

Alaska State Senate

Senator Forrest Dunbar

Session:

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-6944



Interim:

1500 W. Benson Blvd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
(907) 269-0246

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

SB 174: INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

(version A, 34-LS0901\A)

April 28, 2025

"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."

SB 174 will help improve the prevention, eradication, and control of invasive species in Alaska and help reduce their long-term impact in the state. Northern pike have devastated salmon runs in Southcentral Alaska, salmon habitat is being degraded by elodea throughout Alaska, orange hawkweed is taking over Anchorage roadways, and the European green crab is spreading throughout southern Southeast Alaska outcompeting an already struggling Red King Crab population.

We are relatively isolated, and invasive species are just beginning to spread in the state. In 2021 it was estimated that the annual economic impact of invasive species exceeded \$26 billion in the United States. We are already beginning to see the negative economic impacts of invasives in Alaska and now is the time to act.

SB 174 will establish an Alaska Invasive Species Council, a way for us to ensure that our ecosystems remain protected as warming oceans bring new species north and increased globalization increases the frequency with which invasive species infiltrate our ecosystems. This council will assist in the coordinating management of invasive species. In addition, the bill will establish an invasive species response fund to provide the means and revenue for the management of invasive species.

Currently there are numerous departments, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and others working to manage invasive species in Alaska. It's urgently necessary that they coordinate their efforts if we are to prevent further damage from invasives. This bill will result in a better coordination of the management activities, clearer strategies, and policies to address invasive species, while saving that state money through the involvement of volunteer experts. Ultimately, SB 174 will streamline the management of invasive species in Alaska before they further devastate Alaska's resources and become more costly to manage.

Your support for SB 174 will be support for the long-term health of Alaska's fisheries, ecosystems, and fragile habitats.