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**Agriculture & Natural  
Resources Committee**

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**HB 1625**

**Brief Description:** Levying an assessment on certain agricultural plants.

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

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows the horticultural assessment on fruit trees and certain ornamentals to be increased beyond the fiscal growth factor for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004.

**Hearing Date:** 2/14/03

**Staff:** Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

**Background:**

An annual assessment is levied on the sale price of all horticultural plants of the botanical genera for grapevines; quinces; hawthorns; apple and crab apple trees; almond, apricot, cherry, nectarine, peach, and plum trees; pears; and whitebeams and mountain ashes. The assessment is on the wholesale market value of those sales and, except for certain rootstock, is based on the first sale price of the nursery stock. The rate of assessment is determined by the Director of Agriculture by rule as being that needed to carry out grapevine and fruit tree certification and nursery improvement programs. (RCW 15.13.310.)

Initiative 601 was approved by the voters at the November 1993 general election. A provision 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. The forest products commission is exempted from this limitation as are referendum approved assessments of agricultural commodity commissions and boards. (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(7).)

**Summary of Bill:**

The annual assessment that is levied on horticultural plants may, except for the assessment on

grapevines, be increased by the Director in excess of the fiscal growth factor for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.