



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

S.959 (Maziarz, et al.)

Summary

This bill authorizes and directs the DEC to participate in the Great Lakes Aquatic Nuisance Species Coalition (the Coalition), as organized by the State of Michigan, for the purpose of establishing regulations to address the discharge of aquatic nuisance species in the ballast water of ocean-going vessels.

The bill also directs the DEC to continue its cooperation with various organizations that are working to address such nuisance species, including the International Joint Commission, the Great Lakes Commission, the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. EPA, and the NYS Invasive Species Task Force.

Finally, the bill provides definitions for; Aquatic Nuisance Species, Ballast Water, Great Lakes, and Non-indigenous Species.

Explanation

There are over 180 aquatic nuisance species known to be present in the Great Lakes. Over two-thirds of these species have been introduced since the 1959 opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. It is apparent that many of the aquatic nuisance species that are in the Great Lakes have gotten there as a result of the discharge of ballast water from ocean-going vessels.

The impact of aquatic nuisance species is felt in both environmental effects and economic losses, through the destruction of the Great Lakes ecosystem and reduction in the vitality of the Great Lakes' commercial and recreational fishing industries.

This bill will ensure that the DEC is an active participant in the establishment of much needed regulations aimed toward reducing the discharge of ballast water into the Great Lakes and reducing the negative impacts of nuisances species already present.

Environmental Advocates of New York supports this bill.

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