
DIGEST

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Morrish

SB No. 73

Present law allows oyster harvesting in Calcasieu Lake using tongs; a hand dredge; a single dredge with mechanical assist that has a tooth bar no more than 36 inches long; or use of a single scraper with mechanical assist and a flat bar length of no more than 36 inches.

Proposed law prohibits oyster harvesting in Calcasieu Lake except by special permit issued by the DW&F and provides harvest limits for recreational fishermen on Calcasieu Lake.

Proposed law authorizes the issuance of a permit for the commercial taking of oysters on Calcasieu Lake to a person who can provide proof through trip ticket landings of commercially taking oysters on Calcasieu Lake in three of the following four years: 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Proposed law authorizes an additional 20 permits through a lottery to any person who held an oyster harvesters license in the state of Louisiana in three of the same four years.

Present law sets the season for oyster harvesting in Calcasieu Lake.

Proposed law repeals present law and allows the W&F Commission to set the season.

Present law allows the commission to set the harvest limit so long as the limit does not exceed 25 sacks of oysters per day per licensed vessel after consideration of recommendations by the Louisiana Oyster Task Force. Further allows recreational fishermen to harvest oysters.

Proposed law changes present law and sets the harvest limit at 25 sacks of oysters per permittee per day, but the limit may be lowered by the commission based upon technical and biological data and after consideration of recommendations by the Calcasieu Lake Oyster Task Force. Further sets the harvest limit for recreational fishermen to 1 sack per person per day.

Present law provides that any violation of the present law will be a class 4 violation subject to the penalties contained in R.S. 56:34.

Proposed law changes present law and provides that a violation of any provision of this present law or of any W&F Commission regulation pertaining to taking, possessing, recording or reporting of landings or selling oysters from Calcasieu Lake will constitute a Class 4 violation. In addition, the offender will also be penalized as follows:

- (1) 1st offense - the offender shall forfeit any permit to fish for oysters on Calcasieu Lake and be barred from obtaining such permit for the remainder of the period for which it was issued plus 1 year, during which time the offender will be barred from participating in any oyster fishing activity on Calcasieu Lake.
- (2) 2nd offense, the offender shall forfeit any Calcasieu Lake oyster permit issued to him and be barred from obtaining a Calcasieu Lake oyster permit for the remainder of the period for which it was issued plus 2 years, during which time the offender shall be barred from participating in any oyster fishing activity on Calcasieu Lake.
- (3) 3rd offense, the offender shall forfeit any Calcasieu Lake oyster permit issued to him and be permanently barred from obtaining a Calcasieu Lake oyster permit and from participating in any oyster fishing activity on Calcasieu Lake.

Proposed law provides that any person who participates in the fishery while barred will be penalized under the provisions of a Class 7-B violation.

Proposed law provides that the special permit provided for in present law will not be transferable from one person to another for a period of 3 years from August 15, 2011, or until a transfer system is developed by the commission. Further provides for an exception to the prohibition on transfer may be granted by the commission based upon sufficient proof that a person who meets the qualifications for a permit suffers a physical hardship or does not desire to harvest oysters in Calcasieu Lake.

Proposed law requires the commission to adopt rules and regulations, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, for the season, take, harvest, possession, reporting, sale, transfer of special permits, apprenticeship, appeals, individual transfer quotas, and entry of commercial fishermen into the commercial oyster fishery in Calcasieu Lake.

Proposed law requires the commission, within 3 years from August 15, 2011, to establish, by rules adopted in accordance with the APA, a system for the transfer of special permits. Further requires that the rules will provide that there will be no financial gain realized by the transferor of the permit for such transfer.

Proposed law provides that certain provisions of proposed law will expire and be void after adoption by the commission of all of the required rules and regulations.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 56:435.1.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Natural Resources to the original bill.

1. Establishes a special permit for oyster harvesting in Calcasieu Lake and sets the criteria for obtaining such permit.
2. Allows the W&F Commission to adopt rules and regulations, in accordance with the APA, for the season, take, harvest, possession, reporting, sale, transfer of special permits, apprenticeship, appeals, individual transfer quotas, and entry of commercial fishermen into the commercial oyster fishery in Calcasieu Lake.
3. Changes the penalty provisions.

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill.

1. Provides harvest limits for recreational fishermen in Calcasieu Lake.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment to the reengrossed bill.

1. Adds an additional 20 permits to harvest oysters in Calcasieu Lake to be issued through a lottery by the department to any person who held an oyster harvesters licenses in the state of Louisiana in three of the following four years: 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.
2. Authorizes the commission to transfer a permit upon proof of physical hardship or lack of desire to participate in the fishery.
3. Technical amendments.