

SENATE No. 2534

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

SENATE, December 26, 2023.

The committee on Agriculture to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 552) of Patrick M. O'Connor, Jennifer Balinsky Armini, Julian Cyr, Bruce E. Tarr and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to lobstering closure mitigation, reports the accompanying bill (Senate, No. 2534)

For the committee,
Joanne M. Comerford

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An Act relative to lobstering closure mitigation.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 130 of the general laws is hereby amended by adding the following
2 section:-

3 Section 37B. Lobstering Closure Mitigation Fund

4 (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the Commonwealth, subject to
5 appropriation, a fund to be known as the Lobstering Closure Mitigation Fund to be administered
6 by the department of unemployment assistance.

7 (b) The purpose of the Fund shall be to provide financial assistance to lobstermen to
8 mitigate the financial impacts of fishing area closures due to protection of endangered marine
9 species. For the purposes of this act, the term “lobsterman” shall mean a holder of a commercial
10 fisherman permit (lobster) as so appearing in section 38 of this chapter that is deemed to be
11 active and transferable by the director, and the term “trap” shall mean a lobster trap or pot used
12 to catch lobsters that is owned by and licensed under and a lobsterman. Any lobsterman who is
13 domiciled in Massachusetts shall be eligible for weekly payments equal to one dollar per trap per

14 week. Eligibility for said payments shall be available through February 1 and shall terminate on
15 July 30 annually.

16 (c) There shall be credited to the Fund all amounts that are, by law, transferred or
17 authorized to be transferred thereto or directed to be deposited therein, and all amounts received
18 as gifts, grants, or contributions for the purposes of the Fund. Amounts credited to the Fund shall
19 not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the Fund at the end of a fiscal
20 year shall not revert to the General Fund.

21 (d) The director of the department shall report annually to the house and senate
22 committees on ways and means and the joint committee on agriculture on income received into
23 the fund and sources of that income, any expenditure from the fund and their purposes, and fund
24 balances.

25 (e) The department shall promulgate regulations as necessary to implement the provisions
26 of this section, including, but not limited to, regulations pertaining to payment application and
27 disbursement procedures.

28 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect immediately upon its passage.