

State announces \$2.1 million in grants to help fishing businesses impacted by Sandy

By: TYLER R. TYNES, Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 10:30 am

TRENTON – The Christie administration announced Wednesday that over 200 fishing-related businesses will share more than \$2.1 million in federal grants to help them recover from damages sustained from Superstorm Sandy

The grant program is aimed at helping smaller businesses. Owners of bait-and-tackle shops, commercial dealers, commercial fishermen, for-hire party and charter boat operators, marinas and those involved in shell-fish aquaculture businesses were eligible to apply to the Department of Environmental Protection for grants.

ShorePro Contractors ordered to pay nearly \$1 million in state lawsuit

A Linwood-based contractor will have to pay \$940,000 in penalties and restitution and lose its certificate of formation in order as the result of a 2014 lawsuit.

Grants of up to \$10,000 were available to help offset some of the costs of the storm.

“The DEP and our Marine Fisheries staff have worked tirelessly since Sandy to help these businesses get back on their feet,” said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. “Our economically vital commercial and recreational fishing industries are coming back after the devastation caused by Sandy. This grant program will help our smaller fishing-related businesses recover some of their losses.”

Applicants had to document a minimum of \$5,000 in losses as a result of Sandy. Grants were awarded to help with repair or replacement of equipment that was not covered by other programs. Activities paid for out-of-pocket as part of a business’ or individual’s recovery effort also were eligible.



TACKLE WAR

Fisherman Tom Pacula, of Absecon, looks over clams, Wednesday April 15, 2015, in Absecon. He and other locals want the state to dredge Absecon Creek to allow access to the bay.

Examples of losses eligible for reimbursement include lost or damaged fishing gear; lost, damaged or ruined product; replacement and/or repair of other equipment; replacement and repair of infrastructure; and revenue lost in the months immediately after Sandy struck in October 2012.

Lawrence Hajna, a spokesman for the DEP, said the grants will help the small business fisherman, but their losses were still substantial.

"They're losses were much greater than the money allocated by the federal government," he said.

Grants were provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as part of a federal fishery disaster declaration for states impacted by Sandy.

Grants to marinas and commercial fishermen represented slightly more than half the grant applications approved for funding, with the next largest share to bait-and-tackle shops and for-hire businesses. Grants also were awarded to shellfish harvest/aquaculture businesses and commercial dealers.

New Jersey's commercial fishing industry is one of the largest on the East Coast, landing roughly 121 million pounds of seafood and generating more than \$1 billion in revenue in 2013.

The economic impact of recreational fishing also supports approximately 10,000 jobs and \$1.74 billion in annual sales.

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