

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1056

As Reported By House Committee On:

Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to insect control.

Brief Description: Making appropriations for insect control.

Sponsors: Representatives Schoesler, Chandler, Sheahan, Mulliken, Sheldon, Delvin, Foreman and Mastin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/23/95; 2/1/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Chandler, Chair; Koster, Vice Chair; McMorris, Vice Chair; Mastin, Ranking Minority Member; Chappell, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boldt; Clements; Delvin; R. Fisher; Honeyford; Johnson; Kremen; Poulsen; Regala; Robertson; Rust and Schoesler.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Plant Protection and Quarantine Program, surveys for grasshoppers in mid-June and July of 1994 demonstrated an economic infestation in more than 122,000 acres in this state. An economic infestation of grasshoppers is one in which there are eight or more of the insects per square yard. By late August, an economic infestation was demonstrated on approximately 22,000 acres. The USDA provides a matching fund program for controlling outbreaks of grasshoppers and other insects under certain circumstances. For privately owned lands, the funding formula for the program is one-third federal, one-third state, and one-third private monies. If the state participates in the program for state-owned lands, the formula is one-half federal and one-half state monies for those lands.

Summary of Bill: The sum of \$200,000 is appropriated to the state's Department of Agriculture (\$100,000 for the current biennium and \$100,000 for the 1995-97 biennium). The appropriations are to provide matching monies for controlling

grasshoppers and Mormon crickets for a program in which one-third of the monies used are federal, one-third are state, and one-third are private.

The sum of \$100,000 is appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources (\$50,000 for the current biennium and \$50,000 for the 1995-97 biennium). The appropriations are to provide matching monies for controlling grasshoppers and Mormon crickets on state-owned lands for a program in which one-half of the monies used are federal and one-half are state.

Any amount of the appropriations made for the 1995-97 biennium that is not expended by September 30, 1996, must be allocated to Washington State University for studies or activities regarding the registration of pesticides.

Appropriation: \$200,000 to the Department of Agriculture for a matching program for insect control and \$100,000 to the Department of Natural Resources for a matching program for insect control on state lands.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (1) There were significant infestations of grasshoppers in parts of eastern Washington in 1994. The levels were so high in some counties that they were cited by the Governor as being part of the reason he declared disaster status for those counties. (2) A major outbreak can be prevented by just the right weather in the spring. If not prevented by nature, the outbreak can be controlled under the USDA's cost sharing program. (3) Outbreaks damage not only agricultural crops, but also wildlife habitat, trees, and gardens. Last summer, deer were forced out of their natural grazing areas and onto croplands by the lack of vegetation. (4) If there is no coordinated program, individual farmers must combat the insects as they arrive; one had to spray 18 times in 21 days last summer. Wheat production was down 10 to 50 percent in the infested areas. (5) Without the cost sharing program, it is not economical for those with rangeland to control the grasshoppers on the rangeland. (6) The bill gives the state a contingency plan for responding to a grasshopper epidemic.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Mark Schoesler (prime sponsor); Terry Van Doren, Washington Cattlemen's Association (pro); Janelle Keller, Washington State Grange (pro); and Roy Clinesmith (pro).