



# SENATE BILL 573: Strengthen Oyster Industry

**This Bill Analysis  
reflects the contents  
of the bill as it was  
presented in  
committee.**

2015-2016 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Re-ref to Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources. If fav, re-ref to Commerce	<b>Date:</b>	May 20, 2015
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Sens. Cook, Tillman, Sanderson	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Jeff Hudson Committee Counsel
<b>Analysis of:</b>	PCS to First Edition S573-CSMH-11 [v.2]		

**SUMMARY:** *The Proposed Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 573 (PCS) would amend the laws governing marine aquaculture in the State.*

### BILL ANALYSIS:

**Sections 1.1. and 1.2.** would require the North Carolina Economic Development Partnership to include an entity responsible for developing a strategic plan to further economic development of and otherwise provide assistance to the shellfish and other aquaculture industries in the State.

**Sections 2.1. through 2.4.** would make several changes to the statues governing shellfish cultivation leases, including:

- Provide that a lease applicant could provide information other than a survey to define the bounds of the lease.
- Generally, increase the term of leases and decrease the fees for leases.
- Provide that bottom leases can include devices or equipment that extend up to 18 inches from the bottom.

These provisions would become effective July 1, 2015.

**Section 3** would direct the Division of Marine Fisheries, in consultation with representatives of the commercial fishing industry, shellfish aquaculture industry, and relevant federal agencies, to create a proposal to open to shellfish cultivation leasing certain areas of Core Sound that are currently subject to a moratorium on shellfish leasing.

**Section 4** would make several changes to the law establishing the Senator Jean Preston Marine Shellfish Sanctuary, including:

- Change the name to the Senator Jean Preston Oyster Sanctuary Network.
- Provide that the Sanctuary will be a network of oyster sanctuaries, harvestable enhancement sites, and coordinated support for the development of shellfish aquaculture.
- Provide that the plan to establish the Sanctuary include provisions to facilitate the availability of oyster seed and support and enhance production hatcheries.

**Section 5** would direct the Division of Marine Fisheries and the Division of Coastal Management to develop a special coastal permitting process for oyster restoration projects.

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**Section 6** would allow employees of a shellfish leaseholder to harvest from the leased area without having to hold a Standard Commercial Fishing License (SCFL).

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Except as otherwise provided, this act would become effective when it becomes law.