

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1389

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & WATER RESOURCES,
APRIL 5, 1991

Brief Description: Regulating aquatic plants.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Fraser, Winsley, Rust and Belcher).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & WATER RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Barr, Chairman; Anderson, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Conner, Gaspard, Hansen, and Newhouse.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Hearing Dates: April 2, 1991; April 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Some kinds of aquatic weeds are non-native species 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.

Eurasian water milfoil is now present in the Pend Oreille, Okanogan, 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 matching 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.

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.

SUMMARY:

An annual \$3 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.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 20, 1991

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and is effective immediately, except for Section 3, which is effective for vehicle registrations that expire August 31, 1992 and thereafter.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

Grants from the aquatic weeds account may be used only in lakes which have public boat launching facilities.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Because of the rampant spread of nonnative aquatic plant species there is a need to better fund a program for the control of these aquatic weeds. Because boat trailers can often be the means by which milfoil is spread from one lake to another and because the recreational boaters will benefit by efforts to control milfoil, it is appropriate for owners of trailerable boats to assist in paying for weed control efforts.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Representative Fraser, sponsor; Representative Wynne; Mark Swartout, Thurston County; Tom Clingman, Thurston County; Kathy Hamel, Dept. of Ecology; Roffe Burgess; Rosemary Walrod, Lakes Improvement Assn.; Dennis Haack, Long Lake Management District; Sue Hennig, Metro; Genie Stansbury, Long Lake Management District; Gene Little, Thurston County Noxious Weed Board; K.O. Rosenberg, Thurston County; Jack Swanberg, NW Marine Trade Assn.