

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5385

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks

**Title:** An act relating to creating an invasive species council.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington invasive species council.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 3/22/05, 3/31/05 [DPA].

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

- Creates a council, until the end of 2011, of six state agency representatives within the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to coordinate the management of harmful invasive species.
- Creates a new non-appropriated account in the state treasury.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Orcutt and Williams.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative DeBolt.

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

Invasive species are generally considered to be animal or plant species that are thriving in a geographical area to which they are not native. The state of Washington has a number of programs to manage invasive species. Many of these programs are tailored for a specific purpose. For instance, there are programs designed to manage invasive upland plant species such as wild chervil, aquatic plant species such as spartina and purple loosestrife, as well as aquatic animal species such as zebra mussels. The programs are generally run by the state agency with expertise in the environment or industry in which the invasive species operates or the pathway through which future invasive species could arrive.

## **Summary of Amended Bill:**

### Creation of the Washington Invasive Species Council

The Washington Invasive Species Council (Council) is created within the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation until the end of 2011 to provide policy level direction, planning, and coordination for combating harmful invasive species. For the purposes of the Council's scope, invasive species includes non-native organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state.

### Council composition

The Council is to be composed of a representative of six state agencies. The agencies represented are the departments of Agriculture, Transportation, Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Natural Resources, along with the State Noxious Weed Control Board. The members of the Council may vote to increase the membership at anytime. In addition, representatives from the federal government must be invited to participate in a non-voting capacity. Federal participants must represent the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, or the U.S. Coast Guard.

In addition, the Council may establish technical and advisory committees if it deems them necessary to aid and advise the Council. Representation, membership, terms, and organization of the advisory committees will be determined by the Council.

### Council goals

The Council has specific goals. These goals include:

- serving as a forum for identifying and understanding invasive species issues;
- facilitating the communication and cooperation of everyone involved with invasive species;
- reviewing the current funding mechanisms and levels for state agencies to manage noxious weeds on public lands;
- providing an avenue for public outreach; and
- developing future legislative recommendations.

In addition, the Council must prepare a strategic plan for addressing invasive species issues. The state agencies represented on the Council must make efforts to implement the elements on the plan applicable to that agency. The plan must, at a minimum, address the following issues:

- statewide coordination and intergovernmental coordination;
- inventory and monitoring of invasive species;
- prevention of new biological invasions;
- early detection and rapid response;
- eradication of existing established populations of invasive species;
- identification of projects that can be implemented;
- restoration of native species;

- research and education; and
- funding sources.

The Council must select at least one project each year from the strategic plan. This project will be the focus of coordinated action by the Council's member entities.

#### New account

The new non-appropriated Invasive Species Council Account (Account) is created. The Account will receive any appropriations, gifts, grants, or donations that the council may be given. Money in the Account may only be used to fund the Council's charge under the bill.

#### Reports to the Legislature

In addition to developing recommendations for new legislation, the Council is required to submit an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor. The report is to describe the progress made towards implementing the strategic plan. By the end of 2010, the Council must report to the Legislature as to whether its existence should be extended or modified.

#### **Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

The amendment expires the Council after six years, requires the Council to report any recommendations for continuation beyond its expiration, moves the Council from the Governor's Office to the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, adds the Department of Transportation to the Council, allows the Council to expand its membership as it deems necessary, adds the Environmental Protection Agency as a non-voting member, changes the Invasive Species Council Account from an appropriated to a non-appropriated account, and requires the Council to review the current funding models for state agencies to manage noxious weeds.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Immediate action needs to be taken to combat the real threats posed by invasive species. Invasive species cause a loss to both the state's economy and biodiversity. The state can protect itself from these threats. The state does not have a coordinated plan that brings diverse stakeholders together. Each agency has a different charge and responsibility, and that makes coordination with other states and the federal government difficult.

The Council is consistent with the state's priority of government process. It increases the effectiveness of the state agencies by removing duplications and providing for accountability on their progress.

Invasive species cost the state a lot of money. Much of this money can be saved by stopping a potentially invasive species from getting started in the state. This can be accomplished through early detection and rapid response. Both of these actions can benefit from a coordinated approach.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** Scott Smith, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jo Roberts, Washington Invasive Species Coalition; Ron Shultz, Department of Ecology; Steve McGonigel, Washington Noxious Weed Control Board; Bill Robinson, The Nature Conservancy; and Ray Willard, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.