

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6214

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture, January 29, 2004

**Title:** An act relating to expansion of the farmers market nutrition program for women, infants, and children.

**Brief Description:** Expanding the farmers market nutrition program for women, infants, and children.

**Sponsors:** Senators Brown, Swecker, Sheahan, Rasmussen, Winsley, Kline, Franklin, Kohl-Welles, Murray and McAuliffe.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture: 1/29/04 [DP-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Chair; Brandland, Vice Chair; Jacobsen, Rasmussen and Sheahan.

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** The federal Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC) is a federal program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. The program is administered by the Department of Health at the state level. The program provides food to approximately 265,000 people in the state. Foods that can be purchased through WIC by eligible participants at grocery stores are limited including milk, juice, eggs, cereal, baby formula, peanut butter, and dry peas, lentils, and beans. Fresh fruits and vegetables are not eligible to be purchased at grocery stores.

An adjunct to the WIC program is the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program which allows certain eligible participants to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets generally from July through October. The federal program requires 30 percent state/local matching funds. Currently, \$146,000 is available as state matching money for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program from state funds appropriated to the Department of Health.

**Summary of Bill:** \$100,000 from the state general fund and \$233,000 from the general fund-federal are appropriated to the Department of Health to expand the farmers market nutrition program into areas of the state that do not presently receive state matching funds.

The first priority for program expansion are areas that have demonstrated need for and commitment to the program by raising local contributions to meet federal matching fund requirements.

**Appropriation:** \$100,000 from the state general fund and \$233,000 from the general fund-federal are appropriated to the Department of Health.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Of the 85 farmers markets in the state, there is only enough money to allow 29 markets to participate in the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. There is only enough funds to allow 48 farmers markets to participate in the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are important to meet the nutritional requirements for women, infants and children and fresh produce can only be obtained by WIC participants through the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

This program allows a small amount of state funds to attract a larger amount of federal funds, helps to produce healthy babies, helps farms who sell local fresh produce at farmers markets and supports building healthy communities.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Paul Benz, Lutheran Public Policy Office; Zachary Lyons, Washington State Farmers Market Association; Jed Whittaker; Steve Halstrom; Dorothy Ross, WIC; Karen Kinney, Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance; Mary Embleton, Cascade Harvest Coalition; Clarine Chipman Green; Tanya Barnett, Earth Ministry WA Sustainable Food & Farming Net.; Shelley Curtis, Children's Alliance; Kurt Tonnemaker, Tonnemaker Family Orchard; Marissa Wilkie, Washington State Grange; Bonnie Rice, WA Sustainable Food & Farming Network; Tillie Vuksich, WIC; Victor Colman, WA State Dept. of Health.