



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## LaValle: DEC To Issue Refunds To New Yorkers For Saltwater Fishing Licenses

KENNETH P. LAVALLE August 5, 2011

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New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle said today that the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has been directed by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo to issue refunds to recreational fishermen and charter boat operators who purchased a Recreational Marine Fishing License (RMFL) in addition to refunding license fees to New Yorkers who purchased lifetime licenses. The federal government requires all fishermen in marine waters must be registered, and the state originally met this requirement by adopting

the RMFL program. However, the 2011-2012 New York State budget eliminated the license fee, and created a no-fee registration program to comply with federal law. Therefore, any New Yorker who purchased a license for 2011 will be issued a refund.

“I voted against the license law and fee when it was part of the 2009 budget and am happy to see the demise of what was essentially a hidden tax,” said Senator LaValle.

Refunds totaling \$1,350,000 have already been issued to approximately 9,000 saltwater anglers who purchased a "lifetime license" in 2010. Starting today the Department of Environmental Conservation will begin issuing refunds to approximately 200 charter boat operators totaling \$80,000 dollars; and, approximately 23,000 individuals who purchased an annual license in 2011 will receive refunds totaling \$220,000 dollars.

Charter operators refunds will be paid out of the Conservation Fund Fish and Game Trust Account. Annual license refunds will be paid out of the Conservation Fund Marine Account. All refunds are expected to be issued by the end of summer.

### **No-Fee Registry in Place**

In compliance with amendments to the Environmental Conservation Law that eliminated recreational marine fishing license fees, Governor Cuomo directed the DEC to establish a no-fee registration system. All anglers 16 years of age and older who take fish from the waters of the marine district, or who take anadromous fish from any waters of the state, are required to register with NYSDEC through DECALS, the Department's automated sporting licenses system.

The requirement is identical to that of the previously instituted Recreational Marine Fishing License, but is now without charge. Those fishing from a for-hire party or charter fishing vessel that is licensed by DEC are not required to obtain an individual registration.

To register, anglers can go to the usual outlets for sporting licenses, or register online anytime on the DEC website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6101.html>. After registering, anglers will be given a card similar to the fishing license the registry replaced. Those registering online should print out their receipt. The registration card or receipt must be in possession when exercising the privileges of the registration. The new registration fulfills a federal mandate to develop a database of New York marine recreational anglers in order to improve federal recreational fishing surveys about the number and size of their catch.

Anglers must register with New York even if they have already registered with the federal National Saltwater Angler Registry. DEC will be uploading the names and addresses of all lifetime, charter boat operators, and individuals who purchased an RMFL in 2011 into the free registry, therefore those license holders will not need to register this year, but are required to register in 2012.

For more information, visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/54950.html> on the DEC website.