

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6294

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2000

Title: An act relating to aquatic nuisance species.

Brief Description: Creating the aquatic nuisance species committee.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 1/20/2000, 1/26/2000 [DPS].

Passed Senate, 2/11/2000, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6294 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Population increases, more rapid means of transportation and other factors have contributed to a dramatic increase in the accidental introduction of nonnative species throughout the world. The introduction of new species can have unpredictable and often negative impacts. Aquatic plants and animals that are especially destructive when introduced into new areas are referred to as aquatic nuisance species.

Aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels, European green crab, Chinese mitten crab, spartina, and hydrilla, can seriously threaten the ecological integrity of Washington's marine and freshwater resources. Aquatic nuisance species can have significant negative impacts on the economic, social, and public health conditions in the state. Often these species have few natural controls in their new habitat and can spread rapidly, destroying native plant and animal habitat and reducing recreational opportunities. Often the introduction of such species lowers property values, clogs waterways, and impacts both irrigation and power generation negatively.

Congress has authorized \$4 million annually to fund the implementation of state management plans to minimize the environmental and economic damage caused by aquatic nuisance species. In recent years, only a small portion of these funds, about \$200,000, has been made available to the states.

Summary of Bill: An Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinating Committee is created consisting of representatives from the Department of Fish and Wildlife; the departments of

Ecology, Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources; the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team; the State Patrol; the State Noxious Weed Control Board; the Washington Public Ports Association; and the Washington Sea Grant Program. The committee periodically revises the State Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan. The committee must advise member agencies on the use of funds available for nuisance species activities. The committee must prepare a report for the Legislature by December 1, 2001.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: A coordinating committee is needed to help the Department of Fish and Wildlife direct the program.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Scott Smith, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Ron Shultz, Audubon Society; Bruce Wishart, People for Puget Sound; Donald Norman, Adopt a Beach; Mark Sytsma, Portland State University; Grant Kirby, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Ed Owens, Commercial Seafood Handlers; Ray Schow, Bernard Murrly, RBAW; Bill Dewey, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association.

House Amendment(s): The committee will make recommendations to the Legislature on statutory provisions for classification and regulation of aquatic nuisance species.