

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2386

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 22, 2006

Title: An act relating to commercial geoduck harvesting.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions related to the commercial harvest of geoduck clams.

Sponsors: Representatives B. Sullivan and Chase; by request of Department of Natural Resources.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/10/06, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/16/06, 2/22/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Morton, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages state-owned aquatic lands and is responsible for designating the areas of such lands that are available for geoduck harvest. Geoducks are sold as valuable materials by DNR and, after sale, DNR may enter into a geoduck harvesting agreement with the purchaser.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is responsible for managing the state's fishery resources, including the time, place, and manner in which shellfish are harvested. Once a purchaser has entered into a geoduck harvesting agreement with DNR, the purchaser may receive a geoduck fishery license from DFW. DFW also calculates the total allowable catch for commercial geoduck harvest each year, which is roughly 2.7 percent of the geoduck biomass on a tract. The calculation of the total allowable catch includes geoduck in waters between 18 feet below mean lower low water and 70 feet deep. The allowable catch is allocated equally between the commercial tribal and state harvests, the specifics of which are negotiated through harvest management plans.

Current law prohibits the commercial harvest of geoduck from waters shallower than 18 feet below mean lower low water and that lie shoreward of a line 200 yards seaward from and parallel to the line of ordinary high tide. Also, by rule, geoduck may not be harvested in areas deeper than 70 feet. Tribal harvests are not subject to the 200 yard restriction.

Summary of Bill: Commercial geoduck harvest would remain prohibited from areas shallower than 18 feet below mean lower low water. Although vessels conducting harvest operations would be required to remain seaward of a line 200 yards seaward from and parallel to the line of ordinary high tide, harvest shoreward of that line would not be prohibited.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This bill will allow the state and tribal commercial geoduck harvests to occur under the same depth and distance rules, creating an equal playing field and allowing for more efficient harvesting of aquatic land tracts.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Morris Barker, DFW; Sarah Dzinbal, DNR..