

SUPPORT HB2096

Topic: Noxious weeds; invasive plant species

Bill Patron: Delegate Bulova

Overview: Removes the provision in current law that prohibits the movement, transportation, delivery, shipment, or offering for shipment of any noxious weed into or within the Commonwealth without a permit from the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services and grants the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services the authority to adopt regulations governing the conditions under which a permit will be required for such actions. The bill also adds requirements related to invasive plant species, including directing the Department of Conservation and Recreation to update the current invasive plant species list by 2024 and every four years thereafter.

Reasons to support: The primary purpose of all provisions in the bill is increased public awareness of the problem of invasive plants in the landscape. The provision in current law and supporting regulations addressing the movement of a noxious weed requires a permit from VDACS for such movement, creating a burden for farmers and other operators who might incidentally move such a noxious weed. This bill would authorize the Board of Agriculture to create regulations allowing the incidental movement of particular widespread agricultural weeds without a permit, and so facilitate their listing as noxious weeds, a public awareness benefit. The provision that tradespeople inform their clients of the installation of invasive plants on their properties provides property owners data they need to make informed plant choice decisions. It would also support the use of economically and ecologically superior native plant species by state agencies, and thereby showcase beneficial native plantings to the public.

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