

House Bill Analysis

HB 2737

HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGY COMMITTEE

January 27, 2000

The dairy nutrient task force created in ESSB 5803 (1999) is merged with the oversight and advisory committee established by the department of Ecology and confirmed until 2004.

BACKGROUND:

The Dairy Nutrient Management Act

The Dairy Nutrient Management Act passed by the Legislature in 1998 substantially amended the state's dairy waste management law. It requires that every dairy farm be inspected at least once within two years after the effective date of the act, and that every dairy producer develop a dairy nutrient management plan.

Among other things, the bill established an advisory and oversight committee comprised of dairy producers and public officials to monitor and advise the overall dairy nutrient management program. The governor vetoed the section of the bill creating the committee saying the section provided an inappropriate delegation of authority to a non-governmental body. The veto message also directed the Department of Ecology to establish the same committee to perform the advisory functions identified in the vetoed section.

The Department established this committee as described in the vetoed section of the act. Members of the committee include: one representative of the Department of Ecology, four representatives of the dairy industry (one from each of four geographic regions), one representative of the Conservation Commission, two representatives of local conservation districts, and one representative each from a local health department, an environmental organization, and a shellfish protection interest. In addition, a representative of the U. S. Natural Resources Conservation Service and of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were each invited to participate.

Substitute Senate Bill 5803

In 1999, Substitute Senate Bill 5803 was passed setting up a dairy nutrient management task force. The task force is comprised of: two members of the House of Representatives (one from each major caucus), two members of the Senate (one from each major caucus), a representative of the Department of Ecology, a representative of the Conservation Commission, three active dairy farmers, and a representative of an environmental organization (appointed by agreement of the Co-Speakers of the House and President of the

Senate).

The task force was directed to review enumerated topics to provide more clarification to the dairy nutrient management program. The task force was also directed to provide a report in December, 1999, identifying its recommendations for administrative improvements and statutory changes. The task force terminated on December 31, 1999.

A final task force report became available in January, 2000. The report finds that dairy producers will need to make an investment of \$25 million over the next few years in order to meet the deadlines established in the dairy nutrient management act. The task force also recommends that it continue to provide oversight for the dairy nutrient management program, and that the advisory and oversight committee be merged with the task force.

SUMMARY:

House Bill 2737 continues the dairy nutrient management task force until June 30, 2004. It supplements the existing membership on the task force with those members of the advisory and oversight committee that were not represented on the task force. Those members are:

- a representative of a local health department;
- a representative of commercial shellfish growers;
- a representative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, at the agency's discretion; and
- a representative of the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, at that agency's discretion.

The task force would continue to meet as needed to consider issues related to dairy nutrient management.