

RCW 90.72.030 Shellfish protection districts—Establishment—Governing body—Programs. The legislative authority of each county having shellfish tidelands within its boundaries is authorized to establish a shellfish protection district to include areas in which nonpoint pollution threatens the water quality upon which the continuation or restoration of shellfish farming or harvesting is dependent. The legislative authority shall constitute the governing body of the district and shall adopt a shellfish protection program with elements and activities to be effective within the district. The legislative authority may appoint a local advisory council to advise the legislative authority in preparation and implementation of shellfish protection programs. This program shall include any elements deemed appropriate to deal with the nonpoint pollution threatening water quality over shellfish tidelands, including, but not limited to, requiring the elimination or decrease of contaminants in stormwater runoff, establishing monitoring, inspection, and repair elements to ensure that on-site sewage systems are adequately maintained and working properly, assuring that animal grazing and manure management practices are consistent with best management practices, and establishing educational and public involvement programs to inform citizens on the causes of the threatening nonpoint pollution and what they can do to decrease the amount of such pollution. The county legislative authority shall consult with the department of health, the department of ecology, the department of agriculture, or the conservation commission as appropriate as to the elements of the program. An element may be omitted where another program is effectively addressing those sources of nonpoint water pollution. Within the limits of RCW 90.72.040 and 90.72.070, the county legislative authority shall have full jurisdiction and authority to manage, regulate, and control its programs and to fix, alter, regulate, and control the fees for services provided and charges or rates as provided under those programs. Programs established under this chapter, may, but are not required to, be part of a system of sewerage as defined in RCW 36.94.010. [2008 c 250 § 1; 2007 c 150 § 1; 1992 c 100 § 2; 1985 c 417 § 3.]

Findings—1992 c 100: "The legislature finds that shellfish harvesting is important to our economy and way of life. Washington state is an international leader in the cultivation and production of shellfish. However, large portions of the state's productive recreational and commercial shellfish beds are closed to harvesting, and more are threatened, because of water pollution. The legislature finds that the problem of shellfish bed closures demands a public policy solution and that the state, local governments, and individuals must each take strong and swift action or this precious resource will be lost.

It is the goal of the legislature to prevent further closures of recreational and commercial shellfish beds, to restore water quality in saltwater tidelands to allow the reopening of at least one restricted or closed shellfish bed each year, and to ensure Washington state's commanding international position in shellfish production.

The legislature finds that failing on-site sewage systems and animal waste are the two most significant causes of shellfish bed closures over the past decade. Remedial actions at the local level are required to effectively address these problems.

The legislature finds that existing entities, including conservation districts and local health departments, should be used by counties to address the water quality problems affecting the recreational and commercial shellfish harvest.

The legislature finds that local action in each watershed where shellfish are harvested is required to protect this vital resource. The legislature hereby encourages all counties having saltwater tidelands within their boundaries to establish shellfish protection districts and programs designed to prevent any further degradation and contamination and to allow for restoration and reopening of closed shellfish growing areas." [1992 c 100 § 1.]