



RYAN GUILLEN

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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 6, 2018

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GUILLEN AIDES IN OYSTER INDUSTRY RECOVERY

New Grants And Legislation To Help Revive Oyster Population In Coastal Texas

AUSTIN - Amid good news for the oyster industry in Texas, Representative Ryan Guillen (D - Rural South Texas) pledges his support for commercial fishing industries in the area and is dedicated to helping revive and sustain the oyster population on the Gulf coast.

"Oysters are an important part of the fishing industry that is vital to South Texans, and they play a critical role in the coastal marine ecosystem," said Guillen. "So it is important that we continue the valuable work being done to support the oyster population."

The Texas Coastal Management Program recently allocated nearly \$100,000 to a Galveston Bay Foundation program meant to help revive the depleted oyster population on the coastal regions. The oyster populations have been depleted due to overfishing as well as habitat loss caused by natural disasters like Hurricane Ike and Hurricane Harvey. The project will reclaim spent oyster shells from seafood restaurants which will be used to help accelerate the growth of existing oysters with the goal of stabilizing and growing the population in the near future.

Guillen contributed to the cause in the 85th Legislature, in which he authored and passed HB 51. The bill will reduce overharvesting of oysters while still supporting and stabilizing commercial fishers. The bill created an oyster license buyback program, based on other successful state license buyback programs, where oyster harvesters can sell their unused licenses to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) at a fair market rate. HB 51 also cracked down on the harvesting of undersized oysters and established a vessel monitoring system which prevents boats from fishing in closed waters.

Guillen also authored and passed HB 1724 which combines the different buyback accounts that TPWD uses to buy back unwanted fishing licenses. Under old state law, there were separate buyback accounts for each commercial fishing license, leaving some accounts flush with cash and others depleted. As a result, TPWD did not always have the funds available to buy back certain types of licenses. HB 1724 combined the accounts into one giving TPWD greater flexibility.

Serving ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, Ryan Guillen is known for his hard work, fierce independence, and relentless efforts for South Texas families. Recently, Capitol Inside called him a "House Bill Machine," and a "one-person assembly line for legislation." Since elected, few other legislators have passed more bills than Guillen. Sign up for updates at ryanguillen.com, facebook.com/representative.guillen, and twitter.com/ryanguillen

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