

Manitoba PC Caucus



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Lagimodiere's bill for awareness of invasive species moves forward

Maintaining healthy ecosystems is important for the environment and economy: Lagimodiere

Alan Lagimodiere, MLA for Selkirk, has seen his private member's bill, the Invasive Species Awareness Week Act, passed by the Legislative Assembly on second reading and moved ahead to the committee stage. Bill 212 proposes to proclaim the last full week of April each year as Invasive Species Awareness Week.

"This bill continues on the path of protecting Manitoba's environment by raising awareness of invasive species to the public," said Lagimodiere. "Maintaining healthy ecosystems in our lakes and rivers is important for the environment and our economy. Our Invasive Species Awareness Week would fall in line with our government's plan to set out initiatives to protect wetlands and watersheds, water quality, and wild species and habitats."

If passed into law, Manitoba will become the first province or territory to enact legislation declaring an Invasive Species Awareness Week. Lagimodiere noted that Manitoba has environmental protection laws that are among the strongest in Canada.

Aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels, and terrestrial invasive species pose a significant threat to Manitoba's ecosystems. About 40 per cent of threatened and endangered species are at risk due to invasive species, though early identification can mitigate harm. The keys to saving ecosystems from invasive species are prevention, detection and timely responses to identification.

Under the previous NDP government, in the fall of 2013, zebra mussels were found in harbours on Lake Winnipeg. It took the NDP a full year, until the fall of 2014, to introduce legislation to battle zebra mussels.

Our Progressive Conservative government wants Manitoba to lead the way in fighting invasive species, and is stepping up the battle with more leaflets and signage for awareness of zebra mussels as well as wash stations for watercraft. We are supporting efforts to improve the quality of Manitoba's ecosystems.

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