

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5290

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to the freshwater aquatic weeds management program.

Brief Description: Changing the freshwater aquatic weeds management program by clarifying funding and creating an advisory committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environmental Quality & Water Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Swecker, Winsley, Fairley, Franklin, Morton, Prentice, Spanel, Jacobsen, Honeyford, Oke and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 4/1/99, 4/2/99 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Changing the freshwater aquatic weeds management program by clarifying funding and creating an advisory committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives G. Chandler, Republican Co-Chair; Linville, Democratic Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Koster, Republican Vice Chair; Anderson; B. Chandler; Delvin; Fortunato; Grant; Reardon; Schoesler; Stensen; Sump and Wood.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The freshwater weeds account is funded by a \$3 annual licensing surcharge on boat trailers. The Legislature may appropriate money from the freshwater aquatic weeds account to the Department of Ecology to provide grants to cities, counties, and state agencies to address freshwater aquatic weeds in lakes, rivers, and streams with a public

boat launch; develop public education programs relating to preventing the propagation and spread of freshwater aquatic weeds; provide technical assistance to local governments and citizen groups; fund demonstration or pilot projects; and fund hydrilla eradication activities.

There is no allocation formula in statute for how moneys from the account are spent. Special purpose districts and tribes are not eligible for grants.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department of Ecology must allocate funds from the freshwater aquatic account so that no more than one-third of the funds are used for public education programs and technical assistance. At least two-thirds of the funds must be awarded: (1) as grants to cities, counties, tribes, special purpose districts, and state agencies to prevent or control freshwater aquatic weeds; (2) to fund demonstration or pilot programs; or (3) to fund hydrilla eradication activities.

Grants to prevent or control freshwater aquatic weeds may also be issued for lakes, rivers, or streams which are designated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for fly-fishing.

The department is required to appoint an advisory committee to oversee the freshwater aquatic weeds management program. The advisory committee must have representatives from recreational boaters; residents adjacent to lakes, river, or streams with public boat launch facilities; local governments; scientific specialists; pesticide registrants; certified pesticide applicators who specialize in aquatic pesticides; and the aquatic nuisance species coordinating committee if one is established by the Legislature. The advisory committee is responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations on freshwater aquatic weeds management program activities and budget, and establishing criteria for grants funded from the freshwater aquatic weeds account.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill: The water bodies for which grants may be made to address freshwater aquatic weeds is expanded to lakes, rivers, or streams which are designated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for fly-fishing. A technical amendment is made to allow current hydrilla eradication activities to continue.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 25, 1999.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The allocation ratio is a recommendation of the original advisory committee and is currently followed. There have been some complaints that more money should go out for grants. Tribes and special districts are added so they can respond quickly to infestations. Aquatic weeds affect fish by using up oxygen and by slowing down the streamflow causing a rise in water temperature. Fly-fishermen have been causing the spread of noxious weeds through their gear.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (Original Bill) Senator Karen Fraser, prime sponsor; Dick Wallace, Department of Ecology; Lisa Lantz, State Noxious Weed Control Board; Jim Zimmerman, Washington State Fish Growers; and Dan Robinson, Lake Limmerick.