
Technology & Economic Development Committee

HB 1710

Brief Description: Fostering economic growth in Washington by supporting the in-state production, processing, and distribution of food supply.

Sponsors: Representatives Tarleton, Walkinshaw, McBride, Ortiz-Self, Sawyer, Peterson, Gregerson and Hudgins.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State University Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources to study the economic development of the local food system in the state.
- Appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture's Farm-to-School Program and Small Farm Direct Marketing Assistance Program.

Hearing Date: 2/11/15

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

Background:

Farm-to School Program.

In 2008, the Farm-to School Program was created within the Department of Agriculture (DOA). The Farm-to School Program facilitates increased procurement of Washington grown food by schools. The DOA, in consultation with the Department of Health, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of General Administration, and Washington State University, is tasked with identifying policies and procedures to implement the program; assisting food processors, distributors, and food brokers to market grown foods to schools; assisting schools in connecting with local producers; identifying and recommending mechanisms to increase predictability of sales for producers; identifying and making available curricula to

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educate students on nutrition, environmental, and economic benefits of growing and consuming locally grown food; and seeking additional funding to leverage state expenditures.

Direct Marketing Assistance Program.

The Direct Marketing Assistance Program was created to assist small farms in their direct marketing efforts. The assistance includes providing direct marketing opportunities for small farms, assisting with infrastructure to increase direct marketing opportunities for small farms, and promoting localized food production systems. The Farm-to School Program works closely with the Direct Marketing Assistance Program to improve farm to school connections.

Washington State University Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The Washington State University Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (Center) was established to provide statewide leadership in research, extension, and resident instruction programs to sustain agriculture and natural resources. The Center is engaged in research and development on issues including climate change, energy and water security, and improving technology and management to make agriculture more sustainable.

Summary of Bill:

The Center must study the economic development of the state's local food system. The study must identify a 10-year goal for expansion of the state's food capacity by examining the state's capacity to grow a variety of food products, potential market demands, infrastructure needs, institutional capacity to foster economic development of the food sector, changes to financing and environmental planning, and identifying legislative action needed to implement improvements.

The Center must establish an advisory committee, consisting of members from farm organizations, food processors and distributors, restaurateurs, food service directors, and local food advocacy organizations, to help provide technical information through the study process.

Washington State University must submit a final report with findings and recommendations to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees by November 30, 2015.

The study is contingent on funding in the operating budget.

Appropriation: The sum of \$75,000 from the General-Fund State to Washington State University for purposes of the study, contingent on at least \$75,000 in matching funds. The sum of \$1,000,000 from the General Fund-State to the Department of Agriculture for purposes of the Farm-to-School Program and the Small Farm Direct Marketing Assistance Program.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 5, 2015.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.