

**From:** [kendra meeker](#)  
**To:** [LCB DL Rules](#)  
**Subject:** Petition for a Rule Change  
**Date:** Thursday, October 10, 2024 2:38:11 PM  
**Attachments:** [Amend Rule- Westcott Bay Shellfish Co. .pdf](#)

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External Email

> Good afternoon, my name is Kendra Lawson, and I am reaching out on behalf of Westcott Bay Shellfish Farm. I have attached a PDF with our petition for an amendment to our liquor license. Small businesses in the San Juan Islands are struggling with regulations the Liquor Control Board has in place regarding business hours. The islands have become a seasonal destination, and in the off season there is a real struggle keeping staff on, acquiring business, and staying afloat long enough to make it to the busy season again. These hardships could be mitigated if there was a simple rule change on the business days/hours requirement.

> My hope is that those with the ability to make changes hear our struggles and use their power to help our small businesses and island community.

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> I really appreciate you taking the time to read our petition, thank you.

>

> Sincerely,

> Kendra

## 2 Amend Rule RCW 66.24.320; 66.28.360 Restaurant- Beer and Wine

I am requesting the following change:

We are asking the Liquor and Cannabis Board to allow us to be open to the public two days a week during the months of October - March, as opposed to the current requirement of three days a week. The current requirement is causing unnecessary hardship on small businesses in the San Juan Islands. The ability to be open only two days a week in the off season would have significant positive impact.

This change is needed because:

The economy of the San Juan Islands has changed dramatically over the last few decades. We have one of the highest concentrations of small business in Washington State, and many of those are dependent on tourism. The Islands have become a seasonal destination where many businesses rely on making enough money in the summer months to carry them through the very slow winter months. Last year, 88% of our sales were done between April-September. As both a farm and a restaurant, we operate with extremely low profit margins- the norm for both industries. At this time, we feel as though we have done our best to capitalize on what we can do in the summer months- which includes employing 25 seasonal workers, serving 300+ people lunch a day, and selling shellfish to over a dozen restaurants. Our business is a significant supporter of our local farmers, bakeries, cheesemakers, breweries, wineries, and dozens of other merchants throughout the islands. We are a shellfish farm that in the last decade has worked diligently to bring aquaculture back to the San Juan Islands, as well as put eating farm to table at the forefront of island living. We get to share the splendors of island living with thousands of visitors in the summer, and for the local community we have become the place to go for special occasions. We are proud to be a leader in our community, but the seasonality of the islands places tremendous pressure on small businesses like ours. We want to remain open and continue to serve our island community and guests, but under the current circumstances our business would be better off completely closing to the public from October through March.

For years we have struggled to attract enough business to stay open through the winter and keep employees on the payroll. Historically, the only day that has been worth being open is Saturdays for lunch, which in the dead of winter is often a stretch. The Farm is located 9.3 miles outside the town of Friday Harbor. We don't have the benefit of foot traffic on the Main Street, or office and other workers in town coming out in the middle of their 30 minute lunch break. We have cultivated an experience, and that has become a cornerstone of our business plan. We need to be able to do what we do best- grow high quality shellfish, make seasonal food with local ingredients, and be an authentic island experience. Year after year we come off of an incredible summer season, followed by a winter that eats up any profits and cushion we have built up. We are determined to

operate in the off season in a way that makes sense for our small business while continuing to serve as a gathering place for local families. We have found a sensible solution, which is simply to be open to the public two days a week during the off season.

The effect of this rule change would be:

The effect of this rule change cannot be understated. The reality of our situation is fairly dire. On the farm side, we have seen a massive increase of seed prices, coupled with changing weather patterns that have resulted in massive crop losses. On the restaurant side, food prices, employee wages, and affordable housing on the island present unprecedented challenges during the summer season, but are nearly impossible to keep up with in the off season. After years of being open and keeping a skeleton crew employed to run the restaurant, we would often be paying more in labor than we would bring in sales in a day. With the ability to be open only two days a week through the off season, our year-round employees would be able to work to capitalize on the business we get while open to the public, while also efficiently harvesting shellfish on the other days in order to expand our commercial market. This would significantly lower our overhead costs and give our small business an opportunity to not only survive, but also to potentially grow in the off season.

The rule is not clearly or simply stated:

The rule is clearly stated that we must be open a minimum of three days a week, five hours a day. Compliance of this during our peak season is not an issue, but due to both the seasonality of our business and our remote location, the requirement is incompatible with our success as a small business that is driven largely by seasonal visitors. We are asking for a simple change from three days, to two days, so that our small shellfish farm and restaurant can run more efficiently, and persevere through the hardships the industries are currently faced with.