

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5155

As of February 24, 2005

Title: An act relating to noxious weeds.

Brief Description: Concerning state agencies' duty to control the spread of noxious weeds.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Mulliken, Roach, Hewitt, Swecker, Parlette, Carrell, Schoesler, Delvin, Benson, Honeyford and Deccio.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/23/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The Legislature has declared its intent to limit economic loss and adverse effects to Washington's agricultural, natural, and human resources due to the presence and spread of noxious weeds on all terrestrial and aquatic areas in the state.

All state agencies must control noxious weeds on lands they own, lease, or otherwise control through integrated pest management practices. Agencies must also develop plans in cooperation with county noxious weed control boards to control noxious weeds.

The term noxious weed is defined as a plant that when established is highly destructive, competitive, or difficult to control by cultural or chemical practices. Class A noxious weeds are those weeds not native to the state that are of limited distribution or are unrecorded in the state and that pose a serious threat to the state. Class B noxious weeds are those weeds not native to the state that are of limited distribution or are unrecorded in a region of the state and pose a serious threat to that region.

Summary of Bill: In controlling noxious weeds on their lands, state agencies must give first priority to the control of class A and B noxious weeds occurring within five hundred feet of adjacent private property.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Private lands are inundated with weeds that blow across boundary lines from federal and state property. The state has limited resources to eliminate noxious weeds, but prioritization may prevent the spread of these weeds onto private land. As an agricultural state, it is vital for the state to protect private lands from weeds.

Testimony Against: The eradication of class A and B noxious weeds is already prioritized under the state's noxious weed statute. Additionally, the state is committed to eliminating noxious weeds throughout all of its property, so a focus on lands bordering private property is not necessary.

Who Testified: PRO: Chad Henneman; Cattle Producers of Washington; Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Ramona Pfitzer, Okanogan County Noxious Weed Board.

CON: Steve McGonigal, State Noxious Weed Board; Ray Fann, State Noxious Weed Board.