FINAL BILL REPORT
SHB 1309

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Addressing the impacts of burrowing shrimp on bottom culture shellfish farming through integrated pest management research.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives McEntire, Bernbaum, Griffey, Tharinger, Couture, Walsh, Simmons, Ormsby, Schmick and Nance).

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Shellfish Aquaculture.

Several state agencies have roles related to permitting and regulating shellfish aquaculture in Washington including the Departments of Natural Resources, Ecology (Ecology), Health, Fish and Wildlife, and Agriculture (WSDA).

Ecology administers the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) under the federal Clean Water Act, which regulates discharges of pollutants to surface waters in the state. In Washington, Ecology has delegated authority to issue NPDES permits. In 2018 Ecology denied a request by shellfish growers to use the pesticide imidacloprid on shellfish beds to control burrowing shrimp in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. In 2019 Ecology and the Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association signed a settlement agreement to study and monitor the impacts of burrowing shrimp on commercial oyster and clam harvesting in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. In the 2023-25 Operating Budget, the WSDA received $2 million from the Model Toxics Control Account for research on a suitable replacement for the insecticide imidacloprid to address the impacts of burrowing shrimp on shellfish cultivation in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Integrated Pest Management.

Integrated pest management is a strategy that uses various combinations of pest control methods, biological, cultural, and chemical, in a compatible manner to achieve satisfactory control and ensure favorable economic and environmental consequences.

Summary:

Burrowing Shrimp Research Program.

Subject to appropriation, the Department of Agriculture (WSDA) must establish and administer an integrated pest management program that: focuses on addressing the impacts of burrowing shrimp on bottom culture shellfish farming; supports and recommends funding for research to enhance the resilience and productivity of shellfish farming and the marine ecosystem in light of burrowing shrimp infestations; and facilitates and enhances collaboration among various parties including researchers, shellfish farmers, and regulatory agencies to ensure effective solutions to manage burrowing shrimp infestations. Responsibilities of the program include:

- soliciting researchers with relevant experience to submit proposals for burrowing shrimp control research projects;
- identifying and providing ground for controlled research;
- identifying funding mechanisms for future equipment needs; and
- providing permitting assistance for shellfish growers to use identified control methods.

Burrowing Shrimp Research Program Governing Board.

The Director of the WSDA must collaborate with legislators in districts that border the Pacific Ocean and with an association that supports oyster growers in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor to establish a Governing Board (Board) to oversee the program and provide guidance to the WSDA in spending research grant funds. Members of the Board must have a clear stake or vested interest in the preservation of the shellfish industry, be knowledgeable about the impacts of burrowing shrimp on shellfish farming, and have a special interest in identifying tools to control burrowing shrimp, with an emphasis on bottom culture shellfish farming. The Board must meet at least quarterly and include members from:

- the Departments of Agriculture, Ecology, Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, Commerce, and the State Conservation Commission;
- five shellfish growers of varying sizes in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor region;
- two shellfish processors in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor region;
- the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe;
- the executive director of an association supporting oyster growers in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor Region;

- one member representing a nonprofit organization that develops and disseminates scientific and technical shellfish-related environmental health and safety information; and
- one ex-officio member from an ecosystem-based management collaborative in the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor area.

The Board must also identify an objective and effective facilitator to moderate meetings and serve as an additional ex-officio member. The Board must establish a consensus-based decision-making process where participants develop and decide on proposals with the goal of achieving broad acceptance. In the absence of consensus on any proposal before the Board, the proposal may be approved by a simple majority of appointed members.

Expiration Date.

The program expires July 1, 2035.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	94	1
Senate	48	1

Effective: July 27, 2025