



# House of Representatives

**File No. 922**

General Assembly

January Session, 2025

**(Reprint of File No. 715)**

Substitute House Bill No. 6222  
As Amended by House Amendment  
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner  
May 15, 2025

**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 review the results of a study conducted by an in-state university-  
3       based marine research, education and outreach program on the  
4       appropriate minimum length for eastern oysters to be taken in the state  
5       upon the commissioner's receipt of such results from such program  
6       immediately following the conclusion of such study. In reviewing such  
7       study, the commissioner may consult with scientific experts concerning  
8       such appropriate minimum length. Not later than February 1, 2026, the  
9       commissioner, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the  
10      general statutes, shall issue a detailed recommendation concerning the  
11      minimum length for the taking of such eastern oysters to the joint  
12      standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
13      matters relating to the environment. The commissioner's  
14      recommendation concerning such minimum length shall be based on

15 the conclusions of any such review and scientific consultations as to the  
16 minimum length that enables the optimal health condition of the oysters  
17 taken and the state's oyster beds.

18 Sec. 2. Section 26-45 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
19 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

20 No person shall possess for the purpose of sale, sell or offer for sale  
21 any bait species without first obtaining a bait dealer's license from the  
22 commissioner, provided the provisions of this section shall not apply to  
23 persons issued a commercial hatchery license under section 26-149 or to  
24 any person operating a food service establishment that is regulated  
25 pursuant to the public health code when such bait species purchased by  
26 such person is prepared as food for human consumption and is not  
27 resold for any other purpose. Application forms for such license shall be  
28 furnished by the commissioner. Such license shall be nontransferable.  
29 The fee for each such license shall be sixty-three dollars annually. Each  
30 such license shall expire on the last day of December next after issuance.  
31 Each such licensed bait dealer may possess and sell only such bait  
32 species as shall be authorized under regulations issued by the  
33 commissioner, provided live carp and goldfish shall not be possessed  
34 for any purpose on premises used by licensed bait dealers. Each such  
35 licensee shall keep such records relating to the operation of such  
36 business as the commissioner determines on forms furnished by the  
37 commissioner and shall file such report with the commissioner within  
38 thirty days after the expiration of such license. No such report shall  
39 contain any material false statement. Failure to file such report shall be  
40 a violation of this section and the commissioner may refuse to reissue  
41 such license until the licensee complies with this requirement.  
42 Representatives of the commissioner may enter upon the premises of  
43 bait dealers at any time to inspect required records and the bait species  
44 possessed and to detect violations of this section and regulations issued  
45 hereunder by the commissioner, and such representatives may  
46 confiscate and dispose of any fish illegally possessed. Any person who  
47 violates any provision of this section or any such regulation issued by  
48 the commissioner shall be guilty of a class D misdemeanor.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
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Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	26-45

*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.*

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### **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to conduct a study and make recommendations on the appropriate minimum length for eastern oysters to be taken in the state. This is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as the Department of Agriculture has the staff and expertise necessary to complete the study. The bill also makes a clarifying change regarding bait dealer licenses, which does not result in a fiscal impact.

House "A" strikes the underlying bill and its associated fiscal impact and replaces it with the fiscal impact described above.

### **The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6222 (as amended by House "A")\******AN ACT CONCERNING THE TAKING OF EASTERN OYSTERS AND INVASIVE AQUATIC SPECIES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill exempts a person who operates a food service establishment regulated under the public health code from needing to obtain a bait dealer's license from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) if the person purchases bait species to prepare as food for human consumption and not for resale for any other purpose. By law, "bait species" is all species of fish, frogs, crustaceans, and insects listed as bait in DEEP's regulations (CGS § 26-1; Conn Agencies Regs., § 26-112-45(d)).

By law, a person generally needs a bait dealer's license to possess bait species for the purpose of selling or offering them for sale. Licenses cost \$63 annually, and licensees must keep certain records and file reports with DEEP. A violation of the bait dealer license requirements is a class D misdemeanor punishable by a fine up to \$250, up to 30 days in prison, or both.

Separately, the bill requires the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner to review a study of the appropriate minimum harvest length for eastern oysters done by an in-state university-based marine research, education, and outreach program. In doing the review, he may consult with scientific experts on the appropriate minimum length. The bill also requires him to issue a detailed recommendation to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026, for the minimum harvest length for eastern oysters. The recommendation must be based on the review and any scientific consultations and enable optimal health

conditions for the oysters and oyster beds.

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).

\*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill, which required the (1) DEEP commissioner to establish a commercial invasive aquatic species harvest license and (2) DoAg commissioner to do a study of the appropriate minimum harvest length for eastern oysters.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, except the eastern oyster provisions are effective upon passage.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33      Nay 0      (03/28/2025)