

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5222

As of January 29, 2013

Title: An act relating to industrial hemp.

Brief Description: Concerning industrial hemp.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Hatfield, Hobbs, Frockt, Chase, Hasegawa and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water & Rural Economic Development: 1/29/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Industrial hemp production is not pursued in Washington to any significant extent at this time. The fact that hemp contains tetrahydrocannabinol, a controlled substance on the federal level and a regulated substance on the state level, complicates its feasibility as a farm product. A comprehensive inquiry into existing knowledge about the crop's growing requirements and the economic potential of hemp products could contribute to determination of whether industrial hemp production is an advantageous market opportunity for the state.

Summary of Bill: Washington State University (WSU) must study the feasibility and desirability of industrial hemp production in Washington State. The concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol in industrial hemp may not exceed 0.3 percent by weight except for purposes of licensed seed research. The study's sources of information are prescribed and specific analyses are required. Hemp products to be studied include cloth, fuel, plastics, seed meal, and seed oil for consumption, among other things. WSU must report its findings to the legislature by January 14, 2014.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Province of British Columbia allows industrial hemp production and manufacturing. It is estimated that there is a \$300,000 potential market for hemp and hemp products in the United States. Though growing hemp is not legal in the United States, products made from hemp are sold here. These include clothes, backpacks, and lip gloss among many others. The growing of hemp in colonial times was mandated in order to support the rope-making industry. Today hemp is valued as biofuel, a rotator crop, a successful eco-thermal insulator, for paper-making, furniture-making, erosion control, and in recycling, among other uses. It is a high-yield, low-input crop that requires minimal herbicide and pesticide application. Industrial hemp is not marijuana as defined in Washington law because its THC concentration is limited to 0.3 percent by weight. It is considered a green crop.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor.