

6553-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Poulsen, Oke and Regala; by request of Governor Locke)

Brief Description: Enhancing regulatory capabilities to prevent invasive aquatic species.

SB 6553-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Recognizes the potential economic and environmental damage that can occur from the introduction of invasive aquatic species.

Declares that the purpose of this act is to increase public awareness of invasive aquatic species and enhance the department of fish and wildlife's regulatory capability to address threats posed by these species.

Declares that a person is guilty of unlawful use of a prohibited aquatic animal species if he or she possesses, imports, purchases, sells, propagates, transports, or releases a prohibited aquatic animal species within the state, except as provided in this act.

Declares that unlawful use of a prohibited aquatic animal species is a gross misdemeanor. A subsequent violation of this section within five years is a class C felony.

Provides that a person is guilty of unlawful release of a regulated aquatic animal species if he or she releases a regulated aquatic animal species into state waters, unless allowed by the commission.

Declares that unlawful release of a regulated aquatic animal species is a gross misdemeanor.

Provides that a person is guilty of unlawful release of an unlisted aquatic animal species if he or she releases an unlisted aquatic animal species into state waters without requesting a commission designation under RCW 77.12.020.

Declares that unlawful release of an unlisted aquatic animal species is a gross misdemeanor.

Requires the director to create a rapid response plan in cooperation with the aquatic nuisance species committee and its member agencies that describes actions to be taken when a prohibited aquatic animal species is found to be infesting a water body. These actions include eradication or control programs where feasible and containment of infestation where practical through notification, public education, and the enforcement of regulatory programs.

Provides that, in consultation with the aquatic nuisance species committee, the director of the department of fish and wildlife and the chief of the state patrol must jointly develop a plan to inspect watercraft entering the state to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic species. The plan shall be provided to the legislature by December 2003.