
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1231

Brief Description: Controlling saltwater algae.

Sponsors: Representatives Nelson, Priest, Miloscia, Upthegrove, Cody, Orwall, Roberts and Rolfes.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a new appropriated Saltwater Algae Control Account to receive funds from the annual boat registration fee.
- Creates a new Saltwater Aquatic Algae Control Grant Program at the Department of Ecology to provide grants for the management and study of saltwater algae and sea lettuce.

Hearing Date: 2/12/09

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339)

Background:

As of January 1, 2008, the registration fee for a vessel is \$20.25 plus an excise tax of 0.5 percent of the fair market value of the vessel or \$5, whichever is more. Of the \$20.25, \$10.50 is the registration fee; 75 cents is the license service fee; \$4 is the subagent fee unless registering with a county auditor; and \$5 is an additional assessment. Of the additional \$5, \$2 goes to the Derelict Vessel Removal Account, \$1.50 goes to the Aquatic Invasive Species Account, \$1 goes to the Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account, and 50 cents goes to the Aquatic Invasive Species Enforcement Account.

The Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Program at the Department of Ecology (DOE) provides grants for the treatment of lakes facing harmful algal blooms.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account receives 75 cents from the annual boat registration fee instead of \$1. The remaining 25 cents goes to the Saltwater Algae Control Account (Account).

The funds from the Account may be appropriated to the DOE to develop a Saltwater Aquatic Algae Control Grant Program (Program). Funds from the Account will be distributed as grants to cities, counties, tribes, special purpose districts, and state agencies for capital and operational expenses used to manage and study saltwater algae and sea lettuce. Grants may be for proactive investments in research and control or for rapid response and restoration due to algal incidents.

Grants may also be used as reimbursement for rapid response or restoration due to algal incidents. Potential grantees may contact the DOE before asking for reimbursement to determine if the Account has sufficient funds for the potential grantee's actions. The DOE must also develop a process that allows potential grantees to be screened and evaluated prior to a saltwater algae incident.

When appropriate, grants must be prioritized to benefit: 1) areas of marine waters with documented significant sea lettuce growth; 2) potential grantees capable and willing to provide matching funds, either directly or through a third party; and 3) potential grantees that are eligible Puget Sound Partners.

The Account and the Program expire June 30, 2012.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.