

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2634

As Passed House:
February 17, 2016

Title: An act relating to modifying the powers and duties of the Washington dairy products commission to include research and education related to the economic uses of nutrients produced by dairy farms.

Brief Description: Modifying the powers and duties of the Washington dairy products commission to include research and education related to the economic uses of nutrients produced by dairy farms.

Sponsors: Representatives Buys, Lytton, Dent, Blake, Stanford and McBride; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/28/16, 2/4/16 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/17/16, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Washington Dairy Products Commission to conduct research and education related to the economic uses of nutrients produced by dairy farms.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Walkinshaw, Vice Chair; Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hurst, Kretz, Lytton, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Schmick, Stanford and Van De Wege.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

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.

Dairy Nutrients.

"Nutrients produced on dairy farms" (dairy nutrients) is the organic waste produced by dairy cows on a dairy farm operation. The Dairy Nutrient Management Program (Program) is administered by the Department of Agriculture (Department) to help protect water quality from dairy nutrient discharges. The Program requires all licensed cow dairies to develop and implement dairy nutrient management plans, register with the Department, and participate in regular inspections.

Dairy nutrients contain nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, and other nutrients, in varying quantities, which promote plant growth. For this reason, dairy and other livestock nutrients are sometimes composted to be used as garden fertilizer.

Washington Dairy Products Commission.

The Washington Dairy Products Commission (Dairy Commission) is one of several commodity commissions in the state, and promotes and provides public education regarding the state's dairy industry. The Dairy Commission also conducts research to develop efficient and equitable methods of marketing dairy products.

Summary of Bill:

The Dairy Commission is authorized to conduct research and education related to economic uses of nutrients produced on dairy farms.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The goal of this bill is to use Dairy Commission funds to research how products from dairy farms other than cheese and milk can be used. There has been research into ways dairy nutrients can be used in energy production and for crop fertilization.

There are dairy farms in 29 of Washington's 39 counties. Dairy products contribute significantly to the state's economy. Consumers are increasingly interested in where their food comes from and the practices on the farms and other producers use for their products. This change will serve to increase consumer confidence in dairy farms and dairy products.

Conducting research on how dairy nutrients are used is a good addition to the Dairy Commission's powers and duties.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Buys, prime sponsor; Michelle Schilter, Washington Dairy Products Commission; and Jay Gordon, Washington State Dairy Federation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.