
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1761

Brief Description: Concerning shellfish aquaculture.

Sponsors: Representative Seaquist.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Shellfish Aquaculture Public Information Center through the Washington State University Cooperative Extension Program to, among other things; serve as a single point of contact for the public regarding aquaculture permitting issues, questions about violations, and debris cleanup.
- Continues the current geoduck research being done by the Sea Grant Program at the University of Washington (Sea Grant) using the existing model with changes that make clear that the research scope belongs to Sea Grant and that the citizen committee is just advisory in nature.
- Reconstitutes the Shellfish Regulatory Advisory Committee with a new name (removing “regulatory”) and a new mission scope (limited to just advising the Sea Grant research and not interacting with the Department of Ecology in regards to shoreline management guidelines).

Hearing Date: 2/13/13

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Geoduck Research.

The Sea Grant Program at the University of Washington (Sea Grant) was directed in 2007 to initiate a research initiative to review the potential effects of geoduck aquaculture on the environment. A list of required study elements were provided to the Sea Grant, which included studies evaluating the structures used in geoduck aquaculture, the effects of harvesting

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techniques, how aquaculture impacts natural ecological characteristics, and research into the genetic interactions between farm raised and naturally occurring geoduck. The Sea Grant, with consultation of an oversight committee, can prioritize the listed studies and add or subtract to the listed studies as necessary.

The Geoduck Aquaculture Research Account (Account) was created to fund the required research and to accept legislative appropriations and private donations. Any institution involved in research funded from the Account may not retain more than 15 percent of any funding for administrative overhead.

The final report of the research is scheduled to be delivered to the Legislature by December 1, 2013.

Shellfish Aquaculture Regulatory Committee.

The Shellfish Aquaculture Regulatory Committee (SRAC) was formed in 2007 to serve as the oversight committee for the research conducted by the Sea Grant, to develop recommendations for a regulatory system or permit process that integrates local, state, and federal regulations, and to develop recommendations for appropriate guidelines for the Department of Ecology (Department) to include in shorelines master program guidelines.

The members of the SRAC were appointed by the director of the Department and included state agency representatives, tribal invitees, members of the environmental community, shellfish growers, and property owners. The SRAC concluded its change of work and has since been disbanded by the Department.

Summary of Bill:

Shellfish Aquaculture Public Information Center.

The Washington State University Cooperative Extension Program (Cooperative Extension) is required to establish a shellfish aquaculture public information center to serve all of the southern Puget Sound counties. The Cooperative Extension may locate in either Mason, Thurston, Kitsap, Pierce, or Jefferson counties. A list of potential services for the public information center to provide is provided. These services may include:

- the development of repository of information on sustainable shellfish aquaculture practices;
- providing technical assistance regarding sustainable shellfish aquaculture and regulation compliance;
- serving as a single point of contact for the public regarding questions about shellfish aquaculture;
- liaising with state and county government in seeking to resolve citizen questions and concerns;
- seeking federal funding for shellfish aquaculture research and development; and
- serving as a point of contact in efforts to remedy derelict shellfish aquaculture sites.

Sea Grant Geoduck Research.

Express intent is provided for the Sea Grant geoduck research currently underway to be continued beyond its current scope of work. The existing direction as to the study process is

retained, except that direction is given to coordinate research with other research being done by the University of Washington on ocean acidification.

The relationship between the Sea Grant research and a reconstituted SRAC is clarified. The SRAC is renamed to remove the word "regulatory" from its title and its scope is limited to being a steering committee to the Sea Grant on its geoduck research. The membership composition of the SRAC is unchanged.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 8, 2013.

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