

SUPPORT HB388 / SB89

Topic: Powers of service districts; control of invasive plant species.

Bill Patron: Delegate Callsen, Senator Salim

OVERVIEW:

This Legislation would add control of invasive plants to the listed powers of service districts ([§15.2-2403](#)). This would allow localities more flexibility to effectively manage invasive plants by enabling collaboration among neighboring jurisdictions and establishing dedicated local funding sources.

This would provide local governments with the tools to raise necessary funds to manage and control invasive plants that affect their communities.

- The Code of Virginia allows for **Public Service Districts** that grant localities authority to “provide additional, more complete or more timely services of government.”
- Currently, the powers of public service districts include managing water, sewerage, garbage removal, beautification and landscaping, *and control of infestations of insects and other pests*, among many listed services.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

Invasive species are costly. Estimated economic losses due to invasive species in Virginia may be as high as \$1 billion annually. Local governments foot the bill for downed trees, degraded stream channels, wildfires, roadside maintenance, and removing invasive plants from parks, playgrounds, and schools.

Invasive plants harm infrastructure. Examples include clogging of important waterways, increasing stormwater runoff and erosion, infiltrating sewer lines, and causing expensive maintenance and repairs for various structures, from power lines to buildings.

Invasive plants destroy local tree canopy. Every day, invasive plants overtake another 4,600 acres in the United States, damaging and even tearing down our forest canopy trees and leaving a tangled mess that can prevent birds from nesting, pollinators from nectaring, and wildlife from accessing water and food.



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