

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5354

As of February 8, 1999

Title: An act relating to geoduck diver licenses.

Brief Description: Addressing geoduck divers licenses.

Sponsors: Senators T. Sheldon, Swecker, Oke, Stevens, B. Sheldon, Snyder and Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Staff: David Johnson (786-7754)

Background: Geoduck may only be harvested by divers using hand-held, manually operated water jet or suction devices. Current law requires that divers must obtain a nontransferable license in order to commercially harvest geoduck clams.

Summary of Bill: Geoduck licenses are made transferable to any natural person. Harvesting must be done only by the actual license holder.

After July 1, 1999, the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife must issue no new geoduck divers' licenses unless fewer than 50 persons are eligible for renewal. A person is eligible to renew an existing license only if the person held the license for five of the eight years between 1991 and 1998 and has not subsequently transferred it to someone else; or the person acquired the license by transfer from someone who held the license the previous year and has not subsequently transferred the license to someone else.

If fewer than 50 persons are eligible to renew a license, the director may accept applications for new licenses. New licensees are selected randomly from all qualified applicants. No more than 50 licenses may be issued in any calendar year.

Licensed harvesters are given the responsibility to plant state supplied geoduck seed on state commercial beds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.