

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2387

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Government Operations & Elections

**Title:** An act relating to declaring the *Ostrea lurida* the official oyster of the state of Washington.

**Brief Description:** Declaring the *Ostrea lurida* the official oyster of the state of Washington.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Blake, Takko, S. Hunt, Reykdal, Hansen, Haigh, Santos, Kretz, Ryu, Orcutt, Morrell, Goodman, Cody, Robinson, Haler and Appleton.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Government Operations & Elections: 1/29/14 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Designates the *Ostrea lurida* as the official oyster of the state of Washington.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives S. Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Taylor, Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Christian, Manweller, Orwall, Robinson and Van De Wege.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Kretz.

**Staff:** Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

**Background:**

The bivalve mollusc known as *Ostrea lurida*, or more commonly the Olympia Oyster, is a native species that inhabits the Pacific coast of North America. The bivalve measures six to eight centimeters in length and lives in estuaries, streams, and small rivers. Like other bivalves, they are filter feeders and feed by filtering phytoplankton and bacteria from seawater. Large populations can reduce algae and control water quality. The Olympia Oyster

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is popular as a cocktail oyster and overharvesting and pollution have caused the species to experience a severe decline.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The *Ostrea lurida* is designated the official oyster of the state of Washington.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill points out the role that the native oyster species played in the history and culture of shellfish in Washington.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The bill is important because this oyster was critical to the economy of early Washington. This bill is the culmination of a year-long eighth grade project. The project began due to a headline in a local paper regarding sea change, a series about ocean acidification and its effect on Puget Sound. *Ostrea lurida* was eaten for thousands of years by coastal and interior tribes. Pioneers of Washington shared in the shellfish bounty and some created an oyster gathering industry to supply the California gold rush. As Washington reached statehood, residents traveled the state with barrels of the native oyster, helping Olympia to gain favor in its quest to attain statehood. Pollution caused many closures of oyster farms and rallied oyster farmers to fight for the state's earliest pollution control regulations. *Ostrea lurida* stands as a living symbol of Washington's history from the earliest Native Americans to the present day and deserves protection as our native oyster.

Shellfish growers support the bill, and are working to find out the Native American name for the Olympia oyster.

(Information only) The bill is brought forward by a talented student as part of a school project. The school's curriculum requires that a student complete a year-long project. It takes a significant commitment and requires much effort and diligence.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Blake, prime sponsor; Claire Thompson; and Jim Jesernig, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association.

(Information only) Hunter Goodman.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.