
**Fisheries, Ecology & Parks
Committee**

HB 1238

Brief Description: Providing guidelines for the issuance and renewal of a geoduck diver license and requiring harvesters to help reseed state commercial beds.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooper, Sump, Dunshee, Kenney, Veloria, Haigh, Berkey, Lantz and Rockefeller.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Limits the Department of Fish and Wildlife's ability to issue new geoduck diver's licenses unless fewer than 50 persons are eligible for renewal.
- Establishes criteria for persons applying for new geoduck licenses.
- Directs geoduck harvesters to provide labor and equipment to seed state geoduck beds.

Hearing Date: 1/22/04

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Commercial licenses allowing participation in fish and shellfish fisheries are managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Unless otherwise restricted, there are generally no limits imposed on the number of persons wishing to participate in a fishery. Fisheries that have restrictions on the number of persons that may participate are called limited entry fisheries. Examples of limited entry fisheries include certain commercial salmon fisheries and the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

Divers engaged in the commercial harvest of geoduck clams must obtain a nontransferable license from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Geoduck diver licenses cost \$185.00 for a resident and \$295.00 for a nonresident. There are currently no restrictions to the number of qualified persons wishing to obtain a geoduck diver license.

Summary of Bill:

After July 1, 2003, the Department of Fish and Wildlife may not issue new geoduck divers' licenses unless fewer than 50 persons are eligible for renewal. The Department shall adopt rules to determine whether to issue new licenses. If the Department determines new licenses may be

issued, they must select randomly from all qualified applicants that apply. Geoduck licenses are transferable only to a natural person.

A person is eligible to renew an existing license if they meet the following criteria:

1) A person must have held a geoduck license in 2002:

and

2) (a) A person must have held a geoduck diver license in 2000 and 2001

or

(b) A person must have held a geoduck diver license for five of the ten years between 1992 and 2001.

and

3) (a) The person must also document active diving participation

or

(b) The person acquired and retains a license from another person who held it during the previous year.

When a person fails to obtain a license during the previous year due to a suspension, they may qualify for a license by establishing that they held a license during the last year in which the license was not suspended.

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

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.