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Boat fire disturbs Whidbey Island shellfish farm

The Penn Cove Shellfish company has suspended harvests at Whidbey Island while clean-up crews work to contain and recover diesel fuel coming from a derelict vessel that burned and sank.

The Associated Press

WHIDBEY ISLAND, Wash. —

The Penn Cove Shellfish company has suspended harvests at Whidbey Island while clean-up crews work to contain and recover diesel fuel coming from a derelict vessel that burned and sank.

Penn Cove general manager Ian Jefferds says the harvest is suspended Monday to confirm the safety of its products. He says customers are being supplied from company shellfish beds at Quilcene.

State Health Department shellfish growing area manager Bob Woolrich says there's no evidence of oil at the Whidbey shellfish beds. The state did not shut down operations; the owner did it as a precaution.

Jefferds says the company "dodged a bullet" and expects to soon resume harvests at Penn Cove.

The 128-foot derelict fishing boat caught fire Saturday and sank Sunday.

By mid-afternoon Monday, the Coast Guard said multiple layers of containment boom were in place around the spot where the vessel sank and about 550 gallons of fuel had been recovered.

The state Ecology Department is overseeing the cleanup.

