

Agriculture & Ecology Committee

HB 2019

Brief Description: *Developing a pilot manufacturing facility that uses straw waste raw materials to manufacture straw board products.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Grant and Mastin.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force to work with local governments and port districts to assist the development of programs that will use straw waste raw materials in the manufacturing of straw board or other products.*
- *Directs the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force to set burning permit fees at the level necessary to cover the administrative costs of the program and, until July 1, 2006, to provide funds to the Port of Walla Walla to be used in the development of a pilot manufacturing facility that will use straw waste raw materials collected in Washington in the manufacturing of straw board or other materials.*

Hearing Date: *2/23/01*

Staff: *Jason Callahan (786-7117).*

Background:

Agricultural burning is an effective farm management tool; however, air quality standards have necessitated regulation on the practice. According to the Department of Ecology (DOE), an estimated 2,000 agricultural fires are set each year in Washington, with up to 25,000 acres thought to be burned. The Washington Clean Air Act requires agricultural permits for commercial agricultural operations that burn natural vegetation as a farm management tool.

Any person wishing to set a fire for the purposes of weed abatement, fire fighting instruction, or agricultural activities must first obtain a burning permit. A permit can be

obtained from an air pollution control authority, the DOE, or a local entity that has been delegated permitting authority. The DOE has established general permit criteria by rule. All permits issued are conditioned to insure that the public interest in air, water, and land pollution and safety to life and property is fully considered.

Burning permit applicants must pay a fee. The portion of the fee not earmarked to cover administrative costs is deposited in the Air Pollution Control Account. Fees may not exceed \$2.50 for every acre burned, and must be set to cover administrative costs and to provide funds for research into alternative methods to reduce agricultural burning emissions. If possible, the fees must be set to be consistent with the fees charged by neighboring states and reduced for permittees utilizing best management practices to minimize air contaminant emissions.

The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (task force) has been established to identify the best management practices for reducing air emissions from agricultural activities, provide information to the DOE and local air authorities, and determine the level of fees to be assessed for agricultural burning permits. The task force is chaired by the DOE, and is composed of representatives of local air authorities, the agricultural community, the Department of Agriculture, local universities and colleges, public health, and the conservation districts.

Summary of Bill:

The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (task force) is required to work with local governments and port districts to assist in the development of programs that will use straw waste raw materials in the manufacturing of straw board or other products.

The task force is also directed to set burning permit fees at the level necessary to cover the administrative costs of the program and, until July 1, 2006, to provide funds to the Port of Walla Walla to be used in the development of a pilot manufacturing facility that will use straw waste raw materials in the manufacturing of straw board or other materials. The waste straw material must be collected in Washington. The task force will monitor the progress of the pilot manufacturing site's development and make recommendations to the legislature for additional actions that would be necessary to expand the pilot manufacturing facility program into other areas of Washington.

The burning permit fees no longer have to be set at a level necessary to provide funds for research into alternative methods that reduce burning emissions. The fees also do not have to be set at levels consistent with neighboring states or reduced for permittees who use best management practices to minimize air contaminant emissions.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*

