

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5069

As Passed Senate, January 27, 2012

Title: An act relating to the creation of the farm labor contractor account.

Brief Description: Creating the farm labor contractor account.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection (originally sponsored by Senators Prentice, Kohl-Welles, Conway, Kline and Chase; by request of Department of Labor & Industries).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 1/20/11, 1/24/11 [DPS]; 1/10/12 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/01/11, 49-0; 1/27/12, 44-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Conway, Vice Chair; Keiser and Kline.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Legislature enacted statutes governing farm labor contractors in 1955.

A farm labor contractor (FLC) is an individual or organization that for a fee recruits, employs, or hires agricultural workers. Agricultural workers are employed in producing or harvesting farm or nursery products, or in forestation or reforestation of lands. Farm labor contractors must be licensed by the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), pay a fee, show proof of insurance, and post a bond. Civil or criminal penalties are provided for violation of this act. The Director L&I is responsible for enforcing various requirements and prohibitions relating to farm labor contractors. The Director can also bring suit upon a surety bond on behalf of a worker whose rights have been violated or seek to prohibit someone from acting as an FLC in violation of the law.

Currently, when L&I receives payment from FLCs, the money is deposited in a local bank.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A dedicated Farm Labor Account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from farm labor licenses, penalties, or donations are to be deposited in

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this account and are subject to appropriation. Expenditures may only be used for the purpose of administering the Farm Labor Contractor Licensing program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Funds from this account allow L&I to ensure that workers are paid and that contracts are monitored. By establishing a separate account in the state treasury it will save bank fees and earn interest.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Tamara Jones, L&I.