

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6553

C 281 L 02
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Enhancing regulatory capabilities to prevent invasive aquatic species.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Poulsen, Oke and Regala; by request of Governor Locke).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines
House Committee on Natural Resources

Background: The Washington State Legislature created the Invasive Aquatic Species Act in order to give the Department of Fish and Wildlife and other state agencies the authority to control the introduction of invasive aquatic species that damage the native environment.

Summary: The Legislature recognizes that the potential economic and environmental damage that can occur from the introduction of the invasive aquatic species is serious and increased public awareness of invasive aquatic species is a benefit to the state.

The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife must create a rapid response plan in cooperation with the Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee and the other state agencies involved in invasive species management. The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Chief of the State Patrol must jointly develop a plan to inspect watercraft entering the state to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic species. The plan must be provided to the Legislature by December 2003. The Fish and Wildlife Commission is given authority to classify nonnative aquatic animal species in various categories related to their danger to the environment. The commission is given the authority to designate by rule state waters that are infested if the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that the waters contain a prohibited aquatic animal species.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission will designate commercial shellfish species as regulated aquatic species. The commission will develop a work plan to eradicate native aquatic species that threaten human health. Plant and non-native animal species that threaten or harm human health and native plant species that displace other species, threaten natural resources or cause economic harm can be classified as an "invasive specie." Invasive species is defined to match the federal definition.

Persons may not possess, import, purchase, sell, propagate, or transport prohibited aquatic animal species in the state. Exceptions are allowed for identifying a species or reporting the presence of a species, for possessing a prohibited species while in the process of removing it from watercraft or equipment in the manner specified by the department, or to take the species and return it to the water from which it came. A gross misdemeanor penalty is established.

Ballast water is excluded from the act.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	46	0	
House	93	0	(House amended)
Senate	43	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 13, 2002