
DIGEST

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HB 543 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Zeringue

Abstract: Separates the \$7.50 charter promotion fee from the recreational charter fishing license fees, changes the Charter Boat Fishing Fund to an escrow account for the deposit of charter promotion fees associated with recreational and commercial charter fishing licenses, directs the Louisiana Charter Boat Assoc. to use the monies within the Charter Boat Fishing Escrow Account as required by law, requires appropriate fishing licenses for nonresidents fishing with a charter guide, and reinstates requirements for fishing in saltwater areas of the state.

Present law provides for recreational fishing licenses and fees, including saltwater licenses and charter guide fishing licenses for residents and nonresidents.

Proposed law retains the licenses and fees that exist under present law.

Present law requires that \$7.50 must be collected for every recreational charter fishing license sold and be deposited into the Charter Boat Fishing Fund for the purposes of promoting charter fishing, among other things.

Present law establishes a single fee for recreational charter fishing licenses that includes this \$7.50 promotion fee, specifically, a \$20 fee for three-day saltwater charter fishing licenses and a \$10 fee for three-day freshwater charter fishing licenses.

Proposed law separates the \$7.50 charter promotion fee from the recreational charter fishing license fees so that it can be deposited directly into an escrow account for promotional use pursuant to present law. Proposed law therefor provides for a \$12.50 three-day saltwater charter fishing license and a \$2.50 three day freshwater charter fishing license and the \$7.50 charter promotion fee required under present law will be collected in addition to these base fees under proposed law.

Present law establishes a Charter Boat Fishing Fund within the Conservation Fund for the deposit of monies to be used by the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries for the promotion of the charter boat industry, protection of the fishery, and to provide for administrative costs of the fund. Present law further provides that these funds are to be expended for such purposes through the Louisiana Charter Boat Assoc.

Proposed law changes the Charter Boat Fishing Fund to the Charter Boat Fishing Escrow Account, requires that charter promotion fees collected under 56:302.9 (\$500 fee for nonresident charter guide licensees) and 3001 (\$7.50 for each recreational charter fishing license) be deposited into this escrow account.

Proposed law removes the department from administration of these funds and requires that the monies in the escrow account be used by the La. Charter Boat Assoc. directly for the uses established under present law.

Present law requires that 10% of all annual charter guide license fees collected be deposited into the Charter Boat Fishing Fund and that the remainder be deposited into the Conservation Fund.

Proposed law repeals the dedication of this 10% of annual charter guide license fees to the Charter Boat Fishing Fund and requires that all revenue from charter guide licenses except for the charter promotion fees paid by nonresidents be deposited into the Conservation Fund.

Present law requires that nonresident charter fishing guides pay \$500 in addition to their annual charter guide license fee which is dedicated to the Charter Boat Fishing Fund.

Proposed law retains the \$500 fee and dedicates the fee to the Charter Boat Fishing Escrow Account.

Proposed law reinstates provisions of prior law regarding the options available for licensing when saltwater fishing.

(Amends Act No. 356 of the 2021 R.S., §6 and R.S. 56:10(B)(1)(f), 302.9(B), (C)(3)(c), and (G), and 3001(A)(4) and (5) and (B)(5) and (6); Adds R.S. 56:302.1 and 3001(A)(6) and (B)(7); Repeals R.S. 56:3007(C))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment to the original bill:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Change the Charter Boat Fishing Fund in the Conservation Fund to the Charter Boat Fishing Escrow Account.
3. Specify that "charter promotion fees" collected under R.S. 56:302.9 and 3001 are to be deposited into the escrow account.
4. Remove the responsibility of the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries from administering the Charter Boat Fishing Escrow Account and require that the monies in the escrow account be used by the Louisiana Charter Boat Association directly.
5. Remove the dedication of 10% of all annual charter guide license fees collected to the Charter Boat Fishing Fund, and instead specify that all revenue from charter guide licenses, except charter promotion fees, be deposited into the Conservation Fund.
6. Correct a reference to the fishing license required by a nonresident fishing with a charter

guide from a saltwater fishing license to an appropriate fishing license under R.S. 56:3001(B).

7. Add the term "charter promotion fee" to an existing \$500 fee paid by nonresident charter boat fishing guides that is currently dedicated to the Charter Boat Fishing Guide Fund, and changes the dedication from the Charter Boat Fishing Fund to the Charter Boat Fishing Escrow Account.