

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

the Compact no later than July 1, 2027. The agency anticipates a loss of federal grant funding used to support fisheries enforcement and data collection activities conducted by the agency, for which participation in ASMFC is a condition for receipt. According to the agency, MRC would still be required to complete these functions in order to meet federal fisheries management requirements and support fisheries operating in federal waters. Under the provisions of this bill, MRC anticipates needing additional general fund support to replace current federal funding.

MRC has been awarded a Virginia Enforcement of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries grant by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under the U.S. Department of Commerce since 2001. According to the agency, MRC currently has a grant for a project period of October 1, 2025, to November 30, 2029, with a first-year amount of \$340,748 and four-year total amount of \$1,445,748. This funding is currently utilized by MRC for costs associated with day-to-day enforcement work of marine patrol officers, ensuring Virginia remains compliant with interstate fishery management requirements and avoids potential federal moratoria. Specifically, under this grant, marine patrol officers carry out finfish enforcement activities required under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA), including enforcing ASMFC fishery management plan regulations, providing on-the-water compliance and monitoring, supplying dedicated enforcement hours funded by the grant, receiving and disseminating regulatory training and updates, serving as public-facing educators and compliance contacts, and documenting and reporting enforcement outcomes. The agency anticipates needing additional general fund support of \$363,949 in FY 2028 and \$374,867 in FY 2029 based on current grant amounts. The anticipated general fund cost in outgoing fiscal years is approximately \$377,617 based on the federal fiscal year 2029 award amount; award amounts are not set beyond federal fiscal year 2029.

MRC has received an Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) and For-Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS) grant since 2015. According to the agency, MRC is in the process of signing a grant for a project period of January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, which is anticipated to be at an amount similar to previous years; the grant award for the last grant cycle was \$478,917. With this grant funding, MRC performs data collection and related services in support of the Federal Marine Recreation Information Programs (MRIP) APAIS and FHTS. Under the federal Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council accountability requirements, Virginia relies on APAIS data to establish, monitor, and adjust recreational harvest measures for economically significant species. According to MRC, without this data collection, the agency would be unable to proactively adjust seasons, size limits, or bag limits, and reactive accountability measures could not be accurately calculated, risking noncompliance with federal fishery management plans. This sub-award is negotiated under the provisions of a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Commerce, the National Marine Fisheries Service under NOAA, and ASMFC.

MRC currently utilizes the APAIS and FHTS grant to fund three positions and contractual employees for field work. According to the agency, MRC would need general fund support for two Natural Resource Specialist II positions and one Natural Resource Specialist IV position that are currently federally funded, for an ongoing general fund cost of \$268,414. MRC also anticipates needing an additional \$176,867 in general fund resources

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for staff travel to sampling sites and meetings, contractual clerical support, and field and office supplies and equipment associated with data collection and fisheries monitoring.

Other: None.