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**HOUSE BILL 1297**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Reeves, Lekanoff, Reed, and Chapman; by request of Department of Natural Resources

Read first time 01/13/23. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a task force of the geoduck  
2 comanagers to identify harvest opportunities to promote tribal treaty  
3 rights to geoduck and enhance state geoduck harvest opportunities;  
4 creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The department of natural resources  
7 administrator shall convene a geoduck comanagement task force to  
8 investigate opportunities to reduce negative impacts to tribal treaty  
9 and state geoduck harvest in Washington state and promote long-term  
10 opportunities to expand or sustain geoduck harvest.

11 (2) The task force shall investigate the feasibility of  
12 intervention to enhance the wildstock of geoduck, including reseeding  
13 projects to improve native stocks of geoduck. An evaluation of  
14 opportunities, challenges, and financial feasibility as well as joint  
15 recommendations must be submitted as a report to the legislature and  
16 the administrator of the department of natural resources by December  
17 1, 2024.

18 (3) The task force shall identify and investigate the important  
19 factors preventing classification of areas for commercial harvest of  
20 wildstock geoduck or leading to existing wildstock geoduck commercial  
21 tract downgrade in classification and develop recommendations to

1 sustainably increase the number and area of harvestable tracts. An  
2 evaluation of drivers and recommendations for most cost-effective  
3 improvements must be submitted as a report to the legislature and  
4 administrator of the department of natural resources by December 1,  
5 2024. This report must include:

6 (a) A consideration of opportunities identified and  
7 recommendations presented in previous studies and reports;

8 (b) An inventory of wastewater treatment plant and surface water  
9 runoff point sources impacting state and tribal geoduck harvesting  
10 opportunities within the classified commercial shellfish growing  
11 areas in Puget Sound;

12 (c) A ranking of these outfalls and point sources prioritized for  
13 future correction to mitigate downgraded classification of areas with  
14 commercial geoduck harvest opportunity;

15 (d) An inventory of wildstock geoduck tracts that are most  
16 impacted by poor water quality or other factors impacting  
17 classification;

18 (e) Consideration of the role of sediment load and urban runoff,  
19 and pathways to mitigate these impacts; and

20 (f) Recommendations for future actions to improve the harvest  
21 quantity of wildstock geoduck and to prioritize areas that can attain  
22 improved classification most readily, while considering the influence  
23 of outfalls as identified in (c) of this subsection.

24 (4) The task force shall convene at least quarterly and may  
25 consult any necessary experts in development of these reports.

26 (5)(a) The department of natural resources administrator must  
27 invite the following representatives to participate in the task  
28 force:

29 (i) A representative of the department of natural resources who  
30 shall serve as the chair of the task force;

31 (ii) Representatives of tribes with treaty or reserved rights to  
32 geoduck harvest in Washington state;

33 (iii) A representative of the department of ecology;

34 (iv) A representative of the department of health;

35 (v) A representative of the department of fish and wildlife;

36 (vi) A representative of the Puget Sound partnership; and

37 (vii) A representative of the academic community.

38 (b) The department of natural resources administrator must  
39 appoint each representative.

1           (c) The department of natural resources administrator has the  
2 authority to invite other individuals to the task force; not to  
3 exceed the number of seats of tribal entities.  
4           (d) Members of the task force may be reimbursed for travel  
5 expenses as authorized in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.  
6           (e) Representatives serve at the pleasure of the department of  
7 natural resources administrator.  
8           (f) The task force must be staffed by the department of natural  
9 resources.  
10          (6) This act expires January 15, 2025.

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