

Chapter 324 of the Laws of New York, 2003

AN ACT creating the New York state invasive species task force Became a law August 5, 2003, with the approval of the Governor. Passed by a majority vote, three-fifths being present. The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

§ 1. Legislative intent. The Legislature finds that invasive plant and animal species pose an unacceptable risk to New York State's environment and economy and that this risk is increasing through time as more invasive species become established within the state. The Legislature additionally finds that invasive species are having a detrimental effect upon the state's fresh and tidal wetlands, water bodies and waterways, forests, meadows and grasslands, and other natural communities and systems by out-competing native species, diminishing biological diversity, altering community structure and, in some cases, changing ecosystem processes. Moreover, the Legislature recognizes that the ecological integrity of an increasing number of publicly and privately-owned parks and preserves is being adversely affected by invasive plants and animals, challenging the ability of land management agencies to effectively manage these sites. The Legislature further recognizes that nearly half (forty-six percent; fifty-seven percent of the plants, thirty-nine percent of the animals) of the species on the federal list of endangered species are declining, at least in part, due to invasive species. The Legislature additionally finds that invasive species have an adverse impact on the New York State economy. Particularly affected by these species are the water supply, agricultural, and recreational sectors of the state economy. The economic impact to the national economy has been estimated to be as high as one hundred thirty-seven billion dollars annually.

§ 2. The New York state invasive species task force is hereby established. The role of the task force includes, but is not limited to:

(a) assess the nature, scope and magnitude of the environmental, ecological, agricultural, economic, recreational, and social impacts caused by invasive species in the state;

(b) identify actions taken by members of the task force, state and local governments and the public to: prevent the introduction of invasive species; detect and respond rapidly to and control populations of invasive species in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner; monitor invasive species populations accurately and reliably; provide for restoration of native species and habitat conditions in ecosystems that have been invaded; conduct research on invasive species and develop technologies to prevent introduction; provide for environmentally sound control of invasive species; promote public education on invasive species; and the means to address invasive species;

(c) prepare a report to the governor and the legislature that provides specific recommendations regarding: existing state laws, regulations, programs, policies, practices, and resources available to prevent the introduction of invasive species; the detection and rapid response to and control of populations of such species in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner; the monitoring of invasive species populations accurately and reliably; the restoration of native species and

habitat conditions in ecosystems that have been invaded; research on invasive species and development of technologies to prevent introduction and provide for environmentally sound control of invasive species; the promotion of public education on invasive species; and the means to foster greater coordination between state agencies, and the public.

§ 3. The task force shall issue its findings, in the form of a report, no later than November 30, 2005.

§ 4. The task force shall consist of a total of 17 members and shall include the commissioners of environmental conservation, agriculture and markets, transportation, the office of parks, recreation and historic preservation, secretary of state, the chairperson of the New York state thruway authority, the director of the New York state canal corporation, the chairperson of the Adirondack Park agency, and the program manager of the New York natural heritage program, or a designee of such agencies, public authorities or programs. The commissioners of environmental conservation and agriculture and markets shall select the task force's 8 at-large members from each of the following: New York biodiversity research institute, New York state's land grant university, New York sea grant, a statewide organization formed to address invasive species, a statewide land conservation organization, a statewide agricultural organization, a nursery business and a boating organization.

§ 5. The commissioner of agriculture and markets and the commissioner of environmental conservation or their designees shall serve as joint chairs of the task force.

§ 6. The task force may consult with any organization, educational institution, governmental agency, or person including, but not limited to, the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Coast Guard, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the National Invasive Species Council.

§ 7. The commissioners of environmental conservation and agriculture and markets may reconvene the task force, with the same or different members, after issuance of the report, to address any invasive species issues.

§ 8. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except that at-large members shall be allowed their necessary and actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties under this act.

§ 9. This act shall take effect immediately.

The Legislature of the STATE OF NEW YORK

Pursuant to the authority vested in us by section 70-b of the Public Officers Law, we hereby jointly certify that this slip copy of this session law was printed under our direction and, in accordance with such section, is entitled to be read into evidence.

JOSEPH L. BRUNO, Temporary President of the Senate

SHELDON SILVER, Speaker of the Assembly

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