
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1976

Brief Description: Increasing awareness of the potential harm caused by releasing pets or aquatic plants into the natural environment.

Sponsors: Representatives Donaghy, Bronoske, Parshley, Scott and Obras.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires retail pet stores to provide a pamphlet prepared by the Invasive Species Council to customers with certain information related to the animal family or aquatic plant a customer purchases.

Hearing Date: 2/18/25

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Invasive species are nonnative species of animals that are not naturally occurring in Washington and that pose an invasive risk of harming or threatening the state's environmental, economic, or human resources. Invasive species include all stages of species' development and body parts. They may also include genetically modified or cryptogenic species. Aquatic invasive species are invasive species of the animal kingdom with a life cycle that is at least partly dependent upon fresh, brackish, or marine waters. Examples include nutria, waterfowl, amphibians, fish, and shellfish.

The Washington State Invasive Species Council (Council) was created by statute in 2006 to provide policy-level direction, planning, and coordination to prevent the spread and introduction of invasive species throughout the state. Members of the Council include representatives from

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federal, state, local, and tribal governments, the private sector, and other nongovernment interests. Staff support for the Council is provided through the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Summary of Bill:

Retail pet stores must provide an informational pamphlet, prepared by the Invasive Species Council, to customers who purchase an animal or aquatic plant from their store that is related to the animal family or aquatic plant the customer purchases. At a minimum, the pamphlet must include information about:

- invasive species or aquatic invasive species and the threat these species present to native ecosystems;
- problems that can arise if an animal with no natural predators is released into the natural environment;
- actions a customer can take in the event the customer needs to rehome an animal, including a list of entities who may accept the animal;
- actions a customer can take in the event the customer needs to dispose of unwanted aquatic plant material;
- additional resources to identify invasive species and invasive aquatic species, including how aquatic plants can sometimes harbor invasive species; and
- applicable state laws that prohibit the possession, transport, or trafficking of prohibited invasive species and aquatic invasive species.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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