

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5093

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 22, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to providing matching funds for local economic development strategic planning for agriculture.

**Brief Description:** Creating a matching fund program for agricultural economic planning.

**Sponsors:** Senator Jacobsen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/22/05 [DP-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Morton and Sheldon.

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

**Background:** Changes are occurring that affect local agricultural economies. Some local areas utilize a strategic planning process to identify the changes and to develop plans to capitalize on new opportunities.

**Summary of Bill:** A matching fund program is established for strategic economic development plans for agriculture. The program is to be administered by the Department of Agriculture. The state match must not exceed 50 percent of the cost of the planning process. The state portion for each county must not exceed forty thousand dollars per county. Applications are to be submitted by September 15 and awarded by October 15 of each year.

The department and the involved county may contract with Washington State University Cooperative Extension or the University of Washington to facilitate discussions with an advisory committee appointed by the county to develop the strategic plan.

If specific funding is not provided by June 30, 2005, the act is null and void.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** Increased competition from other regions and countries have harmed our state's agricultural industry. Apples, dairies, and berries and other segments will suffer if

nothing is done to assist farming. The seriousness needs to be recognized and funding is needed to begin helping this distressed industry. Forces beyond the control of agriculture are diminishing the viability of some segments. Seed money is needed for programs that will help establish alternative crops and direct marketing.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Marguerite Sutherland, Preserve Land for Agriculture Now; Ann Mack; Don Stuart, American Farmland Trust; and Dick Carkner.