



RYAN GUILLEN
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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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GUILLEN TO PRESERVE TEXAS OYSTER FISHERY

HB 51 'Creating an Oyster Buyback Program' Receives Public Hearing

AUSTIN - Early this session, State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas) filed HB 51, a bill to create an oyster license buyback program that would protect oyster fishery areas from overfishing and enhance long term oyster production off the Texas Gulf Coast. The bill continues to move forward in the Texas legislature, and a public hearing took place on **Tuesday, March 28**.

"I'm happy to see this bill making quick and steady progress," said Guillen. "As I've said before, buyback programs are necessary to support and stabilize the commercial fishing industries, and they play an important role in the preservation of our coastal environment and it's economic stability."

Oyster fisheries are a significant part of Texas commercial fishing. Reef damage and overfishing prompted the 79th Legislature to issue a moratorium on new commercial oyster fishing licenses in 2005, but the three-month period before the moratorium's implementation witnessed a doubling of the number of issued licenses. Today there are over 700 issued licenses, and deepening concerns regarding overfishing have spread throughout the fishing community.

Representative Guillen's bill to preserve and sustain this fishery has received positive support in the Texas House, and it continues to progress towards law. At the public hearing on **Tuesday, March 28**, constituents were given the opportunity to address their concerns about overfishing to members of the Culture, Recreation, and Tourism Committee.

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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