

# HD.3574/SD.1661 An Act responding to the threat of invasive species

Sponsored by Senator Patricia Jehlen and Representative David Rogers

Once an invasive species enters an ecosystem, it can dominate the area, taking up resources and choking out native species.

An infestation ruins habitat, scenic value, and decimates local plant and animal populations.

Recent invasive species that have impacted Massachusetts include:

- Water Chestnut - covers lakes, impoundments, and some rivers. In 2005, 45 acres of Pepperell Pond were 100% covered.
- Zebra Mussels - clog boat engines, create sharp debris on beaches, and create an obnoxious odor.
- Gypsy Moth - caused 923,000 acres of defoliation in Massachusetts forests.
- Asian Longhorned Beetle - destroys trees. The City of Worcester had to remove 29,000 infested trees since 2008.



*Photo: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management*

## THE PROBLEM

Invasive species are expensive to eradicate, and municipalities often do not have the technical expertise to manage them. The Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group has identified 66 invasive plants that pose a threat to our ecosystems. Accessing guidance and resources from the State's current offerings is confusing, tedious, and inconclusive.

Responding to invasive species requires monitoring and quick action at the sign of first threat. Climate change will only bolster conditions for invasive species outbreaks - Massachusetts needs to have a coordinated response.

## THE SOLUTION

- The bill would create a centralized office dedicated to controlling both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species by combining new and existing resources like the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group and DCR's Aquatic Invasive Management Plan.
- Municipalities, groups of municipalities, state agencies, and non-profit organizations would be able to apply for grant funding for controlling invasive species, provided that they present a management plan to the State, through a new Invasive Species Trust Fund that would benefit the entire state.
- A new State Coordinator would provide guidance and direction on handling invasive species to municipalities, farmers, and nonprofit organizations, including help on identifying state and federal funding.

### For more information contact:

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