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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE TO ADMINISTER DINGELL BILL PROVISIONS

Federal aid for State fishery restoration projects, authorized by H. R. 6533 which was signed by President Truman on August 9, will be administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service on a nation-wide basis beginning on July 1, 1951, when the first excise tax funds become available, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman announced today.

Plans for the establishment of an adequate administrative set-up in the Service are now under consideration, according to Secretary Chapman.

The "Dingell Bill," vetoed by the President last year, was reintroduced into the present session of Congress by Representative John D. Dingell of Michigan and Senator Edwin U. Johnson of Colorado after it had been rewritten to remove the items to which the chief executive objected.

In language, this bill is patterned after the highly successful Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937, known as the Pittman-Robertson Act. Sport fishermen have been seeking a comparable service for the fisheries since 1939.

Funds to finance the Federal share of this cooperative fishery work will come from the 10-percent excise tax on fishing rods, reels, creels, and artificial lures, baits and flies. This income will be appropriated annually by the Congress and then allotted to the States.

To insure equality of distribution, each State's share will be based upon the number of its angling license holders as compared to the total in all the States, and upon the percentage relation of the area of each State (including coastal and Great Lakes waters) to the area of all the States.

In order to give a few of the small States sufficient working capital to finance substantial undertakings, Fish and Wildlife Service Director Albert H. Day stated that the law further provides that "no State can receive less than one percent nor more than five percent of the total apportioned to all of them." Provision is also made for the annual apportionment of as much as \$75,000 to Alaska, \$25,000 to Hawaii, and \$10,000 each to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The new law provides, as in the case of the Pittman-Robertson Act, that the States through their fish and game departments shall select suitable fishery restoration projects. Work on such projects will be done by State-employed

personnel. The State will be entitled to reimbursement for 75 percent of the cost of the work performed, and all lands acquired, structures erected, and equipment purchased will become the property of the States. After July 1, 1953, as much as 25 percent of the annual apportionments may be expended for the maintenance of the completed projects.

"Federal responsibilities in handling the program," declared Director Day, "are confined to determining whether projects selected by the States are approvable under the law; whether the costs to be incurred are reasonable; and whether the work has been satisfactorily performed before reimbursement claims from the States can be endorsed for payment."

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