

For Immediate Release

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Governor Musgrove Approves Plan to Stabilize Mississippi Shrimp Industry

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove has announced a plan for distributing Mississippi’s portion of the Congressional Fisheries Disaster Relief Fund. He said the Department of Marine Resources had reviewed input from shrimp industry representatives to set qualifying criteria and recommend how the \$1,003,307 share would be disbursed.

“The shrimping industry is a vital component in the economy of south Mississippi and the state as a whole,” Gov. Ronnie Musgrove said. “As Governor, I am committed to protecting jobs created by shrimping, and I will ensure this industry continues to receive the support it needs. One hundred percent of the fund is being distributed to the shrimpers, boat captains and businesses involved in the shrimping industry.”

In February 2003, Congress appropriated \$35 million in funds to aid the shrimping industry, which has been hard hit by declining prices due to the increasing amount and low price of imported shrimp and higher operating costs. Funds were allotted to states based on the volume of shrimp produced by each state. Mississippi’s portion of the \$17.5 million allotted for the Gulf of Mexico states is about \$1 million.

“These funds will be used to help offset some of the costs associated with the price competition from imported shrimp and will help those families working in Mississippi’s shrimping industry meet basic needs of food, shelter and fuel,” said Dr. William W. Walker, DMR Executive Director.

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Upon application, the DMR will distribute:

- 2 percent of funds to fishermen with a demonstrated record of compliance with Turtle Excluder Device (TED) and Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) regulations;
- 90 percent of funds to shrimp vessel owners, captains and fishermen; and
- 8 percent of funds to related businesses (including deckhands and net makers), shrimp marketing, and funding for TED and BRD technology transfer, including incentives for ensuring widespread and proper use of TEDs and BRDs.

The following qualifying criteria for eligibility of funds have been established:

- A valid state approved photo identification and social security number/tax identification number;
- Mississippi commercial shrimp license in 2001 and/or 2002; and
- More than 50 percent of income from commercial shrimp fishing or a minimum of 5,000 pounds of shrimp landed in Mississippi in 2001 and/or 2002.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the State by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.state.ms.us

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