

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6114

C 153 L 98

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Preventing the spread of zebra mussel and European green crab.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Spanel, Kline, Snyder and Haugen).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks

House Committee on Natural Resources

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Two nonindigenous aquatic species are found in waters of the United States and are causing specific environmental problems. The zebra mussel and the green crab from Europe are both getting nearer and nearer to Washington State.

Zebra mussels, a fresh water specie, have expanded their range in the last 12 months and have invaded a total of 90 lakes in the Great Lakes region of the United States. The United States has tracked the infestation of zebra mussels since 1988 when they were first detected in Lake St. Claire. Zebra mussels and the European green crabs are native to eastern Europe and Asia and have few natural enemies in the United States. Zebra mussels are especially invasive. They clog intake pipes for water systems. They get into generators at power stations and have fouled engine cooling systems on recreational boats. The damage these zebra mussels cause involves millions of dollars a year to both private industry and governmental agencies. The Army Corps of Engineers has reported new sightings of zebra mussel infestations on the Ohio River near Pittsburgh and on the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania. European green crabs, a saltwater specie, can destroy oyster and clam beds.

Summary: The Legislature finds that the unauthorized introduction of the zebra mussel and the European green crab into Washington State poses a serious economic and environmental threat. The zebra mussel and the European green crab have adverse effects on fisheries, waterways, public and private facilities and the functioning of natural ecosystems. The Legislature also finds that the threat of zebra mussel and European green crabs requires a coordinated state response.

To complement programs authorized by the Federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, the Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to develop rules to prevent the introduction and dispersal of zebra mussels and European green crabs and to allow eradication of infestations should they appear. The department is specifically authorized to display and distribute material informing boaters and owners of airplanes that land on water of the problem and to publicize and maintain a telephone number for the public to express concerns and report infestations. The department must also prepare, maintain and publish a list of lakes, ponds or other waters of the state or other states infested with zebra mussels or European green crabs. The state must develop a plan for controlling the introduction of zebra mussels and green crabs.

A zebra mussel and European green crab task force is created to develop recommendations for legislative consideration, including control methods, inspection procedures, penalties, notification procedures and eradication and control techniques. The department must seek the participation of interested parties as well as the University of Washington, the Department of Ecology, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Natural Resources, the Washington State Patrol and appropriate federal agencies. The task force is authorized to look at possible funding mechanisms for controlling the spread of zebra mussels and green crabs. Final recommendations of the task force to the Legislature are due December 1, 1998. The task force ceases to exist January 1, 1999.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	43	0	
House	96	0	(House amended)
Senate	47	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: March 25, 1998