

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1580

As Passed House

March 11, 1997

Title: An act relating to community gardens.

Brief Description: Providing funding for community gardens.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Regala, Cooke, Conway, Schoesler, Grant, Tokuda, Skinner, Benson, Chopp, Veloria, Van Luven, Blalock, Hatfield, Wood, O'Brien, Ogden and Constantine).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 3/3/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/11/97, 89-7.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Grant; Keiser; Kessler; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan and Tokuda.

Staff: Mary Alice Grobins (786-7118).

Background: Washington State University (WSU) has helped establish a number of community gardens— around the state, particularly in Seattle and Tacoma. These gardens, often planted in urban areas on land that is either donated or loaned, can provide families a way to cheaply raise food.

The gardens can vary in size and are usually operated by community organizations or family coalitions. Agreements are sometimes reached with local landowners to allow gardening on a vacant lot in exchange for cleaning up the property. Once the garden is established, participating families typically are assigned their own plot of ground within the community garden to raise food.

WSU Cooperative Extension has built a non-credit curriculum around the community gardening program, using it as an opportunity to instruct families in nutritional information as well as growing food for their families. WSU extension agents also have programs to provide information on food preservation and nutrition to further support the benefits of community gardening.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature intends to support the development of community gardens through the cooperative extension services of Washington State University.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: More than one quarter of Washington citizens do not have adequate access to fresh produce. Community gardens provide a way for citizens to grow their own fresh food while reducing blight and crime and fostering neighborhood cooperation. Gardens are supported by WSU extension services which will work to obtain federal matching grants.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Regala, prime sponsor; Steven Garrett, Washington State University Pierce County Cooperative Extension Agency; and Carrie Little, Bugs Guadalupe Garden Project.