



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 715

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 6222

House of Representatives, April 16, 2025

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. PARKER of the 101st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TAKING OF EASTERN OYSTERS AND INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Agriculture
- 2 shall conduct a study on the appropriate minimum length for eastern
- 3 oysters to be taken in the state. In undertaking such study, the
- 4 commissioner shall consult with scientific experts concerning such
- 5 appropriate minimum length. The commissioner's recommendation
- 6 concerning such minimum length shall be based on the conclusions of
- 7 such scientific consultations as to the minimum length that enables the
- 8 optimal health condition of the oysters taken and the state's oyster beds.
- 9 Not later than February 1, 2026, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
- 10 general statutes, the commissioner shall submit a report to the joint
- 11 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
- 12 matters relating to the environment that shall contain such
- 13 recommendation and a detailed analysis of the basis for such
- 14 recommendation.

15 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) (a) The Commissioner of
 16 Energy and Environmental Protection, in consultation with the
 17 Department of Agriculture, shall establish a commercial invasive
 18 aquatic species harvest license to regulate the collection, sale and
 19 distribution of invasive marine species, including, but not limited to,
 20 green crabs and Asian shore crabs. Any such licensee shall be permitted
 21 to: (1) Harvest and sell such invasive species for use as bait or for human
 22 consumption, and (2) sell such invasive species directly to restaurants
 23 and seafood markets for food purposes.

24 (b) The Commissioners of Energy and Environmental Protection and
 25 Agriculture shall develop clear guidance and regulatory provisions to
 26 ensure that (1) restaurants and individuals with a dealer's license can
 27 legally procure, process and sell green crabs and other designated
 28 invasive species for human consumption, and (2) fishermen operating
 29 under a bait dealer license may sell invasive species both as bait and for
 30 food while ensuring compliance with all applicable public health and
 31 seafood safety regulations.

32 (c) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may
 33 adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the
 34 general statutes, to implement the provisions of this section. Such
 35 regulations may include an expansion of the list of invasive aquatic
 36 species covered under such license, as may be necessary to support
 37 ecosystem management efforts.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section

ENV *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Section 1 requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to conduct a study on the appropriate minimum harvest length for eastern oysters. This is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) has the staff and expertise necessary to complete the study.

Section 2 requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to establish a commercial invasive aquatic species harvest license. It is anticipated that the new license fee would be approximately \$100 and DEEP would on average sell ten per calendar year, resulting a minimal revenue gain to the resources of the General Fund. **Section 2** also requires DEEP to adopt regulations related to the aquatic species license, which is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as DEEP has the staff and expertise necessary to do so.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of licenses issued annually.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6222*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE TAKING OF EASTERN OYSTERS AND INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to establish a commercial invasive aquatic species harvest license to regulate collecting, selling, and distributing invasive marine species (e.g., green crabs and Asian shore crabs) as bait or for human consumption. She must do this in consultation with the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner. The bill allows the DEEP commissioner to adopt implementing regulations, which may include expanding the list of the invasive aquatic species covered by the license, as is needed to support ecosystem management efforts.

Separately, the bill requires the DoAg commissioner to study the appropriate minimum harvest length for eastern oysters. In doing so, he must consult with scientific experts and make a science-based recommendation that enable optimal health conditions for oysters and oyster beds. He must report his recommendation, and a detailed analysis of the basis for it, to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026. Existing law generally prohibits harvesting eastern oysters that are less than three inches long or otherwise not ready for harvest as determined by the DoAg commissioner (CGS § 26-234b).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, except for the study provision, which is effective upon passage.

COMMERCIAL INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES HARVEST LICENSE

Under the bill, a commercial invasive aquatic species harvest licensee must be allowed to (1) harvest and sell the invasive species as bait or for human consumption and (2) sell the invasive species directly to restaurants and seafood markets.

The bill requires the DEEP and DoAg commissioners to develop clear guidance and regulatory provisions to ensure that (1) restaurants and people with a dealer's license can legally procure, process, and sell green crabs and other designated invasive species for human consumption and (2) fishermen with a bait dealer's license can sell invasive species as bait and for food in compliance with applicable public health and seafood safety regulations.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/28/2025)