

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

HOUSE BILL 280

"An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game; relating to management of invasive species; and providing for an effective date."

Sponsor Statement Version S (Revised March 13, 2020)

Invasive species are costing Alaska money and damaging some of our most important resources. Whether is the devastation of the Alexander Creek king salmon by northern pike, the degradation of salmon habitat by elodea, purple loosestrife and orange hawkweed, or the blanketing of Whiting Harbor by *Didemnum Vexillum* (Dvex), the impact of invasive species in the state is clear.

It is, however, important to note that Alaska also has an advantage over other states in the United States. We are relatively isolated and invasive species have just begun to spread in the state. It was estimated in 2005 that invasive species cost the United States \$120 billion in damages every year. At this time Alaska is only bearing a small portion of this cost and now is the time to address invasive species, before they become a bigger, more costly problem.

House Bill 280, INVASIVE SPECIES IN STATE WATER; COUNCIL would streamline the response to invasive species, as well as help reduce the impact and cost of invasive species in Alaska. House Bill 280 establishes an invasive species council that would allow for better cooperation among the numerous stakeholders. In addition to establishing a council, and outlining the responsibilities of the council, House Bill 280 also gives the Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) broad authority to use the necessary means to prevent, control and eradicate invasive species.

Furthermore, House Bill 280 requires the ADFG to classify non-native species that are prohibited, regulated or approved and mandates that the department adopts regulations to relating to the lawful use of invasive species. The bill also gives the department authority to restrict use on, and off, waters infested with invasive species. The bill requires individuals to take the necessary steps to reduce the spread of invasive species. Finally, the bill establishes an invasive species response fund to help finance the control and eradication of invasive species.

House Bill 280 gives ADFG the tools they need to control the spread of invasive species and establishes a council to facilitate a cohesive, timely response to invasive species by the numerous stakeholders.