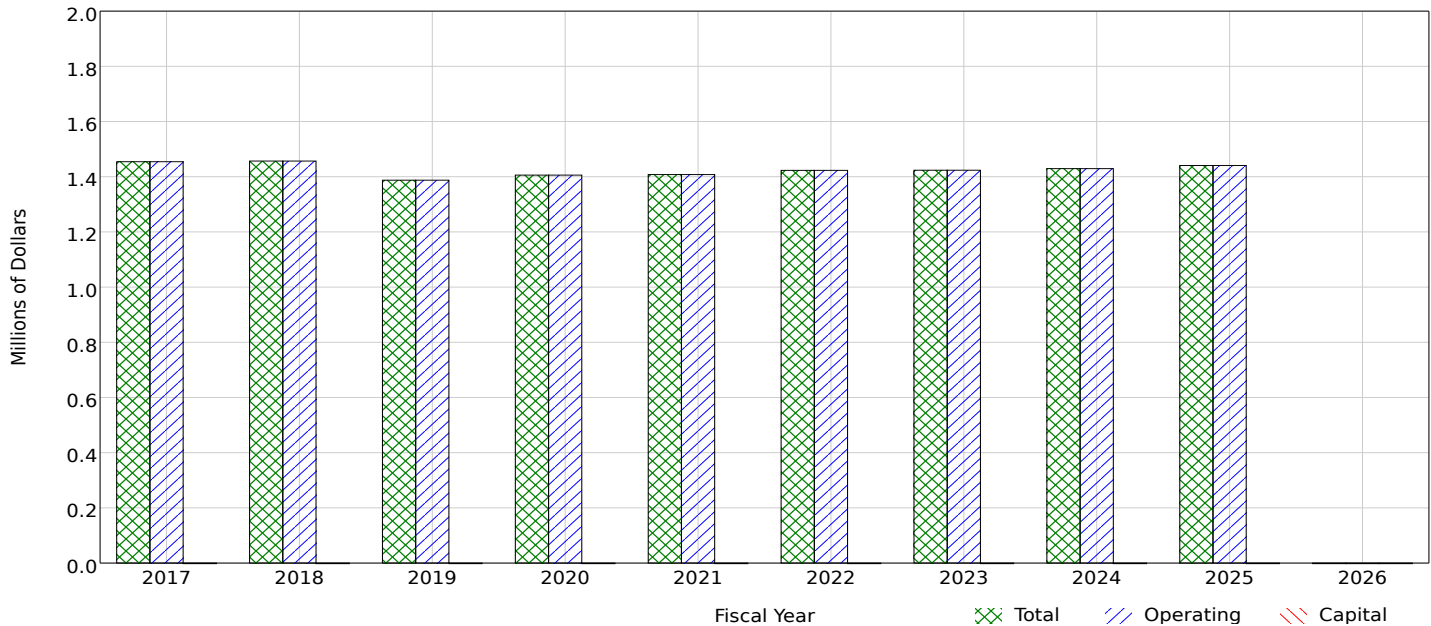


Fund Source Report

1032 Fish Fund Fishermen's Fund

Year Authorized 1951 Year Repealed Active? Yes Mental Health? No Duplicated? No Fund Group Designated General

Operating and Capital Appropriations



Legal Authority

AS 23.35.060, AS 37.05.146(c)(12)

Source of Revenue

Consists of 39 percent of the money derived by the state from all commercial fishermen's licenses (not to exceed \$50 per license holder) and money appropriated by the legislature.

Restrictions on Use

The fund is a pre-statehood dedication of revenue to benefits to disabled fishermen per AS 23.35.070. Up to 50% of earnings on the fund may be appropriated for a grant for statewide marine safety training and education programs.

Description and History

The Alaska Legislature first enacted legislation that created the Fishermen's fund in 1951. The fund is a dedicated fund that predates statehood and the Alaska Constitution. The fund provides emergency medical coverage to injured or ill commercial fishermen whose injury or illness is directly related to commercial fishing. The medical coverage is available when the fisherman has no other coverage for treatment and provides for emergency treatment, transportation, medical care, and hospitalization of commercial fishermen.

The fund was created because commercial fishermen don't always have personal insurance. Fishermen are also not covered under workers' compensation law, and maritime law also does not provide blanket coverage for fishermen who are injured or become ill. The fund provides for medical treatment to commercial fishermen when there is no other coverage.

The fund is comprised of 39% of the money charged for the purchase of commercial fishing licenses, not to exceed \$50 per license holder per year. The money was once designated only for the payment of medical costs for commercial fishing injuries and illnesses and administration of the fund. A change in statute (SLA 97) allows for the legislature to appropriate up to 50% of the interest income earned by the fund as a grant for statewide marine safety training and education programs. Other income remains in the general fund.

The fund was comprised of 60% of receipts from the purchase of commercial fishing licenses until legislative change in SLA 99 that decreased the percentage to 39%. The fund was changed again in SLA 01 including a cap not to exceed \$50 per license holder per year.

Payment of benefits from the fund does not require an appropriation. The law allows the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to adopt regulations necessary or advisable to protect the fund by limiting or suspending payments from the fund.

Fund Source Report

This fund is sometimes referred to as the Sick/Disabled Fishermen's Fund.

September 2010

The Budget Clarification Project changed this fund code classification from "Other Dedicated" to "Designated General Funds." The dedicated classification is optional based on the timing of its creation. The legislature is not bound by this dedication and can use the fund for any purpose (thereby breaking the dedicated classification). This fund, and others with similar "pre-date statehood" status as grounds for dedication, were classified as "Designated General Fund" because use of the fund is at the discretion of the legislature.

Despite AS 23.35.060(b), which allows up to 50% of interest earnings to be appropriated for marine safety training and education, there is no record of this code being appropriated for that purpose.