

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6204

As of June 14, 2001

Title: An act relating to the fruit and vegetable inspection district fund.

Brief Description: Authorizing the transfer and use of moneys in the fruit and vegetable inspection district fund for pest control purposes.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Honeyford and Swecker.

Brief History:

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The Department of Agriculture administers a number of commodity inspection services which are funded on a fee-for-service basis. Fees collected for the inspection of horticultural products are deposited into a fund for each district and may be used to pay inspection costs. Inspections are conducted to determine whether the commodities meet the grades and standards specified in either domestic and international sale agreements. The existence of certain pests or blemishes caused by insects are factors that affect whether fruit meets standards.

Fruit and Vegetable Inspection District 2 is made up of Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania, and Yakima counties, and a portion of Benton County.

To minimize the effect of insects and other pests on fruit quality, there exist county horticultural pest and disease boards. These boards have authority to inspect lands and enforce pest and disease control and prevention requirements. The Department of Agriculture also has pest control responsibilities.

Due to the drought and the economic downturn in the fruit industry, there has been a substantial increase in abandoned orchards. An additional source of funding is sought to prevent having abandoned orchards from becoming a source of infestation of pests and diseases into orchards that remain in production.

Summary of Bill: \$450,000 of District 2 fruit and vegetable inspection district fund is authorized to be transferred to the plant pest control account in the agricultural local fund. The amount transferred is derived from fees collected for state inspections of tree fruits and must be used solely to reimburse county horticultural pest and disease boards within District 2 for the cost of pest control activities including tree removal.

The transfer is to occur by July 1, 2001. Any unexpended portion must be returned to the fruit and vegetable inspection district fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.