
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1764

Brief Description: Concerning geoduck diver licenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Stanford, Blake, Appleton and Dunshee.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prevents the Department of Fish and Wildlife from issuing new Geoduck Diver Licenses after July 1, 2013.
- Provides requirements for Geoduck Diver License renewals and transfers of ownership.
- Creates the Geoduck Safety Advisory Committee that is responsible for establishing a safety program for Geoduck Diver License holders.

Hearing Date: 2/20/13

Staff: Cherlyn Walden (786-7296).

Background:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is responsible for the issuance of Geoduck Diver Licenses and Geoduck Fishery Licenses, a combination of which are required of anyone wishing to participate in a commercial geoduck fishery. In order to be granted a fishery license, the purchaser must first enter into a valid geoduck harvest agreement with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

A holder of a Geoduck Fishery License does not necessarily have to obtain a Geoduck Divers License. The Geoduck Fishery License holder can arrange for geoduck divers to harvest the product allowed by the license. Likewise, the holder of a Geoduck Diver License is not required to obtain a Geoduck Fishery License if he or she is operating under the Geoduck Fishery License of another.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Geoduck Diver Licenses are nontransferable. The Geoduck Diver License annual fee is \$185 for residents and \$295 for nonresidents.

Summary of Bill:

Geoduck Diver License.

Divers engaged in the commercial harvest of geoducks are required to have a Geoduck Diver License. A diver may only own one license, and must perform all geoduck harvesting personally. A Geoduck Diver License may be renewed if the license holder owned a license in 2011 or 2012 and was listed on a DNR geoduck harvest agreement plan of operation during that period. The annual license fee is \$200 for residents and \$285 for nonresidents. Any license issued after January 1, 2013 that does not meet the renewal requirements must be revoked.

The WDFW may not issue new Geoduck Diver Licenses after July 1, 2013, but may transfer ownership of an existing license for a fee paid by the acquiring person to the WDFW. A Geoduck Diver License is transferable after July 1, 2013 only if the license is held by a person listed on a DNR geoduck harvest agreement plan of operation during 2011 or 2012. The transfer of ownership fee is \$2,300 for residents and \$2,850 for nonresidents.

The WDFW must revoke Geoduck Diver Licenses not renewed each year by December 31st, however a license may be reissued for a fee of \$2,300 for residents or \$2,850 for nonresidents. If a license holder violates the DNR geoduck harvest agreement plan of operation two or more times, the license must be revoked and surrendered. The surrendering license holder may not hold another Geoduck Diver License for one calendar year, and the WDFW may reissue the license to a different person subject to the transfer of ownership fee.

Geoduck Safety Advisory Committee.

The DNR must establish a Geoduck Safety Advisory Committee (Committee) with one member from DNR, WDFW, the Washington Harvesters Association, and the Harvest Divers Union. The Committee must meet at least quarterly and establish a safety program for geoduck license holders by December 1, 2014. Beginning January 1, 2015, each person applying for a Geoduck Diver License must complete the safety program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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