

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6463

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, FEBRUARY 8, 1994

Brief Description: Revising department of agriculture administrative duties.

SPONSORS: Senator M. Rasmussen; by request of Department of Agriculture

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6463 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators M. Rasmussen, Chairman; Loveland, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Morton and Snyder.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Hearing Dates: January 27, 1994

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6463 as recommended by Committee on Agriculture be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Quigley, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Gaspard, Hargrove, Ludwig, McDonald, Moyer, Niemi, Pelz, Snyder, Spanel, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, Williams and Wojahn.

Staff: Cindi Yates (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: February 7, 1994; February 8, 1994

BACKGROUND:

A source of funds is needed to retain a toxicologist in the Department of Agriculture to examine requests for registering labels of pesticides for special local needs.

The use of grain inspection fees can no longer be used to fund audits of grain warehouses. An alternative source of funding is sought for conducting audits of grain warehouses.

The Department of Agriculture is authorized to inspect plants and other articles being shipped into this state that are likely to bring pest or weed infestations into the state.

In 1993, the Legislature increased the statutory lids on fees that could be assessed to fund the livestock identification program by about 50 percent. The Department of Agriculture did not immediately revise the fee schedule. Initiative 601 passed in November, which requires increases in fees that

exceed the fiscal growth factor be first approved by the Legislature.

SUMMARY:

A fee of \$200 is established on requests or renewals of registration of pesticide labels for special local needs.

The license fee for terminal warehouses is increased from \$400 to \$1200. The license fee for subterminal warehouses is increased from \$300 to \$900. The license fee for country warehouses is increased from \$100 to \$350.

The Department of Agriculture may provide that the fee for licensees who operate more than one warehouse be based on the capacity of the warehouse. The costs of the fee range from \$500 for licensed capacities of under 500,000 bushels to \$8000 for licensed capacities over 10 million bushels. The \$300 license fee for grain dealers is increased to \$600. The fee for exempt grain dealers is increased from \$75 to \$150.

Revenue from grain warehouse license fees are to be deposited in the grain warehouse audit account and used to support the grain warehouse audit program.

The Department of Agriculture may adopt a fee schedule for the inspection of plants, plant products, bees and other articles that likely contain pests or weeds being shipped into this state. The fees are to, as closely possible, cover the costs of the services rendered.

The Department of Agriculture's duty to promote and protect agriculture shall not be construed as to diminish its regulatory responsibility to protect the public health and welfare.

Milk samples from dairy farms may be examined in laboratories approved by the director.

Maximum fee levels for the brand identification program established by the 1993 Legislature are reauthorized.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The authority to establish fees on plants, plant products and other articles being imported into the state is deleted.

The option to establish warehouse license fees based on the capacity of a warehouse is deleted but the fee by category of warehouse is retained.

The brand identification program fees enacted in 1993 to be established by rule were reenacted to comply with provisions of Initiative 601. The level of the fees is reduced on July 1, 1997, and a task force is assigned to work during the upcoming interim to make recommendations to improve the efficiency of the program and address adjustments to the fee schedule.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: The bills contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

TESTIMONY FOR (Agriculture):

The bill is necessary to fund programs administered by the agency and to comply with provisions of Initiative 601.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Agriculture): None

TESTIFIED (Agriculture): Chris Cheney, WSFC; Ray Shindler, WA Assn. of Wheat Growers; Mike Schwisow, WA Cattle Feeders Assn.; Kent Lebsock, WA Cattlemen's Assn.; Enid Layes, WA AgriBusiness Coalition

TESTIMONY FOR (Ways & Means):

This bill is necessary to support the livestock identification program. The fee increases are justified and have been negotiated with the groups affected by the fees.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (Ways & Means): None

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): PRO: Bill Garvin, WA State Farm Bureau; Mike Schwisow, WA Cattle Feeders Assn.; Jim Jesernig, WSDA Director