

**Linda Hay**

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**From:** Tim Stallard <weeds.free.ak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 19, 2012 11:08 AM  
**To:** Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Alan Dick; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Berta Gardner; Rep. Scott Kawasaki  
**Subject:** HB 365 is needed to address Alaska's aquatic invasive species  
**Categories:** Linda

Hello members of the House Resources Committee,

Thank you for proposing and considering HB 365 - "An Act relating to the rapid response to, and control of, aquatic invasive species." I hope you will support this measure.

Alaska's environment and the natural resources upon which we depend for jobs, development, tourism, and quality of life are under threat by the rapid spread of damaging invasive species. Despite our isolation and extreme climate these aggressive alien species are skilled at hitch-hiking on cargo ships, fishing and pleasure boats, float planes, heavy equipment, vehicle tires, commodities (gravel, straw, mulch, soil), etc.

As you are likely aware, invasive species cause many billions of dollars of damage each year in the lower 48 and we are just beginning to see these impacts in Alaska. The best solution is to prevent the arrival of new species in the first place with invasive species-free commodities and good "hygiene" - For example wash the boat, plane, equipment, etc. free of any weed seeds or invasive species prior to arrival in a clean part of Alaska. While we need to do more to prevent the spread of invasive species, it is still inevitable that a few will sneak in. Thus it is essential that we have the ability to detect these alien invaders as early as possible and respond as quickly as possible. This is known as Early Detection/ Rapid Response (EDRR).

I know its politically easier to act after everyone recognizes a major problem, but the sooner we can detect and eradicate or control the most damaging species the better - this will save us a tremendous amount of money and heartache in the long run.

A specific example of a fresh water aquatic invasive species is Elodea (water weed) which is currently known in the Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Cordova areas. This plant is easily spread by small fragments. It has the ability to choke up lakes and slow moving water and degrade salmon spawning habitat. It was recently discovered in Anchorage's Sand Lake - which is used by float planes. We are very concerned that without action, it will soon spread to Lake Hood and from there throughout southcentral and southwest Alaska. USFWS biologists estimate it will cost about \$210,000 to plan for and apply aquatic herbicide to Sand Lake - but we believe we can eradicate the plant from this lake with a three year effort. Note that herbicides are a last resort, but in the case of this aggressive weed, herbicides represent a much lower ecological cost than allowing Elodea to take over and spread.

I read through the text of HB 365 and this proposed bill appears to me to perfectly address the need for ADF&G to develop an EDRR plan and act in coordination with other state, federal, local, and private entities. Of course such efforts require funding to be successful, but I understand that needs to be addressed separately in a different process.

I don't see any changes that need to be made to this proposed legislation, except that there may be a comma out of place or word order issue in Sec. 16.05.093 (c) that begins on line 5 of page two of the bill. I believe in the intent of this sentence, but it doesn't make sense to me the way it is written. Also, perhaps something could/should be added to this bill to address the issue of prevention?

At the risk of asking for too much, we need a similar comprehensive statewide effort to deal with the rapid invasion of

terrestrial invasive plants. DNR has an excellent Invasive Species Coordinator, but more resources are needed to address damaging invasive land plants. Perhaps most importantly, Alaska DOT needs to take an active role in preventing the spread of invasive weeds and controlling the many weeds along state Rights of Way, airports, snow dumps and gravel pits.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Thank you,

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*Keeping Weeds OUT of the Picture*