

Other 2011 Puget Sound Legislative Issues Invasive Species Agenda Item #03

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Proposed Action: Briefing

Summary: The Washington Invasive Species Council was created by the Legislature in 2006 to provide policy-level direction, coordination, and collaboration among state and federal agencies, tribes, and stakeholders on invasive species. The Council is slated to sunset at the end of 2011. Stakeholders and member agencies support continuing the role and function of the Council through 2017.

The Puget Sound Partnership's technical memorandum, *Identification, Definition, and Rating of Threats to the Recovery of Puget Sound*, rates invasive species as a high threat to Puget Sound ecosystems.

Question for ECB members: *Do members support extending the function and role of the state Invasive Species Council through 2017?*

Background:

Unique role: The Washington Invasive Species Council plays a unique role in the state's battle against invading species. It provides the only structured, regular venue for coordination on invasive species among multiple state agencies and those outside of state government, including federal and local agencies, tribes, businesses, non-government organizations, and the public. The council has effectively addressed many parts of the invasive species issue, including strategic planning, education and outreach, setting priorities for action on a state level, improving the detection of new invasions, facilitating quick and effective response actions, preventing the establishment and spread of new species, and establishing a baseline understanding of invasive species (part of the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda) to fill gaps in knowledge and management. This council bridges many independent programs from different state, federal, and local implementers.

Role in Puget Sound: The Council is addressing the high-risk threats to Puget Sound recovery identified by the Partnership. To protect the Puget Sound habitat, one of the Action Agenda's strategies is to "prevent and rapidly respond to the introduction of invasive species." In addition, the Action Agenda calls on the state to implement relevant key recommendations of the Invasive Species Council's strategic plan and to build capacity within the region to respond to immediate invasive species risks.

Using EPA national estuary funding, the Council has developed a baseline and database of invasive species in or a threat to Puget Sound to guide control efforts for 15 high priority species and plans to expand this database to include an additional 35 high threat species.

Leadership: The Council's leadership on invasive species ensures readiness and accountability in responding to new invasions. In Capitol Lake, the council initiated the multi-agency response to the New

Zealand mud snail infestation. In a larger-scale emergency response situation, such as zebra mussels found in the Columbia River or Puget Sound Basin, the structure already exists so that agencies would be ready for immediate and collaborative action to isolate the infestation, prevent spread, and minimize damages to industry and the environment.

Attachments:

- Z-Draft bill (An act relating to the expiration date of the invasive species council and account.)

1 AN ACT Relating to the expiration date of the invasive species
2 council and account; amending RCW 79A.25.310 and 79A.25.370; creating
3 a new section; repealing 2007 c 241 s 75 (uncodified); repealing 2006
4 c 152 s 10 (uncodified); and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The land, water, and other resources of
7 Washington state are being severely impacted by the invasion of an
8 increasing number of harmful invasive plant and animal species. These
9 impacts are resulting in damage to the state's environment and causing
10 economic hardships. The multitude of public and private organizations
11 with an interest and authority in controlling and preventing the spread
12 of harmful invasive species in Washington state need a mechanism for
13 cooperation, communication, collaboration, and implementation of the
14 statewide plan of action to combat these threats.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 79A.25.310 and 2007 c 241 s 61 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (1) There is created the Washington invasive species council to
18 exist until (~~December 31, 2011~~) June 30, 2017. Staff support to the

1 council shall be provided by the recreation and conservation office and
2 from the agencies represented on the council. For administrative
3 purposes, the council shall be located within the office.

4 (2) The purpose of the council is to provide policy level
5 direction, planning, and coordination for combating harmful invasive
6 species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others
7 that may be potentially harmful.

8 (3) The council is a joint effort between local, tribal, state, and
9 federal governments, as well as the private sector and nongovernmental
10 interests. The purpose of the council is to foster cooperation,
11 communication, and coordinated approaches that support local, state,
12 and regional initiatives for the prevention and control of invasive
13 species.

14 (4) For the purposes of this chapter, "invasive species" include
15 nonnative organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are
16 capable of spreading to new areas of the state. "Invasive species"
17 does not include domestic livestock, intentionally planted agronomic
18 crops, or nonharmful exotic organisms.

19 **Sec. 3.** RCW 79A.25.370 and 2007 c 241 s 62 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

21 (1) The invasive species council account is created in the custody
22 of the state treasurer. All receipts from appropriations, gifts,
23 grants, and donations must be deposited into the account. Expenditures
24 from the account may be used only to carry out the purposes of the
25 council. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter
26 43.88 RCW and the approval of the director of the recreation and
27 conservation office is required for expenditures. All expenditures
28 must be directed by the council.

29 (2) This section expires June 30, 2017.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The following acts or parts of acts are
31 repealed:

- 32 (1) 2007 c 241 s 75 (uncodified); and
- 33 (2) 2006 c 152 s 10 (uncodified).

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