
HOUSE BILL 2245

State of Washington 62nd Legislature 2012 Regular Session

By Representatives Bailey, Haler, and Blake

Read first time 01/10/12. Referred to Committee on Environment.

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 add the
11 following questions to the state environmental policy act environmental
12 checklist form provided in WAC 197-11-960 by January 1, 2013.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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