

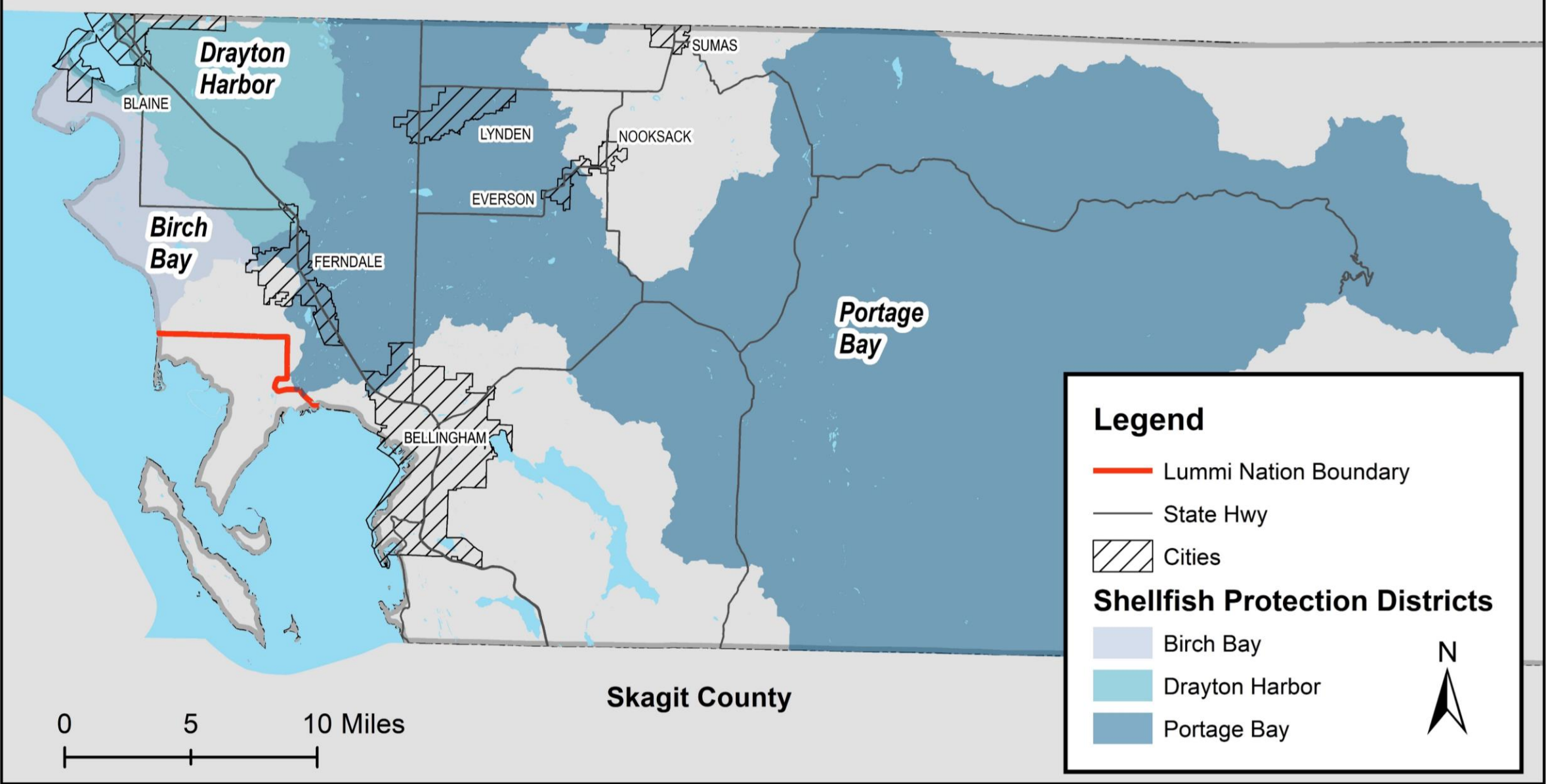
Amending WCC 16.20 Whatcom County Shellfish Protection District

Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee Presentation

July 14, 2026

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Whatcom County Shellfish Protection Districts



Code revision objectives

- Create a single advisory committee for the Drayton Harbor and Portage Bay Shellfish Protection Districts
 - Expand scope of advisory committee to include county-wide shellfish growing interests
 - Create a distinction between Council-appointed, voting positions and jurisdictional non-voting representatives
- Address conflicts in current code
 - Dissolve the Birch Bay Shellfish Protection District
- Remove arbitrary sunset dates
- Other minor administrative updates

Process to develop proposed code revisions

- Drayton Harbor and Portage Bay Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee discussion and feedback
 - 6 meetings January 2025 – March 2026
- Birch Bay Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee discussion and feedback
 - 2 meetings October 2025 – January 2026
- Sought feedback from Lummi and Nooksack Natural Resources
- Consultation with Civil Prosecuting Attorney
- Consultation with Municipal Research and Services Center

Summary of proposed code revisions

1. Dissolution of the Birch Bay Shellfish Protection District

- Marine water quality has been well within standards since 2018
- No longer required by Chapter 90.72 RCW
- District status does not affect funding or county services
- Resolves conflicting code language
- Recommended by Birch Bay Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee

Summary of proposed code revisions continued

2. Single Shellfish Protection Advisory Committee

- Creates efficiencies
- Subcommittees can focus on watershed-specific issues
- Establishes a distinction between council-appointed voting and permanent, non-voting partner jurisdiction representatives
 - Addresses long-standing challenge with vacant positions and quorum
- New 9 position structure with positions for each watershed and a shellfish grower
- Expanded scope to provide advice on both:
 - Shellfish Protection District programs
 - Shellfish growing protections county-wide

Summary of proposed code revisions continued

3. New criteria for district dissolution

- Replace automatic dissolution based on sunset date or removal of downgrade with process to consider advisory committee recommendation
- Allows for consideration of current conditions and trends before dissolving a district

Summary of proposed code revisions continued

4. Other minor administrative revisions

- Update reference to most current Drayton Harbor Shellfish Recovery and Protection Plan
- Clarify district purpose
- Clarify shellfish protection programs
- Assigns coordination of shellfish recovery plan implementation to Public Works

Questions