
**Fisheries, Ecology & Parks
Committee**

SB 5266

Brief Description: Concerning the commercial harvest of geoduck clams.

Sponsors: Senators Oke, T. Sheldon, Swecker, B. Sheldon, Doumit, Sheahan and Esser.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the restriction to harvest geoducks within 200 yards from ordinary high tide line.

Hearing Date: 4/1/03

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Geoducks (*Panopea abrupta*) are large burrowing clams found in quantities sufficient for commercial harvest in Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Admiralty Inlet, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the San Juan Islands.

The geoduck fishery on state-owned aquatic lands in Washington is managed jointly by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and, as a result of a federal court decision ("the Rafeedie decision"), the Puget Sound Treaty Indian Tribes. The state and the tribes are responsible for estimating geoduck population size, determining sustainable yield, and minimizing adverse effects to the environment. Regional management agreements and annual harvest plans are negotiated and signed by the state and the tribes. The DNR and the WDFW have civil and criminal enforcement responsibility for state laws, regulations, and contract conditions that apply to the state's geoduck fishery.

The Department of Natural Resources currently designates harvest tracts, administers geoduck harvest agreements, and enforces commercial violations. It is unlawful to commercially harvest geoducks from bottoms shallower than 18 feet below the mean lower low water, or that lie in an area bounded by the line of ordinary high tide and a line 200 yards seaward from and parallel to the ordinary high tide line. The tribes are not governed

by state law and manage the tribal fishery independently of state law. Tribal harvest is not restricted to 200 yards from shore, as is the state harvest.

Summary of Bill:

The bill removes the restriction preventing the commercial harvest of geoducks that lie in an area bounded by the line of ordinary high tide and a line 200 yards seaward from and parallel to the ordinary high tide line.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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