

SB 261: Ballast Water Management Fee Increase

What is Senate Bill 261?

SB 261 would sustain current ballast water program service levels beyond 2015 by increasing the ballast management fee to \$88 per commercial vessel arrival to state waters – an \$18 increase.

What is the Ballast Water Management Program?

The discharge of ballast water, an incidental commercial shipping practice often necessary for vessel stability and safety, is widely recognized as a pathway for transporting aquatic species into habitats outside their native range.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Ballast Water Management Program is designed to prevent the introduction of invasive species to Oregon waterways from commercial shipping activities. Under Oregon law, vessels may only discharge ballast water if they have implemented ballast management strategies or qualify for specific exemptions.

To ensure regulatory compliance and reduce the risk for new invasive species in Oregon waterways, DEQ implements ballast water program activities that include:

- Monitoring vessel traffic for pre-arrival reporting compliance
- Screening reports for discharge activity and regulatory compliance
- Managing and analyzing reporting data for long-term trends
- Inspecting vessels and sampling ballast tanks for compliance verification
- Outreach and consultation with maritime industry stakeholders
- Preparation and response for invasive species emergencies

DEQ also coordinates with federal partners and nearby states to promote environmental protection and regulatory consistency.

Current and proposed funding

Currently, Oregon's ballast water program operates with 1.5 full-time equivalency personnel staffing and is supported by a 50/50 cost share between General Fund and revenues

generated from the ballast water management fee (\$70 per vessel arrival).

Why is this fee increase needed?

Prevention, rather than reactive management, is the most economical strategy for combating invasive species. Current resources allow the DEQ ballast water program to conduct a modest level of prevention efforts, including the inspection of more than 15 percent of vessel arrivals to Oregon ports. Without a fee increase, program services would be reduced and the vessel inspection rate would fall below 4 percent.

DEQ developed the fee increase proposed in SB 261 in consultation with maritime industry representatives. The Task Force on Shipping Transport of Aquatic Invasive Species unanimously supports the increase in its report to the 2015 Legislature (http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/cu/emergency/docs/STAIS_LegReport2015.pdf). Moreover, the fee increase – with a commensurate increase in General Fund proposed under DEQ Policy Option Package 136 - would maintain a 50/50 cost share for ballast program services between the regulated industry and the general public in the interest of protecting Oregon's environment.

Alternative formats

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