

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2823

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 27, 2008

Title: An act relating to the Willapa harbor oyster reserve.

Brief Description: Regarding the Willapa harbor oyster reserve.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Blake and Kretz).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/15/08, 86-1.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/25/08, 2/27/08 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Rockefeller and Stevens.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The Legislature has established a series of oyster reserves in Willapa Bay as well as Puget Sound. These reserves are aquatic lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources, with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) managing the shellfish and shellfish harvest on such lands.

Revenues from the lease of land or sale of shellfish from oyster reserve lands are deposited into the Oyster Reserve Land Account (ORLA). Up to 40 percent of the funds are used for the management expenses of the oyster reserve lands incurred by DFW and the expenses associated with new research and development. Up to 10 percent of the funds from the ORLA are deposited into the General Fund. The remainder is deposited into the On-Site Sewage Grant Program (OSGP).

Each year, the DFW must transfer \$100,000 from the revenues from the Willapa Harbor Oyster Reserve to the OSGP. All remaining revenues are used for DFW management of oyster reserve lands and new research and development activities.

The Department of Health (DOH) manages the OSGP, which covers Pacific County, Grays Harbor County, and the Puget Sound. DOH provides funds to the local health jurisdictions to use as grants or loans to individuals to improve their on-site sewage systems. The funds are

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provided only in areas that have the potential to adversely affect water quality in commercial and recreational shellfish growing areas.

Summary of Bill: DFW must transfer funds from the ORLA to the local governments in Pacific and Grays Harbor counties and Puget Sound to manage their OSGP. Local governments, in consultation with the DOH, will use the funds as grants or loans to individuals for repairing or improving their on-site sewage systems. DFW must transfer up to 50 percent of the annual revenues generated in the previous year from the Willapa Harbor Oyster Reserve to the OSGP, as necessary, to achieve a fund balance of \$100,000.

Pacific County is directed to transfer certain funds received through the OSGP for research projects identified by DFW and the appropriate oyster reserve advisory committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: This bill makes it easier to provide necessary funds for research into shellfish issues. The current on-site sewage grant program has been successful, so it is appropriate to make slight changes to benefit other shellfish related activities. This is a technical bill to improve the current distribution of income from oyster reserve lands.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jim Jesernig, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers; Ed Owens, Willapa Bay – Grays Harbor Oyster Growers.