

By: Williams

S.B. No. 932

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to oyster beds and shells and an oyster shell recovery and replacement program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 76.020, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 76.020. OYSTER SHELL RECOVERY AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) The commission by proclamation may establish and conduct a program to require the recovery of oyster shell or other suitable cultch material from, and replacement of oyster shell in, the coastal waters of the state to maintain or enhance public oyster reefs.

(b) The department may accept grants and donations of money or materials from private or public sources to be applied to the oyster shell recovery and replacement program.

SECTION 2. Subchapter A, Chapter 76, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by adding Section 76.021 to read as follows:

Sec. 76.021. OYSTER SHELL RECOVERY AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAM ACCOUNT; FEE. (a) The oyster shell recovery and replacement program account is a separate account in the game, fish, and water safety account. The account consists of money deposited to the account under this section. The account is exempt from the application of Section 403.095, Government Code.

(b) The department shall collect a fee of 20 cents or an

1 amount set by the commission, whichever is greater, from a licensed
2 commercial oyster fisherman for each box of oysters harvested by
3 the fisherman from the water of this state.

4 (c) The commission by rule shall adopt policies and
5 procedures for the issuance of oyster shell recovery tags or other
6 means to collect the fee imposed by this section. A tag required by
7 this section must:

8 (1) be affixed to the outside of each box of oysters at
9 the time of harvest, in the location of harvest;

10 (2) contain information required by the Department of
11 State Health Services under the National Shellfish Sanitation
12 Program; and

13 (3) remain affixed during transportation of the
14 oysters to a dealer.

15 (d) The department shall deposit to the credit of the oyster
16 shell recovery and replacement program account all revenue, less
17 allowable costs, from the following sources:

18 (1) all fees collected under Subsection (b); and

19 (2) grants and donations received under Section
20 76.020.

21 (e) Money in the oyster shell recovery and replacement
22 program account may be appropriated only for the recovery and
23 enhancement of public oyster reefs under Section 76.020.

24 (f) The department shall consult with members of the oyster
25 industry regarding the management of oyster beds in this state.

26 SECTION 3. Section 76.115, Parks and Wildlife Code, is
27 amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsections (d), (e),

1 and (f) to read as follows:

2 (c) Before closing any area, the commission [~~commissioner~~]
3 shall [~~post notices of the closing in fish and oyster houses in two~~
4 ~~towns nearest the area to be closed and shall~~] publish notice in a
5 daily newspaper of general circulation in the area to be closed.
6 The notice [~~notices~~] shall be [~~posted and~~] published at least three
7 days before the effective date of the closing.

8 (d) Areas closed under this section must reopen by the
9 beginning of the next public oyster season unless sound biological
10 data indicates that the need for closure still exists.

11 (e) The commission by rule may establish procedures and
12 criteria for closing areas under Subsection (a).

13 (f) The commission may delegate to the director the duties
14 and responsibilities under this section.

15 SECTION 4. Not later than January 1, 2012, the Parks and
16 Wildlife Commission shall adopt rules:

17 (1) for the recovery of oyster shells in accordance
18 with this Act; and

19 (2) necessary for the implementation of this Act.

20 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.