

HB 1555 -- NONNATIVE INVASIVE PLANTS

SPONSOR: Sassmann

This bill prohibits anyone from knowingly importing, exporting, buying, selling, transporting, distributing, or propagating invasive plants unless he or she has obtained prior approval from the Director of the Department of Agriculture. The Director can approve a person to do the prohibited activities for the purpose of disposal, control, research, education, or export the plants for such reasons.

A person found to be in violation of the prohibition will be issued a notice of violation and will be allowed an informal hearing by the Director within 14 days of the notification. If he or she fails to respond timely to the notification or upon unsuccessful resolution of the notification, the person may be summoned to a formal hearing before the Director of a designated hearing officer. If found to have committed two or more violations within 12 months, he or she may be ordered to cease and desist. A person found in violation may be ordered to pay a penalty of at least \$50 but not more than \$500 per violation.

The director must maintain a list of plants known as the "Invasive Plant List" and create a watchlist known as the "Potentially Invasive Plant Watchlist". Any person, business, or other entity that offers for sale any plant on the watchlist must label the plants as potentially invasive and failing to do so, will be issued a notice of violation.

The provisions of this bill become effective January 1, 2025, except, burning bush and callery pear plants acquired by a licensed nursery before that date will be exempt from enforcement until January 1, 2028.