
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 2554

Brief Description: Establishing a farm worker-grower advisory committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Chase, Green, White, Simpson, Ormsby and Moeller.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides for a farm worker-grower advisory committee to aid the Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture in formulating policies and discussing problems related to agricultural labor.

Hearing Date: 1/12/10

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) administers various agriculture-related programs, including programs related to animal services, commodity inspection, food safety, pesticide management, and plant protection. The Director of the WSDA (Director) exercises powers and performs duties relating to these programs and other matters pertaining to the production, distribution, and sale of agricultural commodities. These matters include farm labor.

Summary of Bill:

The Director is required to appoint a farm worker-grower advisory committee.

The 10-member advisory committee consists of: four farm worker representatives; four grower representatives; and two nonvoting members representing the Commissioner of the Employment Security Department (ESD) and the Director. The advisory committee is chaired by the member representing the Director. The members are appointed for four-year terms, except that for initial

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members, the terms are staggered. The members serve without compensation, but are entitled to travel expenses.

The advisory committee is required to:

- aid the Director in formulating policies and discussing problems related to agricultural labor;
- provide comment on the WSDA rule-making, policies, and other initiatives related to agricultural labor;
- conduct a continuing study of any aspect of agricultural labor that requires its consideration; and
- reports its findings to the WSDA or the ESD for action as deemed appropriate.

The advisory committee is permitted to hire experts and use personnel and facilities of the WSDA and the ESD as needed without charge.

The advisory committee's expenses are paid by the WSDA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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