

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1896

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, March 28, 2005

Title: An act relating to geoduck harvest in Hood Canal.

Brief Description: Studying geoducks in Hood Canal.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Appleton, Eickmeyer, Chase and Haigh).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/11/05, 91-3.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 3/23/05, 3/28/05 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/31/05 [w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The state's geoduck resources and commercial geoduck fishery are generally managed jointly by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU gives the WDFW primary responsibility for conducting resource assessments and setting the total amount of geoduck that can be harvested annually. The DNR has primary responsibility according to the MOU for managing the state harvest and sale of geoducks, including planning and location of state sales.

Hood Canal is a glacier-carved fjord approximately 60 miles in length with approximately 180 miles of shoreline. Portions of Hood Canal have had low dissolved oxygen concentrations for many years. The University of Washington recorded low dissolved oxygen concentrations in the 1950s. In recent years, low dissolved oxygen concentration conditions and significant fish death events have been recorded on Hood Canal. The 2004 dissolved oxygen concentrations in southern Hood Canal were the lowest recorded concentrations for the water body.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must conduct several studies regarding geoducks in Hood Canal. First, the DNR must conduct a study, by comparing prior population surveys with current study surveys, to determine if changes to the Hood Canal geoduck populations have occurred over time. Second, the DNR must assess the relationship between the Hood Canal's geoduck population levels and its environmental conditions, including dissolved oxygen concentrations. Third, the DNR must conduct a study to establish an age profile and analyze the shell oxidation rate of Hood Canal geoduck.

For these studies the DNR must choose geoduck beds or establish index or sampling stations that are representative of the Hood Canal's northern, central, and southern areas. The index stations for the second study must be located near the Department of Ecology's water sampling stations. The DNR must submit reports describing the study results by January 1, 2006, for the first study and by December 1, 2007, for the second and third studies. A null and void clause is included.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Studies of specific sea cucumber and geoduck populations in Hood Canal may lead to a better understanding of the canal conditions and improvement needs.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Appleton, prime sponsor; Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Fran McNair, Department of Natural Resources.