

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6341

As Passed Senate, February 10, 2010

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

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

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Hatfield, Haugen, Schoesler, Prentice, Shin and Fairley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/21/10, 1/28/10 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/10/10, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6341 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: In 1986 the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) that provides support to food banks was instituted in the Department of Commerce (Commerce). A tribal voucher program was added in 1991. The program utilizes 28 contractors who serve 340 food banks and distribution centers, and 32 tribes provide vouchers or food bank services. Currently, the program received an appropriation of \$10 million in state funds for the current biennium.

The Department of General Administration (GA) has administered federal food programs provided from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This program started as the butter and cheese program in 1981, and was originally referred to as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program. The program has changed over the years and is now known as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This federal program has a requirement for state matching funds. This program serves 420 food providers including

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food banks, shelters and meal providers. In 2009 TEFAP provided 14.6 million pounds of USDA provided food.

Additionally, GA administers a second federal program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Washington State was approved for CSFP in 2001.

Summary of Substitute Bill: EFAP in Commerce is transferred to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Additionally, TEFAP and CSFP in GA are transferred to the WSDA.

The director of the WSDA is authorized to exercise powers and duties prescribed by law with respect to the administration of food assistance programs that are assigned to the department. Additionally, WSDA is authorized to adopt rules and to enter into contracts and agreements necessary to implement the programs. Statutory authority for Commerce to coordinate and provide food assistance to distribution centers and needy individuals is deleted.

The transfers take effect on July 1, 2010. The transfers include records, appropriations, employees, rules, and existing contracts, and obligations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original bill.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Food banks look forward to working with the WSDA. It is a smaller agency and so it will be faster to get decisions made. This bill implements the transfer of programs that was proposed in the Governor's request budget. With this move, Washington State will be better aligned to gain full access to federal food assistance programs. The transfer of the program to WSDA will assist in securing donations of bulk commodities from farmers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Cary Retlin, Commerce; Josh Fogt, Northwest Harvest; Jeff Canaan, Ken Harder, WSDA; Robert Coit, Thurston County Food Bank; Mike Moran, 2nd Harvest; Kim Eads, Department of General Administration.