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## Appropriations Committee

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### HB 2274

**Brief Description:** Restricting expenditures from the fruit and vegetable inspection account.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Grant, Newhouse and Haler.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phases out the use of moneys in the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account to pay for general and administrative expenses of the Department of Agriculture.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 3/5/05

**Staff:** Alicia Paatsch (786-7178).

**Background:**

The director of the Department of Agriculture (Department) is required to adopt rules that provide standards for the sale of various fruits and vegetables. These rules must also provide for the inspection of the fruits and vegetables, as well as for the collection of fees set at a level necessary to recover the costs of the inspection program. The products that are required to meet the set standards include apples, apricots, Italian prunes, peaches, sweet cherries, pears, potatoes, and asparagus.

All fees collected by the Department are required to be deposited into the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Account (Account). This is a non-appropriated account that the director of the Department may use for the implementation and enforcement of the fruit and vegetable standards and inspection rules. Within the Account, the director of the Department is required to maintain sub-accounts for both fruit and vegetable inspection districts in the state.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Legislature intends to phase out the Department's practice of using funds from the Account to pay the general and overhead expenses of the Department. Instead of using the Account for these purposes, the Legislature intends to have those expenses covered by the General Fund.

Money in the Account may only be used for the fruit and vegetable inspection program. For the 2005-2007 biennium only, the director of the Department may use up to \$250,000 per year from the Account to pay for general and administrative expenses, as long as those funds provide some benefit to the inspection program. The director of the Department may use up to \$125,000 from the Account annually for the same purposes in the 2007-2009 biennium.

After the end of the 2009 biennium, the director of the Department will not be able to use any portion of the Account for general and administrative expenses

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.