

ANALYSIS OF HB 2053

*House Agriculture & Ecology Committee
1997*

February 24,

BACKGROUND:

The Fruit Commission was created by statute to establish classifications of soft tree fruits, conduct scientific research and develop the healthful, therapeutic and dietetic value of these fruits, promote the general welfare of the state's soft tree fruit industry, conduct advertising and educational campaigns and increase the production, and develop and expand the markets and improve the handling and quality of soft tree fruits. (RCW 15.28.110.) Although the statutes creating the Commission provide means for growers to recommend increases in the Commission's assessment on a particular fruit, only those for pears must be approved by a referendum by Bartlett pear growers before they may take effect. The Commission determines the method and procedure for conducting the referendum. (RCW 15.58.180.)

Initiative 601. Initiative 601 was approved by the voters at the November 1993 general election. Section 8 of the initiative states that no fee may increase in any fiscal year by a percentage in excess of the fiscal growth factor for that fiscal year without prior legislative approval. (RCW 43.135.055.) The fiscal growth factor for a fiscal year is the average of the sum of inflation and population change for each of the prior three fiscal years. (RCW 43.135.025(6).)

SUMMARY:

No assessment levied by the Fruit Commission may be increased in excess of the fiscal growth factor unless it is approved by referendum by a majority of the persons who are subject to the assessment. The Commission determines the method and procedure for conducting the referendum.