

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House Resources Committee

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Sponsor Statement

HB 365

Didemnum vexillum (DVex) also known as Sea Vomit, is an aggressive tunicate invader that grows rapidly and has few known natural predators. It creates metabolic toxins that help it smother substrates and other organisms to create monoculture infestations from intertidal, subtidal to deep sea habitats. As demonstrated in a recent infestation in Whiting Harbor near Sitka the rapid spread of DVex is a threat to the mariculture industry, commercial fisheries and ecosystem integrity.

HB 365 provides the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) the statutory authority to swiftly address outbreaks of aquatic invasive species such as Dvex. Other species of concern include *Didymosphenia geminate* (aka Rock Snot) and *Northern Pike*.

HB 365 requires ADF&G, in coordination with the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources, to establish a plan of coordination and response to an aquatic invasive species outbreak and colonization in a limited and isolated geographic area.

HB 365 gives ADF&G the authority to use chemical, biological, mechanical, or physical methods to deal with the outbreak. It allows for expedited review of plans for dealing with invasive species, and directs ADF&G staff to prioritize eradication of the invasive species over other management issues for the limited and specific area.

Sea Vomit, Rock Snot and other aquatic invasive species have the potential to seriously impact our lucrative commercial fishing, mariculture, and recreational fishing industries. HB 365 gives Alaska the tools to combat this threat.