

HB 1730-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that aquatic invasive species and freshwater aquatic algae are causing economic, environmental, and public health problems that affect the citizens and aquatic resources of our state. Many highly destructive species, such as the zebra mussel, are currently not found in Washington's waters and efforts should be made to prevent the introduction or spread of these aquatic invasive species into our state waters. Preventing new introductions is significantly less expensive and causes far less ecological damage than trying to control new infestations.

Finds that freshwater algae, particularly blue-green algae, are also seriously degrading the water quality and recreational value of a number of our lakes. Blue-green algae can produce toxins that inhibit recreational uses and pose a threat to humans and pets.

Declares an intent to clarify the roles of the different state agencies involved in these issues in order to address the threat of aquatic invasive species and the problem caused by aquatic freshwater algae, and to provide a dedicated fund source to prevent and control further impacts.

Creates the aquatic invasive species prevention account in the state treasury.

Declares that funds in the aquatic invasive species prevention account may be appropriated to the department to develop an aquatic invasive species prevention program for recreational watercraft. Funds must be expended as follows: (1) To inspect watercraft, watercraft trailers, and outboard motors at selected boat launching sites;

(2) To educate general law enforcement officers on how to enforce state laws relating to preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species;

(3) To evaluate and survey the risk posed by marine recreational watercraft in spreading aquatic invasive species into Washington state waters;

(4) To evaluate the risk posed by float planes in spreading aquatic invasive species into Washington state waters; and

(5) To implement an aquatic invasive species early detection and rapid response plan.

Requires the department to submit a biennial report to the appropriate legislative committees describing the actions taken to implement this section along with suggestions on how to better fulfill the intent of this act. The first report is due December 1, 2007.

Creates the freshwater aquatic algae control account in the state treasury.

Provides that funds in the freshwater aquatic algae control account may be appropriated to the department to develop a freshwater aquatic algae control program. Funds must be expended as follows: (1) As grants to cities, counties, tribes, special purpose districts, and state agencies to manage excessive freshwater algae; and

(2) To provide technical assistance to applicants and the public about aquatic algae control.

Requires the department to submit a biennial report to the appropriate legislative committees describing the actions taken to implement this act along with suggestions on how to better fulfill the intent of this act. The first report is due December 1, 2007.

Creates the aquatic invasive species enforcement account in the state treasury.

Provides that funds in the aquatic invasive species enforcement account may be appropriated to the Washington state patrol to develop an aquatic invasive species enforcement program for recreational watercraft. Funds must be expended as follows:

(1) To inspect recreational watercraft that are required to stop at port of entry weigh stations managed by the Washington state patrol. The watercraft must be inspected for the presence of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species; and

(2) To establish random check stations, in conjunction with the department of fish and wildlife, to inspect watercraft in areas of high boating activity.

Requires the Washington state patrol to submit a biennial report to the appropriate legislative committees describing the actions taken to implement this act along with suggestions on how to better fulfill the intent of this act. The first report is due December 1, 2007.