

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 25-14—sHB 6222

Environment Committee

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

SUMMARY: This act 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 them as food for human consumption and not for resale for any other purpose. By law, "bait species" are 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 to sell or offer 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 (see [Table on Penalties](#)).

Separately, the act requires the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner to review a study on the appropriate minimum harvest length for eastern oysters in Connecticut 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 act also requires him to issue a detailed recommendation to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026, on 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).

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