H.B. No. 2321

AN ACT

relating to the regulation of oyster harvesting; increasing a criminal penalty.

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

SECTION 1.  Sections 76.118(c), (e-2), (e-3), (e-4), and (g), Parks and Wildlife Code, are amended to read as follows:

(c)  A person who violates [~~Section 76.116, or at the same time violates~~] Sections 76.109 and either Section 76.115 or 76.116 in the same criminal episode[~~,~~] commits an offense that is a Class A Parks and Wildlife Code misdemeanor.

(e-2)  An offense related to oyster size or the harvest of oysters from a closed area is a Class B Parks and Wildlife Code misdemeanor if it is shown on the trial of the offense that [~~The punishment for an offense otherwise punishable under Subsection (a) is a Class B Parks and Wildlife misdemeanor if it is shown on the trial of the offense that:~~

[~~(1)  the defendant is the captain of a commercial oyster boat or a member of the crew of a commercial oyster boat;~~

[~~(2)  the provision or regulation violated relates to oyster size; and~~

[~~(3)~~]  the defendant has previously been convicted at least twice for a violation of a provision or regulation relating to oyster size or the harvest of oysters from a closed area.

(e-3)  An [~~The punishment for an~~] offense during the commission of which the defendant was in possession of a cargo of oysters in which 30 percent or more of the oysters measured less than three inches in length along an imaginary straight line through the long axis of the shell or an offense related to the harvest of oysters from a closed area [~~otherwise punishable under Subsection (a)~~] is a Class B [~~C~~] Parks and Wildlife Code misdemeanor, [~~with an attendant license suspension under Section 76.1181,~~] if it is shown on the trial of the offense that[~~:~~

[~~(1)  the defendant is the captain of a commercial oyster boat or a member of the crew of a commercial oyster boat;~~

[~~(2)  the provision or regulation violated relates to oyster size and the defendant was in possession of a cargo of oysters in which 30 percent or more of the oysters measured less than three inches in length along an imaginary straight line through the long axis of the shell; and~~

[~~(3)~~] the defendant has previously been convicted one time for a violation of a provision or regulation relating to:

(1)  oyster size and the defendant was in possession of a cargo of oysters in which 30 percent or more of the oysters measured less than three inches in length along an imaginary straight line through the long axis of the shell; or

(2)  the harvest of oysters from a closed area.

(e-4)  The punishment for an offense otherwise punishable under Subsection (a) is a Class A [~~B~~] Parks and Wildlife Code misdemeanor, with an attendant license suspension under Section 76.1181, if it is shown on the trial of the offense that:

(1)  the defendant is the captain of a commercial oyster boat or a member of the crew of a commercial oyster boat;

(2)  the provision or regulation violated relates to:

(A)  oyster size and the defendant was in possession of a cargo of oysters in which 30 percent or more of the oysters measured less than three inches in length along an imaginary straight line through the long axis of the shell; or

(B)  the harvest of oysters from a closed area; and

(3)  the defendant has previously been convicted at least two times for a violation of a provision or regulation relating to:

(A)  oyster size and the defendant during both offenses was in possession of a cargo of oysters in which 30 percent or more of the oysters measured less than three inches in length along an imaginary straight line through the long axis of the shell; or

(B)  the harvest of oysters from a closed area.

(g)  If it is shown on [~~at~~] the trial of a defendant for a violation [~~at the same time~~] of Section 76.109 and either Section 76.115 or 76.116 occurring in the same criminal episode [~~or Section 76.205 of this code~~] that the defendant has been convicted once before within five years before the trial date of a violation [~~at the same time~~] of Section 76.109 and either Section 76.115 or 76.116 [~~or 76.205 of this code~~] occurring in the same criminal episode, the defendant is guilty of a Parks and Wildlife Code felony.

SECTION 2.  The change in law made by this Act applies only to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act. An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the effective date of this Act if any element of the offense occurred before that date.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

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    President of the Senate Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2321 was passed by the House on May 2, 2019, by the following vote:  Yeas 133, Nays 7, 1 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 2321 was passed by the Senate on May 15, 2019, by the following vote:  Yeas 31, Nays 0.

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Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

                    Date

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                  Governor