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COMMISSIONER BRONSON EXTENDS THE APALACHICOLA BAY OYSTER HARVESTING LICENSE APPLICATION PERIOD

TALLAHASSEE- Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson today announced the extension of the licensing period for the Apalachicola Bay Oyster Harvesting License. This license (in addition to the Saltwater Products License) is required to commercially harvest oysters from the Apalachicola Bay System.

This action is being taken as a result of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill event, which is causing severe economic hardship and uncertainty for the oyster industry. Under normal circumstances, licenses for the fiscal year that begins July 1 have to be obtained between May 17 and June 30, or applicants face a \$500 late fee. Today's action extends this year's licensing period through August 31, 2010, meaning that no late fee will be imposed until after that date.

"I am pleased to support the hard working people in Florida's oyster industry during these uncertain times," Bronson said. "I know that for those oystermen who have not yet renewed their licenses, the late fee would have been a major burden for them, especially this year with the turmoil caused by the oil spill out in the Gulf."