
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)