

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6708

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 2, 2006

Title: An act relating to geoduck harvesting.

Brief Description: Providing guidelines for the issuance and renewal of a geoduck diver license and requiring harvesters to help reseed state commercial beds.

Sponsors: Senator Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/30/06, 2/2/06 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6708 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Morton and Stevens.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Fraser.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Licensed geoduck harvesters are underwater divers who harvest and plant geoduck clams. There are about 52 divers and about 25 percent of the divers are active at any given time. The underwater aquatic land tracts are leased for harvest by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department, in cooperation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, coordinates enforcement. There is a tribal fishery and tribal members are not required to have a state issued license.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The number of licenses is frozen at the present level and the licenses are not transferable. Requirements are established to renew an active license.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Requirements to plant geoduck are removed and the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife can issue a new license when one is turned in.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Emergency clause.

Testimony For: The divers need to have protection from the influx of out of state divers.

Testimony Against: The bill will reduce income to the state and is not needed.

Who Testified: PRO: Sam Swanson, Gordon Baxter, Harvest Divers Union of the Pacific.

CON: Loren Stern, Department of Natural Resources; Morris Baker, Department of Fish and Wildlife.