

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5837

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, February 26, 2001  
Ways & Means, March 8, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to state oyster reserve lands.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a pilot project culturing shellfish on nonproductive oyster reserve land.

**Sponsors:** Senators T. Sheldon, Swecker, Spanel, Snyder and Oke.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/19/01, 2/26/01 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 3/7/01, 3/8/01 [DPS (NPS)].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5837 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Constantine, Hargrove, McDonald, Morton, Oke, Snyder and Stevens.

**Staff:** Ross Antipa (786-7413)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5837 as recommended by Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Brown, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Fraser, Hewitt, Honeyford, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Long, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Rossi, Sheahan, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Richard Ramsey (786-7412)

**Background:** Oyster reserve lands are managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Currently, a number of oyster reserve lands in Puget Sound and Willapa Harbor are not producing shellfish at an intensively managed level.

Leasing of state oyster reserve lands would place these lands into productive status and provide new revenue to the state.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A minimum of three long-term leases of state oyster reserve lands must be completed with commercial shellfish growers in Puget Sound. Revenues from the leases must be placed in the oyster reserve land account which is created. Funds in the

oyster reserve land account must be utilized for management of the oyster reserves, aquatic nuisance control research, deposition in the general fund and for the shellfish on-site sewage grant program which is established.

The Puget Sound Action Team must administer the shellfish on-site sewage grant program. Grants are targeted to shellfish protection districts, septic system improvements, and persons of low to moderate income. For the 2001-03 biennium, up to 50 percent of on-site funds may be used by local health jurisdictions to establish areas where septic failures occur.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Leasing in Willapa Bay is removed from the bill. The Department of Natural Resources administers the leases rather than the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Puget Sound Action Team administers the on-site sewage grant program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines):** Revenues could be generated by leasing unused areas of state oyster reserve lands to shellfish growers. These revenues could be utilized to improve sanitation problems from leaking septic fields, control aquatic nuisance species, and improve oyster reserve management.

**Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines):** The Department of Health voiced concerns over the cost to administer the on-site sewage grant program. Shellfish growers in Willapa Bay did not want state oyster reserve lands to be leased.

**Testified Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines):** Bill Dewey, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Assn. (pro); Bill White, Department of Health (concerns); Loren Stern, DNR; Morris Barcker, DFW; Bryan Harrison, Pacific County (pro); Terry Hull, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team (neutral).

**Testimony For (Ways & Means):** The bill will increase the efficiency of land management, improve water quality and increase revenues to the general fund. It also provides an additional tool for combating aquatic nuisance species.

**Testimony Against (Ways & Means):** None.

**Testified (Ways & Means):** PRO: Terry Hull, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team; Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Rick Anderson, Pacific Coast Shellfish Grower's Assn.