

HB 1833-FN - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

11Mar2026... 0700h

2026 SESSION

26-2886

08/06

HOUSE BILL

1833-FN

AN ACT creating a special license for non-resident vessel operators participating in tuna tournaments.

SPONSORS: Rep. Bridle, Rock. 29; Rep. Bernardy, Rock. 36; Rep. McGrath, Rock. 40; Rep. Porcelli, Rock. 19; Rep. Sabourin dit Choiniere, Rock. 30

COMMITTEE: Fish and Game and Marine Resources

ANALYSIS

This bill creates a special license for non-resident vessel operators participating in tuna tournaments.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT creating a special license for non-resident vessel operators participating in tuna tournaments.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; Nonresident Special Tuna License. Amend RSA 211 by inserting after section
2 49-e the following new section:

3 211:49-f Nonresident Special Tuna License.

4 I. Any person who does not qualify as a resident under RSA 207:1, who takes, possesses,
5 lands, or transports, as part of a tuna tournament, from or on the waters of this state, regardless of
6 where the catch was taken, any tuna species by any method for the purpose of selling the same, shall
7 first procure a valid license from the executive director to do so. A special tuna license shall be
8 issued to a nonresident operator of the vessel who is a registered participant in a tuna tournament
9 that is sponsored and operated by a nonprofit association that has existed for at least one year prior
10 to the tournament. An individual shall not be issued more than one license per one eligible tuna
11 tournament in any one calendar year. This license shall only be valid for the dates of the eligible
12 tuna tournament, not to exceed 10 days. No other marine species may be taken, possessed, landed,
13 or transported for the purpose of sale under this license.

14 II. The fee for an annual license shall be set by the executive director pursuant to RSA
15 206:10, I. The executive director shall establish a surcharge on each license issued under this
16 section of not more than \$25, nor less than \$10, to be deposited in the derelict fishing gear and
17 coastal cleanup fund established in RSA 211:77 and shall adopt rules under RSA 541-A for
18 implementing and collecting the surcharge. Any person who satisfactorily demonstrates to the
19 executive director that he or she is participating in a coastal cleanup program shall not be required
20 to pay the surcharge. The executive director shall adopt rules pursuant to RSA 541-A to determine
21 what constitutes satisfactory participation in a coastal cleanup program and to account for licensees
22 who are exempt from the surcharge each year.

23 III. Licensees shall be responsible for conducting their fishing activities in compliance with
24 rules adopted by the executive director under RSA 541-A.

25 IV. Any person so licensed shall furnish to the executive director such information
26 concerning marine species and fishing activities as the executive director may require by rules
27 adopted under RSA 541-A.

28 V. Any person convicted of violating any provision of this section shall be guilty of a violation
29 if a natural person or guilty of a misdemeanor if any other person. In addition, the defendant's catch
30 shall be confiscated and sold according to rules adopted by the executive director pursuant to RSA

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1 541-A, the proceeds of such sale shall become the property of the New Hampshire fish and game
2 department.

3 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

**HB 1833-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE (AMENDMENT #2026-0700h)**

AN ACT creating a special license for non-resident vessel operators participating in tuna tournaments.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable		
<i>Revenue Fund</i>	Derelict Fishing Gear and Coastal Cleanup Fund			
Expenditures*	\$0	Fish and Game System Costs - \$15,000 to \$25,000 in FY 2027 Criminal Penalty Related Costs - Indeterminable		
<i>Funding Source</i>	Fish and Game Fund, General Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill *Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
County Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
County Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable		
Local Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable		

METHODOLOGY:

This bill establishes a new special tuna license for nonresidents who take, possess, land, transport, or sell tuna in connection with a tuna tournament involving New Hampshire waters. The license must be obtained from the Fish and Game Department and is issued to a nonresident vessel operator participating in a qualifying nonprofit-sponsored tournament. A license is valid only for the tournament dates, not to exceed 10 days, and authorizes the commercial handling of tuna only. The Executive Director is authorized to set the license fee and must impose a \$10 to \$25 surcharge to support the Derelict Fishing Gear and Coastal Cleanup Fund, with exemptions available for participants in approved coastal cleanup programs.

As this bill would create a new license type that does not currently exist, the Department states it would need to create a new license type within the licensing system and build functionality to track tournament-specific license validity periods. While the Department cannot estimate the exact cost for changes to the licensing database and related infrastructure to add a new license type, based on recent experience, similar system modifications have cost the Department over \$20,000. A comparable range of \$15,000 to \$25,000 is a reasonable estimate for this work.

The Department states that the revenue impact of this bill is indeterminable. Currently, it issues nonresident commercial saltwater licenses at a fee of \$500, and in licensing years 2023 and 2024, 16 nonresident licensees who targeted tuna generated approximately \$8,000 in annual revenue. The Department cannot determine whether these individuals were participating in tuna tournaments, nor can it estimate how many would seek the proposed special tuna tournament license or whether additional operators would apply. Because the fee for the new license would be set through administrative rulemaking, potential revenue is uncertain. To avoid a net loss, revenue from the new license would need to exceed current collections and cover any costs associated with system changes and additional staff time.

Also, this bill adds, deletes, or modifies a criminal penalty, or changes statute to which there is a penalty for violation. Therefore, this bill may have an impact on the judicial and correctional systems, which could affect prosecution, incarceration, probation, and parole costs, for the state, as well as county and local governments. A summary of such costs can be found at: https://gencourt.state.nh.us/lba/Budget/Fiscal_Notes/JudicialCorrectionalCosts.pdf

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Fish and Game Department, Judicial Branch, Judicial Council, Department of Justice, Department of Corrections, New Hampshire Association of Counties, and New Hampshire Municipal Association