

02/07/2025

Members of the Committee,

I am writing today to express my support for the legislation that would authorize the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Marine Board, and the State Department of Agriculture to enter into an intergovernmental agreement to perform aquatic invasive species inspections at check stations. This legislation would improve our ability to protect Oregon's waters, including our ecosystem and all of its natural inhabitants and resources, by allowing state agencies to collaborate with local governments in enforcing inspection stations.

There are multiple invasive species that are of concern, such as the Zebra and Quagga mussel. These are small freshwater mollusks that attach themselves very easily to boats, docks and buoys. Once they've invaded an aquatic system, they can disrupt food chains which can cause a serious impact on the ecosystem in the area they invaded. These mussels are just a few of the multiple aquatic invasive species that can be introduced into an environment they are not natural inhabitants of. These various species can pose a severe threat to our state's ecosystems. It has been proven that the most effective way to combat the rapid spread of any invasive species is through prevention and being proactive. Requiring these check stations would be beneficial to minimize these species being introduced into Oregon's waters.

There are several important reasons why I support this legislation:

1. **Prevention is key and also cost effective** - If we can prevent these issues from happening to begin with, it is cost effective. Mitigating these problems after the fact is exponentially more costly than any costs that may go into implementing this legislation.
2. **Public Awareness** - Requiring these check stations will help the general public be aware of this issue. Educating aquatic enthusiasts and boaters on the different invasive species and what to look for would be beneficial.
3. **Better Efficiency** - Allowing state and local governments to collaborate in operating check stations would make the process more efficient and more likely to be successful. State and local governments know the waters better than anybody else.

For all of these reasons, I support this legislation and I encourage others to do the same. By enabling the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Marine Board, and the State Department of Agriculture to perform these inspections we are taking our own waters into our hands and we are safeguarding our natural species and resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration!