

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2383

Title: An act relating to aquatic nuisance species.

Brief Description: Creating the aquatic nuisance species committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Regala, G. Chandler, Anderson, Linville, Fisher, Scott, Kenney, Lovick, Haigh, Lantz, Wood, Santos, Edmonds and Ogden.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Date: January 21, 2000.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Bill Lynch, Counsel (786-7092)

Background: The Zebra Mussel and European Green Crab Task Force created by the Legislature during the 1998 session, recommended the creation of an aquatic nuisance species committee as its highest priority in its report to the Legislature. The Legislature provided some funding in the 1999 operating budget for such a committee, but did not enact legislation establishing such a committee.

Although the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife may request the Fish and Wildlife Commission to designate a species of animal as deleterious exotic wildlife, there is no similar authority for the director to request the designation of aquatic nuisance species.

Summary of Bill:

An aquatic Nuisance Species Committee is created to foster state, federal, tribal, and private cooperation on aquatic nuisance species issues. The committee is directed to give special emphasis to preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic nuisance species.

Membership of the committee consists of representatives of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, State Patrol, State Noxious Weed Control Board, and the Washington Sea Grant Program. The committee is required to solicit participation

by federally recognized Indian tribes, federal agencies, Washington conservation organizations, and representatives from industries that may either be affected by the introduction of an aquatic nuisance species or that may serve as a pathway for their introduction.

The committee has several responsibilities that it is directed to accomplish through the authority and cooperation of its member agencies. These responsibilities include: periodically revising the state aquatic nuisance species management plan; recommending to the Fish and Wildlife Commission that an animal be classified by the commission as an aquatic nuisance species; recommending to the State Noxious Weed Control Board that a plant be classified as an aquatic noxious weed; coordinating education, research, regulatory authorities, and monitoring and control programs; participating in regional and national efforts regarding aquatic nuisance species; and consulting with representatives of different industries and activities that may serve as a pathway for introduction of these species, in order to develop strategies to minimize the risk of new introductions.

The committee must prepare a biennial report, listing its accomplishments and making recommendations for improvements for accomplishing its objectives, to the Legislature beginning December 1, 2001.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission may classify aquatic nuisance species upon the recommendation of the committee, or upon request of the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The director may request the classification if the director determines that a nonnative aquatic animal species threatens the diversity or abundance of native species; the ecological stability of infested waters; or commercial, agricultural, or recreational activities dependent on such waters.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 19, 2000.

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

Rulemaking Authority: None.

