

Notice of Hearing

The Department of Natural Resources announces that it will hold a preliminary public hearing on a statement of scope SS 023-20 to revise ch. NR 25, relating to Lake Michigan whitefish management and Great Lakes harvest reporting, at the time and place shown below.

Hearing Information

Date: June 11, 2020

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: Online through [Skype link](#) or 1-866-715-6499 (passcode 8227536094#)

Rule Information: This is a statement of scope for a proposed permanent rule. The rule would address quotas and other harvest management regulations for lake whitefish in Lake Michigan, and would also standardize commercial harvest reporting requirements for both Lake Michigan (including Green Bay) and Lake Superior.

Accessibility (Choose either version)

1. Hearing impaired persons may request an interpreter for this hearing. Please make reservations for a hearing interpreter at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled hearing, by writing to e-mail Meredith.Penthorn@wisconsin.gov.
2. Alternatively, you may contact the Department of Natural Resources TDD at (608) 267-6897. The hearing facility is accessible to disabled users.
3. Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, including the provision of information material in an alternative format, will be provided for qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. Please call with specific information on your request at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled hearing.
4. Handicap access is available at the hearing location.

Appearances at the Hearing and Submittal of Written Comments

The public has the opportunity to testify at the hearing. Registration will take place at the hearing by completing a Hearing Appearance form, which will be provided. Comments on the proposed rule must be received on or before June 16, 2020. The Hearing Appearance form also can be used for submitting a written comment at the hearing. Written comments may be submitted by U.S. mail, fax, E-mail, or through the internet and will have the same weight and effect as oral statements presented at the public hearing. Written comments and any questions on the proposed rules should be submitted to:

Department of Natural Resources
Attn: Meredith Penthorn
P.O. Box 7921
101 S. Webster Street,
Madison, WI 53707-7921

The rule may be viewed at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/news/input/ProposedPermanent.html>

Comments can be made at: DNRAAdministrativeRulesComments@wisconsin.gov

Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis: The rule may impact the harvest of lake whitefish by commercial fishers, and exact economic impacts are likely to vary among commercial fishers. Because of the shift in distribution and overall decline in lake whitefish populations in Lake Michigan, some commercial fishers could have a reduction in their individual harvest quotas or percentage of the harvest while others have an increase. Certain areas or the whole fishery may be further restricted by season and methods. However, the overall economic impact may be positive for the commercial fishing industry because the rule would allow for more efficient harvest to make full use of the available lake whitefish commercial stocks.

The rule may have a minimal economic impact on sport anglers, guides and charter businesses, especially if commercial fishers shift part of their harvest effort to different areas of Green Bay. This could affect the density and distribution of sport anglers in Green Bay, including those that are targeting game fish other than whitefish. However, fishing may also improve in areas where commercial fishing is lessened due to revised quota allocations.

The rule changes are necessary in order to ensure a sustainable lake whitefish fishery over the long-term and to better allow commercial fishers to harvest the total allowable commercial catch for whitefish. The rule may have a moderate economic impact in the Lake Michigan region, but an exact amount of impact is unknown at this time. The department will conduct an economic impact analysis to gather comments from any individuals, businesses, local governments, or other entities that expect to be affected economically by the rule change. In addition, the department will seek advice from the Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board when developing the rule.

The rule may also revise commercial harvest reporting requirements for Lake Superior, Lake Michigan or both. Transitioning to full implementation of the electronic reporting system for all commercial fishers may have a minimum impact since some commercial fishers would need to obtain a computer or cell phone to enter reporting information electronically.

The proposed rule would likely not contain any design or operational standards.

Agency Small Business Regulatory Coordinator:

Emma Esch (608) 266-1959

Emma.Esch@wisconsin.gov

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin _____

STATE OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By _____

Preston D. Cole, Secretary

Rev. 03/20/19