

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1040

As Reported By House Committee On:
Fisheries & Wildlife

Title: An act relating to razor clam hatcheries.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of fisheries to construct and operate a razor clam hatchery.

Sponsors: Representatives Riley, King, Kessler, R. Meyers and Springer.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 16, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members:
Representatives King, Chair; Orr, Vice Chair; Sehlin,
Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Chappell; Lemmon;
and Scott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members:
Representatives Fuhrman, Ranking Minority Member; and
Foreman.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: The Department of Fisheries (WDF) regulates the harvest of razor clams, a shellfish that occurs on the Washington coast. The recreational harvest of razor clams is a contributor to coastal economies of Pacific and Grays Harbor counties, and occurs on four major beach management areas: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, and Mocrocks. Just over 70,000 razor clam licenses were sold by the WDF in 1991.

Razor clams have been plagued by diseases that are harmful to the clam and harmful to humans. In 1983, the Nuclear Inclusion X (NIX) parasite killed a large number of razor clams. Domoic acid, a naturally occurring toxin produced by a microscopic organism, accumulates in razor clams and can cause amnesic shellfish poisoning to those who eat the clams. This toxin has been found with increasing frequency in recent years. These problems have caused the Department

of Fisheries and, in the case of domoic acid, the Department of Health to manage razor clams conservatively.

Between 1983 and 1987, the Department of Fisheries operated a pilot razor clam hatchery in Nahcotta. Budget cuts and technical problems forced its closure in 1987.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fisheries is directed to construct and operate a razor clam hatchery located at or near the Willapa shellfish laboratory on the Long Beach peninsula. The functions of the hatchery shall be to: