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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1309**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives McEntire, Bernbaum, Griffey, Tharinger, Couture, Walsh, Simmons, Ormsby, Schmick, and Nance)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing the impacts of burrowing shrimp on  
2 bottom culture shellfish farming through integrated pest management  
3 research; adding new sections to chapter 15.85 RCW; creating a new  
4 section; and providing expiration dates.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that in 2014,  
7 shellfish growers were dealt a significant setback when they lost  
8 their primary tool for controlling burrowing shrimp infestations in  
9 coastal estuaries. Burrowing shrimp in high densities pose a  
10 significant threat to shellfish farming operations and the  
11 surrounding aquatic ecosystem, causing damage to shellfish growing  
12 areas, negatively impacting productivity, and eliminating the growth  
13 of native eelgrass which provides essential habitat for salmonids and  
14 Dungeness crab, among other species.

15 (2) In addition, the legislature finds that since 1963, a control  
16 method developed in collaboration with the Washington state  
17 department of fish and wildlife had been effectively utilized.  
18 However, the phased-out use of carbaryl and the denial of a permit to  
19 use imidacloprid by the Washington state department of ecology left  
20 growers without crucial pest control measures. Burrowing shrimp  
21 infestations on shellfish grounds has led to a reduction in growing

1 operations due to the absence of an effective control tool, and  
2 despite persistent efforts a viable alternative remains elusive.

3 (3) To address this ongoing crisis, the legislature intends to  
4 continue the current collaboration and research efforts and create a  
5 program within the Washington state department of agriculture to  
6 coordinate research into new and innovative control methods for  
7 burrowing shrimp infestations.

8 (4) This section expires July 1, 2035.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 15.85  
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
12 specific purpose, the department of agriculture shall administer an  
13 integrated pest management research program that focuses on  
14 addressing the impacts of burrowing shrimp on bottom culture  
15 shellfish farming. The program must work towards the following  
16 objectives:

17 (a) Support and recommend funding for research efforts focused on  
18 enhancing the resilience and productivity of shellfish farming and  
19 the marine ecosystem in the face of burrowing shrimp infestations.

20 (b) Facilitate and enhance collaboration between researchers,  
21 shellfish farmers, regulatory agencies, and relevant stakeholders to  
22 ensure permanent, practical, and effective solutions.

23 (2) To accomplish its objectives, the program must do the  
24 following:

25 (a) Solicit researchers with expertise in marine biology,  
26 agriculture, ecology, engineering, and related fields to submit  
27 proposals for burrowing shrimp control research projects.

28 (b) Identify and provide ground for controlled research that  
29 explores diverse control methods.

30 (c) Identify funding mechanisms for future equipment needs based  
31 on tool and technology development.

32 (d) Provide permitting assistance for shellfish growers to use  
33 identified control methods.

34 (3) The governing board created in section 3 of this act is  
35 responsible for reviewing research proposals, ensuring transparency  
36 and accountability in implementing the program, and guiding the  
37 department of agriculture on the expenditure of research grant funds.

38 (4) Research expenditures may only be spent on projects that  
39 support control of burrowing shrimp in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.

1 Any control method that has been demonstrated as ineffective in past  
2 studies is not eligible for funding.

3 (5) This section expires July 1, 2035.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 15.85  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
7 specific purpose, the director of the department of agriculture, in  
8 collaboration with legislators representing legislative districts  
9 that border the Pacific Ocean and an association that supports oyster  
10 growers in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor region, shall establish a  
11 governing board consisting of representatives from the following  
12 entities to oversee the research program established in section 2 of  
13 this act:

14 (a) One member each from the departments of agriculture, ecology,  
15 natural resources, fish and wildlife, and commerce, and the state  
16 conservation commission;

17 (b) Five shellfish growers of varying sizes located in the  
18 Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor region;

19 (c) Two shellfish processors located in the Willapa Bay and Grays  
20 Harbor region;

21 (d) Shoalwater Bay Indian tribe;

22 (e) The executive director of an association supporting oyster  
23 growers in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor region;

24 (f) One member representing a nonprofit organization that  
25 develops and disseminates scientific and technical shellfish-related  
26 environmental and health and safety information; and

27 (g) One member from an ecosystem-based management collaborative  
28 in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor area, to serve in an ex officio  
29 capacity.

30 (2) The governing board must identify an objective and effective  
31 facilitator to moderate meetings and serve as an additional ex  
32 officio member.

33 (3) Members of the governing board must have a clear stake or  
34 vested interest in the preservation and sustainability of the  
35 shellfish industry, be knowledgeable about the impacts of burrowing  
36 shrimp on shellfish farming, and have a special interest in  
37 identifying tools to control burrowing shrimp with an emphasis on  
38 bottom culture shellfish farming.

1           (4) The governing board must meet at least quarterly and  
2 implement discussion parameters to ensure productive and efficient  
3 meetings that focus on bottom culture shellfish farming in coastal  
4 estuaries. The governing board must establish a consensus decision-  
5 making process whereby the participants develop and decide on  
6 proposals with the goal of achieving broad acceptance. In the absence  
7 of consensus on any proposal before the governing board, the proposal  
8 may be approved by a simple majority of appointed governing board  
9 members.

10           (5) Governing board members are eligible for reimbursement for  
11 subsistence, lodging, and travel expenses incurred in the performance  
12 of their duties pursuant to RCW 43.03.050.

13           (6) This section expires July 1, 2035.

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