

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 43

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 123

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 43—Relative to California shellfish.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 21, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 43, Chesbro. California shellfish.

This measure would state that the Legislature supports ensuring a clean and healthy marine environment to protect existing shellfish beds and access to additional acreage for shellfish farming and restoration, and further supports a dialogue between industry, environmental, and federal and state agency leaders to develop an improved permitting process that is efficient and economical for both shellfish restoration and commercial farming.

WHEREAS, The California Shellfish Initiative (Initiative) is a collaborative effort of growers, regulators, nongovernmental organizations, and scientists to restore and expand California's shellfish resources, including oysters, mussels, clams, abalone, and scallops; and

WHEREAS, The Initiative's goals are to protect and enhance our marine habitats, foster environmental quality, increase jobs, encourage interagency coordination and communication, and strengthen coastal economies; and

WHEREAS, In California, over 90 percent of our seafood is imported and over 60 percent of our shellfish are supplied, mostly by air transport, from other states; and

WHEREAS, Many coastal communities with estuarine resources and working waterfronts are working to measure and predict how changing socioeconomic and environmental factors, including climate change, will affect their future; and

WHEREAS, These communities seek a balance between protecting and restoring their marine and estuarine habitats while also maintaining a local economy. These communities could greatly benefit from a coordinated effort to promote sustainable shellfish aquaculture production in a manner that achieves both desired goals in conformance with California's strong environmentally protective laws and policies; and

WHEREAS, California has an enormous opportunity to create living-wage jobs in coastal communities, improve water quality, and restore important ecosystem functions through expansion of sustainable shellfish farming and habitat restoration; and

WHEREAS, Public demand for local shellfish has risen dramatically in recent decades, and worldwide, demand for farmed seafood has never been greater, as global farmed aquaculture exceeded beef production for the first time in 2012; and

WHEREAS, California is the third largest shellfish consuming state in the United States, and state production meets less than half of this demand, contributing to a state and national seafood trade deficit and a lost opportunity for economic growth; and

WHEREAS, California could lead the nation to meet an ever growing shellfish demand while creating environmentally sustainable “blue jobs” in coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, California could increase competitiveness in the national and global aquaculture economy and encourage shellfish restoration projects while ensuring proper protection of its valued coastlines and estuaries; and

WHEREAS, A successful Initiative will engage coastal stakeholders in a comprehensive process to grow California’s \$25 million sustainable shellfish harvest, restore natural shellfish reefs, protect clean water, and enhance healthy watersheds, in conformance with California’s laws and policies; and

WHEREAS, The Initiative can utilize the state’s Geoportal and other state-of-the-art planning tools to involve the public and evaluate the opportunities and challenges for new shellfish operations and restoration areas along California’s coastal and offshore ocean waters. The Initiative supports the completion and approval of a Marine Aquaculture Programmatic Environmental Impact Report, currently being prepared by the Department of Fish and Wildlife, which will identify and address any environmental impacts of expanded shellfish production in the state; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature supports ensuring a clean and healthy marine environment to protect existing shellfish beds and access to additional acreage for shellfish farming and restoration, and further supports a dialogue between industry, environmental, and federal and state agency leaders to develop an improved permitting process that is efficient and economical for both shellfish restoration, and commercial farming; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.