
**Economic Development,
Agriculture & Trade Committee**

HB 2559

Brief Description: Changing the registration fees for weighing and measuring devices.

Sponsors: Representatives Hasegawa, Pettigrew and Linville; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the annual registration fee for all categories of commercial weighing, measuring and counting devices by a factor of 2.5 effective July 1, 2006.

Hearing Date: 1/25/06

Staff: Meg Van Schoorl (786-7105).

Background:

The state Department of Agriculture (Department) regulates all commercial weighing, measuring and counting devices used in the state, except those used in the cities of Spokane and Seattle which operate their own regulatory programs. Examples of regulated devices include gasoline pumps, railroad track scales, home heating oil truck meters, grocery store scales, taxi meters, and truck scales.

The Department's Weights and Measures program inspectors test devices for accuracy and suitability for service. They also inspect price scanner systems for accuracy; inspect packaged commodities for correct content, labeling and pricing; and investigate consumer complaints.

The Weights and Measures program was historically supported by the State General Fund until 1990 when a system based primarily on inspection fees began. In 1995, the Legislature established the current funding structure. Businesses are required to pay an annual device registration fee, according to a statutory fee schedule, ranging from \$5 to \$800, depending upon the category of the device. In 2005, 67,600 devices were registered. Ninety-two percent of these devices cost \$5 to register. Revenues from device registration fees in FY2005 totaled \$499,773.

The Department's frequency of inspection and device failure rate each differ significantly from national averages. For inspection intervals, the national average is 1 - 1.5 years. The state's average varies depending upon device. The most frequent inspections are of railroad track scales (2 years), gas pumps (2.5 years), and small scales (once every 3.7 years). Other devices are

rarely, if ever, inspected. For failure rates, the national average is 6.9 percent for small scales and 6.6 percent for gas pumps, while the failure rates in the last two years for those same state-inspected devices averaged 9.5 percent and 8.9 percent respectively.

Cities with weights and measures programs may establish their own annual fees as long as they do not exceed the statutory fee schedule.

Summary of Bill:

The annual registration fee for each category of commercial weighing, measuring, and counting device is increased by a factor of 2.5, as shown on the following chart:

Device Type	Current Fee	Fee Proposed in HB 2559
Small Scale (0-400 lbs capacity)	\$ 5.00	\$ 12.50
Intermediate Scale (401-5,000 lbs)	20.00	50.00
Large Scale (5,000+ lbs)	52.00	130.00
Railroad Track Scale	800.00	2,000.00
Liquid Fuel Meter (0-20 gal)	5.00	12.50
Liquid Fuel Meter (21-150 gal)	16.00	40.00
Liquid Fuel Meter (151+ gallon)	25.00	62.50
Liquid Petroleum Gas Meter (small)	10.00	25.00
Liquid Petroleum Gas Meter (large)	30.00	75.00
Fabric Meter	5.00	12.50
Cordage Meter	5.00	12.50
Mass Flow Meter	14.00	35.00
Taxi Meter	5.00	12.50

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2006.