

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2138

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As Passed Legislature

**Title:** An act relating to rodent control.

**Brief Description:** Eliminating Washington State University's rodent control responsibilities.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rayburn, Roland, Sheahan, Schoesler and Hansen; by request of Washington State University.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:

Agriculture & Rural Development, January 24, 1994, DP;

Passed House, February 4, 1994, 92-0;

Passed Legislature.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Rayburn, Chair; Kremen, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chappell; Karahalios; Lisk; McMorris; and Roland.

**Staff:** Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

**Background:** Washington State University (WSU), through the cooperative extension service, is required by state law to administer a program for destroying ground squirrels, pocket gophers, rabbits, and any other rodent it may designate as being injurious to the agricultural interests of the state. It is the duty of each person possessing or caring for land to destroy all such rodents. WSU is to inspect rodent conditions and to supervise the extermination of rodents by landowners.

WSU may notify landowners of their obligation to exterminate rodents and, if the rodents are not exterminated in a timely manner, may enter the land and exterminate the rodents at the cost of the landowner. If such an extermination expense is not otherwise paid by the landowner, the board of county commissioners must tax the land to recover those costs.

**Summary of Bill:** State laws are repealed which direct WSU to administer a rodent inspection and extermination program and make landowners responsible, under this program, for the

extermination of rodents injurious to agricultural interests.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** (1) WSU does not conduct the program outlined in the statutes being repealed by the bill. The program is not well suited to a university and could be in competition with the private sector. Repealing the program will not remove WSU's role in providing information concerning agricultural pests to farmers. (2) WSU needs to provide information to farmers regarding the control of voles.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Larry Ganders, Washington State University (in favor); and Andy Erickson, Kittitas County Hay Growers Association.