

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6099

As Passed Senate, February 9, 1996

Title: An act relating to funding hydrilla eradication.

Brief Description: Authorizing freshwater aquatic weeds account moneys to be used for hydrilla eradication.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe and Swecker; by request of Department of Ecology.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 1/16/96, 1/19/96 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/9/96, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Drew, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Morton, Oke, Owen, Snyder, Strannigan and Swecker.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The aquatic weeds management program, a state program for managing Washington's aquatic weeds, has allowed Washington to react promptly to the discovery of hydrilla in the Pipe and Lucerne lake system in King County. Not only were funds available to deal with the problem, but through this program the Department of Ecology has trained staff. Hydrilla, an invasive non-native aquatic plant, is considered to be the most problematic aquatic plant in the United States.

The discovery of hydrilla in the Pipe and Lucerne lake system is the first known occurrence of this plant in the Pacific Northwest. Other states where hydrilla has become widespread spend millions of dollars each year for hydrilla management. Florida spent \$56 million controlling hydrilla during a ten-year period and during that time the hydrilla infestation more than doubled.

The aquatic weeds management program has an emergency fund for immediate action when initial infestations of noxious aquatic plants such as Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife, and hydrilla are found. Using this fund, the department and King County were able to take action this past summer to eradicate the hydrilla infestation in the Pipe and Lucerne lake system. More eradication activities will take place in 1996 and 1997 to ensure that this threat to Washington's waters is eliminated. The department has issued a \$301,788 grant to King County for these eradication activities.

Although discovered in King County, hydrilla threatens all of Washington's waters. It is readily spread by boaters and waterfowl. Having a dedicated fund source such as the aquatic

weeds management fund allows the department the funding to contain this new threat to our waters before it can spread throughout the state as Eurasian watermilfoil has done.

Summary of Bill: Funds in the freshwater aquatic weeds account may be appropriated to the Department of Ecology to develop a freshwater aquatic weeds management program and to fund hydrilla eradication activities in the waters of the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The Department of Ecology and King County used this fund for hydrilla eradication and its use in the future may be necessary. Clear authority to use this fund is needed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dick Wallace, Dept. of Ecology (pro); Laurie Renders, State Noxious Weed Board (pro).