
**Agriculture & Ecology
Committee**

HB 2290

Brief Description: Creating the fruit and vegetable inspection account.

Sponsors: Representatives Linville and Schoesler; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Replaces the fruit and vegetable district funds located locally with a Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account in the custody of the State Treasurer, provides for the use of monies from the new state account, authorizes the account to receive its share of its earnings, and requires accounts for each of the districts to be created within the new account.
- Repeals the Fruit and Vegetable Trust Account.

Hearing Date: 1/25/02

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

State laws require the Director of Agriculture to establish standards and grades for apples, apricots, Italian prunes, peaches, sweet cherries, pears, potatoes and asparagus and allow the Director to establish them for other fruits and vegetables. (Chapter 15.17 RCW and RCW 15.17.050) For the purposes of these laws, the state is divided into not less than three fruit and vegetable inspection districts. The Director may assign a district manager to each district to administer the regulatory and inspection program within the district. (RCW 15.17.230.) The fees collected for these services are deposited in a district fund, which is used as a revolving fund to carry out services within the district. Some of the monies in the district fund are also transferred to the state Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Trust Account. (RCW 15.17.240 and .245.)

Beginning in 1997, legislation has authorized a transfer of \$200,000 in District #2 funds to the Plant Pest Account for activities related to apple maggot control. Funds from this transfer that are unexpended by June 30, 2003, are to be returned to the district fund. (RCW

15.17.243.) District #2 is composed of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima counties and the portion of Benton County containing Prosser, Kiona, and Benton City. (WAC 16-458-075.)

Summary of Bill:

The Fruit and Vegetable District Funds maintained in banks located in the districts are replaced by a Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account in the custody of the State Treasurer. The Director of Agriculture is to establish accounts within the new state account for each district. The new account is subject to allotment procedures but is not subject to appropriation. (Section 1.) The account is to receive its proportionate share of any earnings on the account. (Section 3.) The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Trust Account is repealed. (Section 4.)

The Director, rather than the district managers, may authorize expenditures from the account. In addition to being used for carrying out the state laws for grades and packs of fruits and vegetables, the new account may be used for other legislatively authorized activities. (Section 1.)

Any unexpended portion of the \$200,000 from the district fund of District #2 that has by statute been transferred to the Plant Pest Account and that must be returned to the district fund by June 30, 2003, must now be transferred to the new state account by that date. (Section 2.)

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect July 1, 2002.