

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

**H.B. 841**  
**Apr 9, 2025**  
**HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK**

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HOUSE BILL DRH10399-MH-53

Short Title: Shellfish Leasing Study.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Carson Smith.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO REQUIRE A STATEWIDE STUDY ON SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE  
LEASING AND CURRENT MORATORIUMS ON SHELLFISH LEASING.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Study. – The North Carolina Collaboratory (Collaboratory) shall conduct a comprehensive study on shellfish aquaculture regulations to ensure a balanced approach between economic development, environmental protection, and public access to coastal waters. The study shall evaluate all of the following:

- (1) The effectiveness of existing regulations and permitting governing shellfish aquaculture leases.
- (2) The history and policy bases for current permanent and temporary moratoriums and whether to lift or modify existing moratoriums or enact additional moratoriums on shellfish aquaculture leases.
- (3) Best practices from other states for managing shellfish aquaculture.
- (4) The economic impact of shellfish aquaculture expansion on coastal economies and tourism.
- (5) Potential and actual conflicts between shellfish aquaculture operations and private property values, commercial or recreational fishing, boating, and other coastal land and water uses.
- (6) Environmental considerations, including water quality, seagrass protection, and marine habitat impacts due to the presence or absence of shellfish aquaculture in various coastal habitats.
- (7) Regulatory, permitting, and environmental impact differences between bottom and column leases.
- (8) The role of local governments in shellfish aquaculture leases located in or adjacent to their jurisdictions.
- (9) Recommendations for a statewide framework on the regulation and permitting of shellfish aquaculture that benefits the industry and the State while mitigating conflicts with users of public trust waters.

**SECTION 2.** Required Consultations. – In conducting its study, the Collaboratory shall consult with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, the Marine Fisheries Commission, and other stakeholders, including shellfish growers, commercial and recreational fishermen, property owners, and coastal area local governments.

**SECTION 3.** Report. – The Collaboratory shall submit an interim report with preliminary findings to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural



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1 and Economic Resources no later than December 1, 2025, and a final report, including any  
2 recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes, by May 1, 2026.

3 **SECTION 4.** Effective Date. – This act is effective when it becomes law.