

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

H.B. 841
Apr 9, 2025
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10399-MH-53

Short Title: Shellfish Leasing Study. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Carson Smith.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE A STATEWIDE STUDY ON SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE
3 LEASING AND CURRENT MORATORIUMS ON SHELLFISH LEASING.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Study. – The North Carolina Collaboratory (Collaboratory) shall
6 conduct a comprehensive study on shellfish aquaculture regulations to ensure a balanced
7 approach between economic development, environmental protection, and public access to coastal
8 waters. The study shall evaluate all of the following:

- 9 (1) The effectiveness of existing regulations and permitting governing shellfish
10 aquaculture leases.
11 (2) The history and policy bases for current permanent and temporary
12 moratoriums and whether to lift or modify existing moratoriums or enact
13 additional moratoriums on shellfish aquaculture leases.
14 (3) Best practices from other states for managing shellfish aquaculture.
15 (4) The economic impact of shellfish aquaculture expansion on coastal economies
16 and tourism.
17 (5) Potential and actual conflicts between shellfish aquaculture operations and
18 private property values, commercial or recreational fishing, boating, and other
19 coastal land and water uses.
20 (6) Environmental considerations, including water quality, seagrass protection,
21 and marine habitat impacts due to the presence or absence of shellfish
22 aquaculture in various coastal habitats.
23 (7) Regulatory, permitting, and environmental impact differences between
24 bottom and column leases.
25 (8) The role of local governments in shellfish aquaculture leases located in or
26 adjacent to their jurisdictions.
27 (9) Recommendations for a statewide framework on the regulation and permitting
28 of shellfish aquaculture that benefits the industry and the State while
29 mitigating conflicts with users of public trust waters.

30 **SECTION 2.** Required Consultations. – In conducting its study, the Collaboratory
31 shall consult with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, the Marine Fisheries
32 Commission, and other stakeholders, including shellfish growers, commercial and recreational
33 fishermen, property owners, and coastal area local governments.

34 **SECTION 3.** Report. – The Collaboratory shall submit an interim report with
35 preliminary findings to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural



1 and Economic Resources no later than December 1, 2025, and a final report, including any
2 recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes, by May 1, 2026.

3 **SECTION 4.** Effective Date. – This act is effective when it becomes law.