
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

ESSB 5385

Brief Description: Creating the Washington invasive species council.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Oke, Fraser, Swecker and Kline).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Creates a council, until the end of 2011, of six state agency representatives within the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation with the purpose of coordinating the management of harmful invasive species.

Hearing Date: 2/17/06

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Invasive species are generally considered to be animal or plant species that are thriving in a geographical area to which they are not native. The State of Washington has a number of programs to manage invasive species. Many of these programs are tailored for a specific purpose. For instance, there are programs designed to manage invasive upland plant species such as wild chervil, aquatic plant species such as spartina and purple loosestrife, as well as aquatic animal species such as zebra mussels. The programs are generally run by the state agency with expertise in the environment or industry in which the invasive species operates or the pathway through which future invasive species could arrive.

Summary of Bill:

Creation of the Washington Invasive Species Council

The Washington Invasive Species Council (Council) is created within the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation until the end of 2011 to provide policy level direction, planning, and coordination for combating harmful invasive species. For the purposes of the Council's scope, invasive species include non-native organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state.

Council composition

The Council is to be composed of representatives of six state agencies. The agencies represented are the Departments of Agriculture, Transportation, Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Natural Resources, along with the State Noxious Weed Control Board. The members of the Council may vote to increase the membership at any time. In addition, representatives from the federal government must be invited to participate in a non-voting capacity. Federal participants must represent the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Coast Guard.

In addition, the Council may establish technical and advisory committees if it deems them necessary to aid and advise the Council. Representation, membership, terms, and organization of the advisory committees will be determined by the Council.

Council goals

The Council has specific goals. These goals include serving as a forum for identifying and understanding invasive species issues, facilitating the communication and cooperation of everyone involved with invasive species, reviewing the current funding mechanisms and levels for state agencies to manage noxious weeds on public lands, providing an avenue for public outreach, and developing future legislative recommendations.

In addition, the Council must prepare a strategic plan for addressing invasive species issues. The state agencies represented on the Council must make efforts to implement the elements on the plan applicable to that agency. The plan must, at a minimum, address the following issues:

- Statewide coordination and intergovernmental coordination;
- Inventory and monitoring of invasive species;
- Prevention of new biological invasions;
- Early detection and rapid response;
- Eradication of existing established populations of invasive species;
- Identification of projects that can be implemented;
- Restoration of native species;
- Research and education; and
- Funding sources.

The Council must select at least one project each year from the strategic plan. This project will be the focus of coordinated action by the Council's member entities.

New account

The new non-appropriated Invasive Species Council Account (Account) is created. The Account will receive any appropriations, gifts, grants, or donations that the council may be given. Money in the Account may only be used to fund the Council's charge under the bill.

Reports to the Legislature

In addition to developing recommendations for new legislation, the Council is required to submit an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor. The report is to describe the progress made towards implementing the strategic plan. By the end of 2010, the Council must report to the Legislature as to whether its existence should be extended or modified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.