



# News Release

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Contacts: [Donn Moyer](#), Communications Office 360-236-4076  
[Julie Graham](#), Communications Office 360-236-4022

## **Penn Cove shellfish tests allow some areas to reopen, others remain closed**

**OLYMPIA** — Test results on shellfish samples will allow some parts of the Penn Cove growing area to re-open to harvest today; areas closest to where the sunken boat leaked fuel remain closed. Based on analysis of the test results, state health officials lifted the closures in the areas north of Mueller Park. Earlier chemical testing showed no contamination, however taste and smell sampling in the southern portion of Penn Cove show the slight presence of contaminants that won't allow the commercial harvest area or recreational beaches to be opened yet.

Penn Cove was closed May 15 to all shellfish harvesting due to a diesel spill from the fishing vessel *Deep Sea*, which burned and sank, leaking diesel fuel to surrounding areas. When oil spills occur, filter feeding shellfish such as clams, mussels, oysters, and geoduck can concentrate the environmental contaminants. With time, contamination from the spill will be gradually eliminated from the shellfish during normal feeding activity.

The Department of Health will open the remaining area once testing shows there is no contamination in the shellfish. The state health Shellfish Program will work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on a second round of sensory sampling in the closed area. Additional samples are expected to be collected and analyzed by early next week.

The agency is responsible for the safety of commercial shellfish harvested in the state. The agency works cooperatively with the shellfish industry, the federal Food and Drug Administration, and Washington tribes. The agency works with other federal, state, and local partners to protect public health by closing shellfish harvest areas that are subject to pollution events, including fuel spills.

Find our [Recreational Shellfish program on Facebook](#). The [Department of Health website](#) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*.

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