

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5699

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 28, 2005
Ways & Means, March 7, 2005

Title: An act relating to preventing and controlling aquatic invasive species and algae.

Brief Description: Preventing and controlling aquatic invasive species and algae.

Sponsors: Senators Oke, Jacobsen, Spanel, Doumit, Kline, Rockefeller and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/23/05, 2/28/05 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 3/4/05, 3/7/05 [DPS(NROR), DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5699 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Oke, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Morton, Spanel and Swecker.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Stevens.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5699 as recommended by Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair; Brandland, Kohl-Welles, Pflug, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member and Roach.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Hewitt and Parlette.

Staff: Kirstan Arestad (786-7708)

Background: Invasive species pose a serious threat to Washington State. This threat has increased with improvements in travel technology and increased travel in recent years. Once

nonnative species become established in a new environment, the conditions that kept their population in check in their native environment may be missing.

Currently, an applicant for a vessel registration must pay a registration fee of \$10.50 per year, plus an excise tax. In addition, \$2 must be collected annually from every vessel registration application for deposit in the derelict vessel removal account.

Summary of Substitute Bill: In addition to the \$10.50 vessel registration fee, the excise tax, and \$2 for derelict vessel removal, an additional \$3 must be collected from every vessel registration application. This \$3 must be distributed as follows: \$1.50 for aquatic invasive species prevention; \$1 for freshwater aquatic algae control; and \$.50 for aquatic invasive species enforcement.

To carry out the purposes of this bill, three accounts are created. The aquatic invasive species account is created to develop an aquatic invasive species prevention program for recreational watercraft within the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Funds from this account must be used for such purposes as inspecting watercraft and educating law enforcement officers on invasive species laws. The freshwater aquatic algae control account is created to develop a freshwater aquatic algae program. Funds from this account must be used for such purposes as grants to tribes and local governments and technical assistance regarding invasive species control. The aquatic invasive species enforcement account is created to fund the creation of the aquatic invasive species enforcement program within the Washington State Patrol. Funds from this account must be used for such purposes as the inspection of recreational watercraft and the establishment of invasive species check stations in areas of high boating activity.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill makes the increased vessel registration fees applicable to fees that are due or become due on or after August 1, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The section increasing vessel registration fees applies to vessel registration fees that are due or become due on or after August 1, 2005. The remainder of the bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): The additional revenue provided by this bill would give the state additional resources to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species into Washington state through watercraft.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): Although everyone supports efforts to eliminate invasive species and prevent their spread, additional fees on top of current vessel licensing charges are a concern.

Who Testified (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Lynda Hendriksen, Department of Licensing; Melodie Selby, Department of Ecology; Fran McNair, Department of Natural Resources.

CON: Cliff Webster, Northwest Marine Trade Association.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): None.

Other: This program has merit. The legislature may want to allow the fee to expire after a reasonable amount of time and re-evaluate whether to reimpose this fee, at a lesser or greater amount.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Who Testified (Ways & Means): OTHER: Cliff Webster, Northwest Marine Trade Association.