

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6114

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 29, 1998

Title: An act relating to prevention and control of nonindigenous aquatic species.

Brief Description: Preventing the spread of zebra mussel and European green crab.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Spanel, Kline, Snyder and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/22/98, 1/29/98 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6114 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Snyder, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Two nonindigenous aquatic species are found in waters of the United States and are causing specific environmental problems. Two of those are potentially a problem for Washington State in that the zebra mussel and the green crab from Europe are both getting nearer and nearer to Washington State. Zebra mussels, a fresh water specie, have expanded their range in the last 12 months and have invaded a total of 90 lakes in the Great Lakes region of the United States. The United States has tracked the infestation of zebra mussels since 1988 when they were first detected in Lake St. Claire. Zebra mussels are native to eastern Europe and Asia and have few natural enemies in the United States. This is also true of the European green crab. Both species cause environmental problems. Zebra mussels are especially invasive. They clog intake pipes for water systems. They get into generators at power stations and have fouled engine cooling systems on recreational boats. The damage that these zebra mussels cause involves millions of dollars a year to both private industry and for governmental agencies. The Army Corps of Engineers has reported new sightings of zebra mussel infestations on the Ohio River near Pittsburgh and on the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania.

European green crabs, a saltwater specie can destroy oyster and clam beds.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Legislature finds that the unauthorized introduction of nonindigenous aquatic species into Washington State poses a serious economic and environmental threat. The zebra mussel and the European green crab have adverse effects on fisheries, waterways, public and private facilities and the functioning of natural ecosystems. The Legislature finds that without preventive measures the threat of zebra mussel and European green crabs requires a coordinated state response. To complement

programs authorized by the Federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, the Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to prevent the introduction and dispersal of zebra mussels and European green crabs and to eradicate infestations should they appear in the state of Washington. The department is specifically authorized to display and distribute material informing boaters of the problem. The department is authorized to eradicate infestations using the most environmentally sound and economically feasible techniques. The department is given the authority to quarantine an infestation in a body of water to prevent further infestation and is also given the authority to adopt rules to prevent and control infestations. The department is authorized to publicize and maintain a telephone number for the public to express concerns and report infestations. The department must maintain and publish a list of lakes, ponds or other waters infested with zebra mussels or European green crabs should they be found in the state of Washington.

The unauthorized introduction of the zebra mussel and the European green crab into Washington would pose serious economic and environmental threats. Zebra mussels and European green crabs have adverse impacts on fisheries, waterways, public and private facilities and the functioning of the natural environment.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to develop draft rules for legislative consideration to prevent the introduction and dispersal of zebra mussels and European green crabs. The department is authorized to display and distribute material and literature informing boaters and owners of airplanes of the danger of both species.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife prepares a list of all lakes, ponds or other waters in this state and other states that are invested with zebra mussels or green crabs. The state must develop a plan for controlling the introduction of zebra mussels and green crabs. A task force is established to develop recommendations for legislative consideration, including control methods, inspection procedures, penalties, notification procedures and eradication and control techniques. The task force is authorized to look at possible funding mechanisms for the spread of zebra mussels and green crabs. The task force invites all interested groups to work on a plan to be presented to the Legislature. Recommendations of the task force are due December 1, 1998. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is immediately given the amount of \$5,000 to start the study, and \$40,000 for the second half of the biennium is authorized for the period ending June 30, 1999.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The scope of the bill is narrowed to only affect zebra mussels and green crabs. The Department of Fish and Wildlife prepares a report due December 1998 on needed rules and the program. The \$45,000 appropriation is split so that the department can start immediately.

Appropriation: \$45,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1998.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: If zebra mussels invade Washington waters, the costs in control will affect boat owners, public and private utilities and municipal and private water supplies. The green crab could destroy our shellfish industry.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Sarah Richards, Linda Chalker-Scott, UW; Bruce Wishart, People For Puget Sound; Dennis Rohr, Chelan and Douglas PUDs; Eric Johnson, WA Public Ports Assn.; Scott Smith, Bruce Crawford, WDFW; Mandy Ray, Puget Sound Steamship Operators; Tom Cowan, Puget Sound Action Team; Bill Taylor, Pacific Coast Oyster Growers Assn.; Ron Newbry, Pacificorp; Rick Wickman, Columbia River Steamship Operator's Assn.; Ron Shultz, National Audubon Society; John Woodring, NW Marine Trade Assoc.; Ed Owens, Crab Industry, Coastal Oyster Industry.