

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2863

As Reported by House Committee On:
General Government Appropriations

Title: An act relating to transferring emergency food assistance programs to the department of agriculture.

Brief Description: Transferring emergency food assistance programs to the department of agriculture.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Chandler, Liias, Van De Wege, Jacks and Wallace.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

General Government Appropriations: 1/26/10, 2/4/10 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Transfers the Emergency Food Assistance Programs at the Department of Commerce and the Department of General Administration to the Department of Agriculture on July 1, 2010.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Darneille, Chair; Takko, Vice Chair; McCune, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Crouse, Dunshee, Hudgins, Kenney, Klippert, Pedersen, Sells, Short, Van De Wege and Williams.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391).

Background:

The Department of Commerce (DCOM) administers the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) that provides fiscal and administrative support to food banks. The EFAP provides funding for 320 food banks and distribution centers to pay for staff, operational expenses, equipment, and food, as well as funding for 32 tribes to issue emergency food vouchers and food bank services.

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.

The Department of General Administration (GA) manages the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The TEFAP is a federal food program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the TEFAP provides food and operational funding to 21 lead agencies through the GA. These lead agencies serve 450 food banks, shelters and meal providers in Washington.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill transfers the EFAP from the DCOM and the TEFAP and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program from the GA to the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA). The effective date of the transfer of programs is July 1, 2010.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Intent language was added to clarify that the transferred food programs will continue to be provided through community based organizations and that the transfer of food bank programs will not impact core programs administered by the WSDA. The effective date for the transfer of programs is changed to July 1, 2010. Rule making authority is provided to the WSDA. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is transferred from the GA to the WSDA. Language is added to align the transfer of classified employees to the WSDA with state civil service laws.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for original. Not requested for substitute.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will strengthen emergency food programs in the state. Don't leave behind the Community Supplemental Food Program in the GA, that program should transfer to the WSDA as well. The Senate bill includes the transfer of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program from GA to the WSDA. The WSDA is a good fit for these programs, the WSDA is involved in food safety and can leverage federal food funding. The nature of emergency food commodities has changed over the past several years, now there is more fresh food available. The WSDA will be able to coordinate better with a planned cold storage building in Kennewick. These programs are a natural fit for the WSDA, and these program transfers will help connect the public with the WSDA. This change is a win for all involved, and adds value to the emergency food network. Keep these programs intact within the WSDA.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Blake, prime sponsor; Robert Coit, Thurston County Food Bank; Mike Moran, 2nd Harvest Spokane; Dan Newhouse and Ken Harden, Washington State Department of Agriculture; and Kelsey Beck, Food Lifeline.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.