

CAPE COD COMMERCIAL
**FISHERMEN'S
ALLIANCE**
Small Boats. Big Ideas.

October 5, 2026

RE: 2027 Calendar Year Shellfish Division Fees

Barnstable Shellfish Committee,

On behalf of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, we understand the Town of Barnstable needs a more sustainable funding model for shellfish, but we oppose the size of the proposed increases on the commercial and aquaculture sides.

The Town's analysis shows commercial permits bring in \$24,450 against \$60,424 in direct costs, a gap of \$35,974, or about 8 percent of the \$471,695 total deficit. Recreational carries a gap of \$355,068, about 75 percent. Commercial permits already recover about 40 percent of its direct costs, compared with about 35 percent for recreational permits. Despite that, the proposal would raise the commercial permit from \$550 to \$550 plus \$100 per additional species. For example a three-species permit rises to \$850 (55 percent) and a five-species permit to \$1,050 (91 percent), with another \$100 for quahog dredging.

About 3,100 recreational permits were sold in 2024, and demand for those permits have held steady. Yet non-residents would see the smallest increases (\$170 to \$200, and \$80 to \$90 seasonal) while residents would go from \$45 to \$60-\$70. We urge the Committee to widen the resident and non-resident differential, before turning to commercial fees. We also urge the Town not to adopt per-species pricing. We are not aware of other Massachusetts municipalities that layer per-species charges on commercial permits.

Regarding the aquaculture sector, the proposal keeps the \$25 per acre license fee and adds a \$500 per acre administrative and inspection fee, taking a one-acre grower from \$25 to \$525 and a five-acre grower from \$125 to \$2,625. We ask the Town to explain what the \$500 per acre covers and to show the documented inspection costs are behind it.

Any commercial surplus should stay dedicated to commercial seed and enhancement, dock repairs, or holding down future commercial fees, not subsidize the recreational or aquaculture programs. Shellfishing is a significant part of Barnstable's working waterfront, and pricing fishermen out of it could cost the Town more than these fees raise.

We ask the Town to scale back the commercial and aquaculture increases, close the recreational gap through recreational fees, not adopt per-species pricing, and keep any commercial surplus in reserve for the commercial program.

Sincerely, Caitlin Townsend, Working Waterfront Community Organizer



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