
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 148

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO AQUACULTURE-RELATED STATUTES.

SUMMARY

This bill (1) changes the notice requirements for areas closed to shellfishing and (2) eliminates an obsolete law authorizing the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) to appoint shellfish police.

By law, DoAg must classify areas for shellfish taking and may restrict or prohibit shellfishing from areas that fail to meet specified standards to minimize health risks. The bill eliminates the requirement that DoAg post notices about shellfishing area closures in local newspapers and instead requires the department to post these notices on its website. By law, the department must also (1) file the notices with local municipal clerks and health directors in affected towns, cities, or boroughs, and (2) post signs on or near affected areas. The bill specifies that the notices to municipal clerks and health directors may be filed in writing or electronically.

The bill similarly eliminates the requirement that the commissioner notify the general public about shellfishing area closures due to a health emergency by publishing the notice in a local newspaper. It instead requires him to notify any applicable shellfish commission in the affected area. By law, he must also notify the affected area's municipal or district health authority about the closure. The bill also makes technical changes.

Lastly, the bill eliminates DoAg's authority to appoint and commission shellfish police to patrol privately owned oystering areas at the request of specified entities, including oyster businesses, associations, and property owners. Under current practice, environmental conservation officers serve this function through a

memorandum of understanding with DoAg.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/04/2026)