

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESB 5204

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As Passed Senate, March 8, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to the enforcement of animal health laws.

**Brief Description:** Enforcing animal health laws.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen, Schoesler, Shin, Hatfield, Jacobsen and Morton; by request of Department of Agriculture.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/18/07, 2/06/07 [DP].  
Passed Senate: 3/08/07, 48-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Sam Thompson (786-7413)

**Background:** The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Animal Health Program is charged with protecting animals and the public from communicable animal diseases. The program monitors movement of animals across state lines by reviewing health certificates, which are required for most animals entering the state, and issuing or denying requested permits. It also sets requirements for reporting and controlling diseases and conducts tests and inspections to detect diseases.

The program is responsible for emergency management planning for tracing and controlling diseases. It cooperates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in a national program designed to identify where affected animals have been within 48 hours of confirmation of a disease outbreak or other health event.

**Summary of Engrossed Bill:** WSDA is authorized to stop vehicles transporting animals to check for required animal health documents and to impose a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation on persons not carrying required documents.

A person violating animal health laws or rules is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation. Revenue must be deposited into the state General Fund.

Persons may bring livestock into the state without first getting animal health documents if the livestock are destined for immediate slaughter at a federally inspected facility. Animals

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imported into the state for slaughter must be slaughtered or delivered to a slaughterhouse within three days after entry, rather than seven days.

It is unlawful to intentionally falsely apply, alter, or remove an official animal health or identification tag, mark, or other device.

WSDA hold orders requiring animals to be kept separate from other animals because of concerns regarding disease, other jeopardy to animals, or improper documents are in effect for 14 days, rather than seven days.

Livestock dealers must carry animal identification and health documents pursuant to rules adopted by WSDA.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This legislation provides necessary tools for WSDA to enforce animal health standards, particularly with respect to livestock imported into the state that may carry diseases. Currently, animal health law violations are misdemeanors, requiring prosecution by county prosecutors. WSDA itself needs authority to impose civil penalties for violations. The inspection authority granted in this bill mirrors WSDA's existing authority regarding inspection of agricultural products. The Governor's budget includes funding for additional inspection officers.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Mary Beth Lang and Dr. Leonard Eldridge, WSDA; Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association.