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## **Rep. Todd Hunter Advances Key Coastal Economy and Seafood Sustainability Bills to Governor's Desk**

**AUSTIN, TX** — State Representative Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi) proudly announces that two key pieces of legislation supporting Texas' coastal economy and sustainable seafood industry are now headed to the Governor's desk for signature.

House Bills 3486 and 3487—authored by Rep. Hunter with Senator Lois Kolkhorst sponsoring in the Senate—passed with strong bipartisan support and are designed to promote locally sourced seafood and environmentally responsible business practices in the food service industry.

**HB 3486** incentivizes Texas restaurants to buy local by providing a deduction on sales and use taxes for establishments that purchase Texas farm-raised oysters. With competition from out-of-state oyster producers and increasing regulatory costs, this legislation will help bolster the Texas oyster mariculture industry and encourage more restaurants to serve homegrown seafood.

"This bill is about protecting Texas jobs and supporting the hardworking oyster farmers who are committed to sustainable practices," said Rep. Hunter. "By incentivizing local sourcing, we're keeping more dollars in our coastal communities and ensuring that the Texas oyster industry continues to thrive."

**HB 3487** supports environmental sustainability by providing a tax incentive for restaurants that participate in oyster shell recycling programs. Recycled oyster shells are essential to rebuilding reef habitats, improving water quality, and supporting future oyster populations. The bill helps offset the costs of participation and encourages more food service establishments to contribute to coastal restoration.

"Oyster shell recycling strengthens our marine ecosystem and is critical to the long-term health of the Gulf Coast," Hunter said. "This bill rewards restaurants for doing the right thing and participating in a program that benefits both our environment and our economy."

Brad Lomax, Oyster Farmer and Restaurant Owner, praised the legislation, saying, "This is real, meaningful legislation that supports a new industry with economic, culinary, and environmental benefits by helping local restaurants serve Texas seafood. It's also about educating retailers and restaurateurs—not just on introducing Texas-grown products, but on their broader impact along our coast."

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*State Rep. Todd Hunter of House District 32 represents Nueces and Aransas Counties. He is the Chairman of the House Calendars Committee. He also serves on the House Committees on Land & Resource Management, Public Education, and the Subcommittee on Academic and Career-Oriented Education.*