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SENATE BILL 6210

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senators Haugen, Hatfield, Morton, and Shin

Read first time 01/11/10. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to the preservation and conservation of  
2 agricultural resource lands; and adding a new section to chapter 43.21C  
3 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.21C RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds the state's farm and range lands are a  
8 unique natural resource that provide for the production of food, fiber,  
9 alternative fuels, and other products necessary for the continued  
10 welfare of people locally, nationally, and globally. Each year, a  
11 significant amount of the state's agricultural land is irrevocably  
12 converted from actual or potential agricultural use to nonagricultural  
13 use. The continued decrease in the state's agricultural resource land  
14 base is threatening the ability of the agricultural industry to produce  
15 safe and affordable agricultural products in sufficient quantities to  
16 meet our current and future local, regional, and national food and  
17 fiber needs, as well as the demands of our export markets.

18 (2) The program and project actions of state agencies, local  
19 governments, and persons, in many cases, inadvertently result in the

1 conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses where alternative  
2 actions would be preferred. The legislature declares that it is the  
3 policy of the state to identify and take into account the adverse  
4 effects of these actions on the preservation and conservation of  
5 agricultural lands; to consider alternative actions, as appropriate,  
6 that could lessen such adverse effects; and to assure that such actions  
7 appropriately mitigate for unavoidable impacts to agricultural  
8 resources.

9 (3) To assist the state to implement adequately the policy  
10 identified in this section, the department of ecology shall, by January  
11 1, 2012, conduct a review of chapter 197-11 WAC, and make appropriate  
12 changes to the rules and environmental checklist to require more  
13 detailed review and evaluation of program and project proposals for  
14 identification of probable impacts to agricultural resources. The  
15 environmental checklist shall be modified to include the following  
16 questions in substantially the following form and content.

17 (a) Is there any agricultural land directly affected by the  
18 proposal, or near the vicinity of a project site? If yes, describe.

19 (b) Describe how much agricultural land will be converted to a  
20 nonagricultural use as a result of this proposal.

21 (c) Would this proposal affect the ability of adjacent agricultural  
22 landowners to continue farming?

23 (d) Would this proposal affect existing agricultural drainage  
24 patterns within vicinity? If yes, generally describe.

25 (e) Would this proposal affect or interfere with normal  
26 agricultural operations such as oversize equipment access, pesticide  
27 applications, and tilling and harvesting? If yes, generally describe.

28 (f) Will this proposal result in placing or removing agricultural  
29 soils from the site? If yes, generally describe.

30 (g) Describe proposed measures to preserve or enhance agricultural  
31 resource lands, if any.

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