

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5397

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 6, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to standards and grades for fruits and vegetables.

**Brief Description:** Extending an asparagus exception to the standards for fruits and vegetables.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen, Schoesler, Parlette, Hewitt, Hatfield and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/06/07 [DP].

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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:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** In 2004, the Legislature approved a temporary exception to mandatory grading standards for asparagus shipped out of state for fresh packing. The exception expires on December 31, 2007.

**Summary of Bill:** The exception from mandatory grading standards for asparagus shipped out of state for fresh packing is extended and will expire on December 31, 2009.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**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: Washington State was once a leading asparagus producing state. Due to the loss of asparagus canning plants, asparagus growers had to find alternative markets for their product. To facilitate finding new markets, the requirement of grading asparagus prior to shipment out of the state was temporarily suspended in 2004. This bill extends the temporary suspension until the end of 2009. With the help from the state to develop improved harvest and processing methods, there is hope that production of this crop will stabilize and no extensions beyond this one will be requested.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Charlie Brown, Washington Asparagus Council; Alan Schreiber, Washington Asparagus Commission; Todd Merrill, grower.