

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6294

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to aquatic nuisance species.

Brief Description: Creating the aquatic nuisance species committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Haugen and Oke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/16/00, 2/22/00 [DPA].

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

- Creates an Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee to coordinate efforts to prevent the introduction and spread of these species.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Sump, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; Clements; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen; Rockefeller and Stensen.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The Zebra Mussel and European Green Crab Task Force, created by the Legislature during the 1998 session, recommended the creation of an aquatic nuisance species committee as its highest priority in its report to the Legislature. The Legislature provided some funding in the 1999 operating budget for such a committee, but did not enact legislation establishing such a committee.

Summary of Amended Bill:

An Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee is created to foster state, federal, tribal, and private cooperation on aquatic nuisance species issues. The committee is directed to give special emphasis to preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic nuisance species.

Membership of the committee consists of representatives of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, State Patrol, State Noxious Weed Control Board, and the Washington Sea Grant Program. The committee is required to solicit participation by federally recognized Indian tribes, federal agencies, Washington conservation organizations, environmental groups, and representatives from industries that may either be affected by the introduction of an aquatic nuisance species or that may serve as a pathway for their introduction.

The committee has several responsibilities that it is directed to accomplish through the authority and cooperation of its member agencies. These responsibilities include: periodically revising the state aquatic nuisance species management plan; developing recommendations to the Legislature on statutory provisions for classifying and regulating aquatic nuisance species; recommending to the State Noxious Weed Control Board that a plant be classified as an aquatic noxious weed; coordinating education, research, regulatory authorities, and monitoring and control programs; participating in regional and national efforts regarding aquatic nuisance species; and consulting with representatives of different industries and activities that may serve as a pathway for introduction of these species, in order to develop strategies to minimize the risk of new introductions.

The committee must prepare a biennial report, listing its accomplishments and making recommendations for improvements for accomplishing its objectives, to the Legislature beginning December 1, 2001.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The provision authorizing the Fish and Wildlife Commission to classify an aquatic nuisance species is removed, and replaced with the requirement for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee to make recommendations to the Legislature for classifying and regulating aquatic nuisance species.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Invasive species can seriously impact our economy. There is a need for coordinated activity.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Len Barson, Nature Conservancy.