



October 2023

Commercial Shellfish Fees



Current Fund Balance

\$232,049 end of fiscal year 2023.



Fee Forecast

Without action, deficit was projected before FY 2023. General Fund State funding subsidized the Commercial Shellfish fees 70% in FY 2023.



Deficit Drivers

- Fee analysis delays. The last fee increase was 8 years ago for testing fees and 16 years ago for license fees.
- Annual inflation.

The Department of Health works to protect and improve the health of all people in Washington state. We accomplish this work, in part, through regulation of Commercial Shellfish Operations ([Chapter 69.30 RCW](#)). All Commercial Shellfish Operations are required to be licensed and inspected per the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Model Ordinance.

We currently certify over 300 operations with over 6,000 harvest sites and 100 growing areas. These operations provide shellfish for human consumption. There are three main program operations in the Commercial Shellfish program: Licensing, Testing, and Export Certificates.

These programs work together. Each program is further described in a fact sheet. Per the 1994 Consent Decree, licensing fees do not affect tribal affiliated operations.

Funding the Program

[RCW 43.70.250](#) requires that the cost of each profession, occupation, or business be borne by the members of that profession, occupation, or business through fees.

We charge annual Licensing and Testing fees and monthly Export Certificate fees based on the number of certificates requested by the operation. To set fees appropriately, we consider the financial forecast of the program and set a fee amount designed to align revenue with the cost of regulating the industry.

The program ended (FY) 2023 with a fee balance of \$232,049. This balance would have been depleted without support of general fund state (GFS) funding. GFS funding covers two portions of Commercial Shellfish costs. The first portion covers costs not eligible for fee recovery. These costs account for 49% of total program costs and fund Vibrio testing, consent decree costs, annual license and biotoxin fee subsidy, and services that require a program audit. This audit includes harvest site and permit work as well as other miscellaneous staffing and related costs. The second portion of GFS funding has subsidized fee costs until in-depth analysis could be provided to determine true cost and corresponding fee rates. This analysis was provided in 2023 and determined that 70% of Commercial Shellfish costs eligible for fee cost recovery are being subsidized by GFS funding.

Cost Drivers

Total program costs are projected at \$2,593,531 in FY 2024. Program cost are primarily driven by staff required to perform services. Staff and staff related costs account for 71% of program expenditures and include 12.35 full time equivalent (FTE) staff: 8.85 for licensing, inspecting, testing and monitoring, and issuing export certificates. 3.5 direct supervision, program management, administration, and financial and contractual program support.


The second major program cost (18%) is testing services provided by our Public Health Lab partners. Information Technology System Support accounts for 5%; Travel costs, 3%; and goods/ services, 3%.

Fee Forecast

In 2024, we anticipate increasing fees to align revenue with annual fee eligible operating expenses. The fees listed here are our first step to bring the fee program into requirement of 100% cost recovery. We have developed three additional fact sheets explaining each fee type, financial detail, and cost allocation for each fee program.

Fee Category		Current Fee	Draft Proposed Fee
Annual License Fees			
Harvester 2 or less		\$ 263	\$ 528
Harvester 3 or more		\$ 263	\$ 543
Shellstock Shipper 0-49 Acres 2 or less		\$ 297	\$ 1,096
Shellstock Shipper 0-49 Acres 3 or more		\$ 297	\$ 1,173
Shellstock Shipper 50 or greater Acres		\$ 476	\$ 1,262
Shellstock Shipper Wholesale Only		\$ 297	\$ 1,097
Shellstock Shipper Wholesale Only DNR Tracts		\$ 297	\$ 1,021
Shucker Packer Plants < 2000 sq ft 2 or less		\$ 542	\$ 2,437
Shucker Packer Plants < 2000 sq ft 3 or more		\$ 542	\$ 2,657
Shucker Packer (plants > 5000 sq ft) N/A		\$ 1,210	\$ 2,967
Shucker Packer(plants 2000-5000 sq ft) 2 or less		\$ 656	\$ 3,049
Shucker Packer (plants 2000-5000 sq ft) 3 or more		\$ 656	\$ 2,993
New per Action License Fees			
Non-Compliance Inspection - Virtual		\$ -	\$ 56
Non-Compliance Inspection - Onsite		\$ -	\$ 252
New/Expired License Fee		\$ -	\$ 279
Biotoxin Testing Fees			
Operation	Acres	HS	
Harvester		2 or less	\$ 353
		3 or more	\$ 535
Shell stock Shipper	WS	WS	\$ 198
	0-49 acres	2 or less	\$ 393
	0-49 acres	3 or more	\$ 610
	50 or greater	N/A	\$ 961
Shucker Packer	Plants < 2000 sq ft	2 or less	\$ 752
	Plants < 2000 sq ft	3 or more	\$ 1,076
	plants 2000-5000 ft	2 or less	\$ 882
	plants 2000-5000 ft	3 or more	\$ 1,297
	plants > 5000 ft	N/A	\$ 2,412
			\$ 4,547
Other Fees			
PSP Geoduck		\$58,000 / # of annual tests	\$305 per test
Export Certificates		\$ 55	\$ 75

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