

---

## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

---

HB 579 Original

2015 Regular Session

Garofalo

**Abstract:** Increases the rental rates for oyster leases and the severance tax on the harvest of oysters.

Present law requires the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to fix rental rates for oyster leases at \$2 per acre per year. Proposed law requires the commission to set the rate at \$3 per acre per year beginning Jan. 1, 2016 and at \$4 per acre per year beginning Jan. 1, 2018. Dedicates the revenues from oyster lease rental payments to the Public Oyster Seed Ground Development Fund.

Present law sets a severance tax of 2 and 1/2¢ per barrel for each barrel of oysters harvested from leased water bottoms and 3¢ per barrel for each barrel harvested from the natural reefs. Proposed law increases the severance tax to 10¢ per barrel for oysters harvested from leased water bottoms and 50¢ per barrel for oysters harvested from the natural reefs. Dedicates the revenues from oyster severance tax payments to the Public Oyster Seed Ground Development Fund.

Proposed law further provides a credit against severance taxes for documented expenditures by leaseholders for the development, maintenance, cultivation, and harvesting of oysters from a lease. Such credit shall be in an amount equal to the leaseholder's total necessary expenditures for a calendar year but shall not exceed 75% of the total tax liability for that calendar year. Documentation of expenditures acceptable to the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries must be submitted no later than Dec. 31st of the year in which the expenditures were made. Requires the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to promulgate necessary rules and regulations.

(Amends R.S. 56:428(C) and 446(A))