

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5517

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As of February 8, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to meat and poultry inspection programs.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a meat and poultry inspection program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Jacobsen, Schoesler, Hobbs, Honeyford, Shin, Marr, Hatfield, Morton, King, Parlette, Delvin and Haugen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/09/09.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** Under federal law, meat and poultry processing establishments may apply for either federal or state inspection. Washington is one of twenty-three states that relies solely on the federal meat inspection program. Twenty-seven states currently have state meat and poultry inspection programs that are approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Inspected meat may be sold to others.

For state meat and poultry inspection programs to receive federal approval, they must enforce requirements that are at least equal to those of the federal Food Inspection Safety Service. Up to 50 percent of the operating costs of federally approved state program costs are reimbursed by the federal government, as well as training and other assistance. State inspected meat may be sold in intrastate commerce. The 2008 federal Farm Bill provides for limited sales of state inspected meat in interstate commerce.

Persons may have their own animals slaughtered by a custom farm slaughterer and custom meat facilities licensed by the state. Though these facilities are inspected for sanitation by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the meat processed at these these facilities is not inspected. Under state law, it is unlawful to sell, trade, or give away uninspected meat or meat products. Uninspected meat must be clearly marked and labeled "not for sale." Uninspected meat may be prepared only for the use of the owner, who must be a household user which also includes nonpaying guests and employees.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:** A state meat and poultry inspection program is established for Washington State that is to be at least equal to those requirements imposed under federal law. Meat food products inspected and passed under this chapter may be sold at retail in the state.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (department) must appoint inspectors to examine meat food products prepared in a slaughtering, meat canning, salting, or packing establishment solely for intrastate commerce. The inspections must take place at any time when the slaughtering of animals or the preparation of food products is being conducted.

Inspectors are authorized to inspect any place used for the manufacture, preparation, storage, sale, use, transport, offer of sale, or intention of sale of meat or meat products intended for use as human food. Inspectors are also authorized to inspect any container believed to hold food, a food ingredient, or some other product that is regulated by state law.

Inspected food will be labeled either as "Washington Inspected and Passed" if it is unadulterated or "Washington Inspected and Condemned" if it is adulterated. If any facility does not meet the required sanitary conditions, food products from that facility can not be labeled as "Washington Inspected and Passed."

The department will also adopt rules of sanitation applicable to these establishments and for labeling of meat inspected under this chapter. Additionally the department is to adopt rules regarding storing and handling of inspected carcasses and meat products.

Custom processing of animals for the exclusive use by the owner's household, non-paying guests, or employees continues to be exempt from meat inspection requirements.

The department must adopt rules to ensure that dead, dying, disabled, or diseased animals are not used as human food.

Persons regulated under this act must first register with the department and are subject to record keeping requirements. The department is authorized to adopt rules to implement the chapter and to establish inspection fees.

Violations are subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 per violation per day. Each violation is a separate and distinct offense.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** None.

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