

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6345

As of January 28, 2016

Title: An act relating to merging the state department of agriculture's fruit and vegetable inspection districts and accounts.

Brief Description: Merging the department of agriculture's fruit and vegetable inspection districts and accounts.

Sponsors: Senators Takko, Warnick and Hobbs; by request of Department of Agriculture.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water & Rural Economic Development: 1/26/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program (Program) operates on delegated authority from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through fee-for-service-based, state sponsored programs.

The Program provides inspection services to the fresh produce and processing industry to ensure orderly marketing of fruits and vegetables. Major commodities inspected include apples, pears, cherries, peaches, asparagus, potatoes, and onions.

These commodities are inspected for quality, size, labeling, condition, and contract specifications; and may be certified as free from disease and insects as required by domestic and international markets. These inspections include phytosanitary certification, shipping point inspection, third party grading of raw product for processing, and export certification. The program also licenses controlled atmosphere storage facilities for factors affecting the marketability and export of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables.

These services are provided through two district offices, each with a district manager, and 10 field offices located throughout the state. The Northeast and Northwest Regions are administered from East Wenatchee. The Southwest and Southeast Regions are administered from Yakima.

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.

The fees collected under the Program are deposited into the fruit and vegetable inspection account in the custody of the state treasurer. Within this account, WSDA must maintain separate accounts for each district. Two \$150,000 transfers of funds from tree fruit inspections were authorized for 2009 and 2013, for the control of *Rhagoletis pomonella* in District Two..

Summary of Bill: Authority to administer the Program through two districts is repealed.

The positions of district manager are deleted.

The requirement for WSDA to maintain separate accounts for each district is deleted. The section addressing control of *Rhagoletis pomonella* is repealed.

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: This bill will provide much more efficient management of the program. Two districts means two separate accounts that must stand on their own for purposes of fees. Yakima Valley has surplus revenue and Wenatchee is not negative but not surplus either. The bill allows statewide fee adjustments so that the fees are uniform throughout the state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Takko, prime sponsor; J. Cameron Crump, Washington State Department of Agriculture; Jim Halstrom, Wa State Tree Fruit Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.