



# Alaska State Legislature

**Senate Majority** Web: [www.akrepublicans.org](http://www.akrepublicans.org)

**Sponsor:** Senator Bert Stedman

**Current Version:** CSSB 126 (RES)

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## Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 126

**Short Title:** AQUATIC FARMING

### Summary:

- Amends state Aquatic Farming Act so shellfish farmers can harvest "insignificant" numbers of wild geoducks within aquatic farm areas.
- Permits Alaska Department of Fish & Game to hold a preliminary commercial geoduck dive fishery within shellfish farm areas.
- Clarifies that shellfish farmers do not need to replace wild geoduck stocks harvested during commercial dive opening.

### Benefits:

- Creates a win-win situation for shellfish farmers, commercial dive fishermen and the state.
- Settles a long running legal dispute regarding wild geoduck stocks within shellfish farm areas.

### Background:

- In April 2004, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled the Aquatic Farming Act prevents shellfish farmers from having exclusive rights to wild geoduck stocks within their farm area. A deal was struck between the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the Alaskan Shellfish Growers Association and the Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association that allows shellfish farmers to harvest an "insignificant" amount of wild geoducks located within farm areas. The department is holding commercial geoduck dive fish openings inside shellfish farm areas. SB 126 also clarifies that shellfish farmers don't have to replace wild stocks of geoducks harvested during commercial openings.