepted.

[Florida's Draft Spend Plan](#)

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[View our comments on Florida's Spend Plan](#)

**Texas:** The public still has very little visibility on Texas' spend plan, including what it includes, what the criteria may be, and what the timeline is. Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) has sent it to the Governor's office and is awaiting approval before submitting it to NOAA. Lance Robinson, the former point of contact for TPWD's CARES Act efforts, has retired. According to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Robin Reichers is now the point of contact.

If you have any questions or are concerned about Texas putting this together behind closed doors without proper public input, we highly encourage you to contact Robin. His email is [robin.riechers@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:robin.riechers@tpwd.texas.gov) and his phone number is 512-389-4636.

You may consider asking the following questions:

- *What is the status of Texas's spend plan?*
- *What will the application process be?*
- *What criteria will TPWD use to determine 35% loss?*
- *Why did TPWD choose to bypass industry input on the spend plan?*

**Mississippi:** Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) had a short public [comment period on their spend plan](#) that closed on August 26. Their plan has been submitted to NOAA and is under review. If you have questions or would like an update, please contact Traci Floyd ([traci.floyd@dmr.ms.gov](mailto:traci.floyd@dmr.ms.gov), 228-523-4068).

[View our comments on Mississippi's Spend Plan](#)

**Alabama:** Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) has submitted its plan to NOAA and it was approved last week. The state should be publicizing the application process soon, though we do not have an exact timeline. We encourage you to reach out to Scott Bannon ([Scott.Bannon@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:Scott.Bannon@dcnr.alabama.gov), 251-861-2882) and ask for an updated timeline on when the applications process will be open.

[ADCNR's CARES Act Page](#)

We will continue to update you as we get more information. If you have any questions, please feel free to email or call me

Thanks,

Eric

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*The Shareholders' Alliance is the largest organization of commercial snapper and grouper fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico. We work hard to ensure that our fisheries are sustainably managed so our fishing businesses can thrive and our fishing communities can exist for future generations. We are the harvesters that provide much of the American public with a reliable source of domestically caught wild Gulf seafood, and we do this through a philosophy that sustainable seafood and profitable fishing businesses depend on healthy fish populations.*

[www.shareholdersalliance.org](http://www.shareholdersalliance.org)

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