## **SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE\***

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
Seattle Public Utilities	Zoe Loutos	Akshay Iyengar

### 1. BILL SUMMARY

**Legislation Title:** AN ORDINANCE relating to the Cedar River Municipal Watershed; amending the Secondary Use Policies, adopted by Ordinance 114632, to provide for the limited application of the herbicide imazapyr to treat invasive knotweed species; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.

## **Summary and Background of the Legislation:**

This legislation would amend a 1989 ordinance banning herbicide use in the Cedar River Municipal Watershed. Knotweed is required for control on the Cedar River and its tributaries per RCW 17.10 and WAC 16-750.

Knotweed spreads rapidly along stream banks, posing a significant threat to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat by displacing native vegetation and eroding stream banks. The utility attempted manual control of knotweed from 2002 to 2010 by covering patches with geotextile fabric and digging isolated plants. This strategy was labor intensive and costly and is impractical for treating acres of knotweed infestations. Manual control can also spread knotweed; the tiny stem and root fragments that break off when pulling or digging are easily transported downstream in high flow events and can create new infestations. After exhausting all other control options and still not seeing a reduction in knotweed coverage, the utility investigated the use of the herbicide imazapyr. Land managers downstream of the municipal watershed use imazapyr to control knotweed and the ecological risk of imazapyr is widely accepted to be significantly lower than the ecological risk of uncontrolled knotweed.

This legislation would amend the Secondary Use Policies, enacted in 1989 by Ordinance 114632. The Secondary Use Policies include an herbicide moratorium intended to prevent the broadcast spraying of roadside vegetation and did not consider how herbicide may be selectively applied to control invasive species. The City Council took similar action in 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2019, each authorizing application of the herbicide imazapyr for three years.

This ordinance would allow limited application of the herbicide imazapyr to continue treating knotweed within the municipal watershed for three additional years, through 2025.

# 2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? Yes X No

### 3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

<sup>\*</sup> Note that the Summary and Fiscal Note describes the version of the bill or resolution as introduced; final legislation including amendments may not be fully described.

Does this legislation amend the Adopted Budget?

\_\_\_\_ Yes <u>X</u> No

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to the City of Seattle that are not reflected in the above, including direct or indirect, short-term or long-term costs? The long-term implications of this legislation would result in cost savings.

# Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

Yes. No effective control alternative exists without this authority. SPU tried covering knotweed patches with geotextile fabric, which was ineffective on these large patches. Covering knotweed with geotextile fabric is also much more costly than the use of the herbicide proposed by this legislation. SPU spent an estimated \$44,000 an acre covering knotweed with geotextile fabric; this compares to the \$387 an acre to treat knotweed with herbicide in 2021. The no action alternative was ruled out because the infested areas would continue to be sources of knotweed, undermining efforts by SPU and King County to control the plant in downstream areas, ultimately increasing the cost of control and/or resulting in substantial negative ecological impacts. Under a related but different program, over \$1,000,000 has been spent controlling knotweed with herbicide (allowed outside of the municipal watershed boundary) in these downstream areas, projects that would be put at risk if control of the knotweed in the municipal watershed is not continued.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- a. Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?  ${
  m No.}$
- **b.** Is a public hearing required for this legislation?
- c. Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?

  No.
- d. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

Yes, this legislation affects the 92,000-acre Cedar River Municipal Watershed.

- e. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? What is the Language Access plan for any communications to the public? The legislation would improve ecosystem health in the Cedar River and benefit tribal and non-tribal fishers.
- f. Climate Change Implications
  - 1. Emissions: Is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way?

Controlling knotweed will allow SPU to plant treated areas with native species, including woody species that sequester significantly more carbon than knotweed.

- 2. Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle's resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.
  - The action authorized by this legislation would increase Seattle's resiliency to climate change. Knotweed poses a significant threat to biodiversity by outcompeting and displacing native plant species. Preserving diversity of our native plant communities will also enhance Seattle's resiliency to disease and pests, which are predicted to become more prevalent with climate change.
- g. If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program's desired goal(s)?

  No.