

SB 5923-S - DIGEST

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 2ND SUB)

Provides changes to aquatic invasive species enforcement and control.

Requires the department to post signs warning vessel owners of the threat of aquatic invasive species, the penalties associated with introduction of a prohibited aquatic animal or plant species, and the proper contact information for obtaining a free inspection. The signs must be posted at all ports of entry to the state and at all boat launches owned or leased by the department. The signs should provide enough information for the public to discern whether the vessel has been operated in an area that would warrant the need for an inspection.

Directs the department to provide an inspection of a watercraft at no cost to the person requesting the inspection. The department shall provide an inspection receipt verifying that the watercraft is not contaminated.

Directs the department to provide training to all department employees that are deployed in the field to provide for efficient and timely response and inspections of recreational and commercial watercraft.

Declares that a person is guilty of unlawfully avoiding aquatic invasive species check stations if the person fails to: (1) Obey check station signs; or

(2) Stop and report at a check station if directed to do so by a uniformed fish and wildlife officer.

Declares that unlawfully avoiding aquatic invasive species check stations is a gross misdemeanor.

Declares that: (1) A person is guilty of unlawfully introducing a prohibited aquatic animal species if the person fails to: (a) have a vessel inspected by state patrol officers or state fish and wildlife officers prior to launching the vessel in Washington waters; and (b) the vessel is contaminated with an aquatic invasive species, as defined by the department.

(2) The penalty for unlawfully introducing a prohibited aquatic animal species may include forfeiture of the contaminated watercraft, under RCW 77.15.070.