

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5803

As Passed Senate, March 13, 1999

Title: An act relating to dairy nutrients.

Brief Description: Changing dairy nutrient management provisions.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen and Swecker).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/15/99, 2/22/99 [DPS].

Passed Senate, 3/13/99, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5803 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Gardner, Honeyford, Morton, Prentice, Snyder and Swecker.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: In 1998, the Legislature passed the Dairy Nutrient Management Act. The legislation requires that nutrient management plans be prepared for all dairy farms. The plans are required to be approved by July 1, 2002. Certification that the plans have been fully implemented is to occur by December 31, 2003.

The act established an inspection program for dairy farms.

A number of issues have been raised in regards to implementation of the program.

Summary of Bill: A Dairy Nutrient Task Force is established comprised of 11 members. The members include:

- two members of the House, one from each caucus, appointed by the Co-Speakers;
- two members of the Senate, one from each caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- one representative from each the Department of Ecology, the State Conservation Commission and local conservation districts;
- three active dairy farmers, representing different sizes of farms and different regions of the state appointed by a statewide organization representing dairy farms; and

- a representative of an environmental interest organization appointed by agreement of the Co-Speakers of the House and the President of the Senate.

The task force is directed to review enumerated topics to provide more clarification in the program. The task force must issue a report by December 10, 1999, that consists of recommendations for administrative improvements and statutory changes. The task force is directed to elect a chair and adopt rules to conduct the business of the task force. The task force expires on December 31, 1999.

The Department of Ecology is directed to prepare an informational guide for dairy farmers that explains the expectations of the department when conducting an inspection. This guide must be completed by January 30, 2000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There continues to be issues that have not been clarified with respect to the dairy nutrient management program. There are concerns about changes to dairy nutrient management plans that are resulting from changes to field office technical guides.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Debbie Becker, Dairy Federation; Victor Jensen, dairy farmer; Steve Meyer, Conservation Commission; Megan White, Ecology.

House Amendment(s): Staffing of the task force would be provided by the Department of Ecology rather than the Office of Program Research and Senate Committee Services.