

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6294

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating the aquatic nuisance species committee.

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

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation
House Committee on Natural Resources

Background: Population increases, more rapid means of transportation and other factors have contributed to a dramatic increase in the accidental introduction of nonnative species throughout the world. The introduction of new species can have unpredictable and often negative impacts. Aquatic plants and animals that are especially destructive when introduced into new areas are referred to as aquatic nuisance species.

Aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels, European green crab, Chinese mitten crab, spartina, and hydrilla, can seriously threaten the ecological integrity of Washington's marine and freshwater resources. Aquatic nuisance species can have significant negative impacts on the economic, social, and public health conditions in the state. Often these species have few natural controls in their new habitat and can spread rapidly, destroying native plant and animal habitat and reducing recreational opportunities. Often the introduction of such species lowers property values, clogs waterways, and impacts both irrigation and power generation negatively.

Congress has authorized \$4 million annually to fund the implementation of state management plans to minimize the environmental and economic damage caused by aquatic nuisance species. In recent years, only a small portion of these funds, about \$200,000, has been made available to the states.

Summary: An Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinating Committee is created consisting of representatives from the departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources; the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team; the State Patrol; the State Noxious Weed Control Board; the Washington Public Ports Association; and the Washington Sea Grant Program. The committee periodically revises the State Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan. The committee makes recommendations to the Legislature on statutory provisions for classification and regulation of aquatic nuisance species. The committee coordinates education, research, regulations, monitoring and control among the member agencies. The committee makes recommendations to the State Noxious Weed Control Board on the designation of aquatic nuisance species. The committee must prepare a report for the Legislature by December 1, 2001.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	96	1	(House amended)
House	97	0	(House reconsidered)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 8, 2000