HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2489

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Development

Title: An act relating to weed control.

Brief Description: Examining means to improve weed control.

Sponsors: Representatives Fuhrman, Rayburn, Chandler, Orr, Stevens, Chappell, Schoesler, Basich, Mielke, Van Luven, King, McMorris, Quall, Sehlin, Morris, Sheahan, Johanson, Silver, Kremen, Long, Foreman, Roland, Grant, Carlson, Backlund, Scott, Jones, Forner, Ballard, Lisk and Springer.

Brief History:
  Reported by House Committee on:
    Agriculture & Rural Development, February 3, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Rayburn, Chair; Kremen, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Chappell; Grant; Karahalios; Lisk; McMorris and Roland.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The Department of Agriculture and the state Noxious Weed Control Board share responsibility for noxious weed control at the state level. In large portions of the state, county noxious weed control boards and weed districts administer local weed control programs.

The Commissioner of Public Lands, through the Department of Natural Resources, manages much of the land owned or held in trust by the state.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Commissioner of Public Lands must examine means of controlling nonaquatic noxious weeds on public lands owned or managed by the state. The commissioner must consult certain state and federal agencies, county weed control boards, and statewide organizations of cattle producers, farm owners and timber owners. The commissioner must report to the Legislature on means of establishing a long range plan for controlling such weeds. Certain elements of such a plan are specified.

The director of the Department of Agriculture and the state Noxious Weed Control Board must examine means of providing notification for sales of real estate of one or more acres concerning the presence of certain noxious weeds on the real estate. The director and the board must identify in a report to the Legislature mechanisms for providing such notification.

These reports must be submitted by December 1, 1994.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill requires a report from the commissioner regarding a long range plan for controlling weeds on all state public lands; the original bill required a report on certain weed control programs for lands managed by three state agencies. The notification study required by the substitute bill is limited to notices for sales of real estate. The deadline for submitting the reports is changed by the substitute bill.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 27, 1994.

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

Testimony For: (1) Much of the state's range land is being lost to noxious weeds. The cost of controlling these weeds is increasing while state monies for control programs are decreasing. (2) If weeds are controlled on state lands, their control on adjacent private lands is much easier. (3) The bill helps address the problems posed by uninformed small landowners. (4) Some weeds, such as leafy spurge, are not just a private landowner's problem; they pose an environmental problem as well. (5) A comprehensive approach to weed control is needed.

Testimony Against: The study of weed control on public lands required by the original bill is unnecessary. The Department of Wildlife currently spends $400,000 per year for weed control.

Witnesses: In Favor: Representative Fuhrman, prime sponsor; Eric Roecks and Bob Joy, Washington State Grange; Bob Leonard, Grant County Noxious Weed Board; Gene Little, State Noxious Weed Control Board; K. O. Rosenberg; Jim Davidson, Ferry County Weed Board; Matt Voile, Stevens County Weed Board; and Kent Lebsack, Washington Cattlemens Association. Commented: Stan Biles, Department of Natural Resources. Opposed: Gene Tillett, Department of Wildlife.