

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1161

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Development

Title: An act relating to agricultural products.

Brief Description: Directing Washington State University to research the technology necessary to transform wheat and legumes into biodegradable plastics.

Sponsors: Representatives Schoesler, Rayburn, Chandler, Kremen, Grant, Foreman, Sheahan, Morton, R. Johnson, Mielke, Jacobsen, Hansen, Fuhrman, Padden, Shin, Miller, Wood and Silver.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Agriculture & Rural Development, February 24, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Rayburn, Chair; Kremen, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chappell; Foreman; Grant; and Lisk.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: An article in a 1989 publication of the American Association of Cereal Chemists discusses the success of finding new market opportunities for starch as a component of plastics, especially where a biodegradable component of the plastic is important. It cautions, however, that more than 95 percent of the industrial starch market in the United States is for starch from corn.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Washington State University (WSU) is directed to develop and execute a plan to address current obstacles to the development and commercialization of biodegradable plastics from wheat and legumes. WSU is also directed to conduct research necessary for perfecting the technology of transforming wheat and peas into plastic packaging materials. The research is to involve: developing fractionation processes to break the wheat and peas into their usable components; developing the technology for

transforming starch components into plastic; and finding economic uses for the glutens, dietary fibers and other by-products of the process.

If specific funding for these activities is not provided in the Omnibus Appropriations Act by June 30, 1993, these responsibilities assigned to WSU are null and void.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill contained an appropriation of \$200,000; the substitute bill replaces the appropriation with a statement that the bill is null and void unless specific funding for it is provided in the Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, this bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (1) The bill addresses two problems: expanding the markets for surplus agricultural materials and enhancing the biodegradability of plastics. (2) The projects outlined in the bill are feasible and federal matching monies for them may be available.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Ray Shindler, Washington Wheat Growers Association (in favor); Larry Ganders, Washington State University (in favor); and Ralph Mackey, Washington Environmental Council (in favor).