

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6543

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2010

Title: An act relating to the Washington tree fruit research commission.

Brief Description: Modifying the powers of the Washington tree fruit research commission.

Sponsors: Senators Hatfield, Schoesler and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/26/10, 1/28/10 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/11/10, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: 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: The Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission (WTFRC) provides funds to Washington State University (WSU) to develop new varieties of apples and cherries. WTFRC has negotiated an agreement with WSU that allows WTFRC to have right of first refusal on intellectual property (IP) that is developed with WTFRC investments in WSU programs.

To utilize this agreement, the WTFRC is seeking legislation to establish a self-supporting 501(c)(3) foundation to communicate the results of trials on new varieties to Washington growers, and to protect the IP of WSU programs. This foundation is anticipated to be an independent entity with its own board of directors.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission is authorized to:

- establish a foundation using commission funds for the purposes of this chapter;
- enter into contracts or interagency agreements with public or private entities to carry out the purposes of this chapter (and require personal service contracts to comply with chapter 39.29 RCW);

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- acquire or own intellectual property rights, licenses, patents, and to collect royalties resulting from commission-funded research;
- engage in appropriate fund-raising activities for supporting activities of the commission for authorized purposes; and
- accept and expend or retain any gift, bequest, contribution, or grant from private persons or public agencies to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: None.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The intent of forming the foundation will be to make available, to all growers in the state, the new varieties of apples and cherries that are developed at WSU with commission funds. The foundation will be operated as a non-profit. This provides the WTFRC the authority that other commissions have.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jim Halstrom, Washington State Horticultural Association; Jim Doornick, WTFRC.