

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1389

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Environmental Affairs*

**Title:** An act relating to aquatic plants.

**Brief Description:** Regulating aquatic plants.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Fraser, Winsley, Rust and Belcher.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Environmental Affairs, February 19, 1991, DPS.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Majority Report:** *That Substitute House Bill No. 1389 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*  
Signed by 11 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Brekke; G. Fisher; Neher; Phillips; Pruitt; and Sprenkle.

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

**Staff:** Rick Anderson (786-7114).

**Background:** Aquatic weeds are primarily non-native species of plants that cause damage through rapid, unchecked propagation. Well known examples include eurasian water milfoil and purple loosestrife.

Aquatic weeds pose a variety of problems in Washington lakes and rivers. Aquatic weeds affect water quality by promoting low dissolved oxygen and high alkalinity; these conditions are unfavorable to fish and other aquatic life. They cause expensive damage to power plants, irrigation equipment, and motors. Additionally, aquatic weeds can restrict swimming, boating, and other recreational opportunities.

Eurasian water milfoil is now present in the Pend Oreille, Okanagan, and the Columbia river systems. Several lakes in eastern and western Washington are infested with milfoil.

Purple loosestrife is also known to be spreading, primarily in wetland areas.

Washington currently has a state milfoil program for the prevention, control, and eradication of the milfoil plant. Under the program, the U.S. Corps of Engineers provides approximately \$400,000 per year to the Department of Ecology. The department issues this money to local governments on a match basis. The program applies to milfoil only and is limited to navigable waters under the corps' jurisdiction. This requirement excludes many milfoil infested areas in the State. Federal milfoil dollars may be lost unless the Department of Ecology secures funds to pay for the state's administrative costs of the program.

Aquatic plant control is eligible to compete for funds under the clean water account under certain circumstances. To date, few aquatic control projects have been funded from this account.

Small personal trailers, such as boat trailers, under 2,000 pounds pay an annual license fee of \$3.25.

***Summary of Substitute Bill:*** An annual \$3 dollar licensing surcharge is assessed on boat trailers.

An aquatic weeds account is created. The Department of Ecology is appropriated \$1.5 million to: 1) issue grants to local governments and state agencies to manage all types of aquatic weeds; 2) develop public education programs to prevent the spread of aquatic weeds; 3) provide technical assistance to local governments and lake management districts; and 4) fund demonstration or pilot projects to manage aquatic weeds.

Grants issued to local governments and state agencies may be used on lakes, rivers, or streams where aquatic weeds are a problem. Lakes, rivers, or streams must have public access as a condition of funding.

***Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:*** The funding source in the original bill was a surcharge on the licensing fee of small personal trailers; the substitute changes the funding source to a surcharge on the licensing fee of boat trailers.

Provisions are made to clarify that aquatic weed projects on lakes, rivers, and streams are eligible for funding. A requirement that such waters have public access as a condition of funding is added.

***Fiscal Note:*** Requested February 13, 1991.

**Appropriation:** Yes.

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

**Testimony For:** Boat trailers are an appropriate funding source because boats help spread milfoil and other aquatic weeds. Local governments need additional funding to combat aquatic weeds. Public access should be provided on waters where public funds are used.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Representative John Wynne (pro); Jack Swanberg, Northwest Marine Trade Association (pro); Kathy Adams, Lakes Improvement Association and Washington Lakes Protection Association (pro); Tom Harmon, Washington Lakes Protection Association-Save Lake Sammamish (pro); and Elsie Sorgenfre, Lake Roesiger Citizens (pro).