



Fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed diseases can spread across the United States. This can occur through natural movement or through transportation of fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed by humans.

Currently, Washington is increasing efforts to prevent one wildlife disease, chronic wasting disease, from establishing in the state. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been detected as close as Idaho, but has not yet been confirmed in Washington State. Broadening the Department's authority to notify the public of checkpoints will allow for further biological sampling and monitoring of relevant species.

CWD is a fatal illness found in deer, elk, moose, and caribou. The disease is caused by mutated prions, which can contaminate the environment and be transmitted between animals through their feces, saliva, urine, and other bodily fluids. It can remain viable in soil and in the ground for years, so it is critical to avoid establishment in large areas.

Broader use of disease checkpoints and signage to indicate they are available would also allow Department staff to test for other diseases and monitor expected future climate related increases in frequencies or occurrences of disease.

This legislation creates the authority to sign disease checkpoints and requests voluntary compliance. It would create a new chapter in RCW 77 to include fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed infectious disease interdiction and control.

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