

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5002

As of January 29, 2013

Title: An act relating to mosquito control districts.

Brief Description: Concerning mosquito control districts.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford, Fraser and Ericksen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/17/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: Originally authorized in 1957, mosquito control districts are a type of special purpose district created to exterminate mosquitoes and abate mosquito breeding places. A mosquito control district may include territory in all or part of a county or multiple counties. They are financed by property taxes, assessments, and bonds. Currently, 18 mosquito control districts are in existence. Most are in eastern Washington.

To abate mosquito breeding places, mosquito control district officials may enter land in a district to conduct inspections and treat breeding places with oil or other larvicidal material.

Like other types of special purpose districts, mosquito control districts may only exercise powers granted in statute.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Mosquito control districts are authorized to enter lands adjacent to districts to conduct inspections and abate breeding places.

Existing language authorizing districts to apply oil or other larvicidal material to breeding places is deleted. Instead, districts may use integrated pest management (IPM) methods in places where mosquitoes are found or are likely to exist. IPM is defined as a coordinated decision-making and action process, seeking in an environmentally and economically sound manner, to prevent pest – including insect – problems, monitor pests and pest damage,

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establish tolerable pest populations – including zero, treat pest problems, and evaluate treatments.

Districts are authorized to cut or remove shrubbery or undergrowth as necessary or proper to carry out district operations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill enables mosquito control districts to more efficiently address threats posed by mosquitoes, including West Nile Virus. It clarifies that districts may use modern pest management practices. Enabling districts to abate breeding places in lands adjacent to districts will cost districts less than eradicating mosquitoes after they have hatched and migrated. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) supports the bill but suggests language requiring districts to consult with landowners prior to cutting or removing shrubbery, which could be birch or other threatened species.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Stephen Ingalls, Yakima County Mosquito Control District; Angela Beehler, Benton County Mosquito Control District; Paul Dahmer, DFW.