

**Proposed Substitute
Bill No. 357**

LCO No. 5835

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF THE SHELLFISH
INDUSTRY IN CONNECTICUT.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) There is established the
2 Aquaculture Coordinating Council. Such council shall be composed of
3 the following members: (1) Two appointed by the Governor; (2) one
4 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; (3) one
5 appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate; (4) one
6 appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives; (5)
7 one appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; (6) one appointed
8 by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; (7) one
9 appointed by the minority leader of the Senate; (8) the Commissioner
10 of Agriculture, or the commissioner's designee; and (9) a
11 representative of the Sea Grant Program at The University of
12 Connecticut, as appointed by the chairperson of the program's Senior
13 Advisory Board. Not fewer than three of the appointed members of the
14 council shall be representatives of the state's shellfish industry. The
15 council shall be located in the Agricultural Experiment Station for
16 administrative purposes only.

17 (b) The Aquaculture Coordinating Council shall: (1) Direct the
18 policies and procedures of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of

19 Aquaculture; (2) develop a plan to expand the shellfish industry in
20 Connecticut; (3) assure the public availability of maps indicating the
21 names of state shellfish bed lessees; (4) review the language of current
22 state shellfish leases and make recommendations to the joint standing
23 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
24 relating to the environment for any requisite changes to such leases; (5)
25 review health and safety standards pertaining to the state's shellfish
26 industry; and (6) coordinate with other states to further develop the
27 state's shellfish industry.

28 (c) Not later than January 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, the
29 council shall submit a report on the status of the state's shellfish
30 industry and any attendant recommendations to the joint standing
31 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
32 relating to the environment, in accordance with the provisions of
33 section 11-4a of the general statutes.

34 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) There is established within
35 the Department of Agriculture the Office of Business Ombudsman.
36 Such office shall provide information to businesses on agricultural
37 programs and requirements, including information on permits,
38 licenses and leases of the department and shall coordinate and serve as
39 a liaison between the department and programs affecting businesses.
40 Such office shall be responsible for the receipt of any complaint from
41 any such permittee, licensee or lessee and shall coordinate the efforts
42 of the department to respond and resolve any such complaint in a
43 timely manner.

44 (b) No employee of the Department of Agriculture, nor the
45 Commissioner of Agriculture, shall take or threaten to take any
46 retaliatory action against any permittee, licensee or lessee for any
47 complaint filed with the Office of Business Ombudsman pursuant to
48 subsection (a) of this section.

49 (c) Not later than January 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, the Office

50 of Business Ombudsman shall, in accordance with the provisions of
51 section 11-4a of the general statutes, submit a report to the joint
52 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
53 matters relating to the environment and to the Aquaculture
54 Coordinating Council, established pursuant to subsection 1 of this act,
55 on the efforts of such office. Such report shall include, but not be
56 limited to, the number of businesses assisted by the office during the
57 course of the previous calendar year, a description of the type of
58 matters that the office assisted businesses with during the previous
59 calendar year, the number of complaints received by the office during
60 the previous calendar year pursuant to subsection (a) of this section
61 and the disposition of any such complaints, including, but not limited
62 to, the manner in which any such complaint was resolved, the length
63 of time required to resolve such complaint and any reasons for the
64 failure to resolve any such complaint.

65

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2015</i>	New section